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# LESSON 18

from **The Bluest Eye** (fiction)  
by Toni Morrison

Outdoors, we knew, was the real terror of life. The threat of being outdoors surfaced frequently in those days. Every possibility of **excess** was **curtailed** with it. If somebody ate too much, he could end up outdoors. If somebody used too much coal, he could end up outdoors. People could gamble themselves outdoors, drink themselves outdoors. Sometimes mothers put their sons outdoors, and when that happened, regardless of what the son had done, all sympathy was with him. He was outdoors, and his own flesh had done it. To be put outdoors by a landlord was one thing—unfortunate, but an aspect of life over which you had no control, since you could not control your income. But to be slack enough to put oneself outdoors, or heartless enough to put one’s own kin outdoors—that was criminal.

There is a difference between being put *out* and being put *outdoors*. If you are put out, you go somewhere else; if you are outdoors, there is no place to go. The distinction was subtle but final. Outdoors was the end of something, an **irrevocable**, physical fact, defining and complementing our **metaphysical** condition. Being a minority in both **caste** and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to **consolidate** our weaknesses and hang on, or to

creep singly up into the major folds of the garment. Our **peripheral** existence, however, was something we had learned to deal with—probably because it was abstract. But the concreteness of being outdoors was another matter—like the difference between the concept of death and being, in fact, dead. Dead doesn’t change, and outdoors is here to stay.

Knowing that there was such a thing as outdoors bred in us a hunger for property, for ownership. The firm possession of a yard, a porch, a grape arbor. **Propertied** black people spent all their energies, all their love, on their nests. Like frenzied, desperate birds, they overdecorated everything; fussed and fidgeted over their hard-won homes; canned, jellied, and preserved all summer to fill the cupboards and shelves; they painted, picked, and poked at every corner of their houses. And these houses **loomed** like hothouse sunflowers among the rows of weeds that were the rented houses. Renting blacks cast **furtive** glances at these owned yards and porches, and made firmer commitments to buy themselves “some nice little old place.” In the meantime, they saved, and scratched, and piled away what they could in the rented hovels, looking forward to the day of property.

## Exercise 1: 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.				
caste	curtail	furtive	loom	peripheral
consolidate	excess	irrevocable	metaphysical	propertied

## 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.

- caste** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: being a minority in both . . . and class  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: a class or group of people set off from others
- consolidate** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: no clue  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: to combine into a stronger whole; to bring together
- curtail** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: ate too much, could end up outdoors  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: to cut short; to reduce
- excess** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: If somebody ate too much  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: the act of taking or enjoying too much of something; overindulgence
- furtive** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: no clue  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: sneaky; secretive
- irrevocable** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: physical fact, defining . . . condition  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: unalterable; irreversible; impossible to change
- loom** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: like hothouse sunflowers  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: to appear (usually in an enlarged or distorted form); to take shape
- metaphysical** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: physical . . . condition  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: spiritual; psychological
- peripheral** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: on the hem of life  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: on the edge; outside a boundary; marginal
- propertied** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: spent all their energies . . . on their nests  
Your Definition: Answers will vary.  
Dictionary Definition: affluent; prosperous

### • • • Exercise 3: Using Synonyms

The words and phrases in italic type in the sentences below are synonyms of the Master Words. On the line below each sentence, write a new sentence using Master Words in place of the words in italic type. You may have to adjust the form of one or more words to fit the context.

caste	curtail	furtive	loom	peripheral
consolidate	excess	irrevocable	metaphysical	propertied

1. The presence of the heroine *appeared* so large that *marginal* characters faded into the background.

The presence of the heroine **loomed** so large that **peripheral** characters faded into the background.

2. If you *cut short* your smoking habit now, you may not cause *irreversible* damage to your lungs.

If you **curtail** your smoking habit now, you may not cause **irrevocable** damage to your lungs.

3. Vicky openly revealed her interest in *spiritual* subjects; not so, her *secret* passion for romance novels.

Vicky openly revealed her interest in **metaphysical** subjects; not so, her **furtive** passion for romance novels.

4. If I *combine* my student loans and eliminate *overindulgences*, I will be able to get out of debt.

If I **consolidate** my student loans and eliminate **excesses**, I will be able to get out of debt.

5. In some societies, there is no way for members of the lowest *class* to join the ranks of the *affluent* elite.

In some societies, there is no way for members of the lowest **caste** to join the ranks of the **propertied** elite.

