

EXERCISE 2 *Context Clues* 

Directions. Scan the definitions in Column A. Then think about how the boldface words are used in the sentences in Column B. To complete the exercise, match each definition in Column A with the correct vocabulary word from Column B. Write the letter of your choice on the line provided; then write the vocabulary word on the line before the definition.

COLUMN A

- _____ 11. word: _____
adv. easily spoken; speaking too smoothly to be sincere
- _____ 12. word: _____
adj. sad or mournful, often to an exaggerated degree; doleful
- _____ 13. word: _____
n. delicate skill; subtlety; *v.* to bring about with skill; to evade
- _____ 14. word: _____
n. an avenger; an unbeatable rival; a person who punishes another for evil deeds
- _____ 15. word: _____
v. to steal
- _____ 16. word: _____
adj. commonplace; trite; stale from overuse
- _____ 17. word: _____
n. a fictitious name assumed by an author; a pen name
- _____ 18. word: _____
n. strongly satirical writing; *v.* to ridicule or satirize
- _____ 19. word: _____
adj. very wicked; infamous; having a bad reputation
- _____ 20. word: _____
adj. warlike; inclined to fighting


COLUMN B

- (A) One of the greatest British poets was Alexander Pope, whose **finesse** with the English language is legendary. Few others have used words with such skill.
- (B) One of Pope's most famous poems is *The Rape of the Lock*, a lampoon intended to ridicule the petty daily lives of eighteenth-century England's aristocracy.
- (C) The title of the poem refers to the theft of a lock of hair, which an adventurous baron purloins from the fair Belinda.
- (D) The action in the poem is based on an actual event. Pope wrote the poem, in part, to ridicule the people involved, who treat the banal, insignificant event as a major crisis.
- (E) Pope himself was a fascinating individual. He was a literary success, yet he often felt lugubrious; his sadness and depression led him to refer to his life as a "long disease."
- (F) Pope was also bellicose. He frequently attacked his contemporaries in his writings, often with great vigor and always with great skill.
- (G) Those who suffered from his attacks considered Pope to be vicious, even nefarious. They called him the "Wicked Wasp of Twickenham," after the villa in which he lived.
- (H) To lesser literary figures of the day, Pope was sometimes seen as a nemesis, a rival who could not be beaten.
- (I) Pope's pride in his work is revealed by the fact that he never used a pseudonym but always published under his own name.
- (J) Today we glibly use the expressions "To err is human, to forgive, divine," "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread." We should take these phrases more seriously—after all, they are quotations from the great British poet Alexander Pope.

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7

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COLUMN A

COLUMN B

_____ 11. word: _____

n. a mild expression used in place of a harsh, crude, or distasteful expression

_____ 12. word: _____

adj. hazy; vague; not clearly defined

_____ 13. word: _____

adj. hopelessly low; wretched; miserable; without self-respect

_____ 14. word: _____

n. acceptable behavior; conformity with conventional standards

_____ 15. word: _____

v. to attack with abusive language; to call insulting names

_____ 16. word: _____

adj. in a state of mental conflict; agitated; crazed

_____ 17. word: _____

v. to reprove mildly and kindly, but seriously; to caution or warn; to urge

_____ 18. word: _____

adj. matter-of-fact; ordinary; commonplace

_____ 19. word: _____

adj. sluggish; indifferent; calm

_____ 20. word: _____

adj. in proper proportion; having the same scale, measure, or size; proportionate

(A) Wollstonecraft's early home life, which greatly influenced her views about men and women, was not a model of **propriety**, or acceptable behavior

(B) As a child, Wollstonecraft was often **distraught**. She was especially agitated by her father's cruelty to her mother.

(C) Wollstonecraft's father not only physically abused her mother but also probably **reviled**, or verbally abused, her.

(D) You might say that Wollstonecraft's father was often "under the influence," which is a **euphemism** for "drunk."

(E) Wollstonecraft's passive, submissive mother was **phlegmatic** in her reaction to the abuse. Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, reacted quickly and tried to help her mother.

(F) Wollstonecraft's father made the family's **abject** home life even more wretched by wasting an inherited fortune.


(G) Surely, no one would **admonish**, or reprove, Wollstonecraft for leaving home at the age of nineteen.

(H) Wollstonecraft needed a job that matched her abilities. Becoming a companion to a widow was **commensurate** with her limited experience at the time.

(I) Her physical circumstances may have been **prosaic**, but Wollstonecraft's independence was out of the ordinary for women of her time.

(J) Even if her overall plans for her life were **nebulous**, Wollstonecraft had one definite goal: to educate herself.

