

EXERCISE I—Words in Context

From the list below, supply the words needed to complete the paragraph. Some words will not be used.

gadfly humility arduous affable
grandiloquent harangue grimace sycophant
explicit agrarian

A. "All the king's horses and all the king's men showed up tonight," mused Wyston to himself as he snatched another glass of champagne from the server's tray. He hated the governor's cocktail parties; it was always a [n] _____ task to maintain a friendly, _____ demeanor around so many obvious _____ seeking favors from the administration. After two hours, Wyston had to struggle to prevent his tired, polite smile from turning into a _____. It took all he had to pretend to listen and nod at the _____ stories of the wannabe rich and famous. There was also the annoying babble of the _____—single attendees who lacked the _____ required to be seen alone. They forced themselves into conversations and then held the listeners captive by withholding any opportunities to escape. When Wyston could no longer tolerate the pestering, he stepped outside and waited for the Governor to arrive and deliver his _____ to the idiotic crowd.

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humility dolorous agrarian gadfly gargantuan
avid explicit formidable epistle

B. The atmosphere at Aunt Agnes's farmhouse was _____ during the wake. No one could believe that Agnes was gone. At least, they reasoned, the _____ equestrian died while doing something that she loved. There was no definite explanation as to why Agnes's horse bucked her off, but by the looks of the _____ animal tracks, the horse had been spooked by a [n] _____ wolf, perhaps the largest ever seen.

The threat of wolves was nothing new to the _____ Van Ness family, who had been farming the northern valley for six generations. Wolves had attacked horses on the farm in the past, especially during extremely cold winters such as this one. Children on the farm always had _____ instructions to stay within sight of the house, but sometimes not even that was enough to protect the family from the hungry, silver predators.

Needing a break, Vicky wandered up the stairway to the second floor. Memories of her youth flashed through her head as she entered Agnes's room and sat on the corner of the bed. That's when she noticed the dusty corner of an old shoebox protruding from beneath the vanity. Curious, Vicky retrieved the box and, to her surprise, she found thirty years of hand-written _____, some of which were for Agnes, and some of which Agnes wrote but never sent.

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