Lesson 5  CONTEXT: Expression

The Aliens at Grovers Mill

Imagine turning on the radio and hearing a news announcer explaining the details of a Martian invasion of Earth. The invasion, the announcer says, is happening now at Grovers Mill, New Jersey. You believe this report to be totally accurate. What would you do? On Halloween Eve in 1938, thousands of radio listeners found themselves in just such a situation, and they panicked. They didn’t realize that they were hearing actor Orson Welles’s (1915–1985) taking part in an adaptation of English writer H. G. Wells’s (1866–1946) novel The War of the Worlds.

In the following exercises, you will have the opportunity to expand your vocabulary by reading about Orson Welles’s famous radio broadcast of The War of the Worlds. Below are ten Vocabulary Words that will be used in these exercises.

affiliates  exalted  plausible  portly  rejuvenate
encumber  invariably  pompous  proximity  unprecedented

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. **affiliate**

   The War of the Worlds broadcast was a creation of Orson Welles and others who were affiliated with the Mercury Theater on the Air. Members of this troupe presented unusual dramatic productions.

   **Context:**

   **Structure:**

   **Sound:**

   **Dictionary:**
2. 
Welles, however, was not delighted with the project, because he was already rehearsing for a play. Why did Welles encumber himself with two projects at once? An extremely talented actor and director, Welles apparently liked to keep busy, even if he became too busy.

3. 
Welles chose writer Howard Koch to adapt The War of the Worlds, but the overworked Koch did not feel exalted about the project. He took on the task without being completely thrilled by it.

4. 
Wherever he was, Koch invariably thought about the project. He was thinking about it continually as he took time off to visit his family.

5. 
Koch was thinking that he wanted the broadcast to sound plausible. He decided, therefore, that the story needed a real setting.

6. 
Koch chose the town of Grovers Mill, New Jersey, as the site of the Martian invasion. The decision was not made in some boardroom filled with pompous; or self-important, executives; Koch chose the place where his pencil landed on a New Jersey map.

7. 
He liked the sound of the name Grovers Mill. It reminded him of Grover's Corners in the play Our Town by Thornton Wilder (1897-1975). Perhaps Koch thought of Grovers Mill as a typical rural town where the sight of portly farmers and their equally stout families meant that plenty of food was available.

8. 
Another attraction of Grovers Mill was its proximity to Princeton University, which had an observatory. In Koch's script, the astronomer, Professor Pierson, could come to Grovers Mill from the nearby university.

9. 
Days before the broadcast, Koch was still working out the format of having an announcer break into a music program with the story. Completing the script may have temporarily rejuvenated Koch, making him feel like a kid again.