### • • • 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.

- Some oppose the death penalty because the decision is ...?... once the punishment is carried out. irrevocable
- Courtney plans to ...?... the amount of time she spends on social media sites. curtail
- My ...?... neighbors are reluctant to see homes broken up into apartments. propertied
- The rise in obesity is linked to (a, an) ...?... of sugar in the diet. excess
- Dan decided to major in philosophy to pursue his interest in ...?... topics. metaphysical
- The security guard was trained to notice ...?... movements used by shoplifters. furtive
- The ...?... parking lots provide shuttles to bring travelers to the terminal. peripheral
- A rigid system of ...?... (s) in a society makes social mobility difficult. caste
- My childhood home ...?... (s) larger in my memory than it does in reality. loom
- After the merger, the banks ...?... (d, ed) their assets. consolidate

## • • • • Exercise 5: Using Words with Multiple Meanings

The Master Word *loom* has many different meanings depending on how it is used in a sentence. Choose the number of the correct definition for *loom* for each of the following sentences.

<i>loom</i>
1. <i>n.</i> a piece of equipment used for weaving
2. <i>n.</i> the middle part of an oar
3. <i>v.</i> to appear indistinctly
4. <i>v.</i> to dominate
5. <i>v.</i> to take form as something about to happen

- The new office tower seems to **loom** over the other buildings in the area. 4
- As we rounded the curve, the mountains **loomed** in the distance. 3
- Ashley wove a small rug on the **loom** at the craft center. 1
- A showdown over the budget **loomed** as the new congressional term began. 5
- The **loom** allows an oar to swivel in the oarlock. 2

## • • • • Exercise 6: Metaphor and Simile

In the passage, Toni Morrison uses figurative language, including metaphor and simile, to paint a picture of the setting. Metaphor is a figure of speech that compares essentially unlike things to focus on an important similarity. A simile is a comparison that uses the words *like* or *as*.

In the chart below, write examples of metaphors and similes from the passage in the first column. Then explain each one in the second column. An example has been done for you.

Metaphor / Simile	Explanation
Being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life.	In this metaphor, the narrator compares life to a garment and vividly conveys that African Americans were on the periphery of society.
to creep singly up into the major folds of the garment	Continuing with the metaphor of life as a garment, the narrator conveys that black people are trying to move from the peripheral hem to the more central areas of society. Their movement is a bit stealthy and it is slow.
Like frenzied, desperate birds, they overdecorated everything	The narrator makes the comparison of the home to a bird's nest and compares black homeowners to birds who are urgent in their nest-building activities.
And these houses loomed like hothouse sunflowers among the rows of weeds that were the rented houses.	In this simile, homes owned by black people are compared to sunflowers and rental houses are compared to weeds. The owned homes dominate the neighborhood as tall, bright sunflowers that would tower over and visually dominate a field of scraggly weeds.

### Write About It: Home Sweet Home

In this selection, Toni Morrison writes about the meaning of home and the terror of being outdoors.

**Write a personal essay** about the meaning of home for you. Use at least four Master Words or words related to the Master Words in your essay.

# Unit Word Study

## Classic Roots and Affixes (*in-*, *dict*, *-ment*)

The Master Word **indictment** is based on the Latin root *dictare*, which means “to say; to put into words.” The Latin prefix *in-* here means “in,” and the suffix *-ment* forms a noun from a verb and indicates the result of an action. **Indictment** literally means “the result of putting (a charge) into words.” Use this information, your knowledge of other affixes, and a dictionary, if necessary, to complete the exercise below.

### Matching

Write the letter of the matching etymology after the word on the left.

- |                       |                  |                                      |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <b>diction</b>     | <u>    c    </u> | a. a good wish; a blessing           |
| 2. <b>dictionary</b>  | <u>    g    </u> | b. someone who speaks with authority |
| 3. <b>dictator</b>    | <u>    b    </u> | c. a way of speaking                 |
| 4. <b>benediction</b> | <u>    a    </u> | d. a pronouncement                   |
| 5. <b>contradict</b>  | <u>    e    </u> | e. to speak against                  |
| 6. <b>edict</b>       | <u>    d    </u> | f. a judgment; a true word           |
| 7. <b>predict</b>     | <u>    h    </u> | g. a collection of words             |
| 8. <b>verdict</b>     | <u>    f    </u> | h. to say in advance                 |

### Writing Definitions

The prefix *in-* (also *im-*) can mean “in” as in the Master Word **indictment**, and it can also mean “not” as in the Master Word **impartial**.

Use a standard dictionary or a dictionary of etymology to explain the literal meaning of the following words and write a definition. On the second line, write a sentence using the word. An example has been done for you.

**imbue**                   to soak in; to inspire; to fill or saturate  
\_\_\_\_\_  
The speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. imbued his followers with hope.  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. **infringe**           to break in; to encroach on; to violate  
\_\_\_\_\_  
The company would not allow others to infringe on its patents.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. **insinuation**      an act of curving in; a hint; a suggestion  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Savannah wouldn't accuse Rick directly, but her insinuation was pretty clear.  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **inland**           relating to an area not covered by water; interior; away from a coast  
\_\_\_\_\_  
When Lynn moved to an inland city, she really missed the ocean.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. **invariable**      not variable; unchanging  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Our dog's morning routine is invariable.  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Unit Word Study

## Academic Vocabulary

Some of the Master Words in Unit 4 are part of your academic vocabulary. These are words that you might not use often in daily conversation but that you use to understand concepts in academic areas.

