

3

Personality Traits and Attitudes I

Are you *personable* or *petulant*? *Perfidious* or *punctilious*? The 20 words in this chapter identify some of the characteristics that describe who we are and how we behave.

Word List

blithe (blīth) *adj.* lighthearted, casual, and carefree. *Rachel's blithe attitude toward spending money left her penniless and in debt.*

bumptious ('bump·shūs) *adj.* arrogant, conceited. *The bumptious man could not stop talking about himself or looking in the mirror.*

capricious (kā·'prish·ūs) *adj.* impulsive, whimsical, and unpredictable. *Robin Williams, the comedian, demonstrates a most capricious nature even when he is not performing.*

churlish ('chur·lish) *adj.* ill-mannered, boorish, rude. *Angelo's churlish remarks made everyone at the table uncomfortable and ill at ease.*

circumspect ('sur·kūm·spekt) *adj.* cautious, wary, watchful. *The captain was circumspect as he guided the boat through the fog.*

craven ('kray·vēn) *adj.* cowardly. *"This craven act of violence will not go unpunished," remarked the police chief.*

diffident ('dif·i·dēnt) *adj.* lacking self-confidence; shy and timid. *Alan's diffident nature is often misinterpreted as arrogance.*

gregarious (grē·'gair·i·ūs) *adj.* 1. seeking and enjoying the company of others; sociable. 2. tending to form a group with others of the same kind. *John was a gregarious fellow who always had fun at social events.*

irascible (i·'ras·ī·bēl) *adj.* irritable, easily aroused to anger; hot tempered. *Her irascible temperament caused many problems with the staff at the office.*

overweening (oh·vēr·'wee·ning) *adj.* 1. presumptuously arrogant, overbearing. 2. excessive, immoderate. *I quit because I couldn't stand to work for such an overweening boss.*

perfidious (pěr·'fid·i·ūs) *adj.* treacherous, dishonest; violating good faith, disloyal. *The perfidious knight betrayed his king.*

personable ('pur·sō·nā·bēl) *adj.* pleasing in appearance or manner; attractive. *Sandra is personable and well-liked by her peers.*

petulant ('pech·u·lānt) *adj.* peevish; unreasonably or easily irritated or annoyed. *The pouting and sulking child could only be described as petulant.*

pretentious (pri·'ten·shūs) *adj.* showy, pompous, putting on airs. *Hannah thinks that being pretentious will make people like her, but she is sorely mistaken.*

501 Vocabulary Questions

puerile ('pyoo·ě·rĭl) *adj.* 1. childish, immature. 2. suitable only for children; belonging to or of childhood. *Andrew is a remarkably successful businessman for someone so puerile.*

punctilious (pungk·'til·i·ŭs) *adj.* very conscientious and precise; paying great attention to details or trivialities, especially in regard to etiquette. *Kira is as punctilious in her personal affairs as she is in the workplace.*

sagacious (să·'gay·shŭs) *adj.* having or showing sound judgment; perceptive, wise. *My sagacious uncle always gives me good, sound advice.*

sanguine ('sang·gwin) *adj.* 1. confidently cheerful, optimistic. 2. of the color of blood; red. *People are drawn to her because of her sanguine and pleasant nature.*

saturnine ('sat·ŭr·nĭn) *adj.* gloomy, dark, or sullen. *The saturnine child sulked for hours.*

surly ('sur·lee) *adj.* bad-tempered, gruff, or unfriendly in a way that suggests menace. *Emily received a surly greeting from the normally cheerful receptionist.*