The general words in this chapter and in the other chapters in this section can be called high-frequency words. That means that they occur more often than other words in written English. Many high-frequency words have multiple meanings. For example, in this chapter, you will study the word components. Although any definition of the word includes the notion of parts, it can be used in very different contexts. It may refer to word parts, parts of a stereo system, or the ingredients in a recipe. As a result, you may come across this word in a variety of different types of writing. Of course, the words with the highest frequencies, like a, the, is, he, etc., are so common that everyone knows and uses them. They have not been included. It would be foolish to study the meanings of words you already know when there are so many other interesting and useful words you could be learning.
Social Programs in the United States

People who have grown up in the United States often have very strong opinions about government social programs. Their (1) interpretation of the value of such programs often corresponds to the (2) generation they belong to. For example, individuals approaching retirement usually feel (3) entitled to Social Security checks since they have been paying into the system for many years. A group of senior citizens will also show great emotional (4) intensity about proposed cuts in their Medicare health benefits. On the other hand, young mothers may believe a Head Start program for their children is more (5) vital than the programs that serve the elderly. Yet another opinion may be held by a young professional who sees his (6) wage earnings decreased by taxes to provide for the (7) welfare of others. One disgruntled accountant analyzed the (8) conventional pay stubs and income tax returns of 10 of his clients. When he divided the deductions into (9) components that benefited the wage-earner directly and those that primarily benefited others, his findings confirmed what he believed. For this particular group of employees, for every (10) minute the worker earned money for himself, he worked several minutes for the benefit of others. Those who preach the doctrine of social responsibility hold that every member of a society benefits from programs that improve the quality of life for its less fortunate members.

Exercise 1: Define

Write your definition for each word as it is used in the passage.

1. interpretation _______________________________________________
2. generation _______________________________________________
3. entitled _______________________________________________
4. intensity _______________________________________________
5. vital _______________________________________________
6. wage _______________________________________________
7. welfare _______________________________________________
8. conventional _______________________________________________
9. components ____________________________________________
10. minute _______________________________________________

**Exercise 2: Match**

Match the terms in Column A with their definitions in Column B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. entitled</td>
<td>a. view; outlook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. intensity</td>
<td>b. period of 60 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. vital</td>
<td>c. parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. wage</td>
<td>d. established; approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. components</td>
<td>e. essential; important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. interpretation</td>
<td>f. deserving by right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. generation</td>
<td>g. earnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. minute</td>
<td>h. strength or power, especially of feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. welfare</td>
<td>i. a group of individuals born at about the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. conventional</td>
<td>j. aid, as in money, clothing, etc., to those in need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 3: Fill In**

Fill in the letter of the word that best completes each sentence.

1. The emergency medical technician checked for the accident victim’s __________ signs as soon as he was removed from the car.

2. Henri’s great-grandmother was the only representative of her __________ at the family reunion.
3. Economists use the ________ and price index as one of their measures when they analyze the health of the economy.

4. Elaine’s ________ of her new neighbor’s behavior was that she was unfriendly, but Bill thought she was probably shy.

5. Not one ________ longer could Jamie gaze at the chocolate cream pie without cutting into it.

6. Even after he left home, found a job, and rented an apartment, Omar felt ________ to have his mother do his laundry.

7. The salesclerk in the music store urged Chuck to try out various ________ until he assembled the stereo system with the best sound.

8. Sonya’s wedding took place in a field with barefoot guests, but her sister Ann’s marriage ceremony was more ________.

9. The angry politician charged that the ________ program had made people lazy and was responsible for most of the country’s ills.

10. Alicia delivered her lines in the play with such ________ that she felt exhausted after every performance.

**WORD LIST**

The following list gives dictionary-type definitions of the words you are studying in this chapter. Each entry includes the word’s pronunciation and part of speech. If the word has multiple meanings, they are also included. Note that some words may function as more than one part of speech, and that function may affect their meaning.

