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Word Generation - Unit 1.24

Focus Words

assault | abuse | trigger | distort | physical

WEEKLY PASSAGE

In the hallway of Stevens High School, Franny and Jada, two seventh-grade girls, are leaning against their lockers reading a magazine. They read a horrible story about their favorite pop-singing couple: Shelley and James. Jada reads aloud: "James became angry at Shelley. He hit her in the face, then punched and bit her repeatedly, threatened to kill her, and even choked her, over the course of 20 minutes." At first, neither girl can believe that James, the beloved star, **physically assaulted** Shelley. "Maybe Shelley is lying," Jada says. "Maybe Shelley wasn't hurt that badly. Or maybe she did something that **triggered** the assault." But when they see the photo of Shelley's bruised, bloody face, they changed their minds.

According to the Family Violence Prevention Fund, dating violence is a serious problem. One in three teenage girls is physically, emotionally, or verbally **abused** by a dating partner.

Franny and Jada read on. The article says that when James was young, he saw his father beat his mother. His attitude toward women and violence may have become **distorted** by these experiences. But is this a good explanation? Does it excuse his behavior?

Finally, the article says that Shelley eventually forgave James and dropped the charges. Franny and Jada are outraged. "Even if Shelley drops the charges, the police should make James pay," says Franny. "He broke the law!" Franny's and Jada's friend, Kim, overhears their conversation. "No one really knows what went on between Shelley and James," she says. "If Shelley wants him back, that's her business."

What do you think? Should Shelley press charges, or is it her right to decide that James should be forgiven? Is dating violence a private matter, or a public one? How should we handle dating violence?

TEACHER
Discussion questions:
- What did James do?
- What was James's childhood like?
- How is physical abuse different from verbal and emotional abuse?
- How did Franny and Jada's attitude about Shelley change as they read the article?
- How is Kim's opinion different from Franny and Jada's?

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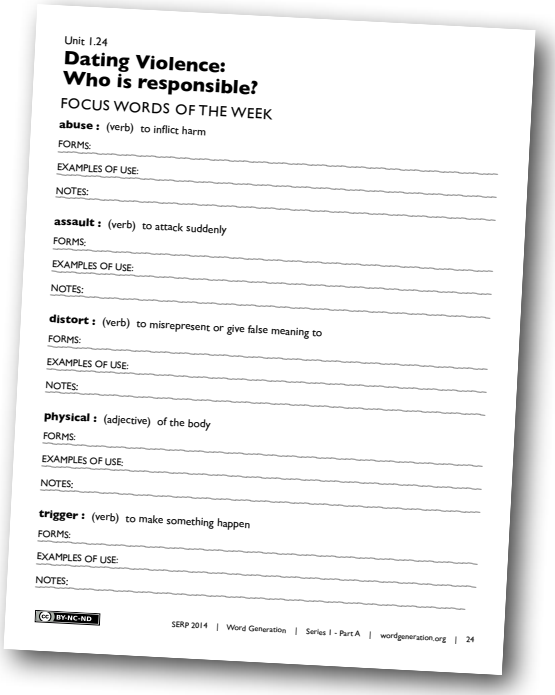
PLEASE NOTE:
THE STUDENT VERSION OF THIS PAGE IS FORMATTED DIFFERENTLY


Unit 1.24

Dating Violence: Who is responsible?

FOCUS WORDS OF THE WEEK

abuse : (verb) to inflict harm
FORMS:
EXAMPLES OF USE:
NOTES:

assault : (verb) to attack suddenly
FORMS:
EXAMPLES OF USE:
NOTES:

distort : (verb) to misrepresent or give false meaning to
FORMS:
EXAMPLES OF USE:
NOTES:

physical : (adjective) of the body
FORMS:
EXAMPLES OF USE:
NOTES:

trigger : (verb) to make something happen
FORMS:
EXAMPLES OF USE:
NOTES:

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Unit 1.24

WORD CHART FOR TEACHERS

This chart is not in the student book. It is a resource for teachers to support students in the use of the focus words each week. Students are provided one page in each unit immediately following the weekly passage with a basic definition printed and space for taking notes.

Word	Meaning	Forms			Related Words
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/ Suffixes	
abuse	(v.) – to inflict harm	abuse (n.) abuses abused abusing	use	abusable abusive abusively abuser	misuse
assault	(v.) – to attack suddenly	assault (n.) assaults assaulted assaulting		assaulter assaultive	somersault assailant
distort	(v.) – to misrepresent or give false meaning to	distorts distorted distorting	tort	distortion	tort retort contort extort torque torture
physical	(adj.) – of the body		physic	physically	physique physics physician
trigger	(v.) – to make something happen	trigger (n.) triggers triggered triggering			trigger-finger trigger-happy triggerman

Unit 1.24

Dating Violence: Who is responsible?

PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

Many dating violence victims have **distorted** ideas about relationships. They may think that jealous behavior and even **physical assault** are ways of showing love. They may blame themselves for **triggering** verbal or physical **abuse**. Violence prevention programs urge teens to recognize that mean and controlling behavior has no place in a healthy relationship and can lead to more serious abuse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide the following dating violence statistics.

- *Each year, 1 in 4 adolescents is verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by a dating partner*
- *One in ten students report being physically hurt by a girlfriend or boyfriend in the past year*

Option 1: What percent of students was physically hurt by a girlfriend or boyfriend in the past year?

A) 10%

B) 15%

C) 20%

D) 25%

Option 2: One in four adolescents is abused or assaulted by a dating partner. In a group of 5 students, if each one has a one-in-four chance of being a victim, what is the likelihood that there are NO victims?

