

Words in Action

A **blow** is a violent stroke given by the hand or weapon (to somebody or something). It also means a sudden shock or disaster for somebody or something.

e.g. He dealt him a blow on the head.

His death came as a blow to the family.

A **misfortune** carries the idea of bad luck, often of a serious nature. It is usually of a lingering character or consequence, and such that the sufferer is not considered directly responsible. *e.g. He had the misfortune to be born blind.*

An **adversity** is an unfortunate event or unfavorable situation, usually caused by outward circumstances such as the loss of fortune, position, etc.

A **calamity** is a serious misfortune or disaster causing a great deal of damage, destruction or suffering.

A **hardship** is a specific difficult condition of life such as lack of food, comfort, money, etc.

A **mishap** conveys the idea of a minor and unfortunate accident.

A **reverse** is any change or alteration for the worse.

Distress is a state or condition of great suffering, danger, anxiety, pain or discomfort.

Affliction denotes the state of physical or mental suffering.

A **trial** (to somebody) is a troublesome or irritating person that must be endured.

A **stroke** can be any blow or ill effect caused as if by a blow, such as a stroke of misfortune or sunstroke. It can also be an attack of paralysis or apoplexy.

NOTE

For the loss of friends by death we commonly use **blow**, **affliction** or **bereavement**.

We speak of the **misery** of the poor,
the **hardships** of the soldier,
the **misfortunes** of a businessman,
the **adversities** met with because of bad weather,
the **calamities** of war,
a **mishap** preventing you from doing something,
people in **distress**, and
a boy being a **trial** to his mother.

Exercise >>> Choose the correct word in the parenthesis to complete each sentence below.

- 1 My uncle's sudden inability to move was diagnosed as a paralytic _____. (stroke/blow)
- 2 Sorry we're late, but we had a little _____ (mishap/misfortune) on the way here.
We got a flat tyre on the highway.
- 3 Paralysis is a terrible _____. (affliction/adversity)
- 4 The two drunken sailors kicked up a brawl and exchanged _____ (strokes/blows) outside the tavern.
- 5 Towards the end of the experiment, the subjects showed signs of great _____. (hardship/distress)
- 6 The recent floods were the worst _____ (calamity/mishap) in the country's history.
- 7 The mischievous boy was a _____ (trial/misfortune) to his parents and teachers alike.
- 8 The _____ (afflictions/hardships) borne by explorers during the expedition resulted in their relinquishing any hope of conquering the unknown territory.
- 9 The captain had the _____ (mishap/misfortune) to hit an iceberg on his maiden voyage.
- 10 The airline had lost her suitcase; the customs officer had misplaced her passport. Yet, despite all this, she remained cheerful in the face of her _____. (adversities/misfortunes)
- 11 He suffered many _____ (reverses/strokes) in his political career.

Vocabulary Development

Task One >>> Tick the one word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the words in heavy type.

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| 1 People living in squalid living conditions live in ____. | ☐ wretched conditions | ☐ clean conditions |
| 2 A derelict house is ____. | ☐ ramshackle and run-down | ☐ posh and well-constructed |
| 3 If you are hard up you ____. | ☐ have enough money | ☐ don't have enough money |
| 4 A jerry-built house is ____. | ☐ well constructed | ☐ badly constructed |
| 5 A poor person is ____. | ☐ indigent and destitute | ☐ wealthy and affluent |
| 6 A mishap , such as losing one's scarf, is a ____. | ☐ serious misfortune | ☐ minor misfortune |
| 7 A mischievous boy behaves in a way people ____. | ☐ approve of | ☐ disapprove of |
| 8 Downtrodden people are invariably ____. | ☐ oppressed | ☐ pampered |
| 9 A brawl is a ____, usually in a public place. | ☐ discussion | ☐ fight |
| 10 When you prove your mettle , you show you are ____ to do things. | ☐ able | ☐ unable |
| 11 When you relinquish a privilege or a claim, you ____. | ☐ put it forward | ☐ give it up |
| 12 A point vital to an argument is ____ to it. | ☐ important | ☐ unimportant |

Task Two >>> What are the nouns derived from the words listed below?

NOUN	NOUN	NOUN
convert	mischievous	subvert
destitute	indict	indigent
indignant	vital	condemn

Task Three >>> Complete the sentences using the words defined below.

- A indigent** - poor ⇔ **indigenous** - native; belonging naturally to a place
The pigeon is not _____, it was brought here by people.
- B diligent** - hard working; studious; industrious ⇔ **indolent** - lazy; idle
He is a _____ student and always start preparing well before an exam.
- C adversity** - a considerable disappointment, failure or misfortune ⇔
adversary - an enemy or opponent
I hear they had a great time cycling across Africa, even though they had to overcome many _____.
- D afflict** - cause trouble, pain or distress ⇔
inflict - cause somebody to suffer by imposing something on him/her
Anna won't be at work this week because she is _____ with the measles.
- E rush** - move quickly ⇔ **rash** - acting or done without careful thought, especially of the consequences
Don't you think it's _____ of Jodie to accept the job in China without even visiting first?
- F avert** - turn away; avoid ⇔ **divert** - when sb diverts your attention from sth important you disapprove of them behaving in a way that stops you thinking about it.
He can't stand the sight of blood and always _____ his eyes in violent movies.
- G convert** - change into another form or use; cause somebody to change his/her religious beliefs ⇔
subvert - try to destroy the power and influence of a government or established ideas, beliefs, etc
See that man in the suit? He is trying to _____ passers-by to the Mormon religion.

