

**WORDS
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**AN ENGLISH
VOCABULARY
BUILDER AND
ANTHOLOGY**

**MARVIN S.
ZUCKERMAN**

**SECOND
EDITION**

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***An English Vocabulary Builder
and Anthology***

SECOND EDITION

Marvin S. Zuckerman

Los Angeles Valley College

GLENCOE PUBLISHING CO., INC.
Encino, California

COLLIER MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS
London

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Printed in the United States of America

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Glencoe Publishing Co., Inc.
17337 Ventura Boulevard
Encino, California 91316
Collier Macmillan Canada, Ltd.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 71752

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 83 82 81 80

ISBN 0-02-479960-2

Acknowledgments

- George Allen & Unwin Ltd., for: Excerpt from pp. 176–90 of *Language in Thought and Action*, 2nd ed., by S. I. Hayakawa. Reprinted by permission of George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
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Preface

At the time of this writing, the first edition of *Words, Words, Words* has been through seven printings and has been used for courses in both vocabulary building and language study.

A second edition is an opportunity to correct and improve. While the market for and organization of this new edition remain the same, certain changes have been made. Questionnaire respondents from around the country were generous and helpful in providing suggestions on how to improve the text. Their reactions, along with my own experiences in using the book in the classroom, are responsible for making *Words, Words, Words* an even more effective tool in helping students to strengthen their vocabularies and to learn more about language in general.

Here is a summary of the revisions in this second edition.

- New chapters on "Passing Vocabulary Tests" and "Dialects of American English," with accompanying exercises, have been added, and the chapter on malapropisms has been deleted.

- The total number of vocabulary words introduced has been expanded from 750 to 800.

- The total number of word elements introduced has been increased from 364 to 384.

- Certain exercises have been altered to minimize ambiguities as to which is the "right" answer.

- The design of the book has been completely changed to improve general readability and appearance.

As with the first edition, *Words, Words, Words, Second Edition*, is organized in chapters (this time sixteen) comprised of articles by well-known writers and authorities on language. The articles range from using the dictionary to passing a vocabulary test to choosing the right word. Within each chapter there are ten separate exercises. Each exercise examines the vocabulary words from different perspectives—etymology, usage, and so on. Thought and discussion questions are also suggested for classroom use or as outside assignments. Each vocabulary word is given its own "search number" to permit constant cross-checking from the exercises to the article in which the word first appeared.

The text concludes with two indexes, the first on commonly formed roots, prefixes, and suffixes, which unlock from 20,000 to 50,000 additional words. The second index lists all 800 vocabulary words used throughout the text and the page numbers on which they are found.*

Words, Words, Words introduces its 800 words into a reader's vocabulary in the same way practically all the words we now possess came into our vocabularies; that is, naturally, by way of numerous encounters in many different contexts. And, because the articles that present those words all center around the same broad topic, the reader will not only master the new terms and word elements but will also learn a great deal about the history and nature of words and language in general.

The 800 words have not been chosen arbitrarily, but rather because they occur with high frequency in serious writing, both fiction and nonfiction. Many of them are often included in college entrance, civil service, graduate record, personnel screening, achievement, aptitude, and IQ tests of all kinds. The fact that most of the 800 words appear several times throughout this book, in articles written by a variety of professional authors, is testimony to their currency.

In addition to the indexes covering all the words and word elements introduced in the text, each chapter is provided with a separate alphabetical listing of the words introduced in that chapter. This listing allows the reader (or instructor) to choose which words, from among those introduced in a chapter, he especially wants to concentrate on.

The order of the chapters, though dictated to some extent by the content of the articles, is flexible enough to be varied by any user.

In the course of preparing this book, it became evident that some of the words in the articles were unusual not so much in themselves as in the way they were used. For example, **sense**, **suggestion**, **retire**, **fantastic**, **common**, **wake**, **figure**, and **bald** may seem ordinary until one examines their contexts and sees the rather extraordinary work they were given to do. This experience helps the reader to understand that it is not only "big" words that contribute to an effective vocabulary, but also many of the "little" words he already knows. On this point, chapter 9 should be particularly instructive.

