



Word List

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

avalanche
av' ə lanch*n.* 1. A great mass of ice, earth, or snow mixed with rocks sliding down a mountain.The mountain climbers had a narrow escape when the **avalanche** swept over them.

2. A great amount of something.

Our company had an **avalanche** of orders after we used a television ad for our new game.**blizzard**
bliz' ə rd*n.* A heavy snowstorm with strong winds.The Chicago airport had to close for two days because of the **blizzard**.**challenge**
chal' ə nj*v.* 1. To invite others to take part in a contest.I **challenged** my friend to a game of chess.

2. To cause a person to use a lot of skill or effort.

This trail **challenges** even the best skiers.

3. To question or to argue against, especially when something is unfair or unjust.

Very few scientists **challenge** the idea that a large meteorite killed off the last of the dinosaurs sixty-five million years ago.*n.* 1. An interesting task or problem; something that takes skill or effort.Living out of our backpacks for a week on the mountain was a real **challenge**.

2. A call to take part in a contest.

I accepted the **challenge** to run in the marathon.**conquer**
kən' kər*v.* 1. To get the better of.Swimming lessons at the YMCA helped me to **conquer** my fear of the water.

2. To defeat.

Hannibal's army **conquered** part of Spain in 219 B.C.E.**conquest** *n.* The act of defeating.The Norman **conquest** of England took place in 1066.**crevice**
krev' is*n.* A deep, narrow opening in rock caused by a split or crack.The **crevice** had filled with soil in which a cluster of small red flowers was growing.

foolhardy
fōol' hār dē

adj. Unwisely bold or daring.
It would be **foolhardy** to go sailing during a gale.

lure
loor

v. To tempt or attract with the promise of something good.
In the early nineteenth century, the hope of owning land of their own **lured** many people to travel west to Ohio and Indiana.
n. 1. Something that attracts.
The **lure** of the sea led us to take up sailing.
2. Artificial bait used for fishing.
A large striped bass took the **lure**, and I hooked it.

makeshift
māk' shift

n. A temporary and usually less strong replacement.
They used the trailer as a **makeshift** while their house was being rebuilt.
adj. Used as a temporary replacement.
We use the sofa as a **makeshift** bed when we have overnight guests.

optimist
öp' tə mist

n. One who looks at things in the most positive way; a cheerful, hopeful person.
Pat and Jean are **optimists** and so, of course, they believed the plane would not leave without us.
optimistic *adj.* Cheerful; hopeful.
In spite of the injuries to our best players, I am **optimistic** about our chances of winning the big game.
optimism *n.* A feeling of hope or cheerfulness.
The patients' **optimism** helped them recover more quickly from their illnesses.

previous
prē' vē əs

adj. Earlier; happening before.
Although I missed the last meeting, I attended the two **previous** ones.

route
rōot

n. 1. The path that must be followed to get to a place.
Our **route** to Seattle takes us through Denver.
2. A fixed course or area assigned to a sales or delivery person.
Magali has over a hundred customers on her newspaper **route**.

summit
sum' it

n. 1. The highest part; the top.
It took us three hours to climb to the **summit** of Mount Washington.
2. A conference or meeting of the top leaders of governments.
The **summit** of African heads of state will take place in Nairobi in late June.

terse
tērs

adj. Short and to the point.
When I said I was sure we would be rescued soon, my friend's **terse** reply was, "How?"

thwart v. To block or defeat the plans or efforts of.
thwôrt Heavy fighting **thwarted** the UN's attempts to deliver food.

vertical *adj.* Running straight up and down; upright.
vêrt' i kæl The black **vertical** lines in this painting are what one notices first.

5A Finding Meanings

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 5. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) the way to reach the top. (c) A lure is
(b) a meeting of heads of state. (d) A summit is

2. (a) An optimistic statement is one (c) A previous statement is one
(b) that is released to the public. (d) that was made earlier.

3. (a) To lure someone is (c) to offer help or advice to that person.
(b) To thwart someone is (d) to tempt that person with promises.

4. (a) an area assigned to a (c) a payment for something done.
salesperson. (d) A route is
(b) A crevice is

5. (a) To be thwarted is to be (c) prevented from carrying out one's plans.
(b) To be challenged is to be (d) attracted by promises.
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6. (a) An optimistic report is one (c) that is written out.
(b) that is hopeful. (d) A terse report is one
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7. (a) a call to take part in a contest. (c) A challenge is
(b) a severe snowstorm with high winds. (d) An avalanche is
-
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8. (a) A makeshift file is one that (c) stores things upright.
(b) A vertical file is one that (d) gets narrower toward the top.
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9. (a) A foolhardy remark is one (c) that sounds threatening.
(b) that is short and to the point. (d) A terse remark is one
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-

10. (a) a split or crack in rock. (c) A blizzard is
(b) a mass of falling rocks and snow. (d) An avalanche is
-
-

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vertical

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 5.

