VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT—Practice 1

Part I

1. In the sentence below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?
   a. example  b. antonym  c. synonym
   You can’t take certain courses unless you’ve taken a prerequisite; for instance, you can’t take Spanish Literature I unless you’ve taken Spanish III.

2. In the sentence below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?
   a. example  b. antonym  c. synonym
   There are thick pine forests at the foot of the mountain, but higher up, the trees become sparse.

3. In the sentences below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?
   a. example  b. antonym  c. synonym
   Talent may take years to surface. When Beethoven was a young child, his great aptitude in music was not at all apparent to his teachers.

Part 2

Directions: Using context clues for help, circle the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word.

4. Nepotism is commonplace where I work: the boss’s daughter is vice-president of the company, her husband runs the order department, and their son has just started working in the warehouse.
   a. good managerial practice  c. arguments among employees
   b. favoritism to relatives  d. confusion among management

5. The professor’s explanation was nebulous, so the student asked him to make himself clear.
   a. vague  c. fascinating
   b. boring  d. brief

6. The bank robber was apparently nondescript—none of the witnesses could think of any special characteristics that might identify him.
   a. poorly disguised  c. memorable
   b. lacking distinctive qualities  d. cruel

7. The lake water was so murky that my hand seemed to vanish when I dipped it only a few inches below the surface.
   a. cold  c. dark
   b. dangerous  d. inviting

8. During the Revolutionary War, the English paid German mercenaries to help fight the Americans.
   a. hired soldiers  c. rebels
   b. traitors  d. recent immigrants
Part 3
Directions: Using context clues for help, write the definition for each word in italics. Choose from the definitions in bold below. Each definition will be used once.

a. provided   b. overjoyed   c. doubtful   d. nag   e. discouraged

9. I would not be just glad if I won the lottery; I'd be **ecstatic**.
   Ecstatic means ____________________.

10. Nature has **endowed** hummingbirds with the ability to fly backward.
    Endowed means ____________________.

11. Opponents of the death penalty say it has never actually **deterred** anyone from committing murder.
    Deterred means ____________________.

12. Around the age of two or three, small children like to **badger** their parents with endless questions beginning with the word "why."
    Badger means ____________________.

13. While four-year-old Mattie claimed she was going to stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve, her parents were **dubious** of her ability to remain awake that late.
    Dubious means ____________________.

a. wasteful   b. respect   c. identify   d. difference   e. safe

14. Because of the fog, I was barely able to **discern** the landing strip.
    Discern means ____________________.

15. The couple got married even though there was a great **disparity** in their ages. He was 50 and she was only barely 25.
    Disparity means ____________________.

16. Since the drink is **innocuous** it is okay for us to have some without suffering any adverse side effects.
    Innocuous means ____________________.

17. The **prodigal** son squandered his inheritance on drugs and alcohol.
    Prodigal means ____________________.

18. Nearly all Catholics **revere** the Pope.
    Revere means ____________________
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT—Practice 2

Part 1: Examples

Directions: For each item below, underline the examples that suggest the meaning of the italicized term. Then circle the letter of the meaning of that term. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from textbooks.

1. Today was a day of turmoil at work—the phones were constantly ringing, people were running back and forth, and several offices were being painted.
   
   Turmoil means a. discussion. b. confusion. c. harmony.

2. Some mentally ill people have bizarre ideas. For example, they may think that the TV is talking to them or that others can steal their thoughts.
   
   Bizarre means a. very strange. b. realistic. c. creative.

3. There are several common gambits used in singles bars, such as "What sign are you?" "How do you like this place?" and "You remind me of someone."
   
   Gambits means a. questions. b. conversation starters. c. steps.

4. Since my grandfather retired, he has developed several new avocations. For instance, he now enjoys gardening and long-distance bike riding.

   Avocations means a. hobbies. b. vacations. c. jobs.

5. In biology class today, the instructor discussed such anomalies as creatures with two heads or webbed toes.

   Anomalies means a. groups. b. illnesses. c. abnormalities.

6. Each day, the neglected boy received one meager meal, often only a spoonful of rice and a few beans.

   Meager means a. small. b. sweet. c. filling.

7. The Chinese government provides incentives for married couples to have only one child. For example, couples with one child get financial help and free medical care.

   Incentives means a. warnings. b. penalties. c. encouragements.

8. Changes in such abilities as learning, reasoning, thinking, and language are aspects of cognitive development.

   Cognitive means a. physical. b. mental. c. spiritual.

