

LESSONS 5 AND 6

Up and Down

LESSON 5

Leve fit, quod bene fertur, onus.

A burden that is cheerfully borne is made light.—OVID

Key Words		
bas-relief	leaven	penchant
debase	legerdemain	ponderous
declivity	leverage	preponderant
echelon	levitate	proclivity
imponderable	levity	transcendent

Familiar Words

base
basement
basis
bass
basset hound
bassoon

Challenge Words

abase
basso
basso-profundo
basso-relievo

BASIS <G. "pedestal," "foot," "base"

BASSUS <L. "low"

1. **bas-relief** (bă' rī lēf') [*rilievo* <Italian "relief"]
n. Sculpture whose ornament or figures are somewhat raised above the background (also known as "low relief").

Trajan's column, which stands in Rome, is encircled with **bas-reliefs** depicting the emperor's military victories.

bas-relief, *adj.*



2. **debase** (dī bās') [*de* < L. "away from"]
tr. v. To lower in quality, value, or dignity; to degrade.

According to Flora Tristán, the llama is the only animal that human beings have not been able to **debase** because it refuses to be mistreated or to take orders.

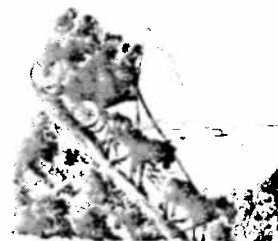
Challenge Word
 acclivity

CLIVUS < L. "slope"

3. **declivity** (dī klīv' ə tē)
 [*de* < L. "away from"]
n. A downward slope; the slope of a hill.

Undersea photographs of the floor of the Atlantic Ocean reveal **declivities** that resemble topographical configurations on land.

declivitous, *adj.*



4. **proclivity** (prō klīv' ə tē) [*pro* < L. "forth"]
n. A natural inclination or tendency.

"By necessity, by **proclivity**, and by delight, we all quote."
 —Ralph Waldo Emerson

proclivitous, *adj.*

Familiar Words

alleviate
 elevate
 lever
 light
 relieve

LEVIS < L. "light (in weight)"

5. **leaven** (lēv' ən)
n. 1. A substance like yeast or a small amount of fermented dough that causes dough to expand or rise.

In *My Ántonia* Mrs. Shimerda shocks her American neighbors by her old-country method of using fermented dough as a **leaven** for new loaves of bread.

2. A lightening or enlivening influence.

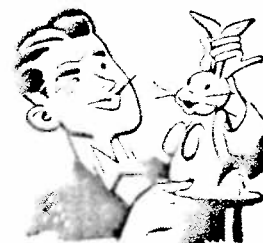
The film critic Penelope Gilliatt admires Judy Holliday and Marilyn Monroe for the **leaven** they impart as "beautiful clowns," smarter than everyone else and knowing that they will eventually be found out.

tr. v. To provide a lightening influence.

Letters from home **leaven** the spirits of battle-weary troops.

6. **legerdemain** (lēj' or də mǎn') [*leger de main* < French "quick of hand" < L. *levis de manu*]
n. 1. Sleight of hand; magic tricks.

Thomas Beison, a fifteenth-century monk skilled in **legerdemain**, could make a hollow egg appear to float by suspending it below his hand with a fine hair.



Challenge Words

alto-relievo
 basso-relievo
 Levant
 levee
 mezzo-relievo

2. Any trickery or deception.

Emmeline Piggott, a Confederate spy who epitomized the elegant Southern belle, easily slipped military documents past Union sentries through the **legerdemain** of concealing the messages under her voluminous hoopskirt.

7. **leverage** (lěv' ər ĭj, lē' vər ĭj)
n. 1. The action of a lever that raises or lifts.



The **leverage** of an automobile jack enables a person to raise a heavy vehicle.

2. Power to influence; a position of strength.

During her tenure as the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher applied **leverage** to her conservative cabinet by appointing ministers who agreed with her policies.

8. **levitate** (lěv' ə tāt')
tr. and *intr. v.* To rise or float, or cause to rise, seemingly despite gravity.

