

现代英语

# 现代英语

第五级

· 泛读 ·

EXTENSIVE  
READING

STUDENTS'  
BOOK 5B

Patrick Goldsmith

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Macmillan

China  
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# MODERN ENGLISH

for University Students

## Extensive Reading

Students' Book

Grade 5 B

Patrick Goldsmith



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## 现代英语

泛读 B

第5级

帕特里克·戈德史密斯

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# Unit 7

## Lexical cohesion

You will already be familiar with the idea of synonyms, words with approximately the same meanings, and antonyms, words with meanings that are approximately opposite, but you may not be familiar with the idea of lexical sets. Lexical sets, also known as collocational sets, are groups of words with meanings which are related in the sense that they tend to occur in the same contexts. In a text about cars, for example, you might expect to find some of the following: wheels, brakes, driving, skidding, rear mirror, traffic lights, road etc. Obviously, this is a very loose relationship, but it is one that exists nevertheless, and it accounts for a considerable amount of the cohesion in texts. By observing the distribution of the different lexical sets throughout a text you can see where changes of topic occur, and distinguish divisions and subdivisions in a text which need not necessarily correspond to the author's own division of a text into paragraphs. In this unit, you will be asked to examine some aspects of the cohesive use of vocabulary in the texts that follow.

## EXERCISES

1 In the following text, a number 1 in the margin indicates that there is a word in that line belonging to a lexical set we might call *war*. Underline the word that you believe belongs to the set. For example, 1.1 contains the word *soldier*, and 1.3 contains the word *officer*.

2 In the same text, a number 2 in the margin indicates that there is a word in that line belonging to a lexical set we might call *butterfly catching*. Underline the word that you believe belongs to the set.

1 I woke to find a German soldier standing over me. At first, with the sun behind him he was  
1 as indistinct as the peaks had become, but then he swam into focus. He was an officer and he was  
1.1 wearing summer battledress and a soft cap with a long narrow peak. He had a pistol but it was  
1 still in its case on his belt and he seemed to have forgotten that he was armed because he made no  
1 effort to draw it. Across one shoulder and hanging down over one hip in a very unmilitary way  
1 he wore a large old-fashioned civilian bag, as if he was a member of a weekend walking club,  
2 rather than a soldier, and in one hand he held a large, professional-looking butterfly net. He was  
a tall, thin, pale young man of about twenty-five with mild eyes and he appeared as surprised to  
see me as I was to see him, but much less alarmed than I was, virtually immobilised, lying on my  
back without my boots and socks on.

"Buon giorno," he said, politely. His accent sounded rather like mine must, I thought. "Che bella giornata."

At least up to now he seemed to have assumed that I was an Italian, but as soon as I opened my mouth he would know I wasn't. Perhaps I ought to try and push him over the cliff, after all he was standing with his back to it; but I knew that I wouldn't. It seemed awful even to think of murdering someone who had simply wished me good day and remarked on what a beautiful one



it was, let alone actually doing it. If ever there was going to be an appropriate time to go on stage in the part of the dumb man from Genoa which I had often practised but never played. this was it. I didn't answer.

"*Da dove viene, lei?*" he asked.

I just continued to look at him. I suppose I should have been making strange noises and pointing down my throat to emphasise my dumbness, but just as I couldn't bring myself to attack him, I couldn't do this either. It seemed too ridiculous. But he was not to be put off. He

2 removed his bag, put down his butterfly net, sat down opposite me in the hollow and said:

"*Lei, non è Italiano.*"

It was not a question. It was a statement of fact which did not require an answer. I decided to abandon my silly act.

"*Si, sono Italiano.*"

He looked at me, studying me carefully: my face, my clothes and my boots which, after my accent, were my biggest give-away, although they were in a very bad state now.

"I think that you are English," he said, finally, in English. "English, or from one of your  
1 colonies. You cannot be an English deserter; you are on the wrong side of the battle front. You  
11 do not look like a parachutist or an agent. You must be a prisoner of war. That is so, is it not?"

I said nothing.

"Do not be afraid," he went on. "I will not tell anyone that I have met you, I have no intention of spoiling such a splendid day either for you or for myself. They are too rare. I have only this one day of free time and it was extremely difficult to organise the transport to get here.

