

Read the following passage, taking note of the **boldface** words and their contexts. These words are among those you will be studying in Unit 15. As you complete the exercises in this Unit, it may help to refer to the way the words are used below.

## A Brief History of Gold

### <Informational Essay>

**H**as there ever been a more precious commodity than gold? One of the rarest metals in the world, gold has been treasured, **hoarded**, sought after, and **feuded** over. It was highly prized long before the concept of exchanging money began. A ruler's wealth and power **coincided** with how much gold he had: More gold equaled more power. Even now, some view owning gold as the ultimate in financial security.

Recent scientific research suggests that gold and other metals were transported to the earth's surface by meteors billions of years ago (though there is not yet **authoritative** evidence to confirm this

theory). Gold is found in the form of dust, grains, flakes, or nuggets. Surprisingly, gold is also found in seawater. Extracting it from water is expensive. Entrepreneurs attempting to recover gold from the sea would likely go **bankrupt**.

The mining of gold began many thousands of years ago. Some of the oldest gold artifacts have been unearthed in the Varna Necropolis. This ancient burial site is near Varna, Bulgaria. It contained an astounding cache of treasures. Skilled goldsmiths of that era hammered gold into exquisite pieces, including solid-gold masks, goblets, and jewelry.

Prospectors rest by a sluice box in California during the gold rush.





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Solid gold Thracian king's mask  
from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE

The world's oldest-known geological map, the Turin papyrus map (created circa 1150 BCE or Before the Common Era), indicates where the early Egyptians excavated their gold mines. Egyptians were so enamored of gold that they believed it to be a physical manifestation of the sun and the "flesh of the gods." Their pharaohs' coffins were made out of solid gold. Because of its beauty and indestructible nature, it was valued by numerous other early civilizations, from the ancient Mediterranean civilizations of the Minoans and Etruscans to the ancient American Aztecs and Incas. Gold was also used in religious **rites**. The **legacy** of age-old folk and fairy tales from around the world is full of wishes and dreams for gold.

But how did gold change from an object of beauty and worship to a **legitimate**, official form of currency? Early on, people used the barter system to get most goods and services they needed. When **haggling** proved less than **harmonious**, people moved on to primitive forms of payment such as shells, stones, beads, and fur. This system evolved over time, and many societies switched to using pieces of gold. The pieces were marked with weight and then turned into coins. The first gold coins were minted around 640 BCE in the ancient Roman province of Lydia. The Greeks also used gold coins. Goldsmith Ephraim Brasher created the first United States gold coin in 1784.

Man's greed for gold inspired European explorations and violent conquests in Central and South America. **Despots** and tyrants on all sides had "gold fever," **clamoring** loudly for more and more riches. Fortunes were quickly made, and even more quickly lost.

The discovery of gold around the world led to gold rushes, including the famous California gold rush of the 1840s. The wild outpost of Sutter's Mill attracted more than 40,000 **hardy** prospectors. Few found the mother lode. Those who did were **indisposed** to share it. Many failed prospectors returned home **cynical**, sadder, and wiser, no doubt appreciating the saying, "Better an ounce of happiness than a pound of gold."

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## Definitions

Note the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the appropriate form of the word in the blank spaces in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms.

### 1. authoritative (ə thā' ə tā tiv)

(adj.) official, coming from a source that calls for obedience or belief; dictatorial

A dictionary is an \_\_\_\_\_ source for the spelling, pronunciation, and definition of words in a language.

SYNONYMS: reliable, authoritarian; ANTONYMS: unofficial, unreliable

### 2. bankrupt (bank' rəpt)

(adj.) in a state of financial ruin; (v.) to ruin financially; (n.) one who has been ruined financially

The \_\_\_\_\_ company was closing its doors for the last time.

Another bad sales year will \_\_\_\_\_ the failing firm.

A \_\_\_\_\_ will have trouble getting credit.

