Confidence-In-Context Coaching

Lesson 6 Workbook

A. Words About Words

"Words, words, words" said Shakespeare's Hamlet. In this section you'll learn five words about words: syntax, nuance, didactic, hackneyed, and badinage.

Your words about words explained

You started this Ultimate Vocabulary course to get confidence in using words in context, or using words at the right time "**Syntax**" refers to using words in the right place – that is, where a word appears in a sentence, and the rules of language that determine how it relates to the other words in that sentence. The syntax of a language is the set of rules that tell you how to construct grammatically-correct sentences.

Example: "Even though Karl has been living in Australia for more than a decade, his mistakes in English syntax have led to frequent misunderstandings with customers taking his charter dive tours."

Sometimes the best way to communicate is with simple, direct language that clearly states what you want to say. On other occasions, you may want to be more subtle, and use words that are a bit more ambiguous, letting the nuances of your phrases speak for themselves. "**Nuance**" means a subtle difference in implication, or a hidden meaning, and can refer to the use of a single word, or to the effect of the entire communication.

Example: "Many traditional forms of Japanese poetry use specific, symbolic words to create nuances of meaning, and the reader must be aware of Japanese history and culture in order to appreciate the full effect."

Poetry is often a medium where writers play with words in order to create a certain mood or feeling. In general, though, poetry is not used very often to teach or instruct – though this was not always the case. In fact, many famous poems, including John Milton's "Paradise Lost," are almost didactic in form and content, with a message of sin and Christian redemption. "**Didactic**" means written or presented in a format designed to be educational or instructional, especially in terms of moral or religious matters. Someone with a didactic manner of speaking might be called "preachy" today.

Example: "During the Cultural Revolution in China, possession of books or newspapers from the West was dangerous, and most people found it safest to only read the didactic publications coming from the Central Committee, while following the strict party line."

"Following the strict party line" – you've heard that phrase before, haven't you? It's used to describe everything from political alliances to dress codes in offices. The phrase has become a bit hackneyed. "**Hackneyed**" means overused, trite, banal; something repeated so often that it has lost its original significance.

Example: "That comedian still gets bookings, even though his hackneyed jokes all poke fun at politicians who haven't been in office for years."

Humor is an important aspect of communication, and the more confidence you have at using words in context, the better you'll be able to entertain people with your quick, intelligent badinage. "**Badinage**" means banter, playful remarks, or repartee. It's conversation that isn't meant to be taken seriously.

Example: "Playwright Noel Coward, like his predecessors George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde, was famous for his ability to write witty badinage that made his plays immensely popular entertainment."

B. Words Describing States of Being

We use words to describe the reality of what we see and experience, and in a way we use words to create that reality. In fact, many people believe that the universe was created by the power of words, whether they follow the Christian God or the Aboriginal Songlines in Australia. Learning how to use the power of words will help you shape your own reality, in your professional and personal life. Start by learning these five words that describe states of being: cosmos, permeate, integral, sacrosanct, consummate.

Your states of being words explained

Where better to begin than with the word that describes everything? "Cosmos" means "everything that exists" and comes from the Greek word for "**universe**". You'll often hear it used when people are referring to the physical universe - the vast stretches of interstellar space in which we live - but it also has a more metaphysical sense, encompassing space and time, everything imaginable and unimaginable at once.

Example: "The first astronauts to look back at Earth from space were all moved by the wonder of our little planet's place in the endless cosmos around it."

Scientists studying the cosmos have come to the conclusion that something they call "dark matter" must exist, because the there's not enough mass in the visible universe to account for the way the law of gravity works. This dark matter permeates every part of the visible universe, but is invisible itself. "**Permeate**" means to spread throughout something.

Example: "Once the students dropped the red dye into the clear glass of water, they could see how molecular vibration caused the red coloring to eventually permeate the liquid from top to bottom."

Science classes, with their opportunities for exploration and hands-on experimentation, are an integral part of a well-rounded curriculum for young students. "**Integral**" means an essential part of a larger whole, something that is necessary to achieve a desired result.