2 I am anxious to collect specimens, but specimens with wings. I give you my word that no one  
1 will ever hear from me that I have seen you or your companions if you have any."

In the face of such politeness it was useless to pretend and it would have been downright rude to do so.

"Yes, I am English," I said, but it was a sacrifice to admit it. I felt as if I was giving up my freedom.

He offered me his hand. He was close enough to do so without moving. It felt strangely soft when I grasped it in my own hard and roughened one and it looked unnaturally clean when he withdrew it.

11 "*Oberleutnant* Frick. Education Officer. And may I have the pleasure of your name, also?"

11 "Eric Newby," I said. "I'm a lieutenant in the infantry, or rather I was until I was put in the  
1 bag." I could see no point in telling him that I had been in S.B.S., not that he was likely to have  
1 heard of it. In fact I was expressly forbidden, as all prisoners were, to give anything but my  
11 name, rank and number to the enemy.

1 "Excuse me? In the bag?"

1 "Until I was captured. It's an expression."

He laughed slightly affectedly, but it was quite a pleasant sound. I expected him to ask me  
1 when and where I had been captured and was prepared to say Sicily, 1943, rather than 1942,  
which would have led to all sorts of complications; but he was more interested in the expression  
I had used.

1 "Excellent. In the bag, you say. I shall remember that. I have little opportunity now to  
22 learn colloquial English. With me it would be more appropriate to say 'in the net', or, 'in the  
2 bottle'; but, at least no one has put you in a prison bottle, which is what I have to do with my  
captives."

Although I don't think he intended it to be, I found this rather unpleasant, but then I was  
2 not a butterfly hunter. His English was very good, if perhaps a little slow. I only wished that I  
could speak Italian a quarter as well.

He must have noticed the look of slight distaste on my face because the next thing he said  
2 was, "Don't worry, the poison is only crushed laurel leaves, a very old way, nothing modern  
21 from I.G.Farben."

Now he began digging in his bag and brought out two bottles, wrapped in brown paper  
2 which, at first, I thought must contain the laurel with which he used to knock out his butterflies  
22 when he caught them; but, in fact, they contained beer, and he offered me one of them.

"It is really excellent beer," he said. "Or, at least, I find it so. To my taste Italian beer is not  
at all good. This is from Munich. Not easy to get now unfortunately. Permit me to open it for  
you."

It was cool and delicious. I asked him where he had come from.

"From Salsomaggiore, in the foothills," he said. "It is a spa, a bathing place, and like all  
spas it is very sad, or at least I find them so, although we Germans are supposed to like sad  
places. It is the feeling that no one who has ever visited them has been quite well, and never will  
be again, that I find disagreeable. Now it is a headquarters. My job there is to give lectures on  
Italian culture, particularly the culture of the Renaissance, to groups of officers and any of the  
11 men who are interested. It is scarcely difficult because so few of them are."

"I must confess," he went on, "that there are some aspects of my countrymen's character  
that I cannot pretend to understand. I do not speak disloyally to make you feel more friendly to  
me because, no doubt, you, also, do not always understand your own people, but surely only  
2 Germany would employ a professor of entomology from Göttingen with only one lung, whose  
2 only interest is *lepidoptera*, to give lectures on Renaissance painting and architecture to soldiers  
1 who are engaged in destroying these things as hard as they are able. Do you not think it  
strange?"

"I wouldn't say that," I said, "I'm sure we do the same sort of thing and, if we don't, I'm  
sure the Americans do."

"Really," he said. "You surprise me. You would not say that it is strange?"

"The intention is, of course," he continued, "to make us popular with the inhabitants, but  
that is something we can never be. For instance, I came to that village down there by car. I  
suggested to the driver that he might like to accompany me up here; but he is not interested in  
2 the countryside or *lepidoptera*. Besides he told me that there is a regulation against leaving  
1 military vehicles unattended. I did not ask him to accompany me because I wanted his company  
but because I knew that he would not enjoy himself in that village, or any other. When we  
arrived at it no one would speak to us. There was scarcely anyone to speak to anyway, which  
was very strange because it is a Sunday. They must have thought I had come to make some kind  
1 of investigation. It might have been better if we had not been wearing guns; but it is a  
regulation."

I could visualise the state of panic the village must have been thrown into by their arrival,  
with young men running from the houses and the *stalle* and up the mountainsides, like hunted  
hares.

