

Lesson 10

91. **coerce** — 100. **conjecture**

91. **co-erce** *verb* kō-ûrs'

[co, a form of *cum* (Latin), "together" + *arcere* (Latin), "confine"]

Definition: To force someone to do something against his or her will by using undue pressure, threats, intimidation, or physical violence.

There are far more subtle ways of **coercing** a person into doing what you want than twisting his or her arm.

"Though my parents frequently advise me about how to act in a particular situation," Rhoda said, "they never try to **coerce** me into doing what they think best."

If you seek to impose your will on others by **coercing** them, you will make many enemies.

Related Forms: (*nouns*) coercion, coerciveness; (*adjectives*) coercive, coercible; (*adverb*) coercively

Synonyms: (*verbs*) constrain, compel, pressure, bulldoze, dragoon; hector, browbeat, cow

Related Phrases: strong-arm tactics; high-pressure someone, bring pressure to bear, railroad someone into; under duress

92. **co-gent** *adjective* kō'-jěnt

[*cogens, cogentis* (Latin), "driving together"; from *co*, a form of *cum* (Latin), "together" + *agere* (Latin), "drive; force"]

Definition: Forceful and convincing; to the point.

"The objections that Gloria raised to my plan were not only **cogent**," Frank admitted candidly, "they were totally unanswerable!"

One of the articles in yesterday's paper had some **cogent** and perceptive things to say about our troubled economy.

Phrases: a cogent argument; a cogent criticism, a cogent account, a cogent description, a cogent analysis, at her most cogent and compelling

Related Forms: (*noun*) cogency; (*adverb*) cogently

Synonyms: (*adjectives*) powerful, potent, effective, telling; persuasive, compelling; valid, sound; relevant, pertinent, apposite, germane, apropos

Antonyms: (*adjectives*) weak, ineffective, unconvincing, frivolous, inane; invalid, untenable; irrelevant

93. **co-here** verb kō-hēr'

[co, a form of *cum* (Latin), "together" + *haerere* (Latin), "stick, cling"]

Definition: To hold or stick together; to fit together into an orderly, logical, and unified whole.

Add just enough water to the mixture of sand and cement to produce a gritty substance that **coheres** like oatmeal.

If all the elements in your essay don't **cohere** properly, you won't achieve a single overall effect.

Related Forms: (*nouns*) coherence, coherency, cohesion, cohesiveness; (*adjectives*) coherent, cohesive

Usage Note:

In spoken and written English, *coherence* is the principle that requires the parts of a sentence or a longer composition to be so worded and arranged that they stick together in an orderly, logical relationship. Errors that usually produce incoherence, especially in student writing, include dangling or misplaced modifiers, faulty pronoun references, lack of an overall focus, puzzling shifts in thought, the inclusion of irrelevant details, the illogical arrangement of facts or events, and the omission of essential information.

Synonyms: (*verbs*) coalesce, combine, gel

Antonyms: (*verbs*) separate, fall apart, come apart, come asunder; diverge, disperse, dissipate, diffuse, scatter; (*noun*) incoherence; (*adjectives*) incoherent, disjointed

94. **col-lab-o-rate** verb kə-lāb'-ə-rāt

[col, a form of *cum* (Latin), "together" + *laborare, laboratus* (Latin), "work"]

Definition:

a. To work together on some kind of joint project. (In this sense the tone of the word is neutral.)

Though Shakespeare usually worked by himself, other Elizabethan dramatists frequently **collaborated** on plays.

b. To cooperate with the enemy in some kind of treasonable activity. (In this sense the tone of the word is definitely pejorative.)

"Make no mistake," the leader of the resistance movement declared. "A frightful punishment awaits any citizen who willingly **collaborates** with the foreign power that has occupied our country."

Related Forms: (*nouns*) collaboration, collaborator

Synonyms: (*verbs*) cooperate, team up, join forces, pool one's efforts; intrigue, collude, conspire; (*nouns*) partner, colleague, coworker; quisling, fifth columnist, fellow traveler; partnership, team effort, joint effort

Antonyms: (*verbs*) work by oneself; dissociate oneself from, part company with, take leave of

Related Phrase: in cahoots with

Quisling



In the 1930s Vidkun Quisling (1887–1945) was a respected Norwegian serving in various political and diplomatic posts. By 1945 he had become Norway's most notorious turncoat, and his surname had supplied English with a new word for *traitor*.

