

# Lesson 1

**Word List** Study the definitions of the words below; then do the exercises for the lesson.

- avid**  
av' id  
*adj.* 1. Having a strong desire for, to the point of greed.  
[Avid for the attention of their baby sitter, the children shouted and tumbled about on the floor.]  
2. Eager; enthusiastic.  
[Marcia is an *avid* skier, who spends each weekend on the slopes.]
- brusque**  
brusk  
*adj.* Abrupt in manner or speech; gruff.  
[The lawyer's *brusque* questioning intimidated the witness.]  
**brusqueness** *n.* The quality or state of being brusque.  
[With a *brusqueness* quite unlike her, Melanie ended the phone conversation.]
- concise**  
kən sis'  
*adj.* Short and to the point.  
["Speed Kills" is a *concise* way of warning drivers of the danger of going too fast.]
- demean**  
dē mēn'  
*v.* To cause a lowering of self-esteem; to lower in reputation or character.  
[Don't *demean* yourself by denying what everyone knows to be true.]  
**demeaning** *adj.* Degrading.  
[Being scolded in front of the entire class was *demeaning*.]
- despicable**  
des pik' ə bəl  
*adj.* Deserving contempt or scorn.  
[Driving away after hitting the child was a *despicable* thing to do.]
- emulate**  
em' yoo lāt  
*v.* To try to equal; to imitate.  
[Musicians around the world have tried to *emulate* Louis Armstrong's soulful trumpet playing.]
- evoke**  
ē vōk'  
*v.* 1. To call forth; to produce.  
[After the oil spill, the governor's appeal for clean up volunteers *evoked* a huge response from people in the state.]  
2. To bring to mind, often by suggestion.  
[The tinkling notes from the music box *evoked* for me the carefree joys of childhood.]  
**evocative** *adj.* (ē vāk' ə tiv) Creating something again, especially through the imagination.  
[The costumes and music of the film were *evocative* of Paris in the 1920s.]
- excruciating**  
eks krōō' shē āt in  
*adj.* Very painful.  
[The unusual salve soothed the *excruciating* burn on Ronald's arm.]
- inaugurate**  
in ā' gyər āt  
*v.* 1. To install in office with a formal ceremony.  
[Presidents of the United States are *inaugurated* in January following the November election.]  
2. To begin officially or mark the opening of.  
[On Tuesday, Mayor Ovalles *inaugurated* a free vaccination program for all children under five living in the city.]  
**inauguration** *n.* The act of installing in office.  
[Governor Maitland was at her desk within hours of her *inauguration*.]

**pervade**  
pə vād'

*v.* To spread throughout.

[Laughter *pervades* the house whenever Aunt Sara visits us.]

**pervasive** *adj.* Spreading throughout.

[Every Friday afternoon, the *pervasive* odor of disinfectant fills the halls as the cleaning crew mops the floors.]

**proprietor**  
prə prī' ə tər

*n.* An owner of a store or other business.

[The *proprietors* of the downtown shops planned a sidewalk sale for the first weekend in June.]

**pseudonym**  
sūō' də nīm

*n.* A fictitious name used by an author; a pen name.

[Female British authors of the nineteenth century often had to use a male *pseudonym* in order to get their books published.]

**rebuff**  
rē buf'

*v.* 1. To reject bluntly.

[The owners *rebuffed* all attempts to take over their successful computer company.]

2. To drive back.

[Although the men in the Alamo were determined to *rebuff* Santa Anna's forces, in the end they were defeated.]

*n.* 1. A blunt rejection.

[Caroline's offer to Fred to patch up their quarrel met with a *rebuff*.]

2. An abrupt setback in progress.

[After a storm delayed their start, the climbers experienced another *rebuff* when a rock slide shut down one of the trails.]

**resilient**  
rē zil' yənt

*adj.* 1. Capable of recovering quickly from misfortune.

[After slipping to third place, the Red Sox were *resilient* enough to regain first place.]

2. Returning quickly to an original shape or condition.

[A wool sweater is more *resilient* after washing than a cotton one.]

**resilience** *n.* 1. The ability to recover.

[Steven's body showed great *resilience* after the chemotherapy treatment.]

2. The ability to spring back.

[Tennis balls lose *resilience* after three or four sets of vigorous play.]

**turbulent**  
tɜr' byə lənt

*adj.* 1. Chaotic; unruly.

[My brother and I tried our best to stay calm during the *turbulent* period of our parents' divorce.]

