

UNIT SIX

SOMN

Latin SOMNUS “sleep”

III Can you think of another common word that comes from this root?

SOMNOLENT (sām´ nə lənt) *adj.* Drowsy; sleepy

The already *somnolent* professor found that sitting through a slow afternoon of student presentations was agonizing.

syn: drowsy

ant: alert

SOPOR

Latin SOPOR “sleep”

SOPORIFIC (sop əɾ əf´ ək) *adj.* Causing sleep or fatigue

L. *sopor* + *facere*, “to make” = *sleep-making*

Although we had been promised that the play would “astonish and amaze” us, we found the whole thing rather *soporific*.

SOPOR (sō´ pər) *n.* Sleep; drowsiness

Tim explained that his *sopor* was a result of the medicine given to him by the dentist, not a lack of interest.

LANG

Latin LANGUERE “to be weak, be faint”

LANGUID (lān´ gwid) *adj.* Lacking energy; weak

In response to James’ voice, the sick dog was still able to give a *languid* wag of its tail.

syn: tired

ant: active

LANGUISH (lān´ gwish) *v.* To waste away

Bernard feared that if he was not granted parole, he would *languish* in prison for the rest of his life.

syn: weaken

LANGUOR (lān´ gər) *n.* Lack of physical or mental energy

The heat wave that the city had been experiencing for three weeks left residents in a state of *languor*.

syn: listlessness, lethargy



Angie's ANGER meets Larry's LANGUOR

VIGIL

Latin VIGIL “watchful”

VIGILANT (vi'jələnt) *adj.* On the alert; watchful

Having grown up in a tough neighborhood, Byron was known for keeping a *vigilant* eye on everything around him.

syn: aware

VIGILANTE (vi'jəlan'tē) *n.* Someone who takes law enforcement into his or her own hands

A number of mothers in the community decided that the police were not doing enough to combat teen violence, so they used *vigilante* tactics to clean up the neighborhood.

QUIES

Latin QUIESCERE, QUIETUS “to rest”

ACQUIESCE (əkwe'es) *v.* To give in

L. ad, “toward,” + quiescere = *to rest towards*

Geraldine finally *acquiesced* to her teacher’s request to remain silent during the testing period.

syn: submit; accede

ant: resist

REQUIEM (re'kwēəm) *n.* A song or religious service for the dead or lost
Verdi composed a moving *requiem* about Romeo and Juliet.

syn: elegy

QUITTANCE (kwɪ'təns) *n.* A repayment; compensation

After weeks of negotiation, the company finally allowed Jorge a *quittance* for his work.

▮ The first word of the Roman Catholic mass for the dead is *requies*, meaning “rest.” A *requiem* can now mean any service or work intended to remember the departed.

EXERCISES - UNIT SIX

Exercise I. Complete the sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the *italicized* vocabulary word.

1. Rather than *languishing* in his room during his mother's absence, the little boy...
2. Lieutenant Eliot warned that if the soldiers were not *vigilant*, they might...
3. The *sopor* into which Matthew drifted was a result of...
4. Denise's *languid* pose suggested that she was feeling...
5. In her *somnolent* state, Sandy should definitely not have been...
6. The *languor* that settled over the farm was dispelled by...
7. The lecturer's voice was exceedingly *soporific*, judging by...
8. The head of the mob was once a sheriff, but he became a *vigilante* when...
9. Trent would not *acquiesce* to his doctor's suggestion because...
10. The jazz singer's mournful ballad was a fitting *requiem* for Michelle because...
11. Many of the attorney's clients were businessmen seeking a *quittance* from...

Exercise II. Fill in the blank with the best word from the choices below. One word will not be used.

acquiesced vigilante languor soporific languid

1. Finding the magazine article _____, Kathleen fixed herself a cup of coffee and then finished reading it.
2. When the manager asked that I leave the store, I _____ only because I did not want to cause a scene.
3. There seemed to be no escape from the _____ brought about by the intense heat.
4. In response to the police officer's rapid-fire questions, the tired-looking boy gave a _____ shrug.

Fill in the blank with the best word from the choices below. One word will not be used.

requiem vigilant somnolent quittance sopor

5. The insurance company granted Sam a _____ after his house was consumed by fire.
6. No amount of shouting could lift the children out of their television-induced _____.
7. Even the most superb gymnast must be _____ for flaws in his own performance.
8. The _____ expression of the taxi driver made the passengers fear for their safety.

Fill in the blank with the best word from the choices below. One word will not be used.

languish vigilante requiem sopor

9. When the regular army was destroyed, citizens gathered in _____ militias to protect their property.
10. Some critics have seen the actor's final film as a _____ for the bygone era of movies.
11. Without challenging and exciting subject material, the children will _____ in the classroom.

Exercise III. Choose the set of words that best completes the sentence.

