

Lesson 13

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Word List

Study the definitions of the words. Then do the exercises that follow.

accommodate
ə kəm' ə dat

- v.* 1. To have or to find room for.
This bus, which **accommodates** thirty adults, will drive to the historic buildings in the center of the city.
2. To do a favor for.
Tell me what you want, and I will try to **accommodate** you.

aggressive
ə gres' iv

- adj.* 1. Ready to attack or start fights; acting in a hostile way.
Many animals become **aggressive** when their young are threatened.
2. Bold and active.
Rod Laver, the Australian tennis star, was an **aggressive** player at the net.

bask
bask

- v.* 1. To relax where it is pleasantly warm.
At lunch break, several students **basked** in the sunshine flooding the front steps.
2. To enjoy a warm or pleasant feeling.
The twins **basked** in the praise heaped on them by their parents.

carcass
kar' kəs

- n.* The dead body of an animal.
New Zealand exports frozen lamb **carcasses** in refrigerator ships.

conceal
kən sēl'

- v.* To keep something or someone from being seen or known; to hide.
I **concealed** myself behind the curtain just as the thief entered the room.

flail
flāl

- v.* To strike out or swing wildly; to thrash about.
Matt's arms **flailed** desperately as he felt himself sinking into deep water.

gorge
gôrj

- n.* A narrow passage between steep cliffs.
We crossed the **gorge** on a swaying rope bridge.
- v.* To stuff with food; to eat greedily.
The children **gorged** themselves on watermelon at the family picnic.

morsel
môr' səl

- n.* A small amount, especially of something good to eat; a tidbit.
For appetizers we served stuffed mushrooms and other tasty **morsels**.

protrude
prō trōod'

- v.* To stick out; to project.
Watch out for the stone ledge that **protrudes** from the wall.

ripple v. To form small waves.
rip' əl The breeze **rippled** the surface of the lake.
n. A movement like a small wave.
Raindrops made **ripples** in the pond.

slither v. To move with a sliding, side-to-side motion of the body.
slith' ər A snake **slithered** through the grass.

sluggish *adj.* 1. Lacking energy; not active.
slug' ish The heat made me **sluggish**.
2. Slow moving.
In the dry season, the river becomes little more than a **sluggish** stream.

snout *n.* The nose or jaws that stick out in front of certain animals' heads.
snout The **snout** of a ferocious dog may need to be covered with a muzzle.

taper v. 1. To make or become less wide or less thick at one end.
tā' pər A boning knife **tapers** to a very sharp point.
2. To lessen gradually. (Usually used with *off*.)
As a loud knock was heard at the door, the speaker's voice **tapered off**, and she fell silent.
n. A thin candle.
The only light in the room came from a flickering **taper**.

visible *adj.* Able to be seen; exposed to view; not hidden.
viz' ə bəl On a clear day Mount Shasta is **visible** from fifty miles away.
visibility *n.* 1. The condition of being easily seen.
An orange vest increases a cyclist's **visibility** on the road.
2. The distance within which things can be seen.
Visibility is poor this morning because of the fog.

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 13. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) relax where it is pleasantly warm. (c) To taper is to
(b) move by sliding from side to side. (d) To slither is to

2. (a) An aggressive animal is one (c) that is a carnivore.
(b) A sluggish animal is one (d) that is ready to fight.

3. (a) stuff oneself with food. (c) To gorge is to
(b) strike out wildly. (d) To taper is to

4. (a) a small wave. (c) A carcass is
(b) a tasty bit of food. (d) A ripple is

5. (a) To flail is to (c) hold out one's arms.
(b) To bask is to (d) enjoy a pleasant feeling.

6. (a) within sight. (c) lacking energy.
(b) To be visible is to be (d) To be concealed is to be

7. (a) keep out of sight. (c) strike out wildly.
(b) To protrude is to (d) To flail is to

8. (a) an animal's slow movement. (c) A morsel is
(b) an animal's projecting nose. (d) A snout is
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9. (a) speak favorably of that person. (c) hide that person.
(b) To conceal someone is to (d) To accommodate someone is to
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10. (a) the body of a dead animal. (c) A carcass is
(b) a narrow passage. (d) A morsel is
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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 13.

1. The company received an avalanche of mail the first day, but the orders soon **began to arrive in smaller and smaller numbers**.
2. A leaf dropped onto the pond and **made small waves on** the surface.
3. The **narrow passage with cliffs on either side** is two hundred feet deep.
4. Will you be able to **find room for** all five of us in your car?
5. When a **small piece of something good to eat** fell to the floor, we let our dog eat it.
6. Customers who cannot pay their bills are pursued by the company in a very **active and forceful** manner.
7. The Inuit hunters cut up the **dead body of the animal** and shared it among themselves.
8. The twins **wildly swung** their arms and legs as their parents tried to dress them in snowsuits.
9. The tractor engine is **very slow to turn over** on these cold mornings.
10. Watch out! There are several rusty nails **sticking out** from that board lying on the ground in front of you.

Circle the letter or letters of each correct answer. A question may have more than one correct answer.