The Answer Key that accompanies *Words, Words, Words* provides answers to all appropriate text exercises.

I would like at this opportunity to express my thanks to Roland Gagon and Elmer Baldwin at Northrop for extended leave and forbearance; Don Mealy at Northrop for my initial total immersion in the world of write, edit, and rewrite; Harrison West, former Chairman of the English Department at Los Angeles Valley College, for starting the whole thing by giving me English 23, "Vocabulary," to teach; Dr. Gertrude Fujii, Chairman of the English Department, LAVC, for allowing me to continue; Mort Tennenbaum, Chairman of the English Department, West

*By means of a programmer and a computer, it has been possible to locate and boldface all 800 words wherever they appear, in any form, anywhere in the book, thus allowing students to see a new or half-familiar word at work in a variety of natural contexts. We know of no other text that has this feature.

Los Angeles College, for encouragement in the early stages; all my students in English 23 at LAVC; Karen Callahan for being my "girl Saturday"; Wanda Horning for much help at the start; Louise Bennett for all her help at the last; there was also an initial Worthy contribution; Liz Oberstein for help with roots; Ann Cane for moral support; Mrs. Venettis for truly faithful service throughout the years; Deborah Winters for joy and pretty; Clay Howard for programmatic consulting; Doug Arter at the Los Angeles Valley College, computer center; Ingrid Horowitz for expert typing and other help; Ken and Bunny Dohrmann for sage advice; Katherine and John D-e-c-k-e-r, for crucial diagnostic assistance; Lee and Isobel; Leo and Eleanor; Bartolo and Anna; Paul and Lupi for a most generous trade; Mimi for her ineluctable modalities; Fritz for model as book-maker; my parents, Manye and Rubin Zuckerman, for all the first and best words I ever learned (in Yiddish and English); David and Philip for diverting interruptions; and last, but far from least, Katzie, for being a good wife.

Diagnostic Test

The following twenty-five questions present a representative sampling of the 800 words introduced in this book. The answers are printed upside down at the end of the test. Choose the answer closest in meaning.

If you miss from one to two, you have an excellent vocabulary already. You, especially, will profit from the articles in this book, and also from a study of the word roots introduced; you will increase your present vocabulary by approximately ten to fifteen percent.

If you miss from three to five, your present vocabulary is very good; a study of this textbook will raise it to excellent.

If you miss from six to ten, you have a good vocabulary; working through this text will raise it to very good or excellent.

If you miss from eleven to fifteen, your vocabulary is fair and needs attention; careful study of this book will raise it to good, very good, or even excellent.

If you miss sixteen or more, your vocabulary might best be termed anemic; you will benefit greatly from a study of this textbook.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------|
| 1. alluded (1:20)* | a. <u>r</u> eferred | b. restricted | _____ |
| | c. deferred | d. neglected | _____ |
| 2. hackneyed (1:35) | a. <u>a</u> bused | b. sliced | _____ |
| | c. bowlegged | d. commonplace | _____ |
| 3. marauding (2:36) | a. mutilating | b. perambulating | _____ |
| | c. <u>s</u> oaring | d. raiding | _____ |
| 4. condone (3:38) | a. <u>f</u> orgive | b. anticipate | _____ |
| | c. encourage | d. chastise | _____ |
| 5. opprobrious (4:33) | a. fitting | b. cumbersome | _____ |
| | c. flattering | d. repugnant | _____ |

