

UNIT EIGHT

INSUL

Latin INSULA, "island"

III A peninsula (*paene*, "almost," + *insula*) is a piece of land that extends into water, but is not completely surrounded by water like an island is.

INSULAR (in' sə lər) *adj.* Limited in knowledge or perspective
Cal's *insular* ideas about politics came from his sheltered upbringing and lack of travel outside his hometown.

syn: restricted *ant:* broad-minded

INSULATE (in' sə lāt) *v.* To protect from outside influence
The mayor believed that his status in the community would *insulate* him against the negative attention other politicians had been given.

IDIO

Greek IDIOS, "single, peculiar, personal"

IDIOSYNCRASY (id ē ō sin' krə sē) *n.* A peculiar quality; a quirk
G. *idios* + *syn*, "together," + *krasis*, "mixture" = *one's personal mixture (of habits)*
The general's only *idiosyncrasy* was his insistence that all his soldiers wear blue uniforms.

syn: habit

IDIOM (id' ē əm) *n.* Speech or phrase specific to a particular language or group of people

Because I was unfamiliar with the *idiom* that my Spanish visitor used, I could not follow the rest of what he said.

syn: dialect

NUM

Latin NUMERARE, NUMERATUM, "to count"

ENUMERATE (ē nōōm' ər āt) *v.* To list separately; to count off
Latin *e*, "out," + *numeratum* = *count out*

Joanna was asked by her doctor to *enumerate* the symptoms that had been bothering her.

syn: tally; itemize

INNUMERABLE (i nōōm' ər ə bəl) *adj.* So plentiful as to be uncountable
L. *in*, "not," + *numeratum* = *not able to be counted*

When viewing the *innumerable* stars that dot the midnight sky, I find it impossible not to wonder how big the universe really is.

syn: countless *ant:* few

PLUS, PLUR

Latin PLUS, PLURIS, "many"

NONPLUSSED (non plust') *adj.* Baffled; confusedL. non, "no," + plus, "more" = *no more*The Vice Principal, looking *nonplussed*, asked why there were no students in any of the classrooms.*syn:* dumbfounded *ant:* clear**SURPLUS** (sûr' plus) *n.* Amount beyond what is necessaryL. super, "over," + plus = *over many*Zoe was able to get cantaloupe at a good price because the store had a huge *surplus* of melons.*syn:* excess *ant:* shortage**PLURALITY** (plōō ral' ə tē) *n.* Greater part; majorityNoting that a candidate needed a *plurality* of votes to win the election, the announcer prepared to read the results.*ant:* minority**SING**

Latin SINGULUS, "single"

SINGLE (sing' əl) *v.* To isolate; to chooseDonna did not want to be *singled* out by the harsh critic for her performance in the play.*syn:* screen**SINGULAR** (sing' yə lər) *adj.* Separated from others; uniqueBo was known around town for his rather *singular* habit of walking to school on his hands.*syn:* rare; exceptional *ant:* usual; ordinary

The SINGER'S SINGULAR voice was like nothing we had ever heard.

III Someone who is nonplussed is so confused that he or she literally can think of nothing more to say or do.

EXERCISES - UNIT EIGHT

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

1. When the sailors saw *innumerable* seabirds on the horizon, they knew that...
2. Gary felt that his gift for acting was not *singular*, but rather...
3. Though she tried to *insulate* her children against rudeness and cruelty, Mrs. Hunter knew that...
4. At first, Earl seemed *nonplussed* by the streamers and balloons, but he soon...
5. The store's vast *surplus* of bananas was brought about by...
6. Many *idiosyncrasies* of the famous actor were revealed when he...
7. Doris searched for the perfect *idiom* to...
8. Because a *plurality* of citizens voted to reduce noise pollution...
9. When Don *enumerated* the many difficulties we would face in the mountains, we...
10. Every day, the school nurse would *single* out a child who had...
11. Laura found the little college town a rather *insular* environment because...

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

insular innumerable idiom single

1. When Joyce used a(n) _____ unfamiliar to her listeners, she was forced to stop and explain.
2. Our manager did not _____ just one of us out for criticism; he expressed displeasure with the whole department.
3. Due to his rather _____ upbringing, John had tasted few foods besides those cooked by his family.

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

idiosyncrasy surplus insulate innumerable singular

4. Jeremy often tried to _____ his nervous coworker from the chaos raging in the office.
5. One _____ of Rebecca's was her tendency to nap standing up.
6. Ana's _____ knack for remembering phone numbers led the rest of us to seek her help many times.
7. Though _____ spectators used to crowd Times Square on New Year's Eve, this year it was unusually empty.

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

surplus plurality nonplussed enumerated singular

8. A(n) _____ of wheat on the international market was the result of an excellent growing season.
9. Mr. Hooper was amazed when a(n) _____ of his students chose to skip recess for a science presentation.
10. My teacher _____ at least ten reasons why she refused to pass me for the year.
11. Olivia confessed that she was _____ by my sudden change of mood.

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

1. Members of the small, _____ community were _____ when they discovered that a huge city would soon be built on the borders of their town.
 - A. innumerable; insular
 - B. singular; innumerable
 - C. insular; nonplussed
 - D. innumerable; nonplussed
2. While some consider Fred's ability to calculate huge sums in his head a(n) _____ talent, others think that it is an irritating _____.
 - A. singular; idiosyncrasy
 - B. innumerable; surplus
 - C. insular; idiom
 - D. nonplussed; plurality
3. The employee did not _____ out anyone as the main cause of his resignation, but he did _____ reasons why he found the workplace unpleasant.
 - A. insulate; single
 - B. single; enumerate
 - C. enumerate; insulate
 - D. single; insulate

4. A(n) _____ of bananas in the storehouse on Monday can mean _____ flies and other pests on Tuesday.
- idiosyncrasy; insular
 - idiom; singular
 - plurality; nonplussed
 - surplus; innumerable
5. Even if a(n) _____ of parents were very careful about what their children watch on television, it is unlikely that the kids would be _____ from all of its negative material.
- plurality; insulated
 - idiom; singled
 - idiosyncrasy; enumerated
 - surplus; enumerated

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

- Freddy often *singled* out his favorite friend in order to...
- Al attempted to *enumerate* the many uses of a comma, but he...
- Eddie was *nonplussed* after she fell clumsily, so her friends...

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.

Who is your favorite professional athlete? Can you imagine him or her spying on enemy countries or fighting in a war? Can you imagine your favorite star sneaking out at night, getting information about enemy positions and weapons, and then sneaking back into the team hotel?

This sounds like the plot for a movie, but it isn't—it is the real-life story of Moe Berg. He started life as the child of poor Russian immigrants, and ended up with the offer of a Medal of Freedom from the United States government, following a fourteen-year major league baseball career that involved some unusual adventures.

Despite his poor beginnings, Berg soon rose beyond the expectations of most of his social class. He excelled in baseball; his high school team won eighteen consecutive games during his senior year, and he was admitted to Princeton University, where he began the study of seven languages. After graduating, he continued both baseball and academics; he made the Brooklyn Robins (later the Dodgers) as a backup catcher in 1923, and, during the off-season, he continued studying languages in Paris and at New York City's Columbia University. His solitary lifestyle, however, combined with his habit of appearing, disappearing, and staying in isolation, made him few friends.

Moe Berg began attracting the interest of agencies outside baseball. In 1934, an American all-star team was selected to tour Japan. Alongside such great hitters as Babe

Ruth, Lou Gehrig, and Jimmie Foxx, Berg was chosen to make the trip. Because he knew a great deal about Japanese language and culture, Berg was a favorite of the Japanese public and press. However, he had a _____ (SING) purpose, different from the other ballplayers: he filmed the military installations, shipyards, and industrial plants in Tokyo from the top of a hospital during the team's stay. These films were eventually used when the United States planned its raids on mainland Japan near the end of World War II.

Berg left baseball in 1937 and joined the Office of Strategic Services, which later became the CIA. During World War II, he performed _____ (NUM) missions as a spy. The most dramatic came in December, 1944, when he attended a lecture given by Germany's premier nuclear physicist to find out the status of Germany's atomic weapons program. If enough progress had been made to pose a threat to the United States, Berg was to shoot the scientist and then swallow a cyanide tablet. Fortunately for the United States and for Berg, Germany was not close to creating even a single nuclear weapon, and Berg returned to his hotel.

In our own time, it may be hard to imagine a professional athlete having such diversity of talent and knowledge, but such a combination was found in Moe Berg.

1. The writing style of this essay could best be described as
 - A. persuasive
 - B. descriptive
 - C. argumentative
 - D. informative

2. With which of the following statements would the author most likely agree?
 - A. Most professional athletes would not be able to handle the challenges of being a spy.
 - B. Moe Berg contributed significantly to the Allied victory in World War I.
 - C. If Moe Berg had spent more time studying languages, he would have been more helpful as a spy.
 - D. Princeton University normally did not accept poor students.

3. Which inference is supported by this essay?
 - A. Pitchers generally require a lot of development to be successful spies.
 - B. Defense requires more thought than offense in baseball.
 - C. Catchers need to be able to hit very well to make a team.
 - D. The United States suspected Japan's motives well before the War.

4. What would be the best title for this essay?
 - A. Why the United States Won World War II
 - B. A History of Spies in Sports
 - C. Moe Berg
 - D. A Catcher's Spy Secrets

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 *super* means "above."

Although Conni was only a *supernumerary*, she was excited by her first role in a real Broadway play. She was in a group of extras who the director told to stroll around the "picnic grounds" of the opening scene. When the lead actor entered, however, Conni strolled towards him and bowed as she passed. She hoped that this one scene would hint that she is an actress of *pluralistic* talent. Given the opportunity, she could play a variety of different roles.