The sentences below are the type you might encounter in a school assignment, test, or textbook. Write the word that best completes each sentence.

conclusive	controversy	dominant	landmark	propertied
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- An experiment must be replicated several times before the results can be considered ...?... conclusive
- Which faction was most ...?... in determining the outcome of the English Civil War? dominant
- Explain why the Americans with Disabilities Act was a ...?... piece of legislation. landmark
- It took years before anyone outside the ...?... class was given the right to vote. propertied
- Copernicus's findings led to a ...?... with the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. controversy

## Domain-Specific Words

*Domain-specific words* are those that are used in a certain subject area, such as math or science. Words in the first column below are from the domains of math and social studies. For each word, work in pairs to write a brief definition as it is used in the domain. Then give an example and find synonyms of the word. Use your textbooks or other sources as needed. The first one is done for you.

Word	Definition as Used in Domain	Example	Synonyms
<b>affirmation</b> (social studies/law)	declaration made in lieu of an oath	Quakers making an affirmation in a trial	affidavit, sworn statement, solemn pledge
<b>1. indictment</b> (social studies/law)	formal accusation made by a Grand Jury in a criminal case	charging someone with a major crime such as fraud or murder	accusation, charge, arraignment, allegation
<b>2. jeopardy</b> (social studies/law)	the danger faced by criminal defendants of being found guilty and punished	no double jeopardy, can't be tried twice for the same crime	danger, hazard
<b>3. ratio</b> (math)	relationship between two quantities	fraction	proportion, percentage
<b>4. geometrical</b> (math)	a sequence based on multiplication or division	The sequence 1, 3, 9, 27 . . .	exponential



# Unit Assessment

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

## The Harlem Renaissance

Zora Neale Hurston was one of the leading writers associated with the artistic movement known as the Harlem Renaissance. This **resurrection** of African American culture spanned a variety of art forms during the 1920s. In the early years of the 20th century, thousands of blacks made the transition from the **agrarian** South to the Northern cities in what became known as the Great Migration. New York City, the communications center of the country, attracted large numbers of African-American writers and artists. The Harlem neighborhood in New York became a center of a vibrant black culture.

African American writers who had experienced **exclusion** from mainstream white culture established new periodicals and publishing companies that provided an outlet for their works. At the same time, some white intellectuals and artists began to value black culture for its more natural emotional and artistic expression. For these whites, going to **raucous** jazz clubs in Harlem was not a **furtive** activity but a way to break openly with more restrictive Victorian morality.

Black writers and artists seized the opportunity to reconnect with their traditional cultures in new ways. They saw no need to **disparage** African-American folk culture as simplistic or primitive. Rather, writers such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Hurston used their writing as an **affirmation** of their heritage.

Born and raised in the rural south, Hurston studied anthropology at Barnard College in New York. During the late 1920s, she made several trips to the Southern United States and the Caribbean collecting folktales and customs. Not content to **consign** her research to specialized scholarly journals, Hurston wove her findings into short stories, plays, and novels written for a wider audience.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is considered a **landmark** work of the Harlem Renaissance, although it was published after the movement had peaked. The coming of the Great Depression in the 1930s **curtailed** the cultural revival as blacks and whites alike became focused on economic survival.

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

1. **agrarian** is most nearly **opposite** in meaning to

- (A) civilian
- (B) egalitarian
- (C) human
- (D) partisan
- (E) urban

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

- (A) acceptance
- (B) discrimination
- (C) maintenance
- (D) prevention
- (E) reluctance

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

- (A) famous
- (B) momentous
- (C) respected
- (D) subdued
- (E) trained

*continued*

# Unit Assessment

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

- 4. resurrection** is most **similar** in meaning to
- (A) celebration                      (D) reorganization  
(B) demise                              (E) translation  
X (C) rebirth
- 5. furtive** is most **similar** in meaning to
- (A) active                              X (D) secretive  
(B) futile                                (E) wistful  
(C) juvenile
- 6. disparage** is most **similar** in meaning to
- (A) arrange                              (D) organize  
X (B) criticize                            (E) restructure  
(C) design

**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 **affirmation** as used in the sentence below?
- African American writers saw their work as an **affirmation** of their heritage.
- (A) verb                                      (D) adverb  
X (B) noun                                    (E) preposition  
(C) adjective
- 8.** What is the part of speech of the word **consign** as used in the sentence below?
- Not content to **consign** her research to specialized scholarly journals, Hurston wove her findings into short stories, plays, and novels written for a wider audience.
- X (A) verb                                      (D) adverb  
(B) noun                                      (E) preposition  
(C) adjective