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COLUMN A

- _____ 11. word: _____
n. one who is in disguise or using an assumed name; *adj.* disguised; using a false name; *adv.* in disguise; under a fictitious name
- _____ 12. word: _____
adj. aware of or informed about something
- _____ 13. word: _____
adj. ridiculous; like a farce; exaggeratedly comical
- _____ 14. word: _____
adj. wandering or shifting from one subject to another; rambling; long winded
- _____ 15. word: _____
n. an obvious exaggeration, made for effect and not meant to be taken literally
- _____ 16. word: _____
adj. knowing everything; having complete or infinite knowledge
- _____ 17. word: _____
adj. occurring by chance; accidental; fortunate
- _____ 18. word: _____
v. to absorb and incorporate food or knowledge; to absorb one group into a larger culture
- _____ 19. word: _____
n. discontent and listlessness from lack of occupation or interest; boredom
- _____ 20. word: _____
n. hypnotism; hypnotic appeal; intense fascination

COLUMN B

- (A) There must have been a million lion heads carved on the castle door. Well, that may be a **hyperbole**, but there certainly were many.
- (B) The man who answered the doorbell seemed to exert a power of **mesmerism** over all of us, although I can't explain our intense, almost magnetic fascination.
- (C) "Welcome, I am Rincent Brice," he said. I thought he was presenting himself **incognito** because that didn't sound like a real name.
- (D) My father told our **farcical** story—the comedy of errors, wrong turns, and late starts that resulted in our arriving there.
- (E) "I am already **cognizant** of all you are telling me," Mr. Brice said, but he did not explain how he knew about us.
- (F) Obviously, unlike my brother Eric, Mr. Brice was not a **discursive** talker. He said as little as possible, and his speech was abrupt, but his eyes wandered over us all.
- (G) Mr. Brice appeared to know everything about us, even our futures. "You will change your plans and stay here three weeks," our seemingly **omniscient** host announced, like a fortune teller making a prediction.
- (H) "Your arrival here was not **fortuitous**. Chance had no part in it," Mr. Brice added, sending shivers down my spine. "It was meant to be."
- (I) Well, I thought, we surely won't have any problem with **ennui** here. Who could be bored under circumstances like these?
- (J) "You now want to **assimilate** some food," Mr. Brice said. "I know that your bodies, unlike my own, need to absorb food."

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#3

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COLUMN A

- _____ 11. word: _____
n. a funeral hymn; a poetic or musical expression of grief
- _____ 12. word _____
v. to give, grant, or bestow; to have a conference or talk; to meet for discussion
- _____ 13. word: _____
v. to banish from one's native country; to withdraw from one's native land; *n.* one who is exiled or who has withdrawn from his or her native land
- _____ 14. word: _____
n. a conversation or conference, usually formal
- _____ 15. word: _____
v. to lessen; to relieve; to calm
- _____ 16. word: _____
v. to pretend; to make up
- _____ 17. word: _____
v. to proclaim; to display publicly; *n.* a coat of arms; a banner
- _____ 18. word: _____
adj. easily angered; bad tempered
- _____ 19. word: _____
adj. clever; skillful in a mental or physical way; expert
- _____ 20. word: _____
n. a show of false bravery or confidence

COLUMN B

- (A) Macbeth is afraid that his actions after Duncan's death will **blazon** his guilt for all to see.
- (B) Because he is obsessed with keeping the throne, Macbeth **confers** with underlings. When they meet, he orders them to kill Banquo and his son, Fleance, but Fleance escapes.
- (C) Apparently Macbeth's friendship with Banquo was not genuine, but **feigned**. In reality, Macbeth is willing to kill Banquo to secure the throne.
- (D) Banquo's ghost appears to Macbeth at a party. Macbeth's **bravado** is obvious; his false bravery when he faces the ghost makes the guests suspicious.
- (E) In another colloquy, the witches warn Macbeth to "beware Macduff." After meeting with the witches, Macbeth orders Macduff's wife and children killed.
- (F) Macduff leaves Scotland, **expatriating** himself to England. There he joins forces with Malcolm and Donalbain.
- (G) Unlike her husband, Lady Macbeth is not **adroit**, or skillful, at intrigue and murder. Her guilt leads to madness.
- (H) The choleric witches prophesy Macbeth's doom, but he does not understand what the bad-tempered women mean until it is too late.
- (I) Macbeth's fears increase when he realizes that what he considered impossible is coming true. Nothing can **allay** Macbeth's fears; he cannot hope for relief.
- (J) With all the deaths, including Macbeth's, there are many opportunities to play dirges during a performance of the play.

