

MAKING NEW WORDS YOUR OWN

Lesson 25 **CONTEXT: Writers, Their Work, and Their Worlds**

Romantic Voices

Often when people think of poets, they fall back on old stereotypes. They see the poet as a sort of tormented genius who paces a darkened room as a storm rages outside. As lightning strikes, so does inspiration and the poet writes until he or she is exhausted, producing a brilliant poem in one draft. In another version, the poet wanders through beautiful fields or along gurgling streams, finally stopping to write a delicate little verse titled something like "Ode to the Daffodil." Both of these stereotypes have some of their roots in Romanticism, a literary movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Neither idea has much basis in reality.

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about Romanticism and the Romantic poets of Great Britain. Below are ten vocabulary words that will be used in these exercises.

dubious	essence	grueling	liability	vanity
equation	frenzied	haphazard	unkempt	volatile

EXERCISE 1 *Mapping*

Directions. In the item below, a vocabulary word is provided and used in a sentence. Take a guess at the word's meaning and write it in the box labeled **Your Guess**. Then look the word up in your dictionary and write the definition in the box labeled **Definition**. In the **Other Forms** box, write as many other forms of the word, such as adjective and noun forms, as you can think of or find in your dictionary.

Then, following the same procedure, draw your own map for each of the nine remaining vocabulary words. Use a separate sheet of paper.

1. dubious →

Most Romantics firmly believed that human beings were basically good. Many of their contemporaries, however, found this idea **dubious**.

↓

Your Guess:

↓

Definition:

←

Other Forms:

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EXERCISE 2 *Context Clues* 

Directions. Scan the definitions in Column A. Then think about how the boldface words are used in the sentences in Column B. To complete the exercise, match each definition in Column A with the correct vocabulary word from Column B. Write the letter of your choice on the line provided; then write the vocabulary word on the line preceding the definition.

COLUMN A

_____ 11. word: _____
adj. wildly excited; frantic

_____ 12. word: _____
adj. left to chance; not planned; random

_____ 13. word: _____
adj. causing doubt; uncertain; questionable

_____ 14. word: _____
adj. exhausting; very tiring or annoying

_____ 15. word: _____
adj. not neat; neglected; untidy

_____ 16. word: _____
adj. explosive; changeable; fickle

_____ 17. word: _____
n. a statement of equality; a process of making equal; a state of equality, especially in mathematics

_____ 18. word: _____
n. the fundamental nature of something; a defining feature; an extract of a substance

_____ 19. word: _____
n. something for which someone is legally responsible; a disadvantage or drawback; a debt

_____ 20. word: _____
n. the quality of being vain or conceited

COLUMN B

- (A) Because of his poor health, the young John Keats (1795–1821) found the English winters **grueling**. He lived the last few months of his life in the kinder, warmer climate of Italy.
- (B) Some people were **dubious** about the talent of Lord Byron. They doubted that such an outrageous young man could be a serious poet.
- (C) A famous poem of the Romantic period is "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The old man with the long gray beard and glittering eye probably looked **unkempt** and wild in contrast to the people on their way to a wedding.
- (D) Mary Shelley (1797–1851) saw an **equation** between evil and the distortion of the natural order. In other words, she believed it was wrong to create something unnatural.
- (E) Charles Lamb (1775–1834) took care of his sister Mary, a **volatile** young woman who suffered from serious mental illness. Often, however, she experienced periods of calm and sanity.
- (F) When Wordsworth said that poetry was the spontaneous overflow of feelings, he did not mean that poetry should be written in a **frenzied** state. He indicated that a poem should be written in a tranquil frame of mind.
- (G) Lord Byron's unconventional behavior became a social **liability**. Eventually, many people did not want to associate with him, so he left England.
- (H) Poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) did have difficulty organizing his daily affairs, but there was nothing **haphazard** about his thinking. He had one of the finest minds of the Romantics.
- (I) Byron believed that the **essence**, or fundamental characteristic, of Shelly was his generous, unselfish nature.
- (J) Keats was a modest young man. He seemed incapable of **vanity**.

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EXERCISE 3**Sentence Completion** 

Directions. For each of the following items, circle the letter of the choice that best completes the meaning of the sentence or sentences.

21. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is about a scientist who gradually loses his mind. He cares less and less about his appearance and well being, and in this _____ and _____ state, he creates a monster.
 (A) frenzied . . . dubious
 (B) dubious . . . haphazard
 (C) vain . . . grueling
 (D) unkempt . . . frenzied
 (E) grueling . . . essential
22. It is Doctor Frankenstein's _____, his own conceitedness, that leads to his destruction.
 (A) vanity
 (B) liability
 (C) equation
 (D) essence
 (E) dubiousness
23. Mary Shelley was _____ at first about writing the novel. She wasn't sure that she could do it.
 (A) haphazard
 (B) grueling
 (C) frenzied
 (D) volatile
 (E) dubious
24. The novel establishes an _____ between rationality and happiness. It also suggests that the _____ of human happiness lies in accepting our place in nature.
 (A) essence . . . equation
 (B) unkemptness . . . essence
 (C) equation . . . essence
 (D) essence . . . liability
 (E) equation . . . liability
25. When he realizes that his creation is a monstrous _____ rather than a benefit, Dr. Frankenstein becomes increasingly _____, unable to control his anger.
 (A) liability . . . volatile
 (B) liability . . . unkempt
 (C) equation . . . frenzied
 (D) vanity . . . grueling
 (E) vanity . . . haphazard
26. The idea for *Frankenstein* came to Mary Shelley in a dream, but that does not mean the book was produced in a _____ manner. The novel was not a product of chance or luck, but of difficult, _____ work.
 (A) frenzied . . . volatile
 (B) grueling . . . frenzied
 (C) volatile . . . grueling
 (D) haphazard . . . grueling
 (E) haphazard . . . frenzied
27. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's approach to writing was _____. In fact, he allowed a chance interruption to prevent him from completing "Kubla Khan."
 (A) haphazard
 (B) grueling
 (C) frenzied
 (D) volatile
 (E) unkempt
28. The Shelleys and Lord Byron invited Keats to join them in Pisa, Italy, but Keats was _____ about accepting their invitation. He decided it would be wiser to go to Rome.
 (A) frenzied
 (B) dubious
 (C) volatile
 (D) unkempt
 (E) haphazard
29. Keats had problems with money, family, and health. These _____ must have made life seem a _____, uphill struggle.
 (A) essences . . . volatile
 (B) equations . . . frenzied
 (C) equations . . . grueling
 (D) liabilities . . . frenzied
 (E) liabilities . . . grueling
30. Byron was drawn into the _____ politics of Greece; he risked his life to fight in Greece's independence movement, and he died of a fever there in 1824.
 (A) grueling
 (B) volatile
 (C) frenzied
 (D) dubious
 (E) unkempt

