Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefix: *in-* means "in" or "not"
Suffix: *-ness* means "state", "quality", or "condition"
Suffix: *-ous* means "full of"
Suffix: *-or* means "one who does"

**Vocabulary List 15**
(see next page for definitions and activities)

- arbitrary
- conspicuous
- detest
- dexterity
- dreg
- flourish
- fray
- incoherent
- nullify
- paltry
- persistent
- prediction
- sinister
- succinct
- tundra
Lesson Fifteen

1. **arbitrary** (är´ bi trër ē) adj. based on preference, convenience, or chance rather than law, reason, or fact
   An appellate court overturned the judge's arbitrary ruling.
syn: random; irrational  ant: legitimate; reasoned

2. **conspicuous** (kan spik´ yōō ās) adj. obvious; easy to see; attracting attention
   The conspicuous man was wearing a cowboy hat in the swimming pool.
syn: noticeable; showy  ant: disguised; ordinary

3. **detest** (di test´) v. to dislike intensely; to hate
   Pam detests traffic, so she waits to leave work until rush hour is over.
syn: abhor; loathe  ant: adore; love

4. **dexterity** (dek ster´ i tē) n. 1. skill in physical action
   2. mental quickness; cleverness
   (1) He demonstrated his superior dexterity by juggling four bowling pins.
   (2) The police underestimated the dexterity of the criminal who used a ballpoint pen to pick the locks on his shackles.
   (1) syn: proficiency; talent  ant: clumsiness
   (2) syn: cunning; ingenuity  ant: incompetence

5. **dreg** (dreg) n. the least desirable part (often used in plural form)
   Stray cats fought over the tasty dregs behind the seafood-processing factory.
syn: lees; waste

6. **flourish** (flûr´ əsh) v. to thrive; to prosper
   n. a stylish ornamentation; a decoration
   (v) Not all trees flourish in bright, sunny conditions.
   (n) Debbie adds a beautiful flourish to the capital letters in her signature.
   (v) syn: succeed; grow  ant: flounder; deteriorate
   (n) syn: enhancement; embellishment  ant: blemish; disfigurement

7. **fray** (frā) n. a fight; a brawl
   v. to wear away by friction
   (n) The players involved in the fray were ejected from the game.
   (v) The sharp rocks slowly frayed the mountain climber's rope.
   (n) syn: brawl; scuffle  ant: peace
   (v) syn: unravel; tatter
8. incoherent (in kō hîr' ənt) adj. lacking logical connection; unclear; rambling
   Roger mumbles incoherent phrases in his sleep.
   syn: confused; disjointed  
   ant: articulate; rational

9. nullify (nul' ə fi) v. to make invalid; to repeal
   The antidote nullified the effects of the deadly poison.
   syn: annul; reverse  
   ant: validate; confirm

10. paltry (pôl' trē) adj. of little or no importance; petty
   With adequate time, even a paltry investment now can turn into a fortune later.
   syn: insignificant; trivial  
   ant: substantial; major

11. persistent (pôr sis'tent) adj. refusing to give up; remaining for a long time
   Anne's persistent complaining finally convinced the city to fix the pothole in front of her house.
   syn: unrelenting; continual  
   ant: temporary; short

12. prediction (pri dik'shan) n. something foretold; a prophecy
   The fan made a prediction that his team would win the game by eleven points.

13. sinister (sin' i stēr) adj. threatening; ominous; evil
   The stone gargoyles on the building look sinister, but they are meant to frighten away evil spirits.
   syn: menacing; frightening  
   ant: harmless; good

14. succinct (sök singk't) adj. clearly expressed in few words; to the point
   The president delivered powerful messages in clear, succinct speeches.
   syn: concise; pithy  
   ant: wordy; drawn-out

15. tundra (tôr' dra) n. a treeless plain in arctic regions having permanently frozen subsoil
   During the warmest summer months, the soil of the tundra is soft and muddy.
EXERCISE I – Words in Context

Using the vocabulary list for this lesson, supply the correct word to complete each sentence.

