# HOW TO TALK ABOUT A VARIETY OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

(Sessions 45-46)

### TEASER PREVIEW

What word, ending in -ous, describes someone who is:

- fawning, servilely attentive, transparently self-ingratiating?
- nagging, dissatisfied, complaining?
- snobbish, haughtily contemptuous, arrogant?
- noisily troublesome, unmanageable?
- habitually short of cash?
- attentive and courteous to women?
- harmless?
- fond of liquor?
- o pale, gaunt, haggard?
- melancholy, sorrowful?

### **SESSION 45**

There are thousands of English words that end in the letters -ous —a Latin suffix meaning full of.

The central theme about which the words in this chapter revolve is the idea of "fullness"—and as you will shortly see, you can be full of compliance and servility; full of complaints; full of snobbery; full of noise; full of no money; full of horsemanship; full of harmlessness; full of liquor; full of deathly pallor; and full of sorrows.

For each of these ideas English has a word—and the person with a rich vocabularly knows the exact word to describe what someone is full of.

#### **IDEAS**

# 1. compliance

The Latin root sequor means to follow—and those who follow rather than lead are usually in a menial, subordinate, or inferior position. People who engage in certain fields of endeavor—waiters, clerks, and servants, for example—are forced, often contrary to their natural temperaments, to act excessively courteous, pleasant, obliging, even subservient and humble. They must follow the lead of their customers or employers, bending their own wills according to the desires of those they serve. They are, etymologically, full of following after, or—

obsequious

#### RELATED WORDS:

1. obsequies—In a funeral cortege, the mourners follow after the corpse. Hence, obsequies are the burial ceremonies, the funeral rites.

- 2. subsequent—A subsequent letter, paragraph, time, etc. is one that follows another.
- 3. sequel—A sequel may be a literary work, such as a novel, that follows another, continuing the same subject, dealing with the same people or village, etc. or it may be an occurrence that grows out of or follows another, as in, "Just wait until you hear the sequel to the story!"
- 4. sequence—In order, one item following another, as in, "The sequence of events of the next few days left him breathless."

Any other word containing the root sequ- is likely to have some relationship to the idea of following.

### 2. complaints

The Latin root queror means to complain—and anyone full of complaints, constantly nagging, harping, fretful, petulant, whining, never satisfied, may accordingly be called—

querulous

### 3. snobbery

The Latin root cilium means eyelid; super means above; and above the eyelid, as anyone can plainly see, is the eyebrow. Now there are certain obnoxious people who go around raising their eyebrows in contempt, disdain, and sneering arrogance at ordinary mortals like you and me. Such contemptuous, sneering, overbearingly conceited people are called—

supercilious

#### 4. noise

The Latin root strepo means to make a noise. Anyone who is unruly, boisterous, resistant to authority, unmanageable—and in a noisy, troublesome manner—is

obstreperous

### 5. moneyless

The Latin root pecus means cattle—and at one time in human history a person's wealth was measured not by stocks and bonds but by stocks of domestic animals, which was a lot more logical, since you get milk and leather and meat from cattle—true wealth—and all you get from the stock market is a headache.

Someone who had lots of *pecus*, then, was rich—someone without *pecus* was indigent, destitute, "broke." And so today we call someone who is habitually without funds, who seems generally to be full of a complete lack of money—

impecunious

This word is not a synonym of *indigent*, destitute, or poverty-stricken; it does not necessarily imply living in reduced circumstances or want, but quite simply being short of cash—habitually.

#### RELATED WORD:

1. pecuniary—pertaining to money, as in, a pecuniary consideration, pecuniary affairs, etc.

#### 6. horses

The French word *cheval* means *horse*; and in medieval times only gentlemen and knights rode on horses—common people walked. Traditionally (but not, I understand, actually) knights were courteous to women, attentive to female desires, and self-sacrificing when their own interests came in conflict with those of the fair sex. Hence, we call a modern man who has a knightly attitude to women—

chivalrous

#### RELATED WORDS:

(Cheval, horse, comes from Latin caballus, an inferior horse. Callabus is found in English words in the spelling caval-.)