Example: "The choir director always took a few minutes to explain the background and history of the composer before introducing a new piece of music, as he believed that understanding the context of a piece was integral to learning how to sing it effectively."

Many Baroque composers followed set forms when creating their sonatas and symphonies; for example, it was typical to have three movements in a piece, with the first in a lively tempo, the second at a slow speed, and the third a rousing jig or gavotte. In fact, some composers held this pattern to be sacrosanct, with the result that much of their music sounds very much alike. Something that is "**sacrosanct**" is something that people believe should not be altered or changed, because it's perfect the way it is. This word is formed from two Latin words, "sacrum" and "sanctus", both meaning "sacred," and originally applied to something protected under religious law.

Example: "While many people these days write their own wedding vows, others believe that the traditional pledges such as 'in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer' are sacrosanct and that couples are not truly married until they say them."

Have you ever met some one who seems just perfect - the ideal husband, the wise and helpful teacher, the incorruptible politician? Or perhaps you're a fan of a consummate actress, who is entirely believable in any role she plays. "**Consummate**" means the absolute best, and describes someone who has completely mastered a skill, who is the acme of perfection in that aspect or talent.

Example: "Pablo Picasso was a consummate artist, able to create detailed ink sketches with a single unbroken flowing line."

C. Words About Strength or Power

Once you learn these Ultimate Vocabulary words, you'll find that your ability to communicate has gotten stronger. In turn, this will strengthen your control over your interactions at work, and give you the power to direct conversations to your benefit. Here are five words that can be used to describe strength or power: robust, prevalent, impervious, redoubtable, titanic.

Your words about strength and power explained

Having confidence in your ability to use words correctly will make you more confident and relaxed when you're speaking in public. You'll be able to shrug off any disruptions from the audience – you'll be impervious to any negative comments or questions. "**Impervious**" means immune to or not affected by something.

Example: "Native Americans and early pioneer settlers would rub animal fat into their leather shoes to make them impervious to water."

There's a saying that "history is written by the conquerors" and in the case of the many native populations around the world, that's particularly true. Although many of the indigenous peoples had robust economies and cultures, they often could not stand up

against the military forces set against them. The word "**robust**" comes from the Latin word for oak tree, and means strong and vigorous, sound and healthy.

Example: "Many people who invested in real estate lost money as the formerly-robust world economy spiraled down into global recession."

When there's an economic crisis, analysts work to identify the factors that led to the problem. Recent studies refute the prevalent theory that unregulated free market capitalism is the best way to run the global economy. "**Prevalent**" means dominant or most widespread, something that is strongest or superior, overcoming everything else.

Example: "As more and more people in the United States rely on television and the internet to get their news, on-line newspapers have become prevalent, and traditional publishing companies are going out of business."

With so many alternative sources of information, even titanic news organizations like The Times of London and The Wall Street Journal have had to follow the crowd and create web sites. The word "**titanic**" comes from the Titans, the giant gods of Greek mythology. Today, the word refers to something that has great power, strength, and force. You can also use "titanic" to describe something very large in size.

Example: "The car started rolling towards the edge of the cliff, but with a titanic burst of strength, Kit stopped the car long enough to give James an opportunity to wedge a block beneath the wheel."

Every day, people around the world accomplish amazing things, but it's rare that we hear about them, unless they happen in our own neighborhood. Occasionally, though, a politician or athlete is brought to our attention, like the redoubtable Lance Armstrong, who broke all world records in the Tour de France by winning seven times in a row, even after fighting off several bouts of cancer. A person who is "redoubtable" is someone awe-inspiring or worthy of respect. You can also use "**redoubtable**" to describe a person who is formidable, powerful, and imposing in size as well as in ability.

Example: "Even after they left political office, both Nelson Mandela and Jimmy Carter have shown themselves to be redoubtable champions for human rights around the world."

D. Words Describing Things That Are Small And Hard to See

Learning one new Ultimate Vocabulary word each day might not seem like a lot, but even a small change in the power and complexity of your speech will have an impact on those around you. Sometimes the best way to influence people is by making changes so slowly they don't notice. Here are six words that you can use to describe things that are small or hard to see: subtle, tentative, diffuse, amorphous, inchoate.

