

Confidence-In-Context Coaching

Lesson 4 Workbook

A. Words about Success and Achievement

This block of five words is designed to inspire you to greater vocabulary-building heights by giving you words that can be used to describe success and achievement in your life: catalyst, lucrative, proficient, opulent, munificent.

Your success and achievement words explained

Your decision to study these ultimate vocabulary words will bring a change in the way you communicate.

Something that brings about change by its mere presence is a “**catalyst**”. In general, the word refers to “change for the better.” The catalytic converter on your car transforms harmful emissions into non-toxic forms; a new CEO can be the catalyst for change in a corporation.

Example: “The new lead singer for the Blackbirds was the catalyst the band needed to take their music from ‘pretty’ to ‘powerful’ and make them a worldwide sensation.”

When change leads to success, success can often bring financial rewards. When your activity brings in a significant amount of money, it’s described as “**lucrative**”. This word comes from the Latin *lucrum*, or “profit.”

Example: “Anyone who has a computer and a digital camera can set up a shop on eBay, though not everyone can turn online resale into a lucrative career.”

In general, it does take some skill to make a lot of money, and it’s easier the better you are at your job. If you’re good at doing something, you’re proficient in it. “**Proficient**” means “skilled” or “practiced.” While it’s a positive word, it’s not the most positive – that is, “proficient” doesn’t necessarily mean “expert.” Being proficient in something means that you’re able to do it well enough to be successful, but there might be many other people who can do it better than you can.

Example: “She was an excellent legal assistant, as proficient at transcription as she was at preparing documents for court and interviewing clients.”

For some people, the purpose of seeking a lucrative career is to accumulate a fortune – and then spend it buying the biggest and best houses, jewelry, and clothing they can find. These people have opulent lifestyles: “extravagant,” “fancy” and “luxurious” are synonyms for “**opulent**” and can describe what they wear as well as the parties they throw. Opulence is richness taken almost to excess, like a dressing gown made of cashmere, trimmed with fur, and embroidered with gold thread.

Example: “The hotel’s ‘honeymoon suite’ is lavishly decorated with framed artwork and crystal chandeliers, and the bed is topped with an opulent cover of plush velvet and silk.”

Some people who’ve made a lot of money enjoy spending it on others, and give lavish gifts to their friends and family. These people are “**munificent**” – their gifts, of money or goods, are more than usually generous.

Example: “I didn’t think I’d be able to pay for my university education, but a munificent benefactor set up a scholarship that funded all four years of school.”

B. Words for reacting to or acting in a situation

Facilitate, delegate, corroborate, exonerate, capitulate – it must be something we “ate” that led to the choice of words in this section. All of these words are verbs that describe different ways of acting in or reacting to a situation.

Your action words explained

The first word, “**facilitate**”, means “to make simple or easy.” You’re probably most familiar with it in a business setting, where one person may facilitate a meeting or conference. By facilitating the meeting, this person will deal with any problems and solve them – this makes things simpler for the rest of the group. A facilitator often acts as an intermediary between two or more people who have different views on an issue, helping them come to agreement – this makes their discussion easier. In general, “to facilitate” means to smooth things along, to make them easier to do, and to get rid of obstacles that prevent them from happening.

Example: “By sending the boys out to pick up all of the sticks and debris off of the grass, you will facilitate the process of mowing the lawn.”

When you send the boys out to clean up the lawn, you’re delegating some of the yard work to them. “**Delegate**” means “to assign responsibility to someone else”. This responsibility could be to pick up sticks, or to represent a country at an international political meeting. Delegate is a verb, but can also be a noun that refers to the person to whom the responsibility is assigned.

Example: “I was feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work left to do on the project, but once I was able to delegate the filing and copying to my assistant, I made more progress.”

We’re sure you’ll agree that being able to get rid of necessary but time-consuming tasks makes your job easier. In fact, you may have examples from your own work life that will corroborate this. “**Corroborate**” means to confirm or support, often using additional evidence or examples.

Example: “The new witness for the defence was able to corroborate the defendant’s claim that he was out of the country when the murder was committed.”

If you are accused of a crime, but later found innocent, you are exonerated, or freed from, the criminal charges. “**Exonerate**” comes from the Latin roots “ex-” – meaning without – and “onus” – meaning burden, thus “exonerate”, or “without the burden”. Being accused of a crime, or blamed for something, is a weighty burden, especially if you did not do it. Some synonyms of exonerate are “acquit” and “absolve.”

