

# Upgrade Your Writing: Improving Your Vocabulary *Study Guide*

by  
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Roslyn Heights, New York

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## Upgrade Your Writing: Improving Your Vocabulary

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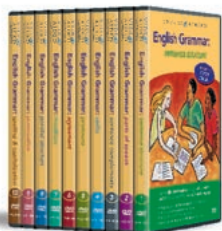
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## Upgrade Your Writing: Improving Your Vocabulary Study Guide

### Introduction

Video Aided Instruction's *Upgrade Your Writing* Series is like a virtual "writing clinic on DVD" that gives middle school students through adults (and challenged learners requiring remediation, in particular) the tools they need to dramatically improve their performance on any academic writing assignment or real-world writing task.

Before you begin viewing this program, please allow us to make a few recommendations. First, we suggest that you have a notebook and pen ready, so you're prepared to use the many on-screen graphics to take notes for yourself—the physical act of writing things down can help you remember them. Best of all, when you're done, you'll have a terrific resource filled with useful tips, key concepts, and easy-to-follow strategies that will help you become a better writer—all in one handy notebook that you can refer back to again and again.

Secondly, don't forget to take advantage of your "pause" button while viewing the program. This will allow you to try to complete the exercises in this study guide before you view the answers on-screen.

Finally, don't try to absorb too much at one time. By viewing the program over a number of short sessions (instead of all at once), you'll stay "fresher" and retain more of what you learn. And don't forget: you can review the entire program, or specific sections, as many times as you need to!

So now you can avoid the kind of incoherent, disorganized, and error-laden writing that inspires teachers to "break out the red pen"—you really can *Upgrade Your Writing...* let Video Aided Instruction be your guide!

### About the Author

Laurie E. Rozakis, Ph.D., is a Professor of English and Humanities at the State University of New York at Farmingdale. An award-winning educator and vibrant public speaker, Dr. Rozakis is also a prolific author with more than 100 books to her credit, including numerous test prep titles for Scholastic, McGraw-Hill, and Peterson's and many books in the bestselling *Complete Idiot's Guide* series.

# Upgrade Your Writing: Improving Your Vocabulary *Study Guide*

## PART 1: Some *Dos* and *Don'ts*

*Directions:* See DVD program.

## PART 2: The Best Ways to Upgrade Your Vocabulary

### Exercise 1

*Directions:* Use *context* to determine the meaning of each underlined word. Also, identify the kind of context clue that helped you infer this meaning; was it A) *definition*; B) *restatement*; C) *contrast*; D) *cause and effect*; E) *example*; or F) *style and tone*?

1. The teacher shot Brittany one of his famous withering glances; she froze in response and put her cellphone back in her jacket.  
*meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*context clues:* \_\_\_\_\_
2. The chef seared the edges of the tuna steak; that is, he scorched them in a very hot pan.  
*meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*context clues:* \_\_\_\_\_
3. Far from a fortune, the salary they offered Dwayne was downright paltry.  
*meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*context clues:* \_\_\_\_\_
4. It seemed innocuous enough, just a harmless, friendly game of touch football at the family picnic.  
*meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*context clues:* \_\_\_\_\_
5. Dr. Figueroa specializes in the evolutionary biology of South American rodents, from the pocket-sized guinea pig to the 140-pound capybara.  
*meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*context clues:* \_\_\_\_\_
6. Argh! I just couldn't take it anymore. I was incensed!  
*meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*context clues:* \_\_\_\_\_

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## Exercise 2

**Directions:** Use a dictionary or online resource to find out about the *history* of each word (also called its origin, derivation, or etymology). Also, learn its meaning.

1. mentor      *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
2. quisling     *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
3. thespian     *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
4. quixotic     *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
5. sideburns    *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
6. dahlia        *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
7. pasteurize   *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
8. nicotine      *history:* \_\_\_\_\_  
                    *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_

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## Exercise 3

**Directions:** Use a dictionary or online resource to learn the correct *pronunciation* of each word. Also, learn its meaning.

1. Amish                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
2. toupee                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
3. denouement              *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
4. awry                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
5. aplomb                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
6. syllogism                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
7. nuclear                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
8. eccentricity                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
9. omnipotent                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_
10. chaos                      *pronunciation:* \_\_\_\_\_  
   *meaning:* \_\_\_\_\_

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## Exercise 4

**Directions:** Write at least one *synonym* and at least one *antonym* for each word. You may need to use a dictionary, thesaurus, or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words. Also, think about the shade of meaning for each word.

- |               |                        |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 1. relinquish | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 2. authentic  | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 3. chronic    | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 4. naïve      | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 5. sullen     | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 6. frigid     | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 7. impetuous  | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 8. loquacious | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 9. terse      | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |
| 10. hackneyed | <i>synonyms:</i> _____ |
|               | <i>antonyms:</i> _____ |

## Exercise 5

**Directions:** Create a *word card* for each of the following words. You may need to use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words. Remember to write the word on the front of each card, and then write its definition, a sentence that includes the word, and perhaps its part of speech on the back of the card.

gaudy	somber	quarry
vicarious	ominous	audacious
prosaic	latent	vernacular
imminent	disheveled	vivacious
icon	inclement	baffling

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## Exercise 6

**Directions:** Determine which word in each pair has a **positive connotation** and which word has a **negative connotation**. In each pair of words, put a plus sign (+) next to the word that has a positive connotation and a minus sign (-) next to the word that has a negative connotation. Use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words—and create word cards to help you remember them!