1. During the yard sale, Amber sold her beloved possessions for ________ sums.

2. They knew the painting was authentic because the artist’s signature had a unique ________.

3. The new ruling ________ the court’s previous decision.

4. The suspect was easy to find because he was driving a[n] ________ car.

5. The ________ man tried out for the team three times unsuccessfully before attempting a different sport.

6. Caribou and grizzly bears can be found walking the ________ of northern Alaska.

7. If you ________ getting animal hair on your clothes, then you should not buy a cat.

8. There was something ________ about the unmarked, black helicopters seen flying over the forest at night, far from any military base.

9. The encoded message was ________ to anyone but the spy who received it.

10. The dishonest official made a[n] ________ decision instead of actually counting the votes.

11. The ________ of society congregated beneath the abandoned highway bridge.

12. The oracle’s ________ made the king uneasy.

13. Mike lost a tooth when he was punched while trying to break up the ________.

14. The teacher expressed the ________ message that cheating would result in instant failure.
15. Aldon has the natural ________ to become a world-class concert pianist.

EXERCISE II – Sentence Completion

*Complete the sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the italicized vocabulary word.*

1. If you *detest* cold weather, then you would not want to...

2. Harriet could manage to mumble only a few *incoherent* words after...

3. The judge *nullified* the prior ruling because...

4. The lumber industry *flourished* in the small town until...

5. The lions ate the best parts of the deer and left the *dregs* to...

6. To remove the *persistent* oil stain on the driveway, Dan had to...

7. Digging into the *tundra* is difficult because...

8. No one would offer a *prediction* about...

9. Terry got into a *fray* during the concert when...

10. The young students must wear *conspicuous* T-shirts during the class field trip so the chaperones can...

11. *Succinct* communication is especially important when...

12. Everyone could tell by the *sinister* look in his eye that he...

13. Her own problems seemed *paltry* after...

14. To assure parents that none of the students’ grades were *arbitrary*, the teacher showed...

15. Her superior *dexterity* allowed her to...
EXERCISE III – Prefixes and Suffixes

Study the entries and use them to complete the questions that follow.

The prefix in- means “in” or “not.”
The suffix -ness means “state,” “quality,” or “condition.”
The suffix -ous means “full of.”
The suffix -or means “one who does.”

Use the provided prefixes and suffixes to change each word so that it completes the sentence correctly. Then, keeping in mind that prefixes and suffixes sometimes change the part of speech, identify the part of speech of the new word by circling N for a noun, V for a verb, or ADJ for an adjective.

1. (dexterity) The many levers and buttons on the complex machine require an operator with ________ hands. N  V  ADJ

2. (conspicuous) The movie star tries to look _________ when she goes to public places. N  V  ADJ

3. (arbitrary) Instead of taking their problems to court, the companies hired a[n] ________ to settle their dispute. N  V  ADJ

4. (conspicuous) The ________ of the animal’s markings makes it easy to identify. N  V  ADJ
EXERCISE IV – Improving Paragraphs

Read the following passage and then answer the multiple-choice questions that follow. The questions will require you to make decisions regarding the revision of the reading selection.

1. It is difficult to ignore the conspicuous art style often referred to simply as retro. The style, characterized by long, flowing lines, rounded corners, and a streamlined general appearance, is a mainstay of classic comic books and novelty diners. It is present in the great sunbursts on the spire of the Chrysler Building and in the tapered towers of the Golden Gate Bridge. Also many forms of transportation prior to the decade of the 1950s were made in the style, such as trains, cars, and even bicycles. They look as though they are moving fast even when they are sitting still due to their design. What is this sleek style and where did it go?

2. The style widely regarded as retro is actually a form of art deco, a movement that originated in Europe in the early 1920s. There are several conflicting explanations of its exact origins, but most agree that art deco became famous at the 1925 World’s Fair in Paris, where it debuted as an art form that combines fashion and function. By 1928, art deco had made it to the United States.

