

SUPERWORDPOWER

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Eugene Ehrlich

A Hudson Group Book



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PREFACE

Who can resist the intellectual challenge posed by a truly demanding vocabulary test, especially when the test is self-administered and self-scored? Finding out how extensive one's vocabulary is provides a measure of satisfaction plus a road map for future growth of vocabulary. So if you relish a challenge and are interested in learning new words, *SuperWordPower* represents an excellent opportunity to enrich your vocabulary further by taking and scoring a series of one hundred multiple-choice tests.

Learning all the words in *SuperWordPower* will increase your ability to read difficult texts without continual reference to an unabridged dictionary and will increase your ability to write precisely and colorfully. Above all, *SuperWordPower* offers the pure pleasure of adding to your store of useful knowledge.

The twelve hundred *SuperWordPower* entries in this book were selected from published works written for intelligent and well-informed adults. As a result, even if your present vocabulary is well above average, the one hundred *SuperWordPower* tests in this book will challenge your knowledge. Those whose store of words is not already above average may find other vocabulary books more rewarding.

Each *SuperWordPower* test presents ten words to be defined, and these are followed by two bonus words intended for those whose vocabularies are outstandingly rich. For your convenience, answers for all the *SuperWordPower* tests are supplied at the end of *Test One Hundred*.

Each of the one hundred tests begins with words known to most mature readers. As a test progresses, the challenge increases, and the final questions in each test are quite difficult. The first ten test words are presented in sentences intended to illustrate proper word usage. At the same time, care has been taken not to reveal the correct definitions of the words through contextual clues. This in-

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creases the difficulty of the tests somewhat, but it also adds to their validity.

The exceptionally difficult bonus words are intended to challenge even those who can define many relatively rare words. For this reason, the eleventh and twelfth words in each test have been dubbed *zingers*, conveying the sense that they are words known to few people. To make these last two questions even more challenging, *zingers* are presented without benefit of illustrative sentences.

Some advice to keep in mind when working your way through *SuperWordPower*: (1) Test words sometimes are defined in unfamiliar senses, so you should examine all the suggested answers carefully before responding to a test question. (2) After completing a test and checking your answers, it is advisable to consult an unabridged dictionary to find all meanings of words you wish to learn.

Acquiring **SuperWordPower**

You may recall a wonderful time in your life when a single encounter with a new word was enough to make the word yours forever. Reading the word in a context that made the meaning clear, hearing it defined, or reading the definition in a dictionary just once would do the trick. Those were the days.

There came a time in your intellectual development when you felt the need to make lists of new words so that one day you could look them up and learn them. Much of the time you mislaid the lists or never found the right opportunity for spending the required hours with your dictionary. At times of crisis, for example in the months before taking a scholastic aptitude test, you may have tried to learn great numbers of difficult words by saying the words and their definitions to yourself over and over again. This repetitive drill may have achieved its purpose—you did well in your tests—but did you actually learn many of the words well enough so that you knew what they meant a few weeks or months after the test? If your experience was that of most people who have tried to cram in this way, not likely.

If the ability to learn new words easily appears to have vanished, you are not alone. As adults acquire more and more information and more and more experience, they typically find that vocabulary-building, an exercise in abstract learning, demands sustained effort. Ask yourself how many times you have gone back to a dictionary for the second, third, fourth time or more for help with a word you have wrestled with before.

The sad fact is that even though you may resolve to learn a definition so you won't have to use your dictionary yet again for that same word, mere resolve usually proves fruitless. Soon enough, there you are at your dictionary for yet one more consultation. The hopelessness of reading a definition over and over again in widely

separated sessions with a dictionary makes it clear that something else must be done to fix words and their meanings in your memory.

If you wish to go on increasing the strength and versatility of the vocabulary you need for reading, writing, and speaking, it is helpful to use a systematic approach to learning new words. The time it takes to make new words your own will be insignificant when measured against the bother of looking up the same words repeatedly. With an effective learning procedure, you will find that the next time you encounter a difficult word you have studied, its meaning will be immediately apparent. And you will be able to use the word readily and naturally in your writing and speech.