1. The _____ effect of the drug made it difficult for Claude to remain _____ against mistakes in his work.
 - A. languid; vigilant
 - B. vigilant; somnolent
 - C. languid; soporific
 - D. soporific; vigilant
2. The unruly student was warned that if he did not _____ to the teacher's warnings, he would "_____ in this room with detentions until the end of the semester."
 - A. languish; acquiesce
 - B. acquiesce; languish
 - C. acquiesce; sopor
 - D. languish; vigilante
3. Sandra's already _____ mind was made sleepier by the _____ pace of the boat and the gentle rocking of the waves.
 - A. vigilant; soporific
 - B. soporific; vigilant
 - C. somnolent; languid
 - D. soporific; acquiescing

4. While the _____ enforced strict and careful justice in Hodgeville, the uniformed police went about their tasks with a _____ that made them seem almost careless.
- soporific; quittance
 - vigilante; languor
 - languid; requiem
 - vigilante; requiem
5. Darren considered the pleasant _____ into which he now fell a fair _____ for weeks of backbreaking work.
- requiem; quittance
 - vigilante; languor
 - languor; requiem
 - sopor; quittance

Exercise IV. Complete the sentence by inferring information about the *italicized* word from its context.

- If Franklin says that the music played by the radio station is *soporific*, he probably thinks that the station should...
- When the doctor sees that her patient is *languishing*, she may wonder if...
- Dana will probably not *acquiesce* to Patrick's demand for money if...

Exercise V. Fill in the blank with the word from the Unit that best completes the sentence, using the root we supply as a clue. Then, answer the questions that follow the paragraphs.

During World War II, the United States rounded up immigrants from Japan and American citizens of Japanese descent and kept them _____ (LANG) in internment camps for the duration of the war to avoid the possible threat of plots against American security. During World War II, Nazi Germany rounded up Jews and locked them up in camps, blaming them for the economic problems in the country after World War I. In the German camps, forced labor combined with starvation was only the slowest killer; the gas chambers, crematoria, and even crueler forms of torture, including surgery without anesthesia, provided swifter death. Both societies chose a group of people based on ethnic backgrounds for confinement, and both societies were cruel to their captives—many Japanese had to wait as long as four years to return home, and, even though the government offered reparations for documented losses in 1948, many Japanese-Americans received no payment from the government until the 1980's.

One major difference, though, is that, since Adolf Hitler had enough support from his military and enough unquestioning support from the German people, he was not held accountable within his nation for his decisions, and there was no force to check him from putting his theories of racial purity into practice. President Roosevelt, in contrast, had an American public, weary from twelve years of the Great Depression, monitoring his actions, and his lease on power was up for renewal every

four years. The insanity that was allowed to become official policy in Germany would have never passed the test of public approval, let alone the institutional roadblocks to executive action—the Congress and the Supreme Court.

Judging from these examples, what separates a republic from a dictatorship? Public _____ (VIGIL) does. Decision-making is much more efficient for dictators: they face no angry voters (or voters of any kind), their strongmen can usually persuade individual dissidents to be quiet, and the press that dictators typically control can sway the opinions of society.

Augustus Caesar, the first Roman emperor, said that only nourishment and entertainment were necessary to keep a society sufficiently content to ignore the workings of the government. If there is a danger to American freedom, it is that our material wealth keeps us from noticing any news from the government that does not have to do with the economy. Because the average American does not keep any sort of surveillance on the environment, on industry regulation or deregulation, or on treaties with other nations, the government is not held accountable for many of its decisions. Therefore, any area in which the government is permitted to operate without accountability is one in which public apathy has allowed the American republic to become a semi-dictatorship.

1. Which of the following would the author probably agree with?
 - I. President Roosevelt was wrong to order the confinement of American citizens, even if they were of Japanese descent.
 - II. A dictator has fewer obstacles to overcome in making decisions than the leader of a republic.
 - III. People tend to focus more on issues that affect society as a whole than those that affect them individually.
 - A. I only
 - B. II only
 - C. I and II only
 - D. II and III only

2. In the author's opinion, what is the greatest threat to American freedom?
 - A. internment based on ethnic background
 - B. having elections only every four years
 - C. the fact that the American press is permitted to operate freely
 - D. the self-absorption that comes with a focus on material possessions

3. What was the difference between German and American treatment of ethnicity, according to the author?
 - A. There was no difference; both Germans and Americans based decisions on race only.
 - B. Hitler's decisions about ethnicity were created solely by economics.
 - C. The U.S. treatment of Japanese-Americans was based on security concerns.
 - D. Both A and C

Exercise VI. Drawing on your knowledge of roots and words in context, read the following selection and define the *italicized* words. If you cannot figure out the meaning of the words on your own, look them up in a dictionary. Note that *ambulat-* means "walking."

Peace had finally settled over the orphanage. The *quiescent* halls of the younger children's ward satisfied the watchful eyes of the night nurse, whose duty it was to shepherd loitering or *somnambulating* children back to bed. Several weeks before, she had followed one such traveler all the way to the cafeteria, and watched in amusement as he seated himself at the table, waiting, in his sleep, for the meal to begin.