

Unit 11 - Two Bad Cousins

11A Introduction

These two comical cousins have a love/hate relationship. They're close, but they're also competitive. Each one has a distinct personality: Lulu is quiet, and Lee is over the top. Most of the time, they get along just fine.

11B Song Lyrics

My cousin Lee has a temper, he's **irascible**,
On the court, I'm like, "Yo! Pass the ball."
Aww naww, he's a ball hog,
So I launched a verbal attack, an **onslaught**.
"At some point, **eventually**, Lee,
You're going to need the rest of the team."
He didn't think much of me, **disdained** me,
He said, "Yo, girl, quit acting like a baby."

That's an **excerpt** from what he said to me,
He said more words that I won't repeat.
I t-t-t-t-ried to stay **indifferent**,
And act like I didn't care a little.
I told him I was **adept** for real,
I could hit threes, and I had real skills.
He didn't believe me, so I snatched the ball,
And dunked over him like an astronaut.

*We're experts in the field, like connoisseurs.
Lee, only eats meat like a carnivore.
Lulu, let's clarify and clear it up,
We're just two bad cousins who will never stop.*

My cousin Lulu wears a tall hat,
She has sneakers, thinks she's all that.
She'll believe any story,
I told her the word **gullible** wasn't even in the dictionary.
Oh, OK, that was a lie,
It was a test to see if she was **sage** and wise.
Lee is my **pseudonym**, my nickname,
My real name's Levar, I have a big chain.

My only problem is that my armpits
Smell like onions, they're so **pungent**.
I use gel in my hair to keep it **sleek** and smooth,
And I know the secret to life, it's simple, dude.
Just **renounce** vegetables, give 'em up,
I get the vitamins that I need from my Corn Pops.
Oh, that advice was not **profound**,
Like the kiddie pool, you see? Not too deep...

Hook



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11C Words Defined

adept / clarify / connoisseur / disdain / excerpt / gullible / indifferent / irascible / onslaught / profound / pseudonym / pungent / renounce / sage / sleek

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

1. **adept**  (adj) very skilled; expert

The juggler was so *adept* he actually juggled three chainsaws.

2. **clarify**  (verb) to make clear or understandable

The senator asked the witness to *clarify* his earlier statement.

Synonyms: simplify, refine

Antonyms: confuse, complicate

Other forms: A *clarification* (noun) is what is given to you when you ask someone to *clarify* something.

3. **connoisseur**  (noun) an expert in a specific field, such as art or food

My best friend was a *connoisseur* of Impressionistic art; he collected it.

Antonyms: amateur, novice

4. **disdain**  (verb) to look down upon or hate

My PE teacher *disdained* lazy students and thought they weren't worth his time.

Synonyms: to hate, feel contempt for

Other forms: *Disdain* can also be a noun, as in: The proud poodle owner felt nothing but *disdain* for those owners who let their dogs get covered in mud.

5. **excerpt**  (noun) a passage or selection from a book, film, song or the like

The author chose to read an *excerpt* from his best-selling novel, *Torture Chamber*.

6. **gullible**  (adj) easily tricked or deceived

Nina was so *gullible* that she believed the roller coaster's loop was an illusion.

Synonyms: trusting, naive

Antonyms: suspicious, skeptical, wary

7. **indifferent**  (adj) having no particular interest one way or the other

When it comes to my pain, she is totally *indifferent* and that increases the pain.

Antonyms: caring

Other forms: Kendra expressed her *indifference* (noun) to the musical by leaving halfway through.

8. **irascible**  (adj) very irritable or easily angered

Most of the *irascible* old men at the rest home upset their nurses on a daily basis.

Synonyms: testy, cranky

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9. onslaught (noun) a violent attack or a huge outpouring

There was an *onslaught* of mosquitoes during the barbecue, so we had to move the party indoors.

10. profound (adj) deep

The teacher was surprised to find that the class clown was such a *profound* thinker.

Antonyms: shallow

11. pseudonym (noun) a fake or alternate name

The author wanted to see if people liked his writing or him, so he wrote several books using a *pseudonym* to test that theory.

Synonyms: alias, false name, nickname

12. pungent (adj) sharp and powerful, usually smell or taste

Diane's remarks about Steve being a liar were as *pungent* as stinky cheese.

Antonyms: bland, mild

13. renounce (verb) to give up voluntarily

Sam told his father he hated him so much that he would *renounce* his inheritance of \$200,000.

Synonyms: abandon

14. sage (adj) wise

Dave was known for his *sage* advice regarding the stock market.

Other forms: Sage is also a noun meaning "a wise person," as in: The *sage* warned that chaos would prevail unless the community started to work together.

15. sleek (adj) smooth, slick, shiny

Devin pulled up in a *sleek* new Corvette to pick up his prom date.

Antonyms: dull, rough

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11D Fix the Mistake

adept / clarify / connoisseur / disdain / excerpt / gullible / indifferent / irascible / onslaught / profound / pseudonym / pungent / renounce / sage / sleek

Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.

1. Dee is such a(n) **indifferent** soccer player that, although he's still a kid, he plays on an adult team.

2. Deidre had to **renounce** the multistep directions for the art project so there would be no mistakes.

3. He was such a(n) **pseudonym** of food and wine that it was scary to cook dinner for him.

4. The bookie gave us **sleek** advice on which horses to bet on at the racetrack, and we won.

5. The **profound** smell of vinegar filled the kitchen as we dyed Easter eggs.

6. A(n) **excerpt** of moviegoers stormed the theater as the doors opened.

7. The **gullible** old lady was upset that someone had moved her cane from its normal resting place.

8. Big Kim had nothing but **connoisseur** for campers who killed spiders instead of releasing them back outside.

9. Harriet was so **adept** that she believed our story that Bigfoot had been captured and was on display at the local zoo.

