

MAKING NEW WORDS YOUR OWN

Lesson 28 **CONTEXT: Writers, Their Work, and Their Worlds**

Emily Dickinson

One of the most remarkable poets of the nineteenth century was Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). Her work was truly original; she modeled herself after no one and created her own individual style. Although she wrote more than a thousand poems, only a few were published in her lifetime. A private person, Emily seldom left her home after 1862. In her later years, she dressed only in white.

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about Emily Dickinson and her work. Below are ten vocabulary words that will be used in these exercises.

- | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| alteration | drastic | initiative | irretrievable | promenade |
| amends | indivisible | intervention | medley | reprimand |

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.

alteration

→

Emily Dickinson sometimes asked others for their opinions of her work, and sometimes she followed their suggestions. For example, she made some **alterations** in one poem at the request of her sister-in-law Susan Dickinson.

↓

Your Guess:

↓

Other Forms:

←

Definition:

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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

COLUMN B

_____ 11. word: _____

n. the process of adjusting or changing; a change or an adjustment

_____ 12. word: _____

n. a first step or movement toward something; enterprise; ability to think or act without urging

_____ 13. word: _____

adj. unable to be retrieved, recovered, restored, or replaced

_____ 14. word: _____

n. something done or paid to make up for an insult, wrong, or injury

_____ 15. word: _____

n. an act of coming between in order to stop, settle, or change; interference

_____ 16. word: _____

n. a mixture of things that are not usually placed together; a musical piece made up of tunes from various works

_____ 17. word: _____

n. a severe rebuke or scolding; a formal censure; *v.* to rebuke severely; to show disapproval of

_____ 18. word: _____

adj. not capable of being divided or separated

_____ 19. word: _____

n. a leisurely walk or stroll; a public walkway; *v.* to take a leisurely walk or stroll

_____ 20. word: _____

adj. severe; extreme; harsh

(A) Emily Dickinson spent time with her father in Washington, D.C., and was familiar with its streets, parks, and **promenades**.

(B) Some scholars believe that Emily Dickinson retired to her home because she had fallen hopelessly in love with the Reverend Charles Wadsworth and had experienced a sense of **irretrievable** loss when he did not return her affections.

(C) Other critics **reprimand** the scholars who hold this view. These critics disapprove of interpreting Dickinson's motive.

(D) Dickinson may or may not have been in love with Wadsworth, but it is clear that she did experience a sense of **drastic** loss during her life. That extreme pain appears in some of her poetry.

(E) In 1862, Dickinson wrote Thomas Wentworth Higgins to ask his advice about her poetry. This **initiative** was the start of a long friendship.

(F) Although Dickinson asked for Higgins's advice, she paid little attention to it. She did not make the **alterations** he suggested.

(G) Dickinson's idea of heaven seems **indivisible** from her idea of life on earth. For her, heaven was family, friends, and nature.

(H) Some family members were concerned about what some of the poems contained, and so they destroyed them. Other poems may have been altered. We can only imagine what Dickinson would have thought of such **intervention** in her work.

(I) Perhaps Dickinson would have been horrified by the idea she had upset her family and would have tried to make **amends**. On the other hand, she might have been upset that they did not allow her to speak for herself.

(J) Emily Dickinson kept her poems in packets of about twenty. Some critics can see no relationship between the poems in a packet. They say they are more like a **medley** than a single unit.

EXERCISE 3**Sentence Completion** 

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

21. "You know how the theater teacher says we don't show enough imagination or _____. Well, I have an original idea," says Cassie.
 (A) initiative
 (B) amends
 (C) intervention
 (D) medley
 (E) promenade
22. "Let's write a musical about Emily Dickinson. It can open with the chorus taking a slow _____ along the street in front of her house. The chorus can sing a _____ of the songs that will appear in the play."
 (A) medley . . . promenade
 (B) promenade . . . medley
 (C) intervention . . . reprimand
 (D) reprimand . . . medley
 (E) amends . . . reprimand
23. "Since her poetry is _____ from her identity, we'll use her poems as songs—if we can do it without many _____."
 (A) irretrievable . . . reprimands
 (B) drastic . . . amends
 (C) indivisible . . . alterations
 (D) indivisible . . . reprimands
 (E) irretrievable . . . alterations
24. "We'll have a scene where her father _____ her for neglecting her chores, but her sister offers to help her. Her sister's _____ makes it possible for Emily to finish her poem."
 (A) promenades . . . medley
 (B) promenades . . . intervention
 (C) reprimands . . . amends
 (D) reprimands . . . intervention
 (E) amends . . . reprimand
25. Lorena says, "I don't mean to interrupt, Cassie, but did that ever happen? I don't want to have to make _____ to the audience for lying about Emily Dickinson."
 (A) interventions
 (B) amends
 (C) initiatives
 (D) alterations
 (E) reprimands
26. "Lorena, you exaggerate. It wouldn't be that _____. I don't think anyone would _____ us. Everyone knows that art doesn't have to be absolutely true."
 (A) altered . . . promenade
 (B) indivisible . . . medley
 (C) irretrievable . . . reprimand
 (D) drastic . . . reprimand
 (E) drastic . . . promenade
27. "Well, I guess you do have to make some _____ in the facts, and of course, some of the facts are _____ now. We couldn't find them even if we looked for them."
 (A) alterations . . . irretrievable
 (B) amends . . . irretrievable
 (C) interventions . . . indivisible
 (D) reprimands . . . indivisible
 (E) promenades . . . drastic
28. "It's more than that. You know that Emily and Lavinia didn't suddenly begin to sing on one of their Sunday afternoon _____. They just walked and talked."
 (A) interventions
 (B) amends
 (C) promenades
 (D) medleys
 (E) initiatives
29. "And their parents would issue sharp _____ if they had begun to dance in public."
 (A) amends
 (B) reprimands
 (C) alterations
 (D) medleys
 (E) promenades
30. "I get your point. We have to make all kinds of _____ in the story to fit Dickinson's life into a musical, but aren't there some things we shouldn't change?"
 (A) initiative
 (B) alterations
 (C) amends
 (D) interventions
 (E) promenades

