Lesson 10 CONTEXT: Expression

Leo Tolstoy: The Wealthy Russian Peasant

A towering figure of world literature is Count Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), one of Russia’s greatest authors. His two masterpieces are the novels War and Peace (1869) and Anna Karenina (1877). Tolstoy was a wealthy Russian nobleman, but he thought the Russian class system was unjust. He developed a deep sympathy for the average, working-class people of his country. Many of his writings glorify the common people and the individual’s efforts to do what is right and proper.

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about Leo Tolstoy’s life and works. Below are ten Vocabulary Words that will be used in these exercises.

- encompass
- implacable
- incentive
- militant
- pivotal
- postulate
- retribution
- stringent
- transcribe
- transitory

EXERCISE 1 Wordbusting

Directions. Follow these instructions for this word and the nine words on the next page.

- Figure out the word’s meaning by looking at its context, its structure, and its sound. Fill in at least one of the three CSS boxes. Alternate which boxes you complete.
- Then, look up the word in a dictionary, read all of its meanings, and write the meaning of the word as it is used in the sentence.
- Follow this same process for each of the Vocabulary Words on the next page. You will need to draw your own map for each word. Use a separate sheet of paper.

1. **encompass**

   Tolstoy’s early life encompassed the world of Russia’s aristocracy, or upper classes. His first years on the family estate south of Moscow included wealth and opportunities undreamed of by most children.

   **Context:**

   **Structure:**

   **Sound:**

   **Dictionary:**
2. Implacable in their probing, biographers have studied all aspects of Tolstoy’s boyhood. Their relentless research has sometimes centered on the effects Tolstoy’s parents’ deaths had on him.

3. After his parents’ deaths, Tolstoy was raised by relatives. I wonder if his private tutors set up incentive programs to encourage the young Tolstoy to study and learn.

4. After three years at Kazan University, Tolstoy returned home to manage the family estate. Although he wanted to improve the conditions of the peasants, he was not a militant prepared to fight for the cause.

5. Becoming a soldier at the age of twenty-three was a pivotal event in Tolstoy’s life. It was of vital importance to his development as an author because while in the army he started writing about his life.

6. You would be incorrect to postulate that Tolstoy did not do well during his service in the Crimean War. On the contrary, evidence shows that he was a good and dedicated soldier.

7. The Russian army routinely punished soldiers who disobeyed orders or otherwise failed to perform, but because of his excellent service, Tolstoy never received such retribution during his five years in the army.

8. Tolstoy no doubt learned to follow stringent rules while in the military. This strict training may have helped him discipline himself when he was writing his novels and short stories.

9. The success of the stories that Tolstoy wrote while in the army probably transcended his wildest hopes. He could not have guessed that the result of his labors would go beyond his expectations.

10. The fame Tolstoy achieved immediately after his army service was not transitory. His later short stories and novels, along with his essays about art and philosophy, firmly established his lasting reputation.
**EXERCISE 2  Context Clues**

