

Unit 1 - Too Easy

1A Introduction

Ever wished you had a superpower? If you had to choose one, which would it be? The ability to fly? To be invisible? To walk through walls? Or would you rather just be like everyone else and lead a normal life? The character in this story wasn't looking for superpowers. But sometimes you don't choose things. They choose you.

1B Song Lyrics

I was a normal kid with a normal life,
School during the day, sleep during the night.
Until one day, I wasn't feeling right,
My leg was cramped up, feeling real tight.
I thought it was unimportant and **trivial**,
But my legs were burning, I could feel it, yo.
And the pain got so intense,
I **winc**ed, I flinched, my whole face clenched,
I needed to **abate** the pain, make it fade,
Needed it to go away with no delay.
Stumbled on down to the nurse's office,
She thought I was faking, 'cause I do that often.
"Nurse, this time I really feel worse,
Like a vein in my leg could **rupture** and burst."
Sat and rolled up my pants on my right leg,
Almost freaked, 'cause my skin was bright red.
Started to panic, head started **throbbing**,
Beat like a heart beats, steady and hard.
And I cried, "My neighbor's a doctor, I know the guy,
Please can you just let him know and **notify** him,
'Cause my future looks dark and **grim**.
Will I ever play ball in the park again?
Please, what's the number for 9-1-1?"
I fainted, thinking that my time had come.

*You're gonna need slow-mo to see me,
Fast like Flo Jo, you can't beat me.
Hear me coming, "Oh no!"
Feel my breeze please,
Win all races, this is too easy..
Too easy! I could beat a rabbit in a race,
Too easy! Quicker than a rat is in a chase.
Too easy! See me run a lap, you'll be amazed.
I move with ease with my super speed.*

I woke in the hospital all alone,
Looked at my legs, and thought, "Oh no!
What's my **affliction**, the cause of my pain?
Could my legs be twisted, broken or sprained?"



Then I noticed and **perceived** that I felt fine,
 Feeling better and better as I passed time.
 You know what? I was feeling **robust**,
 Strong like iron, yeah, I'm not lying.
 And that's when things got cool, y'all.
 I got up and I started to move, y'all.
 Started moving faster, watch me **accelerate**,
 Go even faster, at a better pace.
 All of a sudden, it was so **abrupt**,
 My super duper speed just showed up.
 I was **incredulous**, couldn't believe it,
 Ran out the hospital, I just didn't need it.
 Ran on the highway, then in a blur,
 In a couple seconds, I visited the world.
 Ran to Alaska, waved to a moose,
 Then ran to Asia, raced a mongoose.
 Ran to Times Square, had a slice there,
 Made it back to class with time to spare.
 Running like a cheetah, you're slower than rust,
 I'm ghost like Casper—choke on my dust.
 True I'm **abnormal**, nope I'm not normal,
 Not average; dude who outperforms whoever
 Wants to race me, I'll defeat all,
 Outrun a Porsche in the Flintstone car.
 You'll be **flabbergasted** and surprised,
 When I run right past your eyes.
 That's if you can see me when I pass you by,
 'Cause mostly I'm a flash in disguise.

Hook

1C Words Defined

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

1. **abate** (verb) to make or become less in amount or intensity

We waited for the storm to *abate* before we went outside.

Synonyms: lessen, decrease

Antonyms: increase, amplify

2. **abnormal** (adj) not normal

Kane is a nice guy, but he has some really *abnormal* habits.

Synonyms: unusual, unique

3. abrupt (adj) sudden or unexpected

We made an *abrupt* change of plans when we realized we had no money.

4. accelerate (verb) to speed up, or to cause to speed up

You can *accelerate* a plant's growth by using fertilizers.

Antonyms: decelerate

Other forms: A car with good *acceleration* (noun) can go from zero to 60 miles per hour in less than six seconds. If you want to learn another language quickly, you can take an *accelerated* (adj) class.

5. affliction (noun) the cause of serious pain and suffering, or a state of such suffering

Some people consider blindness an *affliction*, but to others it is just a challenge.

Other forms: Melanie was afflicted (verb) with a rare bone disease.

6. flabbergast (verb) to surprise or amaze people into a state of shock

Nina was *flabbergasted* to learn that her bus driver was actually 104 years old.