Your words relating to things that are small and hard to see explained

Children grow up quickly, and if you live with children, you probably don't realize the small changes they go through every day. But when you take them on their yearly visit to their great-aunt, she'll see a big difference between now and the way they were the year before. From your perspective, though, the changes were so subtle that you didn't notice them when they were happening. The word "**subtle**" comes from the Latin term for "woven in", meaning that something is so blended in with its surroundings that it takes an effort to bring it to the forefront. A subtle difference means one that is not obvious at first glance.

Example: "The forgery of the painting was very well done, but the experts could tell from the subtle differences in the brushstrokes that the piece was not an original Rembrandt."

Have you ever tried your hand at painting? Unless you have a good deal of self-confidence or an innate genius for the art, your first efforts probably involved a lot of tentative poking at the canvas with your brush. "**Tentative**" means uncertain or experimental, trying something out. It can also mean only putting a small effort into something, usually due to a feeling of fear.

Example: "We made a tentative attempt at creating an agenda for the conference, but it was impossible to get a final format without knowing what the committee's decision would be on this year's theme."

Beginnings can be difficult times, especially if they involve coordinating a large number of people. Without some sort of strong leadership, you can be left with an inchoate group of individuals, each with their own ideas, unable to work together. "**Inchoate**" means unformed, rudimentary, and without a final set of rules or order.

Example: "When the football team started practice at the beginning of the year, their game strategy was inchoate and often counterproductive, but as they learned to work together, they had more winning plays."

Marching bands are a favorite entertainment at many sporting events, and the best ones are famous for the precision of their form, with the musicians' bodies creating detailed images on the playing field. Unfortunately, the bands that haven't practiced enough only end up making amorphous blobs of color against the green turf. "**Amorphous**" means without a clear form, unorganized, not clearly identifiable as something specific.

Example: "Some galaxies have a spiral patter, like our own while others are amorphous; however, all of them are organized under the same laws of gravity and physics."

When scientists first started looking into deep space, the prevailing theories led them to believe that they would find an equal number of galaxies in any direction they looked. However, they were surprised to find that instead of an evenly diffuse distribution of stars, there were frequent large empty spaces with no stars at all, and other places where there

were more galaxies than expected. "**Diffuse**" means spread out more or less evenly. If something is diffuse, it is not concentrated or heavier in only one spot.

Example: "The island of Kauai gets a lot of rain, but it's usually a gentle diffuse precipitation that soaks into the ground evenly, rather than a stronger localized shower."

E. Words For Cooking Up a Conversation

With all of these powerful Ultimate Vocabulary words, you'll have the ingredients you need to create appealing and tasteful speeches that will satisfy your listeners as you fill their ears. Cooking up a story is easier when you have a grocery list of fine and fancy words to choose from. Try using these five words at your next dinner party: culinary, redolent, carnivorous, replete, complement.

Your words for cooking up a conversation explained

With the recent popularity of cooking shows and celebrity chefs, applications to culinary schools have been on the rise. "**Culinary**" means related to cooking, or to the kitchen.

Example: "Along with providing fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat, many farmer's markets also offer workshops and demonstrations to help new cooks improve their culinary skills."

We walked past a booth at last week's market that was so redolent of sauteed garlic that we got hungry again, even though we had just finished breakfast. "**Redolent**" means having a strong odor of something – either good or bad. Some synonyms for redolent are "aromatic" and "fragrant."

Example: "I enjoy shopping at the Indian markets because they're always redolent with spices and tropical fruits."

Because of the Hindu ban on eating beef, and the Muslim ban on eating pork, many traditional Indian dishes are vegetarian. However, there are also many delicious preparations of lamb or chicken, and even the most carnivorous diner can usually find the meat he craves in an Indian restaurant. A carnivore is someone who eats meat; the word comes from the Latin "carne", meaning "meat." "**Carnivorous**" is an adjective meaning "meat-eating."

Example: "I've been a vegetarian for over twenty years, and have learned how to cook meals that are so tasty, even my carnivorous friends don't miss the meat."