Example: “After the new witness’ testimony was taken into consideration, the judge said he had no choice but to exonerate the defendant from the murder charge.”

It’s important to make sure that witnesses are telling the truth in legal trials. If a lawyer suspects that one is lying, he may spend hours questioning that witness, putting pressure on them to change their story. In the end, the witness might just give up and tell the truth. To give up, or to stop resisting pressure, is to “**capitulate**”.

Example: “I don’t believe in spoiling children, but my niece asked for a new skateboard so many times that I finally had to capitulate and buy her one.”

C. Words for defining a concept

Sometimes things aren’t always as they seem. For example, this next group of five words might appear to be confusing or strange, but don’t worry – that only applies to the concepts they define. The five ultimate vocabulary words in this section are analogous, anomaly, dichotomy, fallacious, and verisimilitude.

Your words for defining a concept explained

You’re using your brain to learn these words, making connections between ideas and storing information for later retrieval. Sounds like a computer, doesn’t it? In many ways, your brain and a computer are very similar. In other words, a brain is “**analogous**” to a computer. They’re not the same, but for the purposes of this example – comparing how they store and process information – they’re enough alike to be able to make the comparison.

Example: “The way a helicopter’s vanes can tilt in any direction is analogous to wing mobility in dragonflies and other insects.”

Dragonflies have such specialized wings that they can actually fly backwards. In general, if you’re watching something flying and it’s going backwards instead of forwards, you’d probably think that was pretty unusual. In fact, you might say it was an anomaly.

“**Anomaly**” is a noun meaning something out of the ordinary, unusual, and strange.

Example: “At the harvest fair, we saw chickens, cows, and horses, but the two-headed goat in the livestock tent was an anomaly we weren’t expecting.”

Something that is split into two, where each separate part has nothing in common with the other, is a “**dichotomy**”. An example from biology is the division of the animal kingdom into vertebrates and invertebrates. Together, they make up all animal life on the planet, but since some have backbones and others do not, they form totally separate classifications. Black-and-white reasoning is another example, where only two options are presented, as in “You’re either with us or against us.” This is also known as a “false dichotomy” because, for example, sitting on the sidelines not taking part is not considered to be a valid choice. Unless you’re in the sciences, you’ll probably be using the word “dichotomy” in this second sense.

Example: “The book ‘Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus’ tries to explain the author’s view of the dichotomy between the way men and women think.”

It has been scientifically proven, using brain scans, that men and women process information differently, and in different parts of their brains. But you can’t use those results to make the argument that because women’s brains process language more efficiently, that means no men should ever teach English classes. That’s a fallacious argument, based on a false premise. “**Fallacious**” means false, misleading, or deceptive.

Example: “The prosecutor asserted that the defendant could not have been at the pizza parlor because she was allergic to cheese, but the judge ruled that out as fallacious, as she had ordered a plain green salad for dinner.”

An argument that appears logical at first might seem to be true, even though it could later be proved false. “**Verisimilitude**” is a noun meaning “an appearance of truth.”

Example: “The new wig and the heavy application of makeup gave her the verisimilitude of health, but we all knew that she did not have long to live.”

D. Words for Talking about Decisions

We’re glad you made the decision to improve your skills by learning how to use these ultimate vocabulary words in context. These next five words are ones that you might use while talking about decisions: consensus, precedent, vacillate, irrevocable, and antithesis.

Your words for talking about decisions explained

Sometimes you’re the only one who has input into a decision, but more often you’ll find yourself working with other people who each have an opinion on the issue. Occasionally you’ll have to negotiate until you reach consensus and can move forward. “**Consensus**” means that there is general agreement about a proposal or decision, such that the proposal can be acted on, or the decision implemented. It doesn’t necessarily mean that

everyone agrees exactly – sometimes people will “agree to disagree” for the sake of progress.

Example: “Although the members representing animal rights groups thought there should be more emphasis on the feral cat issue, the general consensus on the panel was that the city-wide spay and neuter program be implemented this summer.”

It’s often easier to make a decision if similar situations or issues have been dealt with before. You can use the previous decision as a precedent for your current course of action. A “**precedent**” is something that has occurred or been decided on in the past that is used to influence an action or decision in the present. Many legal systems are based on the rule of precedence.

