

## LESSON 4

*In medias res.*

In the middle (the thick) of things.—HORACE

### Key Words

extraneous  
extraterrestrial  
extrovert

mediate  
mediocrity  
medium  
non sequitur

obsequious  
sequester  
subsequent

#### Familiar Words

extracurricular  
extramural  
extraordinary  
extrasensory  
extravagant  
extravaganza

#### EXTRA <L. “on the outside”

1. **extraneous** (ěk strā'nē əs)  
*adj.* 1. Coming from outside; foreign.

To study a virus, laboratory technicians must remove all **extraneous** matter.

2. Not essential or vital.

Our history teacher said, “Keep to the subject; no **extraneous** details, please.”

2. **extraterrestrial** (ěk strē tər əs'trē əl) [*terra* <L. “earth”]  
*adj.* Outside or originating outside the limits of the earth’s atmosphere.

According to some scientists, the impact of an **extraterrestrial** object, such as a comet, caused conditions that led to the extinction of dinosaurs.



3. **extrovert** (ěks trə vûrt) Also **extravert**. [*vertere* <L. “to turn”]  
*n.* A person chiefly interested in things outside the self, directing thoughts outward rather than inward.

Some **extroverts** express their social ease with facile talk and colorful clothing.

**extroverted, adj.**

Antonym: **introvert**

**Familiar Words**

immediate  
intermediate  
medieval  
Mediterranean

**Challenge Words**

medial  
mizzen  
moiety  
mullion

**MEDIUS <L. "middle"**

4. **mediate** (mē'dē āt')  
*tr. v.* To act as negotiator between opposing sides in a dispute.

During his presidency Jimmy Carter **mediated** disagreements between Israel and Egypt.

**mediation, n.; mediator, n.**



5. **mediocrity** (mē'dē ök'rē tē)  
*n.* The condition of being commonplace or ordinary, somewhere in the middle between high and low; a very ordinary person.

Although twice elected prime minister of Great Britain, Sir Winston Churchill was considered an academic **mediocrity** as a schoolboy.

**mediocre, adj.**

6. **medium** (mē'dē əm; plural **media**: mē'dē ə)  
*n.* 1. A substance or element through which something is transmitted.

For the Watusi, an African ethnic group, cattle are wealth and therefore become a **medium** of exchange.

2. A person thought to have communication with spirits of the dead.

Despite her implied powers as a **medium**, Madam Arcati cannot control the ghost of a first wife who complicates the lives of her successor and her helpless husband in the play *Blithe Spirit*.

**NOTA BENE:** Of course, *medium* also means “a condition halfway between extremes” (*n.*): Orange is the *medium* between yellow and red; (*adj.*): We sought a house in a *medium* price range.

**Familiar Words**

consequence  
execute  
persecute  
prosecute  
pursue  
sect  
sequel  
sue  
suitor

**SEQUOR, SEQUI, SECUTUM <L. "to follow"**

7. **non sequitur** (nōn sěk'wī tōor')  
[*non sequitur* <L. “it does not follow”]  
*n.* A statement that does not follow logically from evidence.

“A person who cries must be sad” is a **non sequitur** because there are other reasons for tears than feeling sad: laughing uncontrollably and peeling onions, for example.

**Challenge Words**  
 ensue  
 inconsequential  
 sequestrate

**NOTA BENE:** A deliberate non sequitur can be a comic device, as humorist Robert Benchley illustrates:

“Is life too easy for youth of today? Are we raising a generation of pampered dawdlers? What is that on your necktie?”

8. **obsequious** (əb sē’kwē əs) [*ob* < L. “to”]  
*adj.* Excessively willing to yield to others.

The powerful Japanese military dictators known as *shōguns* expected their followers to be **obsequious**.

**obsequiously**, *adv.*; **obsequiousness**, *n.*

9. **subsequent** (sūb’sə kwənt) [*sub* < L. “under”]  
*adj.* Coming after or later.

After the volcano erupted, geologists carefully monitored **subsequent** rumblings.

**subsequently**, *adv.*

10. **sequester** (sə kwēs’tər)  
*tr. v.* 1. To go into hiding; to seek solitude.

Bears **sequester** themselves during the months of hibernation, sleeping through the winter.

2. To isolate.

Fearful of invasion during World War II, the U.S. government hastily **sequestered** American citizens of Japanese ancestry behind barbed wire in internment camps, an action now severely criticized.

**sequestered**, *adj.*; **sequestration**, *n.*

## EXERCISE 4A

Circle the letter of the best SYNONYM (the word or phrase most nearly the same as the word in bold-faced type).

1. **obsequious** admirers   a. annoying   b. bossy   c. too subservient  
     d. mimicking   e. pretentious
2. **mediation** of a conflict   a. stimulation   b. definition  
     c. observation   d. circumvention   e. solution
3. a series of **mediocre** jobs   a. low-paying   b. outstanding  
     c. central   d. undemanding   e. ordinary

Circle the letter of the best ANTONYM (the word or phrase most nearly opposite the word(s) in bold-faced type).

