

LESSON 2

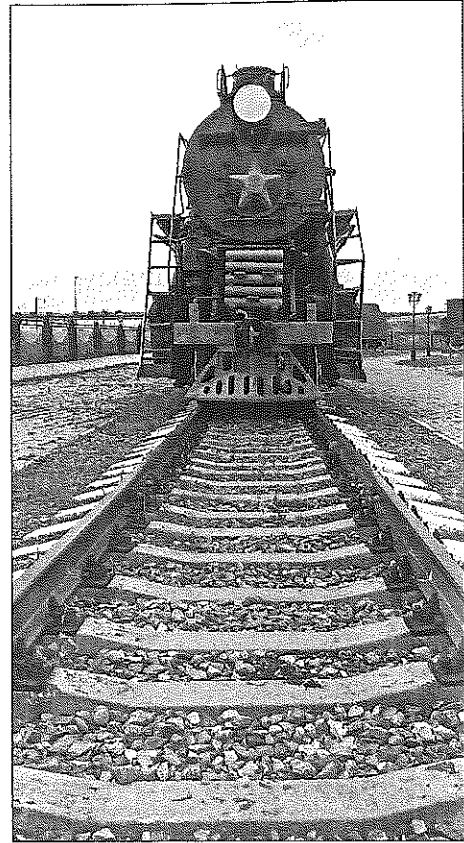
The Railway Train (poem) by Emily Dickinson

I like to see it **lap** the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, **prodigious**, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, **supercilious**, **peer**
In shanties, by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry **pare**

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting **stanza**;
Then chase itself down hill

And **neigh** like Boanerges;
Then, **punctual** as a star,
Stop—**docile** and **omnipotent**—
At its own stable door.



Exercise 1: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each Master Word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the Master Words.

Master Words

Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don't know.

docile

neigh

pare

prodigious

stanza

lap

omnipotent

peer

punctual

supercilious

• Exercise 2: Using Context Clues

Fill in the form for each of the Master Words listed below with context clues (if any), your definition, and the dictionary definition. If you have difficulty writing a definition, try using the word in a sentence instead.

1. **docile** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

2. **lap** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

3. **neigh** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

4. **omnipotent** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

5. **pare** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

6. **peer** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

7. **prodigious** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

8. **punctual** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

9. **stanza** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

10. **supercilious** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

• • • Exercise 3: Using Words in Context

Correct or Incorrect: Write **C** on the line if the word is used correctly; write **I** if the word is used incorrectly.

- _____ 1. A **docile** pet is submissive.
- _____ 2. A **punctual** student often has to stay after to make up work.
- _____ 3. It is hard to befriend someone who holds a **supercilious** attitude toward you.
- _____ 4. The more you **pare** an apple, the smaller it becomes.
- _____ 5. **Prodigious** events seem to go on forever and put everybody to sleep.
- _____ 6. The **omnipotent** wizard could never get anything right.
- _____ 7. To **peer** through a steamed-up window, you may need to wipe it with a cloth first.
- _____ 8. In the stillness of a summer night, you can hear frogs **neigh** peacefully to one another.
- _____ 9. My dog would **lap** up gallons of water after our morning runs.
- _____ 10. Harry had to leave the theater before the final **stanza** of the play.

• • • Exercise 4: Sentence Completion

From the Master Words, choose the appropriate word for the blank in each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided at the right.

1. Winning the chess tournament required ...?... concentration. _____
2. The superstorm showed the ...?... force of nature. _____
3. Everyone helped ...?... the apples for the pie filling. _____
4. The actress threw back her head and ...?...(d, ed) a hearty laugh. _____
5. The kitten would ...?... the milk from the saucer as if in a trance. _____
6. The ...?... waiters offended some diners new to the fancy restaurant. _____
7. The dog liked to rest his head on the back of the couch and ...?... outside. _____
8. Ellie sang the first few verses solo, but the band joined in on the last ...?... . _____
9. The ...?... horse gently nudged Claire's hand for another carrot. _____
10. Students who were not ...?... lost points for coming in late. _____

Exercise 5: Personification

In "The Railway Train," Emily Dickinson uses personification, a figure of speech that gives human or animal qualities to ideas or inanimate objects. For example, the persona of the poem likes to see the train "lap the miles." The description implies that the train is like a cat licking up water.

In the organizer below, write other examples of personification from the poem. Then explain each figure in the second column. An example has been done for you.

Text of Personification	Explanation
Train is said to "lap the miles"	The train is compared to a cat or other animals that might lap up water.

Exercise 6: Related Words and Meanings

The italic words in the sentences below are related to the Master Words. Write the matching synonym from the list on the line following the sentence.

docile

lap

neigh

prodigious

omnipotent

1. Tinka was a good school horse because she was so *manageable*.
2. A good rider could bring out her *amazing* jumping skills.
3. Her muscled strength made even the smallest riders feel *almighty*.
4. After a lesson, she would *whinny* to say she did not want to leave the ring.
5. If offered a sugar cube, she would *lick* it up and head happily to her stall.

Write About It: Personification

Review the personification chart you filled in on this page. Then **write a brief essay** explaining the qualities Dickinson assigns to trains through her use of personification. Use at least six Master Words or words related to the Master Words. Be sure to begin your essay with a clear introduction, include a main idea statement, and provide evidence from the poem to back up your main idea.