



English II: Reading: Module 1: Lesson 6: Section 5

Reference Materials (Dictionaries, Thesauri, Glossaries) Printed/Electronic
Using Reference Guides to Analyze Words in Context

Instructions: Read the excerpt below from A. O. Scott’s movie review of “Tower Heist.” Using the reference materials we reviewed in this lesson, write down the dictionary meaning of each highlighted word and explain how it is used in the text. Then, answer other questions about each word. The first word is completed for you. Mouse over the text icon to review the word in context, and mouse over the checkbox to see a possible response to the question.

From “Crime Doesn’t Pay. Oh, Wait.” A. O. Scott, November 3, 2011. *New York Times*.

Rich guys are among the most reliable villains in Hollywood movies, and it takes no special **insight** to point out that the guys who make and star in those movies tend to be pretty well off themselves. You can call this **hypocrisy**, but I prefer to think of it as one of the cultural contradictions of capitalism that all of us have to live with.

Today’s specimen is “Tower Heist,” an action comedy produced by Brian Grazer, directed by Brett Ratner and starring Ben Stiller and Eddie Murphy. The previous sentence could be expressed mathematically as a whole bunch of zeros, which is to say that the \$20 million that is one object of the heist in question is small change. The movie’s makers and marketers surely expect to take much more than that from you and your friends in the next 48 hours or so, and you could do worse than to chip in your share, with a little something extra for the Coca-Cola Company. What you will receive in return (in addition to high-fructose corn syrup) is a mild, **chaotic** and **cartoonish** dose of **populism**, set in a Manhattan luxury high-rise at the southwestern corner of Central Park from which the name “Trump” has been excised with the utmost digital care. At the top of this heap lives Arthur Shaw, a Wall Street titan played with twinkly **malevolence** by Alan Alda.

Mr. Alda, who spent years on “M*A*S*H” turning himself into a **paradigm** of niceness, has since relished **subverting** that image, and he generously supplies occasions for the audience to snarl and hiss and gasp at him in **indignant** disbelief. A genial plutocrat, Shaw fancies himself a man of the people. He loves to remind Josh Kovaks, the building’s manager (Mr. Stiller), that they grew up in the same Queens neighborhood, and he is generally expert at disguising his **condescension** as bonhomie...

There are heist pictures that offer careful and detailed accounts of criminal procedure, generating suspense by focusing on the precise arrangements necessary to bring a brazen and **improbable** crime to **fruition**. “Tower Heist” is emphatically not one of those movies. Important plot points seem to have been edited away—or never bothered with in the first place—and credulity is strained at nearly every point, sometimes amusingly (as when a car dangles from a skyscraper, apparently unnoticed by the crowds below) and sometimes annoyingly.

Full article:

<http://movies.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/movies/ben-stiller-and-eddie-murphy-in-tower-heist-review.html>



1. Insight

Definition:

Insight is used to mean understanding.

How is the word used in the sentence?

Insight is used by the writer to illustrate the fact that it takes no special understanding on our part to realize that the people playing these evil rich people in movies are often well off themselves.

What are three synonyms of insight? Use a thesaurus.

discernment, comprehension, perception

2. Hypocrisy

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What is the etymology of this word?

3. Chaotic



Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What word could the author have chosen that does not have the connotative power that *chaotic* has? Use a thesaurus to find an alternative.





4. Cartoonish

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What are three synonyms of *cartoonish*? Use a thesaurus.



5. Populism

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What is the etymology of this word?





6. Malevolence

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What are three synonyms of this word?

What word could the author have chosen that does not have the connotative power that *malevolence* has?



7. Paradigm

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What is the etymology of this word?





8. Subverting

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What are three synonyms of *subverting*?



9. Indignant

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What are two antonyms of this word?



10. Contempt

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What is the etymology of this word?





11. Bonhomie

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What is the etymology of this word?



12. Improbable

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What are three synonyms of this word?



13. Fruition

Definition:

How is the word used in the sentence?

What is the etymology of this word?

