
Newsweek English Program

“Why I Write”

Nov. 19, 2007

No. 2

Vocabulary

Glossary

Before you look at the definitions provided, try to figure out the meaning of each word based on its use in the sentence and the paragraph. Write down a synonym for the word, and then compare your synonym with the definition below. As you look at each word, also consider its language root (English borrows many words from other languages). The number in brackets after each word is the number of the paragraph in which the word is located.

ponder [subhead/4]: weigh mentally; think over; consider (Old French *ponderer*; Latin *pondus* – weight)

seek out [1]: to make a search or inquiry; to look for (Old English - *secan*)

assault [1]: a violent physical or verbal attack (Old French - *assauter*)

madness [1]: the condition of being crazy or insane (Old English - *gemad*)

unfolding [1]: developing (from Old English *unfealdan*)

huddled [1]: a confused or crowded mass of people or things (related to Old English *hydan* - hide)

sniper [2]: person who kills from far off (from Old High German *sneþfa*)

block [2/3]: the area between streets in a city or town (from Middle English - *bloc*)

cater-cornered* [2]: situated diagonally (from Latin *quattor* -four)

sprinkling [2]: distributing in small drops or particles (Middle Dutch -*sprenkelen*)

bright [4]: intelligent (Old English *beorht*)

afford [4]: have enough money, time, or means (from Old English *geforthian*, to promote)

mainstream [6]: the prevailing trend in opinion, fashion, etc. (from Old Norse - *megann* and Old English - *stream*)

forbidden [6]: not allowed or permitted; illegal (Old English *forbeodan*)

trespasses [6]: enters without permission (Latin - *transpassare*)

foreign [6]: not from this country (Old French - *forein*)

bears [6]: carries, brings, or provides (Old English - *bearan*)

journalism [6]: the business or practice of writing and producing newspapers (Old French *jurnal*)

law-abiding [6]: following the law

deranged [7]: crazy (French - *déranger*)

regretted [7]: to feel or express sorrow or repentance (Old French - *regreter*)

turmoil [7]: violent confusion; agitation (*unknown origins*)

endeavored [7]: sincerely tried to do something (Middle English *devoir* –put oneself into)

columnist [7]: a writer who contributes regularly to a newspaper (Latin *columna* - pillar)

advertised [7]: made generally or publicly known (Old French - *avertir*)

counsel [7]: advice, especially formally given (Latin - *consilium*)

somewhat [7]: a little (some + what)

torn down [8]: (past participle of *tear*) destroyed (Old English *teran*)

fireplaces [8]: a place for a fire inside a house or business

counters [8]: a long, flat-topped surfaces used for preparing food (Anglo French - *count(e)our*)

renewal [8]: make new or vibrant again, especially cities (re + new)

shook [8]: past tense of shake – agitate or shock (Old English - *sceacan*)

upended [8]: turned upside down (up+end)

* In colloquial speech, Americans say “catty-cornered” or “kitty-cornered.”

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Idioms

See how these words and phrases are used in the article. Then use them to replace the italicized words below. The number in brackets following the idiom refers to the paragraph in which it appears.

bore witness to, about to [1]; housing project, commercial strip, went up in flames [3]; had nothing to do with, to bridge [4]; dailies, jungle [6]; the big time, took me under their collective wing, op-ed [7]; turned...into [8]

- a. I lived in a *government apartment for the poor* a couple blocks away from the Madison Street *small shopping center* that was the epicenter of the '68 explosion.
- b. And why was it that the distance between those two worlds seemed so *difficult to cross*?
- c. . . .the same fires that shook my world, upended my life, and *changed me into* a writer.
- d. Instead of laughing me out of their offices, editor James Hoge and managing editor Ralph Otwell *gave me long-term personal advice and guidance*.
- e. I did not seek out the '60s; they found me: in my living room where as a kid during a hot summer night, I *saw* the madness of the times.
- f. And when I was 19, still in college but presumably somewhat better prepared, they gave me an *opinion* column in the newspaper itself.
- g. I, at least, knew that I didn't live in a[n] *area that is very dangerous to live in* and that my 300,000 neighbors did not need to be controlled by cops.
- h. And at some point after my 18th birthday, I decided I was ready for *the highest area of a profession*.
- i. Both the Chicago Sun-Times and the Chicago Tribune, the cities two mainstream *daily newspapers*, did an impressive job covering the chaotic events of 1968.
- j. I knew that something huge was happening outside and that the world I thought I knew was *on the edge of change*.
- k. Some 1,500 National Guardsmen were rushed to the area as Madison Street *was set on fire and destroyed*.
- l. Its mission *was not related to* integration, but with giving bright young men who could not afford private school the kind of education public school kids didn't typically get.

