Vocabulary in context: hauteur versus meekness

A vocabulary-in-context question is answered by the sentence, not by a memorized. . .



Lesson `grev.vocab.V16`

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The idea

A vocabulary-in-context question is answered by the sentence, not by a memorized gloss. The sentence almost always plants a clue — a defining phrase, an example, a contrast, or a consequence — that pins down which meaning the writer intends.

What clue in the sentence fixes the intended meaning of the word, and what plain paraphrase does that clue predict?

Predict a paraphrase from the clue before reading the options. Then match, discarding opposites, wrong-nuance near-synonyms, wrong dictionary senses, and sound-alikes.

Watch every step

She gave a demure smile and lowered her eyes, too modest and reserved to accept the compliment openly.

As used in the sentence, 'demure' most nearly means

A. brashly forward ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. coldly standoffish ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. to object or raise a scruple ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

D. modestly reserved

E. mature and adult ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why D — "modestly reserved." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

Now a harder one

Mindful of his lowliness, the servant never presumed to sit at his master's table or to speak unless spoken to.

As used in the sentence, 'lowliness' most nearly means

A. lofty eminence ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. quiet gentleness ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. a low position in height or place ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

D. loneliness and isolation ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

E. humble low station

Why E — "humble low station." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

The method, in one line

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Predict a paraphrase from the clue before reading the options. Then match, discarding opposites, wrong-nuance near-synonyms, wrong dictionary senses, and sound-alikes.

Could my choice replace the word and preserve the sentence's logic? Have I resisted the opposite, the almost-right synonym, and the alternate sense the context rules out?

Watch out: two traps to dodge

⚠ opposite-meaning
Selects a meaning roughly opposite to the one the clue requires.

⚠ near-synonym-wrong-nuance
Selects a meaning in the right general family but with the wrong precise nuance for this sentence.

Name the trap before you pick — most wrong answers are one of these two.

Try it, then watch the walk-through

Explore this live

Watch the walk-through