*The numbers in parentheses after each word indicate the chapter where the word is first introduced and its "find number" within that chapter. For example, "(1:20)" after "alluded" means that it is first introduced in chapter 1 and is followed by the number 20 wherever it appears in the article and exercises in that chapter.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| 6. milieu (5:36) | a. milium | b. abandon | _____ |
| | c. confusion | d. environment | |
| 7. occlude (6:17) | a. preclude | b. close | _____ |
| | c. include | d. glide | |
| 8. nuance (7:14) | a. trance | b. seance | _____ |
| | c. subtlety | d. identical | |
| 9. pejorative (8:27) | a. depreciatory | b. fallacious | _____ |
| | c. monetary | d. helpful | |
| 10. pretentious (8:29) | a. showy | b. extended | _____ |
| | c. oblivious | d. before entering | |
| 11. swathe (9:21) | a. cut through | b. envelop | _____ |
| | c. smooth | d. swarthy | |
| 12. mellifluous (10:16) | a. liquid | b. sweet | _____ |
| | c. disharmonious | d. melodious | |
| 13. commingle (10:50) | a. interact | b. revolt | _____ |
| | c. blend | d. share | |
| 14. jaded (11:5) | a. tainted | b. jeweled | _____ |
| | c. exhausted | d. faded | |
| 15. prevaricating (12:39) | a. lying | b. assembling | _____ |
| | c. confounding | d. describing | |
| 16. hedonism (13:16) | a. hellish desire | b. psychological disorder | _____ |
| | c. social tenet | d. dedication to pleasure | |
| 17. chauvinism (13:34) | a. stark realism | b. poor showmanship | _____ |
| | c. exaggerated patriotism | d. yellow journalism | |
| 18. sardonic (13:47) | a. bitterly ironic | b. joyful | _____ |
| | c. funereal | d. illegitimate | |
| 19. garrulous (14:33) | a. autonomous | b. gigantic | _____ |
| | c. talkative | d. famous | |
| 20. lithe (14:49) | a. awkward | b. supple | _____ |
| | c. athletic | d. stiff | |

21. deft (15:21)	a. crazy	b. dexterous	_____
	c. thoughtless	d. hard-of-hearing	
22. assiduous (15:11)	a. arduous	b. vitriolic	_____
	c. caustic	d. diligent	
23. inchoate (15:24)	a. anarchic	b. incapable	_____
	c. flagrant	d. beginning	
24. anomalous (15:47)	a. controversial	b. private	_____
	c. aggressive	d. irregular	
25. sanguine (16:13)	a. optimistic	b. wise	_____
	c. timid	d. lethargic	

ANSWERS:

1(a), 2(d), 3(d), 4(a), 5(d), 6(d), 7(b), 8(c), 9(a), 10(a), 11(b), 12(b), 13(c), 14(c), 15(a), 16(d), 17(c), 18(a), 19(c), 20(b), 21(b), 22(d), 23(d), 24(d), 25(a).

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The Dictionary

*Much Phrase that now is dead shall be
reviv'd
And Much shall dye, that now is nobly
liv'd,
If Custom please; at whose disposing
Will,
The pow'r and Rule of Speaking resteth
still.*
BEN JONSON (from *An English Dictionary*, by E. Coles, London, 1717)

What's in a Word?

WILLIAM W. WATT

Those words which you have worked to get
will almost certainly come when you need
them again.

EDWARD WEEKS

"The way to **acquire** a good vocabulary is to look up in the dictionary every word you don't understand and find out exactly what it means." At first glance this student sentence appears as foolproof as an axiom from mathematics. But the more it is examined by a critical reader, the more questions it raises. What is a good vocabulary? Is using the dictionary the only way to **acquire** one? What is "the dictionary"? What does it mean to "look up a word in the dictionary"? Can any dictionary tell you "exactly" what a word means? What does it mean to talk about what a word means? Although these questions bear a family resemblance to the annoying quibbles in which the classroom prosecutor often indulges, they are fundamental to an understanding of words. To answer them in much detail would require a long excursion into the tangled jungle of *semantics*, the intricate study of the meaning of meaning. To answer them briefly is the purpose of this chapter.