The sign of a successful dinner party is a table surrounded by happy people with empty plates, leaning back in their chairs, replete with satisfaction. "**Replete**" means "full of" – in the previous sentence, the diners are full of satisfaction after a delicious meal.

Example: "Ella's birthday party was perfect: the weather was sunny, the guests enjoyed themselves, and the cake was delicious. She went to bed replete with happiness."

Ella's guests also enjoyed fine champagne, a dry rosé that complemented the fresh strawberries served with the cake. To "complement" something means to complete it, either by providing something that was missing, or by providing an additional element that makes something better. In this case, then, we might imagine that the fruitiness of the wine enhanced the flavors of the strawberries, or that the strawberries were so sweet that the dryness of the wine provided a pleasing balance. Remember when using the word "**complement**" – spelled C-O-M-P-L-*E*-M-E-N-T – that you are not thinking of the word "compliment" – spelled C-O-M-P-L-*I*-M-E-N-T – which means saying something nice to someone.

Example: "Sarah is pleased at the compliments she's getting about how well her flower arrangements complement the linens on the tables."

F. Words To Invest In

In uncertain economic times, it's difficult to know where to invest your money. You've made a wise investment by getting these Ultimate Vocabulary words and putting them to work for you. You'll get a return on your investment through your increased conversational ability and your newly-minted wealth of powerful vocabulary words. Here are five more words that you can bank on for conversational currency: parsimonious, appreciate, philanthropy, prudent, gratuity.

Your words to invest in explained

When times are good, it's easy to spend money on dinners out, or movies, or just that one pair of shoes that caught your eye in the shop window. But when you need to be on a budget, you're better off being a bit parsimonious, and saving up funds for what you really need. "**Parsimonious**" means unwilling to spend money. Someone who is parsimonious is very frugal – some might even say "stingy." While the word "parsimonious" can be used for anyone who keeps a tight hold on their spending, it's often applied to people who go a bit too far in that direction.

Example: "I don't enjoy going to restaurants with him; he's so parsimonious he calculates the bill down to the last penny, and never leaves more than a few dollars for the server."

Instead of being parsimonious, perhaps being prudent with your money is a better choice. "**Prudent**" means careful or practical; in this case, it means frugal and not extravagant.

Example: "She was left a very small inheritance from her mother, but because of her prudent investments, she had enough to live on after retiring."

In general, investments are a good way to plan for your financial future, as most opportunities give at least a small return in interest, and that interest will appreciate over time to increase your capital. "**Appreciate**" in this case means "an increase in value over time" but it's also used to mean "an awareness of value." You'll definitely appreciate how fast your money will appreciate in a high-interest savings fund.

Example: "Stock and bonds can be volatile, so I decided to use my money to purchase antiques and fine art, whose value will continue to appreciate no matter what the financial markets are doing."

Very wealthy people are often known for their charitable giving, and have grants and scholarships and buildings named after them. But many people of ordinary means also donate to causes, and this philanthropy helps support others who are in need. "**Philanthropy**" means giving money to support a cause or institution, or charitable giving in general. Technically, the word implies that the money is given in the spirit of charity or love as well, and not just as a tax deduction – the word was coined from the Greek words for "love" and "mankind" – but today it's used in the more generic sense of "giving to charity" without assigning any particular benevolent intent to the giver.

Example: "Even at eight years old, Leah seems to have a natural tendency towards philanthropy; she always shares her sweets with her classmates."

Certain institutions have become associated with a tradition of gift-giving as a reward for services rendered. In many countries, it's customary to add a gratuity to the restaurant bill, or to hand a taxi driver an extra dollar for carrying your suitcases to the curbside. A "**gratuity**" is a gift or reward for service. Depending on where you are, a gratuity might also be called a "tip" or a "pourboire." This last word comes from the French for "to have a drink" and refers to the coins you leave on the table for your server, so that they might get a pint for themselves after they're off work.

Example: "Restaurants often add an automatic gratuity of eighteen percent for large groups of people at one table; perhaps they think it makes it easier for their customers, but I rather resent it when the service has been poor."