- 1. cavalcade—A procession of persons on horseback, as in a parade.
  - 2. cavalier—As a noun, a cavalier was once a mounted soldier.

As an adjective, cavalier describes actions and attitudes that are haughty, unmindful of others' feelings, too offhand, such attributes often being associated with people in power (the military being one of the powers-that-be). Thus, "He answered in a cavalier manner" would signify that he was arrogant in his answer, as if the questioner were taking a little too much privilege with him. Or, "After the cavalier treatment I received, I never wished to return," signifying that I was pretty much made to feel unimportant and inferior. Or, "After her cavalier refusal, I'll never invite her to another party," signifying that the refusal was, perhaps, curt, off-hand, without any attempt at apology or courtesy.

- 3. cavalry—The mounted, or "horsed" part of an army.
- 4. chivalry—Noun form of chivalrous. Can you write the alternate noun form ending in -ness?
- 5. chivalric—Less commonly used adjective form, identical in meaning to chivalrous.

Another Latin root for *horse*, as you know, is *equus*, found in words we have already discussed:

- 1. equestrian-A horseman.
- 2. equestrienne-A horsewoman.
- 3. equine-Horselike.

### 7. no harm done

The latin root *noceo* means to *injure*; someone who need cause you no fear, so harmless is that person, so unable to interfere, so unlikely to get you into trouble, is called—

innocuous

#### RELATED WORDS:

- 1. innocent—Not guilty of crime or injury.
- 2. noxious—Harmful, poisonous; unwholesome.

### 8. alcoholic

The Latin root bibo means to drink; and one who is generally found with one foot up on the brass rail, who likes to tipple be-

yond the point of sobriety—who, in short, has an overfondness for drinks with a pronounced alcoholic content, is called, usually humorously—

bibulous

#### RELATED WORDS:

- 1. imbibe—To drink in, soak up, absorb. If we use this verb without specifying what is drunk, as in, "He likes to imbibe," the implication, of course, is always liquor; but imbibe may also be used in patterns like "imbibe learning" or "In early infancy she imbibed a respect for her parents."
- 2. bib—Upper part of an apron, or an apronlike napkin tied around a child's neck. In either case, the bib prevents what is drunk (or eaten) from spilling over, or dribbling down, on the wearer's clothing.

#### 9. like death itself

The Latin root cado means to fall—one's final fall is of course always in death, and so someone who looks like a corpse (figuratively speaking), who is pale, gaunt, thin, haggard, eyes deep-sunk, limbs wasted, in other words the extreme opposite of the picture of glowing health, is called—

cadaverous

#### RELATED WORDS:

- 1. cadaver—A corpse, literally, especially one used for surgical dissection
- 2. decadent—Etymologically, "falling down" (de- is a prefix one meaning of which is down, as in descend, climb down; decline, turn down; etc.). If something is in a decadent state, it is deteriorating, becoming corrupt or demoralized. Decadence is a state of decay. Generally decadent and decadence are used figuratively—they refer not to actual physical decay (as of a dead body), but to moral or spiritual decay.

### 10. pain and misery

The Latin root doleo means to suffer or grieve—one who is

mental distress, who seems to be suffering or grieving, is called—

dolorous

#### RELATED WORDS:

- 1. dolor—A poetic synonym of grief.
- 2. doleful—A word referring somewhat humorously to exaggerated dismalness, sadness, or dreariness.
- 3. condole—Etymologically, to suffer or grieve with (Latin con-, with, together). Condole is a somewhat less commonly used synonym of commiserate, a verb we discussed in Chapter 15. The noun condolence is much more frequently heard than the verb, as in, "Let me offer you my condolences," usually said to someone mourning the death of a friend or relative. You have heard of condolence cards, and no doubt have sent your share of them. When you condole with somebody who has sustained a loss, usually by death, you are saying, in effect, "I am suffering or grieving with you."