**Directions.** Scan the definitions in Column A. Then, think about how the boldface words are used in the sentences in Column B. To complete the exercise, match each definition in Column A with the correct Vocabulary Word from Column B. Write the letter of your choice on the line provided; then write the Vocabulary Word on the line preceding the definition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN A</th>
<th>COLUMN B</th>
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| 11. word: ____________________  
*adj.* aggressive in support of a belief or cause; *n.* an individual prepared to fight for a cause; an activist | (A) What was my incentive for reading War and Peace? I was inspired by my cousin’s claim that my mother’s side of the family is very distantly related to Leo Tolstoy. |
| 12. word: ____________________  
*adj.* passing quickly; lasting only a short time; temporary | (B) The novel is long because it encompasses so much of Russian life during the early 1800s. It even includes Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812. |
| 13. word: ____________________  
*n.* motivation; encouragement;  
*adj.* motivating; encouraging | (C) Pivotal to the story are the lives of three aristocratic families. The story especially revolves around two characters, Andrey and Pierre. |
| 14. word: ____________________  
*v.* to contain or include; to surround | (D) As you would expect, some of the characters are strong and implacable, while others are weak and easily pacified. |
| 15. word: ____________________  
*n.* an assumption; a fundamental truth or doctrine; *v.* to assume without proof | (E) Among Tolstoy’s basic principles is the postulate that people should be of service to others. That belief comes across in the novel. |
| 16. word: ____________________  
*adj.* tight in finances or credit; strict; severe | (F) The number of characters in War and Peace—more than five hundred—certainly transcends, or goes beyond, the number in any other novel I’ve read. |
| 17. word: ____________________  
*adj.* relentless; not capable of being calmed or appeased | (G) There are, of course, many characters in the novel whose roles are transitory; they are in the story for only a brief time and are consequently not very important. |
| 18. word: ____________________  
*n.* something given to make up for a wrong done; punishment | (H) Some of the war heroes in the novel become very vigorous in defending their sides. They actually are too militant for my tastes. |
| 19. word: ____________________  
*adj.* on which something turns or depends; crucial; vitally important | (I) My favorite character was Natasha, so I didn’t want her to suffer any retributions in the story. I didn’t care so much if other characters were punished, though. |
| 20. word: ____________________  
*v.* to surpass the limits of; to exceed | (J) Reading War and Peace was a welcome break from my work at the bank, where I keep track of the stringent, or rigidly controlled, money markets. |
EXERCISE 3 Sentence Completion

Directions. For each of the following items, circle the letter of the choice that best completes the meaning of the sentence or sentences.

21. During the last thirty years of his life, Tolstoy had a new ____, or purpose, for writing.
   (A) incentive
   (B) retribution
   (C) militant
   (D) postulate
   (E) transcendence

22. In his novels, Tolstoy ____ that love and nonviolence are basic principles that have influenced many people.
   (A) encompasses
   (B) transcends
   (C) postulates
   (D) personifies
   (E) fabricates

23. Tolstoy imposed strict rules on his own behavior; some members of his family found his self-discipline too ____.
   (A) transitory
   (B) pivotal
   (C) incentive
   (D) apprehensive
   (E) stringent

24. “To do good” was a ____ point in the philosophy that Tolstoy developed in the late 1870s; his life revolved around that idea.
   (A) transcendent
   (B) transitory
   (C) stringent
   (D) pivotal
   (E) mediocre

25. Ironically, some people thought Tolstoy had become too ____ or pushy, in support of his philosophy of love.
   (A) incentive
   (B) pivotal
   (C) plausible
   (D) transitory
   (E) militant

26. Tolstoy looked at the world that ____ him and found it disturbing. He tried to understand life’s basic principles, or ____.
   (A) transcended ... militant
   (B) encompassed ... postulates
   (C) grimaced ... incentives
   (D) postulated ... retributions
   (E) excerpted ... postulates

27. His inner struggles were so difficult and painful that they must have seemed like _____. His troubles were ____, however, and eventually passed.
   (A) postulates ... incentive
   (B) militants ... stringent
   (C) retributions ... transitory
   (D) compliances ... incentive
   (E) incentives ... militant

28. Tolstoy became ____ in his desire to live right and equally relentless in his desire to live simply. He applied ____ standards to himself, denying himself luxuries.
   (A) transitory ... implacable
   (B) pivotal ... incentive
   (C) incentive ... transitory
   (D) implacable ... stringent
   (E) transitory ... stringent

29. Tolstoy’s writings provided ____ for many people to become followers. Those motivated to follow his ideas were peaceful rather than ____ in their support.
   (A) incentives ... militant
   (B) retributions ... implacable
   (C) postulates ... transitory
   (D) incentives ... stringent
   (E) militants ... pivotal

30. The Indian leader Mohandas K. Gandhi found Tolstoy’s writings influential, even _____. They were important in developing his ideas to urge people to ____ or rise above, violence.
   (A) transitory ... postulate
   (B) militant ... transcend
   (C) pivotal ... encompass
   (D) implacable ... fabricate
   (E) pivotal ... transcend