

UNIT 6

Read the following selection, taking note of the **boldface** words and their contexts. These words are among those you will be studying in Unit 6. As you complete the exercises in this unit, it may help to refer to the way the words are used below.

Modernize the School Calendar

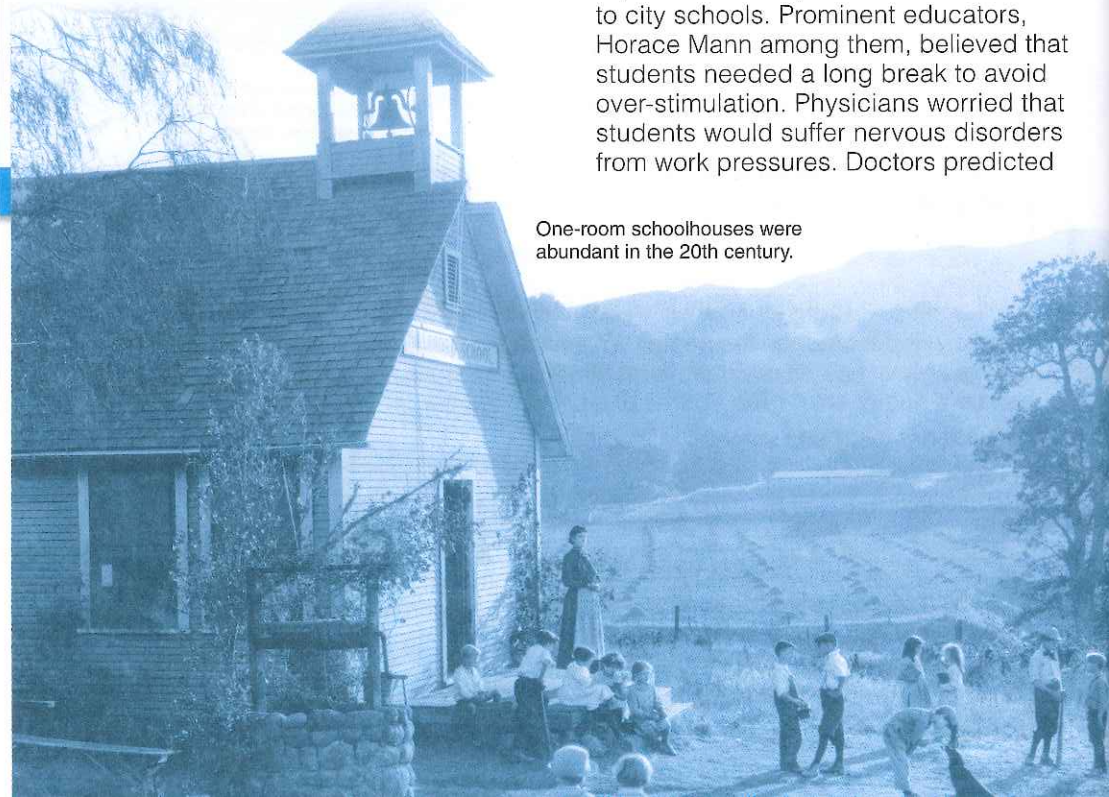
<Persuasive Essay>

Should the school day be longer? “Should administrators lengthen the school year?” Some people would answer both questions with “No.” Insisting that students already work **incessantly** during the day, they argue that students need those after-school hours and summer days to earn money, help at home, or pursue key interests. Supporters of the current school year argue that keeping schools open later and longer will cost too much. Such advocates **hew** to the argument that school time need not be longer, just better spent. Those contentions are **lucid** and **credible**—anyone can see that. But for the

sake of the students’ futures, the answer to both questions must be “Yes.”

