

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*.

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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"

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.*

Challenge Words

accumbent
cubit
decumbent

NOTA BENE: *Incumbent* is sometimes used in its literal sense, "leaning" or "lying on" as in, Crumbling rock and *incumbent* slabs of stone and concrete made rescue efforts after the earthquake both difficult and hazardous.

2. **recumbent** (rī kŭm' bənt) [*re* < L. "back," "again"]
adj. Reclining; lying down.

Although they quarreled fiercely in life, the **recumbent** effigies of Eleanor of Aquitaine and King Henry II of England now rest peacefully side by side on their tombs.



recumbence, *n.*; **recumbency**, *n.*

3. **succumb** (sə kŭm') [*suc* = *sub* < L. "under"]
intr. v. 1. To yield; to give in or give up, especially to a powerful force or desire (often used with *to*).

The major sorrow of young Werther's life is his unrequited passion for Charlotte, who gently but firmly refuses to **succumb** to his many protestations of love.

2. To die.

Until 1882 when Robert Koch, a German physician, identified the tiny bacillus causing tuberculosis, its victims expected to **succumb** quickly.

Familiar Words

hypocrite
hypodermic
hyposensitivity
hypotenuse
hypothermia

HUPO < G. "under," "beneath"

4. **hypochondria** (hī' pə kŏn' drē ə)
[*khondros* < G. "cartilage"]
n. A psychological disorder characterized by the illusory conviction that one is ill or in pain, or likely to become so.



Jane Austen's novel *Emma* depicts **hypochondria** humorously, as Mr. Woodhouse encourages guests to join him in eating wholesome gruel and fears the effect of bad weather upon his health.

hypochondriac, *n.*; **hypochondriacal**, *adj.*

NOTA BENE: The word *hypochondria* contains a compressed form of archaic medical theory. According to ancient Greek and medieval diagnosis, feelings of melancholy, caused by the humor "melancholy," and delusions of illness had their source in the abdomen (for which

Challenge Words

hypogastric
hypoglossia
hypoglycemia
hypoplasia
hypostasis
hypothecate
hypothyroid

the Greek word is *hypokhondrium*), located “under the cartilage” of the breastbone. Consequently *hypochondria*, in English, still has its source “under the cartilage.”

5. **hypothesis** (hī pōth' ə sīs) [*tithenai* <G. “to put”]
n. 1. A theory or explanation that leads to further investigation for proof or disproof.

Although the **hypothesis** that all of the Indo-European family of languages derive from one original language is widely accepted, it will probably never be proven because this extinct language existed before the invention of writing.

2. An assumption on which a conclusion or decision is based.

“The great tragedy of Science—the slaying of a beautiful **hypothesis** by an ugly fact.”—T.H. Huxley

hypothesize, *v.*; **hypothetical**, *adj.*

Familiar Words

catacomb
catalog
catalyst
cataract
catastrophe

Challenge Words

catacoustics
catafalque
catalepsy
catamenia
catarrh

KATA <G. “down”

6. **cataclysm** (kāt' ə klīz' əm) [*kluzein* <G. “to wash”]
n. A disaster or catastrophe on such a large scale that biological, environmental, or cultural elements are permanently altered or irreparably lost to the earth.

A **cataclysm** that occurred sixty-five million years ago changed atmospheric conditions so drastically that no dinosaurs were able to survive.

cataclysmal, *adj.*; **cataclysmic**, *adj.*

NOTA BENE: Some dictionaries give overlapping definitions for *cataclysm* and *catastrophe*. However, distinctions exist in the Greek roots of these words. The former can be defined as a “destructive washing down or inundation,” such as the Biblical flood. *Catastrophe* [*kata* + *strephein*, “to turn,” “to twist”] can mean “a sudden violent upheaval” such as an earthquake or, more generally, “a sudden calamity or complete failure,” involving a sharp downward turn or twist. The catastrophe in classical tragedy is the twist of fate or crucial downward turn of events beyond which there is no recovery.

7. **catapult** (kāt' ə pŭlt') [*pallein* <G. “to toss,” “to whirl”]
n. 1. An ancient mechanical device for hurling missiles.