9. Researchers have proved that negative gestures, including folded arms and lack of eye contact, are impediments to open communication.

   Impediments means a. obstacles. b. aids. c. additions.

10. White-collar crime—for example, accepting a bribe from a customer or stealing from an employer—is more costly than "common" crime.

    White-collar crime means crime committed by a. gang members. b. strangers. c. people in business.
Part 2: Antonyms

Directions: Each item below includes a word that is an antonym of the italicized word. Underline the antonym of each italicized word. Then circle the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

11. He was born to a family that possessed great wealth, but he died in indigence.
   Indigence means   a. a hospital.  b. an accident.  c. poverty.

12. Many politicians do not give succinct answers. They prefer long ones that help them avoid the point.
   Succinct means   a. brief.  b. accurate.  c. complete.

13. "I've seen students surreptitiously check answer sheets during exams," said the professor. "However, until today I never saw one openly lay out a cheat sheet on his desk."
   Surreptitiously means   a. legally.  b. secretly.  c. loudly.

14. While Irma's house is decorated plainly, her clothing is very flamboyant.
   Flamboyant means   a. inexpensive  b. flashy  c. washable

15. To keep healthy, older people need to stay active. Remaining stagnant results in loss of strength and health.
   Stagnant means   a. inactive.  b. lively.  c. unhealthy.

16. In formal communication, be sure to avoid ambiguous language. Clear language prevents misinterpretation.
   Ambiguous means   a. wordy.  b. ineffective.  c. unclear.

17. Being raised with conflicting values can be a detriment to boys' and girls' relationships with each other. In contrast, shared values can be a benefit.
   Detriment means   a. improvement.  b. harm.  c. relationship.

18. While houses and antiques often increase in value, most things, such as cars and TV's, depreciate.
   Depreciate means   a. remain useful.  b. lose value.  c. break.

19. Reliable scientific theories are based not upon careless work, but rather upon meticulous research and experimentation.
   Meticulous means   a. hasty.  b. expensive.  c. careful.

20. In the early days of automobile manufacturing, stringent laws controlled motorists' speed. In contrast, the laws designed to protect consumers from faulty products were extremely weak.
   Stringent means   a. informal.  b. not effective.  c. strict.
Part 3:

Directions: Try to answer the question that follows each item below. Then use the logic of each answer to help you circle the letter of the meaning you think is correct.

21. Jamal didn't want to tell Tina the entire plot of the movie, so he just gave her the gist of the story. (What kind of information would Jamal give Tina?)
   Gist means   a. ending.   b. title.   c. main idea.

22. The lizard was so lethargic that I wasn't sure if it was alive or dead. It didn't even blink. (How active is this lizard?)
   Lethargic means   a. green.   b. inactive.   c. big.

23. After the accident, I was angered when the other driver told the police officer a complete fabrication about what happened. He made it seem that I was the only person at fault. (How truthful was the other driver's information?)
   Fabrication means   a. lie.   b. description.   c. confession.

24. The public knows very little about the covert activities of CIA spies. (What kind of activities would the CIA spies be involved in that the public wouldn't know much about?)
   Covert means   a. public.   b. secret.   c. family.

25. Whether or not there is life in outer space is an enigma. We may never know for sure until we are capable of space travel or aliens actually land on our planet. (What would we call something to which we have no answer?)
   Enigma means   a. reason.   b. certainty.   c. mystery.

26. Suicide rates tend to fluctuate with the seasons, with much higher rates in the winter than in the summer. (What happens to the suicide rate from season to season?)
   Fluctuate means   a. go up and down.   b. disappear.   c. stay the same.

27. Human beings are resilient creatures—they can often bounce back from negative experiences and adjust well to life. (What point is the author making about the nature of human beings?)
   Resilient means   a. not flexible.   b. living.   c. able to recover.

28. A major accomplishment of sociology is dispelling the myths and prejudices that groups of people have about each other. (What would a profession do to "myths and prejudices" that could be considered a "major accomplishment"?)
   Dispelling means   a. ignoring.   b. making vanish.   c. creating again.

29. Ten years of research culminated in a report explaining the behavior of the praying mantis, a large green or brownish insect. (What would be the relationship of the report to the research?)
   Culminated means   a. failed.   b. began.   c. concluded.

30. Despite complaints from parents, educators, and government officials, violence and sex on television seem to go on unabated. (What happens despite the complaints from parents, educators, and government officials?)
   Unabated means   a. more slowly.   b. with no decrease.   c. at great expense.
Part 4: Synonyms

Each item below includes a word that is a synonym of the italicized word. Select the correct definition for the word in italics.

31. ______________ Speaking in front of a group disconcerts Alan. Even answering a question in class embarrasses him.
   a. cause to feel uneasy   b. questions   c. disorganized

32. ______________ Because my friends had advised me to scrutinize the lease, I took time to examine all the fine print.
   a. ignore   b. observe closely   c. reward

33. ______________ The presidential candidate vowed to discuss pragmatic solutions. He said the American people want practical answers, not empty theory.
   a. unreasonable   b. practical   c. complicated

34. ______________ Rita successfully begged her father for five dollars and then implored her mother for another five.
   a. begged   b. yelled   c. fooled

35. ______________ The lawyer decided to lecture on euthanasia to the Nurses' Association because there is a great deal of interest in mercy killing these days.
   a. cancer   b. overdoses   c. painless death

36. ______________ To reach Venice, a city of islands, food first had to be carried by wagon to the water's edge and then conveyed by barge to the islands.
   a. destroyed   b. transferred   c. realized

37. ______________ Managers should beware of having adversaries work together; opponents often do not cooperate well.
   a. friend   b. ally   c. opponent

38. ______________ In the same way that the arrival of mechanical equipment meant fewer farm jobs, the advent of the computer has led to fewer manufacturing jobs.
   a. arrival   b. decline   c. destruction

39. ______________ Throughout history, the prevalent authority pattern in families has been patriarchy, in which males are in control. In only a few societies has patriarchy been the customary authority pattern.
   a. male dominance   b. female dominance   c. parent dominance

40. ______________ Convention limits the acceptance of something new to a culture. If it were not for existing custom, for example, we might all be wearing wild fashions unlike anything seen before.
   a. inventions   b. rewarding   c. customary
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Practice 3

Part 1: For each item below, underline the examples that suggest the meaning of the italicized term. Then circle the letter of the meaning of that term.

1. When I finally get around to cleaning out my refrigerator, I always find something vile at the back of a shelf, such as moldy fruit or a container of old smelly beans.
   a. tempting  b. recent  c. false  d. disgusting

2. The Easter egg hunt featured cryptic clues such as, somewhere narrow" and "Look for the pink."
   a. rhyming  b. puzzling  c. clear  d. overused

3. Verbose writing can be hard to follow. For instance, "At this point in time, we have an urgently felt need for more and greater financial resources" is less clear than "We now need money urgently."
   a. realistic  b. informal  c. wordy  d. ungrammatical

Part 2: Each item below includes a word or words that are a synonym of the italicized word. Write the letter of the synonym of the italicized word in the space provided.

4. ____________________ "I'll (A)try any (B)ride in this amusement park except the Twister," said Nick. "I'll (C)venture getting (D)sick to my stomach, but I won't risk my life."

5. __________________________ In the past three hundred years, several people have gone on a quest for Noah's Ark. The (A)search has (B)taken some to northeastern Turkey, on Mount Ararat, (C)thousands of feet above sea level.

6. __________________________ Samuel Langhorne Clemens wasn't the first author to use the pseudonym Mark Twain. A (A)newspaper (B)writer of the time used the same (C)false name.

Part 3: Each item below includes a word or words that are an antonym of the italicized word. Underline the antonym of each italicized word. Then circle the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

7. Computer manuals are often very hard to understand, so I was surprised to discover how lucid this one is.
   a. long  b. expensive  c. clear  d. new

8. When my sister first got her job at the recording studio, she was excited to go to work each day. Now after ten years, she's bored about her work and wants to change jobs.
   a. tardy  b. bored  c. thrilled  d. curious

D. Use the general sense of each sentence to figure out the meaning of each italicized word. Then circle the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

9. A person can be very intelligent and yet be deficient in common sense.
   a. lacking  b. well supplied  c. overqualified  d. lucky

10. The store detective faced the dilemma of either having an elderly, needy man arrested or ignoring store rules about shoplifters.
    a. memory  b. difficult choice  c. proof  d. reason
Part 4: For each textbook item below, underline the examples that suggest the meaning of the italicized term. Then circle the letter of the meaning of that term.

11. Every *habitat* in the world, from volcano tops to icebergs, can support some sort of life.
   a. country  b. environment  c. food source  d. practice

12. Common *redundant* phrases include "cooperate together" (instead of simply "cooperate") and "postponed until later" (instead of "postponed").
   a. repetitious  b. descriptive  c. difficult  d. useful

Part 5: Each textbook item below includes a word that is a synonym of the italicized word. Write the letter of the synonym of the italicized word in the space provided.

____________________  13. The Amish people prefer *austere* styles - their (A)clothing and (B)homes are (C)plain.

____________________  14. Airport security (A)guards must observe people’s *demeanor* so as to notice any (B)suspicious (C)conduct.

____________________  15. In business, it can be harmful to be too *unassuming*. If you’re overly (A)modest about your (B)achievements, for example, you may be passed up for a (C)promotion.

Part 6: Each textbook item below includes a word that is an antonym of the italicized word. Underline the antonym of each italicized word. Then circle the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

16. Even when textbooks are *standardized* throughout a school system, methods of teaching with them may be greatly varied.
   a. different  b. expensive  c. made the same  d. lacking

17. During the Middle Ages, everyone—from the rich landowner down to the most *impoverished* peasant—had a clear place in society.
   a. weak  b. common  c. poor  d. decent

H. Use the general sense of each sentence to figure out the meaning of each italicized word. Then circle the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

18. America has often been called a "melting pot" into which people of many different cultures *assimilate*.
   a. learn  b. leave  c. avoid each other  d. blend

19. During the 1960s and 1970s, many American folk singers used anti-war lyrics to *espouse* an end to the Vietnam War.
   a. recognize  b. remember  c. reject  d. argue for

20. It is widely believed that Columbus sailed westward to *validate* the theory that the world is round. In fact, it was already well known at that time that the world is round.
   a. think up  b. prove  c. contradict  d. foresee
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Practice 4

Part 1: Using context clues for help, circle the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word.

1. It's a good idea for married couples to discuss their plans in case of each other's demise. For example, do they wish to be buried or cremated?
   a. death         b. success         c. desire to divorce  d. concern

2. The press assailed the company responsible for the oil spill until it increased its efforts to clean up the mess.
   a. searched for  b. paid            c. attacked        d. fined

3. One tenet of Islam is that its followers should not drink alcohol.
   a. answer        b. prediction      c. teaching        d. guarantee

4. Toddlers are naturally inquisitive. It is because they are so curious about their surroundings that they are so eager to explore everything.
   a. unreliable    b. clumsy          c. curious         d. tired

5. After x-rays were discovered in 1895, there were some preposterous reactions. For example, London merchants sold x-ray-proof underwear.
   a. logical       b. ridiculous      c. dangerous       d. delayed

6. The foolish defendant waived his right to an attorney and instead spoke for himself in court.
   a. depended upon b. greeted         c. wrote           d. gave up

7. Sexual standards in England during the 1800s were so strict that it was considered sordid for women to reveal their legs in public.
   a. proper        b. impossible      c. popular         d. indecent

8. Young children believe their parents are perfect, until they become teenagers, when their parents suddenly become fallible.
   a. unhealthy     b. dangerous       c. imperfect       d. skilled

9. At the company where Gerry works, people who are laid off during a brief recession are often rehired when there's a business upturn.
   a. business decline b. bankruptcy   c. holiday         d. war

10. The Englishman John Merrick's illness gave him such a grotesque appearance that he was called "The Elephant Man." Despite people's reactions to his misshapen head and body, Merrick remained affectionate and gentle.
    a. strong         b. deformed       c. gray            d. childlike
Part 2: Using context clues for help, circle the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word or words. Note that all of the sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

11. After the Civil War, trolleys and streetcars greatly expanded workers' **mobility**, permitting them to move beyond walking distance from factories.

   a. pay          b. skills          c. ability to move         d. interests

12. What people say may not reflect accurately what they are actually feeling. It is sometimes necessary to **resort to** clues other than their spoken words to understand them fully.

   a. remove from      b. make light of     c. make use of         d. ignore

13. Individual political organizations often join together to form **coalitions** to increase the support for their issues.

   a. partnerships  b. lines       c. contests       d. questions

14. Surveys about people's sexual habits are often inaccurate because people may lie, and there is no way to **corroborate** what they say.

   a. forget          b. prove the truth of     c. change          d. recall

15. Burning the flag and damaging a church are outrageous acts that **blatantly** violate American norms.

   a. secretly        b. accidentally      c. barely         d. obviously

16. Following the English principle that voters had to have a **stake** in the community, the colonies generally required citizens to minimum amount of land in order to vote.

   a. job            b. relative        c. investment     d. employee

17. William Henry Harrison's 1840 campaign brought many **innovations** to the art of electioneering. For example, for the first time, a presidential candidate spoke out on his own behalf.

   a. new things      b. people         c. crimes        d. financial skills

18. To fully **assess** patients in order to place them in appropriate programs, mental health professionals need information on emotional adjustment and physical health.

   a. find           b. recognize      c. hide          d. evaluate

19. In the eating disorder bulimia nervosa, a person will go on huge eating binges and then will try to **nullify** the outrageous food intake by purposely vomiting or strictly dieting.

   a. increase         b. undo          c. forget     d. delay

20. Adults who have both elderly parents and children need to balance their commitments: while they are responsible for their own family, they also should **allocate** time and energy to caring for their parents.

   a. recall            b. pay for     c. set aside       d. view
Part 3: Using context clues for help, circle the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word. Note that all the sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

21. The possibility of developing a top seller is so *alluring* that American companies spend billions of dollars a year trying to create new products or improve old ones.
   a. dangerous  b. final  c. attractive  d. unreasonable

22. Using sign language, chimpanzees can *convey* such ideas as "Candy sweet" and "Give me hug."
   a. reject  b. accept  c. think of  d. communicate

23. Smoking or chewing tobacco, wrote King James I, was "*loathsome* to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, and dangerous to the lungs."
   a. appealing  b. hidden  c. disgusting  d. healthy

24. The death of a spouse can cause *profound* depression that, in some cases, can even lead to the death of the partner.
   a. deep  b. accidental  c. occasional  d. mild

25. The healthiest type of parents are those who guide and instruct their children, but also grant them a degree of *autonomy*, encouraging the children to make their own decisions and form their own opinions.
   a. financing  b. knowledge  c. independence  d. guidance
VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Practice 5

Part 1: Five words are italicized in the textbook passage below. Write the definition for each italicized word, choosing from the definitions below. Read the entire passage before making your choices. Note that five definitions will be left over.

(A) colorful (B) passed (C) stir up interest (D) delayed (E) most common

(A) uncontrolled (B) disappeared (C) pray (D) increased (E) punished

1. In sentence 1, prevailing means __________________.

2. In sentence 10, agitate means ____________________.

3. In sentence 13, unbridled means ____________________.

4. In sentence 14, mounted means ____________________.

5. In sentence 17, enacted means ____________________.
Part 2: Five words are italicized in the textbook passage below. Write the definition for each italicized word, choosing from the definitions below in the box. Read the entire passage before making your choices. Note that five definitions will be left over.

A. causing  B. enjoyable  C. pay for  D. deadly  E. give credit for  
A. put through  B. delay  C. helpful  D. die  E. reducing

1 In the early days of medicine, there were few drugs or treatments that gave any real physical benefit. 2 As a result, patients were treated in a variety of strange, largely ineffective ways. 3 For instance, Egyptian patients were medicated with "lizard's blood, crocodile dung, the teeth of a swine, the hoof of an ass, rotten meat, and fly specks." 5 If the disease itself didn't cause the patient to succumb, he or she had a good chance of dying instead from the treatment. 6 Medical treatments of the Middle Ages were somewhat less lethal, but not much more effective. 7 And as late as the eighteenth century, patients were subjected to bloodletting, freezing, and repeatedly induced vomiting to bring about a cure.

8 Amazingly, people often seemed to get relief from such treatments. Physicians have, for centuries, been objects of great respect, and this was no less true when few remedies were actually effective. 9 To what can one attribute the fair level of success that these treatments provided and the widespread faith in the effectiveness of physicians? 10 Of the most likely answer is that these are examples of the tremendous power of the placebo effect—"any medical procedure that produces an effect in a patient because of its therapeutic intent and not its specific nature, whether chemical or physical." 11 Even today, the role of placebos in curtailing pain and discomfort is substantial. 12 Many patients who swallow useless substances or who undergo useless procedures find that, as a result, their symptoms disappear and their health improves.

6. In sentence 5, succumb means ______________________.

7. In sentence 6, lethal means ________________________.

8. In sentence 7, subjected to means ________________________.

9. In sentence 9, attribute means ________________________.

10. In sentence 11, curtailing means ________________________.