Read Words in Context

Vocabulary Words

brash	radiant
courteous	serene
exotic	solitary
explosive	somber
frightful	sparse
miniature	transparent
outlandish	treacherous
overcast	

Word Learning Tip!

An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun or pronoun. An adjective often answers the question "What kind of person, place, or thing is it?" For example, in the phrase "*a rainy day*," the adjective *rainy* answers the question "What kind of day is it?"

Vocabulary Building Strategy

Use Context Clues You can use context clues to determine the meanings of new adjectives. Look at the noun or pronoun the adjective describes and at nearby descriptive words—including other adjectives. Try to visualize the scene or the action. This will give you a clue to the meaning of the new word.

READ!

The Great Expedition

It seemed like a **brash**, bold, and even foolish idea when Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803 for the **outlandish** amount of $15 million—a ridiculously low figure by today's standards. But the purchase had an **explosive** effect on America's growth, doubling the country's size in one stroke.

To explore the new territory, Jefferson appointed Meriwether Lewis—a serious, even **somber**, man—as leader. Lewis in turn picked the refined William Clark, a gifted naturalist and **courteous** gentleman, as his second in command.

This was no lonely journey by a **solitary** explorer. The expedition was a busy little world, a small group of people or a traveling **miniature** community entering other communities—Mandan, Hidatsa, Shoshone, Nez Perce—along the way. The West's population may have seemed **sparse** to Easterners used to crowded cities, but the land was home to dozens of Native American nations, each with its own proud culture.

The land they traveled through must have seemed as strange and **exotic** to them as Mars would seem to explorers today. However, magnificent scenery thrilled the travelers wherever they went. Imagine a **radiant**, sunny day on the prairie, with the Rocky Mountains in the distance. The cloudless sky was nothing like the often murky, **overcast** weather in the East. It was so clear, it almost seemed **transparent**. The vast, rolling fields, dotted with wildflowers, had a calm and **serene** beauty.

There were dangers on the journey, of course—**treacherous** mountain passes and churning rapids. One **frightful** incident occurred on May 14, 1805, when a storm on the Missouri River almost overturned the boat with the expedition's precious records. However, the expedition was a success and all but one man returned safely to its starting point in St. Louis on September 23, 1806—a great day in American history.

Connect Words and Meanings

brash	explosive	outlandish	serene	sparse
courteous	frightful	overcast	solitary	transparent
exotic	miniature	radiant	somber	treacherous

Directions For each item, first read the definition. Then fill in the blank in the sentence with the correct adjective from the three choices. Use the context to help you make your choice. You may use your glossary to help you.

1. **Definition:** polite and respectful
   courteous brash somber
   It is _____ to say "thank you" for a gift.
2. **Definition:** very odd or strange; peculiar
   overcast outlandish serene
   Everyone stared when Lewis arrived wearing a(n) _____ weather-beaten bear-skin coat.
3. **Definition:** clear, obvious; lets light through
   exotic radiant transparent
   The water was so _____ you could see ten feet down to the bottom.
4. **Definition:** covered with clouds; gray
   sparse brash overcast
   The group returned on a damp, dark, _____ day in September.
5. **Definition:** dangerous; not to be trusted
   courteous explosive treacherous
   The _____ wooden bridge swung beneath their feet, terrifying them at every step.
6. **Definition:** terrible; shocking
   radiant overcast frightful
   The battered houses were in a(n) _____ state after the hailstorm.
7. **Definition:** spread thinly; not dense
   sparse exotic transparent
   The dry grass was thin and _____, with many bare patches.
8. **Definition:** bold; reckless
   treacherous solitary brash
   The _____ and cocky rider leaped upon the horse bareback and galloped wildly away.

LIVEWORKSHEETS