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. know-it-all _____ | 4. bold _____       |
| sage _____           | reckless _____      |
| 2. thrifty _____     | 5. steadfast _____  |
| cheap _____          | obstinate _____     |
| 3. vain _____        | 6. simplistic _____ |
| confident _____      | uncomplicated _____ |

## Exercise 7

**Directions:** Using what you learned about **prefixes** and **roots**, fill in each blank with the appropriate word from the list. Use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words—and create word cards to help you remember them!

- Jacqueline used the formula to determine the distance around the circle: the \_\_\_\_\_ was 1 meter.
- The madrigal was \_\_\_\_\_; instead of singing in unison, each singer sang a different melody at the same time.
- Magellan's voyage is generally credited with being the first successful attempt to \_\_\_\_\_ the Earth.
- That shape has 16 sides of equal length; the more sides a \_\_\_\_\_ has, the closer it can come to looking like a circle.
- The mayor "talked around" every question he was asked; he was a true master of the art of \_\_\_\_\_.
- The three tribes on the island worship similar gods; their \_\_\_\_\_ beliefs may seem similar, but their ceremonies reveal that they practice vastly different religions.
- When a square sits inside a circle, the circle is said to \_\_\_\_\_ the square.
- The ambassador is a true \_\_\_\_\_; her multilingual abilities enable her to communicate easily with many foreign leaders.
- Lisa is \_\_\_\_\_ about material that she reads online, and teachers respect her cautious approach.

**circum-** = around

circumspect  
circumlocution  
circumnavigate  
circumscribe  
circumference

**poly-** = many

polyglot  
polytheistic  
polygon  
polyphonic

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## Exercise 8

**Directions:** Using what you learned about **suffixes**, match each word stem with the appropriate suffix from the list of suffixes. Then match the resulting word with its meaning from the list of definitions. Use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words—and create word cards to help you remember them!

1. superficial
2. internation
3. anteced
4. disambiguat
5. incess

- ion
- ent
- ant
- ity
- al

- between or among nations
- something that eliminates confusion
- the thing that came before
- the state of being shallow
- continuing without stopping

## Exercise 9

**Directions:** Match each word that entered English from **French** with its definition. Use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words—and create word cards to help you remember them!

- |                |                       |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. bon mot     | a. middle class       |
| 2. bourgeoisie | b. indifference       |
| 3. charlatan   | c. faker, quack       |
| 4. faux pas    | d. socially inept     |
| 5. gauche      | e. expert storyteller |
| 6. genteel     | f. clever saying      |
| 7. nonchalance | g. harmony, accord    |
| 8. rapport     | h. social blunder     |
| 9. repartee    | i. witty talk         |
| 10. raconteur  | j. elegant, refined   |



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## Exercise 10

**Directions:** Match each word that entered English from *Spanish* with its definition. Use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words—and create word cards to help you remember them!

- |             |                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. armada   | a. an independent soldier         |
| 2. embargo  | b. a ruling group                 |
| 3. flotilla | c. to restrict commerce           |
| 4. junta    | d. a chain of hills or mountains  |
| 5. presidio | e. a fleet of warships            |
| 6. guerilla | f. sun-dried brick                |
| 7. adobe    | g. bluster                        |
| 8. canyon   | h. a valley with very steep sides |
| 9. sierra   | i. a fort, a garrison town        |
| 10. bravado | j. a group of ships               |

## Exercise 11

**Directions:** Match each word that entered English from *Italian* with its definition. Use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words—and create word cards to help you remember them!

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 1. arcade      | a. tomb                                |
| 2. catacomb    | b. lowest balcony                      |
| 3. cornice     | c. molding                             |
| 4. grotto      | d. a unit of weight in gemstones       |
| 5. mezzanine   | e. a fortress                          |
| 6. citadel     | f. arched passageway; a group of shops |
| 7. vendetta    | g. cave                                |
| 8. carat       | h. cheese                              |
| 9. parmesan    | i. pertaining to trade                 |
| 10. mercantile | j. a private feud                      |

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## Exercise 12

**Directions:** Match each word that entered English from a *Native American, Asian, or Middle Eastern language*—or *some other language*—with its definition. Use a dictionary or online resource to look up the meanings of any unfamiliar words—and create word cards to help you remember them!

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1. saffron  | a. a very tall tree [Native American]            |
| 2. garble   | b. wise leader [Hindi]                           |
| 3. clan     | c. a type of magic [Arabic]                      |
| 4. karaoke  | d. a group of families [Gaelic]                  |
| 5. alchemy  | e. a sing-along recreational activity [Japanese] |
| 6. karma    | f. expert, authority [Hindi]                     |
| 7. kumquat  | g. an orange fruit [Chinese]                     |
| 8. guru     | h. mix up [Arabic]                               |
| 9. pundit   | i. fate [Sanskrit]                               |
| 10. sequoia | j. a yellow-orange spice (or its color) [Arabic] |

## PART 3: Some Parting Thoughts

**Directions:** See DVD program.