1. Your **daring but unwise** leap off the boat almost cost you your life.
2. What kind of **artificial bait** is best for catching bluefish?
3. Being appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was the **highest point** of General Colin Powell's military career.
4. According to the radio, we can expect a **severe snowstorm with very strong winds** tonight.
5. 'm driving to Yellowstone this summer and wonder which would be the best **way to get there**.
6. The German army's **defeat of the armed forces** of France in 1940 took less than four weeks.
7. A **deep, narrow opening made by a split in the rock** provided a toehold for the climbers making their way up the cliff face.
8. Swimming across the lake will be quite a **difficult task requiring great skill and effort**.
9. What is the reason for Gail's **feeling that all will go well?**
10. Bruno didn't have a pillow, so he used a rolled-up coat as a **temporary replacement for one** and slept quite soundly.

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

- Which of the following might an **optimist** say?
 - "Things could be a lot worse!"
 - "Don't count your chickens."
 - "What's the use?"
 - "I know we can do it."
- Which of the following might be a **lure** to a person?
 - the Broadway stage
 - the presidency
 - an ocean voyage
 - a tropical island
- Which of the following might **challenge** a person?
 - competing in the Olympics
 - watching a TV show
 - driving a racing car
 - reading a comic book
- Of which of the following could there be an **avalanche**?
 - letters
 - orders
 - gales
 - requests
- Which of the following would you expect to be **vertical**?
 - a sleeping person
 - a front door
 - the horizon
 - a stairway
- Which of the following might **thwart** someone?
 - support from a friend
 - a sudden change in the weather
 - a flat tire
 - lack of money
- Which of the following is **foolhardy**?
 - skating on thin ice
 - riding a horse
 - losing your wallet
 - eating salad
- Which of the following can be **terse**?
 - a comment
 - muscles
 - a phone conversation
 - an aroma

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A prefix comes at the beginning of a word. The part that comes at the end is called a suffix. A suffix can change a word from one part of speech to another. The *-ive* ending changes the verb *create* into the adjective *creative*. The *-or* ending changes it into the noun *creator*. Notice that you may have to add, drop, or change some letters in the word before you add the suffix.

Turn the following verbs into nouns by adding the suffix *-ment*, *-ion*, *-ing*, or *-or*.

1. assign _____
2. distract _____
3. crave _____
4. survive _____

Turn the following nouns into adjectives by adding the suffix *-ic*, *-al*, or *-ous*.

5. optimist _____
6. horizon _____
7. nostalgia _____
8. carnivore _____

Turn the following adjectives into nouns by adding the suffix *-cy*, *-(t)ion*, or *-ence*.

9. accurate _____
10. jubilant _____
11. obedient _____
12. patient _____

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

On Top of the World



The world's greatest climbers have always been drawn to Mount Everest. In trying to climb it, however, many have been **lured** to their deaths. Everest is located on the border of two Asian countries, Nepal and Tibet. It is part of the Himalayan mountain chain north of India. It is just over twenty-nine thousand feet high. Other mountains are more difficult to climb and offer a greater **challenge**.

But because it is the world's highest mountain, Everest has a special place in our imaginations.

Every attempt to reach the top requires careful planning and can cost over a quarter of a million dollars. Often climbers hire Nepalese guides called Sherpas. Sherpas are skilled and experienced mountaineers. Together they work out the **route** to take and set up camps along the way.

Because the air is so thin near the top, climbers need to bring oxygen with them. This adds greatly to the weight that must be carried. In recent years, small groups of climbers have made attempts on Everest without oxygen and without relying on Sherpas. Their daring method has been to travel fast and light. They stay in temporary shelters as they make their way up and down.

Where the mountain rises **vertically**, climbers drive spikes into **crevices** in the rock. Then they pull each other up with ropes. They must be very careful. A loose stone or even a loud noise can start an **avalanche**. An avalanche can bury those caught in its path or sweep them to their deaths. In addition, climbers must be alert to the weather because it can change suddenly for the worse. **Blizzards** often strike with little warning. This forces climbers to scramble for **makeshift** shelter until the danger has passed.