Example: “This was the first land use case brought to trial in the county, but the judge was able to find a precedent for his ruling in similar cases from other regions.”

When you’re using a precedent, you’re comparing things that are alike in some way. But sometimes you’ll be dealing with things that are completely unlike – polar opposites in fact, where one is the antithesis of the other. “Black and white” or “good and evil” are examples of this: good is the antithesis of evil. “**Antithesis**” means having absolutely nothing in common with the other.

Example: “Politicians who favor using armies and weapons to resolve international situations are the antithesis of true peacemakers.”

Choices aren’t always black and white. Sometimes it’s hard to decide between two options, and you may vacillate between them. “**Vacillate**” means to be unable to settle on a choice, to be indecisive.

Example: “The waiter was ready to take their dessert order, but Helen continued to vacillate between the vanilla-bean *panna cotta* and the pineapple sorbet for another five minutes.”

Once you’ve made a decision, though, sometimes there’s no going back. While it’s relatively easy to change a dessert order, other things are impossible to stop once started, from kicking a football to pulling the lever to dynamite a building. Such decisions are “**irrevocable**”, meaning impossible to revoke, or take back.

Example: “Many people object to the death penalty because it is irrevocable, and with the new DNA testing available, prisoners can later be found innocent of wrongdoing.”

E. Words for Depth of Conversation

In this set of five ultimate vocabulary words, you'll be learning descriptive words that will give your conversations more power and depth: implement, intrinsic, impeccable, inexorable, and incorrigible.

Your words for depth of conversation explained

In fact, when you implement all you're learning in these lessons, you'll be a skilled and persuasive speaker. **"Implement"** is a verb that means "to put into practice" or "bring about, cause to happen". You might also have heard this word as a noun meaning "tool" – you can think of using a tool to make something happen.

Example: "All I need to implement the new bookkeeping system at work is a three-day weekend when no one is using the computers."

Computers are an essential part of almost every business enterprise these days. In fact, some businesses – like eBay, for example – would not exist without the internet. For these businesses, the internet is an intrinsic part of their operation. When one thing is **"intrinsic"** to another, it means that the first thing is so entwined, so essential, that it cannot be separated from the second thing; that when you talk about the second thing it's understood that the first is always part of it. You can't talk about eBay without also talking about the internet.

Example: "Einstein's theory of relativity is intrinsic to much of modern science, from particle physics to astronomy."

Studying the massive galaxies and the uncountable number of stars they contain, watching them as they travel across light-years, gives you a sense of the forces at work, a movement that is powerful and unstoppable. From our perspective, the forces controlling the orbits of the planets are inexorable. **"Inexorable"** means relentless or unstoppable.

Example: "The boys built a sand castle on the beach, but it was washed away by the inexorable advance of the incoming tide."

Even the most perfectly-constructed sand castle is no match for the power of the ocean. When something is perfect, without any flaws or errors, it can be described as **"impeccable."**

Example: "She speaks English and German quite well, but her French is impeccable, and she often helps with the language classes at the local school."

Teaching at a school brings you in contact with all sorts of students, from the ones who sit quietly and listen to the incorrigible ones who make trouble on a daily basis. **“Incorrigible”** means “not correctable.” You’ll often hear this word applied to children who persist in doing bad things, even when they’re punished for them over and over again.

Example: “The arsonist had been in and out of jail so many times, and had been responsible for so much damage to lives and property, that he was finally pronounced an incorrigible criminal and sentenced to life in prison.”

F. Things Small or of Questionable Significance

Learning how to use these ultimate vocabulary words in context will make a big difference in your life; however, all of the words we’ll look at in this section can be used to describe things that are small or of questionable significance: trivial, nominal, dubious, tenuous, surreptitious.

Your words for things small or of questionable significance explained

If you’re a fan of pub quizzes, you probably have a store of knowledge that’s not of much practical use – other than for winning pub quizzes, that is. This knowledge is referred to as “trivia.” Add an ‘L’ to the end and make it an adjective, and you have our first ultimate vocabulary word: **“trivial”**. Something that is trivial has little value, significance in general, or impact on a situation.

Example: “He would have gotten better marks on his essay on space exploration if he hadn’t added so much trivial information quoted from ‘Star Trek’ episodes.”

Quoting from television shows or movies may make your arguments less believable and of dubious value. **“Dubious”** means “questionable” or “open to doubt.” It’s a versatile word: you can be dubious about something that is dubious.

Example: “The cheap plastic toys were colorful but of dubious quality, and Elena decided to buy the sturdier wooden toys, even though they were more expensive.”

Handmade wooden toys are often more expensive, but if you’re lucky, you might have a friend who carves wooden toys for his children, and he’ll be willing to make some for your children for a nominal sum. The word **“nominal”** comes from the Latin “nomen,” meaning “name,” and in this example, means “in name only” – that is, a token amount of money, compared to what the carver could charge for the toys. Nominal means small in effect or quantity, a trifling amount, a token gesture.

Example: “I had asked him to clean his room before I returned, but he only made a nominal effort at picking up his clothes, and the room was just as filthy as when I left.”

A child who doesn't want to clean his room might try to hide some of the mess in a closet or under his bed. That sort of surreptitious behavior doesn't work for long, and he'll end up in more trouble than before – first for having a messy room, and then for trying to hide the mess. “**Surreptitious**” means sneaky, stealthy, furtive, or hidden.

Example: “Joan was so surreptitious when taking extra cards that it was years before we figured out why she always won the card games.”

The words “trivial” and “nominal” can both be used to describe similar concepts. These words are connected by their meanings, but they also have another point of similarity: they both end in the letters ‘A-L’. So does the word “annual”, but this word by definition has nothing in common with the first two, other than its spelling. The connection between the three words is very tenuous. “**Tenuous**” means flimsy, fragile, or not substantial. You can use it to talk about concepts, like the tenuous tie between the words “trivial” and “annual.” You can also use this word to describe physical characteristics. For example, a loose button on a shirt might hang from a tenuous thread.

Example: “My family had emigrated three generations before, but even this tenuous connection with the families in the town made me a welcome visitor.”

Tests for Reinforcing What you have Learnt

A. Words about Success and Achievement

You'll become more **proficient** at using these vocabulary words in context if you practice them. Listen to these sentences, and fill in the correct word in each of them.

Test Sentences:

1. Not everyone has the talent to succeed in an acting career, but it can be very _____ for the top Hollywood stars.
2. Her apartment is small, but the luxurious fabrics she chose for the upholstery, carpets, and drapes give it a warmly _____ look.
3. I had to practice on the piano for several months before I was _____ enough to play even the simplest tune.
4. After winning the lottery, Herbert was feeling _____, and made donations to all of the arts organizations in town.
5. He didn't exercise regularly until he got a dog, but that was the _____ he needed to start taking daily walks, and now he's even thinking about entering a marathon.

Answers:

1. Not everyone has the talent to succeed in an acting career, but it can be very **lucrative** for the top Hollywood stars.

Unknown actors playing small roles in movies might not be able to make a living from their acting, but big-name stars get millions for their appearances. A job that brings in a lot of money is a lucrative one. "Lucrative" means "profitable."

2. Her apartment is small, but the luxurious fabrics she chose for the upholstery, carpets, and drapes give it a warmly **opulent** look.

Fabrics that have a rich look and feel, like silk, velvet, and fur, create a luxurious atmosphere. "Opulent" means richly decorated, full of luxury.

3. I had to practice on the piano for several months before I was **proficient** enough to play even the simplest tune.

Playing the piano well requires skill. "Proficient" means "skilled" or "practiced."

4. After winning the lottery, Herbert was feeling **munificent**, and made donations to all of the arts organizations in town.

Someone who gives very generously to others, whether of money or gifts, is munificent. "**Munificent**" means extremely generous and lavish in giving.

5. He didn't exercise regularly until he got a dog, but that was the **catalyst** he needed to start taking daily walks, and now he's even thinking about entering a marathon.

Getting a dog forced a change in his life for the better, because now he's getting exercise regularly. Something that brings about a change is a **catalyst**.