Synonyms: astound

Antonyms: bore

7. grim (adj) gloomy, harsh, and frightening

War is a *grim* business.

Synonyms: dreadful, savage, frightful

Antonyms: mild, delightful

8. incredulous (adj) not willing to believe something

I tried to tell Becky about my 8-foot-tall boyfriend, but she was *incredulous* and didn't think I was telling the truth .

Synonyms: cynical, skeptical

Antonyms: credulous, gullible

9. notify (verb) to let someone know; to inform

When we lost our dog, we went from house to house and *notified* all the neighbors.

Other forms: I was sad when my family received official *notification* (noun) that we would have to leave our home.

10. perceive (verb) to become aware of through any of the senses, especially sight or hearing

Gazing through the mist, the elf could just barely *perceive* the enemy army marching toward him.

Synonyms: discern, spot

Other forms: If you are *perceptive* (adj) and show a lot of *perception* (noun), you demonstrate that you are fully aware of what's going on .

11. robust (adj) strong or healthy

The third little pig was the smartest because he built a *robust* house made out of bricks.
Antonyms: weak, soft

12. rupture 1. (verb) to break or burst 2. (noun) the act of breaking or bursting

1. He had to go to the hospital because he *ruptured* his appendix.
2. The storm caused a big *rupture* in the dam.

13. throb (verb) to pound or beat rapidly or violently; to pulsate or vibrate

I had a terrible headache and my head started to *throb*.
Other forms: At the dance club, I was overwhelmed by the smoke and the bright, *throbbing* (adj) lights.

14. trivial (adj) of very little importance or value

Stop asking *trivial* questions and ask me something that matters!
Synonyms: insignificant, commonplace
Antonyms: valuable, worthwhile

15. wince (verb) to move back suddenly as though in pain or fear

Having cut his arm pretty badly, Wade *wincing* whenever he accidentally touched it.
Synonyms: flinch, recoil

1D Fix the Mistake

Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.

1. I lurched forward in my seat as the truck came to a **robust** halt.

2. Without my glasses, I found it tough to **abate** what the teacher had written up on the blackboard.

3. I was somewhat **abrupt** when Yu tried to convince me the dog really had eaten her homework.

4. Sarah always freaks out about her grades even though, in my opinion, the difference between an A- and a B+ is pretty **abnormal**.

5. Tony turns the bass up so loud in his car that the whole street **flabbergasts** when he drives by.

6. As the effects of the medicine kicked in, my headache slowly **winc**ed.

7. I was **notified** when I heard Janelle sing; I can't believe she thinks she can win the talent show with that lousy voice!

8. The balloon **throbb**ed when Zoe poked it with her sharp fingernails.

9. Don't forget to **perceive** the coach if you're planning on going with us to watch the tennis tournament next week.

10. Marcus was struck with a strange **acceleration** that caused him to break out in an extremely itchy rash.

11. I think my dog might have been abused at his last home; every time I reach down to pet him, he **ruptures**.

12. When my sister first started driving, she had a crazy habit of **afflicting** when she meant to hit the brakes.

13. Grandpa looks much more **incredulous** now that he exercises regularly.

14. Our hero is trapped in the jungle without a compass or water; his situation is looking **trivial**.

15. Does it seem like Terrence has a **grim** number of koala bear posters in his bedroom?

1E Pick the Winner

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

- 1. Rion knows a lot of **(trivial OR incredulous)** facts about reality television shows.
2. _____
- 3. The man screamed when he saw the **(robust OR grim)** expression on the monster's face.
4. _____
- 5. I always **(accelerate OR wince)** when I hear the earsplitting sound of fingernails on a chalkboard.
6. _____
- 7. The library called to **(notify OR perceive)** you that you have an overdue book.
8. _____
- 9. I stubbed my toe this morning and it still **(abates OR throbs)**.
10. _____

1F Draw the Relationships

In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.

1

inform	usual	pulse	gullible
throb	incredulous	notify	abnormal

.....