Conversation

Re-read paragraph 6 and then discuss the following questions: What are some minority groups in your country? Are you a member of a minority group? Do you think that journalists today are prejudiced in their reporting of minority events? Give specific examples that you know of.

As an alternative, in groups, you could also make up “slanted language” phrases used by imaginary journalists.

Usage: Adjective Clauses

First, what is a **clause**? A clause is a group of related words that contains a *subject* and a *verb*, and sometimes a complement. The following sentence has 2 clauses: an **independent clause** which can stand by itself as a complete sentence and a **dependent clause** which needs an independent clause in order to have a complete meaning.

We read the article that was in Newsweek.

We read the article / that was in Newsweek.

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(independent clause) (dependent clause)

that is the subject of the dependent clause, *was* is the verb, *in Newsweek* is the complement.

I. An **adjective clause**, sometimes called a *relative clause*, is a dependent clause that modifies a noun. It is usually introduced by a relative pronoun: *who, that, which, whom, whose, when, where*.

A. Sometimes a *subject relative pronoun* introduces the clause if the word it is replacing is the *subject of the sentence*. *Who* and *that* are used for people: *which* and *that* are used for things. Notice that the adjective clause almost always immediately follows the noun it is describing.

Study the following examples.

Lane Technical School was for boys. The boys tested well.

Lane Technical School was for boys **who** tested well. [4]

This happened during the riot. The riot broke out on Chicago’s West Side in July 1966.

This happened during the riot **that** broke out on Chicago’s West Side in July 1966. [2]

This happened during the riot **which** broke out on Chicago’s West Side in July 1966.

B. Sometimes an *object relative pronoun* introduces the adjective clause if the word it is replacing is the *object of the sentence*. The object pronoun may be omitted if it does not follow a preposition.

1. *Who, whom, or that* may be used for people.

The man is my neighbor. You met him.

The man **whom you met** is my neighbor.

The man **you met** is my neighbor.

2. *Whom* is very formal and is rarely used in spoken conversation, except as the object of a preposition, when it must be used.

The man is my neighbor. You work with him.

The man **with whom** you work is my neighbor. (formal)

The man **who/that** you work **with** is my neighbor. (informal)

The man **you work with** is my neighbor. (informal)

3. *That* and *which* are used for things.

The article was interesting. We read it.

The article **that/which** we read was interesting.

The article **we read** was interesting.

The high school was for boys who tested well. I attended that high school.

The high school **which/that** I attended, was for boys who tested well.

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The high school () I attended was for boys who tested well.[4]

The world was about to change. I thought I knew that world.

The world **which/that** I thought I knew was about to change.

The world () I thought I knew was about to change. [1]

. . .the Tribune observed in one article (**that/which**) I recently reread. [2]

4. *Which* must be used after a preposition for things.

The program was interesting. We listened to it.

The program **to which we listened** was interesting. (formal)

The program **that/(which) we listened to** was interesting. (informal)

The program () **we listened to** was interesting.

C. *Where* is used in an adjective clause to modify a noun of place.

The school is historic. I teach there.

The school *where I teach* is historic.

They found me in my living room As a kid during a hot summer night, I bore witness to the madness of the times there.

They found me in my living room **where** as a kid during a hot summer night, I bore witness to the madness of the times. [1]

The building has since been torn down. I spent my childhood there.