Become **proficient** in these five new Ultimate Vocabulary words and your skillful use of words might be the **catalyst** you need to move up to a new and **lucrative** career! We hope you enjoyed learning how to use these words in context:

- lucrative
- opulent
- proficient
- munificent
- catalyst

B. Words for reacting to or acting in a situation

Practicing these ultimate vocabulary words by using them in context will facilitate your learning process. Try filling in the blanks in these sentences with the appropriate words:

Test Sentences:

1. Although I wanted to take a year off and travel before starting at university, my parents argued against it, and I decided it was easier to _____ and travel in the summers instead.
2. The professor accused Alice of copying her essay from another student, but when that student was caught selling exam answers, he had to _____ Alice.
3. My mother always knew when I had skipped school, because she would ask my brother to _____ my stories of what happened in class that day.
4. The only way you'll succeed in business is by learning to _____ jobs to the people who can do them most efficiently.
5. Her background in sociology and psychology helps her to _____ meetings, no matter how controversial the topics being discussed.

Answers:

1. Although I wanted to take a year off and travel before starting at university, my parents argued against it, and I decided it was easier to **capitulate** and travel in the summers instead.
When you're being pressured to do something and you resist at first but then give in, you're capitulating. "Capitulate" means to give in, or acquiesce, to someone else.
2. The professor accused Alice of copying her essay from another student, but when that student was caught selling exam answers, he had to **exonerate** Alice.
If a person is accused of doing something, but then later found innocent, they are exonerated. "Exonerate" means to remove blame or responsibility from, or acquit.
3. My mother always knew when I had skipped school, because she would ask my brother to **corroborate** my stories of what happened in class that day.
When you bring in additional evidence to confirm something that you or someone else has said, you are corroborating that statement. "Corroborate" means to confirm or attest to, usually including tangible proof of your confirmation.
4. The only way you'll succeed in business is by learning to **delegate** jobs to the people who can do them most efficiently.
When you have a list of tasks to do, and you assign one or more of those tasks to another person, you are delegating those tasks. "Delegate" means to assign responsibility to someone else.
5. Her background in sociology and psychology helps her to **facilitate** meetings, no matter how controversial the topics being discussed.
It's difficult to keep meetings productive and calm when the topic is something that people disagree on or feel strongly about. Someone who facilitates a meeting like that is making it easier for the discussion to move forward. "Facilitate" means "to make easy."

We're sure others will corroborate our claim that daily practice of new vocabulary words is the quickest way to gain confidence in using them. Don't wait to start using these five new words:

- capitulate
- facilitate
- delegate
- exonerate
- corroborate

C. Words for defining a concept

Take a healthy bite out of your new vocabulary and fit your five new ultimate vocabulary words into the correct blanks in these sentences:

Test Sentences

1. His entire argument for making English the national language was based on the _____ belief that the Bible was originally written in English.
2. Schrödinger's paradox is based on an essential _____: a cat cannot be both dead and alive.
3. The dark brown wedge of rock had a crust of sparkling white quartz just like icing on a cake, giving it the _____ of real food.
4. Astronauts often say that being in space is _____ to deep-sea scuba diving, because there's no difference between "up" and "down".
5. The large spiky cactus was an _____ in her otherwise pink-themed rose garden.

Answers:

1. His entire argument for making English the national language was based on the **fallacious** belief that the Bible was originally written in English.

The early Biblical texts were written in Greek, Aramaic, and many other languages, reflecting the population of the Middle East where the texts originated. However, some people think that because they've never seen the Bible in anything other than English, that's the language it was first written in. This is a belief based on false premises. "Fallacious" means mistaken or misleading.

2. Schrödinger's paradox is based on an essential **dichotomy**: a cat cannot be both dead and alive.

Schrödinger's paradox describes a cat sealed in a box with a closed glass jar of poisonous gas and a hammer that will break the glass jar if it is triggered by the movement of a subatomic particle. But because the only way to find out if that has happened is to open the box, you can't say the cat is either dead or alive until then. A dichotomy is an "either-or" situation, where two things are opposite, but taken together are the whole. In this example, the cat is either dead or alive – there's no third possibility.

3. The dark brown wedge of rock had a crust of sparkling white quartz just like icing on a cake, giving it the **verisimilitude** of real food.

*The rock might look like a piece of cake, but you'd soon regret biting into it, no matter how realistic it appears. "**Verisimilitude**" means an appearance of truth or reality.*

4. Astronauts often say that being in space is **analogous** to deep-sea scuba diving, because there's no difference between "up" and "down".