2. Stormy; tempestuous.

[Such a *turbulent* sea prevented all boats from leaving the harbor.]

**turbulence** *n.* 1. Great disturbance or agitation.

[The *turbulence* of the 1960s included peace marches, civil rights protests, and assassinations.]

2. Rapid changes in wind speed and direction in the atmosphere.

[The "Fasten Your Seatbelts" sign flashed on when the plane encountered *turbulence*.]

## 1A Finding Meanings

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 1. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) To inaugurate someone is to  
(b) try to win that person's favor. (c) To rebuff someone is to  
(d) install that person in office.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. (a) be unreliable or untrustworthy.  
(b) have a strong desire for something. (c) To be avid is to  
(d) To be resilient is to  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. (a) is to summon it from memory.  
(b) To emulate something (c) To pervade something  
(d) is to spread throughout it.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. (a) one that is ignored.  
(b) one that deserves contempt. (c) A despicable comment is  
(d) A brusque comment is  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. (a) returns to its original shape.  
(b) Something that is resilient (c) Something that is evocative  
(d) is easily damaged.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. (a) one that is favorable.  
(b) one that is abrupt in manner. (c) A brusque remark is  
(d) A concise remark is  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. (a) A proprietor is  
(b) a fictitious name. (c) a story made up on the spur of the moment.  
(d) A pseudonym is  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. (a) try to imitate that person.  
(b) try to influence that person. (c) To emulate someone is to  
(d) To demean someone is to  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. (a) An evocative poem  
(b) A concise poem (c) is one that is difficult to understand.  
(d) has the ability to bring back feelings.  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. (a) To demean someone is to  
(b) To rebuff someone is to
- (c) reject her.  
(d) manage her successfully.
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## **1B Just the Right Word**

Improve each of the following sentences by crossing out the italicized phrase and replacing it with a word (or a form of the word) from Word List 1.

1. The swelling in Denise's ankle was so *painful that she could hardly stand it*.
2. From Ms. Hernandez's *abrupt manner*, the students understood immediately that something was wrong.
3. The 1930s was a *very disturbed and agitated* decade in European history.
4. When the lawyer attempted to *harm the reputation of* the witness by calling her a liar, the judge intervened.
5. Who is the *person with the legal right to the ownership* of the furniture business?
6. Without any explanation, Emi *bluntly rejected* Brandon's offer to help change the tire.
7. Uncle Joshua used to be an *eager and enthusiastic* fan of the Cleveland Browns until they decided to move to Baltimore.
8. A worker needs to be *able to recover quickly from misfortune* in order to survive in these difficult times.
9. The *installation into office* of Ruth Bader Ginsburg as a justice of the Supreme Court occurred in 1993.
10. Ernest Hemingway wrote in a style that was *short and to the point*.

## 1C Applying Meanings

Circle the letter of each correct answer to the questions below. Questions may have more than one correct answer.

- Which of the following might employ a *pseudonym*?
  - a writer
  - a singer
  - a president of a country
  - a small business
- Which of the following can have a *proprietor*?
  - a corner store
  - a small child
  - a small business
  - a government agency
- Which of the following has *resilience*?
  - a person
  - a doormat
  - a lawn
  - a question
- Which of the following can be *pervasive*?
  - time
  - silence
  - fear
  - a smell
- Which of the following can be *inaugurated*?
  - a president
  - a delivery service
  - a bad habit
  - a promise
- Which of the following can be *evoked*?
  - a loose tooth
  - a grudging response
  - a happy memory
  - a broken ski pole
- Which of the following might suffer a *rebuff*?
  - an announcement
  - an attack
  - a proposal
  - a neighbor
- In which of the following might there be *turbulence*?
  - a relationship
  - the air
  - the ocean
  - a lawn

## 1D Word Relationships

In each group below, circle the two words that are synonyms.

- |              |           |              |              |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. COPY      | REBUFF    | 4. EVOKE     | PRODUCE      |
| ADJUST       | EMULATE   | DEMAND       | REBUFF       |
| 2. EVOCATIVE | AVID      | 5. DEGRADING | EXCRUCIATING |
| ENORMOUS     | EAGER     | DEMEANING    | FALSE        |
| 3. ABRUPT    | BRUSQUE   |              |              |
| EARLY        | TURBULENT |              |              |

In each group below, circle the two words that are antonyms.