#### REVIEW OF ETYMOLOGY

PREFIX, ROOT,		
SUFFIX	MEANING	ENGLISH WORD
1. sequor	to follow	-
2. queror	to complain	
3. cilium	eyelid	
4. super	above	<del></del>
5. strepo	to make a noise	·
6. pecus	cattle	
7ary	adjective suffix	
8. im- (in-)	negative prefix	
9. cheval	horse	•
10. callabus (caval-)	inferior horse	<del></del>
11ous	adjective suffix	
12. <i>-ic</i>	adjective suffix	
13. equus	horse	
14ine	like, similar to,	
	characteristic of	

17. cado	to fall	
18. de-	down	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
19ent	adjective suffix	
20ence	noun suffix	
21. con-	with, together	

in

### USING THE WORDS

16. im- (in-)

#### A. THE BASIC WORDS

1 obsequious

# Can you pronounce the words?

••	0000441.040	
2.	querulous	KWAIR'-ə-ləs
3.	supercilious	soo'-par-SIL'-ee-as
4.	obstreperous	əb-STREP'-ər-əs
5.	impecunious	im'-pə-KYOO'-nee-əs
6.	chivalrous	SHIV'-əl-rəs
7.	innocuous	ə-NOK'-yoo-əs
8.	bibulous	BIB'-yə-ləs
9.	cadaverous	kə-DAV'-ər-əs
10.	dolorous	DOL'-ər-əs or DÖ'-lər-əs

### Can you work with the words? (1)

- 1. obsequious
- 2. querulous
- 3. supercilious
- 4. obstreperous
- 5. impecunious
- 6. chivalrous
- 7. innocuous
- 8. bibulous

a. snobbish

ob-SEEK'-wee-as

- b. harmless
- c. gaunt
- d. short of funds
- e. fawning; excessively, ingratiatingly, polite
- f. sorrowful
- g. addicted to drink
- h. courteous to women

9. cadaverous 10. dolorous

i. complainingj. unmanageable

KEY: 1-e, 2-i, 3-a, 4-j, 5-d, 6-h, 7-b, 8-g, 9-c, 10-f

### Can you work with the words? (II)

Match each word in the first column with one from the second column that is *opposite* in meaning.

- obsequious
   a. content; uncomplaining; satisfied
- 2. querulous3. superciliousb. affluentc. healthy
- 4. obstreperous d. rude
  5. impecunious e. sober
- 6. chivalrous f. dangerous
- 7. innocuous g. humble
- 8. bibulous h. misogynous
- 9. cadaverous i. happy; cheerful 10. dolorous i. quiet

KEY: 1-d, 2-a, 3-g, 4-i, 5-b, 6-h, 7-f, 8-e, 9-c, 10-i

### Do you understand the words?

1. Do obsequious people usually	YES	МО
command our respect?		
2. Are querulous people satisfied?	YES	NO
3. Are <i>supercilious</i> people usually popular?	YES	NO
4. Is a person of affluence impecunious?	YES	МО
5. Do some women like chivalrous men?	YES	NO

6.				
	Are innocuous people dangerous?		YES	NO
	Is a bibulous character a teetotaler	?	YES	NO
8.	Is a cadaverous-looking individual picture of health?	the	YES	МО
9.	Is a dolorous attitude characteristic jovial people?	c of	YES	МО
10.	Is an obstreperous child difficult to manage?	)	YES	NO
KE	Y: 1-no, 2-no, 3-no, 4-no, 5-ye 10-yes	s, 6-no, 7-n	o, 8-no, 9	)–no,
Car	you recall the words?			
	you recall the words?	4 5		
1.	sorrowful			
1. 2.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite	2. O		
1. 2. 3.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale	2. O 3. C		
1. 2. 3. 4.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale complaining; whining	2. O 3. C 4. Q	•	
1. 2. 3. 4.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale complaining; whining addicted to alcohol; likely to	2. O 3. C 4. Q		
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale complaining; whining addicted to alcohol; likely to drink past the point of sobriety	2. O 3. C 4. Q 5. B		
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale complaining; whining addicted to alcohol; likely to drink past the point of sobriety arrogant; haughty	2. O 3. C 4. Q 5. B	•	
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale complaining; whining addicted to alcohol; likely to drink past the point of sobriety arrogant; haughty harmless	2. O 3. C 4. Q 5. B 6. S 7. I	•	
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale complaining; whining addicted to alcohol; likely to drink past the point of sobriety arrogant; haughty harmless noisily unmanageable	2. O 3. C 4. Q 5. B 6. S 7. I	•	
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	sorrowful servilely attentive; overly polite haggard; gaunt; pale complaining; whining addicted to alcohol; likely to drink past the point of sobriety arrogant; haughty harmless	2. O	•	