Tests for Reinforcing What You Have Learnt

A. Words About Words

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Learning these Ultimate Vocabulary words will give you the confidence to take your place on stage as a star performer. Start practicing your lines now with these six sample sentences:

Test Sentences

1. I hope that Brad doesn't ask his friend James to give the toast at the wedding; his speech is sure to be _____ and full of advice on how to live a good and moral life.
2. In this writing class, you'll learn to avoid the use of _____ phrases like "don't put all your eggs in one basket" or "you can't teach an old dog new tricks."
3. She's a very successful politician, in part because her speeches are so carefully written that anyone can read _____ into her words and come away believing she's on their side.
4. One of the most difficult things for me to remember when learning German _____ was to always put the verb at the end of the sentence.
5. The best parties are ones where the food is good, the drink is better, and the _____ between the guests leaves everyone entertained.

Answers:

1. I hope that Brad doesn't ask his friend James to give the toast at the wedding; his speech is sure to be **didactic** and full of advice on how to live a good and upright life.

   While it might be well-meant, using the wedding toast as an opportunity to give moral instruction to the happy couple is usually not welcomed. "Didactic" means in a form of a lesson, especially a lesson on morals or religion.

2. In this writing class, you'll learn to avoid the use of **hackneyed** phrases like "don't put all your eggs in one basket" or "you can't teach an old dog new tricks."

   "Tried and true" phrases – like "tried and true", as a matter of fact – that are trite and banal, are referred to as "hackneyed," meaning they've been used and overused so much they've lost their original force and impact.

3. She's a very successful politician, in part because her speeches are so carefully written that anyone can read **nuances** into her words and come away believing she's on their side.

We usually listen to a political speech and try to discover whether or not the politician is really saying what we think we're hearing, by trying to identify any hidden meanings or misleading phrases. A "nuance" is an implication, or a hidden difference, that might change the way a phrase or word can be interpreted.

4. One of the most difficult things for me to remember when learning German **syntax** was to always put the verb at the end of the sentence.

   If when English speaking the verb at the end you put, people will you not easily understand! "Syntax" means the rules of placing words to form sentences for a specific language.

5. The best parties are ones where the food is good, the drink is better, and the **badinage** between the guests leaves everyone entertained.

   *Banter, repartee, teasing and light, witty conversation is called **badinage**. It's not meant to be taken seriously, but is still an effective way to communicate, and to have fun at the same time.*

Are you ready for your grand entrance? Will you attract people at your next party with your clever **badinage**, and intrigue them with your skill at weaving **nuance** into your conversation? We don't want to be **didactic**, but remember that the best way to learn new vocabulary is to practice, practice, practice! So keep practicing the use of these five new words:

- badinage
- syntax
- didactic
- nuance
- hackneyed

B. Words Describing States of Being

Set aside time every day to practice using the vocabulary words you're learning, and soon you'll be completely confident in when and how to use them. Here are a few exercises to get you started:

Test Sentences

1. Scott goes through three packs of cigarettes a day; the smell of smoke _____ his clothes.
2. Learning how to judge measurements by eye is an _____ part of the training first-year students receive at the culinary school.

3. Annabeth is a _____ politician, always ready to meet people, able to give a speech at a moment's notice, and well-read in the issues that concern her constituents.

4. In some churches, the area in front of the altar is _____ and must be kept clear; however, in my church, that's where we place the flower arrangements.

5. A thousand years ago, people believed that the Earth was the center of the universe, but now we've learned that this planet is actually only a tiny speck in the _____.

Answers:

1. Scott goes through three packs of cigarettes a day; the smell of smoke **permeates** his clothes.

   Someone who smokes that many cigarettes is always surrounded by a cloud of smoke and ash, and the smell of the smoke will be absorbed by the clothing he wears. "Permeate" means to penetrate and become part of.

2. Learning how to judge measurements by eye is an **integral** part of the training first-year students receive at the culinary school.

   Professional chefs have to work quickly to create identical dishes for hungry diners, and the ability to create identical portions is an essential skill that must be learned, whether by training or experience. "Integral" means something essential to success as a whole.