The current school year in the United States is a product of 19th-century thinking. School schedules were shaped by the harsh demands of city life or were in **bondage** to the unyielding hold of farm life. In rural areas, children had to be available for spring planting and fall harvesting. Thus, they customarily were in school only from December to March and from mid-May through August. But as the population of the urban United States ballooned, the educational experts of the day shifted their attention to city schools. Prominent educators, Horace Mann among them, believed that students needed a long break to avoid over-stimulation. Physicians worried that students would suffer nervous disorders from work pressures. Doctors predicted

One-room schoolhouses were abundant in the 20th century.



A typical urban class in 1914 did not meet during the heat of the summer.



Students in South Korea meet 220 days a year.

illnesses caused by the heat of the classrooms in summer. These concerns resulted in the two-month summer holiday, and even though there is nothing permanent about such a long break, belief in adherence to the 180-day school year retains its **tenacious** hold on the thinking of many educators. These apprehensions are **superfluous** today.

How can the United States stay competitive in the global economy when so many of its students’ international peers are in classrooms for more days and longer days? In fact, Japanese students have a 243-day school year, and South Korean students are in school for 220 days a year. Despite the **diligence** of our hardworking teachers and the high quality of our educational institutions, our students are struggling to keep pace, **hindered** by a 20th-century school schedule that holds back the 21st-century student. The argument that the expense of keeping schools open longer would **impoverish** school districts is easily refuted. First of all, buildings kept open later can serve other vital community needs and be rented to civic groups. Secondly, the costs would be **defrayed**

by the improved skills students would bring to medicine, science, and business. Horace Mann might **posthumously** agree that modern conveniences make schools comfortable year round.

Many today see the writing on the wall. They understand that having hardworking and caring educators as well as fresh, thoughtful curricula are not enough to **atone** for the short school year. In March 2009, President Obama spoke of the **intricacies** of the issue. He stated that in order to compete favorably with their international peers, students in the U.S. need to spend more time in school. To guarantee a brighter future for the country it is necessary to **supplant** the current school schedule with a modern one.

Words



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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. atone**
(ə tōn')

(v.) to make up for

At one time or another, everyone has done something for which he or she needs to _____.

SYNONYM: expiate
- 2. bondage**
(bān' dij)

(n.) slavery; any state of being bound or held down

Many people escaped the cruel _____ of slavery with the help of the Underground Railroad.

SYNONYMS: servitude, subjection, dependence

ANTONYMS: freedom, liberty, independence
- 3. credible**
(kred' ə bəl)

(adj.) believable

Do you have a _____ explanation for not completing your assignment on time?

SYNONYMS: plausible, acceptable, likely

ANTONYMS: unbelievable, implausible, improbable
- 4. defray**
(dē frā')

(v.) to pay for

Corporate sponsors helped to _____ the cost of the charity's annual telethon.

SYNONYMS: bear the cost, foot the bill
- 5. diligent**
(dil' ə jənt)

(adj.) hardworking, industrious, not lazy

_____ employees are likely to be well rewarded for their dedication and hard work.

SYNONYMS: assiduous, sedulous

ANTONYMS: lazy, indolent, cursory, perfunctory
- 6. doleful**
(dōl' fəl)

(adj.) sad; dreary

One look at the players' _____ faces told me that the team had lost the championship game.

SYNONYMS: sorrowful, mournful, dolorous

ANTONYMS: blithe, jaunty, buoyant
- 7. ghastly**
(gast' lē)

(adj.) frightful, horrible; deathly pale

Some people are almost afraid to go to sleep because they suffer from _____ recurring nightmares.

SYNONYMS: dreadful, appalling, grisly

ANTONYMS: pleasant, agreeable, attractive

- 8. hamper**
(ham' pər)

(v.) to hold back

Poor grades will _____ you in your effort to get a college education.

SYNONYMS: hinder, obstruct, impede, inhibit

ANTONYMS: facilitate, ease, smooth the way
- 9. hew**
(hyü)

(v.) to shape or cut down with an ax; to hold to

Even in a crisis, we must _____ to this nation's principles of liberty, equality, and justice.

SYNONYMS: chop, hack, fell, adhere, conform
- 10. impoverished**
(im päv' risht)

(adj.) poor, in a state of poverty; depleted

After World War II, _____ European countries received U.S. aid under the Marshall Plan.