The first people to reach the top of Mount Everest were Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay, his Sherpa guide, in 1953. Teams of mountaineers had made at least eight **previous** tries; but all of them had been **thwarted** in their attempts to stand on the highest spot on Earth. Some had been plagued by bad planning, some by bad weather, and some by bad luck. The first woman to **conquer** Mount Everest was Junko Tabei, of Japan, in 1975; the first American woman to do so was Stacy Allison, in 1988.

Mountaineers are by nature **optimists**. They want to believe they will be able to reach the top. At times, however, if either their physical condition or

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the weather is deteriorating, they are forced to ask themselves if it would be **foolhardy** to continue. Their state of mind plays a big part in this decision. They must sometimes decide when they are only a few hundred feet from the **summit**. Many have chosen to continue, a decision that cost them their lives.

By 2008, there had been more than four thousand successful climbs of Mount Everest. Sadly, more than two hundred people have died trying to reach the top. Why do it if it is so difficult and so dangerous? Someone once put this question to the English climber George Mallory. Mallory had made several unsuccessful tries to climb Mount Everest. He died there with less than six hundred feet to go, in 1924. He had answered the question with the **terse** reply, "Because it's there."

▶ 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. What would you think of someone who planned to climb Mount Everest alone?

2. What is the meaning of **challenge** as it is used in the passage?

3. Why would it be unwise to blow an airhorn while high up on Mount Everest?

4. Why would you expect conversations between climbers to be **terse**?

5. Why do climbers watch the weather carefully?

6. What weather conditions would make a mountain climber **optimistic**?

7. How are **crevices** useful to climbers?

8. What is the meaning of **route** as it is used in the passage?

9. What should people do if caught in bad weather while climbing a mountain?

10. When do climbers need to use ropes?

11. What would happen to a team of climbers who couldn't raise enough money for an attempt on Mount Everest?

12. How did George Mallory explain the **lure** of Mount Everest?

13. Why would Mallory have been familiar with Everest on his last climb?

14. How do you suppose climbers know when they have reached the **summit**?

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15. Why would climbers feel **jubilant** while standing on the top of Everest?

FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

- Until 1881, a **blizzard** was a loud noise or blast. In that year the *New York Nation* said: "The hard weather has called into use a word which promises to become a national Americanism, namely *blizzard*. It [is the word for] a storm of snow and wind which we cannot resist away from shelter." That is how the word came to have its present meaning. To be called a blizzard, a storm must have winds above thirty-five miles an hour, a temperature close to zero, blowing snow that reduces visibility, and lasts at least three hours.
- **Route** is sometimes pronounced ROOT and sometimes ROWT; both are correct. Don't confuse this word with *roul*, also pronounced ROWT, which means "a total and complete defeat." *Route* and *root* can be homophones (when both are pronounced ROOT), and so can *route* and *roul* (when both are pronounced ROWT).
- **Vertical** and *horizontal* (Word List 4) are antonyms. In a crossword puzzle the *horizontal* answers must fit perfectly with the *vertical* answers.
- The antonym of **optimist** is *pessimist*. Imagine two people looking at a glass of water. The *optimist* thinks the glass is half full; the *pessimist* thinks it is half empty.



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abolish
ə bäl' ish
v. To bring to an end; to do away with.
Most people would support a plan to **abolish** weapons of mass destruction.

agony
ag' ə nē
n. Great pain of mind or body; suffering.
The pinched nerve caused him **agony** for several weeks.
agonizing *adj.* (ag' ə niz in) Very painful.
Watching their sick child in the hospital bed was **agonizing** to the parents.

catapult
kat' ə pult
n. A machine used in ancient wars that threw objects with great force.
Roman **catapults** could throw six-pound objects almost a third of a mile.
v. To move or be moved suddenly and with great force, as if by a catapult.
The Groaners' latest song **catapulted** them to the top of the country music charts.

character
kâr' ə k tər
n. 1. The qualities that make a person or place different or special.
Your friend's support during your long illness demonstrates her true **character**.
2. A person in a story, movie, or play.
Madame Defarge and Sydney Carton are the two **characters** I remember most clearly from *A Tale of Two Cities*.
3. A letter or symbol used in writing or printing.
The license plate number NKT605 contains six **characters**.

denounce
dē nouns'
v. 1. To speak out against something; to criticize.
The president **denounced** Congress for failing to approve the budget.
2. To accuse someone of doing wrong.
Carla **denounced** Victor, who sat next to her, for cheating on the test.

escalate
es' kə lāt
v. To go up or increase in size or scope.
If house prices continue to **escalate**, many people will be unable to afford to buy a home.