

Little Dorrit: Circumlocution Office

Exercise 1

Which meaning (a, b or c) in the right hand column matches the word in ***bold italics*** in the left hand column?

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| <p>1 If you circumnavigate the word, you sail all the way around it. If you have elocution lessons, you are taught how to speak in a certain way. So <i>circumlocution</i> means</p> | <p>a. Talking around a subject, not getting to the point.
 b. Speaking in a very loud voice.
 c. Keeping silent.</p> |
| <p>2 It will be very difficult to do this without his <i>acquiescence</i>; he could stop you.</p> | <p>a. Assistance
 b. Knowledge
 c. Agreement</p> |
| <p>3 It took me ages just to buy 2 things because there was a <i>legion</i> of shoppers out today.</p> | <p>a. A great number
 b. A formation of soldiers
 c. An absence</p> |
| <p>4 It didn't matter how much I <i>remonstrated</i>; he just went ahead and did it anyway.</p> | <p>a. Ate and drank
 b. Waited
 c. Protested</p> |
| <p>5 At the party, my wife <i>sidled</i> up to me and whispered 'this is boring. Let's go.'</p> | <p>a. Ran, moving quickly
 b. Strode, taking big steps
 c. Moved cautiously, sideways</p> |
| <p>6 'He's not that important; just a <i>functionary</i>, really.'</p> | <p>a. Office window cleaner
 b. A low grade office worker
 c. General Manager</p> |
| <p>7 For breakfast, I usually just have toast and <i>marmalade</i>.</p> | <p>a. A type of cooked meat
 b. A way of cooking eggs
 c. A type of jam, from oranges</p> |
| <p>8 I doubt if she's ever felt shy or nervous about anything; she's very <i>self-assured</i>.</p> | <p>a. Self-confident
 b. Self-aware
 c. Self-hating</p> |
| <p>9 The poor Joneses. The burglars completely <i>cleaned</i> them <i>out!</i></p> | <p>a. Took everything
 b. Did their housework
 c. Repainted their house</p> |
| <p>10 She's so <i>vivacious</i>; the life and soul of any party.</p> | <p>a. Generous
 b. Lively
 c. Entertaining</p> |

Exercise 2

Now read the passage. You have 3 minutes to answer whether Arthur Clennam finds the answer to his question.

Exercise 3

Read the passage again and find the answers to the following questions:

1. How many people does Arthur Clennam speak to in the Circumlocution Office? List them.

6 - Mr Barnacle, Mr Wobbler, 4 gentlemen (number 1, number 2, number 3 & number 4, the 'vivacious' young man.) There is also Jenkinson, the messenger, and Mr Wobbler's companion, but we don't know that Clennam speaks with them.

2. The Circumlocution Office only concerned itself with important matters of state. True or False?

False, as its fingers were in small tarts as well as large pies (lines 3-4) and 'all the business of the country' went through it (10).

3. The Circumlocution Office was not afraid of blocking the objectives of the government. True or False?

True. The government may have 'come in' (ie 'been elected') believing something as 'necessary to be done' (7) but the Circumlocution Office would focus on 'how not to do it'.

4. Arthur Clennam is trying to find out information to help somebody else and not for his own benefit. True or False?

True. He wants to know about the case against a man called Dorrit, who is in prison for debt (14-15).

5. Summarise the story told in Mr Wobbler's office in 1 sentence of no more than 20 words.

A man bets on a dog, but the dog is made drunk, so the man loses his money.

6. Mr Wobbler was polishing his gun when Clennam entered the office. True or False?

False. Mr Wobbler speaks with his mouth full (33), so he is the gentleman with the toast and marmalade, not the gentleman with the gun.

7. How is 'number four' different from the other office workers throughout the passage?

It's not that he helps Clennam, but that he gives him useful advice (not to pursue his matter in the office). He is also polite and friendly in his manner, rather than dismissive or obstructive.

8. How many times does Clennam say 'I want to know'?

5 times - (12, 14, 17, 33, 41)