"It is not pleasant to be disliked," he said, "and it is very unpleasant to be German and to  
know that one is hated, because one *is* German and, because, collectively, we are wrong in what  
1 we are doing. That is why I hate this war, or one of the reasons. And of course, because of this.

1 we shall lose it. We must. We have to."

1 "It's going to take you a long time to lose it at this rate," I said. "Everything seems to be going very slowly."

1 "It may seem so to you," he said. "But it won't be here, in Italy, that we shall be beaten. We  
11 shall hold you here, at least through this winter and perhaps we could hold you through next  
1 summer, but I do not think there will be a next summer. What is going on in Russia is more than  
1 flesh and blood can stand. We are on the retreat from Smolensk; we are retreating to the  
1 Dnieper. According to people who have just come from there we are losing more men every day  
11 1 than we have lost here in the Italian peninsula in an entire month. And what are you doing?" he  
asked.

1 I told him that I was on my way south towards the front. There seemed no point in telling  
him that I was living here. Also I was ashamed.

1 "If you take the advice of an enemy," he said, "you will try to pass the winter here, in these  
1 mountains. By the time you get to the battle front it will be very, very cold and very, very  
1 difficult to pass through it. Until a few days ago we all thought we would be retiring beyond the  
1 Po; but now the winter line is going to be far south of Rome. It has already been given a name.  
1 They call it the *Winterstellung*."

"Tell me one thing," I said. "Where have we got to now. I never hear any news."

1 "You have Termoli and Foggia on the east coast, which means that you will now be able to  
11 use bombers in close-support and you have Naples; but take my advice and wait for the spring."

1 I asked him where he had learned his English. He told me that he had spent several summer  
vacations in England before the war.

"I liked England," he said. "And the English. You do not work hard but you have the good  
sense not to be interested in politics. I liked very much your way of life."

He got to his feet.

1 "Lieutenant," he said, "it has given me great pleasure to have met you. Good luck to you  
1 and, perhaps, though I do not think it probable, we shall meet again after the war at Göttingen,  
or London. Now if you would be so kind, please give me the empty bottle as I cannot obtain  
more of this beer without handing the bottles back. Bottles are in short supply."

2 The last I saw of him was running across the open downs with his net waving, in the  
2 direction from which I had come, making curious little sweeps as he pursued his prey, a tall,  
thin, rather awkward figure with only one lung. I was sorry to see him go.

**3** Working in pairs or small groups, look for other lexical sets occurring in the text (which is from  
a book called *Love and War in the Apennines* by Eric Newby) and discuss the way these fit into  
the general pattern of the story.

**4** Now read the text carefully again and choose the most suitable alternative to complete the  
following statements:

1 The narrator was dressed

A as a soldier

B as a farm worker

C as a city worker

2 The German was

A a typical German soldier.



- B not a typical German soldier.
- C a typical professor of entomology.
- 3 The German was employed by the German army
  - A to catch butterflies.
  - B to catch prisoners of war.
  - C to teach soldiers.
- 4 The narrator spoke Italian
  - A better than the German spoke English.
  - B not as well as the German spoke English.
  - C about as well as the German spoke English.
- 5 The beer was from
  - A Munich
  - B Salsomaggiore
  - C Göttingen
- 6 'So few of them are' means so few of them are
  - A officers.
  - B lectures.
  - C interested.
- 7 'I'm sure the Americans do' means I'm sure the Americans
  - A do the same sort of thing.
  - B destroy these things.
  - C think it strange.
- 8 The German
  - A wanted Germany to win the war.
  - B did not want Germany to win the war.
  - C did not care whether Germany won the war or not.