Tests in Germany and Japan have proved that instead of moving on wheels, high-speed trains can **levitate** on a cushion of magnetic force.

levitation, *n.*

9. **levity** (lěv' ə tē)
n. Lightness in speech or behavior, especially unbecoming jocularity; frivolity.

Tess Durbeyfield disdains the **levity** of the young village women whose chief pleasure is dancing on Saturday night and sleeping off on Sunday the effects of their indulgence in "curious compounds."

NOTA BENE: Dictionaries give *levity* a second definition, "lightness in weight"; however, scientific usage requires *buoyancy* when applied to objects in water, or *density* when they are weighed.

The Latin antonym of *levis*, "light," is *gravis*, "heavy," from which come many familiar words, among them *aggravate*, *gravitate*, *grave*, and *grief*. The opposite of *levity* is *gravity*, "seriousness" or "weightiness." In its literal sense *gravity* is what causes objects to have weight.

Familiar Words

appendage
 appendicitis
 compendium
 compensation
 depend
 dispensation
 expense
 independent
 pendant
 pending
 pendulum
 pensioner
 perpendicular
 ponder
 spend
 suspend

Challenge Words

equiponderate
 equiponderant
 impend
 propensity

PENDO, PENDERE, PEPENDI, PENSUM
 <L. "to cause to hang down," "to weigh"
PONDERO, PONDERARE, PONDERAVI,
PONDERATUM <L. "to weigh"



10. **penchant** (pĕn' chənt)
n. A strong inclination or liking.

Niara Sudarkasa's **penchant** as a college student for facts about Africa led her to focus her career on African anthropology.

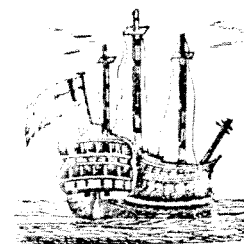
NOTA BENE: Although *penchant* and *proclivity* may seem similar in meaning, they function differently. A *penchant* is a preference for something; dogs may have a *penchant*, or fondness, for bones and a *proclivity*, or inclination, to bark at the mail carrier. A *proclivity* is an inner impulse or direction, a characteristic action: a *proclivity* for altruism, spending money, or fatalism, for example.

11. **ponderous** (pŏn' dər əs)
adj. 1. Extremely heavy; massive.

Although they lacked wheeled vehicles, the Incas moved **ponderous** stones across high Andean passes to build cities like Machu Picchu.

2. Unwieldy or awkward.

The **ponderous** galleons of the Spanish Armada were no match for the light, fast British ships, able to strike and then dart out of firing range.



3. Dull or tedious.

The *Pilgrim's Progress* may seem **ponderous** to some readers because of its heavily moral tone, but it remains the epitome of literary allegory.

12. **imponderable** (īm pŏn' dər ə bəl) [*im* = *in* <L. "not"]
adj. Unable to be assessed or measured precisely.

Although scientists can plan most aspects of a space flight accurately, the weather for launch and reentry remains an **imponderable** factor.

Antonym: **ponderable**

13. **preponderant** (prī pŏn' dər ənt) [*pre* <L. "before"]
adj. Superior in number, force, power, or importance.

Introduced from South America only in the sixteenth century, the potato has become the **preponderant** food source for much of Europe, the Americas, and Africa.

preponderance, *n.*; **preponderate**, *v.*

Familiar Words

condescend
descend
descendant
escalate
escalator
scale (*n.* and *v.*)

Challenge Words

escalade
scandent
scansion
Transcendentalism

SCALA <L. "steps," "stairs," "ladder," "scale"
SCANDO, SCANDERE, SCANDI,
SCANSUM <L. "to climb"



14. **echelon** (ěsh' ə lŏn') [*echelon* <French "rung of a ladder"]
n. 1. A step-like formation of troops, ships, or aircraft.

To honor their fallen comrade, the pilots flew in "man missing" **echelon**, in which one position is left significantly empty.

2. A level of command or authority.

Promoted in 1970 to the rank of brigadier general in the Women's Army Corps, Elizabeth P. Hoisington and Anna Mae Hays became the first women to reach that **echelon** in the United States Armed Forces.

