

People's ideas of what is usual and what is unusual change with time. For example, potatoes, tomatoes, and turkeys are now common in many countries. Before the first voyage of Columbus, however, they were unknown to almost everyone except the people of the Americas. Columbus himself is an example of the way in which an action once thought strange can become accepted as familiar. When he first sailed west toward the Orient, many thought Columbus was crazy, but soon other explorers were sailing in the same direction. Ideas, then, do change.

Perhaps because of such changes, we often use words that express degrees and kinds of usualness and unusualness. There are many. As you study the ten words in this lesson, ask yourself in which group—the usual or the unusual—each one belongs.

WORD LIST

absurd
 authentic
 bizarre
 exception
 exotic
 habitual
 norm
 novel
 superlative
 universal

DEFINITIONS

After you have studied the definitions and example for each vocabulary word, write the word on the line to the right.

1. **absurd** (əb-sûrd') *adjective* Against common sense or reason; ridiculous; extremely silly.

Related Words *absurdity noun; absurdly adverb*

Example Claims like "Dill's Pills Cure All Ills" are *absurd*.

1. _____

2. **authentic** (ô-thên'tîk) *adjective* a. Genuine; not counterfeit or copied: *an authentic antique.* b. True; worthy of being believed; reliable: *an authentic story.*

Related Words *authentically adverb; authenticate verb; authenticity noun*

Example When you apply for a checking account, you will be asked to fill out a card showing your *authentic* signature.

2. _____

3. **bizarre** (bî-zâr') *adjective* Very unusual in manner, style, or appearance; strange; odd: *bizarre behavior.*

Related Words *bizarrely adverb; bizarreness noun*

Example Some of the *bizarre* details in early science-fiction stories have become realities; the laser beam is one example.

3. _____

USAGE NOTE: Do not confuse *bizarre* with *bazaar*, an open market.

4. **exception** (ik-sĕp'shən) *noun* Something that differs from what is standard or the rule: *to make an exception.*

Related Words *except preposition; except verb; exceptional adjective; exceptionally adverb*

Example Buses leave hourly, with the *exception* of Sundays and holidays.

4. _____

5. **exotic** (ig-zōt'ik) *adjective* Unusual or different because of being from another place; foreign; intriguing: *exotic customs*. 5. _____
- Related Word** *exotically adverb*
Example Known to the British as the Princess Pocahontas, Mrs. John Rolfe was considered *exotic* by the court of King James I.
6. **habitual** (hə-bīch' ōō-əl) *adjective* a. Done by habit; done regularly: *a habitual complainer*. b. Established by long use; customary: *her habitual chair*. 6. _____
- Related Words** *habit noun; habitually adverb*
Example Most people agree that *habitual* exercise promotes good health.
7. **norm** (nōrm) *noun* a. A pattern, standard, or model that is typical for a specific group: *In casual clothing, jeans are the norm*. b. In mathematics, an average. 7. _____
- Related Words** *normal adjective; normally adverb*
Example The *norm* for letter delivery in the continental United States is three days.
8. **novel** (nōv'əl) *adjective* Strikingly new, unusual, or different. *noun* A long work of fiction. 8. _____
- Related Word** *novelty noun*
Example At the turn of this century, many people laughed at the *novel* idea of a horseless carriage.
9. **superlative** (sōō-pūr'lə-tīv) *adjective* Superior to all others; best; unequalled. *noun* In grammar, the form of an adverb or adjective that indicates the greatest quantity: *Most brightly and brightest are superlatives*. 9. _____
- Related Word** *superlatively adverb*
Example The *Guinness Book of World Records* is filled with examples of *superlative* performances and strange events.
10. **universal** (yōō' nə-vūr'səl) *adjective* Common to all persons, places, or things; worldwide; general. 10. _____
- Related Words** *universally adverb; universe noun*
Example The need to be loved is *universal*.

EXERCISE 2 USING WORDS CORRECTLY

Each of the following statements contains an italicized vocabulary word. Decide whether the sentence is true or false, and write *True* or *False* on the answer line.

1. A *novel* idea is one that is borrowed from ancient books. 1. _____
2. When you call something "the real thing," it is *authentic*. 2. _____
3. Backyard weeds are *exotic* plants. 3. _____
4. It is *absurd* to think that our moon is green cheese. 4. _____
5. A rosebush with red flowers is a *bizarre* sight. 5. _____
6. Anyone who takes care of a building does *superlative* work. 6. _____
7. A smile is a nearly *universal* way of expressing pleasure. 7. _____
8. A height of about six feet is the *norm* for an American woman. 8. _____
9. An example of *habitual* behavior is always putting the same shoe on first. 9. _____
10. The word *sieve* is an *exception* to the "i before e" spelling rule. 10. _____

EXERCISE 4 USING DIFFERENT FORMS OF WORDS

Decide which form of the vocabulary word in parentheses best completes the sentence. The form given may be correct. Write your answer on the answer line.

1. He is a _____ admired athlete. (*universal*) 1. _____
2. In the nineteenth century, female doctors were a _____. (*novel*) 2. _____
3. Don't let eating junk food become a _____. (*habitual*) 3. _____
4. The prize-winning hat was _____ decorated. (*bizarre*) 4. _____
5. The lawyer was asked to _____ Mr. Todd's will. (*authentic*) 5. _____
6. "These paintings are _____, not art!" sneered the critic. (*absurd*) 6. _____
7. Ms. Jones, who was _____ qualified, got the job. (*superlative*) 7. _____
8. Is snow in October the _____ for your area of the country? (*norm*) 8. _____
9. The platypus and the spiny anteater are _____ mammals. (*exception*) 9. _____
10. On the island we ate many _____ prepared seafood dishes. (*exotic*) 10. _____