- Which of the following would decrease **visibility**?
 - fog
 - a telescope
 - a blizzard
 - darkness
- Which of the following is an **aggressive** remark?
 - "Get out of my way!"
 - "I'm sorry."
 - "Forget it!"
 - "Would you please repeat that?"
- Which of the following might make a person **sluggish**?
 - a heavy meal
 - bracing air
 - lying in the sun
 - a stimulant
- Which of the following animals **slither**?
 - snakes
 - lizards
 - frogs
 - kangaroos
- Which of the following can **taper**?
 - a twelve-inch ruler
 - the blade of a dinner knife
 - a candle
 - the toe of a shoe
- Which of the following **protrudes** from the head?
 - the neck
 - the nose
 - the ears
 - the brain
- In which of the following places might one **bask**?
 - on the beach
 - beside the pool
 - near a campfire
 - on a tropical island
- Which of the following might **accommodate** your neighbors?
 - lending them your tools
 - inviting them to celebrate
 - denouncing them to your friends
 - watching their house while they're away

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Each group of words contains two, three, or four synonyms. Circle any words that are NOT synonyms. (You may have to circle two, one, or no words.)

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|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. aggressive | visible | hostile | friendly |
| 2. taper | conceal | hide | obscure |
| 3. exasperate | annoy | infuriate | protrude |
| 4. anxious | worried | concerned | nervous |
| 5. exultant | joyful | sluggish | methodical |
| 6. absurd | nonchalant | silly | ridiculous |
| 7. heroic | brave | fearless | bold |
| 8. interest | fascinate | donate | attract |
| 9. feeble | evasive | puny | burly |
| 10. yearn | loathe | dislike | hate |

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow it.

Beware the Silent Crocodile



Crocodiles are the largest and most ferocious of all reptiles. They live in swampy areas, close to the banks of tropical rivers or lakes. They have been around since the age of the dinosaurs. Back then they reached lengths of thirty feet or more. The crocodile of today, however, is much smaller than its ancient ancestors. It seldom grows longer than fifteen feet from its head to the tip of its long, **tapering** tail.

Crocodiles in the wild are almost unknown in North America. A few can be found in the remaining tidal marshes of the Everglades and the Florida Keys. There they might be mistaken for alligators, their close relatives. Crocodiles and alligators resemble each other in many ways. There are clear differences between them, however. The crocodile is the more **aggressive** of the two. It also has a longer and narrower **snout**, and the fourth tooth on each side of its jaw **protrudes**. That tooth remains in view even when its mouth is closed.

A crocodile in the water lies almost entirely **concealed** below the surface; only its eyes and nostrils are **visible**. It can stay like this for hours, its eyes fixed on the water's edge, waiting for a thirsty animal to come to drink. When this happens, the crocodile is careful not to scare away its prey. It disappears beneath the surface, swimming slowly toward the unsuspecting animal; it makes not even the slightest **ripple**.

If the thirsty animal is lucky, it senses the danger in time and escapes. If the crocodile is lucky, it seizes the animal in its jaws, knocks it off balance by **flailing** its powerful tail, and drags it into the water. There the creature drowns. The crocodile then finds a place where it can **gorge** on the dead animal without being disturbed. When it has eaten its fill, it will hide the remains of the **carcass**. Then it will return to feed on it later.

When not hunting for food, the crocodile spends much of its time on land. Its belly almost touches the ground as it **slithers** from the water and finds a comfortable spot to **bask** in the sun. Like other reptiles, the crocodile is a cold-blooded animal; therefore, its temperature changes with its surroundings. To escape the extreme heat of midday, it burrows into the soft ground with its sharp claws until it has made a hole large enough to

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accommodate itself. In the cool of the evening, its temperature drops and its movements become **sluggish**.

There are several different kinds of crocodile. The best known is the Nile crocodile of Africa, which has an unusual companion called the crocodile bird. This daring little creature feeds by hopping inside the crocodile's mouth and picking **morsels** of meat from its teeth. The crocodile shows its gratitude for having its teeth cleaned in this way by not eating the bird.

► Answer each of the following questions in the form of a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word from the lesson's word list, use one in your answer. Use each word only once.

1. Why is it unwise to get too close to a crocodile?

2. How does the shape of a crocodile's head differ from that of an alligator?

3. What do crocodiles and snakes have in common?

4. What is the shape of a crocodile's tail?

5. Why do crocodiles hide the **carcasses** of animals they have killed?

6. When are crocodiles likely to be slow in their movements?

7. What is the meaning of **bask** as it is used in the passage?

8. What parts of a swimming crocodile are **visible**?

9. How does a crocodile use its tail to overcome its prey?

10. What is the meaning of **accommodate** as it is used in the passage?

11. How does the passage suggest that a crocodile does not toy with its food?

12. Why is the prey of a crocodile unlikely to see it approaching in the water?

13. Why do you think the crocodile's eyes and nostrils **protrude** above the surface when it is in the water?

14. What do crocodile birds eat?

15. Why do crocodiles lie **concealed** in the water for long periods of time?

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FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

- A *slug* is like a snail but without the shell; it moves just about as fast as a snail, which is very slow indeed. *Slug* comes from an old Scandinavian word *slugje*, which means “a heavy, slow person.” Both the noun *sluggard*, “a lazy, slow-moving person” and the adjective **sluggish** are formed from this word.
- Don’t confuse *tapir*, the name for a large piglike animal that lives in the forests of Central and South America, with **taper**. These two words sound the same but have different meanings and spellings. Can you remember what such pairs of words are called?