3. Annabeth is a **consummate** politician, always ready to meet people, able to give a speech at a moment's notice, and well-read in the issues that concern her constituents.

   People have different ideas about what makes an ideal politician, but the list usually includes such characteristics as honesty, openness, accessibility, and good judgment. "Consummate" means the ideal, or the perfect model of something.

4. In some churches, the area in front of the altar is **sacrosanct** and must be kept clear; however, in my church, that's where we place the flower arrangements.

   Whether by law or tradition, some places are viewed as too sacred to use for ordinary purposes. "Sacrosanct" means sacred or protected.

5. A thousand years ago, people believed that the Earth was the center of the universe, but now we've learned that this planet is actually only a tiny speck in the **cosmos**.

Everything from subatomic particles to galaxies light-years from end to end is part of the universe we live in, aspects of the cosmos that surrounds us. "Cosmos" means the universe, both the physical universe and the metaphysical concept of "everything, everywhere."

You have infinite potential to improve your vocabulary, and the more you practice, the more you'll find that these Ultimate Vocabulary words **permeate** your everyday conversation, and that you've become a **consummate** speaker, with abilities that will take you to the far reaches of the cultural **cosmos**. Enjoy using these five new powerful vocabulary words:

- consummate
- sacrosanct
- integral
- permeate
- cosmos

C. Words About Strength or Power

Have you ever felt passionate about a cause, but just couldn't find the right words to communicate your enthusiasm and convince other people to get involved? Learning these powerful vocabulary words and gaining confidence to use them in context will help you develop your abilities as a speaker. Here are some practice sentences to help you get comfortable with the five new words you've learned in this section:

Test Sentences:

1. With her many honors and awards, and her brilliant career on television, screen and stage, Dame Judi Dench is one of Britain's most _____ actresses.
2. Firefighters often wear clothing that has been soaked in chemical retardant that makes them temporarily _____ to flames.
3. Expert surfers enjoy the big waves at Waimea Bay in Hawai'i, but only the most daring will go out after a storm, when the waves reach truly _____ heights.
4. English has become the _____ language for business transactions around the world, and it's easy for native speakers to find jobs teaching English in various countries.
5. I started using organic fertilizer and compost in my garden beds last fall, and this spring the new plants are amazingly _____; they're twice the size they were last year.

Answers:

1. With her many honors and awards, and her brilliant career on television, screen and stage, Dame Judi Dench is one of Britain's most **redoubtable** actresses.

   Dame Judi Dench has a commanding stage presence, and the talent and abilities to play a variety of roles. It's no wonder many aspiring actors look up to her as someone to be admired and emulated. A "redoubtable" person is someone who commands respect and awe, both for their personality and their accomplishments.

2. Firefighters often wear clothing that has been soaked in chemical retardant, making them temporarily **impervious** to flames.

   Retardant immediately puts out any fire that touches it, by means of a chemical reaction. Another type of protective clothing is sold to people going into bug-infested areas, soaked with repellent to keep away the insects. "Impervious" means immune to or not affected by, or not letting something through.

3. Expert surfers enjoy the big waves at Waimea Bay in Hawai'i, but only the most daring will go out after a storm, when the waves reach truly **titanic** heights.

   The normal height of the waves at Waimea Bay is around 20 feet, but after a big storm, the waves can be twice that height. These dangerous waves tower over the surfers, and can push them underwater with unstoppable force. Something that is "titanic" is of great size and power.

4. English has become the **prevalent** language for business transactions around the world, and it's easy for native speakers to find jobs teaching English in various countries.

   Once it was Latin, then it was French, and now it's English – the language used by people in commerce and trade when dealing with clients in other countries. It's hard to find a community anywhere in the world these days that doesn't have at least one person with a smattering of English. "Prevalent" means widespread, and also dominant; something that is prevalent has taken over due to its greater force.

5. I started using organic fertilizer and compost in my garden beds last fall, and this spring the new plants are amazingly **robust**; they're twice the size they were last year.

   "Robust" means strong, healthy, and vigorous.

