

Lesson 9

For more practice and games, go to www.WordlyWise3000.com.



Word List

Study the definitions of the words. Then do the exercises that follow.

advantage
əd van' tĭj

n. Something that is helpful or useful.

It is an **advantage** to be able to speak French when visiting Paris.

take advantage of *v.* To make use of; to benefit oneself by treating others unfairly.

Martina **took advantage of** her position as camp leader by giving all the best jobs to her friends.

astonish
əstā' nĭsh

v. To surprise or amaze.

It **astonished** me to discover that my new friend and I were born on the same day in the same town.

astonishment *n.* Great surprise or amazement.

The children watched in **astonishment** as the magician pulled a rabbit out of a hat.

confirm
kén fĕrm'

v. 1. To show or prove to be true.

Before giving me a library card, the librarian asked me to **confirm** my street address by showing a copy of my phone bill.

2. To approve or give one's agreement to.

The members of Congress vote to **confirm** the appointment of Supreme Court judges.

distant
dis' tənt

adj. 1. Very far away in time.

Space travel in the very **distant** future may involve journeys to the stars.

2. Very far away; not near or close by.

Marco Polo's travels took him to many **distant** lands.

distance *n.* The length of the space between two places.

The **distance** between Deneen's home and her school was exactly one mile.

founder
faun' dər

n. A person who sets up something that lasts.

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are two of the **founders** of our nation.

v. To sink below the surface of the water.

The ship struck a rock and **foundered** before a rescue team could reach it.

hamlet
ham' lət

n. A small village.

A single street ran through the **hamlet**, which had one church, a general store, and about a hundred houses.

host *n.* 1. A large number.
Graceland is visited by **hosts** of people from all over the world who come to see the house where Elvis Presley lived.

2. One who greets and entertains guests and takes care of their needs at a party or restaurant.
The guests said goodbye to their **host** and thanked him for a lovely New Year's Eve party.

misgiving *n.* A feeling of doubt, uncertainty, or concern about what may happen in the future.
If Ellen had any **misgivings** about joining the group, she gave no sign of it.

parch *v.* To make or become very dry.
The sun **parched** the fields and made the grass turn brown.

parched (*pärcht*) *adj.* Lacking water; thirsty.
We didn't take enough water with us, and we were **parched** before we came to the end of our walk.

prospect *n.* Something that is waited for, expected, or hoped for.
All the hotels were full, and there seemed little **prospect** of our finding a place to spend the night.

v. To look in the ground for valuable metals like gold and silver.
The four men camped alongside the river told us they were **prospecting** for gold.

prospector *n.* A person who explores an area to look for valuable metals.
The **prospector** let out a whoop of joy when he saw some shiny yellow objects lying on the riverbank.

scarce *adj.* In short supply; not plentiful.
When gasoline is **scarce**, the price goes up.

scarcity (*sker' sät ē*) *n.* A shortage.
Due to the **scarcity** of candles in the store when the hurricane struck, customers were allowed only two each.

shrewd *adj.* Clever; good at understanding what is needed and acting on it.
A **shrewd** lawyer prepares her client to answer questions she knows the client will be asked in court.

sole *adj.* Being the only one of its kind; belonging to only one person or group.
söl After her husband died, Mrs. Mazoor became the **sole** owner of the toy store.

n. 1. The bottom surface of the foot or of a shoe or boot.
Shoes with leather **soles** usually cost more than those made of plastic.
2. A flat fish that is caught and eaten for food.
Grilled **sole** is a popular item on the seafood restaurant's menu.

torment *n.* Great pain or suffering.
tôr' ment I cannot imagine the **torment** suffered by a wild animal caught in a steel trap.

(tôr ment') *v.* To cause pain or suffering.
The thought that she might have been the cause of the accident **tormented** the driver of the car.

typical *adj.* Being like others of its kind.
tip' i kəl A **typical** home in this area has three bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and one bathroom.

9A Finding Meanings

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 9. Write each sentence in the space provided.

advantage
astonish
confirm
distant
founder
hamlet
host
misgiving
parch
prospect
scarce
shrewd
sole
torment
typical

1. (a) A hamlet is (c) An advantage is
(b) a small village. (d) a large number.

