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LESSON 20

from **The Inaugural Address (1961)** (speech)
by John F. Kennedy

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been **summoned** to give **testimony** to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long **twilight** struggle, year in and year out “rejoicing in hope, patient in **tribulation**”—a struggle against the common enemies of man: **tyranny**, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we **forge** against these enemies a grand and global **alliance**, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of **maximum** danger. I do not **shrink** from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do

not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, and the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good **conscience** our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.

Exercise I: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each master word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the master words.

Master Words				
Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don't know.				
alliance	forge	shrink	testimony	twilight
conscience	maximum	summon	tribulation	tyranny

• • • Exercise 2: Using Context Clues

Fill in the form for each of the Master Words listed below with context clues (if any), your definition, and the dictionary definition. If you have difficulty writing a definition, try using the word in a sentence instead.

1. **alliance** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: forge against these enemies, global . . .
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: a union among nations for the advantage of all parties involved
2. **conscience** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: high standards, good
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: an inner feeling of right and wrong; a moral sense
3. **forge** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: global alliance
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: to form, as if by heating and hammering; to shape; to mold; to produce
4. **maximum** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: danger, responsibility
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: referring to the greatest number or amount; the highest degree
5. **shrink** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: do not, welcome (contrast)
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: to draw back or hesitate to act, as from fear or distaste
6. **summon** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: answered the call to service
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: to call upon, as to perform a duty; to send for
7. **testimony** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: summoned to give
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: a declaration of support; evidence; proof
8. **tribulation** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: struggle, enemies, tyranny, poverty, disease, war
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: severe suffering or distress
9. **twilight** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: struggle, tyranny, poverty, disease, war
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: resembling the onset of dark at sunset; dim; gloomy
10. **tyranny** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: enemies of man, poverty, disease, war
Your Definition: Answers will vary.
Dictionary Definition: the unreasonable use of power; the abuse of power by a dictator

Exercise 3: Synonyms and Antonyms

Use the synonyms and antonyms in the word list to fill in the blanks except where you see an X.

	Synonyms	Antonyms
1. summon	call	dismiss
2. testimony	evidence	X
3. tribulation	trouble	blessing
4. tyranny	dictatorship	freedom
5. forge	form	dissolve
6. alliance	union	separation
7. twilight	obscure	bright
8. maximum	greatest	minimum
9. shrink	flinch	advance
10. conscience	morals	immorality

Word List	
advance	freedom
blessing	greatest
bright	immorality
call	minimum
dictatorship	morals
dismiss	obscure
dissolve	separation
evidence	trouble
flinch	union
form	

Exercise 4: Sentence Completion

From the Master Words, choose the appropriate word for the blank in each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided at the right.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. I would like to ...?... a new relationship based on trust and friendship. | <u>forge</u> |
| 2. Often ...?... results when too much power is put in the hands of too few. | <u>tyranny</u> |
| 3. Coach had to ...?... Shawn to the sideline for a quick word of advice. | <u>summon</u> |
| 4. The great ...?... that man has suffered shows in his haggard face. | <u>tribulation</u> |
| 5. Each speaker gave ...?... to the achievements of the guest of honor. | <u>testimony</u> |
| 6. I will never be a doctor. I ...?... from the smallest drop of blood. | <u>shrink</u> |
| 7. I knew you had (a, an) ...?... and would do the right thing in the end. | <u>conscience</u> |
| 8. During World War II, the United States and Britain formed (a, an) ...?... to defeat Nazi Germany. | <u>alliance</u> |
| 9. The ...?... number of people allowed into the hall is 5,000; more would be unsafe. | <u>maximum</u> |
| 10. They made one final ...?... effort with only a dim hope of success. | <u>twilight</u> |

Exercise 5: Using Words with Multiple Meanings

Each of the Master Words in bold type in these sentences has a different meaning from the same word in the passage. For each word, note the part of speech and write your definition of the word as it is used in the sentence. Then write the dictionary definition.

1. Unfortunately, deer often feed at **twilight**, and it is hard for drivers to see them in the dwindling light.

Your Definition: Answers will vary.

Dictionary Definition: n. the period from sunset to dark

2. The blacksmith worked at his **forge**, heating the metal and hammering it into horseshoes.

Your Definition: Answers will vary.

Dictionary Definition: n. a place where metal is heated and hammered into shape

3. After the number of occupants reached the legal **maximum**, no one else was allowed into the hall.

Your Definition: Answers will vary.

Dictionary Definition: n. the greatest number or amount allowed

4. Washing clothing made from knitted fabric in hot water will often **shrink** it.

Your Definition: Answers will vary.

Dictionary Definition: v. to become smaller or more compact

5. The eyewitness gave her **testimony** in court, telling what she had seen of the crime.

Your Definition: Answers will vary.

Dictionary Definition: n. a declaration made under oath in court to establish the facts of a case

Exercise 6: Analogies

Determine the relationship between the first pair of words in each item. Then write the Master Word on the blank that would create a similar relationship with the second pair of words. The types of relationships used are cause/effect, degree, producer/product, synonyms, and whole/parts. (See page 158 for a guide to analogy types.)

- | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---------|----|-----------------|---|----------------|
| 1. few | : | least | :: | many | : | <u>maximum</u> |
| 2. farmer | : | harvest | :: | dictator | : | <u>tyranny</u> |
| 3. smash | : | broken | :: | <u>shrink</u> | : | smaller |
| 4. shining | : | bright | :: | <u>twilight</u> | : | dim |
| 5. chain | : | links | :: | <u>alliance</u> | : | nations |

Write About It: Speech

Write a short speech that you might give at a ceremony honoring an important event in American history. The speech might honor heroes who fell in a famous Civil War battle or a major achievement in America's space program. Use formal English that would be appropriate for such an occasion. Include at least four of the Master Words in your speech.

Unit Word Study

Classic Roots and Affixes (*pro-*, *voc/voke*)

The master word **provoke** is based on the Latin root *voc*, sometimes spelled *voke*, which means “to call.” The root comes from the Latin *vocare*, which also means “to call” and is related to the Latin word *vox*, meaning “voice.” The prefix *pro-* usually means “before,” “forward,” or “forth,” so to provoke is literally “to call forth.” Use this information to complete the exercise below.

Matching

Write the letter of the definition after the correct word on the left. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---|
| 1. provocation | <u> c </u> | a. a calling; a career |
| 2. invoke | <u> e </u> | b. to give voice to; to speak or sing |
| 3. revoke | <u> d </u> | c. something that calls forth a reaction of some kind |
| 4. vocation | <u> a </u> | d. to call back; to withdraw or cancel |
| 5. vocalize | <u> b </u> | e. to call on for help or inspiration |

Understanding Word Origins

The Master Word **maximum** contains the prefix *maxi-*, which means “very large,” “very long,” or “greatest.” *Maxi-* appears in several English words and is also used (sometimes with the hyphen retained) in newly invented words to suggest that they are very big or effective. For instance, a juice company calling its product container a maxi-bottle is stressing the very large size of the product. Using this information, write a definition of each word in the left column. Then use the word in a sentence. Consult a dictionary if you need help.

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--|
| 1. maxiskirt | Definition: | a very long skirt |
| | Sentence: | A maxiskirt falls well below the knees. |
| 2. maximize | Definition: | to increase to the largest size possible |
| | Sentence: | If you maximize this web page, the print on it will be easier to read. |
| 3. maxicoat | Definition: | a very long coat |
| | Sentence: | Is the maxicoat in style this year, or are women wearing shorter coats? |
| 4. maximal | Definition: | greatest possible |
| | Sentence: | This chart recommends the maximal heart rate for people of different ages. |

Unit Word Study

Idioms and Sayings

An idiom is a saying in which the meaning is not immediately clear from the denotation of the individual words that make it up. For example, the idiom *after a fashion*, which the doctor uses in the passage from *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (p. 92), means “in some way but not very well.” If you don’t know the meaning of an idiom, you will have to use context clues to figure it out. Idioms are sometimes listed under their key words in regular dictionaries; for instance, you might find *after a fashion* at the end of the dictionary entry for *fashion*. You can also refer to special idiom dictionaries or search the Internet for definitions.

Matching

The sentences below contain idioms in bold print that come from the passages in this unit. Write the letter of the definition on the right that matches the idiom in each sentence. Use the context clues to help you.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| c | 1. Margaret frowned in irritation, for she was put out that I had not obeyed her. | a. show approval |
| a | 2. I was glad that Mrs. Flowers chose to smile on me , since her positive attitude toward me made a big difference in my life. | b. assisted a mother in the birth of her child |
| d | 3. We heard a frenzied voice break in on the radio program to announce the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. | c. annoyed |
| b | 4. “In my forty years in the medical profession, I have brought into this world a large number of babies,” said the doctor. | d. interrupt |

Using Idioms

The idioms in bold print in these sentences each include a Master Word from the unit. Use the context and your knowledge of the Master Words to figure out the meaning of each idiom. Write the definition, and then use the idiom in a sentence of your own.

1. Jo is a **shrinking violet** who rarely speaks except among close friends.

Definition: a shy person

Sentence: Answers will vary but should show an understanding of the meaning of the idiom.

2. Despite the rain, we will **forge ahead** with construction in order to meet our deadline.

Definition: to move forward quickly; to make good progress

Sentence: Answers will vary but should show an understanding of the meaning of the idiom.

3. That dress designer is on the **cutting edge** of fashion.

Definition: the latest or most innovative position; the forefront

Sentence: Answers will vary but should show an understanding of the meaning of the idiom.

4. Although he has entered his **twilight years**, Uncle Al is still the boss in our family.

Definition: the final years of a person’s life; old age

Sentence: Answers will vary but should show an understanding of the meaning of the idiom.