5

- (a) In the following text, which is taken from *A People's War* by Peter Lewis, put a number 1 in the margin every time you see a word related to *shortages*
- (b) Put a 2 in the margin every time you see a word related to *specific types of food*
- (c) Put a 3 in the margin every time you see a word related to *food in general, nutrition or health*
- (d) Put a 4 in the margin every time you see a word related to *paper*
- (e) Put a 5 in the margin every time you see a word related to *household goods*
- (f) Put a 6 in the margin every time you see a word related to *tobacco*
- (g) Put a 7 in the margin every time you see a word related to *make-up*

'Thank you so much for the three eggs. It is wonderful to see three eggs together-one is remarkable'. So wrote Rose Macaulay to her sister in September 1940 as she anticipated the pleasure of cooking one of them when the air raid was over. It was the sort of treat that made a day memorable in the years of shortages that began in late 1940. As merchant ships went down in the Atlantic, so did rations at home. By December 1940, a *Mass Observer* was reporting what

a prized possession an onion was. 'The greengrocer had let her [a neighbour] have a large one for threepence. She tied a piece of ribbon round it and put it on a shelf. She's going to keep it for Christmas.' Another Observer reported from a village near Newcastle: 'They've got some oranges in the village but they'll only sell them to children and they have to bring a note from the clinic to say they need them — such a business for one orange.'

By early 1941, when merchant ships were being sunk at a rate of three a day, shortages were at their worst. Even the small amount of meat allowed was often hard to find, the butter ration was down to two ounces, the ration of 'mousetrap' cheese looked tiny at only one ounce and, perhaps hardest of all, only two ounces of tea a week went nowhere. Egg and milk allowances varied with the season; at its worst, one egg a fortnight, at its best, two eggs a week. Milk sometimes went down to half a pint per adult per week; a large proportion of dairy cattle had been killed for lack of feed for them. To supplement this, two of the most disliked wartime institutions, dried egg and dried milk, were brought in from the United States. 'Shell eggs are five-sixths water,' explained a Ministry of Food announcement. "Why import water?" So from 1942, a packet of dried egg was distributed every two months 'equivalent' to twelve eggs — but somehow incapable of resembling them. When the water was restored, scrambled dried egg looked like badly made custard and tasted chalky. 'National Dried Milk' was no treat either, best flavoured with chocolate — if you could get chocolate.

Chickens were kept in back gardens, back yards, garden sheds, and on flat rooftops even above the smartest London streets. They were fed on meal mixed with scraps, potato peelings, carrot tops, sprout leaves, crusts of National Wheatmeal bread, and their own ground-up egg shells.

'Food is a weapon of war. DON'T WASTE IT.' So ran the tireless recommendations of the Ministry of Food, itself a wartime innovation, run rather like a university department at Colwyn Bay in Wales. Ministry nutritionists were eager to apply what was then a new science. Patty Fisher belonged to the scientific advice division headed by Sir Jack Drummond.

We knew what people needed for nutrients, we knew exactly how much of each nutrient and how many calories people needed for energy. We knew the calorie values of foods and so it only remained to do the calculation. Then we had to calculate which foods to choose, which we could grow and which to import on the basis of their nutritional value. This was vital to the war effort, this evaluation which was the basis of rations. The Ministry of Food was far ahead of its time.

Another Ministry food scientist, Dorothy Hollingsworth, pointed out the social gains behind the policy.

I think Jack Drummond particularly was quite determined from the outset that the war situation would be used to improve the nutritional condition of the people. Special arrangements were made for young children and expectant and nursing mothers. There were special milk supplies, cod liver oil and orange juice; special rations for children in schools. Adults really got what was left over, equally divided. The idea really was fair shares for all.

Pre-war surveys of the nation's diet showed that a quarter of the population was underfed.

Half the women of the working class were in poor health, infant mortality was at a high rate of 62 infant deaths per 1000 births, and bone disease was common — 80 per cent of under-fives showed some bone abnormality, 90 per cent had badly formed or decayed teeth. It was a shameful picture. Now everybody bought their rations — and could afford them thanks to controlled prices. The result was that all the measurable statistics improved — infant mortality, growth rate of children, and the condition of children's teeth, almost certainly due to the shortage of sugar and sweets," said Dorothy Hollingsworth. It was a source of satisfaction to a nutritionist but less so to children who had to wait four weeks for their next sweet coupons to become valid and then make the painful decision whether to spend them all on one half-pound bar of chocolate or on boiled sweets, toffees or something else. Then came the character-building discipline of trying to make these last.

Naturally, people who were in many cases earning more money than they had ever seen in their lives, were prepared to pay extra to improve the diet of their families. Somethings, like fish and birds, fruit and vegetables were never rationed. One result was the eternal fish queue, which did not disperse even when an air raid began, and there were always those who would pay high prices for luxury foods. Grapes, when they could be found, cost £1 or more a bunch and a melon might be £2. But by the end of the war, very few children knew what a banana was.