Any effective vocabulary-building system must be based on repeated recitation and test. There is no need to attend a course in vocabulary development to become serious about improving your knowledge of words. Even though you may take pleasure in going to class and indeed benefit from the discipline of regular assignments and recitations, you probably now have everything you need to do the job on your own.

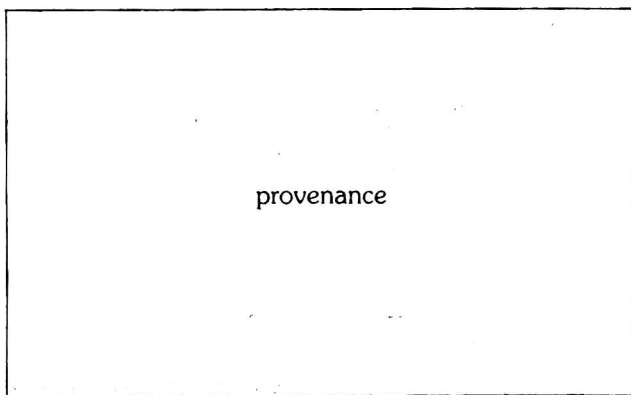
The materials involved in one highly successful system consist of a source of words to be learned, a desk dictionary, and a supply of slips of paper or index cards.

First a word on the source of vocabulary to be learned. Best of all is a collection of books you have always intended to read. Books that attract intelligent adults inevitably employ language that may challenge your present knowledge. Because you have a desire to read the books, you will find that the vocabulary will also be of interest to you.

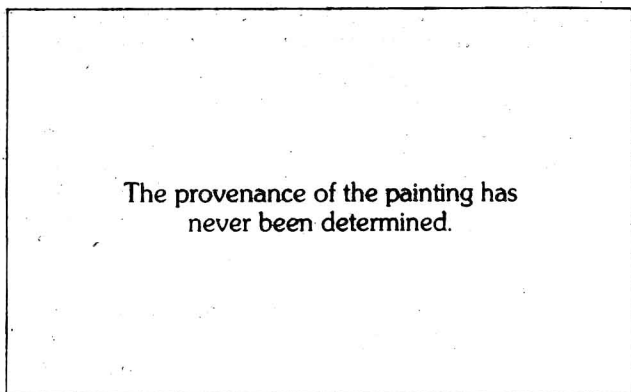
If your present desk dictionary meets your needs in clarity and comprehensiveness, you will not have to look elsewhere. If you find, however, that your dictionary often fails to include words you need to understand, then you should replace it. The problem may be that your dictionary is out of date or does not cover fields of interest special to you. Before you buy a new dictionary, spend time in a bookstore looking up the same words in each of the dictionaries offered for sale. See how the dictionaries define those words. When you find that a particular dictionary has the words you want and provides clear definitions, you have found your new dictionary.

Finally, you will need slips of paper or cards. A convenient size is approximately three inches by five inches. Slips are inexpensive to come by in pad form but are not as easy to handle as index cards, which may be purchased in packets of fifty or one hundred.

Now you have everything you need to launch an effective program of vocabulary-building. Let us assume that you are reading a book and have near at hand a batch of cards and your desk dictionary. In your reading you encounter the word *provenance* in the following sentence: "The provenance of the painting has never been determined." On one side of a card, write *provenance*, the word you wish to learn.

