

Vocabulary Warm-up Word Lists

Study these words from the selection. Then, complete the activities.

Word List A

adversity [ad VER si tee] *n.* great hardship; misfortune

Forest fires, droughts, and mudslides can cause adversity for people.

courteous [KER tee us] *adj.* considerate of others; polite

It is important for a receptionist to be courteous to visitors.

devout [di VOWT] *adj.* extremely religious; pious

The devout woman could be seen going to church every day.

dispense [di SPENS] *v.* administer; distribute in portions

It was the head nurse's responsibility to dispense the medicine.

distinguished [di STING gwisht] *adj.* marked by excellence; well-known

All the world leaders respected the distinguished diplomat.

pilgrimages [PIL gruhm ij iz] *n.* journeys to shrines or sacred places

The man has made pilgrimages to Mecca and other religious cities.

prudent [PROOD uhnt] *adj.* using good judgment; acting wisely

The prudent shopper spends less than he or she earns.

repented [ree PENT id] *v.* felt remorse or regret; resolved to reform

The thief repented and returned the stolen items.

Word List B

agility [uh JIL i tee] *n.* ability to move with ease and speed

The player's agility allowed her to return the ball after a difficult serve.

dainty [DAYN tee] *adj.* tiny and delicately beautiful

The dainty teapot, made of fine china, held only one cup of tea.

diligent [DIL uh juhnt] *adj.* marked by effort and care

The diligent employee was valued for her careful, dependable work.

dispatch [di SPACH] *v.* send to a destination or on specific business

The need to dispatch a messenger showed that the matter was urgent.

frugal [FROO guhl] *adj.* thrifty; economical; inexpensive

Her frugal lunch consisted of a peanut butter sandwich and an apple.

prompt [PRAHMPT] *adj.* acting or arriving on time or without delay

If you are prompt and arrive on time, we won't have to wait for you.

sundry [SUHN dree] *adj.* miscellaneous; various

The boy's pockets contained string, rocks, and sundry other items.

unanimously [yoo NAN uh muhs lee] *adv.* with everyone agreeing

The candidate was elected unanimously; not one person voted against her.

from the Prologue from The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer
Vocabulary Warm-up Exercises

Exercise A Fill in each blank in the paragraph with the appropriate word from Word List A. Use each word only once.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, kings often commissioned the construction of cathedrals—they thought it would be [1] _____ to be seen as supporters of the church. The builders were not generally important or [2] _____ people. Instead, they were ordinary people who contributed their labor and skill. Often progress was slowed by hardships, but despite the [3] _____, the workers dedicated themselves to these stone masterpieces. In cathedrals, [4] _____ Christians prayed piously and [5] _____ their sins. Some cathedrals were not just places of worship but also the destination of [6] _____. In addition, they were centers of learning. They explored subjects from serious philosophy to the rules of [7] _____ behavior. To students who met the requirements, they would [8] _____ degrees. In many ways, then, the cathedral was the center of medieval society.

Exercise B Revise each sentence so that the underlined vocabulary word is used in a logical way. Be sure to keep the vocabulary word in your revision.

Example: Because the cook was frugal, he never bought ingredients that were on sale.
 Because the cook was frugal, he always bought ingredients that were on sale.

1. Because Will was diligent, his parents nagged him to finish his homework.

2. The gymnast's natural agility kept her from becoming a finalist in the competition.

3. The manager fired any worker who was consistently prompt.

4. The teammates could not agree on a captain, so they chose Lauren unanimously.

5. The college offered sundry courses in science, so biology was the only choice.

6. The operator will dispatch the messenger to make sure he has no work to do.

7. The dainty statuette was huge and solidly made.

from the Prologue from The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer
Reading Warm-up A

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

Travel in the Middle Ages was slow and difficult, and travelers were subject to adversity. People who were well-known and excellent in their field—distinguished scholars, for example—as well as pilgrims and actors moved freely through Europe. Most people, however, never wandered more than a few miles from their birthplace. If they did go on journeys or pilgrimages, they were guided by the advice of other travelers. This advice was not reliable, however, because travel conditions changed constantly. Maps did not offer much help either, because they were often inaccurate.