It was well-known that butchers' social standing in the community rose to great heights. They did very well for Christmas presents and were well supplied with drink and cigars. Some customers, it was said, asked them to their parties. Isobel Murphy recalled her childhood in Liverpool:

Everyone had to be nice to my father and more or less nice to us, even if they didn't like us, because my father was their butcher. A customer would bring a parcel in and another would be brought out from under the counter. I'd look at my brother. We both knew there was a leg of lamb in that parcel and probably we had got sugar or butter in exchange. But we never thought what he was doing was anything to do with the real black market. It was a question of survival. My dad would always have a little bit of something put by, in case a neighbour's son came home on leave unexpectedly.

Besides exchange there was simple favouritism. Irene Brewster remembered when she was an assistant in a Hull grocer's shop: "You'd get a dozen tins of salmon in. Well, you had two or three hundred customers, they couldn't all have a tin of salmon, so the manager used to say, 'say that for Mrs So-and-So, save that for this one. We used to put one aside for ourselves, if we could. Why should they have it when we were working for it?'"

"Under the counter" was the general description of all such deals and few people were principled enough to be above temptation when they had families to feed. They would be disapproving only if someone else had been luckier. "They'd say, 'I know you've got some because Mrs So-and-So's had some. You've got it under the so-and-so counter. I know'", said Irene Brewster. "Fruit was wanted for Christmas cakes. We'd say, 'We haven't any today' and we'd save it for the special customers. They didn't like you for it, the customers. Some who were getting the stuff did but the others used to complain."

Lord Woolton wrote after the war:

Because the public grew to realise the essential fairness of rationing, there were constant demands that more and more things should be rationed. People who found that their neighbours had occasionally been able to get tinned salmon or sardines, tinned meat or

dried fruit, demanded that the Ministry should ration all these things. They did not realise the impossibility of the task. It is only possible to ration if there are sufficient supplies for everybody to have some. In the end we borrowed from the Germans a system of rationing by points. The articles that were in shortest supply cost the largest number of points.

But it was not only food that was short. Sooner or later there was a shortage of almost everything and the oddest thing acquired rarity value. Paper, for example. It was a matter of course to write on the back of letters, to readdress envelopes several times, to plaster one economy label over another, to save all paper bags and wrappings and to smooth out the brown paper from parcels to use again – and again. Books carried the legend ‘produced in accordance with the authorised economy standards’, while their pages were spotted with impurities from the re-pulping and were so thin that the type on the reverse side showed through.

Glasses were seldom to be had. Neither were cups. There was a lack of bottles and plates and you could only buy a bottle of beer if you presented an empty. At one time the only cups made were without handles, and cutlery, especially kitchen implements, was also in short supply. The manufacture of soup spoons was totally prohibited and sugar spoons were chained to café counters. You could spend weeks on the look-out for a bicycle, a bottle, a thermos flask, an alarm clock, a lighter, a comb, a pram, or even matches, pens, pencils, packets of rubber teats, needles, or safety pins – so widespread were the scarcities. Many household goods could only be bought secondhand. A children’s birthday party would be a real problem to organise for there were no toys, no crackers, no balloons, no paper hats and a regulation which stated: ‘No person shall put or cause to be put any sugar on the exterior of a cake after the same has been baked. Large wedding cakes in shop windows (and at weddings) were usually made of cardboard or plaster of Paris, and could be hired for decoration.

Two of the most annoying shortages were of tobacco and make-up. Cigarette queues wasted much time and patience and the favoured brands often disappeared under the counter to regular customers, leaving Turkish or Rhodesian or nothing at all for casual callers. After a twelve-hour night shift at a Sheffield shell factory, Mona Marshall remembered, one girl would start queueing for cigarettes on a Monday and by Wednesday would still be queueing all day, not having had any sleep. Make-up production was down to a quarter of the pre-war level and, as luck would have it, the fashion was for a heavily made-up look, with red, red lips and face powder plastered on thickly. Women melted down the ends of lipsticks, cooked beetroot juice was suggested as replacement, and even stranger home-made substitutes were tried. ‘We put our fingers up the chimney to get a little bit of soot to put on our eyes and we looked for long red sweets – that would be our lipstick,’ said Elsie Thompson, recalling her eighteen-year-old days when she worked in a restaurant and lived for dancing. It was easier to make up her legs, to resemble the stockings she had not got: ‘We used to put brown powder for making sauce all over our legs and your friend would stand at the back with a black pen or eyebrow pencil and she’d mark a seam down the back. Mind you, if it rained, you were in a right mess. The dogs used to come round, smelling your legs.’

