

Read the following selection, taking note of the **boldface** words and their contexts. These words are among those you will be studying in Unit 3. As you complete the exercises in this unit, it may help to refer to the way the words are used below.

A Polar Controversy

<Historical Nonfiction>

Today, traveling by air greatly **abridges** the time it once took to reach the North Pole. In the first decade of the 20th century, before airplanes, reaching that remote, frozen destination was no easy task. Those who attempted it had to **surmount** hazardous conditions, such as **rifts** in thick, drifting sea ice and bitter winds that made breathing painful. Nonetheless, reaching the Pole first was an elusive prize that adventurers ardently sought. Then toward the end of that decade, two **eminent** American explorers, Frederick Cook and Robert E. Peary, friends and cotravelers, each claimed to have done so. Which one actually hit the jackpot? After all, a “first” cannot be achieved twice!

The two men shared a passionate commitment to polar exploration, but diverged in their attitudes and methods. Cook took a keen interest in the indigenous

hunters. He strove to learn their culture and language. In contrast, Peary, who had undertaken several Arctic journeys, treated the native peoples he encountered in a manner one would never **condone** today. He approached the Arctic dwellers as a **marauder** would, **pilfering** their grave sites and selling the remains.

Cook left his base camp in Annoatok, Greenland, in February of 1908, and he claimed later that he reached the Pole on April 21 after enduring two months of brutal conditions. Once he determined his location by sextant, he began his long trek back to Annoatok, arriving there a year later. In his exhausted and emaciated state, he bore little **semblance** to a human being. Then, during his recovery, he learned that Peary had begun his own polar expedition eight months earlier, in August 1908. His strength restored, Cook journeyed overland by sled

to a Danish trading post that was 700 miles away, but he left behind most of his expedition records, intending to have them shipped later. In August 1909, several months after Cook's departure, Peary arrived at Annoatok, convinced that he had been the first to reach the Pole on April 6, 1909. Hearing that Cook was claiming to have won the race the previous year made him **irate**. This news led him to try to discredit his fellow adventurer; he later accused Cook of **fabricating** accounts of such past achievements as his successful assault on the summit of Mount McKinley. Peary even refused to take Cook's expedition records with him aboard the ship that took him home, so they were lost forever.

Cook was heartsick that his former colleague would try to **usurp** his claim with these attacks. Their friendship was now **terminated**—and thus began a lifelong **altercation**. Once back in the United States, Peary and his associates kept busy casting doubts on Cook's reliability. Cook did not take these attacks lying down. He was in Europe, writing *My Attainment of the Pole* to make his case more forcefully.

Peary stayed on the offensive and soon gained public favor. A congressional committee investigated Peary's claims, and although it passed a bill honoring him, many **dissented**, remaining unconvinced

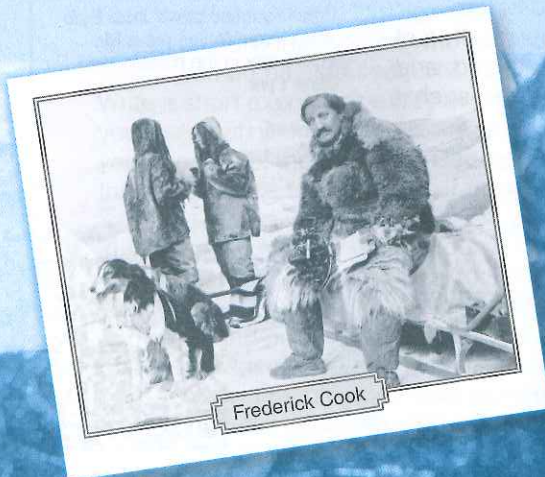
by his so-called proofs. The committee officially credited him—not with discovering the North Pole, but simply with Arctic exploration resulting in its discovery.

Both explorers claimed to have buried objects at the North Pole, but such evidence has never been found. Nor have Cook's records shown up. Both explorers have their **adherents**, and the question of who reached the Pole first remains unanswered, although Peary's name is the one that is most associated with the discovery. Peary's efforts notwithstanding, Cook's claim has proven hard to **exercise**. One reason: More recent visitors to the polar region have confirmed as accurate his original vivid descriptions.