Task Four >>> Choose from the correct words in parenthesis to complete the sentences below.

Academic freedom is based on the principle that the 1) _____ (function / fraction) of an institution of higher learning is to increase and preserve knowledge, evaluate it, and 2) _____ (impair / impart) it to others.

For the institution to 3) _____ (perform / carry) this function, its scholars must be free to 4) _____ (do / hold) and express views which at times can be unpopular or 5) _____ (even / much) mistaken, 6) _____ (which / for) it is only through an open exchange of varying points of view that ideas can be tested and knowledge 7) _____ (advanced / commenced).

However, 8) _____ (conflicting / inflicting) interpretations of the limits and 9) _____ (prohibitions / negotiations) of academic freedom have often led to 10) _____ (displays / disputes) between teachers and the governing boards of educational institutions.

Vocabulary Practice

A. Read the text below and choose the correct word A, B C or D to fit the gaps.

On a yearly (11)....., the United States is afflicted by hurricanes on the east coast, flooding in the midwest, forest fires, earthquakes, and any number of tornadoes, blizzards and storms. Historically, the weather has (12)..... as harsh a chord in people's lives as any we feel today. Historians list the four major events to wreak devastation on the country as the Chicago fire of 1871, the Johnstown flood of 1889, the Galveston hurricane of 1900, and the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. These disasters provide a(n) (13)..... of the havoc nature's storms have wrecked on humanity, and our reactions to them. Galveston, Texas, located on the island of Galveston in the gulf of New Mexico, thrives on industry and exports. Its over 30,000 citizens in the early 1900s were generally economically successful and comfortable with (14)..... conditions. Until the ill-fated morning of Sept. 7, 1900, the people of Galveston enjoyed their life on the remote island. However, weather watchers had been following a growing storm in the Atlantic for several days and were warning of the impending danger of a hurricane. Unfortunately, people ignored the warnings. A day after the hurricane had hit the island, all that remained of the beautiful city was a mass of crumbled buildings, debris and forlorn, hopeless survivors wandering aimlessly with the stench of rotting flesh all around. It is (15)..... that over 8,000 people and most of the animals died that day, victims of one of the deadliest natural disasters in U.S. history. Chicago's 'storm' of 1871, although (16)..... to the hurricanes of the southeastern coast, was described by poet John Greenleaf Whittier as a 'fiery hurricane' that struck the great city with such (17)..... that two days later, half of the city had been destroyed and 300 lives lost. Those relating the events of that catastrophic 'hurricane' say that too little rain and a strong wind blowing off the prairie had been the cause behind the destruction of the Windy City. According to (18)....., however, responsibility was placed on one slovenly cow who kicked over a lantern in her barn somewhere in the southwest corner of Chicago, igniting the dry and highly flammable barn and ultimately bringing destruction to a large part of the city. Two days after the sparks ignited, a steady rain on the burning city put out the flames and within days hope had returned. Signs that the city was beginning to heal became (19)..... everywhere - soon new buildings were (20)..... the burned, and the lifeblood of the ravaged city was being.

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| 11. A. foundation | B. theory | C. basis | D. institution |
| 12. A. punched | B. struck | C. pinched | D. played |
| 13. A. scent | B. flavour | C. recipe | D. ingredient |
| 14. A. existing | B. remaining | C. enduring | D. staying |
| 15. A. anticipated | B. predicted | C. estimated | D. forecast |
| 16. A. disconnected | B. unaccustomed | C. unrelated | D. discredited |
| 17. A. stimulus | B. force | C. charisma | D. constraint |
| 18. A. tradition | B. culture | C. phenomenon | D. legend |
| 19. A. concealed | B. notorious | C. obscure | D. evident |
| 20. A. replacing | B. rebuilding | C. designing | D. refurbishing |

B. Fill the gaps in the following sentences with the correct answer A, B C or D.

- 21 An international hotel has recently been built on the _____ of the old school.
a expedition b landscape c site d ground
- 22 He was _____ manslaughter.
a indicted for b blamed for c condemned to d respected for
- 23 Many tax payers are _____ at what they regard as an illegal use of public funds.
a indifferent b interested c happy d indignant
- 24 Due to the nature of the earthquake, a much larger _____ of the population might be affected.
a segment b density c totality d division
- 25 They continued fighting despite all the _____ they met with.
a adversities b amenities c properties d liabilities
- 26 He was in an extreme state of _____ when his wife left him.
a calamity b mishap c distress d trial
- 27 At length, it _____ him that his life wouldn't take a turn for the better unless he left his present employment.
a dawned on b assumed that c happened to d realized that
- 28 Unfortunately, not all scientists are working for a good _____.
a end b aim c effect d cause
- 29 The media are always keen on reporting _____.
a mishaps b calamities c reverses d hardships
- 30 The threat of a general strike can only be _____ through government intervention.
a averted b converted c subverted d diverted