

Lesson Twelve

1. **machination** (mäk ə nā' shən) *noun* an evil design or plan
Batman and Robin tried hard to figure out what new *machinations* the Joker had up his sleeve.
syn: a scheme, a plot, intrigue

2. **macroscopic** (mäk rə skop' ik) *adj.* visible to the naked eye
On a clear night, the Milky Way is *macroscopic*.
ant: microscopic

3. **maelstrom** (mäł' strəm) *noun* whirlpool; turbulence; agitated state of mind
His emotions were like a *maelstrom*, and he couldn't decide what course to follow.

4. **malapropism** (mäł' ə pröp iz' m) *noun* a word humorously misused
When she said he was very effluvial, she meant affluent; that is a *malapropism*.

5. **malleable** (mäł' ē ə bəl) *adj.* capable of being changed; easily shaped
The sculptor wanted to keep the clay *malleable* until the final design took form in his head.
syn: workable *ant: rigid, inflexible*

6. **martinet** (mä r tɪn et') *noun* a strict disciplinarian; taskmaster
The teacher was a *martinet* who never made any exceptions to the rules.

7. **masochist** (mä s ə kiz) *noun* one who enjoys his or her own pain and suffering
Sue accused her friend of being a *masochist* because he refused to go to the doctor even though he had been sick for two weeks.

8. **mendacious** (mən də' shəs) *adj.* lying; false; deceitful
Everyone knew the politician was *mendacious*, yet the voters kept reelecting him.
syn: duplicitous *ant: veracity, truthfulness*

9. **meretricious** (mēr i trish' əs) *adj.* attractive in a cheap, flashy way
While extremely attractive as a young girl, she changed her lifestyle; she now looks *meretricious*.
syn: gaudy, showy, tawdry *ant: restrained, tasteful*

10. **milieu** (mēl yər') *noun* environment, setting
The poet felt he was in his correct *milieu* as soon as he set foot in Paris.

11. **miscreant** (mīs' krē ənt) *noun* a vicious person
The police were looking for the *miscreant* in all of the local hangouts.
syn: villain, criminal, knave

12. **nebulous** (neb' yə ləs) *adj.* hazy, vague, uncertain
He had a *nebulous* feeling of fear all day, but he didn't understand why until the thunder started.
syn: cloudy, indistinct, obscure *ant: distinct, precise*

13. **necromancy** (nĕk' rə mǎn' sī) *noun* magic, especially that practiced by a witch.
The grieving son hoped to talk with his dead mother through the woman who practiced *necromancy*.
syn: black magic, conjuring
14. **neologism** (nē ăl' ə jiz' əm) *noun* use of a new word; making up a new word or definition
Some writers coin *neologisms* to confuse and impress their readers.
15. **nihilism** (nī' ə liz' əm) *noun* a total rejection of established laws
Nihilism rejects established laws and order, but it offers nothing in their place.

Exercise I - Words in Context

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

malleable nebulous martinet maelstrom machinations

- A. Hitler was known as a _____ whose followers feared him. His _____ for the control of Europe caused a _____ throughout the world.
- B. Some people believe that children are best taught at a very early age when they are still _____ and can easily be taught. Others, however, disagree. To me, the issue is quite _____; I plan on investigating it further at my first opportunity.

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

**mendacious masochist milieu
miscreants malapropisms meretricious**

- C. Although her conversation is filled with _____, she is a kind and gentle soul. Her sister, however, is so _____ you cannot believe a word from her mouth.
- D. "Oh, I will grant that your argument has a flashy attractiveness to it; but like a cheap steak that is all sizzle and little substance, it is _____. A _____," I continued, "is a sick person who needs help, not someone to be exploited."
- E. As Jack walked into the smoke-filled cellar, he pulled out a cigarette and kicked a box out of his way. Now he was in his _____. He said aloud, "No more station wagons and lawns for me." The place was filled with _____ of all sizes and shapes. If the police ever raided the place, they would find at least a dozen fugitives.

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

nihilism necromancy neologisms macroscopic