The building **where** I spent my childhood has since been torn down. [8]

D. *When* is used in an adjective clause to modify a noun of time.

This is the year. The elections are held **this year**.

This is the year **when** the elections are held.

E. *Whose* is a possessive pronoun and replaces a possessive pronoun (my, your, his, her, its, our, their) or possessive noun (Julie’s, The United States’).

That is the girl. **Her** mother is sick.

That is the girl **whose mother is sick**.

F. PUNCTUATION NOTES

1. Do not use *commas* to set off the adjective clause from the main clause if the information is necessary to identify the noun it modifies.

I lived in a housing project a couple of blocks away from the Madison Street commercial strip **that was the epicenter of the of the ’68 explosion**. [3]

(There are many commercial strips so I am identifying this commercial strip specifically.)

2. Use *commas* if the identity of the noun is clear without the adjective clause. In this case the adjective clause just gives more information about the noun, but not essential information.

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I applied to the Chicago Sun-Times, **which was one of Chicago’s daily newspapers**, and got the job. [6]

(There is only one Chicago Sun-Times. It does not need identification. I’m just adding extra information about it.)

3. Examine the difference in meaning between the following sentences:

a. There are many boys who took the test. The boys **who tested well** went to Lane Technical School. (In this sentence, I am writing about any boy who tested well.)

b. Joe and John took the test. The boys, **who tested well**, went to Lane Technical School. (In this sentence, I am writing specifically about Joe and John.)

EXERCISES

A. Combine the following sentences using a relative pronoun to replace the underlined word. Be sure to place the adjective clause next to the noun it modifies. More than one answer is possible for numbers 1-8. No commas are necessary.

1. John paid the man. The man had done the work.

2. The teacher comforted the child. He was crying.

3. She broke the vase. It had belonged to her grandmother.

4. The chair is being repaired. John broke it.

5. The cookies were delicious. Kathy made them.

6. Mary paid the man. She had hired him.

7. John met the woman. Harry wants to marry her.

8. Ellen paid back the man. She had borrowed money from him.

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9. Here is the building. I work there.

10. I think nostalgically about the city. I grew up there.

11. Spring is the season. Flowers and love bloom this season.

12. The boy is my nephew. His picture was in the paper.

13. Joe moved to Kentucky in 1969. He got married then.

B. If necessary, insert commas into these sentences with adjective clauses.

1. Louise who plays the piano beautifully is an excellent music teacher.
2. The woman who is playing the piano is an excellent music teacher.
3. Bowling Green State University which is located in Ohio has a superb psychology department.
4. The university that I attended has a superb psychology department.
5. People who make a lot of money should give some to me.
6. Bill Gates who makes a lot of money gives a lot to charity.

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Comprehension Quiz

1. Comprehension Questions

- a. Why were Ellis Cose and his family so afraid during in July 1966?
- b. Find the sentence that tells you that Cose was aware that his world was going to change.
- c. Re-read paragraphs 1 and 2 carefully. Put the following events in chronological order.
_____ A sniper attack
_____ Police turned off a fire hydrant which angered hot housing project residents.
_____ Two huge buildings were evacuated cater-cornered from Cose’s apartment building.
_____ 100 policemen flooded the area.
- d. Which riot was worse, 1966 or 1968?
- e. Even though the Chicago Sun-Times and the Chicago Tribune did a good job reporting on the riots of 1968, why was Cose so disappointed in the coverage?
- f. Find the sentence in Paragraph 7 that shows Cose had a lot of confidence in himself at 18 years old.
- g. What is ironic about the condominium developments in Cose’s old neighborhood?
- h. Why did Cose become a writer?

2. True or False

Mark each of the following statements with a T if the answer is true, or an F if the answer is false.

- a. _____ One of the main goals of Lane Technical High School was integration.
- b. _____ Cose’s high school opus on race and riots in America was well-written
- c. _____ Most of the 300,000 residents in Cose’s African-American neighborhood did not follow the law.
- d. _____ Cose believed that the riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention were simply between crazy hippies and the police.
- e. _____ Gwendolyn Brooks, James Hoge, and Ralph Otwell gave encouragement and support to a young Cose.