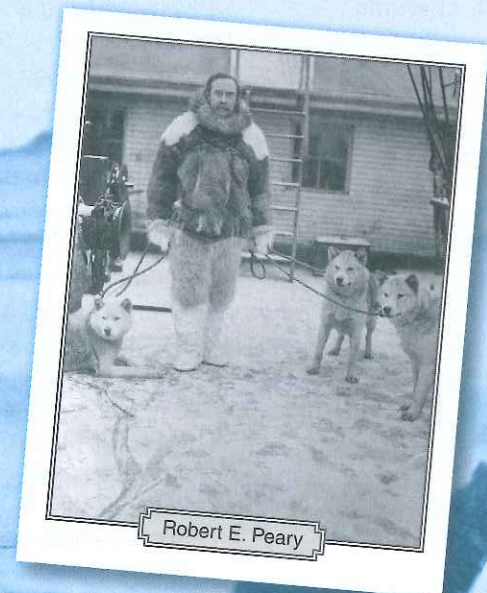
Words!



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Frederick Cook



Robert E. Peary

Definitions

Note the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the word in the blank spaces in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms.

- 1. abridge** (ə brij') (v.) to make shorter
 Travel by air _____ the time needed to reach far-distant places.
 SYNONYMS: shorten, condense, abbreviate
 ANTONYMS: expand, enlarge, augment
- 2. adherent** (ad hēr' ənt) (n.) a follower, supporter; (adj.) attached, sticking to
 The senator's loyal _____ campaigned long and hard for her reelection.
 Before we could repaint the walls of our living room, we had to remove an _____ layer of wallpaper.
 SYNONYM: (n.) disciple
 ANTONYMS: (n.) opponent, adversary, critic, detractor
- 3. altercation** (ôl tər kâ' shən) (n.) an angry argument
 A noisy _____ in the next apartment kept me awake for hours
 SYNONYMS: quarrel, dispute, squabble
 ANTONYMS: agreement, accord
- 4. cherubic** (che rū' bik) (adj.) resembling an angel portrayed as a little child with a beautiful, round, or chubby face; sweet and innocent
 How well those photographs of the month-old twins capture the _____ expressions on their faces!
 SYNONYM: beatific
 ANTONYMS: impish, devilish, diabolic, fiendish
- 5. condone** (kən dôn') (v.) to pardon or overlook
 Our parents have always made it crystal clear to us that they do not _____ rude behavior.
 SYNONYMS: ignore, wink at, look the other way
 ANTONYMS: censure, condemn, disapprove, deprecate
- 6. dissent** (di sent') (v.) to disagree; (n.) disagreement
 Justices have an option to _____ from a ruling issued by a majority of the Supreme Court.
 Some people give voice to their _____ on issues of public policy by writing letters to newspapers.
 SYNONYMS: (v.) differ, dispute
 ANTONYMS: (v.) agree, concur; (n.) unanimity

- 7. eminent** (em' ə nənt) (adj.) famous, outstanding, distinguished; projecting
 A group of _____ scientists met to discuss long-term changes in Earth's climate.
 SYNONYMS: illustrious, renowned
 ANTONYMS: nameless, unsung, lowly, humble
- 8. exorcise** (ek' sôr sīz) (v.) to drive out by magic; to dispose of something troublesome, menacing, or oppressive
 We must do all we can to _____ the evils of hatred and prejudice from our society.
 SYNONYM: expel
- 9. fabricate** (fab' rə kāt) (v.) to make, manufacture; to make up, invent
 Threads from the cocoons of caterpillars called silkworms are used to _____ silk.
 SYNONYMS: put together, devise, contrive, concoct
 ANTONYMS: take apart, undo, destroy, demolish
- 10. gluttony** (glə' tə nē) (n.) engaging in extreme eating or drinking; greedy overindulgence
 In the Middle Ages, _____ was considered one of the Seven Deadly Sins.
 SYNONYMS: overeating, ravenousness, rapaciousness
 ANTONYM: abstemiousness
- 11. irate** (ī rāt') (adj.) angry
 Long delays caused by bad weather are likely to make even the most unflappable traveler _____.
 SYNONYMS: incensed, infuriated, livid
 ANTONYMS: calm, composed, cool, unruffled
- 12. marauder** (mə rôd' ər) (n.) a raider, plunderer
 Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Gold Bug" concerns treasure buried by the _____ Captain Kidd.
 SYNONYMS: looter, pirate
- 13. pauper** (pô' pər) (n.) an extremely poor person
 During the Great Depression, many people were reduced to leading the desperate lives of _____.
 SYNONYM: destitute person
 ANTONYM: billionaire