SYNONYMS: (adj.) flat broke, insolvent

ANTONYMS: (adj.) financially sound, solvent

### 3. clamor (klam' ə)

(n.) a public outcry; any loud and continued noise; (v.) to call for by loud, continued outcries

The coal miners began to \_\_\_\_\_ for better working conditions in the mine.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the trumpets was piercing.

SYNONYMS: (n.) uproar, din, racket; (v.) cry out for

### 4. coincide (kō in sīd')

(v.) to be in full agreement; to be the same in nature, character, or function; to happen at the same time

Our political beliefs would \_\_\_\_\_ with theirs on the issues of term limits and tax reform.

SYNONYMS: concur, match

### 5. cynical (sin' ə kəl)

(adj.) inclined to believe the worst of people; bitterly mocking or sneering

The radio personality's \_\_\_\_\_ attitude made it difficult for the station manager to find advertisers.

SYNONYMS: skeptical, sarcastic, contemptuous

ANTONYMS: hopeful, optimistic

### 6. despot (des' pət)

(n.) a ruler who oppresses his or her subjects, a tyrant

That film director is known for acting like a \_\_\_\_\_ on the movie set.

SYNONYMS: dictator, autocrat, strongman

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**7. feud**  
(fyüd)

(*n.*) a bitter, long-term quarrel; (*v.*) to fight or quarrel with  
A senseless \_\_\_\_\_ caused the division  
between the two clans.

What originally caused the clans to \_\_\_\_\_  
has long been forgotten.

SYNONYMS: (*n.*) grudge, vendettaANTONYMS: (*n.*) pact, agreement, harmony, concord

**8. haggle**  
(hag' əl)

(*v.*) to argue in a petty way, especially about a price  
Let's not \_\_\_\_\_ over the price of  
admission until we finish writing the play!

SYNONYMS: bargain with, wrangle

**9. hardy**  
(här' də)

(*adj.*) able to bear up under difficult conditions or harsh  
treatment; brave and tough

The saguaro is a \_\_\_\_\_ variety of the  
cactus family.

SYNONYMS: rugged, sturdy, resolute, stalwart

ANTONYMS: feeble, weak

**10. harmonious**  
(här mö' nə əs)

(*adj.*) able to get along together well; combining different  
elements that blend pleasingly; melodious

The two companies' negotiations were  
\_\_\_\_\_ and resulted in a merger.

SYNONYMS: agreeable, compatible, tuneful

ANTONYMS: harsh, grating, discordant

**11. hoard**  
(hôrd)

(*v.*) to store up, save; (*n.*) a hidden store or supply

Where did the miser keep his \_\_\_\_\_  
of money?

SYNONYMS: (*v.*) amass, reserve, cacheANTONYMS: (*v.*) waste, throw away, squander

**12. indisposed**  
(in dis pōzd')

(*adj., part.*) slightly ill; disinclined to do something

My sister was \_\_\_\_\_ with a bad head cold.

SYNONYMS: (*adj.*) unwell, reluctantANTONYMS: (*adj.*) healthy, willing, eager

**13. legacy**  
(leg' ə sē)

(*n.*) an inheritance; something handed down from an ancestor  
or from the past

The \_\_\_\_\_ from her grandmother made  
her a wealthy woman.

SYNONYMS: bequest, heritage



**14. legitimate**  
(lə jīt' ə mət)

(*adj.*) lawful, rightful; reasonable, justifiable

There is a new committee that rules on whether complaints are \_\_\_\_\_.

SYNONYMS: legal, right, proper, genuine

ANTONYMS: unlawful, illegal, improper, unauthorized

**15. mirth**  
(mərth)

(*n.*) merry fun, gaiety; laughter

The children were filled with \_\_\_\_\_ as they exited the Fun House.

SYNONYMS: merriment, glee

ANTONYMS: gloom, sorrow

**16. officiate**  
(ə fish' ē āt)

(*v.*) to perform the duties of an office; to conduct a religious ceremony; to referee

Will a judge \_\_\_\_\_ at the ceremony?

SYNONYMS: chair, emcee, moderate

**17. partial**  
(pār' shəl)

(*adj.*) not complete; favoring one side over another; showing a strong liking for someone or something

To say that she is \_\_\_\_\_ to sweets would be an understatement.

SYNONYMS: biased, prejudiced, fond of

ANTONYMS: complete, fair, just, unbiased

**18. patronize**  
(pa' trə nīz)

(*v.*) to give one's business to regularly as a customer; to support, provide financial help; to treat someone as an inferior while making a show of being kind or gracious

We like to \_\_\_\_\_ the family-owned stores in the neighborhood.

SYNONYMS: do business with, deal with, trade with

ANTONYMS: boycott, refuse to deal with

**19. rite**  
(rīt)

(*n.*) a ceremony; the customary form of a ceremony; any formal custom or practice

A minister will perform the marriage \_\_\_\_\_.

SYNONYMS: observance, liturgy

**20. sagacious**  
(sə gā' shəs)

(*adj.*) shrewd; wise in a keen, practical way

History has shown that \_\_\_\_\_ leaders exercise tolerance and fairness, along with good judgment.

SYNONYMS: smart, astute

ANTONYMS: silly, ill-advised, dopey

## Vocabulary in Context

### Literary Text

The following excerpts are from *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Some of the words you have studied in this Unit appear in **boldface** type. Complete each statement below the excerpt by circling the letter of the correct answer.

1. Some, too, have baffled his analytical skill, and would be, as narratives, beginnings without an ending, while others have been but **partially** cleared up, and have their explanations founded rather upon conjecture and surmise than on that absolute logical proof which was so dear to him. ("The Five Orange Pips")

If something is **partially** resolved, it is done

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. openly       | c. rationally |
| b. incompletely | d. cautiously |

2. He rushes to some secret **hoard**, where he has accumulated the fruits of his beggary, and he stuffs all the coins upon which he can lay his hands into the pockets to make sure of the coat's sinking. ("The Man with the Twisted Lip")

A **hoard** is a

- |           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| a. friend | c. stockpile |
| b. cellar | d. dwelling  |

3. His plans were suddenly brought to a head by his knowledge that Sir Charles was about to leave the Hall on the advice of Dr. Mortimer, with whose opinion he himself pretended to **coincide**.  
(*The Hound of the Baskervilles*)

To **coincide** with others is to

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. challenge them | c. be fond of them |
| b. avoid them     | d. agree with them |

4. "I hope," said Dr. Mortimer, "that you do not look with suspicious eyes upon everyone who received a **legacy** from Sir Charles, for I also had a thousand pounds left to me." (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*)

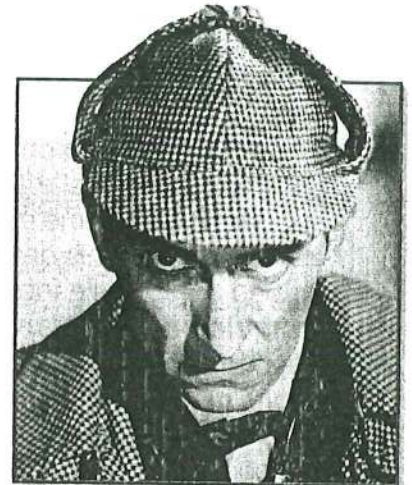
A **legacy** is a(n)

- |                |               |
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| a. misgiving   | c. invitation |
| b. inheritance | d. souvenir   |

5. "I have cross-examined these men . . . who all tell the same story of this dreadful apparition . . . I assure you that there is a reign of terror in the district, and that it is a **hardy** man who will cross the moor at night." (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*)

Someone who is **hardy** is definitely NOT

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| a. frail    | c. courageous |
| b. pleasant | d. stubborn   |



In the 1959 film adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Peter Cushing plays Sherlock Holmes.

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