Medieval travelers usually set off on foot or by oxcart, since horses were a luxury reserved for the wealthy. If conditions were favorable, a traveler could walk about twenty miles a day. Conditions were rarely favorable, however. Even the main roads were little more than paths that became impassable during snowstorms and rainstorms. Dense woods hid thieves and bandits who preyed on passersby. Inns offered meals and beds, but they were not pleasant places. Sometimes guests were not courteous—they might treat a fellow traveler rudely. Not infrequently, too, guests might be dishonest. Therefore, prudent travelers set forth in groups, hoping to find protection in numbers.

A ship or riverboat was a quicker, less expensive option for traveling a long distance. Travel by water had its own perils, however. Storms and pirates made it just as dangerous as travel by land. Still, many devout Christians, who valued religious acts more than personal safety, undertook journeys to the Holy Land or to shrines closer to home. There, wishing to cleanse themselves of remorse, they repented their sins. They believed that the church would dispense spiritual pardons, granting forgiveness because of the severe hardships they endured.

1. Circle the words that hint at the meaning of adversity. Write a sentence about overcoming *adversity*.
2. Underline the words that explain what might make a person distinguished. Describe someone who is *distinguished*.
3. Underline the words that tell what travelers relied on when they went on pilgrimages. Define *pilgrimages* in your own words.
4. Underline the words that describe the opposite of courteous behavior. Describe a *courteous* person.
5. Circle the words that explain why prudent travelers set forth in groups. Then, tell what *prudent* means.
6. Circle the words that suggest the meaning of devout. Use *devout* in a sentence of your own.
7. Underline the words that are a clue to the meaning of repented. Tell what *repented* means.
8. Circle the word that suggests the meaning of dispense. What is a synonym for *dispense*?

from the Prologue from The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer

Reading Warm-up B

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

Thomas Becket was born in 1118 in London. Handsome, athletic, and well educated, he proved to be a charming, diligent administrator and diplomat, putting great effort and care into his work. He therefore pleased the archbishop, who appointed him to an important post in the church. The king, Henry II, also named Becket to an important post, so that Becket might use his sundry skills—in law, religion, and matters of state—to carry out delicate missions. Becket was expected to represent the church but instead used his verbal agility, speaking with ease and speed, to support the king's interests. Henry rewarded Becket with wealth and lavish entertainments. In 1162, the king nominated his friend to the position of archbishop, a post Becket was reluctant to accept. The king insisted, however, and Becket was made a priest and, in an unusually prompt manner—with hardly any delay—named archbishop of Canterbury.

Almost at once, Becket became pious and frugal, refusing the dainty, delicately beautiful luxuries he had previously enjoyed. He infuriated Henry by making the church his priority. A series of minor disputes developed into a major quarrel, and fearing for his life, Becket fled to France, where he remained for six years. In 1170, the two men appeared to have unanimously agreed to resolve their differences, and Becket returned to Canterbury. Nevertheless, he refused to pardon the bishops who had taken the king's side in the quarrel. When Henry learned about this, he is said to have shouted, "Who will rid me of this meddlesome priest?"

The king's anger inspired four knights to dispatch themselves to Canterbury and murder Becket in the cathedral there. Becket's death outraged the kingdom, and Henry repented publicly.

1. Underline the words that describe Becket's diligent habits. Define diligent in your own words.
2. Underline the words that tell about Becket's sundry skills. What is a synonym for sundry?
3. Circle the words that hint at the meaning of agility. Use agility in a sentence of your own.
4. Circle the words that hint at the meaning of prompt. Use prompt in a sentence.
5. Underline the words that tell how a frugal person might act. Then, tell what frugal means.
6. Circle the words that define dainty. Use dainty in a sentence.
7. Circle the words that tell what the two former friends resolved unanimously. Then, tell what unanimously means.
8. Circle the words that tell what inspired the knights to dispatch themselves. Then, explain what dispatch means.