4. **subsequent** events   a. preceding   b. revealed   c. hidden  
     d. following   e. recurring

5. famous for **non sequiturs** a. brilliant expositions b. illogical utterances c. artful connections d. cruel impositions e. extraverted remarks
6. **extraterrestrial** visitors a. earthdwelling b. ghostly c. unwelcome d. heavenly e. perverse
7. **extraneous** bits in the cereal a. extra b. essential c. minute d. foreign e. indigestible

**EXERCISE 4B**

Circle the letter of the sentence in which the word in bold-faced type is used incorrectly.

1. a. French is the **extraneous** language that I study in school.  
b. The soprano added **extraneous** flourishes to her aria.  
c. We stretched the stew to feed **extraneous** guests.  
d. Smart mountain climbers put nothing **extraneous** in their backpacks.
2. a. Sea turtles **sequester** their eggs in sand, laboriously digging out a nest and keeping watch until the nestlings crack their shells and creep to the sea.  
b. Amish folk **sequester** themselves from influences they consider corrupting, such as automobiles and television.  
c. Crowds **sequestering** at Coney Island on hot summer days stroll along the boardwalk and swim in the Atlantic Ocean.  
d. Convents are places of **sequestration** so that women with a religious vocation can devote their energies to contemplation.
3. a. The movie *E.T.* shows the development of friendship between a human family and an **extraterrestrial** being.  
b. Although the pole quivered, it did not fall as a high jumper set a new record with an **extraterrestrial** leap of eight feet.  
c. In 1938 a radio production of Orson Welles's *War of the Worlds* sounded so real that many listeners believed an **extraterrestrial** invasion was occurring.  
d. The first woman to experience **extraterrestrial** flight, Valentina Tereshkova, described the horizon as "a light blue, a blue band."
4. a. During the Watergate investigation in the 1970s an important **medium** of information was someone known only as "Deep Throat."  
b. Many voters think the **media** should not project winners in a national election before the closing of all voting places.  
c. Some people's happy **medium** is gossip.  
d. Through the **medium** of a camera lens Marguerite Higgins caught images of war in Korea and Vietnam.

5. a. A rebellious **extrovert**, Isadora Duncan defended contemporary social conventions by dancing barefoot in gauze togas.  
b. If an **extrovert** is willing to look silly in public for comic effect, then Lucille Ball was an **extrovert**.  
c. The **extroverted** P.T. Barnum had the knack of gathering curiosities for his sideshows and delivering sales pitches that packed his circus tents with eager customers.  
d. The sign of an **extrovert** is greed, always wanting something extraneous.

### EXERCISE 4C

Fill in each blank with the most appropriate word from Lesson 4. Use a word or any of its forms only once.

1. Exploring \_\_\_\_\_ phenomena gives astronomers clues to the millions of galaxies in the universe.
2. At first considered a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in the art world, Consuelo González Amézcua has achieved distinction for her pictures drawn with colored ball-point pens on cardboard.
3. To say that she is not a sensitive person because she doesn't like dogs is to use a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Organizations like Al-Anon provide trained people to \_\_\_\_\_ in cases of family conflict.
5. The satellite serves as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ of information about weather, alerting watchers to storms and atmospheric aberrations around the globe.
6. Although the larval stage of the dragonfly may last for five years, the \_\_\_\_\_ stage as a gauzy-winged adult is brief, lasting perhaps five weeks.
7. Records of Dolley Madison's elegant gowns and large parties, when as the president's wife she was a White House hostess, strongly suggest that she was a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
8. For centuries before the discovery of treatment for leprosy, sufferers of the disease lived as social outcasts, \_\_\_\_\_ ed in remote colonies.
9. When expected to converse with a celebrity, some people become tongue-tied and \_\_\_\_\_, especially if they are taken by surprise.

## REVIEW EXERCISES FOR LESSONS 3 AND 4

**1** Circle the letter of the best answer to the following analogies.

1. *ponere : sequi* ::
  - a. to flee : to serve
  - b. to place : to follow
  - c. to burden : to follow
  - d. to place : to turn
  - e. to stretch : to carry
2. *obsequious : subservient* ::
  - a. impostor : truthful
  - b. exorbitant : excessive
  - c. mediocre : outstanding
  - d. expound : remain silent
  - e. subsequent : previous

**2** Matching: On the line at the left, write the letter of the word with the same meaning as the prefix in the left-hand column.

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| _____ 1. <i>extra</i> as in <i>extraneous</i> | A. under   |
| _____ 2. <i>sub</i> as in <i>subsequent</i>   | B. before  |
| _____ 3. <i>ex</i> as in <i>excerpt</i>       | C. from    |
| _____ 4. <i>in</i> as in <i>impose</i>        | D. with    |
| _____ 5. <i>cum</i> as in compound            | E. in      |
| _____ 6. <i>pro</i> as in <i>proponent</i>    | F. outside |

**3** Writing or Discussion Activities

1. Which of the words listed below can best be used to describe an *extrovert*? Select three that seem the most appropriate to you. Justify your choice by writing a sentence for each, giving particular details that explain what an *extrovert* might do or say.  
compound      expound      mediate  
exhilarate      proponent      impose
2. If you were to read the following headlines in the newspaper, what would each one tell you? For each headline, write a short paragraph that explains what might be happening. Be imaginative in giving colorful details. If you need a model for such a paragraph, find an example in your daily newspaper.
  - a. Subsequent Discoveries Exonerate Impostor
  - b. Proponent of Exposition Confesses Mediocrity
  - c. Extraneous Buildings Impose Exorbitant Cost