3. Make it True.

For each statement you marked false above, rewrite the sentence so that it’s true.

4. Essay Question

Write a 500-word essay responding to the following question.

If change is slow, do you think that violence is the best way for minority groups to affect change? Explain your answer by citing examples from the current and historical events.

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Teacher’s Notes

Vocabulary

Idioms

a. housing projects/ commercial strip; b. to bridge; c. turned into; d. under their collective wing; e. bore witness; f.. op-ed; g. jungle; h. the big time; i. dailies; j. about to; k. went up in flames; l. had nothing to do with

Usage

Answers

- A. 1. John paid the man who had done the work./ John paid the man that had done the work.
2. The teacher comforted the child who was crying./The teacher comforted the child that was crying.
3. She broke the vase which had belonged to her grandmother./She broke the vase that had belonged to her grandmother.
4. The chair which John broke is being repaired. / The chair that John broke is being repaired. /The chair John broke is being repaired.
5. The cookies which Kathy made were delicious. The cookies that Kathy made were delicious. The cookies Kathy made were delicious.
6. Mary paid the man whom she hired./ Mary paid the man that she hired./Mary paid the man she hired.
7. John met the woman whom Harry wants to marry./ John met the woman that Harry wants to marry./John met the woman Harry wants to marry.
8. Ellen paid back the man from whom she had borrowed money./Ellen paid back the man whom she borrowed money from./Ellen paid back the man that she borrowed money from./Ellen paid back the man she borrowed money from.
9. Here is the building where I work.
10. I think nostalgically about the city where I grew up.
11. Spring is the season when flowers and love bloom.
12. The boy whose picture was in the paper is my nephew.
13. Joe moved to Kentucky in 1969 when he got married.
- B. 1. Louise, who plays the piano beautifully, is an excellent music teacher.
2. The woman who is playing the piano is an excellent music teacher.
3. Bowling Green State University, which is located in Ohio, has a superb psychology department.
4. The university that I attended has a superb psychology department.
5. People who make a lot of money should give some to me. (They should give some to you, too!)
6. Bill Gates, who makes a lot of money, gives a lot to charity.

Comprehension Quiz

1. Comprehension Questions

- a. They were afraid because there were gunshots, screams, and a massive police assault on their neighbors in two buildings across the way. [1]
b. “I knew that something huge was happening outside and that the world I thought I knew was about to change.” [1]
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- c. 2. A sniper attack; 1. Police turned off a fire hydrant which angered hot housing project residents.; 4. Two huge buildings were evacuated cater-cornered from Cose’s apartment building.; 3. 100 policemen flooded the area.
- d. The 1968 riot was worse than the 1966 riot. [2]
- e. He wrote the paper because he knew he could produce better journalism than the writers he had been reading and because he was upset that the reporters had stereotyped and generalized about his neighborhood and the people in it. His neighborhood was not a “jungle” and the people were generally law-abiding. [6]
- f. “At some point after my 18th birthday, I decided I was ready for the big time.” [7]
- g. It is ironic because luxury apartments are replacing some of the poorest housing projects in Chicago. [8]
- h. He became a writer because a major life experience led him to want to write the truth about a situation.(Answers may vary because his reason for writing is inferred throughout the article.)

2. True or False

a. F; b. T; c. F; d. F; e. T

3. Make it True

- a. One of its main goals was to give bright young men who could not afford private education the kind of education that public school students didn’t typically get.
- c. Most of the 300,000 residents in Cose’s African-American neighborhood followed the law. (were law-abiding)
- d. Cose believed that the riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention were not simply between crazy hippies and the police, but the real story was much more complicated than that.

4. Essay

Answers will vary.

Meet the Author of the NEWSWEEK English Program:

Katherine Spinnato Orrall has an M.Ed in English as a Second Language and currently teaches American History to ESL Students at Greater Lawrence Technical School in Massachusetts. The events of 1968 continue to shape her life.