15. **transcendent** (trăn sĕn' dănt) [*trans* <L. "across"]
adj. Going beyond the limits of ordinary experience.

To Emily Dickinson everyday occurrences like seeing a snake, a clover, or a "slant of light" became **transcendent**, leading her to reflect on natural law and mortality.

transcendence, *n.*; **transcendental**, *adj.*

NOTA BENE: The word *transcendental* has a meaning similar to that of *transcendent*: "rising above common thought or ideas." *Transcendental* also has a more philosophical meaning: "asserting a supernatural or mystical element in experience." In the 1860s a group of New Englanders known as Transcendentalists believed in the presence of God in nature and placed great faith in individualism and self-reliance, especially as expressed by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau.

EXERCISE 5A

Circle the letter of the best **SYNONYM** for the word(s) in bold-faced type.

- an occasion for **levity** a. leverage b. insults c. gravity
d. powerful action e. frivolity
- a border of **bas-relief** figures a. slightly raised b. roughened
c. engraved d. three-dimensional e. silhouetted

3. a **ponderous** first novel a. complex b. thoughtful c. boring
d. thought-provoking e. straightforward
4. a(n) **imponderable** outcome a. believable b. difficult
c. calculable d. indeterminable e. unthinkable
5. to **debase** an opponent a. insult b. humiliate c. exalt
d. surpass e. traduce
6. a precarious **declivity** a. debasement b. quiescence c. slope
d. cliff e. loss of power
7. **levitation** of a table a. lightening b. lowering c. motion
d. floating e. reconstruction
8. the **leverage** of public opinion a. imponderability
b. powerlessness c. influence d. acquiescence
e. transcendence
9. to add **leaven** to the discussion a. suspense b. meat
c. ponderousness d. relevance e. levity
10. the potentate's **legerdemain** a. accuracy b. honesty
c. deception d. sense of humor e. grouchiness

Circle the best ANTONYM for the word in bold-faced type.

11. a **proclivity** for sports a. disinclination b. fondness
c. tendency d. penchant e. polity
12. the **preponderance** of reporters a. exclusion b. bias
c. debasement d. obtrusiveness e. shortage
13. a(n) **transcendent** moment a. antithetical b. egregious
c. ordinary d. iconoclastic e. quiescent
14. a **penchant** for the archaic a. proclivity b. preference
c. longing d. distaste e. priority

EXERCISE 5B

Circle the letter of the sentence in which the word in bold-faced type is used incorrectly.

1. a. The bison clambered **ponderously** over the hill.
b. Rodin's sculpture *The Thinker*, with elbow on his knee and hand under his chin, expresses a **ponderous** attitude.
c. The demagogues' lengthy sentences and abstract language grew more **ponderous** the longer they talked.
d. Although Howard Hughes had high expectations for his eight-engine wooden flying boat designed to carry 750 passengers, the **ponderous** *Spruce Goose* flew just one mile on its first and only voyage.
2. a. The peripatetic Jenkinsons, Peter and Barbara, traveled the **transcendent** route across America, from Louisiana to Washington state.

- b. Giuseppe Verdi enjoyed what must have been a **transcendent** moment when he took thirty-two curtain calls after a performance of *Aida*.
 - c. When Helen Keller, deaf and mute from age two, finally learned to speak, she **transcended** her incapacities by attending college and writing about her life.
 - d. As Gabriel García Márquez guides readers to a Caribbean village in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, he provides reality, but he also **transcends** it by collapsing the limitations of time and space through the device of “magic realism.”
- 3.
- a. After losing the case at the state court of appeals, the lawyers appealed to the next legal **echelon**, the Supreme Court.
 - b. For mutual protection, convoys of transport ships crossed the Atlantic during World War II in close **echelon**, flanked by destroyers and submarines.
 - c. The honor guard stood at **echelon** during the ceremony.
 - d. Japanese management encourages workers from every **echelon** in the company to offer new ideas for production and efficiency.
- 4.
- a. A cook adds baking powder, a **leavening** agent, to cornmeal to make cornbread but omits **leavening** to prepare tortillas.
 - b. The candidate **leavened** the campaign speech by performing some extempore legerdemain with a deck of cards.
 - c. The **leavening** properties of carbonated beverages are at their peak just as a bottle or can is opened.
 - d. In memory of the Hebrews who had to leave Egypt in haste before their bread had risen, Jewish tradition proscribes the use of **leaven** in bread during the Passover holiday.
- 5.
- a. In the play *Blithe Spirit* Madame Arcati, an expert in seances and **legerdemain**, induces a deceased wife to appear to her former husband but to be annoyingly invisible to his second wife.
 - b. Amateur practitioners of **legerdemain** usually begin by displacing coins and making handkerchiefs disappear before moving on to suspending a glass in midair.
 - c. Moviegoers today take for granted the **legerdemain** of special effects, such as the juxtaposition of human actors with cartoon characters.
 - d. For **legerdemain** during a hot summer, travel agencies suggest a cruise to Alaska.