Answer: .75 x .75 x .75 x .75 x .75, or $.75^5$, ≈ .24, or about a 24% chance

Discussion Question: According to the CDC, 72% of 8th and 9th graders date. In your opinion, do students understand healthy relationships or do they have **distorted** ideas about how dating partners should act? Do students know which behaviors constitute **abuse**? Which do you think is a more common problem: **physical assault** or emotional abuse? If a girlfriend or boyfriend does something that **triggers** a violent response in their dating partner, who is responsible for the violence?

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Unit 1.24

Dating violence: Who is responsible?

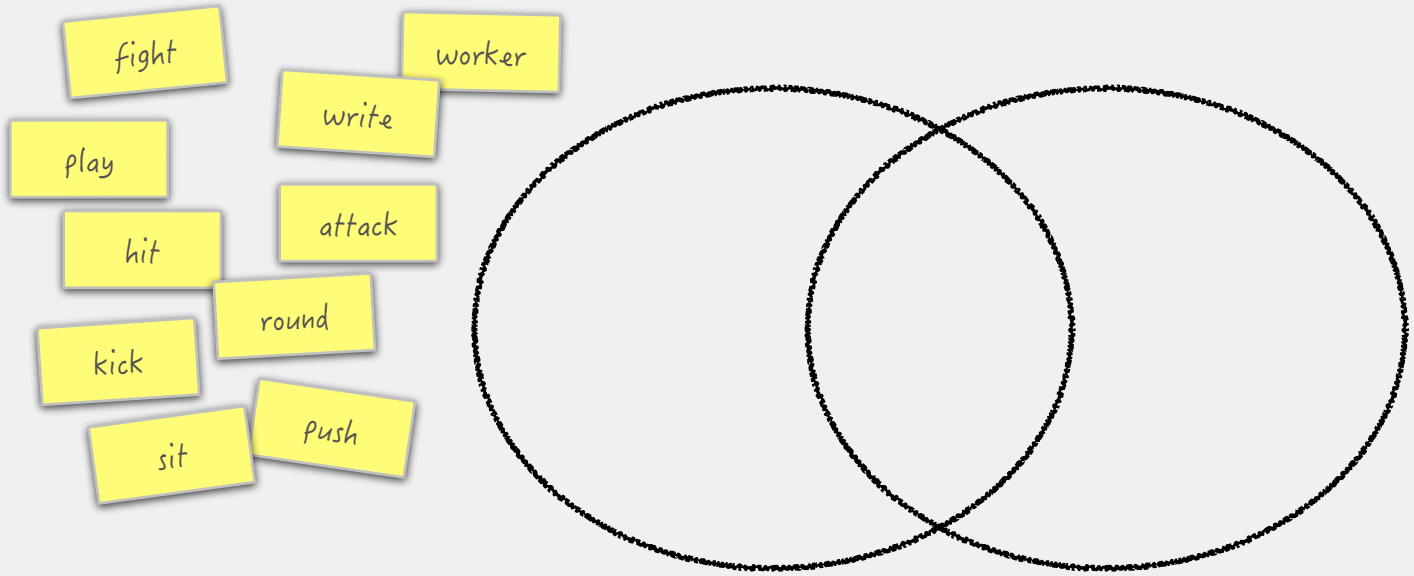
THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY

Mr. Seemy's class is discussing dating violence. He mentions that some researchers think this kind of **abuse** stems from **distorted** ideas about gender. "Some young men believe that 'being a man' means solving arguments with **physical** force. Perhaps these men don't know how to solve their problems with words, and then a disagreement can **trigger** an **assault**."

"I think that male teenagers aren't like that," said Pedro, "even if they become more like that as they grow older. And I have an idea of how I might collect some data!"

→ Here is Pedro's plan for his exploration:

Procedure: On 10 cards, write down 5 words that are connected to violence and 5 words that are neutral. Ask male teenagers to sort the cards into categories as quickly as possible. The 4 categories are **male/female/both/neither**. Then ask men in their 20s, 30s, and 40s to do the same thing. Compare results to see if older men place more of the violent words in the "male" category.



1. How might Pedro use the Venn Diagram as part of his investigation?

One ellipse could represent *male* and the other *female*. Their intersection could represent *both*, and the area outside the ellipses could represent *neither*. Those areas could be labeled, and the study subjects could place the cards to indicate their associations.

2. If Pedro asked you for advice to make his investigation more scientific, what would you tell him?

Students' answers may vary. Different "violent" words could be used with some subjects to see if some are considered more masculine or feminine (might subjects categorized *scratch* differently from *punch* on average?). If *only* violent words or *only* neutral words are presented to subjects, do subjects assign them different genders just because they think they are supposed to distribute the words among the available options? Are bilingual subjects ever influenced by the grammatical gender that words might have in their non-English language?

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Unit 1.24

Dating Violence: Who is responsible?

DEBATING THE ISSUE

TEACHER
Whatever the debate format, ask students to use academically productive talk when arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read these sample positions to illustrate some possibilities, but students should be encouraged to take their own positions about the issue at hand.

Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A A victim of dating violence might have triggered the assault. If the victim drops the charges, the police should stay out of it.

B Assault is wrong. Police should encourage victims of dating violence to press charges.

C Assault is always wrong. A person who physically abuses a dating partner should always be punished, even if the victim won't press charges.

D People who come from abusive homes may have distorted ideas about dating. If a person from an abusive home assaults a dating partner, he or she should be given counseling, not punished.

E _____
_____
_____

Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

_____
_____
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_____

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I think it's more accurate to say...

That's interesting – can you tell why you think that?

Let me share something from the reading that will help us...

I think the evidence is contrary to what you're saying because...

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Unit 1.24

Dating Violence: Who is responsible?

WRITE ABOUT IT

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples.
Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

Focus Words

assault | abuse | trigger | distort | physical

TEACHER

Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on a projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation notebooks as needed.

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