Trained at Norway's only military academy, Quisling became a major in the Norwegian army. After that, he served as an official at the League of Nations and was responsible for the handling of refugees fleeing Stalin's Russia.

While acting as Norway's Minister of Defense from 1931 to 1933, Quisling developed a great admiration for the Germans. When World War II broke out, Quisling helped the German military plan the invasion of his native land; and when the Nazis arrived, he used his influence to hasten Norway's collapse. Somewhat later, the Nazis

appointed Quisling Premier of Norway, a position he held until the war ended. In May 1945, Quisling was arrested, tried, and executed for high treason. Because of Quisling's part in the betrayal of Norway, his name became synonymous with treachery.

95. **com-pat-i-ble** *adjective* kəm-păt'-ə-bəl
[com, a form of cum (Latin), "together" + pati (Latin), "feel; endure" + abilis (Latin), "able to"]

Definition:

- a. Capable of use with some other brand or model.
A particular software program that you have seen advertised on television or in the newspaper may or may not be **compatible** with the type of home computer you own.
- b. Capable of living or getting along together.
The two people work well together despite the fact that their personalities don't seem at all **compatible**.

Related Forms: (*nouns*) compatibility, compatibleness; (*adverb*) compatibly

Synonyms: (*adjectives*) harmonious, agreeable, like-minded; consistent, congruous; parallel

Antonyms: (*adjectives*) incompatible, antagonistic; inconsistent, incongruous

Related Phrases: in sync, in keeping with, in line with

96. **com-pla-cent** *adjective* kəm-plā'-sənt
[*com*, a form of *cum* (Latin), "with; very" + *placens, placentis*, from *placere* (Latin), "please, be satisfied"]

Definition: Overly self-satisfied; smug.

"If you had achieved as much this year as he has," I replied, "you'd be a little **complacent**, too!"

Related Forms: (*nouns*) complacence, complacency; (*adverb*) complacently

Phrases: a complacent attitude, a complacent look

Usage Note:

Do not confuse the adjective *complacent*, meaning "self-satisfied," with the related adjective *complaisant*, meaning "eager to please" or "cheerfully obliging."

Synonyms: (*adjectives*) content(ed), self-content(ed)

Antonyms: (*adjectives*) dissatisfied, discontent(ed), malcontent

Related Phrases: to rest on one's laurels, pleased with oneself; displeased with oneself

97. **con-cise** *adjective* kən-sīs'
[*concidere, concisus* (Latin), "cut up"; from *con*, a form of *cum* (Latin), "very" + *caedere, caesus* (Latin), "cut"]

Definition: Saying a lot in a few words.

Since there is a charge for every word you use in a telegram, always make your message as **concise** as possible.

Phrases: a concise account, a concise statement

Related Forms: (*nouns*) conciseness, concision; (*adverb*) concisely

Synonyms: (*adjectives*) brief, compact, succinct, terse; laconic, summary; pithy

Antonyms: (*adjectives*) wordy, prolix, verbose, garrulous, loquacious, long-winded

98. **con-done** *verb* kən-dōn'
[*condonare* (Latin), "forgive"; from *con*, a form of *cum* (Latin), "completely" + *donare* (Latin), "give away"]

Definition: To overlook or disregard an offense, thereby implying forgiveness, acceptance, or possibly approval of it.

"I'm perfectly willing to wink at a harmless practical joke," Mom remarked, "but I refuse to **condone** outright vandalism."

Today it is considered permissible for children to behave in ways that earlier generations of parents would not have **condoned**.