SYNONYMS: poverty-stricken, destitute, indigent

ANTONYMS: rich, wealthy, affluent, prosperous
- 11. incessant**
(in ses' ənt)

(adj.) never stopping, going on all the time

The loud and _____ chatter of the people at the next table made it hard for us to hear each other.

SYNONYMS: ceaseless, constant, uninterrupted

ANTONYMS: occasional, sporadic, intermittent
- 12. intricate**
(in' trə kət)

(adj.) complicated; difficult to understand

Our teacher took us through the _____ solution to the equation step by step.

SYNONYM: convoluted

ANTONYMS: simple, uninvolved, uncomplicated
- 13. lucid**
(lü' sid)

(adj.) easy to understand, clear; rational, sane

The ability to speak in a _____ and persuasive fashion is a great asset to a politician.

SYNONYMS: limpid, intelligible

ANTONYMS: murky, muddy, obscure, unintelligible
- 14. posthumous**
(päs' chə mäs)

(adj.) occurring or published after death

Many artists and writers have been ignored during their lifetimes only to achieve _____ fame.

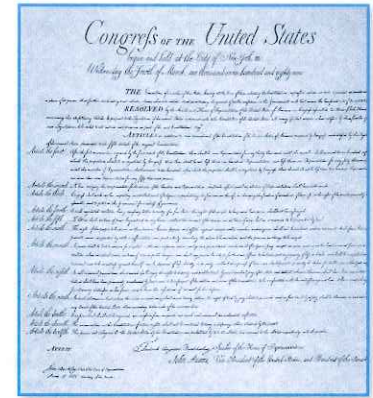
ANTONYM: prenatal

- 15. prim**
(prim) (*adj.*) overly neat, proper, or formal; prudish
How is it that such a _____ and tidy person and such a messy one can be such good friends?
SYNONYMS: fussy, fastidious, squeamish
ANTONYMS: dowdy, frumpy, sloppy, untidy, loose
- 16. sardonic**
(sär dän' ik) (*adj.*) grimly or scornfully mocking, bitterly sarcastic
Great satirists save their most _____ wit for the greedy, the corrupt, and the hypocritical.
SYNONYMS: mordant, acerbic, wry
ANTONYMS: bland, saccharine, good-natured
- 17. superfluous**
(sü par' flü wäs) (*adj.*) exceeding what is sufficient or required, excess
Neat and well-organized people know how to eliminate all _____ clutter.
SYNONYMS: surplus, supererogatory
ANTONYMS: necessary, essential, vital, indispensable
- 18. supplant**
(sə plant') (*v.*) to take the place of, supersede
Computers rapidly _____ typewriters in the workplace, just as photocopiers replaced carbon paper.
SYNONYMS: replace, displace, oust
- 19. taunt**
(tônt) (*v.*) to jeer at, mock; (*n.*) an insulting or mocking remark
It is not at all unusual for brothers and sisters to tease and _____ one another good-naturedly.
For umpires and referees, the _____ of angry fans are just part of the job.
SYNONYMS: (*v.*) ridicule (*n.*) insult
ANTONYMS: (*v.*) cheer, acclaim (*n.*) praise
- 20. tenacious**
(tə nā' shəs) (*adj.*) holding fast; holding together firmly; persistent
Athletes must be _____ in the pursuit of excellence if they hope to become Olympic champions.
SYNONYMS: obstinate, stubborn, dogged
ANTONYMS: yielding, weak, gentle, slack

Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence. You might refer to the essay on pages 70–71 to see how most of these words are used in context.