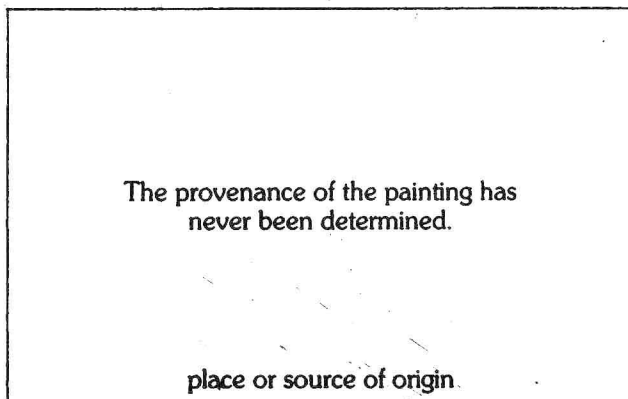


On the back of the card, write the sentence in which the word appeared.



Consult your dictionary to find the meaning of the word. Since many words are defined in more than one way, be certain that the

dictionary definition you find is one that fits the use of the word in the sentence in which you found it. The *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* supplies the following definition of *provenance*: "place or source of origin." You are ready to add to the back of your card.



Now you have a card that will enable you to test your learning of the definition of *provenance* enough times to be absolutely certain of what the word means and how it is used.

It is especially helpful to write the card yourself. Writing by hand gives you contact with the word, and many people find this contact useful in learning. Another reason is that the act of creating a card starts you on the road to effective learning, and so it will for every word you wish to learn and every card you make.

Let us count up the chances you have already had for learning a word such as *provenance* merely by creating the card. (1) You have read the word in a book. (2) You have written it on a card. (3) You have written the sentence in which it appeared. (4) You have looked the word up in your dictionary. (5) You have written a definition on your card. Thus, you have already had five encounters with the word.

In many cases, once you have reached this stage, you will already know the word and its meaning. But this will not be true if you find many new words in a session of reading. So the process must be completed.

This is the way to do so. After you have begun to write cards,

set aside time for recitation and self-test in the following manner. Read aloud the word on the front of a card. Without looking at the back of the card, recite the sentence in which you found the word. Again without looking at the back of the card, recite the definition of the word. Then look at the back of the card. If you correctly recalled both the definition and the sentence, write a checkmark on the front of the card and go on to the next card, repeating the process until you have reviewed the rest of your cards.

When you cannot recall a sentence and definition, read the word aloud along with its sentence and definition. You earn a checkmark for a card only when you can recite the sentence and definition successfully.

Study your pack of cards on alternate days to make certain that your learning of a word persists.

By the time you have awarded yourself three checkmarks on a card, you have probably made a permanent addition to your vocabulary. There is nothing magical about three checkmarks in this context. What is important is that by then you have had a total of at least eight chances to learn each word, five encounters to create a card plus three perfect recitations.

Satisfied that you know a three-checkmark word, retire its card from your growing pack of cards and file the card in alphabetical order along with other new words learned. About a month after you begin to collect your new words, launch a monthly review of your alphabetical collection, looking only at the word on the front of a card and testing your memory of its definition and sentence. You will find that you have nearly perfect recall of every word.

As time goes by, you will also find that the words you have learned recur in your reading and in conversation, and that you handle them with ease. In addition, you will find yourself able to call on your new words whenever you need them for writing or speech. You will be well on your way to SuperWordPower.

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Test ONE

1. Prolonged trips in outer space may yet be shown to produce **deleterious** effects on the human body.

- a. healthful
- b. mysterious
- c. unpredictable
- d. harmful
- e. organic

2. As soon as the first intermission was over, the comments of the audience made it clear that theater reviewers would characterize the play as yet another **debacle** for its author.

- a. great success
- b. complete failure
- c. step forward in a career
- d. financial success
- e. mediocre achievement

3. **Gauche** remarks came from him that night with a rapidity previously unsurpassed.

