1 copious
/'kəʊpɪəs/
-adjective

- The food at the party was too **copious**; the guests stuffed themselves, but there were still platters and bowls of food left over.
- Weeds are **copious** in Charlene's garden, but flowers are few.

__ *Copious* means a. of poor quality. b. plentiful. c. persuasive.

2 dearth
/dɜ:θ/
-noun

- The director of the Class Night show said gloomily, "We have a **dearth** of talent this year. Not one of these acts is worth putting on stage."
- The **dearth** of snow this winter disappointed my children. They had received new sleds for Christmas but never got a chance to use them.

__ *Dearth* means a. a surplus. b. a sufficient amount. c. a shortage.

3 eloquent
/'eləkwənt/
-adjective

- Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is considered one of the most **eloquent** speeches of all time, but on the day he gave it, many in the audience were insulted. They thought it was too short.
- The director of the shelter for battered women wrote an **eloquent** letter to the newspapers, movingly describing the victims' plight and pleading for donations.

__ *Eloquent* means a. stirring. b. confusing. c. simple.

4 jargon
/'dʒɑ:gən/
-noun

- "It's essential that you learn the vocabulary of this subject," the instructor warned us, "or the **jargon**, if you prefer. Whatever you call it, it will be on the test."
- Bernice wanted to make a home-cooked meal for her friends but was puzzled by all the **jargon** in the cookbook. What did *braise* mean? Or *sauté*? Or *mince*?

__ *Jargon* means a. grammatical errors. b. technical language. c. humor.

5 levity
/'levətɪ/
-noun

- The playwright George Bernard Shaw once remarked that his method was to say very serious things, but with "the utmost **levity**." He wanted to convey weighty ideas through wit and humor.
- The guidance counselor thought Kirk's attitude showed too much **levity**. "You should laugh less and spend more time thinking about serious things," she said.

__ *Levity* means a. seriousness. b. surprise. c. lightheartedness.

6 meander
/mɪ'ændə/
-verb

- "Come straight home from school," Mom always said to us. "Don't **meander**."
- The brook **meandered** through the valley, disappearing into the underbrush, then coming into view again, and here and there even turning back on itself.

__ *Meander* means a. to wander. b. to hurry. c. to fall.

7 peripheral
/pə'rɪfərəl/
-adjective

- The meeting to discuss the new road went slowly because the committee kept bringing up **peripheral** issues, such as the need for traffic lights on the old road.
- The lecturer kept getting sidetracked, because audience members repeatedly asked questions about **peripheral** matters that had little to do with her topic.

__ *Peripheral* means a. essential. b. of little importance. c. doubtful.

8 substantiate
/səb'stænʃɪeɪt/
-verb

- If you seek damages under a "lemon law," be prepared to **substantiate** your claim that your car is a lemon. You'll need to show all your repair bills and correspondence.
- A man in our town claims to be 125 years old, but he's unable to **substantiate** this. He has no birth certificate, baptismal certificate, court records, or witnesses.

__ *Substantiate* means a. to report. b. to repeat. c. to prove.

9 unobtrusive
/ˌʌnəb'tru:sɪv/
-adjective

- Jared arrived late for class. Hoping to remain **unobtrusive**, he quickly slid into a seat at the end of the last row.
- When his favorite author autographed books at the mall, Desmond expected to see a dazzling celebrity. Instead, she turned out to be a small, colorless, **unobtrusive** person with a timid smile.

__ *Unobtrusive* means a. not noticeable. b. not easily forgotten. c. not important.

10 vacillate
/'væsɪleɪt/
-verb

- Anand reaches decisions very slowly. For instance, when we went to get ice cream last night, he **vacillated** for fifteen minutes between vanilla and chocolate.
- Should he call Shelley or Robin? Thinking it over at the phone booth, Andy **vacillated** as the moments ticked by and the people waiting for the phone got more and more impatient.

__ *Vacillate* means a. to speak. b. to hesitate. c. to select.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Following are definitions of the ten words. Clearly write or print each word next to its definition. The sentences above and on the previous page will help you decide on the meaning of each word.

1. _____ Lightness of manner or speech
2. _____ To move aimlessly; wander lazily; stray
3. _____ Of minor importance or relevance; only slightly connected with what is essential; irrelevant
4. _____ To sway indecisively between two opinions
5. _____ Extremely expressive and persuasive
6. _____ Not readily noticeable or eye-catching; inconspicuous
7. _____ The specialized language of people in the same profession
8. _____ To prove the truth of; confirm; verify
9. _____ A scarcity; lack
10. _____ Abundant; in plentiful supply

a. **copious**	b. **dearth**	c. **eloquent**	d. **jargon**	e. **levity**
f. **meander**	g. **peripheral**	h. **substantiate**	i. **unobtrusive**	j. **vacillate**

_____ 1. It took Andre all night to put together the wagon he had bought for his daughter. The instructions were written in a strange ___, such as "Attach flange B to sprocket C and secure with Permacaps."

_____ 2. I got an unfortunate case of the giggles during the boss's speech. "This is no time for ___," a colleague hissed at me.

_____ 3. "Can you ___ your story that the dog ate your homework?" the teacher asked Kay. "Yes!" Kay said, and showed her the veterinarian's X-rays.

_____ 4. The defense attorney's closing argument seemed both ___ and convincing, but the jury convicted his client anyway.

_____ 5. "We're supposed to be discussing the death penalty," the moderator reminded the panel. "Let's not get into ___ issues like conditions in prisons."

_____ 6. As she thought about what to wear to her job interview, Amy ___(e)d between a conservative navy-blue suit and a more stylish floral dress.

_____ 7. Remy's vegetable garden yielded an uneven crop. There was a(n) ___ of tomatoes — three, to be exact — and about a ton of zucchini.

_____ 8. During the exam, the instructor ___(e)d through the test room, up and down the aisles, left and then right, apparently with no particular purpose — but the students knew she was keeping a sharp eye on them.

_____ 9. "The costumes must be ___," the playwright urged. "I want the audience to focus on what the actors are saying, not what they're wearing."

_____ 10. Van took ___ notes — they filled three notebooks — but they were so badly organized that they didn't do him much good.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Using the answer lines, complete each item below with **two** words from the box. Use each word once.

_____ 1–2. "I'm hearing ___ complaints here, " said Mom at our family meeting, "but there's a(n) ___ of constructive ideas. For the next few minutes, I'd like everyone to keep quiet unless you have something sagacious° to say."

_____ 3–4. Some of the most ___ language is also the most simple. For example, Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream" speech is something a child could understand, free of high-flown language or technical ___.

_____ 5–6. After our picnic, the kids and I ___(e)d lazily through the woods, taking delight in the tiny ___ wildflowers that we found half-hidden under the dead leaves.

_____ 7–8. "Alice's Restaurant" is a great song by Arlo Guthrie. It begins with Guthrie and his friends having Thanksgiving dinner, then veers off into a very funny ___ story about being arrested for littering. Despite its ___, it ends up making a serious statement about the absurdity of war.

_____ 9–10. Although the suspect said he could ___ his story about being out of town on the night of the crime, he was not very convincing, as he continued to ___ about whether he'd been in Maine or Georgia at the time.

LIVEWORKSHEETS