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About the Author

Nancy Forderer is a retired educator who taught language arts to middle school and high school students for 25 years. She received her B.Ed. and M.E. in secondary education from the University of Toledo in Toledo, Ohio. Currently, Ms. Forderer resides in San Diego, California, near her family. She enjoys tutoring, writing, reading, and traveling.

Vocabulary List 1

Amazing Adjectives

Word

[pronunciation]

other word form



Definition

- sample sentence



effervescent

[ef er VES uhnt]

effervescence (n)

lively, high-spirited, enthusiastic

- Emmalin has an effervescent personality.

mawkish

[MAW kish]

excessively sentimental, often in a silly way

- Barbara became mawkish when she saw the movie *Lion King*.

parsimonious

[pahr suh MOH nee uhs]

parsimony (n)

frugal to the point of stinginess

- The parsimonious woman only spent money for basic necessities.

perspicacious

[pur spi KEY shuhs]

having mental perception and understanding

- His perspicacious financial advisor warned him that the stock market would decline.

spurious

[SPUR ee uhs]

not genuine, authentic, true, or sincere

- The facts proved that his claim of being an Austrian prince was spurious.

surreptitious

[suhr ep TISH uhs]

marked by stealth and secrecy

- She was surreptitious and hid her sister's gift under blankets in the closet.

tantamount

[TAN tuh mount]

equal in value, meaning, or effect

- Ms. Cosgrove reminded her students that always eating junk food is tantamount to deliberately destroying your health.

truculent

[TRUHK yu luht]

truculence (n)

easily annoyed and always ready to argue or fight

- The boss became truculent whenever anyone challenged his authority.

visceral

[VIS er uh]

instinctive feelings not based on reason or logic

- Celeste has a visceral fear of being in crowded places.

A. Write the best list word that the synonyms, idioms, or phrases define to complete each sentence.

mawkish
parsimonious
visceral

spurious
effervescent
perspicacious

surreptitious
tantamount

frugal
truculent

- Her fear of mice is _____ and every time she sees one, she feels like she might faint.
intuitive deep-down ingrained innate
- The FBI ran a/an _____ operation to infiltrate hate groups in the U.S.A.
clandestine on the sly covert furtive
- On New Years Eve, the crowd in Times Square in New York City is a/an _____ group of revelers.
vivacious sparkling bubbly ebullient
- Luke's mom was much too _____ to believe his flimsy excuse for coming home late.
discerning shrewd insightful astute
- The Van Gogh painting was proven to be a/an _____ reproduction.
bogus fraudulent phony counterfeit
- Tim's dad was _____ about giving his children money and insisted that they work for their allowances.
penny-pinching Scrooge-like greedy miserly
- "Getting an A from Ms. Palmer on a speech is _____ to winning the lottery," noted Rachel.
comparable on a par with as good as commensurate
- "Grandma is always _____ when she sees us," laughed Piper. "Cheek-pinching, a few tears, and icky-lipstick kisses are always part of her greeting."
maudlin mushy cloying sappy
- The _____ comments exchanged by the men led to a fist fight.
antagonistic combative pugnacious belligerent

B. Write the best word from the choice box to complete each sentence.

truculence	parsimony	tantamount	surreptitious
perspicacious	mawkish	visceral	infallible
effervescence	spurious		

- Suzanne's _____ is obvious when she refuses to lend her classmates lunch money or school supplies.
- "We need to be _____ when we plan Rachel's surprise birthday party," warned Piper. "If she sees us whispering together, she may get suspicious."
- "Revealing my secret would be _____ to deliberately destroying our friendship," warned Max.
- "Is this another _____ excuse?" queried Ms. Patterson when Ned said he mistakenly thought his essay wasn't due until next week.
- Emmalin's _____ brightens up a room when she enters.
- "I have a/an _____ hatred for those who abuse animals," declared Caroline.
- Her classmates often consult Ann when they have a problem, because she is a good listener and a/an _____ person.
- "Cindy, crying about your bad hair day is a bit _____. Stop or everyone will laugh at you," warned Heidi.
- Luke's _____ toward his classmates is the reason why he has few friends.

C. Story Challenge

Write the best word from the choice box to fill each blank in the story.

tantamount
peripatetic
surreptitious

effervescent
truculent
spurious

mawkish
visceral

parsimonious
perspicacious

Showing and Not Telling

“Fiction writers try to create believable characters,” Mr. Riley stated in writing class. “As readers, sometimes we have a/an ⁽¹⁾ _____ reaction to a believable character, not a reaction based on reason or logic. For example, in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, the reader might instinctively cheer for the young lovers to be together, without considering the negative consequences of Romeo and Juliet’s forbidden love. This reaction is not ⁽²⁾ _____ or overly sentimental, but is sincere because through the characters’ actions and words, Shakespeare created Romeo and Juliet as young lovers who yearn to be together.”

Mr. Riley continued, “Today, we’ll explore ways in which authors create believable literary characters. First, good fiction writers ‘show, not tell.’ Can you give examples of what this means using the books and plays you’ve read in literature classes?”