- If we were to lose the basic freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, we would be truly (**taunted, impoverished**).
- When I looked through the microscope, I observed the (**incessant, intricate**) pattern of blood vessels in the specimen's body.
- The penniless adventurer is a character so familiar to fiction readers that further description of the type is (**sardonic, superfluous**).
- Loss of blood very quickly turned the victim's normally rosy face a (**prim, ghastly**) hue of white.
- In a totalitarian state, people who do not (**hew, supplant**) firmly to the party line are likely to find themselves in hot water with the authorities.
- That village is famous all over the world for its demure cottages, well-manicured lawns, and (**prim, diligent**) gardens.
- "The witness has changed his story so often that no jury on earth is likely to find his testimony (**lucid, credible**)," the district attorney observed.
- (**Hampered, impoverished**) by the weight of my backpack, it took me longer than usual to reach the bus stop.
- Frankly, I am tired of your endless (**credible, doleful**) complaints about all the people who have been unfair to you.
- If we want government to provide services, we must pay taxes to (**defray, hamper**) the costs.
- "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me" is an old saying I try to keep in mind whenever someone (**hews, taunts**) me.
- The author's writing style is as (**lucid, intricate**) as the sparkling waters of a mountain lake on a spring morning.
- In some early societies, people who had committed certain crimes could (**atone, defray**) for them by paying sums of money to their victims.
- The novel's grim humor and (**posthumous, sardonic**) portrayal of the futility of all human endeavor make it an intensely disturbing book.
- What real use is financial independence if a person remains forever in (**bondage, tenacity**) to foolish fears and superstitions?



The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights.

16. Royalties from a novel that is published (**superfluously, posthumously**) normally go to the author's estate.
17. She is very slow to form opinions; but once she does, she holds on to them (**tenaciously, dolefully**).
18. Even after the most systematic and (**ghastly, diligent**) search, we could not find the missing documents.
19. His feverish and (**lucid, incessant**) activity cannot hide the fact that he doesn't know what he's doing.
20. I know that love is fickle, but I never expected to be (**atoned, supplanted**) in her affections by a man like that.
21. The details of the peace accord among the four nations, worked out by a host of foreign affairs officials over a period of months, were (**tenacious, intricate**).
22. I refuse to (**taunt, atone**) for something that I still believe was the right thing to do, even if no one else agrees with me.
23. The gold medal was completely (**incessant, superfluous**), as the pleasure of winning was all that mattered to her.
24. Once he adopted the puppy, his enjoyment of the new pet began to (**supplant, defray**) the sadness he felt over the death of the dog he'd had since childhood.
25. She could never quite forget her sister's hurtful childhood (**bondage, taunts**).

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. a **prudish** way of dress _____
2. averted my eyes from the **gruesome** scene _____
3. a fund to **settle** the cost of room and board _____
4. freed the hostages from **captivity** _____
5. **complex** and beautiful designs _____
6. a **postmortem** analysis of the patient's condition _____
7. a target of the writer's **caustic** criticism _____
8. writes **melancholy** songs about lost love _____
9. **made amends** for their misdeeds _____
10. refuses to respond to **derision** _____

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 **cheerful** individual _____
2. a **delightful** sight _____
3. a rather **lax** attitude toward the rules _____
4. a **mild** response _____
5. **applaud** the competitor _____

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. For thousands of years Native Americans used stone implements to _____ canoes out of logs and tree trunks.
2. I shall never forget the _____ sight that greeted us when we arrived at the scene of the incident.
3. Although the survivors were still in a state of shock, some of them were _____ enough to answer the questions posed by the police.
4. When the stock market collapsed in 1929, many wealthy speculators found themselves as _____ as proverbial church mice.
5. The wily old senator derived a certain amount of _____ amusement from watching his enemies turn on and destroy one another.
6. A student who is _____ and systematic in study habits will often do better than one who is brilliant but lazy.
7. Because my home is located at a busy intersection, I have been forced to accustom myself to the _____ hum of traffic outside.
8. I suppose bloodhounds may be as happy as other dogs, but they have the _____ look of creatures who have lost their last friend.
9. He is a rather _____ sort of man who is easily shocked by other people's less exacting standards of conduct.
10. Saying "I'm sorry" is a good way to begin to _____ for the suffering or harm that you have done to another person.