You've planted the seeds of an expanded vocabulary today, and careful tending will make your verbal abilities grow even more **robust**. Soon you'll be admired for your way with words, a **redoubtable** conversationalist and sought-after speaker. Keep practicing these five new Ultimate Vocabulary words:

- redoubtable
- robust
- titanic
- impervious
- prevalent

D. Words Describing Things That Are Small And Hard To See

Keep your vocabulary growing by practicing your new Ultimate Vocabulary words! Here are some practice sentences to work on:

Test Sentences

1. To some people, clouds are just _____ blobs of white or grey, but others – especially children – see shapes of animals and people in the sky.
2. Even though the beeswax candle is on a table in the corner, its warm honey scent is _____, and you can enjoy it anywhere in the room.
3. Very few students know exactly what they want as a career; most young people have only _____ plans and ideas about their future.
4. Helen is very reluctant to speak in public, and rarely puts up even a _____ hand to volunteer to lead the meeting.
5. Mandarin is a difficult language for many people to learn, because of the many _____ variations in pitch and tone required when speaking.

Answers:

1. To some people, clouds are just **amorphous** blobs of white or grey, but others – especially children – see shapes of animals and people in the sky.

   "Amorphous" means without a defined shape or form, something not clearly identifiable. It's easy for one person to look at a cloud and see a bowl of fruit, while the next person sees a rabbit.

2. Even though the beeswax candle is on a table in the corner, its warm honey scent is **diffuse** and you can enjoy it anywhere in the room.

   The fragrance of a candle will travel on air currents throughout a room, and the odor will become evenly spread out. "Diffuse" means evenly spread out, or not concentrated in any one spot.

3. Very few students know exactly what they want as a career; most young people have only **inchoate** plans and ideas about their future.

   If you're like us, you changed your mind several times about the classes and jobs you wanted to take, especially in the beginning. "Inchoate" means unformed, in the beginning stages, without a final plan.

4. Helen is very reluctant to speak in public, but she occasionally raises a **tentative** hand to volunteer to lead the meeting.

   If you raise your hand, but you don't particularly want to be noticed, you'll be hesitant and probably will be keeping your hand a little lower than usual. "Tentative" means uncertain, or just trying something out and experimenting.

5. Mandarin is a difficult language for many people to learn, because of the many **subtle** variations in pitch and tone required when speaking.

   The meaning of many words in Mandarin differs depending on whether you say the word with a rising or a falling tone. This can be hard for non-Mandarin speakers to learn, especially if they didn't grow up speaking a language that relies on such subtle changes to create different meanings. "Subtle" means hard to distinguish, taking an effort to identify.

It's time to go forward boldly – don't be **tentative** in finding opportunities to use these new vocabulary words. Be **subtle** about working them into your daily conversations, and you'll soon notice an obvious difference in your ability as a speaker. Your five new Ultimate Vocabulary words are:

1. amorphous
2. diffuse
3. inchoate
4. tentative
5. subtle

E. Words For Cooking Up A Conversation

Are you hungry to learn more Ultimate Vocabulary words? Conversational skill, like culinary skill, is something you need to practice to improve. Try using the five words you've just learned in these practice sentences:

Test Sentences

1. My family always gets together for a big dinner on Sunday; after dinner, the men sit _____ in front of the television to watch football while the women clean the kitchen.
2. There are several unusual plants in this swamp that are _____ - they get their food by trapping flies and other insects in a sticky nectar.
3. They make a good pair of ambassadors; her skill with language and dialects _____ his ability to get people talking together.
4. I tried to smuggle some truffles back from France, but was caught at customs because my suitcase was _____ with their pungent odor.
5. She subscribes to several _____ magazines, and has a huge collection of recipes, but I rarely see her in the kitchen.

Answers:

1. My family always gets together for a big dinner on Sunday; after dinner, the men sit **replete** in front of the television to watch football while the women clean the kitchen.

   There might be a more equitable distribution of work in some households, but in this family, the women seem to do all the work for Sunday dinner, while the men eat until they're stuffed full and then relax. "Replete" means "full."