10. Once accepted into the witness protection program, I had to assume a(n) **disdain**, so I chose Oprah Springer.

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11. His **irascible** new haircut made him look like Elvis.

12. Once he didn't believe in the politician anymore, he **clarified** her publicly every chance he got.

13. For a first grader, he had some very **pungent** thoughts about life after death.

14. We were given only a short **onslaught** of the entire book to read, so I was left hanging as to how it ended.

15. Everybody seemed to have very strong feelings on whether to impeach the President or not, but I just felt **sage** about the whole thing.

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11E Pick the Winner

adept / clarify / connoisseur / disdain / excerpt / gullible / indifferent / irascible / onslaught / profound / pseudonym / pungent / renounce / sage / sleek

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

1. There was a **(pungent OR profound)** smell coming out of the science lab where they were dissecting frogs.

2. Our English teacher had us all write one essay during the year under a **(connoisseur OR pseudonym)** to prove to us that it was our writing we were getting graded on as opposed to who we were.

3. Mimi was very **(gullible OR adept)** at fixing computers or anything to do with technology.

4. Our former class treasurer had to **(renounce OR clarify)** his post, and I was able to replace him.

5. I was shocked to see the rich women treat the homeless people with such **(disdain OR excerpt)** when they passed them on the streets.

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11F Draw the Relationships

adept / clarify / connoisseur / disdain / excerpt / gullible / indifferent / irascible / onslaught / profound / pseudonym / pungent / renounce / sage / sleek

In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.

1

adept	confuse	clarify	disdain
hatred			skilled
	amateur	connoisseur	

.....

2

excerpt	kind	indifferent	a selection
gullible			skeptical
	interested	irascible	

.....

3

onslaught	shallow	profound	pungent
attack			bland
	nickname	pseudonym	

.....

4

renounce	keep	dull	clarify
sage			smart
	simplify	sleek	

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11G Understanding What You Read

adept / clarify / connoisseur / disdain / excerpt / gullible / indifferent / irascible / onslaught / profound / pseudonym / pungent / renounce / sage / sleek

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

James lined up at the starting line, thinking that he would easily win. “I’m more adept at running than anyone here,” he thought. “There’s no reason on earth why I shouldn’t win.”

Harlan lined up next. James saw him coming and groaned, wishing he could use a pseudonym and a disguise and not have to be next to him. Harlan was the perfect, popular kid who James had never liked. James thought he was always spouting off his profound opinions in class, like he was the smartest person to ever show up in a classroom. He was popular too, and disdained everyone who didn’t run with his circle of friends.

Harlan nodded at James. James nodded back at him and put his eyes forward. He focused on the finish line one hundred yards down the track. Harlan looked over at James and smiled, then he scrunched up his face like he’d just smelled something particularly pungent. “I just thought I should clarify the instructions for you,” Harlan said. “They fire the gun, and then I run you off the track.”

“Keep talking,” James said. “And when we start running, you can tell me whether I have anything stuck to the back of my shirt.” The official called out, “Marks!” The two boys crouched down into their starting positions. The pistol fired and they took off. James imagined himself as a sleek, silvery bullet. He looked beside him and saw Harlan one step behind him.

The finish line was coming up quickly, when it all happened in an instant. James felt something snap at his foot. Harlan was trying to trip him! James took two large steps only to see Harlan fall on the ground, holding his ankle.

James felt strangely indifferent about Harlan’s trouble. He crossed the finish line as an onslaught of classmates swarmed him. “See you next fall, Harlan,” he whispered to himself.

1. Harlan’s character can best be described as

- (A) indifferent
- (B) big
- (C) boring
- (D) mean

2. When James wishes he had a “pseudonym,” he is wishing that

- (A) he was a mean bully so he could beat up Harlan
- (B) he had practiced running more
- (C) he had a fake name
- (D) he had taken karate lessons

3. According to the text, Harlan

- (A) fears other people
- (B) wishes others would leave him alone
- (C) is the best runner at school
- (D) sees others as inferior to him

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4. James mentions “something on the back of my shirt” in order to

- (A) get Harlan to take whatever it is off, so James can run faster
- (B) tease Harlan
- (C) make Harlan think he has a jet pack
- (D) show Harlan that he has a better number on his shirt

5. According to the text, at the end of the story, what is James’s reaction to Harlan’s fall?

- (A) He is extraordinarily happy.
- (B) He doesn’t care.
- (C) He hopes a doctor is nearby.
- (D) He wishes it was autumn already.

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11H Thinking Creatively

adept / clarify / connoisseur / disdain / excerpt / gullible / indifferent / irascible / onslaught / profound / pseudonym / pungent / renounce / sage / sleek

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. Why is it not advised that a voter feel **indifferent** about voting at election time?

2. Write a creative book title for a story about three **irascible** goblins who journey to New York City.

3. Rewrite this sentence using synonyms: He **disdained gullible** kids.

4. What's scarier: an **onslaught** of bees or the extinction of bees (and the death of most fruits)?

5. Finish this sentence: That car is so **sleek** you could...

Word Breakdown

Other than meaning “wise” or “a wise person,” *sage* is also a type of herb in the mint family. Interestingly, the two *sages* come from different roots. The *sage* that means wise comes from the Latin *sapere*, “to have good taste.” Apparently you are wise if you have good taste. Originally, the word was used to refer to the “Seven Sages” – seven dudes in ancient Greece who people visited for advice.

The herb *sage* comes from the Latin *salvus*, which means “healthy.” Apparently, in old England, people used to use sage to keep their teeth clean and to relieve sore gums. The rapper Sage Francis probably chose his pseudonym after the “wise man” meaning of the word. “Parsley Francis” just doesn't have the same ring to it.