KEY: 1-dolorous, 2-obsequious, 3-cadaverous, 4-querulous, 5-bibulous, 6-supercilious, 7-innocuous, 8-obstreperous, 9-chivalrous, 10-impecunious

#### **SESSION 46**

#### B. RELATED WORDS

### Can you pronounce the words? (I)

1. obsequies OB'-sa-kweez 2. subsequent SUB'-sa-kwant 3. sequel SEE'-kwal 4. sequence SEE'-kwans pa-KYOO'-nee-air'-ee 5. pecuniary 6. noxious NOK'-shas 7. imbibe im-BIR' 8. dolor DŌ'-lar 9. doleful DOL'-fal 10. cavalcade KAV'-əl-kayd'

### Can you pronounce the words? (II)

11. cavalier (adj.)

1. cavalry KAV'-əl-ree
2. chivalry SHIV'-əl-ree
3. chivalric shə-VAL'-rik
4. condole kən-DŌL'
5. condolence kən-DŌ'-ləns
6. equestrian ə-KWES'-tree-ən
7. equestrienne

8. equine EE'-kwīn'

9. cadaver kə-DAY'-ər or kə-DAY'-vər 10. decadent DEK'-ə-dənt or də-KAY'-dənt 11. decadence DEK'-ə-dəns or də-KAY'-dəns

kav-a-LEER'

### Can you work with the words?

1. obsequies a. proper order

subsequent
 drink; absorb; take in
 sequel
 harmful, poisonous

5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.	sequence pecuniary noxious imbibe dolor  doleful cavalcade cavalier (adj.)  cavalry equestrian equestrienne equine cadaver decadent	e. f. g. h. i. j. k. n. o. p.	pain, sorrow (poetic) coming later or afterward procession of mounted riders offhand, haughty a following event or literary work horsewoman pertaining to money mounted military division; soldiers on horseback funeral rites exaggeratedly sorrowful horselike horseman spiritual decline morally decaying	
18.	decadence		corpse	
19.	chivalry		expression of sympathy	
	condolence		gallant courtesy to women	
	12-k, 13-o, 14-i 15-n, 1		, 7-b, 8-d, 9-m, 10-f, 11-g, , 17-q, 18-p, 19-t, 20-s	
ָי סע	you understand the words? (I)			
	Are speeches usually made d obsequies?			
	Did Margaret Mitchell write Gone with the Wind?			i.
	Are these numbers in sequen 8, 9, 10, 11?			١
4.	Do banks often handle the pedetails of an estate?	ecun	aiary YES NO	ŀ
	Is arsenic a noxious chemical		YES NO	
6.	Do children sometimes <i>imbib</i> from their parents?	e w	risdom yes no	
7.	If a song is sung in tones of a happy song?	lolo	r, is it YES NO	
			489	,

8. Is a doleful countenance a happy one?	YES	NO
9. Does a cavalcade contain horses?	YES	NO
10. Does a cavalier attitude show a spirit of humility?	YES	МО
KEY: 1-yes, 2-no, 3-yes, 4-yes, 5-yes, 6-yes, 10-no	es, 7-no, 8-n	o, 9–
Do you understand the words? (II)		
<ol> <li>Is a cavalry officer usually a good horseman?</li> </ol>	YES	NO
2. Would an <i>equestrian</i> statue of General Grant show him with or on a horse?	YES	МО
3. Is an equestrienne a man?	YES	NO
4. Do humans possess many equine characteristics?	YES	МО
5. Is a cadaver alive?	YES	NO
6. Is an iconoclast likely to consider religion a <i>decadent</i> institution?	YES	NO
7. Is decadence a desirable quality?	YES	NO
8. Is chivalry dead?	YES	NO
9. Is it appropriate to <i>condole</i> with someone who has suffered a loss through death?	YES	NO
10. Are <i>condolences</i> appropriate at a wedding ceremony?	YES	МО
KEY: 1-yes, 2-yes, 3-no, 4-no, 5-no, 6-yes, depending on your point of view, 9-you're misogamous)		
Do you understand the words? (III)		
1. obsequies—rites	SAME OPP	OSITE .