## 6

Working in pairs or small groups, use the information you have acquired by examining the lexical sets to do the following:

- (a) Provide a title for the text.

- (b) Divide the text up into sections corresponding to the occurrence of words in the different lexical sets.

**7**

Now read the text carefully again and choose the most suitable alternative to complete the following statements:

- 1 Food had to be rationed because
  - A production in the country fell owing to the war.
  - B not enough food could be imported.
  - C the United States could not produce enough to send to Britain.
- 2 The Ministry of Food imported dried eggs because
  - A they didn't want to import water.
  - B it was more economical and the eggs didn't go bad.
  - C when the water was restored, scrambled dried egg looked like badly made custard.
- 3 The population of the country as a whole
  - A ate better before the war than during the war.
  - B ate better during the war than before the war.
  - C ate the same during the war as before the war.
- 4 During the war
  - A all food was rationed.
  - B no fruit was rationed.
  - C most food was rationed.
- 5 Butchers became popular because
  - A people hoped to get more meat from them by being nice to them.
  - B people found them friendly and helpful in times of difficulty.
  - C they helped the community.
- 6 People wanted
  - A more things to be rationed.
  - B fewer things to be rationed.
  - C everything to be rationed.

**8**

Now write about 100 words of your own about shortages you have experienced, or about war or a disaster of a different kind, then exchange what you have written with a partner and examine the lexical cohesion of your partner's work by marking members of different lexical sets in the same way as in exercises 5 and 6 above. Then discuss your results, comparing the lexical cohesion of your own and your partner's texts.

# Unit 8

## Making sense of unfamiliar words

At this stage of your learning process, you will have read many thousands of words already. It is likely that you will have read at least 200,000 words; remember that a short novel may have 50,000 words. Unless everything you have read has been carefully graded, it is likely that you will have encountered many words whose meanings you were not clear about. Depending on how you have been taught, you may have tried to guess the meaning of the sentence and gone on, or you may have looked up the word in a dictionary.

If you used a bilingual dictionary, you may have done little more than decipher the particular sentence that you found difficult. You will not have been shown by the dictionary how the word you looked up is typically used, and you will not have been given the chance to associate it in your mind with other contexts in which it occurs.

It has become increasingly clear from recent research that the meaning of words is tied up very closely with their common 'collocations' — the words in association with which a word is often used. If you pay no attention to the collocations, your learning will not be very efficient: using bilingual dictionaries solves immediate problems, but only in the short term. Using English dictionaries without examples of the use of words in context is not much more helpful: they can only help you to choose the 'right' meaning of the three or four or more given, and do not show you how the word might be used in other contexts.

When native speakers come across unfamiliar words, they can compare the context the word appears in with similar contexts they have seen before, and they can usually think of other words that could have occurred in such a context. Suppose you saw a sentence 'He intervened on our behalf'. Even if you did not recognise the word 'intervened' you might well recognise the expression 'on our behalf', and remember hearing it in a sentence such as 'He acted on our behalf'. It is a simple step to suppose that 'intervened' is an approximate synonym of 'acted'.

As an advanced learner, you do not have the same store of collocations in your memory that a native speaker has, but if you have a dictionary with examples of usage you can look up the word and see it used in several different contexts, which then puts you in a similar position to that of the native speaker. You can then base your understanding of the word in its context in the book you are reading on the different examples provided by the dictionary. If you use the dictionary in this way, you are using it as a kind of extension to your memory — and apart from helping you to understand unfamiliar words, or familiar words in unfamiliar contexts, it will help you to form mental associations, acquire common collocations, that will be useful in your future reading.

However, you must be careful: sometimes the context changes the meaning of a word. In the exercises that follow, rather than giving you a translation or an explanation of unfamiliar words, we have provided three examples of their uses in other contexts, much as you might find in a good modern learner's dictionary. In some cases, the meaning and usage will be different from that appearing in the passage; tick those which seem to you to correspond to the meaning



and usage in the text. This may be one of the three, or two, or all three. Seeing the words used in these different contexts should clarify the meaning of the sentences in the text. If it does not, wait until you have finished reading the whole text before you look anything up in a dictionary. You will in any case need to read the text **SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY** at least twice, and probably three or even four times. It is part of the introduction to the Collins English Dictionary and was written by Patrick Hanks, a very eminent lexicographer. It should help you a great deal in understanding how words work.

## Meaning and Grammar

“What do you mean?”

“What does this word mean?”

“What is meaning?”

Such questions are often heard—and they <sup>1</sup>*provoke* a great variety of answers. Since dictionaries are often <sup>2</sup>*consulted* for an answer, we may add the questions, “By what authority does the lexicographer make his <sup>3</sup>*assertions* about the words entered in his dictionary? What is the character of these assertions? What can the dictionary user reasonably expect by way of an account of meanings from a dictionary?”

To get answers to such questions, we need to have some <sup>4</sup>*insight* into the nature of language and have a working <sup>5</sup>*hypothesis*, at least, about the relations between language and various worlds of existence outside language—that is, the physical universe, the world of everyday life, the many worlds of fictional writing, the worlds of academic study, and so on. It is also necessary to examine some relationships within the world of language itself, especially the relationship between word and sentence and that between the individual speaker and the community as a whole.

## Evidence and <sup>6</sup>*Intuition*

One problem <sup>7</sup>*confronting* investigators into such questions is what research techniques to use. The traditional technique for the analysis of language is the examination of printed texts—an ancient tradition still <sup>8</sup>*hallowed* in lexicography. Clearly, the published literature of a language represents a <sup>9</sup>*corpus* of sentences uttered by and, presumably, therefore acceptable to native speakers. Many grammarians and lexicographers have based all their work on the analysis of written texts (or believe or claim that they have). This has yielded a great deal of valuable information about language:

Tick the uses and meanings similar to those in the passage—A, A and B, or A,B and C.

- 1 A Her question *provoked* an unexpected response.  
B They deliberately *provoked* the attack.  
C He enjoyed *provoking* his sisters.
- 2 A I *consulted* the doctor about my foot.  
B The experts *consulted* together for two hours.  
C He never *consulted* any works of reference.
- 3 A They made a strong *assertion* of their rights.  
B He made an *assertion* I totally disagreed with.  
C The government's refusal to free him was a clear *assertion* of its power.
- 4 A She has great *insight* into human nature.  
B He had a sudden flash of *insight*.  
C The work contained some interesting psychological *insights*.
- 5 A She formed a *hypo-*

lists of words that <sup>10</sup>*undeniably* exist in various languages, accounts of some generally observed rules of syntax and morphology in such languages, and other patterns and norms. However, if it is relied on as the sole research technique, the analysis of printed texts has at least one serious drawback: it <sup>11</sup>*fosters* the impression that a language is a more fixed, <sup>12</sup>*homogeneous* phenomenon than it is, and that "correct" and "incorrect" and "acceptable" and "unacceptable" utterances can be clearly distinguished. Investigation of spoken language suggests that the dividing line is by no means clear-cut. One man's meat is another man's poison: what one may regard as correct, another frowns upon (even among writers upon language). Textual analysis is an inadequate technique to account for matters of detail in variations in grammatical practice or opinion from one speaker or writer to another, and it has failed even more seriously to account for the nature of meaning, which seems always to <sup>13</sup>*elude* us. The comparison of large numbers of tape recordings to establish patterns and norms is open to the same objection. It is in fact the very search for patterns and norms itself that causes problems when we examine matters of detail in language—and the meanings of words are all matters of detail. Every time we try to establish a sound basis for a general theory of meaning, it seems to slip away from us like a <sup>14</sup>*wraith*. One reason for this is that the subject is <sup>15</sup>*bedevilled* with logical and <sup>16</sup>*binary* structures imposed on it by its investigators: plurality, <sup>17</sup>*redundancy*, and analogy are frowned upon, <sup>18</sup>*discounted*, or ignored.