- |               |              |               |            |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| 6. DETERMINED | WISE         | 9. ADVANCED   | PERVASIVE  |
| HONORABLE     | DESPICABLE   | CONCISE       | WORDY      |
| 7. TURBULENT  | CALM         | 10. TERMINATE | REMEMBER   |
| PERVASIVE     | HONEST       | MIMIC         | INAUGURATE |
| 8. RESILIENT  | EXCRUCIATING |               |            |
| WISE          | PLEASANT     |               |            |

## 1E Narrative

Read the narrative below; then complete the exercise that follows.

### A POET OF THE PEOPLE

Maya Angelou was honored by William Jefferson Clinton when he invited her to read a poem she had written to celebrate his **inauguration** as the forty-second president of the United States. This was a fitting tribute to the woman whose early life had seemed so empty of promise when she was born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, sixty-four years before. She sums up that life **concisely** in these lines from one of her poems: “. . . birthing is hard / and dying is mean / and living’s a trial in between.”

When she was still a small child, her parents divorced; she and her older brother Bailey were raised by their grandmother, Annie Henderson, affectionately known as Momma. Mrs. Henderson was the **proprietor** of the only general store in Stamps, Arkansas, owned by an African-American. In her first book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Angelou **evokes** Momma’s powerful presence as she lovingly describes the way her grandmother coped with the bigotry and racial hatred that was widespread in the country in the 1930s. It was this **resilience** that most impressed Angelou and which she herself tried to **emulate** throughout her life.

One example of such bigotry involved a visit to the dentist. With Angelou suffering from an **excruciating** toothache, Momma had no choice but to take her granddaughter to the town’s only dentist, who was white. When she asked him to treat the little girl’s toothache, he **rebuffed** her, using extremely **demeaning** language. He told her that he would rather put his hand in a dog’s mouth than treat a black person. Momma reminded him that she had helped him in the past by making him interest-free loans; now she was asking a favor in return. But he **brusquely** asserted that his debts had been paid and ordered her to leave. After taking her grandchild out of the office, Momma returned and stood her ground. She demanded that the dentist pay her a fair rate of interest on the loans she had made him. Finally, he handed over ten

dollars, a large sum in those days, and only then did she depart, her dignity intact. She traveled over thirty miles with her granddaughter to Texarkana, where the nearest African-American dentist practiced.

When Angelou was eight years old, she and her brother went to live with their mother in St. Louis. There her mother's boyfriend abused her and threatened to harm Bailey if she told anyone. When Angelou became ill, her mother discovered the despicable abuse. The boyfriend was brought to trial and convicted. But the shock of the experience left Angelou unable to speak for a year.

In spite of her troubled and **turbulent** childhood, a spirit of optimism pervades *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In it, Angelou pays tribute to those who helped and encouraged her, among them a neighbor named Bertha Flowers, who gave her books and introduced her to the pleasures of reading poetry, drama, and great novels. As a result of Flowers's influence, Angelou became an avid reader. This led later to her dream of becoming a writer. Four more volumes of autobiography and many collections of poetry followed *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. All appeared under her **pseudonym**, Maya Angelou, a name she began using in the 1950s.

It was a long and difficult road that she had traveled, but it led to the presidential platform where she read her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" to an audience of millions on that cold January day in 1993. Angelou had triumphed over many difficulties, strengthened by the deep faith expressed in these lines from the poem, "Lift up your hearts / Each new hour holds new chances / For a new beginning."

*Answer each of the following questions in a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word, use a vocabulary word in your answer. Use each word only once. Questions and answers will then contain all fifteen words (or forms of the words) from this lesson's word list.*

1. Why is it inaccurate to say that Momma was Mrs. Henderson's **pseudonym**?

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2. Why would you not use the word **concise** to describe the title of Angelou's first book?

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3. Why did Angelou compose "On the Pulse of Morning"?

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4. Why did Mrs. Henderson have to be knowledgeable about business?

5. Why was Momma desperate to get her granddaughter to a dentist?

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6. How did the dentist let Momma know that she was not welcome?

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7. Why is Angelou's mother's boyfriend someone one would not **emulate**?

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8. In what way did the dentist show **despicable** behavior?

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9. What is the meaning of **evoke** as it is used in the narrative?

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10. What is one way that Angelou showed **resilience** in her life?

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11. What is one example from the narrative of Angelou's **turbulent** childhood?

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12. What details in the narrative suggest that Bertha Flowers's treatment of Angelou was not **brusque**?

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13. In the 1930s, why is it likely that most African-Americans experienced racial bigotry?

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14. How do you know that Angelou did not **rebuff** President Clinton's request for a poem?

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15. What is the meaning of **avid** as it is used in the narrative?

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