3. Generally, it is a marriage of the pre-industrial world and the latest in modern technology. Art deco features the rounded corners and straight lines of zeppelins, but it conveys larger-than-life themes of human ingenuity and dominance. Sculptures depict humans at their finest moments, and skyscrapers inspire the same curious wonder as the Great Sphinx or an Aztec pyramid.

4. The influence of technology increased during the 1930s, and art deco transitioned into Streamline Moderne. Artists began to incorporate elements of aeronautics, broadcasting, and mass-production. Sculptures, signs, and household appliances adopted the rounded corners of rocket fins and airplane wings. In 1935, Chrysler introduced its new Air-Flow automobile design. The public detested streamlined automobiles initially, but the Air-Flow design was indeed decades ahead in automotive design.

5. In its simplest form, art deco emphasizes the size, symmetry, and purpose of its subject. It imparts elegance and sophistication to the most commonplace household items, and it turns ordinary wall clocks and marble paperweights into conversation pieces even if they are not antiques. In architecture, art deco is a mighty flourish of man’s achievement, a prediction of a bright future of towering skyscrapers and cities in the sky. The spire of the Empire State Building was in fact designed to be a mooring dock for blimps! Unfortunately, fleets of floating passenger-airships never quite made it past the drawing board.
The same factors that made it a success eventually led to its demise. As mass-production matured, art deco grew increasingly expensive. Square corners are much cheaper to manufacture than rounded, aerodynamic corners, especially for items that do not really need to be aerodynamic, like washing machines and roadside diners. The financial burden of World War II put an end to large art deco projects.

Though science originally inspired art deco, it eventually rendered art deco obsolete. An emerging Space Age suggested a future in space, and space is a vacuum: streamlining is of little importance beyond the atmosphere. The point was rammed home when, in 1957, a world gazed upon the Soviet Union’s Sputnik, the first artificial satellite. It was an ugly, insect-like spheroid surrounded by antennae, and it was followed by a series of even uglier, yet functional, spacecraft.

Artists abandoned their dreams of sparkling chrome cities on platforms in the sky; the future would consist of cost-effective machines built for function alone. Like space, the machines would be cold and blesk—certainly nothing on which to model a dining table or lounge chair. To all but a few persistent collectors of art deco, the trend sailed off with the last zeppelin.

1. Which revision shows the best way to combine the following sentences from paragraph 1?

Also many forms of transportation prior to the decade of the 1950s were made in the style, such as trains, cars, and even bicycles. They look as though they are moving fast even when they are sitting still due to their design.

A. Transportation looked as if it were moving when it sat still prior to the 1950s—even bicycles, trains, and cars.
B. Art-deco also inspired transportation: prior to 1950, trains, cars, and even bicycles were designed to convey an illusion of motion and speed.
C. The effect of motion was adhered to by cars, trains, and bicycles prior to 1950, even if these things were not moving.
D. Art deco also inspired transportation: prior to 1950, bikes, trains, and even cars were designed to convey an illusion of motion and speed.
E. Cars and trains prior to the 1950s looked as though they were moving even when they were sitting still; even bicycles did, because of the way they were designed.
2. The first sentence of paragraph 6 would be best improved by
   A. replacing *demise* with a better word.
   B. replacing *it* with *art deco*.
   C. adding a comma after *success*.
   D. deleting *same*.
   E. replacing *led* with *leads*.

3. Which sentence should be added to the beginning of paragraph 3?
   A. There is no *succinct* way to explain the many influences behind art deco.
   B. A series of *arbitrary* decisions eventually results in what we call art.
   C. Art deco required great *dexterity* on behalf of the artist.
   D. Space travel *nullified* the ideas behind art deco.
   E. Art deco made buildings look *sinister*, like dank, medieval castles.

4. According to the author, which choice is *neither* an influence nor theme of art deco?
   A. ancient cultures
   B. aerodynamics
   C. industry
   D. satellite technology
   E. broadcasting