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

- 9.** ...?... pride in their ethnic heritage ...?...(d) the work of African American writers during the Harlem Renaissance.
- (A) Compulsory ... consolidate  
(B) Compulsory ... imbue  
(C) Dominant ... infringe  
X (D) Profuse ... imbue  
(E) Profuse ... infringe
- 10.** Prior to the Harlem Renaissance, African Americans were often viewed as a separate ...?... whose artistic expressions were limited to the ...?... areas of American culture.
- (A) caste ... dominant  
X (B) caste ... peripheral  
(C) controversy ... impartial  
(D) legion ... dominant  
(E) legion ... peripheral

*continued*

# Unit Assessment

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

None of the brute creation requires more than Food and Shelter. The necessities of life for man in this climate may, accurately enough, be distributed under the several heads of Food, Shelter, Clothing, and Fuel; for not till we have secured these are we prepared to entertain the true problems of life with freedom and a prospect of success. Man has invented, not only houses, but clothes and cooked food; and possibly from the accidental discovery of the warmth of fire, and the consequent use of it, at first a luxury, arose the present necessity to sit by it. We observe cats and dogs acquiring the same second nature. By proper Shelter and Clothing we legitimately **retain** our own internal heat; but with an **excess** of these, or of Fuel, that is, with an external heat greater than our own internal, may not cookery properly be said to begin?

—from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

11. What word is most similar to the word **excess**?
- (A) achievement            (C) passage  
(B) explanation            X (D) surplus
12. Which phrase from the passage best helps the reader understand the meaning of **excess**?
- (A) necessities of life  
(B) a prospect of success  
(C) first a luxury  
X (D) greater than our own
13. Which dictionary definition below best matches the use of the word **retain** in the passage?
- (A) to engage the services of  
X (B) to hold or contain  
(C) to pay a fee to  
(D) to remember easily

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

At demonstrations that occurred during the ...?... over forced school busing, opponents hurled ...?...(s) at one another in language that clearly revealed the stereotypes motivating their behavior.

14. Which pair of words best completes the blanks in the passage?
- X (A) controversy ... epithet  
(B) controversy ... insinuation  
(C) indictment ... epithet  
(D) indictment ... insinuation
15. Which two words or phrases from the passage best help the reader answer question 14?
- (A) demonstrations, forced school busing  
(B) demonstrations, motivating their behavior  
(C) forced school busing, opponents  
X (D) opponents, clearly revealed the stereotypes

*continued*

# Unit Assessment

## IV. Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

It is evident that each of these classes will exercise an influence **peculiar** to its own propensities upon the administration of the finances of the State. If the first of the three exclusively possesses the legislative power, it is **probable** that it will not be **sparing** of the public funds, because the taxes which are levied on a large fortune only tend to diminish the sum of **superfluous** enjoyment, and are, in point of fact, but little felt. If the second class has the power of making the laws, it will certainly not be lavish of taxes, because nothing is so **onerous** as a large impost which is levied upon a small income. The government of the middle classes appears to me to be the most economical, though perhaps not the most enlightened, and certainly not the most generous, of free governments.

—from *Democracy in America*, by Alexis De Tocqueville

16. Which dictionary definition best matches the use of the word **sparing** in the passage?

- (A) considerate  
X (B) frugal  
(C) merciful  
(D) scanty

17. Which highlighted word from the passage is an antonym of the word **unlikely**?

- (A) peculiar  
X (B) probable  
(C) superfluous  
(D) onerous

## V. Writing a Research Report: Population Growth

The issue of population growth is as alive today as it was when Thomas Malthus published “An Essay on the Principle of Population” in 1798. Conduct a brief research project to answer one of the following questions or a question of your own choosing.

- Are Thomas Malthus’s ideas relevant today?
- How does population growth relate to environmental issues?
- How does population growth affect different regions of the world?

Narrow or broaden your inquiry as you pursue your research and synthesize your findings from at least three reliable sources on the subject. Organize your report logically and use transitions to link the various sections. The following words from Unit 4 may be especially helpful in writing your report.

agrarian	conclusive	geometrical	intervene	ratio
arithmetical	controversy	infringe	paternalistic	sparing

### Gathering Information

As you look for relevant information to help you answer your chosen question, consider which search terms will give you the most meaningful results. Assess the credibility and accuracy of each source you use. The authors of every source should be identified. Information from reputable news organizations, including newspapers and broadcast outlets, as well as from government or educational institutions, tends to be the most reliable. Be aware that nonprofit organizations may be biased in the information they present since they often support a particular agenda. Look for sources that present both sides of controversial aspects of your topic.