- 14. pilfer**
(pil' fər) (v.) to steal in small quantities
An employee who _____ from the petty cash box will get caught sooner or later.
SYNONYMS: rob, swipe, purloin
- 15. rift**
(rift) (n.) a split, break, breach
Failure to repay a loan can be the cause of an angry _____ between longtime friends.
SYNONYMS: crack, fissure, gap, cleft
ANTONYM: reconciliation
- 16. semblance**
(sem' bləns) (n.) a likeness; an outward appearance; an apparition
Despite a bad case of stage fright, I tried to maintain a _____ of calm as I sang my solo.
SYNONYMS: air, aura, facade
ANTONYMS: dissimilarity, contrast, total lack
- 17. surmount**
(sər maunt') (v.) to overcome, rise above
Wilma Rudolph _____ childhood illness and physical disabilities to win three Olympic gold medals.
SYNONYMS: conquer, triumph over
ANTONYMS: be vanquished, be defeated, succumb to
- 18. terminate**
(tər' mə nāt) (v.) to bring to an end
If you fail to perform your job satisfactorily, your boss may _____ your employment.
SYNONYMS: conclude, finish, discontinue
ANTONYMS: begin, commence
- 19. trite**
(trit) (adj.) commonplace; overused, stale
When you write an essay or a story, be especially careful to avoid using _____ expressions.
SYNONYMS: banal, hackneyed, corny
ANTONYMS: original, innovative
- 20. usurp**
(yü sərɹp') (v.) to seize and hold a position by force or without right
The general who led the coup _____ the office of the duly elected president.
SYNONYMS: seize illegally, supplant

Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence. You might refer to the essay on pages 32–33 to see how most of these words are used in context.



President Lincoln before he delivered his Gettysburg Address

- The fact that Abraham Lincoln was able to (**surmount, terminate**) the handicap of a limited education does not mean that you should quit school.
- It is the sacred duty of all Americans to oppose any attempt to (**abridge, condone**) or deny the rights guaranteed to us in the Constitution.
- If you ever saw how vigorously my dog attacks his food, practically inhaling it, you would understand why I accuse him of (**gluttony, altercation**).
- One can't become a good writer just by (**surmounting, adhering**) closely to rules laid down in standard grammar books.
- I do not entirely (**usurp, condone**) your misconduct, but I can understand, to a degree, why you behaved as you did.
- The comforting presence of relatives did much to (**exorcise, pilfer**) the patient's feelings of alarm at the thought of undergoing major surgery.
- Either party has the right to (**terminate, surmount**) the agreement that has been made whenever the partnership proves unprofitable.
- His speech was so (**cherubic, trite**) that one could almost anticipate the phrases he would use next.
- The robber barons of an earlier era often acted more like (**adherents, marauders**) than ethical businessmen in their dealings with the public.
- Unless we repair the (**rifts, semblances**) in our party and present a united front, we will go down in crushing defeat in the upcoming election.
- The few words that she grudgingly muttered were the only (**semblance, altercation**) of an apology that she offered for her rude behavior.
- Like all literary sneak thieves, he has a truly nasty habit of (**pilfering, fabricating**) other people's ideas and then claiming them as his own.
- I am very much flattered that you have referred to me as "an (**abridged, eminent**) educator," but I prefer to think of myself as just a good teacher.
- I feel like a (**usurper, pauper**) now that my part-time job has come to an end and I no longer have any spending money.
- In a dictatorship, people who (**abridge, dissent**) from the official party line usually wind up in prison—or worse.

- 16. The fact that many citizens are (**trite, irate**) over the new taxes does not mean that these taxes are unjustifiable.
- 17. My cousin has so much imagination that he can (**dissent, fabricate**) an excuse that even an experienced principal would believe!
- 18. What began as a minor quarrel grew into a serious (**altercation, exorcism**) and then into an ugly brawl.
- 19. Their (**irate, cherubic**) faces and other-worldly voices almost made me believe that the music they were singing was coming from an ethereal place.
- 20. As a loyal (**adherent, pauper**), she was horrified by her political party's stance on the issue, feeling that it went against her principles.
- 21. In the new movie, the hero (**fabricates, surmounts**) the obstacles put in his path by his evil but clever brother, who has betrayed him.
- 22. There is nothing (**trite, irate**) about the saying "You can't go home again"; it is a wise expression that applies to many situations in life.
- 23. Apparently, our dog is a very successful (**marauder, adherent**) who finds toys and articles of clothing in neighbors' yards and brings them all home to us.
- 24. If you do not act quickly, they will (**pilfer, terminate**) the agreement, and you will have to start all over again with some other company.
- 25. You had no right to (**exorcise, usurp**) for yourself the role of gracious host at my party!

