

## Literary Analysis Step 2 – Example – *The Lady, or the Tiger?*

In this article I'll lead you through a study of a few words you might have chosen in the first paragraph of Frank Stockton's *The Lady, or the Tiger?* You will want to download two documents – the blank Vocabulary Study sheet [HERE](#); and the Sample vocabulary sheet for these five words [HERE](#). I will also assume you have access to an online dictionary and you can use its text-to-speech feature. [[dictionary.com](#) and many others have this feature] You can work with an in-print dictionary as well if that is what is available to you. While you're there, drag out your copy of the story – the one you marked up...the one with the line numbers on it. If you didn't get that 'version' you might want to do so – we'll be using the line numbers often as the series continues. Download that file [HERE](#).

Vocabulary study is a simple thing. Let's begin with the first word a past student of mine chose: *florid*. Looking at the sentence on line 5 it is clear that it is an ADJECTIVE. "His ideas were large, florid...." Use the text-to-speech on the dictionary web site. [try not to look at the meaning, even though it is right there!] LISTEN to it a few times. Say the word to yourself. First - does it sound positive, or negative? Good or bad? Cool or Yucky? Mark + or -. Now GUESS what it means, in the sentence.

To Nick *florid* sounded a bit like *flower* so he marked + and guessed flowery.

Now look at the meanings. The first meaning is red or rosy and the second actually IS flowery. Thinking about the ideas of a semi-barbaric king, which meaning makes the most sense? He chose overly ornate from the second meaning.

Finally he re-wrote the phrase with the synonym in it.

The second word, *untrammelled* posed another problem. After making entries into the first three boxes he went to the dictionary to HEAR the word. And did not find it. *Trammel* is the closest form available. No problem! He knew that UN- as in UNlikely or UNhappy is a meaning reverser. He listen, guessed. *Trammel* sounded like *trample* to Nick, so he thought *Untrample* was good and guessed not crushed as the meaning.

As he looked farther down the dictionary entry he noticed other features. He saw a link for "Use untrammelled in a sentence." That sentence gave him a big clue. Also he found a number of synonyms for *trammel* listed. He changed his guess to *free*.

*Exuberant* was fairly straightforward, so you go on and do that one now.

Self-communing was a bit harder. Nick forgot at first to split it into the two parts: *self* and *commning*. After that he found commune AND remembered that it was a verb, not the noun, he was looking for. The -ing ending on a verb CAN turn it into an Adjective...Nick barely remembered some long-forgotten lesson about Gerunds!

Finally, *genial* was a pretty easy one.

Do exactly the same thing for every single word you didn't recognize in the story. Seem like too many? Remind yourself that it will be fewer with every study you do! Push on – you will be glad you did.

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