

## Lesson Five

1. **consternation** (kɒn' stər nā' shən) *noun* dismay or worry; concern  
 The professor's announcement that there would be a pop quiz created great *consternation* among his students.  
*syn: alarm, bewilderment, shock*                      *ant: composure*
  
2. **conundrum** (kə nʌn' drəm) *noun* a puzzle or dilemma; a problem  
 The Rosetta Stone was a puzzling *conundrum* for archaeologists for many years until its language was deciphered.  
*syn: enigma*
  
3. **coterie** (kō' tərē) *noun* a small group of people who share interests and associate frequently; a clique  
 The Bloomsbury *coterie* of authors and artists, of which Virginia Woolf was a member, was both respected for its talent and ridiculed for its cliquishness.  
*syn: circle*
  
4. **emollient** (ĩ mōl' yənt) *noun* something softening; soothing to the skin  
 Lanolin is used as an *emollient* in many hand and body lotions.  
*syn: balm*
  
5. **expiate** (ɛk' spē āt') *verb* to atone, to make amends for  
 After hitting a baseball through his neighbor's window, Johnny was made to do yard work to *expiate* his crime.
  
6. **extricate** (ɛk' strĩ kāt') *verb* to release, disentangle  
 Try as he could, the magician could not *extricate* himself from his chains in under a minute.  
*syn: free, liberate*                                      *ant: entangle*
  
7. **flippancy** (flĩp' ənt cē) *noun* disrespect  
 Because of his *flippancy* toward his teachers, he was often sent to the principal's office.  
*syn: sauciness*                                      *ant: seriousness*
  
8. **foist** (foist) *verb* to pass off as worthy or real  
 The money launderers attempted to *foist* counterfeit \$100 bills on unsuspecting business owners.
  
9. **incongruous** (ĩn kɔŋg' grōō əs) *adjective* incompatible; not harmonious to the situation or surroundings  
 The man told an off-color joke that was glaringly *incongruous* with the polite company around him.  
*syn: inappropriate*                                      *ant: consistent, harmonious; fitting*

10. **innocuous** (ĩ nõk' yōō əs) *adjective* harmless  
Having a feeling that the child was faking his illness, the doctor prescribed *innocuous* sugar pills.  
*syn: inoffensive, innocent* *ant: injurious*
11. **inveterate** (ĩn vĕt' ər ĩt) *adjective* habitual, continuing  
Because Stan was an *inveterate* liar, no one actually believed that he had met the celebrity.  
*syn: chronic, unalterable*
12. **plethora** (plĕth' ər ə) *noun* abundance; excess  
We observed the *plethora* of meadow flowers from the train.  
*ant: dearth*
13. **preamble** (prĕ' əm' bəl) *noun* a preliminary statement  
After a long, incoherent *preamble*, the lawyer finally presented some pertinent facts.  
*syn: opening, prologue* *ant: epilogue*
14. **soluble** (sŏl' yə bəl) *adjective* easily dissolved  
The medicine was *insoluble* in the stomach, but not in the intestines.
15. **vitriolic** (vĩt' rĕ đl' ĩk) *adjective* bitterly spiteful; caustic  
The cynic's *vitriolic* newspaper column about teenagers' tastes in music prompted thousands of letters.  
*syn: burning* *ant: bland*

### Exercise I — Words in Context

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

**flippant**      **plethora**      **innocuous**      **coterie**      **emollient**

- A. Two days after rain inundated the field, Joe was amazed to see a \_\_\_\_\_ of flowers spring up; one cactus in particular he knew to be a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ for poison ivy.
- B. "If you don't stop being so \_\_\_\_\_ and loud," scolded the judge, "I'll put you and your \_\_\_\_\_ of lawyers in jail until you show the proper respect." Since that rebuke, the prisoner made nothing but \_\_\_\_\_ remarks.

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

**foist**      **consternation**      **soluble**      **preamble**      **inveterate**

- C. As Bill increasingly tried to \_\_\_\_\_ his racist views on his friends, their \_\_\_\_\_ grew, until at one point they told him, without any uncertainty, and with no \_\_\_\_\_, that they did not want him coming around any more.