Synonyms

Choose the word from this unit that is the same or most nearly the same in meaning as the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1. exhibited **voraciousness** at mealtime _____
- 2. **timeworn** expression on a greeting card _____
- 3. a **veneer** of friendliness _____
- 4. programs that aid **the needy** _____
- 5. **partisans** of the free market system _____
- 6. small change **filched** from the cash register _____
- 7. **turned a blind eye to** corrupt practices _____
- 8. bravely faced the **enraged** crowd _____
- 9. **commandeered** the reins of power _____
- 10. a positively **seraphic** appearance _____

Antonyms

Choose the word from this unit that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1. a **demonic** expression on the gargoyle's face _____
- 2. the social position of a **wealthy person** _____
- 3. showed laudable **temperance** at the buffet table _____
- 4. **initiated** talks between the warring parties _____
- 5. a **novel** approach to a familiar subject _____

Completing the Sentence

From the words in this unit, choose the one that best completes each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided.

- 1. Bands of _____ broke through the frontier defenses of the province and began to plunder the rich farmlands of the interior.
- 2. "I am willing to wink at a harmless prank," the dean remarked, "but I will not _____ outright vandalism."
- 3. "It is a real tribute to the ingenuity of the human mind that for thousands of years people have been _____ new and interesting theories of the universe.
- 4. In this clever spoof of horror movies, the local witch doctor encounters hilarious difficulties when he tries to _____ a demon that has taken up residence in the heroine's body.
- 5. As the layer of clouds that hung over the city began to break up, the sun came pouring through the _____.
- 6. It is only through the exercise of their intelligence that people can begin to _____ the difficulties they encounter in daily living.
- 7. A screenplay or television drama with the same old boy-meets-girl plot can certainly be criticized as _____.
- 8. After driving the lawful ruler out of the country for good, the villainous duke _____ the throne and crowned himself king.
- 9. In movies, characters who engage in _____ are often used for comic relief, but in real-life extreme overeating is a serious problem.
- 10. In order to fit the newspaper article into the space available, the editor had to _____ it by omitting secondary details.

- The only way I could _____ the argument peacefully was to walk away abruptly.
- Although they have enough money to live on, the loss of most of their great wealth has left them feeling like _____.
- During a recent interdenominational service in our community center, the _____ of various faiths met to worship as one.
- Though I was hurt by the tactless comment, I tried to show pleasure in it by twisting my lips into a feeble _____ of a smile.
- "I think," said the salesclerk, "that the phrase 'hot under the collar' aptly describes the typical _____ customer we have to deal with."
- A few of us who disagreed strongly with the committee's conclusions felt compelled to raise our voices in _____.
- No one but a heartless scoundrel would _____ nickels and dimes from a charity's collection fund.
- Although I am not a particularly argumentative person, last week I found myself involved in a heated _____ with a salesclerk.
- "That child may have an angel's _____ features, but at heart he is a little demon," I exclaimed in disgust.
- After so many years of distinguished service in the United States Senate, he can properly be called a(n) _____ statesman.

Writing: Words in Action

- Look back at "A Polar Controversy" (pages 32–33). Suppose that you are one of the explorers. You want to persuade members of the National Explorers Club that you were the first to reach the North Pole. Write an argument using at least two details from the passage and three unit words to support your claim.
- "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor."—Mark Twain

Do you agree with Twain's advice? In a brief essay, support your opinion with specific examples from your observations, studies, reading (refer to pages 32–33), or personal experience. Write at least three paragraphs, and use three or more words from this unit.

Vocabulary in Context

Literary Text

The following excerpts are from Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*. Some of the words you have studied in this unit appear in **boldface** type. Complete each statement below the excerpt by circling the letter of the correct answer.

- As I was getting too big for Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt's room, my education under that preposterous female **terminated**.
Whenever something is **terminated**, it
 a. begins c. pauses
 b. ends d. graduates
- Besides, there had been no **altercation**; the assailant had come in so silently and suddenly, that she had been felled before she could look round.
An **altercation** is a(n)
 a. sudden change c. angry argument
 b. loud noise d. warning signal
- Mr. Jaggers suddenly became most **irate**. "Now, I warned you before," said he, throwing his forefinger at the terrified client, "that if you ever presumed to talk in that way here, I'd make an example of you. You infernal scoundrel, how dare you tell ME that?"
Someone who is **irate** is definitely NOT
 a. calm c. irritated
 b. upset d. angry
- So, felons were not lodged and fed better than soldiers (to say nothing of **paupers**), and seldom set fire to their prisons with the excusable object of improving the flavor of their soup.



A still from the 1934 English film adaptation of *Great Expectations*, with George Breakston as "Pip"

- Paupers** are people who are extremely
 a. unlucky c. mischievous
 b. clever d. poor
- My state of mind regarding the **pilfering** from which I had been so unexpectedly exonerated, did not impel me to frank disclosure; but I hope it had some dregs of good at the bottom of it.
The act of **pilfering** involves
 a. beating c. lying
 b. stealing d. helping others

Interactive
Quiz



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