Related Forms: (*nouns*) condonation, condoner

Synonyms: (verbs) ignore; accept, countenance, stomach, tolerate

Antonyms: (verbs) condemn, denounce, disapprove, deprecate, castigate, decry, revile

Related Phrases: close one's eyes to, turn a blind eye to; put up with

99. **con-fron-ta-tion** noun kŏn-frən-tā'-shən

[*confrōtare, confrōtātus* (Latin), "have a common border"; from *con*, a form of *cum* (Latin), "together" + *frōns, frōtis* (Latin), "forehead"]

Definition: A face-to-face encounter, usually (but not always) suggesting a hostile or defiant attitude.

"Our two countries must make every effort to settle our differences peacefully," the ambassador said. "An all-out **confrontation** might ruin us both."

Related Form: (verb) confront

Synonyms: (nouns) showdown, face-off, shoot-out

Related Phrases: stand up to, square off against, throw down the gauntlet, take up the gauntlet, on the brink



Maya Angelou

The African American poet and writer Maya Angelou (born 1928) is best known for her engaging series of autobiographical books dealing with problems and issues she confronted growing up black and female in 20th-century America. Beginning with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), she has given her audience a series of memorable self-portraits designed to lay bare the black experience of life in these United States. The themes she evokes in her autobiographical writing also find expression in her numerous volumes of poetry. Angelou's writing combines a rich and flexible vocabulary with a deft ear for the cadences of ordinary, everyday speech.

100. **con-jec-ture** *noun and verb* kən-jĕk'-chər
[*conjectura* (Latin), "conclusion"; from *con*, a form of *cum* (Latin), "together" + *jacere, jactus* (Latin), "throw"]

Definition:

- a. (*noun*) A conclusion based on inadequate evidence; a guess.

Since the coroner's findings were inconclusive, the exact cause of the child's death remains for the present a matter of **conjecture**.

- b. (*verb*) To conclude from inadequate evidence; to guess.

"I haven't enough hard evidence at hand to say for sure," the detective declared. "I can only **conjecture**, based on past experience, that this was an inside job."

Related Forms: (*adjective*) conjectural

Synonyms: (*nouns*) surmise, supposition, presumption, suspicion, inference; speculation, theory; (*verbs*) surmise, suppose, presume, suspect, infer; speculate, theorize

Antonyms: (*nouns*) fact, certainty; (*verbs*) demonstrate, substantiate

Related Phrases: an educated guess, a shot in the dark, a ballpark estimate

Using the Words

Exercise I. Parts of Speech

Indicate the part of speech of each of the following words. In one case, two answers are correct.

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. confrontation | 3. conjecture | 5. cogent |
| 2. compatible | 4. coerce | 6. complacent |

Exercise II. Words in Phrases

In each of the following groups, select the item that best expresses the meaning of the *italicized* word in the introductory phrase.

- a particularly *cogent* argument
a. forceful b. bizarre c. elaborate d. weak e. silly
- compatible* interests
a. unusual b. conflicting c. deep d. parallel e. scholarly
- condone* wrongdoing
a. point at b. flinch at c. aim at d. rail at e. wink at
- find someone with whom to *collaborate*
a. chat b. team up c. disagree d. sit down e. sympathize
- an interesting *conjecture*
a. fact b. situation c. guess d. development e. history

Exercise III. Completing Sentences

Complete each of the following sentences or pairs of sentences by selecting the most appropriate word from the group of words given below.

concise

confrontation

cohere

coerce

conjecture

complacent

1. Though it omitted many details, her spare and _____ account of the accident left us in no doubt as to exactly what had happened.
2. Some chemical compounds _____ readily; others are highly unstable and separate easily.
3. "I don't understand why you are walking around with that _____ grin on your face," I exclaimed. "Exactly what have you done to make you so pleased with yourself?"
4. The bitter rivals for public office met in a dramatic _____ on TV to debate the issues of the campaign.
5. You should know better than to try to _____ me into doing something that goes against my principles.

Exercise IV. Synonyms and Antonyms

A. In each of the following numbered groups, select the **two** words that are most nearly **synonyms**.

1. a. gel b. rebuke c. separate d. coalesce
2. a. disregard b. overlook c. redress d. compel
3. a. circumvent b. blight c. pressure d. bulldoze
4. a. put-on b. showdown c. time-out d. shoot-out
5. a. terse b. succinct c. frivolous d. incongruous

Now, for each of the pairs of synonyms you have selected, supply a word from the Basic Word List for this lesson (Words 91–100) that means **the same** or **almost the same** thing.

