

it.226 Communication in STEM Professions

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"Good writing is good thinking" Professor John V. Lesko (retired), Harvard University & Bentley College

Chapter 1

Pretest



Each test word is printed in CAPITAL letters in a phrase. From the five choices on the next line, select the one which comes nearest in meaning to the meaning of the test word. Underline the one you select.

1. HASTEN to the store.
walk return wander drive slowly go quickly
2. The FAMINE began.
problem disease food shortage feast dust storm
3. Fine EXCURSION.
visit holiday car journey recreation
4. He was DERANGED.
crazy dirty clever unhappy late
5. The expected DECREE.
understanding diploma shout order weather
6. It was LEGIBLE.
readable unclear clean sensible well-written
7. The GRANDEUR of ancient Rome.
buildings heroes greatness legal system evil
8. She ENUNCIATES well.
dresses speaks hears draws writes
9. They DECIPHERED the message.
decoded removed demanded discovered sent off
10. MERCILESS men.
greedy brave powerful cruel kind
11. They were GLUTTONS.
dieters comics cowards overeaters drunks
12. Strange ESCAPE.
crime adventure silence comedy trip
13. RANSACK the desk.
destroy replace thoroughly search clean throw away
14. Made him FALTER.
jump wonder change hesitate retreat
15. DISPEL their fears.
list cause disagree with fight drive away

Vocabulary Scale 6245

HASTEN (hAs'-ən) v.: to go quickly, speed, hurry; speed up

Note the pronunciation. The *t* is silent.

To **HASTEN** is to move or act quickly.

"The policeman **HASTENED** to the scene of the crime."

"He **HASTENED** to add that the price did not include the tax."

To **HASTEN** something is to speed it up, to make it go faster.

"The general tried to **HASTEN** the enemy's defeat by sending more soldiers into the battle."

HASTE is quickness or speed, especially careless speed.

"In his **HASTE** to leave he forgot to take his jacket."

Something which is **HASTY** is done quickly, often too quickly.

"They decided to have a party at the last minute, and then made some **HASTY** preparations for it."

Other forms of the word: **HASTE**, n.
HASTY, adj.

FAMINE (fam'-ən) n.: an extreme shortage of food

A **FAMINE** is a severe lack of food in an area.

"When it didn't rain for months, the crops all died, and **FAMINE** resulted."

FAMINE is also occasionally used about severe shortages of other kinds of things.

"The charity was suffering from a **FAMINE** of contributions; no one was giving it any money."

A related adjective is **FAMISHED**, which means *extremely hungry, starving*.

"After six days without food we were **FAMISHED**."

Other forms of the word: **FAMISHED**, adj.

EXCURSION (ek-sker'-zhən) n.: a short journey, pleasure trip; a digression

See *ex-* under Prefixes. An **EXCURSION** is a short trip, usually made for pleasure as part of a group, with the intention of returning to the starting point.

"We had a pleasant **EXCURSION** to the country last weekend."

"They made their annual **EXCURSION** to the seashore."

EXCURSION is also occasionally used to mean *digression*, a brief departure from the main idea or the main goal.

"We could never follow him when he went off on one of his **EXCURSIONS** into higher mathematics."

DERANGED (də-rAnjd') adj.: crazy, insane

To **DERANGE** something is to put it out of proper order, to *dissarrange* it. As an adjective, **DERANGED** is used about people whose minds are not working properly, and means *insane*.

"The **DERANGED** man wandered across the highway in the middle of rush hour."

"The **DERANGED** killer said that he heard voices telling him whom to murder."

The most common wrong answer on the Pretest is *unhappy*. Great sorrow can sometimes cause a person to become **DERANGED**, but someone who is *unhappy* is not necessarily insane.

Other forms of the word: **DERANGE**, v.

DECREE (də-krE') n.: an order, edict

A **DECREE** is an order, given by a ruler, judge, or anyone in power, which is to be obeyed just like a law.

"The king's **DECREE** that property taxes were to be raised did not increase his popularity."

"We tried every way we could think of to get around Dad's **DECREE** that we were to be in bed by nine o'clock."

DECREE is also a verb which means "to give an order."

"The judge **DECREEED** that the company had to rehire the two employees."

LEGIBLE (lej'-ə-bəl) adj.: readable

See *-able* under Suffixes. The *leg* part of the word is from a Latin word meaning to *read*. Something which is **LEGIBLE** is able to be read easily, is clear and plain.

"Her handwriting was small but **LEGIBLE**."

"The sign was so covered over with dirt that it was barely **LEGIBLE**."

