

Lesson Fifteen

1. **pedestrian** (pə dēs' trē ən) *adj.* a person or thing said to be ordinary or dull
The crowd failed to respond because it was a *pedestrian* speech.
syn: commonplace, mediocre *ant: imaginative, compelling*

2. **pejorative** (pi jōr' ə tiv) *adj.* having a negative effect; insulting
The comedian was known for making *pejorative* comments, which for some reason the audience found funny.
syn: disparaging, derogatory *ant: complimentary*

3. **perdition** (pər dīsh' ən) *noun* damnation; ruin; hell
The sermon was about the sins which lead to *perdition*.

4. **perfunctory** (pər fungk' tərē) *adj.* done without care; in a routine fashion
She greeted her guests in a *perfunctory* manner.
syn: indifferent, offhand *ant: diligent, attentive*

5. **perspicacity** (pūr spī kās' ĭ tē) *noun* keenness of judgment
That which made him such a good president was his *perspicacity*.
syn: acuteness, discernment *ant: density; vacuousness*

6. **peruse** (pə rōōz') *verb* to read carefully; scrutinize
Bob *peruses* the classified ads every day to try to find a part-time job.

7. **quagmire** (kwäg' mīr) *noun* a swamp; a difficult or inextricable situation
The war was a political *quagmire* for three U.S. Presidents.

8. **quandary** (kwŏn' drē) *noun* a puzzling situation; a dilemma
John was in a *quandary* deciding what his major should be.
syn: predicament

9. **quasi-** (kwā' zī) *adj.* resembling; seeming; half
Grandfather was only in *quasi*-retirement because he couldn't give up control of the business.

10. **querulous** (kwēr' ə ləs) *adj.* complaining; grumbling
The *querulous* child on the plane was making all of the passengers angry.
syn: fretful, peevish *ant: complacent, satisfied*

11. **quiddity** (kwid' ĭ tē) *noun* an essential quality
The *quiddity* of an object or person is that which makes it what it is.

12. **raiment** (rā' mōnt) *noun* clothing; garments
The royal *raiment* of the princess is copied by the fashion industry for the department-store market.
13. **rakish** (rā' kīsh) *adj.* carefree; dashing; jaunty
His hat was on the back of his head and set at a *rakish* angle.
Note: Also used pejoratively to describe a lascivious male.
14. **ratiocinate** (rāsh ī ōs' ə nāt) *verb* to reason; to think
Because alcohol had dulled his mind, he was no longer able to *ratiocinate* clearly.
15. **rationalize** (rāsh' ə nə līz) *verb* to make an excuse for
The boy tried to *rationalize* his absence from school.
syn: justify; account for

Exercise I - Words in Context

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

rakish **raiment** **peruse** **perspicacity** **pedestrian**

- A. As a young woman, my mother would _____ the fashion magazines looking for inexpensive clothing tips. She knew her _____ could never equal the expensive designer clothes, but she had a _____ about herself and her talents. By putting a feather in her hat at a _____ angle, she could turn a _____-looking hat into a style statement.

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

quiddity **quasi** **quagmire**
querulous **perdition** **pejorative**

- B. The professor continued, "That which makes a thing what it is, is its essence; therefore man's _____ is his eternal spirit or soul. So, if you accept that," he concluded, "it follows that a Superior Being could consign a soul to eternal _____."
- C. As they filed out of the room, she heard a few _____ comments. "Well, you can't please everyone," she thought. "Office politics," she reasoned, "can be a _____ that can swallow anyone who is not fleet of foot." She had been appointed acting manager, but she still had to work outside at her old job with the rest of the crew. But this _____-leadership role was beginning to tell on her. At night, she would go home and shout at the kids and nag her husband. In fact, he said that the pressure was turning her into a _____ nag.