B. In each of the following numbered groups, select the **two** words that are most nearly **antonyms**.

1. a. cogent b. agreeable c. unique d. frivolous
2. a. campaign b. conjecture c. certainty d. chagrin
3. a. awry b. faulty c. discontented d. complacent
4. a. collaborate b. border c. dissociate d. recognize
5. a. joyful b. compatible c. frequent d. antagonistic

Exercise V. Word Roundup

1. With or without the aid of a dictionary, define or explain each of the following expressions.
 - a. strong-arm tactics
 - b. fifth columnist
 - c. in cahoots with
 - d. in sync
 - e. rest on one's laurels
 - f. throw down the gauntlet
 - g. quisling
 - h. a shot in the dark
 - i. an educated guess
 - j. turn a blind eye to
2. Explain what principle of good writing (and speaking) is indicated by the term *coherence*. What are some of the characteristics of *incoherent* writing?
3. Explain the difference between *complacent* and *complaisant*. Use each in a sentence that clearly illustrates the word's meaning.

Exercise VI. Framing Sentences

A. Use each of the following words in an original illustrative sentence.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. conjecture | 3. collaborate | 5. confrontation |
| 2. cogent | 4. compatible | 6. condone |

B. Give an **adjective** form of each of the following, and use it in an original illustrative sentence.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| 1. cohere | 2. conjecture | 3. coerce |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|

C. Give an **adverb** form of each of these words, and use it in an original illustrative sentence.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|------------|
| 1. cogent | 2. complacent | 3. concise |
|-----------|---------------|------------|

Will Shortz

Will Shortz (born 1952) is a noted puzzle maker. As the crossword puzzle editor for *The New York Times* and the "puzzle master" for a show on National Public Radio, he draws on his extraordinary facility with the English language. Shortz went to Indiana University, where he designed his own degree program—in enigmatology, the study of puzzles. His library of puzzle books and magazines, thought to be the world's largest private collection, includes one title that is more than 500 years old.



Completing Verbal Analogies

"A Indicates the State of Being B." Another important word relationship that turns up on standardized vocabulary tests may conveniently be expressed as "A indicates the state of being B." An example of an analogy question involving this word relationship is given below. See if you can figure out the correct answer before you read the explanation of it given below.

A B C D

chagrin : mortified = candor : (*careless, vexed, frank, reserved, hungry*)

The answer, of course, is *frank*. *Candor* indicates the state of being *frank* or open about one's knowledge, thoughts, or feelings, just as *chagrin* indicates the state of being *mortified* or humiliated by some kind of disappointment or frustration.

Note that, as usual, the wrong choices offered under *D* include some traps for the unwary. For example, *vexed*, which is something of a synonym of *mortified*, indicates how a person feels when overcome with *chagrin*, but it has nothing to do with *candor*. Similarly, *reserved* indicates a trait that is the opposite of the one suggested by *candor*.

Exercise I

Complete the following analogies based on the word relationship "A indicates the state of being B."

1. **complacency : smug** = vigilance : (*sweet, quarrelsome, generous, watchful, jolly*)
2. **conciseness : brief** = cogency : (*terse, forceful, elaborate, bizarre, childish*)
3. **prudence : careful** = apathy : (*indecisive, indignant, indigent, indiscreet, indifferent*)

Exercise II

Write **three** original analogies based on the relationship "A indicates the state of being B." In your analogies use at least **two** of the basic words studied in Lessons 1–10 (Words 1–100).

Exercise III

The following items review what you have so far learned about analogy questions. Complete each.