- a. tactless
- b. inappropriate
- c. vengeful
- d. unscrupulous
- e. insincere

4. You can count on being **castigated** by your supervisor if your job performance remains at its present level.

- a. recommended for promotion
- b. publicly commended

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- c. congratulated
 - d. demoted
 - e. severely criticized
5. As the campaign dragged into its final weeks, the candidate more and more was given to **egregious** blunders in his speeches.
- a. untimely
 - b. outrageous
 - c. forgivable
 - d. thoughtless
 - e. unpreventable
6. The first characteristic that comes to mind in describing young Hazel is her **ebullience**.
- a. customary apathy
 - b. fairness in dealing with others
 - c. general stubbornness
 - d. pervasive calm
 - e. enthusiastic expression of feelings
7. Just how much of their tiresome **badinage** can you take without losing patience?
- a. playful repartee
 - b. underhanded actions
 - c. malicious jokes
 - d. sexist remarks
 - e. gossip
8. After many years' absence from the campus, I once again found myself playing the role of **abecedarian**.
- a. teacher of freshman English
 - b. teacher of remedial English

- c. calligrapher
- d. student of the rudiments of a subject
- e. stern disciplinarian

9. As each **fascicle** was made available to the public, readers became increasingly attracted to the novel.

- a. division of a book published in parts
- b. advance notice for a book
- c. early review of a book
- d. publicity before official publication of a book
- e. church commentary on the worth of a book

10. Over the years that followed, Edward acquired his apparently well-deserved reputation as **flaneur** of the first rank.

- a. dessert chef
- b. clothing designer
- c. arsonist
- d. aimless person
- e. connoisseur

■ ZINGERS

A. **janissary**: one of a group of

- a. staunch opponents
- b. eloquent officials
- c. official emissaries
- d. appointed seers
- e. subservient supporters

B. **zucchetto**: a small skullcap worn by

- a. a member of the clergy
- b. an Italian peasant

- c. a child at play
- d. a member of a surgical team
- e. a technician using delicate equipment

Test

TWO

1. It was clear to most of us that **kowtowing** would not resolve the bitter dispute.

- a. showing fear
- b. showing obsequious deference
- c. showing ordinary respect
- d. showing disrespect
- e. showing animosity

2. His **maladroit** handling of the situation produced the expected outcome.

- a. awkward
- b. unpardonable
- c. skillful
- d. tentative
- e. unjustifiable

3. We never believed or expected that his senior advisers would be **omniscient**.

- a. forgetful of everything
- b. completely fair to all
- c. always attentive
- d. capable of sufficient insight
- e. possessed of complete knowledge

4. The candidate knew he had to defend himself against charges of **nepotism** made against the previous administration.

- a. misappropriation of public funds
- b. favoritism shown to relatives
- c. indecisiveness in dealing with legislators
- d. unwillingness to hear opinions of others
- e. stirring up controversy

5. Everyone did his best to placate the two factions, yet no one could prevent the inevitable **imbroglio** we all anticipated.

- a. impasse
- b. bitter altercation
- c. complete silence
- d. slight reduction in tension
- e. departure of all concerned

6. In that court, according to observers, most judges are known for the **lenity** of the sentences they hand down.

- a. fairness
- b. unmerited clemency
- c. severity
- d. evenhandedness
- e. extreme harshness

7. Experts recommend that a defective **helve** is best replaced as soon as the condition is detected.

- a. plaster cast
- b. machine part
- c. die fixture
- d. tool handle
- e. camshaft

8. One taste I shall never forget is that of highly spiced food cooked in **ghee**.

- a. virgin olive oil
- b. clarified butter
- c. vegetable oil
- d. animal fat
- e. fresh coconut milk

9. Despite the thoroughness of the commission's work, the feeling persisted that the public had gained only an **inchoate** understanding of the new tax system.

- a. confused
- b. distorted
- c. misleading
- d. superficial
- e. incomplete

10. By that time the customary **lagniappe** no longer worked its magic.

- a. excessive servility
- b. prompt service
- c. courtesy and efficiency
- d. gift of food and drink
- e. something given by way of good measure

■ ZINGERS

A. **adscititious**: acquired or derived from

- a. family wealth
- b. a chance encounter
- c. an external source