10. 
As it turned out, Koch's script sounded so real that it created an unprecedented radio event. Never before had a fictional radio program been mistaken for a real news report and so terrified its listeners.
**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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ 11. word: ___________________</td>
<td>(A) In 1938, people invariably turned to radio for affordable home entertainment. Today, many of us are continually turning to the Internet and to TV.</td>
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<td>adv. continually; perpetually; constantly; always</td>
<td>(B) Regular radio listeners then were much like regular TV viewers now, exalted when their favorite programs came on and sad when they ended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ 12. word: ___________________</td>
<td>(C) Many listeners liked Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater, which was carried by radio stations that were nationwide affiliates, or associates, of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).</td>
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<td>n. nearness; closeness; a neighboring area</td>
<td>(D) People may have thought they knew what to expect from Welles, but the show on Sunday night, October 30, 1938, was unprecedented.</td>
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<td>___ 13. word: ___________________</td>
<td>(E) Welles had a dynamic, deep, clear voice during his young, lean years. It changed little as he became older and portly.</td>
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<td>n. an associated person or organization; a member; v. to join or unite with a larger body</td>
<td>(F) The radio announcer was not pompous, but was natural and appropriately professional.</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ 14. word: ___________________</td>
<td>(G) To thousands of believing listeners, the announcer’s descriptions of the invading Martians sounded perfectly plausible.</td>
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<td>v. to make young or vigorous again; to give youthful qualities to</td>
<td>(H) Koch’s script was not encumbered, or weighed down, with a lot of literary description. Instead, it read like an eyewitness news story.</td>
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<td>___ 15. word: ___________________</td>
<td>(I) People in the proximity of Grovers Mill must have been especially terrified to have the “invasion” right in their neighborhood.</td>
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<td>adj. comfortably fat or stout; large and heavy in a stately and dignified way</td>
<td>(J) The broadcast frightened listeners who did not know that it was fictional, probably causing some of them to age in years with worry and terror. However, it probably rejuvenated those listeners who knew it was a hoax, making them feel like delighted children.</td>
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<td>___ 16. word: ___________________</td>
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<td>v. to hinder; to obstruct; to burden</td>
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<td>___ 17. word: ___________________</td>
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<td>adj. never done or known before; without previous example</td>
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<td>___ 18. word: ___________________</td>
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<td>adj. overjoyed with excitement; raised in status or rank; elevated in style or tone</td>
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<td>___ 19. word: ___________________</td>
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<td>adj. overly dignified; self-important; characterized by exaggerated stateliness, as in speech or manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ 20. word: ___________________</td>
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<td>adj. appearing to be true; reasonable; seeming to be logical or correct</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. My grandfather, who was a young boy at the time The War of the Worlds was broadcast, always became _____ when talking about it. He was like an excited child.
   (A) rejuvenated
   (B) unprecedented
   (C) plausible
   (D) affiliated
   (E) portly

22. Grandpa thought the program was very unusual and thrilling, a(n) _____ example of programming. He considered it far and above anything else that he had heard on the radio.
   (A) plausible
   (B) affiliate
   (C) pompous
   (D) encumbered
   (E) exalted

23. He sometimes became _____, using overly formal, overstated speech to tell about this important childhood event.
   (A) unprecedented
   (B) pompous
   (C) portly
   (D) plausible
   (E) encumbered

24. “Some people back then certainly weren’t _____ with an abundance of common sense,” Grandpa said. “Welles said at the end that the whole thing was fiction.”
   (A) affiliated
   (B) plausible
   (C) rejuvenated
   (D) exalted
   (E) encumbered

25. Grandpa was a(n) _____ man whose large stomach shook when he laughed about people’s reaction to the broadcast.
   (A) invariable
   (B) plausible
   (C) encumbered
   (D) portly
   (E) affiliated

26. “To get out of _____ to the Martians, people rushed to train and bus stations. They didn’t _____ themselves with burdensome luggage.”
   (A) affiliate ... encumber
   (B) rejuvenation ... affiliate
   (C) proximity ... encumber
   (D) affiliate ... rejuvenate
   (E) notoriety ... rejuvenate

27. “Some people _____ believe the worst, and therefore they are always scared. However, public reaction to the Welles broadcast was something new and _____.”
   (A) plausibly ... pompous
   (B) ecstatically ... invariable
   (C) pompously ... plausible
   (D) invariably ... unprecedented
   (E) plausibly ... exalted

28. “The script was very _____, it made the invasion seem real.
   (A) unprecedented
   (B) plausible
   (C) portly
   (D) exalted
   (E) encumbered

29. “However, officials of CBS and its stations, including our local _____, were upset. They even claimed that Welles had an _____ opinion of his own worth. He felt so self-important that he thought he could get away with a major hoax.”
   (A) affiliate ... exalted
   (B) proximity ... unprecedented
   (C) pompousness ... plausible
   (D) rejuvenation ... exalted
   (E) plausibility ... exalted

30. “The event was _____; nothing like it had ever happened before. Radio broadcasters probably stuck to obvious fiction, nothing too _____, for some time after that!”
   (A) plausible ... portly
   (B) exalted ... pompous
   (C) unprecedented ... plausible
   (D) pompous ... exalted
   (E) invariable ... unprecedented