Hillary raised her hand to respond. “In the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch is a/an ⁽³⁾ _____ father—one who is attentive to his children, who explains life situations to them, and who insists that they respect others,” offered Hillary. “Author Harper Lee doesn’t tell us that Atticus is an excellent parent, but the reader understands that his actions and words are ⁽⁴⁾ _____ to those of a good, caring parent,” Hillary said.

Bernie was eager to share an example. “I have another example from *Romeo and Juliet*,” he said. “Shakespeare doesn’t tell us that the character Tybalt is ⁽⁵⁾ _____, but by Tybalt’s words and actions and the way the other characters react to him, the reader sees that Tybalt is hot-headed and always trying to start a fight. For example, Mercutio, who hates Tybalt, gives him the nickname “The Prince of Cats,” because Tybalt always seems to be looking for a fight.”

“Excellent example, Bernie. In another of Shakespeare’s plays, *Julius Caesar*,” added Mr. Riley, “the behavior of Brutus is ⁽⁶⁾ _____. Brutus pretends to be Caesar’s friend, but is being ⁽⁷⁾ _____ because he is involved in a plot to murder him. Shakespeare uses the words, thoughts, and actions of Brutus to show, not tell what he is planning, and also to show how Brutus is conflicted about what he is about to do.”

Mr. Riley continued, “Another good example of a character revealed by words is also from the play *Julius Caesar*: Cassius says, “Caesar...no mightier than you or I, yet prodigious grown...” Can anyone explain what Cassius’ words mean, and what his words tell us about the character, Cassius?”

Suzanne explained, “Cassius is plotting against Caesar and from his words, the reader knows Cassius is trying to convince the others that Caesar is becoming too powerful. Cassius is saying that even though Caesar is no better than all of us, he has become much more powerful.”

“Excellent analysis, Suzanne.” Mr. Riley continued, “Besides showing the character in action, the author often lets the reader see a character’s thoughts. During Shakespeare’s time, the audience would often know a character’s thoughts through an “aside”—a remark made by a character intended to be heard by the audience but not heard by the other characters in the play.”

“You may recall when you were younger, reading the book *Lunch Money* by Andrew Clements,” reminded Mr. Riley, “the character Greg is obsessive about making and saving money. The author uses third-person-limited point of view, so the reader knows by Greg’s thoughts, as well as by his words and actions, that he is ⁽⁸⁾ _____ without the author Andrew Clements telling us.”

Elsie had an answer. “When Ebenezer Scrooge discovers the real meaning of Christmas in *A Christmas Carol*, he is laughing and crying and at the same time saying, “I am light as a feather, I am happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy...” Through the character’s words and actions, Charles Dickens shows the reader that Scrooge is ⁽⁹⁾ _____.”

“Excellent work today, class. When you write your own character analyses, remember to explain how authors reveal character.”

Create Characters – Show, Not Tell

- Character description, words, actions, and thoughts
- Reactions by others to the character
- Words to or about the character by others

D. The underlined part in each sentence is a synonym, idiom, phrase, or definition for a list word. Unscramble the list word and write the word on the blank.

1. An instinctive fear overwhelms me whenever I'm standing in line to ride a roller coaster, " said Hope.

clsevair

2. Luke becomes extremely argumentative whenever someone criticizes him.

lutenurtc

3. A high-spirited mood prevailed in the classroom when Ms. Paterson postponed the grammar test for a week.

evfenrctsefe

4. Kara becomes tearful when she reminisces about her childhood in Vancouver, Canada.

khwimas

5. "Facts must be verified in order to avoid fraudulent information in persuasive writing," said Ms. Paterson.

ursopsui

6. Julia wrote a very perceptive analysis of the novel *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio.

saopieuspricc

7. Mandy was stealthy when she hid her diary under the mattress in her bedroom.

ssuurtreptio

8. Ned claimed that his track team winning the state championship was equal to winning an Olympic gold medal.

mtotannatu

9. Celeste was miserly with her allowance because she was saving money to buy a new smart phone.

usonaisoprmi

E. Write the word, idiom, or phrase from the choice box that best defines each list word.

- sneaky
 - maudlin
 - bad-tempered
 - ingrained
 - grandiose
- fake
 - penny-pinching
 - bubbly
 - equal to
 - insightful

1. parsimonious _____
2. effervescent _____
3. perspicacious _____
4. spurious _____
5. surreptitious _____
6. truculent _____
7. visceral _____
8. mawkish _____
9. tantamount _____

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F. Complete each sentence to show that you understand the meaning of the underlined word.

1. Heidi gave her friend a note in a surreptitious way by _____
_____.

2. Luke displayed truculent behavior when he _____
_____.

3. The spurious claim that Cindy gave for not having her homework was that _____
_____.

4. "Going to the dentist to have a tooth pulled is tantamount to _____
_____, " said Ned.

5. Suzanne is so parsimonious that she _____
_____.

6. Every time Rachel hears _____ she becomes
mawkish and starts to _____.

7. Casey had a visceral reaction when he discovered that _____
_____.

8. Emmalin, an effervescent person, greets her friends by _____
_____.

9. Christopher's grandfather gave perspicacious advice to his grandchildren by telling them
_____.