<ol> <li>pecuniary—financial</li> <li>sequence—order</li> <li>noxious—harmful</li> <li>imbibe—drink</li> <li>dolor—delight</li> <li>doleful—merry</li> <li>cavalier—courteous</li> <li>cadaver—corpse</li> <li>decadent—resurgent</li> <li>chivalry—gallantry to women</li> <li>condolences—congratulations</li> </ol>	SAME OPPOSITE
KEY: 1–S, 2–O, 3–S, 4–S, 5–S 11–O, 12–S, 13–O	, 6–S, 7–O, 8–O, 9–O, 10–S,
Can you recall the words?	
1. harmful	1. N
2. a literary work or an event that	
follows another	
3. drink in	3. I
4. poetic word for sorrow	4. D
5. burial ceremonies	5. O
6. horseman	6. E
7. horsewoman	7. E
8. horselike	8. E
9. following (adj.)	9. S
10. relating to money (adj.)	10. P
11. exaggeratedly sad	11. D
<ul><li>12. proper order</li><li>13. parade of mounted riders</li></ul>	12. S 13. C
14. offhand; unmindful of	14. C
another's feelings	14. C

15. mounted soldiers16. a corpse

17. morally deteriorating (adj.)18. spiritual decay

19. expression of sympathy

15. C\_\_\_\_\_\_ 16. C\_\_\_\_\_

17. D\_\_\_\_\_\_ 18. D\_\_\_\_\_

20.	C
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KEY: 1-noxious, 2-sequel, 3-imbibe, 4-dolor, 5-obsequies, 6-equestrian, 7-equestrienne, 8-equine, 9-subsequent, 10-pecuniary, 11-doleful, 12-sequence, 13-cavalcade, 14-cavalier, 15-cavalry, 16-cadaver, 17-decadent, 18-decadence, 19-condolence, 20-chivalry or chivalrousness

#### CHAPTER REVIEW

- A. Do you recognize the words?
  - 1. Excessively polite and fawning:
    - (a) querulous, (b) obsequious, (c) supercilious
  - 2. Noisily troublesome:
    - (a) querulous, (b) impecunious, (c) obstreperous
  - 3. Courteous and attentive to women:
    - (a) querulous, (b) chivalrous, (c) supercilious
  - 4. Complaining, nagging:
    - (a) querulous, (b) supercilious, (c) innocuous
  - 5. Haughtily disdainful:
    - (a) supercilious, (b) bibulous, (c) dolorous
  - 6. Gaunt, corpselike:
    - (a) noxious, (b) cadaverous, (c) doleful
  - 7. Highhanded:
    - (a) supercilious, (b) cavalier, (c) decadent
- 8. Moral decay:
  - (a) decadence, (b) obsequies, (c) sequence
- 9. Expression of sympathy:
  - (a) bibulousness, (b) dolefulness, (c) condolence
- 10. Courtesy to women:
  - (a) dolor, (b) chivalry, (c) decadence

KEY: 1-b, 2-c, 3-b, 4-a, 5-a, 6-b, 7-b, 8-a, 9-c, 10-b

## B. Can you recognize roots? ROOT MEANING EXAMPLE \_\_\_\_\_ subsequent 1. seauor 2. queror \_\_\_\_\_ querulous 3. cilium \_\_\_\_\_ supercilious \_\_\_\_\_ supervision 4. super 5. strepo \_\_\_\_\_ obstreperous 6. pecus \_\_\_\_\_ pecuniary \_\_\_\_\_ chivalry 7. cheval 8. caballus (caval-) \_\_\_\_\_ cavalier 9. eauus \_\_\_\_\_ equine 10. cado \_\_\_\_\_\_decadence KEY: 1-to follow, 2-to complain, 3-eyelid, 4-above, 5-to make a noise, 6-cattle, 7-horse, 8-(inferior) horse, 9-horse, 10-to fall TEASER QUESTIONS FOR THE AMATEUR ETYMOLOGIST 1. In logic, a conclusion not based on the evidence is called a non sequitur; by extension, the term is applied to any statement that appears to have no connection or relevance to what was said before. Knowing the root sequor, how would you define this term etymologically? \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Sequor, like many other Latin verbs, has another form somewhat differently spelled. (Remember verto, versus and loquor, locutus?) The other form of sequor is secutus. Can you define the following words in terms of the root? (a) second: (b) consecutive: (c) persecute: (d) prosecute:

of English w	uper, above or over, is used as a prefix in hundreds ords. Can you figure out the word starting with super-etymological definition?
(a)	above others (in quality, position, etc.)
(b)	above the surface; not in depth (adj.)
	(flowing) above what is necessary; more than ded (adi.)
	above (or beyond) the natural (adj.)
(e)	to oversee; be in charge of (v.)
of its etymol (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)	ot is spelled -cid). Can you define each word in terms ogical parts?  cadence: coccidental: deciduous: incident: accident: coincidence:
jective that e means idle; English word Can you wri	gative prefix in- plus doleo, to suffer, forms an adtymologically means not suffering (pain), but actually lazy; disliking effort or work. Can you figure out the difference of the noun form?
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(End of Session 46)

Brief	Intermission	Ten——
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# ANOTHER CHECK ON YOUR SPELLING

In each line you will find four words—one of them purposely, subtly, and perhaps unexpectedly misspelled. It's up to you to check the single error. If you can come out on top at least fifteen times out of twenty, you're probably a better speller than you realize.

- 1. (a) alright, (b) coolly, (c) supersede, (d) disappear
- 2. (a) inoculate, (b) definately, (c) irresistible,
  - (d) recommend
- 3. (a) incidentally, (b) dissipate, (c) seperate, (d) balloon
- 4. (a) argument, (b) ecstasy, (c) occurrance, (d) analyze
- 5. (a) sacrilegious, (b) weird, (c) pronunciation, (d) repitition
- 6. (a) drunkeness, (b) embarrassment, (c) weird, (d) irritable
- 7. (a) noticeable, (b) superintendant, (c) absence,
  - (d) development
- 8. (a) vicious, (b) conscience, (c) panicy, (d) amount
- 9. (a) accessible, (b) pursue, (c) exhilarate, (d) insistant
- 10. (a) naïveté, (b) necessary, (c) catagory, (d) professor
- 11. (a) rhythmical, (b) sergeant, (c) vaccuum, (d) assassin
- 12. (a) benefitted, (b) allotted, (c) corroborate, (d) despair
- 13. (a) diphtheria, (b) grandeur, (c) rediculous, (d) license
- 14. (a) tranquillity, (b) symmetry, (c) occassionally,
  - (d) privilege

- 15. (a) tarriff, (b) tyranny, (c) battalion, (d) archipelago
- 16. (a) bicycle, (b) geneology, (c) liquefy, (d) bettor
- 17. (a) defense, (b) batchelor, (c) stupefy, (d) parallel
- 18. (a) whisky, (b) likable, (c) bookkeeper, (d) accomodate
- 19. (a) comparitive, (b) mayonnaise, (c) indispensable,
- (d) dexterous
- 20. (a) dictionary, (b) cantaloupe, (c) existance, (d) ukulele

KEY: 1-a (all right), 2-b (definitely), 3-c (separate), 4-c (occurrence), 5-d (repetition), 6-a (drunkenness), 7-b (superintendent), 8-c (panicky), 9-d (insistent), 10-c (category), 11-c (vacuum), 12-a (benefited), 13-c (ridiculous), 14-c (occasionally), 15-a (tariff), 16-b (genealogy), 17-b (bachelor), 18-d (accommodate), 19-a (comparative), 20-c (existence)