From his research for the construction of an authentic **catapult**, the writer Jim Paul concluded that Alexander the Great “transformed western culture” through his shrewd and powerful use of this weapon.

2. A modern mechanism for launching aircraft from the deck of a ship.

Because flight decks on aircraft carriers are generally only 1,100 feet long, a **catapult** supplies the velocity planes need for take-off.

tr. and *intr. v.* To hurl or launch suddenly (as if from a slingshot); to spring up.

When Charles Lindbergh landed in Paris in 1927, becoming the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, his flight **catapulted** him to international fame.

catapultic, *adj.*

Familiar Words

insubordinate
subjugate
submerge
subnormal
subordination
subsequent
subservient
subterranean
subvert
surreptitious

SUB <L. "under"

8. **subjective** (səb jēk' tīv) [*jacere* <L. "to throw"]
adj. 1. Concentrating on the self in the expression of feelings and perceptions.

Isadora Duncan's **subjective** interpretations of classical Greek dances were greatly admired in Europe but not in America.



2. Relating to personal opinions and thought processes rather than factual information or universal experience.

Readers of newspapers expect editorials and letters to the editors to express **subjective** views but news stories to contain verifiable, objective facts.

subjectivism, *n.*; **subjectivity**, *n.*

Antonym: **objective**

9. **sublimate** (süb' lə māt) [*limen* <L. "threshold"]
tr. and *intr. v.* To turn aside an instinctual, perhaps primitive, impulse in favor of a more socially or culturally acceptable activity.

Therapists attempt to train highly aggressive people to **sublimate** their impulses to fight by visualizing peaceable alternatives.

sublimate, *n.* and *adj.*; **sublimation**, *n.*

NOTA BENE: Although the word *sublimate* began as a psychological term, it is now in general usage. *Sublime*, "exalted" and "awe-inspiring," also contains elements of this meaning.

Challenge Words

subaltern
subaqueous
sub rosa
surrogate

10. **suborn** (sə bôrn') [*ornare* <L. "to equip"]
tr. v. 1. To induce a person in secret to commit a misdeed or a crime.

Mother Midnight **suborns** Moll Flanders by having her trained to pick pockets.

2. To induce someone to give false testimony.

When party members **suborned** the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Albert B. Fall, to lie about the source of a loan for illegally leasing naval oil reserves, he became a central figure in the Teapot Dome scandal of the 1920s.

subornation, *n.*

11. **subterfuge** (sŭb' tər fyŭōj')
[*fugere* <L. "to flee"]

n. An artifice, device, or evasion to hide or avoid something, or to escape an outcome.

After Kate Hardcastle learns that her suitor is too tongue-tied to speak with young women of his own social class, she adopts the **subterfuge** of appearing to be a family servant.



NOTA BENE: Under *sub* in any dictionary you will find from 100 to more than 500 words using the prefix, and many more with *sub* imbedded within words. For example, *surreptitious* comes from the Latin *subrepticus* meaning "snatched" (<L. *sub rapere* "to seize") and illustrates the hidden *sub*. As is the case in many English words, the transition from Latin to English forced *sub* to become *sur*, and slurred pronunciation eventually changed the spelling.

Familiar Words
veracious
veracity
verify
very

VERITAS <L. "truth"

12. **verisimilitude** (vē' ə sīm ĭl' ə tōōd', vē' ə sīm ĭl' ə tyōōd')
[*similis* <L. "of the same kind"]

n. A thing or a quality that appears true or real.

Critics cite John Edgar Wideman as a novelist who captures the speech and thought of urban African-American youth with **verisimilitude**.

13. **verity** (vē' ə tē)

n. 1. The condition or quality of being true or accurate.

Scientists now accept as a **verity** that ninety-nine percent of all biological phenomena eventually become extinct.

2. A belief, principle, or statement expressing some basic human truth.

The writer must leave "no room in his workshop for anything but the old **verities** and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which

Challenge Words

verily
verism
veritas

any story is ephemeral and doomed—love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice.”—William Faulkner

veritable, *adj.*

14. **aver** (ə vûr') [I = ad <L. "to," "toward"]
tr. v. To affirm; to declare or attest to positively or dogmatically.
After the Ancient Mariner's shipmates protest his killing of the albatross, he admits his error:

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all **averred**, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

averment, *n.*

NOTA BENE: Although *verity* and *veracity* look similar, they function differently; a scientific truth is a *verity*; we hope that scientists can be depended upon for their *veracity*, their capacity for telling the truth.

