

Small Is Beautiful Vocabulary Text

Hello, welcome to the vocabulary lesson for “Small is Beautiful.”

Let’s talk about our first word. Our first word is cultivate, to cultivate. Of course, to cultivate means to grow or to encourage something. So it’s to cultivate, it means to grow or to encourage something.

Our next word is envy, envy. He says our cultures are cultivating envy, they’re encouraging envy. Envy really means jealousy. Jealousy, it means someone else has something good and you don’t like it, right? You are jealous. You’re jealous of them. If they have something better than you, you don’t feel good about them. You don’t feel happy because they are happy. Instead you feel mad or angry or jealous. You feel bad because you think “Ah, I want that. I want that. I want that,” right? So envy really means jealousy.

Our next word is frenzy, a frenzy. A frenzy is uncontrolled action. It really means just constantly doing a lot of things without control. So, for example, sharks in the ocean, if you throw a dead fish in the water they will...rawr...they will start attacking the fish and they all go crazy. So that’s this idea of, that they just start attacking and moving and doing all of these things without control. So frenzy really means kind of go crazy, just...aaaahhhh...just start doing a lot of things, going crazy about it...lots and lots of actions with no control.

Our next word is consumerism, consumerism. Consumerism means the philosophy or the idea that buying stuff is most important in your life. It’s the most important thing. So that you get meaning from buying things, that buying stuff, buying cars, buying expensive houses, buying more, more, more, more, that’s what is most important in life. That idea is called consumerism. Consumerism, so Schumacher is saying that right now most of our cultures are consumerist cultures...that we are focused on consumerism in most countries.

Our next word is abate, to abate. He says that consumerism in most of our countries does not abate as we get richer. So to abate means to slow down or to stop, or to abate can also mean to lessen. To get smaller, to get weaker, it has this idea of slowing down, stopping. So he’s thinking if someone gets rich then their greed, their desire for money, should go down. It should become lower. It should abate. But he’s saying it does not abate. It does not slow down. It does not get less. So again, to abate, to get less, to lessen, to slow down.

Next we have the word ruthlessness, or ruthless. So ruthless means really mean, cruel, very, very tough and cruel, no mercy. So ruthlessness is the noun and ruthless is the adjective. So he's saying that rich countries are very ruthless about getting money. They're the most ruthless so those people, those countries that already have a lot of money, they're super ruthless about getting more. They are cruel. They're tough, not kind.

Alright, our next word is humanize, to humanize. To humanize, for example, he talks about to humanize work, or the humanization of work. So humanization or humanize, to humanize is the verb...to humanize means to make something more kind, more human, better for people. So, and the opposite is to dehumanize. To dehumanize means to make something less human. It means to make it less kind, less soft, less healthy. To humanize, using it as a verb, means to make something more healthy, more kind, more good for people. So to humanize work means to make work, to make jobs healthier, happier, better for people.

Our next word is monotonous. Schumacher says most jobs, most normal jobs in the world are monotonous. Monotonous means boring. Monotonous means doing the same again, again, again and again...very, very boring. So again monotonous means boring. A monotonous job is a boring job. It means you're just doing the same thing again and again and again. For example, working in a factory, people who work in a factory, they do the same small task again, again, again, again. Every day, all day, that is a monotonous job.

Our next word is absurd, absurd. So he's saying this situation is absurd. Absurd means crazy and ridiculous, ridiculous. So it has this idea of foolish or stupid, foolish and stupid, absurd. Absurd means foolish and stupid. Absurd means ridiculous, ridiculous...absurd.

And our final word is preoccupation. We have a preoccupation with money in the United States. Preoccupation means something you think about all the time. Similar to the word obsession, obsession and preoccupation, very close. Preoccupation, something that you think about all the time. I have a preoccupation with money. It means I think about money all the time. We can use this as a verb also, preoccupation is a noun but we can use it as a verb, as an action. We can say "I am preoccupied with money." It means I am focused on money. I am obsessed with money. I am thinking about money all the time. I am preoccupied with money.

That is all for the vocabulary lesson for Small is Beautiful. See you next time.