2. (a) is to hurt that person. (c) is to care for that person.
(b) To torment someone (d) To astonish someone

3. (a) A typical city (c) is one that is far away.
(b) is one that is very old. (d) A distant city

4. (a) the only one of its kind. (c) A founder is
(b) A sole is (d) a flat fish used for food.
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-

5. (a) A shrewd plan (c) is one that is cleverly thought out.
(b) is one that is kept secret. (d) A typical plan
-
-

6. (a) To astonish someone (c) To confirm someone
(b) is to get rid of that person. (d) is to approve that person's
appointment.
-
-

7. (a) doubts about the future. (c) Advantages are
(b) unwanted gifts. (d) Misgivings are
-
-

8. (a) To founder is to (c) To prospect is to
(b) sink below the surface. (d) start over.
-
-

9. (a) very thirsty. (c) To be parched is to be
(b) To be scarce is to be (d) not wanted or needed.
-
-

10. (a) To take advantage of someone (c) To astonish someone
(b) is to amaze that person. (d) is to dislike that person.
-
-

Improve each of the following sentences by crossing out the bold phrase and replacing it with a word (or a form of the word) from Word List 9.

1. The **length of an imaginary line** from Earth to the moon is about a quarter of a million miles.
2. The hot sun had **taken every drop of moisture out of** the soil so that nothing grew.
3. Being tall is a great **helpful thing that can make all the difference** to a basketball player.
4. After twenty-two miles, Asad was the **one and only** runner left in the race.
5. Simon was very **good at knowing what to do in every situation**, and he managed to cause trouble for others without ever getting into trouble himself.
6. Mr. Bullwhistle is the **person who was the first owner** of this company.
7. Blankets were **in short supply, without enough to go around**, so some campers got one and some got none.
8. Today's weather was **just like it usually is** on the island: it rained in the morning and poured in the afternoon.
9. A **very large number** of people came together in the park to celebrate Earth Day.
10. Baby Alice was busy **being cruel and causing pain to** the cat by pulling its tail.

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Circle the letter or letters of each correct answer. A question may have more than one correct answer.

1. Which of the following could cause **torment**?
(a) a bad sunburn (c) looking at the moon
(b) a broken shoelace (d) scoring the winning goal

2. Which of the following has a **sole**?
(a) a fish (c) a boot
(b) a foot (d) a shoe

3. Which of the following might affect a person's **prospects** for getting into college?
(a) red hair (c) poor grades
(b) leadership qualities (d) ability at sports

4. Which of the following could easily be taken **advantage** of?
(a) a weak person (c) a strong person
(b) a foolish person (d) a small child

5. Which of the following might a **typical** American traveling abroad carry?
(a) a camera (c) a bucket
(b) a guide book (d) a telescope

6. Which of the following might cause a **scarcity** of water?
(a) too much demand for it (c) a flood
(b) too little rain (d) thirst

7. Which of the following might cause **astonishment**?
(a) a summer snowstorm (c) a talking cat
(b) a flying car (d) a red apple

8. Which of the following can be **confirmed**?
(a) a sigh (c) a fact
(b) a result (d) beauty

In Lesson 5 you learned that words sometimes have more than one part and that there are names for these different parts. The part that comes at the beginning of a word is called a prefix. Prefixes change the meanings of words, sometimes turning them into their opposites: *un-* changes *happy* to *unhappy*.

It's time now to look at the part that forms the ending of some words. It's called a suffix. Suffixes have an important job also. For one thing, they change words from one part of speech to another.

Change each of the verbs into a noun by adding the correct suffix and writing the word in the space provided. All of the words are from earlier lessons.

1. alter _____
2. confuse _____
3. exclaim _____
4. intend _____
5. persist _____
6. migrate _____
7. prepare _____
8. locate _____

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Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow it.

The Forty-Niners



The story was in all the newspapers. It was December of 1848. Television and radio were in the **distant** future; newspapers were the **sole** means of finding out what was going on in the world. And something was going on in California! Millions of people in homes across the United States read about it over the breakfast table.

President James Polk had just **confirmed** what until then only a few people knew for certain. Gold had been discovered in California, lots of it. Now everyone knew.

A **typical** worker in the 1840s earned about a dollar a day. Gold sold for twenty dollars an ounce. And in California, gold was lying on the ground and in streambeds, just waiting to be picked up. Not surprisingly, thousands of Americans quit their jobs and headed west. Many left behind their families. If they had **misgivings**, they tried to hide them from their wives and children. The plan was to return as soon as they struck it rich. It was now 1849. Those who joined the **hosts** taking part in the California Gold Rush were called the "forty-niners."

There were no airplanes, no trains, no cars, and no roads to California in 1849. San Francisco was a **hamlet** of less than two thousand people. Many Easterners went there by ship. From New York, they had to sail seventeen thousand miles around the tip of South America. The journey took about six months. Those with families and lots of goods to carry traveled overland by covered wagon. This journey also took about six months. Crossing the Nevada desert was the worst part of the journey. Water was **scarce**; often the travelers had drunk the last drop with days to go before the journey's end. They were easy victims for merchants who set out from San Francisco and traveled east to meet the **parched** travelers. These businessmen brought wagons loaded with barrels of water. The travelers could now get water—for a price. **Tormented** by thirst, they paid a dollar, five dollars, even a hundred dollars for a glass of the precious liquid.

Merchants like these took **advantage** of the law of supply and demand. This law states that something is worth whatever someone is willing to pay for it. Sam Brannan understood this law better than anyone. He was a San Francisco merchant and one of the city's **founders**. The people who had first discovered the gold had tried to keep it quiet. But word leaked out. Soon

after Brannan heard the news, he repeated it to crowds of eager listeners. He waved a jar of gold dust as proof. Suddenly, lots of people wanted tools for gold digging. They needed pick axes and shovels. They needed the metal pans used to sift through small rocks, water, and sand. And people could get these tools—again, for a price. Before spreading the good news, Brannan had prepared. He had gone around the area **shrewdly** buying up every pick ax, shovel, and pan he could find. A metal pan Brannan bought for twenty cents he could now sell for fifteen dollars. And even at that price, there was no shortage of takers. In nine weeks, Brannan made thirty-six thousand dollars. He went on to become the richest man in California. He was so rich he even printed his own money!

Over a quarter of a million people had poured into California by the mid-1850s. Many of the new arrivals were drawn to San Francisco. The city grew at an **astounding** rate. The price of a house went up tenfold in less than a year. For a period of time, the number of people living there doubled every ten days. Most never got rich, and many who did were not able to hold on to their newfound wealth. Sam Brannan died a poor man in 1889; he didn't even leave enough money to pay for his own burial. There were some winners, though. These were the forty-niners who had come not to **prospect** for gold but to work hard at ordinary jobs. These were the ones who built California and made it what it is today: the Golden State.

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► Answer each of the following questions in the form of a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word from the lesson's word list, use one in your answer. Use each word only once.

1. By what nickname were the **hosts** of people heading for California known?

2. How did some businessmen get rich off the suffering of **parched** travelers?

3. Why do you think these businessmen took **advantage** of these travelers?

4. Why did water cost so much?

5. Did most people earn a lot of money in the 1840s?

6. Describe some of the **torments** travelers in the desert suffered.

7. Was San Francisco a big city in the early 1840s?

8. What **misgivings** might some of the people who left their homes in the East have had?

9. Who was Sam Brannan?

10. In what way had Sam Brannan acted **shrewdly** before spreading the news that gold had been discovered?

11. Which well-known person **confirmed** that gold had been found in California?

12. What was the **distance** between New York and California by boat?

13. How might you describe the growth of San Francisco between 1850 and 1855?

14. What are people who try to find gold called?

15. What was the **sole** means of finding out what was going on in California in the days before radio and television?

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FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

• *Astound* (Lesson 4) and **astonish** are synonyms. A third synonym, less common, is *thunderstruck*. It expresses even greater surprise. If you are thunderstruck, you feel as if you have been struck by lightning, thunder's frequent companion. *Astound* and *astonish* are formed from the Latin word *tonere*, meaning "to thunder"!

• In Exercise D you learned how suffixes change one part of speech to another; for example, the suffix *-ation* changes the verb *alter* into the noun *alteration*. Another suffix, *-ess*, changes nouns that refer to males into nouns that refer to females. *Lion* becomes *lioness*, *actor* becomes *actress*, and *host* becomes *hostess*.