Musee des Beaux Arts  
by W. H. Auden

About suffering they were never wrong,  
The old Masters: how well they understood  
Its human position: how it takes place  
While someone else is eating or opening a window  
or just walking dully along;  
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately  
waiting  
For the miraculous birth, there always must be  
Children who did not specially want it to happen,  
skating  
On a pond at the edge of the wood:  
They never forgot  
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its  
course  
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot  
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the  
torturer’s horse  
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.  
In Breughel’s Icarus, for instance: how everything  
turns away  
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman  
may  
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,  
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun  
shone  
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the  
green  
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must  
have seen  
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,  
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph  
by Anne Sexton

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,  
testing this strange little tug at his shoulder blade,  
and think of that first flawless moment over the  
lawn  
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!  
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;  
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past  
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite  
well:  
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast  
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!  
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually  
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling  
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the  
sea?  
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging  
down  
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

Exercise I: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words  
you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around  
each Master Word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the Master Words.

Master Words
Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don’t know.

acclaim  course  flawless  labyrinth  reverent  
casual  dreadful  forsaken  martyrdom  sensible

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## Exercise 2: Using Context Clues

Fill in the form for each of the Master Words listed below with context clues (if any), your definition, and the dictionary definition. If you have difficulty writing a definition, try using the word in a sentence instead.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Context Clues</th>
<th>Your Definition</th>
<th>Dictionary Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acclaim</td>
<td>v.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>casual</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>course</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dreadful</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flawless</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forsaken</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labyrinth</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>martyrdom</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reverent</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensible</td>
<td>adj.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Exercise 3: Using Words in Context**

Correct or Incorrect: Write C on the line if the word is used correctly; write I if the word is used incorrectly.

1. Acting in a **reverent** manner is appropriate in a church, temple, or mosque.  
2. The thunderstorm made a **dreadful** noise.  
3. My grandfather’s death from natural causes was a clear case of **martyrdom**.  
4. Icarus wanted to follow the **course** of the sun across the sky.  
5. When we left my little sister with a babysitter, she cried as if she had been **forsaken**.  
6. Lauren has a **flawless** complexion because she takes good care of her skin.  
7. The streets in my neighborhood are as straight as a **labyrinth**.  
8. On Fridays, my parents can wear **casual** clothes at work.  
9. The critic **acclaimed** the new play by pointing out all its flaws.  
10. My mother said it was very **sensible** to wear high heels on a hike.

**Exercise 4: Sentence Completion**

From the Master Words, choose the appropriate word for the blank in each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided at the right.

1. Jose decided that saving money from his job for college would be ...?
   
2. It’s easy to get lost in a ...?... even if you stay on the path.

3. The old ...?... cabin had once been the site of happy childhood summers.

4. The seasons follow a natural progression throughout the ...?... of a year.

5. Austin gave a ...?... wave to let Jamie know he had seen her.

6. Critics universally ...?...(d, ed) the new movie by the aging director.

7. The fire raging in the forest was a ...?... sight.

8. The pianist gave a ...?... performance of the Beethoven concerto.

9. Many saints chose to suffer ...?... rather than betray their beliefs.

10. Pilgrims approach the sacred site in a ...?... manner.
Exercise 5: Using Words with Multiple Meanings

The word course has different meanings depending on how it is used in a sentence. Choose the number of the correct definition for course for each of the following sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. n. channel along which something moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. v. to move quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. n. part of a meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. n. the place where a race or game occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. n. program of instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. After running, Tom could almost feel the blood course through his veins. ________

2. The course of the river runs through several former mill villages. ________

3. Hannah plans to take a course in advanced algebra this fall. ________

4. The cross-country course is laid out through the woods and includes several hills. ________

5. You can choose chicken or fish for the main course at the awards banquet. ________

Exercise 6: Related Words and Meanings

The italic words in the sentences below are related to the Master Words. Write the matching synonym from the list on the line following the sentence. You may need to change the form of the Master Word.