Unit Assessment

I. Read the passage below. Then answer questions 1–8.

The Kennedy Inauguration

John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address, given in 1961, is considered one of the finest presidential speeches of all time. As the new chief **executive** of our nation, Kennedy was able to **articulate** his vision for the direction America should take for years to come.

Speaking at the height of the Cold War, Kennedy wanted to **forge** and strengthen **alliances** with other nations in this fight against communism. He also wanted to **reassure** worried Americans that their country would be strong in this struggle. So he spoke firmly about the dangers of **tyranny** and the vital importance of freedom.

Kennedy also wanted to **summon** Americans to do their duty, both at home and abroad. His inspiring line, “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country,” is just such a summons.

Kennedy made his speech with all the **dignity** suited to the formal occasion of a presidential inauguration. Yet he also realized that television—

then still a relatively new invention—was bringing his words and image right into people’s living rooms. For that reason, he worked hard to create intimacy with his audience, a feeling of **familiarity** that would make each listener feel that he or she was part of the grand event.

To help make the occasion even more memorable, President Kennedy invited the world-famous poet Robert Frost, a fellow New Englander, to recite a poem at his inauguration. Although other poets had written about inaugurations in the past, Frost was the first to be invited to the official swearing-in ceremony.

Decades later President Bill Clinton, who deeply admired John F. Kennedy, would also invite a poet to recite at his inauguration. The poet Clinton invited was Maya Angelou, who came from his home state of Arkansas. Angelou is famous not only for poetry but also for an autobiography telling about her Arkansas childhood, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Questions 1–3: Find the word most nearly opposite in meaning to the given word.

1. reassure is most nearly **opposite** in meaning

(A) forget (D) retreat

(B) believe (E) begin

X (C) worry

2. familiarity is most nearly **opposite** in meaning to

(A) replacement (D) simplicity

X (B) formality (E) relationship

(C) boredom

3. alliances is most nearly **opposite** in meaning to

X (A) feuds (D) memories

(B) friendships (E) politics

(C) nationalities

Questions 4–6: Find the word most similar in meaning to the given word.

4. tyranny is most **similar** in meaning to

(A) government (D) ceremony

(B) ruler (E) obsession

X (C) dictatorship

5. articulate is most **similar** in meaning to

(A) wonder X (D) express

(B) dream (E) govern

(C) question

6. executive is most **similar** in meaning to

X (A) administrator (D) politician

(B) investor (E) speaker

(C) patriot

Unit Assessment

Questions 7–8: Choose the answer about the part of speech of the given word as used in the sentence.

7. What is the part of speech of the word **summon** as used in the sentence?

Kennedy also wanted to **summon** Americans to do their duty.

- X (A) verb (D) adverb
(B) noun (E) preposition
(C) adjective

8. What is the part of speech of the word **forge** as used in the sentence?

Kennedy wanted to **forge** and strengthen alliances with other nations.

- X (A) verb (D) adverb
(B) noun (E) preposition
(C) adjective

Questions 9–10: Choose the answer with the words from the unit that best fit the blanks and complete the sentence.

9. An inauguration is usually an occasion of great ...?... in which a new president tries to ...?... ideas about the direction he or she hopes to take the nation.

- (A) tribulation, summon
(B) conscience, barrel
(C) incident, reassure
X (D) dignity, articulate
(E) testimony, restrain

10. Good speakers like John F. Kennedy use words to their ...?... effect and try to ...?... emotional reactions in listeners.

- (A) taut, barrel
X (B) maximum, provoke
(C) unceremonious, fix
(D) hysterical, articulate
(E) bizarre, shrink

continued

Unit Assessment

II. Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

One of the Lhari checking papers stopped and **fixed** him with an inscrutable gray stare but finally turned away again.

Bart began really to worry. Captain Steele would never miss his ship! But he saw only one disembarking passenger who had not yet been surrounded by a group of welcoming relatives or **summoned** a robotcab and gone.

—from *The Colors of Space* by Marion Zimmer Bradley

11. What word or phrase is most similar to the word **fixed** in the passage?

- Ⓐ repaired Ⓒ understood
 Ⓑ sat on Ⓓ focused on

12. Which word(s) or phrase(s) from the passage best helps the reader understand the meaning of **fixed**?

- Ⓐ checking papers Ⓒ turned
 Ⓑ stare Ⓓ worry

13. Which dictionary definition below best matches the use of the word **summoned** in the passage?

- Ⓐ v. called over Ⓒ n. those who were called
 Ⓑ v. ordered to appear in court Ⓓ v. called from the spirit world

III. Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

The ...?... was so obsessed with her cause that she began ranting about it in the middle of the crowded mall. Several shoppers thought her ...?... speech was a sign of madness.

14. Which pair of words best completes the blanks in the passage?

- Ⓐ aristocrat, effortless Ⓒ midwife, stupefied
 Ⓑ executive, methodical Ⓓ fanatic, frenzied

15. Which words or phrases from the passage best help the reader answer question 14?

- Ⓐ obsessed, ranting, madness Ⓒ cause, speech, sign
 Ⓑ shoppers, crowded, mall Ⓓ middle, crowded, several