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COLUMN A

_____ 11. word: _____
n. craftiness, deceit, cunning

_____ 12. word: _____
v. to offer; *n.* an offer

_____ 13. word: _____
adj. angelic; of the highest order of angels

_____ 14. word: _____
adj. shapeless; of no particular form or type; not organized

_____ 15. word: _____
n. proper action, speech, and dress; good manners and behavior; polite behavior

_____ 16. word: _____
n. someone whose welfare or career is promoted by an influential person

_____ 17. word: _____
adj. naturally cheerful and hopeful; confident; having a ruddy complexion; optimistic; hopeful

_____ 18. word: _____
n. badly written or trivial verse, often with a singsong rhythm

_____ 19. word: _____
n. a person who practices unusual self-denial or discipline, often for religious reasons; *adj.* self-denying

_____ 20. word: _____
adj. easily done; performing or working with ease; adroit; not sincere or profound; superficial

COLUMN B

(A) Eventually, the openness and the lack of **guile** of Pre-Raphaelite art attracted more people to the movement.

(B) But other schools of art, such as Impressionism, were also attracting followers, so the Pre-Raphaelites had few **protégés**. Young artists did not seek out their influence.

(C) Many Pre-Raphaelites were criticized for their sensual subject matter. The public expected them to be **ascetics** as artists and felt that neither their art nor their lives reflected an attitude of discipline and self-denial.

(D) The painters were condemned for their informal lifestyles and what the public considered a lack of **decorum** in their actions, speech, and dress.

(E) They were certainly not **seraphic**, like angels, but they did not deserve to have their works condemned because of their personal lives.

(F) Because the Pre-Raphaelites believed strongly in portraying realistic detail, their works were never **amorphous**.

(G) After their works were criticized by the public, the Pre-Raphaelites were not very **sanguine** about their art. Fortunately, they never lost hope or confidence.

(H) The accomplished poets of the group included the Rossettis, George Meredith (1828–1909), William Morris (1834–1896), and Algernon Swinburne (1837–1909). These writers may have addressed unconventional subjects, but their works were intelligent and well-crafted—far from **doggerel**.

(I) Their works were **proffered** to the public in various volumes. Pre-Raphaelite poets, except for Christina Rossetti, offered overtly romantic verse.

(J) George Meredith was a **facile**, adroit writer who wrote novels as well as refreshing poetry.

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COLUMN A

COLUMN B

- _____ 11. word: _____
adj. freely given or obtained; unearned; uncalled for; without justification or cause
- _____ 12. word: _____
n. a right or privilege belonging to a particular person or class; any exclusive privilege
- _____ 13. word: _____
v. to regard with deep respect, honor, or esteem; to revere
- _____ 14. word: _____
n. a statement the truth of which is obvious or well known
- _____ 15. word: _____
adj. having or displaying extensive knowledge; learned; scholarly
- _____ 16. word: _____
n. a person who falsely claims to possess expert knowledge or skill; a quack; an impostor
- _____ 17. word: _____
v. to praise highly
- _____ 18. word: _____
v. to mention for the first time; to introduce a subject; to start a discussion of
- _____ 19. word: _____
v. to create or possess a tendency or preference in advance; to make susceptible
- _____ 20. word: _____
adj. never changing; unchangeable; unalterable

- ~~(A)~~ Just as the Romans felt it was their right to move into Britain when they wanted to, they thought it was their prerogative to move out of Britain in A.D. 410.
- ~~(B)~~ Within fifty years of the Romans' departure, the Teutonic invasions of Britain began. Dr. Hobson said that it is a **truism**, an obvious truth, that these invasions changed the course of Britain's history.
- ~~(C)~~ She went on to say that the different Teutonic groups—the Saxons, Jutes, and Angles—seemed predisposed to fighting. They preferred a warlike way of life to a peaceful one.
- ~~(D)~~ These conquerors and settlers from northern Europe did not venerate the same gods that the Romans revered.
- ~~(E)~~ With gratuitous military action, the Teutons invaded Britain and destroyed Roman architecture and influence without justification.
- ~~(F)~~ The thought of such wanton destruction depressed me. Seeing my reaction, Dr. Hobson introduced a new topic and broached the subject of the origin of the name *England*.
- ~~(G)~~ It is a form of the word *Angle*—in Old English, *Engle*. That alteration in spelling shows that language is not immutable, that it does indeed change.
- ~~(H)~~ The **erudite** Dr. Hobson informed me that *England* comes from the word *English*, and not the other way around. I was impressed by how much she knew about the subject.
- ~~(I)~~ The English language that developed after the invasions is far different from the English my grandparents now extol, or praise.
- ~~(J)~~ I hope my grandparents do not consider me a charlatan when I show them how well informed I have become about the English language—my sources are well respected and I am not faking my knowledge.

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#7