2. There are several unusual plants in this swamp that are **carnivorous** - they get their food by trapping flies and other insects in a sticky nectar.

   Most plants get nutrients from the soil, but carnivorous plants like the pitcher plant lure insects into their hollow stems, where they dissolve and are absorbed. There's not a lot of meat on a fly, but "carnivorous" means "meat-eating.

3. They make a good pair of ambassadors; her skill with language and dialects **complements** his ability to get people talking together.

   She is able to accurately translate negotiations, and he's skilled at convincing people to start negotiating in the first place. Together, they make a completely effective ambassadorial team. When two things complement each other, it means that together they make a whole, and that together they're better than either one alone.

4. I tried to smuggle some truffles back from France, but was caught at customs

because my suitcase was **redolent** with their pungent odor.

Truffles have a distinctive smell that's so strong it will seep through most packaging to permeate everything around them. "Redolent" means having a strong odor.

5. She subscribes to several **culinary** magazines, and has a huge collection of recipes, but I rarely see her in the kitchen.

"Culinary" refers to the kitchen, or cooking in general.

Are you **replete** with knowledge now? Think about these five new Ultimate Vocabulary words the next time you're in the kitchen practicing your **culinary** skills. Perhaps the air will be **redolent** with the savory smells of a roasting chicken – or if you're not **carnivorous**, maybe you'll be chopping up vegetables for a tasty stew. And you'll be able to flavor your conversation with these five words:

- culinary
- redolent
- carnivorous
- replete
- complement

F. Words To Invest In

Work steadily on your vocabulary skills, and you'll profit from your new knowledge in a very short time. Get started now with these practice sentences; fill in the most appropriate word in each blank:

Test Sentences:

1. Don't bother asking Mr. Overton for any contributions for the clothing drive; he's so _____ that he wears his shirts until they're nothing but rags.
2. I was so pleased by the bartender's attentive service, that I left him five dollars as a _____, even though I'd only had two drinks.
3. It's too bad that we don't teach children how to manage their money more carefully; if they learned how to be _____ at a young age, it would become a habit that would help them later in life.
4. George plans on switching banks, because this one promises an interest rate of six percent, and he wants his initial investment to _____ as quickly as possible.
5. Bill and Melinda Gates contribute money to support the fight against infectious diseases around the world, and are often praised for their _____.

Answers:

1. Don't bother asking Mr. Overton for any contributions for the clothing drive; he's so **parsimonious** that he wears his shirts until they're nothing but rags.

   Someone who is determined to get every last bit of value out of what he owns, and won't share with those who have even less, is probably a very stingy person. "Parsimonious" means excessively frugal, stingy, and very unwilling to spend any money.

2. I was so pleased by the bartender's attentive service, that I left him five dollars as a **gratuity**, even though I'd only had two drinks.

   When you receive excellent service, it's often appropriate to show your appreciation by leaving your server a bit of extra money. A "gratuity" is a reward for good service, also known as a tip or pourboire.

3. It's too bad that we don't teach children how to manage their money more carefully; if they learned how to be **prudent** at a young age, it would become a habit that would help them later in life.

   Teaching children to put aside a percentage of their money every month will help them develop into adults who know how to manage their money. "Prudent" means frugal or careful, and refers to someone who does not spend extravagantly.

4. George plans on switching banks, because this one promises an interest rate of six percent, and he wants his initial investment to **appreciate** as quickly as possible.

   When something appreciates, it means it gains in value. In a bank, an investment appreciates by the accumulation of interest.

5. Bill and Melinda Gates contribute money to support the fight against infectious diseases around the world, and are often praised for their **philanthropy**.

   The Gates Foundation was set up to channel money into efforts to combat AIDS and eliminate polio, which are two projects that both of the Gates feel very strongly about. "Philanthropy" means charitable giving, with the goal of bringing benefits to others.

We hope you feel that you've benefited by learning these five new Ultimate Vocabulary words. We're sure you'll find opportunities to use them wisely. Your five new words are:

- parsimonious
- gratuity
- philanthropy
- appreciate
- prudent