*There's another way being in outer space and being underwater is similar – you can't breathe in either situation. "**Analogous**" means the same, for purposes of the comparison or point you're making at the time.*

5. The large spiky cactus was an **anomaly** in her otherwise pink-themed rose garden.

*We can't imagine a plant that looks less like a delicate rose than a large spiky cactus. If you saw one in the middle of a rose garden, it would look very out of place. An "**anomaly**" is something that is out of place, different from what is around it, or unusual.*

Your new, expanded vocabulary might make you a linguistic **anomaly** among your co-workers, but don't worry – being able to use these words in context is a skill you should be proud of. We hope you've enjoyed learning these five new ultimate vocabulary words:

- anomaly
- analogous
- verisimilitude
- fallacious
- dichotomy

D. Words for Talking about Decisions

Practice using these five new vocabulary words in context, by using each one appropriately in the following sentences:

Test Sentences:

1. Taking a year off from school before going to university is not an _____ decision, because you can always start mid-year with the next term.
2. Emily continued to _____ between wanting to be a doctor and wanting to make her living doing massage therapy, so the counselor suggested that she study anatomy and physiology while she decided, since both degree programs required those classes.
3. That candidate is campaigning by presenting himself as the _____ of the current officeholder, but if you look at his voting history, you'll see that they're quite similar in their politics.

4. His family wanted to hold the wedding at their church, but her family preferred an outdoor wedding; however, they were able to reach a _____ when I proposed holding the ceremony in the garden at the local chapel instead.
5. Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, and Margaret Thatcher helped establish a modern-day _____ for women in high political office.

Answers:

1. Taking a year off from school before going to university is not an **irrevocable** decision, because you can always start mid-year with the next term.
If you change your mind about a gap year and want to start classes instead, it's easy to enroll in a university program even after the school year has started. Because you can change your mind, your decision is not irrevocable – that is, it's something that can be changed or revoked. "Irrevocable" means something that cannot be changed.
2. Emily continued to **vacillate** between wanting to be a doctor and wanting to make her living doing massage therapy, so the counselor suggested that she study anatomy and physiology while she decided, since both degree programs required those classes.
When you cannot settle on one option, you are vacillating. To "vacillate" means to be unable to decide between two or more choices.
3. That candidate is campaigning by presenting himself as the **antithesis** of the current officeholder, but if you look at his voting history, you'll see that they're quite similar in their politics.
"Antithesis" means "completely different, with no point of similarity."
4. His family wanted to hold the wedding at their church, but her family preferred an outdoor wedding in the woods; however, they were able to reach a **consensus** when I proposed holding the ceremony in the garden at the local chapel instead.
A "consensus" is a general agreement on a course of action or decision. In this example, there may have been one or two family members who still wanted either a church or woodland setting, but were willing to go along with everyone else in order to reach the consensus and move forward with the wedding plans.
5. Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, and Margaret Thatcher helped establish a modern-day **precedent** for women in high political office.
Gandhi, Meir, and Thatcher were three of the most prominent twentieth-century women who held office, and their example has helped influence political movements around the world to promote women to positions of power. A "precedent" is something that occurred in the past that forms the basis for a decision or action in the present.

Keep practicing using these words in context and your progress will be irrevocable:

- precedent
- consensus
- antithesis
- vacillate
- irrevocable

E. Words for Depth in Conversation

You can practice using your new vocabulary words in the real world and on-line. But first, practice with these five sample sentences by filling in the appropriate word in each blank:

Test Sentences:

1. The legends of mischievous elves and fairies are found in countries around the world, but one of the most well-known is the figure of Puck, the _____ prankster seen in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."
2. After the confusion and problems caused by the computer date change in the year 2000, programmers worldwide were told to _____ a new protocol and use four digits to store system dates.
3. Emergency management officials tried hard to contain the flooding river, but no amount of sandbags could stop the _____ rise of the muddy water over the barriers and into the city streets.
4. If you're wondering what designs to use on your wedding invitations, you should call Kate – she has _____ taste and will create the perfect design.
5. Although many political races turn out to be popularity contests rather than comparisons of the candidates' qualifications, I think that having an understanding of social and economic history is _____ to being able to govern this country.

Answers:

1. The legends of mischievous elves and fairies are found in countries around the world, but one of the most well-known is the figure of Puck, the **incorrigible** prankster seen in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."
In Shakespeare's play, Puck couldn't seem to stop causing trouble for the "foolish mortals" even though his master, Oberon, became angry with him for doing so. "Incorrigible" means not able to be corrected, and often refers to someone who keeps on doing bad things even when they're punished for it again and again.

