Lesson 3

CONTEXT: Expression

Gabriel García Márquez: "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

Gabriel García Márquez was born in a small village near the Caribbean seacoast of Colombia in 1928. Although they were very poor, his family managed to provide him with an education that later enabled him to enter Bogotá University. His short stories and novels depict the myths, personalities, and conditions of the people with whom he grew up. García Márquez received the Nobel Prize in literature in 1982.

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about Gabriel García Márquez and his short story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings." Below are ten Vocabulary Words that will be used in these exercises.

- amiable
- grimace
- malleable
- succumb
- visage
- bayou
- indomitable
- melodramatic
- vibrant
- whimsical

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. amiable

“A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" is the story of Pelayo and Elisenda, who are agreeable, or amiable, people worried about their sick baby.

Context: 

Structure: 

Sound: 

Dictionary:
2. **bayou**
Pelayo and Elisenda live in an area that is as marshy as a bayou. Days of rainfall have caused crabs to crawl into their house, and Pelayo goes out at noon to throw the crabs they have killed into the sea.

3. **grimace**
On his way back to the house, Pelayo’s face twists into a grimace of annoyance at finding an old man with enormous wings lying in the mud. Pelayo and Elisenda cannot understand the man’s strange language.

4. **indomitable**
Pelayo and Elisenda move him into the chicken coop. The old man, who has an indomitable spirit, is unconquered by curious, often cruel, onlookers who taunt him and throw things at him.

5. **malleable**
Pelayo and Elisenda at first do not take advantage of the old man, but they prove to be malleable personalities. The constant flow of onlookers pressures them into fencing their property and charging a fee to view the old man, whom some people think is an angel.

6. **melodramatic**
The old man suffers mostly in silence, except when someone prods him with a burning hot branding iron. García Márquez avoids being melodramatic in depicting the winged man’s situation. The old man cries out in pain in the scene but is not presented in a way that is overly dramatic or emotional.

7. **succumb**
Pelayo and Elisenda make a large amount of money before the townspeople succumb to a new temptation. They yield to the desire to see a new curiosity in town, a woman who looks like a large tarantula.

8. **vibrant**
Perhaps they are hoping that she will be a more vibrant creature than the worn-out, lifeless old man.

9. **visage**
The old man lives on in the chicken coop until it rots away. Only his face hints at the suffering he has endured, for his visage is that of a dying man.

10. **whimsical**
García Márquez describes the townspeople as whimsical, full of curious ideas or notions. They never see the old man as the pitiful person he is, but only as someone strangely different from themselves.
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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. word:</td>
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<tr>
<td>adj. capable of being shaped by hammering or pressing; having the capacity to be changed easily</td>
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<td>12. word:</td>
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<td>adj. friendly; agreeable; good-natured</td>
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<td>13. word:</td>
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<td>adj. vibrating rapidly; energetic, vigorous; produced by vibration (as in sound); stimulating</td>
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<td>14. word:</td>
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<td>adj. overly dramatic, emotional, or sentimental; sensational</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. word:</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. to make a face showing pain, annoyance, and the like; n. a distortion of the face to show pain, annoyance, and the like</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. word:</td>
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<tr>
<td>adj. unconquerable; unyielding; not easily overcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. word:</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. to die; to yield or give in to an overpowering force or desire</td>
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<td>18. word:</td>
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<tr>
<td>n. a marshy inlet or outlet of a river or lake, especially in parts of the southern United States</td>
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<td>19. word:</td>
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<tr>
<td>adj. full of curious ideas or notions; oddly out of the ordinary; unpredictable</td>
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<td>20. word:</td>
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<tr>
<td>n. a face or a facial expression; appearance</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) The new house that Pelayo and Elisenda build is designed to keep out the water and animals from the surrounding bayou.</td>
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<td>(B) The first people who come to see the old man grimace at him through the chicken wire, hoping to provoke a response with their twisted faces.</td>
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<td>(C) The old man does not seem to be malleable. No matter how much pressure the people put on him to move, he resists adapting to their demands and instead sits quietly in the chicken coop.</td>
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<td>(D) For now, his once vibrant voice is gone; he is silent.</td>
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<td>(E) The old man's visage remains the same. His appearance suggests that he is dying, but he lives on.</td>
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<td>(F) Throughout the years, despite neglect and abuse, the old man never gives up; he is indomitable.</td>
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<td>(G) The winged man is not unpleasant, but he is not amiable, either. He seems to ignore the people and events around him.</td>
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<td>(H) Pelayo and Elisenda expect the old man to succumb and perish from old age, neglect, and exposure.</td>
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<td>(I) There is a whimsical ending to the story. In an odd, fanciful scene, the old man actually grows new feathers on his wings and flies away.</td>
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<td>(J) Elisenda, who watches the old man fly away, does not react in a melodramatic way. Instead, she is calmly pleased that he will no longer be an annoyance in her life.</td>
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**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. The beach near Elisenda and Pelayo’s house is muddy and covered with rotten shellfish, and their courtyard is marshy, like a ———, because of the heavy rain.
   (A) grimace
   (B) visage
   (C) bayou
   (D) vibrant
   (E) whimsical

22. The old man has the ——— of a sailor. Elisenda and Pelayo guess from his face that he is a castaway from a foreign ship wrecked by the storm.
   (A) grimace
   (B) mentor
   (C) axiom
   (D) bayou
   (E) visage

23. Because the old man has wings and cannot speak Spanish, Elisenda and Pelayo are not ——— toward him. They turn away and leave him lying in the mud.
   (A) indomitable
   (B) amiable
   (C) malleable
   (D) melodramatic
   (E) whimsical

24. They do not try to change the old man in any way, so they do not know if he is ———. With encouragement he might have adapted to their household.
   (A) amiable
   (B) indomitable
   (C) whimsical
   (D) malleable
   (E) melodramatic

25. Because the old man is ——— in the face of bad treatment, Pelayo and Elisenda begin to ignore him, believing that he can withstand anything.
   (A) indomitable
   (B) whimsical
   (C) malleable
   (D) amiable
   (E) melodramatic

26. García Márquez is a master of portraying odd and fanciful stories. They seem to come alive, much like a ——— painting.
   (A) melodramatic
   (B) indomitable
   (C) malleable
   (D) vibrant
   (E) whimsical

27. Elisenda and Pelayo hope that the old man does not ——— to illness and die because they do not know how to dispose of a body in their marshy area, which is like a ———.
   (A) grimace ... bayou
   (B) succumb ... bayou
   (C) succumb ... visage
   (D) grimace ... visage
   (E) succumb ... grimace

28. The townspeople are ——— and change whenever a more exciting, ——— circumstance presents itself.
   (A) melodramatic ... vibrant
   (B) whimsical ... malleable
   (C) malleable ... melodramatic
   (D) indomitable ... amiable
   (E) vibrant ... indomitable

29. The townspeople hope for even a twisted ——— on the old man’s ———, but his face remains expressionless.
   (A) visage ... bayou
   (B) grimace ... visage
   (C) grimace ... melodrama
   (D) visage ... whimsical
   (E) bayou ... grimace

30. The ——— nature of the townspeople is shown in their bizarre, silly suggestions about what to do with the ——— old man, who seems unable to be controlled by them.
   (A) amiable ... grimacing
   (B) indomitable ... melodramatic
   (C) malleable ... amiable
   (D) vibrant ... malleable
   (E) whimsical ... indomitable