EXERCISE 5C

Fill in each blank with the most appropriate word from Lesson 5. Use a word or any of its forms only once.

1. Once a famous child movie star, Shirley Temple Black rose to the highest diplomatic _____ as ambassador to Ghana and later to the Czech Republic.

2. According to the Koran, King Solomon owned a carpet that _____ at his command and, with the help of wind, sped wherever he directed it.
3. During World War II women were _____ in the work force, symbolized by Rosie the Riveter.
4. The Elgin Marbles, sculpted in _____ and originally forming a border around the Parthenon of Athens, are now on display in the British Museum in London.
5. Although we can calculate the geologic forces that created the earth's past and existing features, the development of future mountain ranges, volcanoes, and oceans is _____.
6. Following World War I the _____ of most European currencies became so extreme that a loaf of bread could cost a day's wages.
7. Fundamental to business strategy is advantageous _____ of maximum financial return and the constants of energy, time, and investments.
8. Margaret Walker Alexander's _____ for poetry developed in her childhood when her father read to her and told her that poetry must have pictures, music, and meaning.
9. As the last North American glacier retreated to the north, it left _____ and basins that became tens of thousands of lakes, including the five Great Lakes.
10. By their _____ for treachery and cruelty, the notorious Cesare Borgia and his sister Lucrezia demonstrated their propinquity in both character and kinship.
11. There was instant _____ at the children's concert when a string snapped on the soloist's violin.

EXERCISE 5D

Replace the word or phrase in italics with a key word (or any of its forms) from Lesson 5.

When the circus comes to town, parents and children indulge their (1) *liking* for spectacles under the big top to (2) *lighten* the summer doldrums. Red-nosed clowns induce (3) *frivolity* when they (4) *make fools of* themselves by stumbling over their outsize shoes, sprawling in the dust, and then showing off their (5) *magic tricks* by producing pigeons from their tall hats. In another ring (6) *massive* elephants march and prance at their trainer's command. The crowd gasps as gymnasts form a human pyramid, each (7) *step in the formation* creating (8) *incalculable* weight.

Finally, near the roof, trapeze artists swoop from swing to swing, hand to hand, (9) *going beyond ordinary experience* in their apparent (10) *defiance of gravity*.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

LESSON 6

Nil sub sole novum.

[There is] nothing new under the sun.—Ecclesiastes

Key Words

aver	incumbent	subterfuge
cataclysm	recumbent	succumb
catapult	subjective	verisimilitude
hypochondria	sublimate	verity
hypothesis	suborn	

Familiar Words

cube
cubicle
cubism
incubate

CUBO, CUBARE, CUBUI, CUBITUM

<L. "to lie down"

INCUMBO, INCUMBERE, INCUBUI, INCUBITUM <L. "to recline"

Challenge Words

accumbent
cubit
decumbent

1. **incumbent** (in kŭm' bənt) [*in* <L. "in"]

n. A person who holds an office or position.

An **incumbent** in the U.S. Congress for thirty-two years, Margaret Chase Smith served longer than any other woman.

adj. 1. Already holding an office or position.

Incumbent school board members may stand a better chance in an election than their inexperienced challengers.

2. Required as a duty or obligation (often used with *on*).

It is **incumbent** on all parents of school-age children to have them vaccinated for measles, mumps, and polio.

incumbency, *n.*