- To help _____ the expenses that I would incur on the senior class trip to Washington, I worked as a babysitter.
- Our football team would do a great deal better if we mastered a few simple plays, instead of trying to use all those _____ formations.
- A woman of strong character and noble bearing, she endured the jibes and _____ of her adversaries with great patience and fortitude.
- The huge piles of snow that cover the roads will greatly _____ the efforts of the rescue team to reach the stranded skiers.
- On the steps of the Capitol, the president awarded _____ Medals of Honor to soldiers who had recently fallen in defense of the country.
- "Since their heroic deeds clearly speak for themselves," the president remarked, "further comment on my part would be _____."
- I know that he will say anything to save his own skin, but I feel that in this case his account of the incident is _____ and should be accepted.
- Lincoln said: "Familiarize yourself with the chains of _____ and you prepare your own limbs to wear them."
- "Someone with such a(n) _____ grip on life doesn't give up the ghost easily," I thought as I watched the old man celebrate another birthday.
- During World War II, artificial rubber began to _____ natural rubber in American automobile tires.

Writing: Words in Action

- Look back at "Modernize the School Calendar" (pages 70–71). Which of the author's arguments in favor of a year-round school calendar do you believe is the strongest? Write a persuasive essay explaining the single best reason for extending students' time in school. Use at least two details from the passage and three unit words to support your argument.
- "To find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness."—John Dewey

Do you agree that happiness comes from discovering one's talents and finding work that utilizes them? Does Dewey's idea refer only to finding the right occupation, or is his idea broader than that? How can schooling help with this quest for "the right work"? In a brief essay, support your opinion with examples from your studies, readings, or your own experiences. Write at least three paragraphs, and use three or more words from this unit.

Vocabulary in Context

Literary Text

The following excerpts are from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, featuring the famous detective Sherlock Holmes. 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.

- All day today the rain poured down, rustling on the ivy and dripping from the eaves. I thought of the convict out upon the bleak, cold, shelterless moor. Poor devil! Whatever his crimes, he has suffered something to **atone** for them.

To **atone** for something means to

- make up for it
- be punished for it
- repeat it
- be very hurt by it

- Our conversation was **hampered** by the presence of the driver of the hired wagonette, so that we were forced to talk of trivial matters when our nerves were tense with emotion and anticipation. It was a relief to me, after that unnatural restraint, when we at last passed Frankland's house and knew that we were drawing near to the Hall and to the scene of action.

Something that is **hampered** is

- overheard
- enhanced
- enjoyed
- hindered

- He spoke unconcernedly, but his small light eyes glanced **incessantly** from the girl to me.

If someone's eyes move **incessantly**, they are moving

- fiercely
- continually
- questioningly
- sleepily

- "...[S]everal people had seen a creature upon the moor which corresponds with this Baskerville demon, and which could not possibly be any animal known to science. They all agreed that it was a huge creature, luminous, **ghastly**, and spectral.... [A]ll tell the same story of this dreadful apparition...."

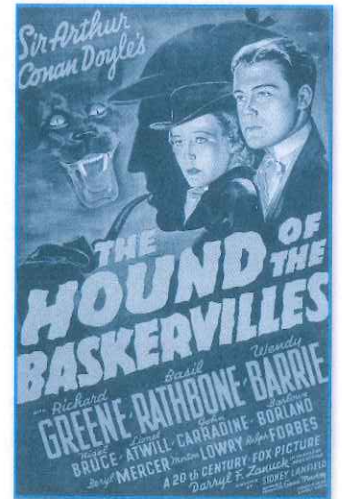
Something that is **ghastly** is

- smelly
- wet
- frightful
- colorful

- It was not a brutal countenance, but it was **prim**, hard, and stern, with a firm-set, thin-lipped mouth, and a coldly intolerant eye.

Something that is **prim** is NOT

- proper
- formal
- neat
- relaxed



Poster for the 1939 film *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, starring Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes.

Interactive Quiz



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