

# Lesson 7

## Word List

Study the definitions of the words below; then do the exercises for the lesson.

**alter**  
ôl' tər

v. To change in some way; to make or become different.

Let's **alter** our uniforms so they will fit better.

**alteration** n. A change.

Please don't make any **alterations** in my newspaper column.

**confuse**  
kən fyooz'

v. 1. To make or become unclear or mixed up in the mind.

That math problem totally **confused** me.

2. To mistake one person or thing for another.

I always **confuse** Sally with her twin sister Samantha.

**confusing** adj. Hard to follow or understand; unclear.

The play was **confusing** at first, but I began to understand it in the second act.

**confusion** n. A state of disorder.

After the playoff game, the dressing room was total **confusion**.

**distribute**  
di strib' yoot

v. 1. To give out; to divide among several or many.

Ahmed **distributed** programs before the concert.

2. To be spread over.

Small parks are **distributed** throughout London.

**eject**  
i jekt'

v. To force or throw out.

When the seventh graders refused to listen, the coach **ejected** them from the team meeting.

**embrace**  
im brās'

v. 1. To hold closely in one's arms; to hug.

My parents **embraced** me when I got off the plane.

2. To take up seriously.

We **embraced** the idea of smaller classes, but lacked the teachers to carry it out.

n. A hug.

At the end of the movie, the hero and the heroine were locked in an **embrace**.

**equip**  
i kwip'

v. To provide with what is needed.

All new cars now come **equipped** with airbags.

**equipment** n. Things that are needed for some activity.

Sarah bought all her camping **equipment** at yard sales.

**flexible**  
flek' sə bəl

adj. 1. Able to bend easily.

Dancers and gymnasts have very **flexible** bodies.

2. Able to adjust to new or different situations.

Antonio is so **flexible** he can get along with anyone.

**instant**  
in' stənt

n. A moment; a very short period of time.

It took Luis only an **instant** to calculate the amount of paint we would need.

adj. Happening or done at once; quick.

He gave an **instant** "yes" to her offer.

**keen**  
kēn

*adj.* 1. Having a sharp edge.

The **keen** blade of the knife sliced through the thick rope with ease.

2. Showing a strong interest; eager.

Marta signed up for lessons because she was **keen** to learn to play the guitar.

3. Having sharp senses; quick to understand.

With her **keen** mind, she was able to master physics with ease.

**limp**  
lɪmp

*v.* To walk lamely or in an uneven way.

I **limped** for two weeks after I fell on the ice.

*n.* An uneven or lopsided walk.

She walked very fast, in spite of her **limp**.

*adj.* Not stiff or firm.

His handshake was as **limp** as a wet rag.

**scurry**  
skʊrɪ ˈē

*v.* To move quickly, with rapid little steps.

The chipmunk **scurried** up the tree as we approached.

**seize**  
sēz

*v.* 1. To grasp suddenly; to grab hold of.

He **seized** my hand and begged me not to go.

2. To take by force of the law.

The government can **seize** many of the things you own if you do not pay your taxes.

**shallow**  
shaˈlō

*adj.* 1. Not deep.

We went wading in a **shallow** stream.

2. With little seriousness or deep thought.

He tried to sound intelligent, but his arguments were really quite **shallow**.

**surround**  
səˈraʊnd

*v.* To enclose on all sides.

The prison was **surrounded** by a high fence.

**surroundings** *n. pl.* The things or conditions around a person or place.

The hotel's peaceful **surroundings** made it a perfect place to relax.

**victim**  
vɪkˈtɪm

*n.* One who is hurt, killed, or suffers.

The scoundrel tried to deny that he had cheated his **victims** of their life savings.

## 7A Finding Meanings

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 7. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) Surroundings are  
(b) Alterations are  
(c) needed items for some activity.  
(d) the conditions around one.