2

bore

frightening

affliction

flabbergast

robust

grim

healthy

cure

3

important

trivial

abate

stop

notice

wince

perceive

flinch

4

pleasant

accelerate

grim

rupture

slow down

break

abrupt

sudden

1G Understanding What You Read

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

The Man Who Walked Through the Sky

On August 13, 1974, people in New York City were flabbergasted to see a man walking across a 3/4-inch-wide wire 1,368 feet above them. For 45 minutes, French citizen Philippe Petit captured the attention of an incredulous city as he walked, bounced, sat, and laid down on a high-wire stretched between the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Amazingly, Petit had planned and executed his stunt without notifying anyone in the city—including the police. As soon as he stepped off the wire, the police abruptly put him in handcuffs and took him to jail. People around the world were left wondering, “Who is Philippe Petit, and how did he accomplish his spectacular feat?”

When Petit was released from jail a few hours later, he shared his story with the press. The seeds of the stunt had been planted when Petit was afflicted by a toothache at age 18. While sitting in the dentist’s office, he came across an article about the World Trade Center, which was just being built. As soon as he saw the picture of the towers, the accomplished wire walker knew that he would have to walk between them someday. He ripped the article from the magazine and left the dentist’s office. Although his tooth continued to throb for days afterward, Petit was happy to have found his life’s dream.

For the next six years, Petit learned everything he could about the World Trade Center. He built a team to help him plan the technical details of the walk. The most important part of the plan was making sure their measurements were precise; one trivial mistake in the laying of the wire could lead to grim consequences.

The night before the walk, Petit's team snuck up to the top floor of the World Trade Center. They stayed awake all night, working under the cover of darkness. Finally, at 7:15 a.m., Petit's six-year dream became a reality. On the streets below, thousands of people stopped to gape up at the abnormal scene. For those who were lucky enough to see it, Petit's stunt remains an incredible moment in New York City history.

1. How did the people of New York respond to Petit's walk?

- (A) They were angry.
- (B) They were uninterested.
- (C) They were amazed.
- (D) They were frightened.

2. Why did the police arrest Petit after his stunt?

- (A) Petit had not gotten permission to walk across the towers.
- (B) Petit was staying in the country illegally.
- (C) Petit had arranged the arrest to draw attention to his stunt.
- (D) Petit had not taken proper safety precautions.

3. How much time did Petit spend planning his walk?

- (A) One night
- (B) Two years
- (C) Six years
- (D) 18 years

4. Read this sentence from the passage:

"The seeds of the stunt had been planted when Petit was afflicted by a toothache at age 18." The author means that, while suffering from a toothache,

- (A) Petit first decided to become a street performer.
- (B) Petit felt as if a plant were growing in his mouth.
- (C) Petit first thought about walking across the towers.
- (D) Petit decided to take up gardening.

5. Read this sentence from the passage:

"As soon as he saw the picture of the towers, the accomplished wire walker knew that he would have to walk between them someday." Based on this sentence, you can tell that

- (A) Petit had walked on wires between other buildings in the past.
- (B) Petit decided to learn how to walk on wires after seeing the picture of the towers.
- (C) Petit had heard of the twin towers before he saw a picture of them.
- (D) Petit learned how to walk on wires before seeing the picture of the towers.

The Word Up Project: Level Yellow

abate / abnormal / abrupt / accelerate / affliction / flabbergast / grim / incredulous / notify / perceive / robust / rupture / throb / trivial / wince

1H Thinking Creatively

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. What is an **abnormal** talent that you wish you had?

2. Describe a situation in which you learned something that made you feel **flabbergasted**.

3. What is one thing people do that makes you **wince**?

4. A mysterious voice calls to say, "I have to **notify** you that your life is in danger."
What happens next?

5. What is the most **trivial** thing you can think of?

Word Breakdown

Flabbergast is a pretty fun word. It is most likely a combination of the words *flap* (originally meaning "to hit") and *aghast* (meaning "shocked"). So *flabbergasted* is to be hit by shock. Fat Joe once bragged in a song that his lyrics "leave you flabbergasted, gasping for air."

Perceive means to grasp or take hold of with your mind. The *per* means "completely" (just like in *perfect*) and *ceive* comes from the Latin *capere*, meaning "to take." So to *perceive* something is to take it in completely. But how do you truly perceive something? The poet William Blake wrote these influential lines many years ago: "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern."