

LESSON 24

adapted from **The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin** (autobiography)
by Benjamin Franklin

There was another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of argument, and very desirous of confuting one another. . . [Such argumentation], by the way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides **souring** and spoiling the conversation, is productive of disgusts and, perhaps **enmities** where you may have occasion for friendship. I had caught it by reading my father's books of **dispute** about religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinborough.

A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the **propriety** of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's

sake. He was naturally more **eloquent**, had a ready plenty of words; and sometimes, as I thought, bore me down more by his **fluency** than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied . . . and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters of a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my **antagonist** in correct spelling . . . , I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method and in [**clarity**], of which he convinced me by several **instances**. I saw the justice of his remark, and thence grew more **attentive** to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor at improvement. that I shall say good night till it be morrow. [*Exit.*]

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.				
antagonist	clarity	eloquent	fluency	propriety
attentive	dispute	enmity	instance	sour

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. **antagonist** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

2. **attentive** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

3. **clarity** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

4. **dispute** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

5. **eloquent** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

6. **enmity** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

7. **fluency** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

8. **instance** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

9. **propriety** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

10. **sour** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

• • 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.

antagonist	clarity	eloquent	fluency	propriety
attentive	dispute	enmity	instance	sour

- The *argument* about returning borrowed clothes *upset* the friendship between Alyssa and Brianna.

- The politician was *focused* on giving a speech that showed *appropriateness* for the solemn occasion.

- The *hostility* between the two politicians grew to the point that they were *opponents* on every issue.

- The judge was known for both *expressiveness* and *clearness* when addressing the court.

- The debate is an *example* that shows why the president has the reputation of being a *persuasive* speaker.

• • 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.

- In every ...?... the party showed the care that had gone into planning it. _____
- The easy flow of language demonstrated the author's ...?... of expression. _____
- My dad has a friendly ...?... with our neighbor over who is the better golfer. _____
- The new parents were extremely ...?... to their baby's every need. _____
- Each debate team considered the other a worthy ...?... . _____
- Mia's remarks about Jon's weight caused their relationship to ...?... . _____
- Jordan was careful about the ...?... of her behavior at her aunt's house. _____
- Trade between two countries is one way to reduce ...?... between them. _____
- Elijah's argument was so ...?... that his parents agreed to let him get a puppy. _____
- The ...?... of the air at the top of the mountain allowed the hikers to see distant landmarks easily. _____

Exercise 5: Shades of Meaning

The bold words in the chart below are Master Words. Beneath each is a synonym. Although their denotations (dictionary definitions) are nearly the same, the Master Word and its synonym have different shades of meaning, or connotations. Based on the context, decide whether a Master Word or its synonym would better complete each sentence. Use a dictionary if necessary.

antagonist	dispute	clarity	attentive
rival	disagreement	simplicity	observant

1. There was ...?... among the friends about which of the two movies was better. _____
2. The audience was very ...?... during the concert. _____
3. The parents were ...?... of the slight differences between their identical twins. _____
4. The ...?... over water rights brought the two companies into court. _____
5. The two companies were ...?... (s) in a bitter lawsuit. _____
6. The ...?... of the story made it suitable for even very young children to hear. _____
7. Sydney and Megan were ...?... (s) on the court but great friends other times. _____
8. Jasmine wrote with absolute ...?... . There was no doubt about her position. _____

Exercise 6: Idioms and Sayings

The Master Words *instance* and *sour* are used in some common idioms. See if you can determine the meaning of the idioms shown in bold type by using the context clues in each sentence. Rewrite the sentence with a paraphrase of the idiom to show that you understand the meaning. Check your work by looking up the meaning in a phrase and idiom dictionary or on the Internet.

1. Natalie applied for the internship **at the instance** of her teacher.

2. Including extracurricular activities, glee club or debate, **for instance**, helps to round out an application.

3. The partnership **turned sour** when the men discovered they had radically different views.

4. Cam acted like he didn't care about not getting the part. It was just **sour grapes**.

Write About It: Your Life

In the excerpt from his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin writes about a friend and about his father and describes the effects they had on particular aspects of his life. **Write a brief autobiographical narrative** describing how a particular person or event has affected your life. Use at least five Master Words or words related to the Master Words in your narrative.