Among the most interesting developments in post-Chomskyan linguistics are those that promote a reexamination of the relationship between the speech of the individual and a language as a whole. A language is made up of a great number of individual speakers and writers, all of whom have slightly different versions of the language in their heads. Some recent researchers have therefore concentrated their attention on the intuition of the native speaker—by which the researcher usually means himself. Of course, <sup>19</sup>*pronouncements* on this basis have no universal <sup>20</sup>*validity*—but that is precisely the point. Examination of one's own intuitions provides no definite answers, but it provokes some interesting questions and has suggested at least one important insight, previously <sup>21</sup>*understated*—namely the great variation in matters of detail between one speaker and another within a single speech community.

In the investigation of transformational-generative grammar after Chomsky, investigators have found a large grey

*thesis* to explain the events.

- B The *hypothesis* rests on very thin evidence.
  - C They took it as a working *hypothesis* that the two effects were related.
- 6 A *Intuition* is supposed to be better than logic on some occasions.
- B It was *intuition* that led him to the solution.
  - C She often relied on her *intuitions*
- 7 A They were *confronted* with a very difficult situation.
- B They decided to *confront* the author ities and demand their rights.
  - C I do not want a *confrontation* with her parents.
- 8 A They were standing on *hallowed* ground.
- B He found himself in the *hallowed* rooms of the president.
  - C The tradition had been *hallowed* by generations of students.
- 9 A The *corpus* of laws covered every possible situation.
- B They studied their *corpus* carefully.
  - C The law of habeas *corpus* is not always respected.
- 10 A They *undeniably* occur in certain cases.
- B It was *undeniably* clear that the vote had been arranged.

area between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences, both from one individual to another and within the speech of a single individual.

No native speaker of English is likely to utter or find acceptable the sentence \**"The man are good"*—but what about, *"He don't sing too good"*? This actually comes from a native speaker of English, the difference between it and *"He doesn't sing very well"* being one of *register* (in this case, class dialect). Variations in grammatical acceptability also occur within a single register in a language, and within the speech of a single individual from one time to another. The sentence *"When else should I have come?"* is regarded by some native speakers of English as perfectly acceptable, by others as ungrammatical or wrong; others regard it as acceptable but awkward, while still others have regarded it as *"wrong"* or *"awkward"* one day, and as *"right"* or *"acceptable"* some time later. The fact is that individual rules of acceptability differ from person to person and from time to time. It is impossible to draw a precise <sup>22</sup>*demarcation* between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences, for reasons that have to do with the <sup>23</sup>*shortcomings* of linguistic performance when compared with <sup>24</sup>*competence* and with the nature of memory in the brain of the individual. The same difficulty applies even more <sup>25</sup>*conspicuously* to the attempt to say what is the *"correct"* meaning of a word.

### Structures in the Brain

Consideration of the speech of individuals may provoke us to inquire further where and how language is stored and generated, physically, in the individual person. The answer, of course, is that it is stored and generated in his brain. But where? How? The mechanisms of speech production—phonetics and phonology—have been <sup>26</sup>*exhaustively* studied. The neurological processes and structures that lie behind speech production, writing, and understanding spoken and written language are less well understood. In years to come, no doubt, neurophysiology will join phonetics as an <sup>27</sup>*"indispensable foundation"* for the study of language. But at present it remains a <sup>28</sup>*daunting* subject for laymen, although there are now available some <sup>29</sup>*lucid* accounts of the current state of knowledge of the nature of the brain—in particular, by Colin Blakemore and Steven Rose, on which this article draws with gratitude.

It is worth reminding ourselves of the character and order

- C It was *undeniably* true that some of the money had disappeared.
- 11 A They decided to *foster* a child.
- B I am her *foster* mother.
- C Wealth often *fosters* envy.
- 12 A The class is fairly *homogeneous*: they're all equally good.
- B Cream has a *hamo-geneous* texture.
- C Milk is not *homo-geneous* unless it is specially treated.
- 13 A She *eluded* discovery for years.
- B The solution continued to *elude* him.
- This explanation is so complex it *eludes* me completely.
- C Milk is not *homo-geneous* unless it is specially treated.
- 14 A He had not eaten for days and he looked like a *wraith*.
- B The mist swirled *wraith-like* around us.
- C The wraith raised its ghostly hand in farewell.
- 15 A The system was *bedevilled* with problems.
- B The project was *bedevilled* by the constant absences of the workers.
- C Difficulties *bedevilled* the expedition right from the start.