

# unit 6 language and culture

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## everyday

✓ commonplace and ordinary

*Her stories of New Orleans were filled with references and names in English (frequently also in French), and those mysterious words, so different from the ones I heard in **everyday** speech, produced in me an irresistible fascination.*

## irresistible

✓ impossible to withstand; overpowering

*Her stories of New Orleans were filled with references and names in English (frequently also in French), and those mysterious words, so different from the ones I heard in everyday speech, produced in me an **irresistible** fascination.*

## exotic

✓ characteristic of another place or part of the world

*They sounded like strange music, an **exotic** melody coming from faraway fantastic places where life had an agitation, a rhythm, an acceleration unknown and unheard-of in the peaceful world I shared with my parents, sisters, and brothers.*

# agitation

✓ a mental state of extreme emotional disturbance

*They sounded like strange music, an exotic melody coming from faraway fantastic places where life had an **agitation**, a rhythm, an acceleration unknown and unheard-of in the peaceful world I shared with my parents, sisters, and brothers.*

# acceleration

✓ an increase in rate of change

*They sounded like strange music, an exotic melody coming from faraway fantastic places where life had an agitation, a rhythm, an **acceleration** unknown and unheard-of in the peaceful world I shared with my parents, sisters, and brothers.*

# perpetual

✓ continuing forever or indefinitely

*We were all part of an enormous family that included grandparents, great-aunts, great-uncles, uncles, aunts, and first cousins, as well as a second and third level of blood relatives, followed immediately by all the other people in the category of relatives included in the family universe and its state of **perpetual** expansion.*

# gravel

✓ rock fragments and pebbles

*For me, that English lacked charm, instead sounding like the noise of my shoes crunching in the **gravel** of the schoolyard during recess.*

# recess

✓ a state of abeyance or suspended business

*For me, that English lacked charm, instead sounding like the noise of my shoes crunching in the gravel of the schoolyard during **recess**.*

# trill

✓ a note that alternates with another note a semitone above it

*Sometimes it sounded like the **trill** of a bird, light and crystalline, and at other times flowed in dense, thick amber like honey.*

# amber

✓ a hard yellowish to brownish translucent fossil resin

*Sometimes it sounded like the trill of a bird, light and crystalline, and at other times flowed in dense, thick **amber** like honey.*

# nostalgic

✓ unhappy about being away and longing for familiar things

*It would rise in high notes with the lonely, **nostalgic** sound of a flute, or swirl in a whirlpool like the frenzied crowds I imagined rushing around the streets of a big metropolis .*

# whirlpool

✓ a powerful circular current of water

*It would rise in high notes with the lonely, nostalgic sound of a flute, or swirl in a **whirlpool** like the frenzied crowds I imagined rushing around the streets of a big metropolis .*

# metropolis

✓ a large and densely populated urban area

*It would rise in high notes with the lonely, nostalgic sound of a flute, or swirl in a whirlpool like the frenzied crowds I imagined rushing around the streets of a big **metropolis** .*

# cryptic

✓ having a secret or hidden meaning

*It was not the **cryptic** and fantastic English full of attractions and mystery that I loved to listen to, nor the tiresome, repetitious one that sounded like a cart struggling over cobbled streets.*

# tiresome

✓ so lacking in interest as to cause mental weariness

*It was not the cryptic and fantastic English full of attractions and mystery that I loved to listen to, nor the **tiresome**, repetitious one that sounded like a cart struggling over cobbled streets.*

# repetitious

✓ characterized by doing or performing again

*It was not the cryptic and fantastic English full of attractions and mystery that I loved to listen to, nor the tiresome, **repetitious** one that sounded like a cart struggling over cobbled streets.*

# enigmatic

✓ not clear to the understanding

*No, this other English expressed things in a different way that was not **enigmatic** and seductive, nor dumb and monotonous, but dramatic and direct: whatever the characters said, happened simultaneously.*

# seductive

✓ tending to entice into a desired action or state

*No, this other English expressed things in a different way that was not enigmatic and **seductive**, nor dumb and monotonous, but dramatic and direct: whatever the characters said, happened simultaneously.*

# monotonous

✓ sounded or spoken in a tone unvarying in pitch

*No, this other English expressed things in a different way that was not enigmatic and seductive, nor dumb and **monotonous**, but dramatic and direct: whatever the characters said, happened simultaneously.*

# downpour

✓ a heavy rain

*The first time I heard characters in a **downpour** shouting their heads off with the phrase "The sky is falling, the sky is falling!"*

# captivated

✓ filled with wonder and delight

*From that deep relationship with the language, I wound up with what I considered a broad and complex knowledge of English, the sounds of which **captivated** me in the first years of life.*

# idyllic

✓ charmingly simple and serene

*My first impression of the country was completely **idyllic**.*

# manor

✓ the landed estate of a lord, including the house on it

*My aunt and uncle's house, where I would stay for three months, was a beautiful and comfortable three-story building, an old New England **manor** with a gorgeous garden out back, an orchard, a stable with horses, and a pond full of trout.*

# gorgeous

✓ dazzlingly beautiful

*My aunt and uncle's house, where I would stay for three months, was a beautiful and comfortable three-story building, an old New England manor with a **gorgeous** garden out back, an orchard, a stable with horses, and a pond full of trout.*

# spruce

✓ any coniferous tree of the genus Picea

*A dense woods of birch and a variety of pine and **spruce** trees, crisscrossed by narrow paths dotted with wildflowers, went around the edge of that peaceful pond in a landscape that seemed like it was lifted from a fairy tale.*

# unforgettable

✓ impossible to dismiss from the mind

*Those vacations are part of the happy memories of my life because I also had the **unforgettable** experience of going to New York City for the first time and visiting the 1964 World's Fair.*

# imprint

✓ mark or stamp with or as if with pressure

*However, what is most deeply **imprinted** in my memory of that first visit to the U.S. is the shock I received from the language I had believed I understood and spoke correctly.*

# anguish

✓ extreme distress of body or mind

*She didn't have a clue about the extreme **anguish** I was going through trying to understand what was being said around me, trying to decipher everything I misunderstood, assuming one thing for another.*

# adapt

✓ make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose

*I anxiously searched for ways to **adapt** my way of speaking, imitating what I heard from others, so I wouldn't be excluded from their conversations or activities.*

# fringe

✓ an ornamental border of short lengths of hanging threads

*I understood that if I didn't do that, I would be left on the **fringes** of the main current, the mainstream where all U.S. teenagers lived, with space only for themselves.*

# consolation

✓ the act of giving relief in affliction

*The barrier was not easy to cross, and when I couldn't do it, my **consolation** was to take refuge in the library of the house, where I read, during that first vacation, an English translation of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.*

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