2. After the confusion and problems caused by the computer date change in the year 2000, programmers worldwide were told to **implement** a new protocol and use four digits to store system dates.

*Not all computers had problems when the dates rolled over from 19 to 20, but IT managers everywhere made it standard to start using a four-digit date, and had their programmers put that standard into place immediately. “**Implement**” means to put into place, to start a program or routine.*

3. Emergency management officials tried hard to contain the flooding river, but no amount of sandbags could stop the **inexorable** rise of the muddy water over the barriers and into the city streets.

*Looking at a slow-moving river is deceptive - it's hard to imagine the sheer power of all those tons of water moving downstream. That's a force that's hard to stop easily. Something that is “**inexorable**” is powerful and hard, even impossible, to stop.*

4. If you're wondering what designs to use on your wedding invitations, you should call Kate – she has **impeccable** taste and will create the perfect design.

*A graphic designer who always knows just the right colors and designs for each of her clients will get a lot of praise for the quality of her work. Something of high quality, where each detail is absolutely perfect, is “**impeccable**.”*

5. I think that having an understanding of social and economic history is **intrinsic** to being able to govern this country.

*Although many political races turn out to be popularity contests rather than comparisons of the candidates' qualifications, it's hard to see how any person could be an effective leader without knowing the reasons behind the current state of affairs. That is an essential qualification. Something that is so essential that it's hard to imagine that quality not being there is “**intrinsic**.”*

Study these new ultimate vocabulary words carefully, and you'll soon be able to implement your new conversational abilities in the workplace and elsewhere:

- incorrigible
- implement
- inexorable
- impeccable
- intrinsic

F. Things Small or of Questionable Significance

You'll get addicted to using these new vocabulary words, once you realize how much they add to your conversations. Make sure you know how to use them in context, and practice by putting the correct word in each of the next five sentences:

Test Sentences:

1. Although he came to all of the meetings, his _____ remarks were wasting everyone's time, and he was not included in the delegation.
2. If you would put in more than a _____ amount of time towards looking for work, you'd have a better chance of actually finding a job.
3. She's so scared of heights that she won't live in an apartment that's more than three floors up, so I'm _____ about her story about climbing Mont Blanc last summer.
4. As the months went by, his mental health continued to decline, and today he has only a _____ grasp on reality, and very little understanding of what's happening in the world around him.
5. I thought we'd bought plenty of sweets for the holidays, but I think the children have been making _____ raids of the pantry, because the chocolates are almost all gone.

Answers:

1. Although he came to all of the meetings, his **trivial** remarks were wasting everyone's time, and he was not included in the delegation.
Saying something just for the sake of speaking up usually doesn't contribute to the progress of a meeting, if what you're saying isn't useful or relevant to the conversation. "Trivial" means of little use or value.
2. If you would put in more than a **nominal** amount of time towards looking for work, you'd have a better chance of actually finding a job.
Just buying a paper and glancing through the "help wanted" advertisements doesn't move you much closer to employment, and although you might call it a job search, it really isn't one, even though you're going through the motions. "**Nominal**" means so small as to have no impact, the bare minimum, or a token effort.
3. She's so scared of heights that she won't live in an apartment that's more than three floors up, so I'm **dubious** about her story about climbing Mont Blanc last summer.
Anyone who's scared of heights will probably not be spending much time in the mountains. If you don't believe a story, you're dubious about it; you could also say that a person's story is dubious. "Dubious" means doubtful, of questionable truth or value.
4. As the months went by, his mental health continued to decline, and today he has only a **tenuous** grasp on reality, and very little understanding of what's happening in the world around him.

“**Tenuous**” means fragile, thin, and insubstantial. For example, when you’re very angry, you might only have a tenuous control over your emotions.

5. I thought we’d bought plenty of sweets for the holidays, but I think the children have been making **surreptitious** raids of the pantry, because the chocolates are almost all gone.

*The children were sneaking into the pantry to eat chocolates, or stealing them and hiding them away. “**Surreptitious**” means hidden, sneaky, or furtive.*

Working on learning how to use these ultimate vocabulary words in context is not a trivial pursuit! You might be dubious about how much these words will help you, but we’re sure that you’ll benefit greatly from your expanded vocabulary. Don’t hesitate to use your five new words in conversation:

- tenuous
- surreptitious
- dubious
- nominal
- trivial