EXERCISE 6A

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

- an imponderable **hypothesis** a. conclusion b. theory
c. attitude d. paradigm e. deduction
- sublimating** a primitive impulse a. hiding b. remembering
c. diverting d. reproaching e. refining
- catapulted** to the Baseball Hall of Fame a. propelled b. led
c. voted d. hurried e. denied
- chronic **hypochondria** a. epicureanism b. good health
c. hyperventilation d. invalidism e. imaginary illness
- recumbent** Romans dining on couches a. ascending
b. reclining c. standing d. seated e. relaxed
- an eternal **verity** a. similarity b. archetype c. levity
d. falsehood e. truth
- incumbent upon** all officials a. the parameters of
b. the duty of c. the term of office of d. the puissance of
e. the demagoguery of
- to **succumb to** flattery a. resist b. die of c. induce
d. suborn e. acquiesce to
- astonishing **verisimilitude** a. falsity b. repetition
c. juxtaposition d. dissimilarity e. likeness

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

10. an ingenious **subterfuge** a. escape b. subtlety c. secrecy
d. candor e. contrivance
11. **averring** full responsibility a. debasing b. denying
c. describing d. reproaching e. testifying to
12. **subjective** responses a. grammatical b. personal
c. objective d. irrelevant e. critical

EXERCISE 6B

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

1. a. The painting's brilliant but harsh colors and jagged shapes were said by some to **sublimate** the artist's anger.
b. Experiments with subliminal advertising—brief exposure to a stimulus that develops a craving for a product before a person can consciously **sublimate** that impulse—have proved to be inconclusive.
c. In letters to his nephew Wormwood, a neophyte devil, Screwtape recommends discouraging the **sublimation** of the lower instincts as a way to undermine the moral principles of the "patient."
d. Harriet Doerr **sublimated** her writing talents for many years but fulfilled them at age seventy-four with her novel *Stones for Ibarra*.
2. a. Because children are natural mimics, their speech patterns and gestures in playing merchant or doctor have the **versimilitude** of adult mannerisms.
b. Now that computers can reproduce the sounds of orchestral instruments with **versimilitude**, composers can quickly hear and transcribe their compositions.
c. When the second Mrs. Max de Winter appears at the fancy dress ball in a gown identical to one worn by Max's late wife, Rebecca, he and his guests are horrified by her **versimilitude**.
d. People who live in small apartments sometimes extend their view with a *trompe l'oeil* ("trick of the eye"), a painted screen or window shade of such **versimilitude** that people believe they are looking out a window.
3. a. Many people trusted the **verity** of the accused spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, but the defendants were convicted and executed for espionage in 1953.
b. Although neutrons and protons are invisible, physicists accept them as a scientific **verity**.
c. Edna Ferber acknowledges a **verity** in American attitudes when a character in *Cimarron* says, "I am not belittling the brave pioneer