acclaim    casual    dreadful    flawless    sensible

1. Everyone wore informal clothes to the school picnic. ________

2. Sneakers or sandals were the most practical shoes to wear. ________

3. Everyone praised my teacher’s guacamole. ________

4. It would have been awful if there had been a severe thunderstorm. ________

5. With good weather, good friends, and good food, it was a perfect day. ________

Write About It: Meaning and Myth

Write an essay explaining the meaning of one of the poems in this lesson, indicating how the poem relates to the myth as narrated in Lesson 2. Use at least four words related to the Master Words.
Guide to Types of Analogies in Vocabu-Lit

The chart below contains descriptions and examples of all the types of analogies used in this level of Vocabu-Lit. The statement in italics is a template of a sentence you can use with each type of analogy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| action/actor or actor/action       | The first word is an action; the second word is the person or thing that does the action. [First word] is what a [second word] does. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] is someone or something who [second word]. | teach: teacher :: sew: needle  
teacher: teach :: needle: sew |
| action/receiver of action or receiver of action/action | The first word is an action; the second word is a person or thing the action is done to, for, or with. [First word] is what gets done to/for/with a [second word]. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] does for/to/with [second word]. | teach: student :: sew: dress  
student: teach: dress: sew |
| adjective/noun or noun/related adjective | The first word is a quality, the second word is a person or thing known for that quality. [First word] is what a [second word] is. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] is known to be [second word]. | artistic: painter :: cunning: fox  
painter: artistic :: fox: cunning |
| antonyms                           | The first word is the opposite of the second word. [First word] is the opposite of [second word]. | hot: cold :: sunny: cloudy |
| category/item or item/category     | The first word is a category or group of things or people; the second word is an item or example from that group. One example of [first word] is [second word]. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] is one example of [second word]. | sports: baseball :: music: jazz  
baseball: sports :: jazz: music |
| cause/effect or effect/cause       | The first word is a cause; the second word is an effect of that cause. [First word] causes [second word]. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] is the result of [second word]. | sadness: tears :: exertion: fatigue  
tears: sadness :: fatigue: exertion |
| degree                             | The first word is an especially strong thing or quality; the second word is a less strong version of the same thing or quality. [First word] is more intense than [second word]. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] is a less intense version of [second word]. | downpour: shower :: feast: meal  
shower: downpour :: meal: feast |
| part/whole or whole/part           | The first word is an individual thing or quality; the second word is the whole that the first thing is part of. [First word] is one part of [second word]. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] is the whole of which [second word] is one part. | finger: hand :: slide: playground  
hand: finger :: playground: slide |
| product/producer or producer/product | The first word is a thing; the second word is the person or thing who made the first thing. [First word] is made by [second word]. This could also be constructed in reverse: [First word] is made by [second word]. | milk: cow :: vase: potter  
cow: milk :: potter: vase |
| synonyms                           | The first word means about the same thing as the second word. [First word] means about the same thing as [second word]. | tired: fatigued :: nervous: anxious |
Glossary
Definitions and parts of speech of these Master Words are based on the usage in the selection in which it appears.

abstract adj. taking place in the realm of thought; conceptual [28]
abyss n. a deep chasm; a bottomless pit [30]
acclaim v. to praise; to honor [3]
accusation n. a charge of wrongdoing; an indictment [15]
acquiescence n. reluctant acceptance without complaint [27]
adornment n. embellishment; decoration [20]
aesthetic adj. related to the study of the arts and of beauty; artistic [25]
affectation n. showing fondness; devoted [8]
afronted adj. insulted; offended [5]
aft adv. near the stern or tail, usually of a boat [8]
agitator n. a person who spurs others to rebellion or protest; troublemaker [16]
allusion n. an indirect reference; a hint; an implied reference to something familiar [5]
altitude n. a measure of the height or elevation above sea level [7]
analogous adj. comparable; similar [28]
analytic adj. logical; systematic [17]
ancestral adj. related to those from whom one is descended; traditional [6]
anchor v. to fasten something to keep it from moving; to secure [21]
androgyne adj. of indeterminate sex; partly male and partly female [15]
anecdote n. a short story, usually entertaining and frequently amusing; a short account [14]
anguished adj. distressed; heartbroken [2]
antropologist n. a scientist or person who studies cultures and societies [17]
apartheid n. a system of racial segregation in South Africa; literally "separateness" [9]
appraisal n. an assessment of value; valuation [15]
artful adj. crafty; cunning [27]
ascetic adj. related to a life of extreme self-denial; Spartan; austere [8]
assurance n. confidence; calmness [7]
attune v. to harmonize; to adjust [22]
audacious adj. daring; adventurous [2]
avarice adj. miserly desire for wealth; greed [22]
baleful adj. harmful; noxious [16]
bard n. poet [24]
base adj. low, ignoble; sinful [1]
bier n. a platform on which a corpse or coffin is placed before burial [23]
blight n. a decline; a withering [22]
capricious adj. given to sudden changes in mood; fickle [5]
casual adj. informal; nonchalant [3]
cavalier adj. showing a lack of concern for rules or proper behavior; casual [10]
ceremonious adj. formal; befitting [23]
chafe v. to rub; to irritate by rubbing; to heat by friction [4]
chalice n. a cup [12]
chaotic adj. in a confused state; disordered [30]
cherub n. plural form of cherub; angel; celestial being [12]
clarify v. to explain; to make clear [17]
cloyed adj. having too much of a good thing; weary; satiated [11]
coercion n. force; threats [1]
commend v. to deliver; to entrust [12]
commerce n. the buying and selling of goods; business [23]
commodity n. a product that can be bought and sold [9]
compensating adj. balancing; redeeming [29]
compliance n. obedience to; acceptance [27]
comprise v. to make up (a whole); to constitute [21]
concurrence n. to agree; to coincide; to act together [5]
confluence n. junction, especially of two rivers; meeting [4]
consoling adj. comforting; encouraging [22]
contemplation n. meditation; thought [30]
contrive v. to plan; to come up with [29]
conversely adv. in turn; on the other hand [25]
convincing adj. believable [19]
correspond v. to match or agree; to be equivalent; to be comparable [4]

courier n. a messenger [12]
course n. a movement along a path; a progression of steps [3]
crest v. to reach the highest level; to peak [18]
cumber adj. difficult to manage; clumsy [28]
dearth n. lack; scarcity; a shortage [14]
debased adj. reduced in value [15]
decay n. a decline; a withering [22]
deflect v. to turn aside or bounce off course; to divert [18]
degraded adj. reduced in quality; humiliated [24]
deliberative adj. having the function of considering, judging, or carefully deciding; carefully thinking out [15]
delusive adj. giving a false impression; deceptive [26]
demise n. death; end [13]
derive v. to stem from; to originate [9]
desolate adj. dismal; lonely [11]
diabolic adj. evil; devilish [18]
diaphanous adj. see-through; fine [8]
dilapidation n. condition of rot or disrepair [22]
diminutive adj. small; tiny [7]
discount v. to regard something as false or not worthy of examination; to dismiss [19]
dispel v. to do away with; to remove; to get rid of [5]
distilled adj. purified; refined [7]
ditty n. a simple song [11]
dominance n. power; supremacy [2]
dominate v. to influence; to control [6]
dormant adj. inactive; inert; sleeping [16]
draw n. attraction [23]
dreadful adj. aweful; fearful [3]
dynamic adj. in motion; changing [28]
devout adj. out of the ordinary; strange [14]
edenominational adj. frugal; thrifty; not wasteful [14]
efficacy n. ability to work or perform; potency [2]
elite n. people of higher classes; aristocracy [25]
elusive adj. hard to find; intangible [24]
emerge v. to come out; to unfold [30]
empyrean adj. heavenly; celestial [24]
enamored adj. in love with; captivated by [20]
enfold v. to envelop; to surround [30]

enigma n. a mysterious situation; a riddle; a puzzle [17]
ennobling adj. elevating to a higher degree; dignifying; enlightening [25]
ensure v. to result from; to follow after [16]
establishment n. the ruling class of a society; the authorities in power [9]
evenhanded adj. impartial; balanced and fair [12]
exclusive adj. having sole rights; belonging to no one else; also, high-class; upscale; select [20]

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