1. **anarchy : order** = apathy : (*influence, ignorance, income, interest, intelligence*)
2. **callous : compassionate** = caustic : (*forthright, bland, callow, myopic, pungent*)

3. **clandestine** : **openness** = compatible : (*conflict, direction, sympathy, meaning, unity*)
4. **coerce** : **constrain** = cohere : (*circumvent, censure, compel, commend, coalesce*)
5. **affluence** : **rich** = captiousness : (*hypercritical, hyperbolic, hyperactive, hypothetical, hypocritical*)

Enriching the Lesson

Exercise I. Look-Alikes

English has a great many duos or even trios of words that look alike but mean quite different things. Some of these items are paired off below. With or without the aid of a dictionary, explain the difference in meaning between the members of each pair.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. abrogate—arrogate | 11. affect—effect |
| 2. human—humane | 12. flaunt—flout |
| 3. resound—redound | 13. fallible—fallacious |
| 4. envious—enviable | 14. noisy—noisome |
| 5. official—officious | 15. founder—flounder |
| 6. laudable—laudatory | 16. ceremonious—ceremonial |
| 7. judicial—judicious | 17. fortunate—fortuitous |
| 8. ferment—foment | 18. contemptible—contemptuous |
| 9. ingenious—ingenuous | 19. progeny—prodigy |
| 10. martial—marital | 20. depredation—deprivation |

Now, choose any **five** of the pairs of words listed above. For each, compose a set of **two** sentences, each of which illustrates the meaning and use of **one** of the words in the pair.

Exercise II. By the Sweat of Your Brow

Some terms and expressions used in connection with working in general and labor-management relations are listed below. With or without the aid of a dictionary or other reference book, define each.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. labor force | 11. seniority |
| 2. skilled worker | 12. real wage |
| 3. unskilled worker | 13. minimum wage |
| 4. blue-collar worker | 14. cost-of-living increase |
| 5. white-collar worker | 15. craft union |
| 6. journeyman | 16. industrial union |
| 7. apprentice | 17. right-to-work laws |
| 8. injunction | 18. automation |
| 9. collective bargaining | 19. featherbedding |
| 10. equal employment opportunity | 20. productivity |

Exercise III. Ships That Have Never Seen the Sea

Below you will find a group of "ship" words. With or without the aid of a dictionary, define each. Then illustrate its meaning by using it in an original sentence or by telling an anecdote that conveys its basic idea.

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. statesmanship | 4. wordsmanship | 7. leadership |
| 2. gamesmanship | 5. sportsmanship | 8. lifemanship |
| 3. horsemanship | 6. one-upmanship | 9. guardianship |

Exercise IV. A Verbal Diversion

A. **Doublets** A good many common English phrases are made up of two elements connected by the word *and* or the word *or* (or sometimes a preposition). Such phrases are often called **doublets**. A good example of a doublet is *aid and abet*, mentioned in Lesson 1. Below are listed a number of other doublets. Define each.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. flotsam and jetsam | 6. spick and span |
| 2. null and void | 7. by hook or by crook |
| 3. sackcloth and ashes | 8. raise a hue and cry |
| 4. kith and kin | 9. cut and dried |
| 5. rank and file | 10. in dribs and drabs |

B. **Triplets** There is also a small group of common phrases made up of three elements. Such phrases are sometimes called **triplets**. A good example of a triplet is the phrase *ready, willing, and able*.

Below you are given the first two elements of a number of other common triplets. Supply the missing third element. Also, define any of these phrases that is not immediately intelligible to you.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. lock, stock, and _____ | 6. any Tom, Dick, or _____ |
| 2. hook, line, and _____ | 7. signed, sealed, and _____ |
| 3. bell, book, and _____ | 8. beg, borrow, or _____ |
| 4. healthy, wealthy, and _____ | 9. rag, tag, and _____ |
| 5. tall, dark, and _____ | 10. blood, sweat, and _____ |

Exercise V. Expanding Your Word Power

The words listed below are not on the Basic Word List, but they were mentioned in passing in Lesson 10. All of them would make useful additions to your vocabulary. Define each, give its etymology, list **two** synonyms and **two** antonyms (where possible), and use in a short illustrative sentence.

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. potent | 4. valid | 7. intrigue |
| 2. relevant | 5. incongruous | 8. malcontent |
| 3. inane | 6. diffuse | 9. substantiate |