2. (a) To eject a group is to  
(b) provide it with what is needed.  
(c) To equip a group is to  
(d) allow it to take part.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3. (a) throw them out.<br>(b) To seize papers is to       | (c) take them by force.<br>(d) To distribute papers is to                         |
| 4. (a) To be flexible is to be<br>(b) To be keen is to be | (c) unwilling to change your mind.<br>(d) agreeable to any sudden change of plan. |
| 5. (a) Alteration is<br>(b) unwillingness to change.      | (c) a state of being mixed up.<br>(d) Confusion is                                |
| 6. (a) Victims are<br>(b) persons who are hurt.           | (c) persons who avoid injury.<br>(d) Embraces are                                 |
| 7. (a) A flexible person<br>(b) is one who is eager.      | (c) A keen person<br>(d) is one who is vain.                                      |
| 8. (a) a hug.<br>(b) An embrace is                        | (c) An instant is<br>(d) a handshake.   |
| 9. (a) To limp is to<br>(b) grasp firmly.                 | (c) To scurry is to<br>(d) walk unevenly.   |
| 10. (a) to hold onto them.<br>(b) to give them out.       | (c) To distribute things is<br>(d) To confuse things is                           |

alter

confuse

distribute

eject

embrace

equip

flexible

instant

keen

limp

scurry

seize

shallow

surround

victim

## 7B Just the Right Word

Improve each of the following sentences by crossing out the bold phrase and replacing it with a word (or a form of the word) from Word List 7.

- The dog's **uneven walk** was caused by a thorn in its left front paw.
- I **opened my arms and held** my cousin, whom I hadn't seen in two years.
- Stay close to shore where the water is **not very deep**.

4. My cat jumped as a mouse **ran with quick little steps** across the kitchen floor.
5. I caught a glimpse of the president in the parade for just a(n) **very short period of time**.
6. This map is very **hard to follow** because some of the streets aren't named.
7. With just a slight **change in form** of the shape of the number, a 3 becomes an 8.
8. The boxes of food were **given out** in time for Thanksgiving.
9. My whole family **gathered around** me, singing "Happy Birthday."
10. Luckily, the pilot was **thrown with great force** from the plane before it crashed.

## 7C Applying Meanings

Circle the letter of each correct answer to the questions below. A question may have more than one correct answer.

1. Which of the following can be **altered**?
 

(a) one's plans	(c) a dress's hemline
(b) today's date	(d) one's age
2. Which of the following are **flexible**?
 

(a) a sewing needle	(c) a dancer's body
(b) a garden hose	(d) a length of cooked spaghetti
3. Which of the following could be given in an **instant**?
 

(a) a yes-or-no answer	(c) a ten-page report
(b) a nod of agreement	(d) a smile of welcome
4. Which of the following might feel **limp**?
 

(a) a sheet of wet cardboard	(c) a sheet of ice
(b) a sleeping child	(d) a sheet of plywood
5. Which of the following could **scurry**?
 

(a) a spider	(c) an elephant
(b) a whale	(d) a mouse

6. Which of the following could be **seized**?

- (a) a person's arm  
(b) a person's boat  
(c) a sneeze  
(d) a puff of smoke

7. Which of the following could be **shallow**?

- (a) a stick  
(b) a tree  
(c) a person's thinking  
(d) a pond

8. Which of the following might be **keen**?

- (a) a pessimist  
(b) a razor blade  
(c) a hammer  
(d) a dog's hearing

## 7D Word Study

In Lesson 5, you met three prefixes, *un-*, *in-*, and *im-*. When attached to the front of a word, they turned the word into its opposite. The meaning of each prefix is "not."

Here are three more prefixes. They add to, or change the meaning of, the word they're attached to. *Pre-* adds the meaning "before," *re-* adds the meaning "again" or "against," and *ex-* adds the meaning "out." The prefix *ex-* is sometimes shortened to *e-*.

In column three, write the prefix of each word listed in column two. In column four, write the meaning of each prefix.

alter  
confuse  
distribute  
eject  
embrace  
equip  
flexible  
instant  
keen  
limp  
scurry  
seize  
shallow  
surround  
victim

<u>Definition</u>	<u>Word</u>	<u>Prefix</u>	<u>Prefix Meaning</u>
1. to fight against	resist	_____	_____
2. to bring out into the open	expose	_____	_____
3. to act before the need arises	prepare	_____	_____
4. not feeling easy in one's mind	uneasy	_____	_____
5. to bring to mind once again	recall	_____	_____
6. to go out of bounds	exceed	_____	_____
7. to go over to correct	revise	_____	_____
8. to speak out loudly	exclaim	_____	_____
9. to throw out	eject	_____	_____
10. to say over again what one has memorized	recite	_____	_____

## 7E Passage

Read the passage below; then complete the exercise that follows.