- men, but the sunbonnet as well as the sombrero has helped to settle this glorious land of ours.”
- d. Athletes in competitive sports accept the **verity** that they can't win all the time.
4. a. Thoughtful voters avoid evaluating candidates **subjectively** with responses like “I'm voting for Ms. X because she had surgery just like my mother's.”
- b. The Paris diaries of Anaïs Nin record in **subjective** detail her relationships with writers and artists when she lived on a barge along the Seine.
- c. Geography textbooks contain **subjective** information about topography, climate, and population.
- d. An important aspect of romanticism is **subjectivity**, the emphasis on imagination and self-expression.
5. a. If any of Hitler's bodyguards appeared to be disloyal, they could be **suborned** into illegal acts that would irrevocably tie them to criminality from which there was no escape.
- b. Boss Tweed of New York's Tammany Hall created such an echelon of political **subornation** that he and his henchmen were thirty million dollars richer before Tweed eventually went to prison on felony charges.
- c. Attempting to shatter the morale of American World War II troops in the Pacific, the soothing voice of Tokyo Rose **suborned** them to dream of home.
- d. A person going to trial may try to create an alibi by **suborning** friends and relatives to attest falsely.
6. a. Masters of **subterfuge**, the lizards known as chameleons escape their enemies by changing color to blend with their surroundings.
- b. Shipwrecked and believing her twin brother dead, Viola adopts the **subterfuge** of male disguise and seeks employment in the house of Olivia.
- c. To forestall her suitors, Penelope says she must complete a funeral tapestry before she can marry, using the **subterfuge** of weaving by day and unraveling her work at night.
- d. In order to separate the cream from the milk, the farmer turned on the **subterfuge** at full speed.
7. a. The Black Death, which raged through Asia and Europe from 1346 to 1361, resulted in a **cataclysm**: more than twenty-seven million people succumbed, leaving the survivors in a state of anarchy.
- b. In September 1938 the U.S. Weather Service failed to alert residents of the Northeast Coast to an imminent hurricane, a raging **cataclysmic** of winds and tides that caused vast destruction.
- c. A myth from British New Guinea tells that Radaulo, the king of

snakes, saved the world from **cataclysmic** inundation by uncoiling itself from its mountain redoubt and using its fiery tongue to lick the waters back to their ocean bed.

- d. The combination of Spanish guns and disease—smallpox, measles, and mumps—appears to have caused the **cataclysm** that reduced the population of twenty-five million Native Americans to one quarter of that number between 1518 and 1548.

EXERCISE 6C

Fill in each blank with the most appropriate word from Lesson 6. Use a word or any of its forms only once.

1. Argan, Molière's foolish _____, not only refuses to leave his bed and stop the prescribed purging, but he also tries to marry his daughter to a medical mountebank so that he will have a doctor in the family.
2. _____ that contaminated soil and groundwater are the deadly source of cholera rather than the bacillus itself, Dr. Max Pettenkofer proved his point in 1892 by swallowing a broth laden with germs and suffering no harmful aftereffects.
3. Maya Angelou _____ that "Hungry people cannot be good at learning or producing anything except perhaps violence."
4. When Gulliver awakens in Lilliput, he tries to rise from his _____ position but discovers "slender ligatures" tying him to the ground and feels forty small people advancing from his legs to his chest.
5. The popularity of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* helped the film adaptation _____ into the ranks of the most successful motion pictures ever made.
6. Richard M. Nixon, the second _____ president against whom impeachment proceedings were initiated, resigned from office in 1974.
7. After the Cincinnati Reds easily defeated the favored Chicago White Sox in the 1919 World Series, the public learned that professional gamblers had _____ eight White Sox players to lose the game for a promise of one hundred thousand dollars.
8. When Mount Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79 and buried Pompeii and Herculaneum under ashes and cinders, the event seemed _____ to neighbors in the region, but

preservation of historical artifacts and architecture for more than 1500 years has justified its classification as catastrophic.

9. In *Love in the Time of Cholera* Florentino Arzo _____ so completely to the charms of Fermina Daza that he is willing to wait fifty years to marry her.

EXERCISE 6D

Replace the word or phrase in *italics* with a key word or any of its forms from Lesson 6.

Human beings have endured many hardships wrought by the arbitrariness of nature and by human ignorance and intolerance. In the twentieth century, however, a different kind of terrible burden has emerged—a (1) *disaster on a huge scale* in the form of a nuclear holocaust. Helen Caldicott, an Australian physician, believes it to be (2) *essential to social responsibility* for citizens to discourage construction of nuclear arsenals, as she (3) *says with authority* in her book *Missile Envy: The Arms Race and Nuclear War*. Some novels (4) *offer a theory about* the destruction and change after a massive nuclear explosion. One of them, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller, (5) *hurls* readers into a world portrayed with such (6) *apparently real qualities* that they feel only emptiness and desolation. Most living creatures have (7) *died*, genetic mutations have created monstrous deformities, and the planet is irrevocably altered. Literary speculations like this one remind readers of a paradox that is also a(n) (8) *basic human truth*: pursuit of goals that seem to have worthy ends can be destructive.

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| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |