**Literature and Composition**

Vocabulary Stories

The English language is bursting at the seams with vocabulary, but many of us don’t care to learn more than we already know; if we know enough to express the ideas we wish to communicate, who cares if we know what “perambulate” and “conducive” mean?

A larger vocabulary makes life easier in many ways. It aids in reading comprehension (and speed). It allows us to create precise shades of meaning when we express ideas. It makes us better communicators. It sharpens your ability to think critically. Like it or not, people will judge you by your vocabulary. A large vocabulary increases your chances of success on the job and your ability to move up in your career – seriously, there have been numerous studies about this, including several cited in an article printed in Fortune magazine several years ago. According to the article, “ . . . as it turns out, when it comes to climbing the corporate ladder, one of your best assets may actually be your very big vocabulary.”

Learning new vocabulary can be hard. When you discover the meaning of word, you’re likely to forget it unless you integrate it into your communication . . . in simple terms, if you don’t use it, you lose it.

**ASSIGNMENT – 30 points**: For this exercise in vocabulary development, you’ll need to use 15 words new to you. ***As you read for school assignments (or for pleasure), watch movies and TV, and talk, keep track of new words.***

 **Part I – the story – 15 points**

1. Look them up in at least two different dictionaries to discover their meanings (I suggest dictionary.com, merriam-webster.com, and yourdictionary.com). Why at least two dictionaries? Because the wording of their definitions will often slightly differ, which can lead you to a better understanding of the word’s precise meaning.
2. To use these words in a meaningful way, write a brief personal narrative (something about your life – it could be about anything, really) or create a short story (again, it could be about anything) in which you properly use these 15 new words. How long should it be? Long enough to get the job done well.
3. In your story, underline each new vocabulary word.

**Part II – the word list and definitions – 15 points**

1. After your story, list each word and its part of speech. Define each word – use the definition (and part of speech) appropriate to the way you used the word in your story.
2. *DO NOT simply copy and paste a definition from an online dictionary – that’s a good way to truly avoid thinking about the word*. After looking the word up in at least two dictionaries, think about how you would define the word for somebody in a conversation – then use that.

Each correctly used word in your story is worth 1 point. Each correct part of speech/definition in the list is worth 1 point. Half credit may be awarded in some cases.