## Armed but Not Dangerous

What is sometimes green, sometimes brown, sometimes gray, sometimes a mixture of all three colors, and has one head and eight arms? Here is a clue: the Greek word for eight is *okto*. If you guessed octopus, you're right!

The octopus lives in holes or openings in the rocky bottom of the sea, where it protects itself from its enemies by changing its color to match its **surroundings**. In seaweed it can turn green; on sand it can turn brown; against rocks it can turn gray. For example, if it is attacked by a shark, it can change its color in an **instant** in order to blend into the background. The surprised shark is left wondering where the octopus went. It can also protect itself by **ejecting** a large blob of black ink-like liquid that acts as a screen. This **confuses** its attacker, who may go after the dark blob, giving the octopus a chance to escape.

An octopus has no bones, so it can easily **alter** its shape; it can then force its way inside empty shells or under rocks or into very narrow openings. To be even safer, it may cover itself with stones or shells.

The octopus's eight rubbery arms are very **flexible** and can easily be wrapped around even quite small objects. Each arm is **equipped** with two rows of fleshy, deeply set suckers that give it a powerful grip. The octopus uses its arms to **seize** other animals such as crabs and lobsters as they **scurry** along the sea floor. It can then use the two strong, horny beaks in its mouth to crack open the shell of its **victim**.

The octopus has **keen** eyesight, which it needs because it hunts mostly at night. It has a large brain for its size, and it makes full use of its intelligence in its efforts to catch food. For example, if an octopus cannot open a clam, it will wait until the clam opens itself. When it does, the octopus will put a stone between the two shells so that they cannot close. Then it can get at the juicy clam without having to struggle.

There are many different kinds of octopuses, and they are widely **distributed** throughout the world's oceans. They live mostly in warm, **shallow** water, not far from shore. The smallest ones grow to be no more than two inches across; the largest ones, which live in the Pacific Ocean, can grow to be thirty feet across, although their bodies might be only eighteen inches.

If, when swimming in the Pacific, you venture too far from shore, you may find yourself in the **embrace** of one of these creatures. If this should happen to you, it is best not to struggle. If you let your body go **limp**, the octopus will probably let you go. Although movies sometimes show them as terrifying and dangerous monsters, there is no reason to fear them. Around humans, at least, octopuses are usually shy and gentle creatures.

Answer each of the following questions in the form of a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word from this lesson's word list, use one in your answer. Use each word only once. Questions and answers will then contain all fifteen words (or forms of the words).

1. Why does an octopus sitting in seaweed turn green?

2. How long does it take for an octopus to change colors?

3. Why does the octopus make a "screen"?

4. How does it make this screen?

5. How does its lack of a skeleton benefit an octopus?

6. How would bones in an octopus's arms affect the way it uses them?

7. How is the octopus **equipped** to grip things?

8. How do its eight arms help an octopus obtain food?

9. Why might an approaching octopus cause a crab to start **scurrying**?

10. How does an octopus get at the meat in a lobster it has caught?

11. Which of the octopus's senses is especially well-developed?

12. In what parts of the world do octopuses live?

13. Why are you unlikely to see an octopus in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean?

14. Would you be in danger in an octopus's **embrace**? Explain.

15. What is the meaning of **limp**, as used in the passage?

### FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

**Alter** is a verb; *altar* (with two *a*'s) is a noun. An *altar* is a table or platform used in churches or temples as a center of worship. A bride and groom may kneel or stand before the altar when they get married. *Alter* and *altar* are homophones—words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings.

**Flexible** means “able to bend or change easily.” The antonym of *flexible* is *rigid*, which means “stiff” or “unbending.” An iron bar is rigid; if it is heated until it

becomes red- or white-hot, it becomes flexible. Both words can be used *literally*, as in the example above, and *figuratively*, as in the examples below. A person who is willing to change plans at the last minute is said to be *flexible*, whereas someone who refuses to make such changes could be called *rigid*. A job with *rigid* hours is one in which the hours of work cannot be changed; a job with *flexible* hours is one in which the hours can be changed easily to suit the needs of the worker or the boss.