1. **component** (kəmˈpōnt) *n:* 1. part; ingredient; constituent. *adj:* 2. serving as a part of something.

2. **conventional** (kənˈvenʃənəl) *adj:* 1. generally approved by custom. 2. established as acceptable.

3. **entitled** (enˈtəld) *adj:* having a right to something.

4. **generation** (jɛnəˈræʃən) *n:* 1. the act of bringing into existence. 2. offspring having the same parents and constituting a stage of descent. 3. a group
of contemporaries. 4. the average time interval between the birth of parents and their children.

5. intensity (in ten’ sät ō) n: 1. great concentration, force, or power. 2. the measure of energy or force.

6. interpretation (in tər prə tə’shən) n: 1. the process of giving meaning to something; an explanation 2. an individual representation, as in a work of art or performance.

7. minute (min’ ōt) n: 1. a unit of time equal to 60 seconds. 2. any very short period of time. 3. a specific instant of time.
   (mī’ nōōt’) adj: 4. exceedingly small. 5. not important.

8. vital (vī’ təl) adj: 1. necessary; essential. 2. necessary for the continuation of life. 3. lively.

9. wage (wāj) n: 1. payment for work done, usu. pl. v: 2. to carry on, as to wage war.

10. welfare (wel’ fār) n: 1. general well-being. 2. public assistance in the form of clothing, money, etc.

Exercise 4: Choose from Multiple Meanings

Some of the words you are studying in this chapter have several meanings. In this exercise, first determine which word best completes each sentence. (You will use words more than once.) Then indicate the number of the meaning from the word list that helped you make your choice.

a. generation  b. interpretation  c. minute  d. welfare  e. intensity

_____ 1. During the custody hearing, the judge indicated that her _______ decision would be based on the ________________ of the children.

_____ 2. The ________________ of the approaching car’s headlights blinded Josh and caused him to swerve off the road.

_____ 3. Mr. Schneider, the science teacher, was delighted with the purchase of 10 new microscopes that allowed his students _______ to observe ________________ particles.

_____ 4. Although there were several witnesses to the plane crash, _______ each one’s ________________ differed from the others’.
5. After losing her job as a waitress, Barbara received __________ checks for two months until she could find another job.

6. Don believed a __________ gap contributed to the difficulty he had communicating with his son.

7. Chita Rivera’s __________ of the title role in *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* differed from her successor’s.

8. The soccer team played with such __________ that the players seemed oblivious of the pouring rain.

9. Each __________ of the underwater dive cost $1,000 to pay for the divers, cameras, and metal detectors used in the search for treasure.

10. At one time, many people believed that __________ of electricity through nuclear power would be cost effective.

**Exercise 5: Use the Word Correctly**

The sentences below contain underlined words that you have studied. Indicate whether the words are used correctly (C) or incorrectly (I).

1. As an American citizen, Carl thought he was entitled to preference over foreign students applying to the state university.

2. During the chess match, the intensity of Bobby’s eyes reflected his casual attitude toward this match.

3. The king decided to wage war against his northern neighbor in spite of the lives that would be lost.

4. Health insurance is an important component of the company’s benefit package that it uses to attract capable employees.

5. Candidates for the astronaut training program filled out applications that included their vital statistics such as height, weight, age, and vision.

6. The conventional minister earned a reputation as one who tried experimental music and audience participation at his services.
7. Concerned for the welfare of his opponent, the prizefighter agreed to delay the match so he could receive a medical evaluation.

8. After a thorough interpretation, the detective turned over all of his findings to the district attorney.

9. Carol’s high school classmates who lived on the other side of town belonged to a different generation.

10. Each minute that the recycling plant stays idle costs the company money.

Exercise 6: Write Your Own Sentences

Write a sentence that uses each of the words you studied in this chapter in a way that indicates your understanding of the word’s meaning.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________
6. ____________________________________________________________
7. ____________________________________________________________
8. ____________________________________________________________
9. ____________________________________________________________
10. ____________________________________________________________