The opposite of LEGIBLE is ILLEGIBLE, *not readable*.

"He signed his name so quickly that it was completely ILLEGIBLE."

Sensible is often chosen as the meaning of LEGIBLE. Something can be LEGIBLE, however, and not make any sense.

Other forms of the word: LEGIBILITY, n.

GRANDEUR (gran'-jər or gran'-dyər) n.: greatness, majesty, magnificence, splendor

GRANDEUR comes from the word *grand*. GRANDEUR is greatness, impressiveness. The word is used about people and things.

"He admired the GRANDEUR of those ancient kings."

"The GRANDEUR of the magnificent scenery left us all in awe."

"His ideas had a certain GRANDEUR, but he never had enough money to carry them out."

ENUNCIATE (i-nuhn'-sē-At) v.: to declare, proclaim, state definitely; pronounce, utter

ENUNCIATE is from the same Latin word as *pronunciation* and *renunciation*. All have to do with speaking out or declaring something. ENUNCIATE has two somewhat different uses. One meaning is "to state or declare in a formal way."

"Jefferson was among the first to ENUNCIATE the principles of representative government."

"He ENUNCIATED his grand theory of the universe."

The second use is simply to *pronounce*, to *utter*.

"He ENUNCIATED his words carefully."

"You must learn to ENUNCIATE clearly."

In both senses the basic idea is *speaking out*.

Other forms of the word: ENUNCIATION, n.

DECIPHER (di-sī'-fər) v.: to make out the meaning of, decode

One meaning of the word CIPHER is a *code*. To DECIPHER something is to take it out of its code and make it understandable. See *de-* under Prefixes.

"The army DECIPHERED the enemy's top-secret messages."

DECIPHER also means "to make out the meaning of" something difficult to understand or read.

"He managed to DECIPHER the hastily written note."

"They DECIPHERED the faint writing on the cave walls."

MERCILESS (mer'-sə-ləs) adj.: without mercy, showing no pity, cruel

See *-less* under Suffixes. A MERCILESS person lacks MERCY or pity.

"The judge was MERCILESS in punishing criminals."

"The other boys laughed MERCILESSLY at John's attempt to sing."

"The boxer kept up his MERCILESS attack until his opponent was knocked out."

The opposite of MERCILESS is MERCIFUL, *full of* MERCY.

"The father decided to be MERCIFUL and not punish his son."

Other forms of the word: MERCY, n.
MERCIFUL, adj.

GLUTTON (gluht'-ən) n.: a person who eats too much

To GLUT something is to overfill it, to supply it with more than it needs.

"There are too many television sets for sale; the market is GLUTTED with them."

A GLUTTON eats too much; he stuffs or gorges himself at every meal and always wants more food than is good for him.

"He was a real GLUTTON; he always had six hamburgers for lunch."

GLUTTON can also be used about a person who never seems to have enough of something besides food. A "GLUTTON for punishment" is someone who can take a lot of punishment without giving in.

Other forms of the word: GLUT, v.
GLUTTONY, n.
GLUTTONOUS, adj.

ESCAPADE (es'-kə-pAd) n.: an adventure, prank, wild experience

ESCAPADE is from the same root as *escape*, and an old meaning of ESCAPADE was "an act of escaping." Today the word has come to mean "an exciting adventure or action which goes against normal behavior."

"His trip to Tahiti was a surprising ESCAPADE for such an old man."

An ESCAPADE isn't usually evil, but it can cause trouble.

"His childish ESCAPADES usually cost us a lot of money."

"The foolish ESCAPADE on the boat almost caused them to drown."

The most common mistake for the meaning of ESCAPADE is *crime*. An ESCAPADE could be a *crime*, but it generally suggests something less serious.

RANSACK (ran'-sak) v.: to search thoroughly, rifle

To RANSACK something is to search through it thoroughly. RANSACK usually suggests that the searching is violent or disorderly, or for the purpose of robbery.

"He RANSACKED the house looking for his mittens."

"The jewel thief RANSACKED the vault."

"The invaders RANSACKED the city and took everything of value they could find."

Many people think RANSACK means *destroy*, probably because of the violence often associated with RANSACKING.

FALTER (fôl'-tər) v.: to hesitate, waver, stumble, stagger

To FALTER is to waver or hesitate, to act uncertainly out of fear, weakness, or nervousness.

"He started the speech well, but FALTERED halfway through."

"She never FALTERED in her drive to become a successful doctor."

"The football team began to FALTER in the second quarter, and by the end of the game couldn't do anything right."

"His legs began to FALTER, and he knew he would never make it to the top of the mountain."

The most frequently chosen wrong answer on the Pretest is *change*, probably because FALTER looks like *alter*, which means to *change*.

DISPEL (di-spel' or də-spel') v.: to drive away, scatter, clear away

See *dis-* under Prefixes. The *pel* part of DISPEL means to *drive* or *push*. To *impel* is to drive *forward*; to *repel* is to drive *back*. To DISPEL is to drive *away*. DISPEL is used more about emotions and states of mind than about actual physical objects.

"His arguments DISPELLED any remaining doubts they had about the plan."

"The teacher DISPELLED any illusions he might have had about passing the course."

"Bill's reassurances couldn't DISPEL her feeling that someone was following them."

Exercise 1

Answer each question with a YES or NO. Put a check in the space for YES or NO next to the question.

EXAMPLE

Is a speck of dust TINY?

Yes

No

✓

1. Do HASTY decisions take a lot of thought?
2. Would people die during a FAMINE?
3. If you moved to Japan, would that be an EXCURSION?
4. Are DERANGED people sometimes dangerous?
5. Are DECREES usually funny?
6. Is this sentence LEGIBLE?
7. Would GRANDEUR usually be a quality of a king's palace?
8. Should an actor be able to ENUNCIATE clearly?
9. Is it possible to DECIPHER a message sent in a simple code?
10. Does a MERCILESS person take pity on others?
11. Are GLUTTONS usually overweight?
12. Is an ESCAPE usually boring?
13. Can you fix a wobbly chair by RANSACKING it?
14. If something FALTERS, does it go straight to the end without stopping?
15. Can doubts be DISPELLED?

Exercise 2

Each sentence contains a test word in CAPITAL letters. Decide whether the test word is being used correctly or incorrectly in the sentence. Put a check in the space for RIGHT or WRONG next to the sentence.

EXAMPLE

After working hard all day Bill felt TINY and wanted to sleep.

Right

Wrong

✓

1. George HASTENED to his mother's bedside when he heard that she was dying.
2. It was such a pleasant FAMINE that they decided to do it every week.
3. They went on a brief EXCURSION into the city one morning.
4. He claimed he was DERANGED when he committed the crime and therefore wasn't responsible for his actions.
5. The principal DECREED that there would be no running in the school corridors.
6. The teacher refused to accept homework which was not LEGIBLE.

7. He felt that nothing could compare with the GRANDEUR of the Rocky Mountains. _____
8. The founder ENUNCIATED the rules by which the organization would be governed. _____
9. He had such poor handwriting that it was impossible to DECIPHER his letters. _____
10. The author was upset by the MERCILESS criticism of his new book. _____
11. He was such a GLUTTON that he couldn't go two steps without tripping. _____
12. On Halloween all the children joined in various harmless ESCAPADES. _____
13. During the battle we RANSACKED the enemy with our bombers. _____
14. I couldn't FALTER him for the way he acted; I would have done the same thing myself. _____
15. The senator tried to DISPEL the rumors that he was running for president. _____

Exercise 3

Each test word is followed by three other words. Decide which of the three words is LEAST CLOSELY RELATED in its meaning to the meaning of the test word. Put the letter for the word you choose in the space at the end of the line.

EXAMPLE

- | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| TINY: | a) small | b) short | c) angry | <u>C</u> |
| 1. HASTEN: | a) rush | b) hurry | c) escape | _____ |
| 2. FAMINE: | a) illness | b) hunger | c) starvation | _____ |
| 3. EXCURSION: | a) journey | b) digression | c) surprise | _____ |
| 4. DERANGED: | a) crazy | b) mad | c) bitter | _____ |
| 5. DECREE: | a) law | b) suggestion | c) regulation | _____ |
| 6. LEGIBLE: | a) real | b) plain | c) clear | _____ |
| 7. GRANDEUR: | a) sweetness | b) riches | c) brilliance | _____ |
| 8. ENUNCIATE: | a) declare | b) laugh | c) speak | _____ |
| 9. DECIPHER: | a) decode | b) repeat | c) understand | _____ |
| 10. MERCILESS: | a) tremendous | b) pitiless | c) ferocious | _____ |
| 11. GLUTTON: | a) fugitive | b) gorging | c) hog | _____ |
| 12. ESCAPADE: | a) fun | b) excitement | c) terror | _____ |
| 13. RANSACK: | a) pack | b) hunt | c) look for | _____ |
| 14. FALTER: | a) stumble | b) question | c) hesitate | _____ |
| 15. DISPEL: | a) clear | b) scatter | c) hurt | _____ |

	end of wordbook 2 of 8 please upload your answers to words.wordbook