

Lesson Fourteen

1. **levity** (lěv' ĭ tē) *noun* lightness or gaiety of disposition; lack of seriousness
 An air of *levity* prevailed long after the comedian left the stage.
syn: frivolity *ant:* sobriety, somberness

2. **lexicon** (lěk' sĭ kŏn') *noun* a dictionary; a special vocabulary
 Having been a gang member himself as a youth, Carl was familiar with the *lexicon* of the streets.

3. **libation** (lĭ bā' shən) *noun* an alcoholic drink
 The guests were offered a small *libation* before dinner was served.

4. **liege** (lēj) *noun* a lord, master, or sovereign
 While the servants pledged their loyalty to the *liege*, they did not always like or respect him.

5. **magnanimous** (măg năn' ə mäs) *adj.* noble; generous in forgiving; free from petty feeling or acts
 Allowing the man who had insulted him to sit at the same table during dinner was a *magnanimous* gesture on Robert's part.
syn: generous *ant:* petty, vindictive

6. **marital** (măr' ĭ təl) *adj.* having to do with marriage
 The presence of *marital* problems does not mean the marriage needs to end in divorce.
syn: nuptial, matrimonial, conjugal *ant:* celibate

7. **mercenary** (mŭr' sə nĕr ĕ) *noun* one who works only for money, especially a hired soldier
 Fighting to support a cause or ideal is one thing; but when a *mercenary* kills someone, to me he is no better than a murderer.

8. **meticulous** (mĭ tĭk' yə ləs) *adj.* extremely careful about small details
 With *meticulous* care he crafted a miniature doll house for his daughter.
syn: fastidious, fussy *ant:* sloppy, careless, remiss

9. **motley** (mŏt' lē) *adj.* made up of different, dissimilar parts; being of many colors
 The international club was certainly a *motley* bunch of individuals.
syn: disparate, various *ant:* uniform, homogeneous, similar

10. **mundane** (mŭn dān') *adj.* of this world and not of heaven; common, worldly; not spiritual
 He thought of himself as too much of an artist to deal with *mundane* things such as earning a living.
syn: earthly, ordinary, secular *ant:* spiritual, eternal, celestial

11. **murky** (mûr' kē) *adj.* gloomy, dark, cloudy
He couldn't think straight; his mind was too *murky* and filled with doubts.
syn: somber, dismal, dingy *ant:* radiant, lustrous, sparkling, clear
12. **myriad** (mîr' ē əd) *adj.* a very large number; of a highly varied nature
After *myriad* questions had been answered, the witness was excused.
syn: countless, innumerable
13. **naïve** (nä ēv') *adj.* simple in nature; not affected; innocent simplicity; childlike
Old movies usually portray country girls in the city as *naïve* and vulnerable.
syn: unsophisticated, unaffected, unsuspecting *ant:* sophisticated, artful, cunning
14. **nocturnal** (nők tûr' nəl) *adj.* having to do with the night; occurring at night
Owls and other creatures which sleep during the day are *nocturnal* creatures.
syn: nightly *ant:* diurnal
15. **novice** (növ' is) *noun* a beginner; one who is new or inexperienced
The older lawyer took the *novice* under his wing and taught him the ropes.
syn: pupil, disciple, apprentice *ant:* master, exemplar

EXERCISE I — Words in Context

From the list of words below, supply the words needed to complete the sentences.

marital	meticulous	mercenary
naïve	motley	

- A. Today's modern science fiction movie must contain certain elements in order to be successful. First of all, to be believable, there must be a _____ cast of humans and aliens who interact together. Then there is the _____, younger man who is not interested in his own gain but in the success of some noble cause. The young man will be joined by an older cynical hero. This older hero will be opposed, of course, by the villain. The hero, after paying _____ attention to the villain's methods, tries to outmaneuver him. Of course, in the end, the hero succeeds. There is also the gorgeous heroine who flies off with the hero; the audience assumes the two will spend the rest of their lives in _____ bliss.

From the list of words below, supply the words needed to complete the sentences.

mundane	novice	mercenary
lexicon	nocturnal	murky

- B. While we do not think of rabbits as _____ animals, in our neighborhood you see more rabbits at night or in the _____ hours of dawn than you see in daylight hours.
- C. Some young men read magazines like *Soldier of Fortune* and see themselves as _____ soldiers fighting wars for people who will pay them large sums of money. These men cannot stand the thought of entering the _____ world of the working man on an assembly line or in a factory. Little do they realize that in any army the _____ soldier is, to use a term from the _____ of the military, little more than cannon fodder.