

ROGET'S THESAURUS  
of  
**WORDS**  
for  
*Intellectuals*



DAVID OLSEN, MICHELLE BEVILACQUA,  
& JUSTIN CORD HAYES

SYNONYMS, ANTONYMS,  
& RELATED TERMS

*Every Smart Person  
Should Know How  
to Use*

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# Introduction

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MOST OF THE WORDS WE USE EVERY DAY come from familiar sources: our family and friends; colleagues; whether they be coworkers or fellow students; and all the media we are exposed to or participate in. This is our working vocabulary, and it should be sufficient for our communication needs. Every field of endeavor has its own terminology, of course, a set of specialized terms developed as shorthand for specialized needs. Usually, however, this terminology is limited in both size and utility, and changes only slowly over time.

Some of us have become aware of a world made larger by an enriched vocabulary. We have been exposed, whether willingly or otherwise, to literature—fiction, nonfiction, and poetry—created by people whose goal is to communicate with others and who have built an arsenal of words for that purpose. We may have been surprised by the beauty of our language, or impressed with its power of expression, and from this realization desire to enrich our own ability to communicate.

Beyond improved expression, there are other benefits to building a vocabulary: an increased vocabulary will improve reading comprehension, and because our linguistic vocabulary is equivalent to our thinking vocabulary, we improve our ability to comprehend and reason by increasing the range of words we use. In addition, because we may be judged on the basis of our vocabulary, by augmenting it we can improve our social status. And that brings us to the purpose and value of this book: making you smarter and helping you to sound smarter.

*Roget's Thesaurus of Words for Intellectuals* offers an array of the finest words our language has to offer arranged by concept. Instead of providing *all* the words that share a meaning, this book concentrates on just those words representing a higher level of expression, that are more precise—or more obscure. By learning and using these words, you will distinguish yourself from your friends and colleagues, and sound like an intellectual.

The book is arranged alphabetically by concept. The concept words were chosen for their simplicity, lack of ambiguity, and breadth. These words encompass a broad spectrum: within each list you'll find a wide

range of terms as well as different parts of speech. The intent is to provide signposts on the path to discovery of words that may be unfamiliar or infrequently encountered.

This book is designed as a tool for the person who is searching for just the right word and wishes to sound smart. It is hoped that some of our language's richness, complexity, and power will be revealed in the process.

# A

## 1. Abuse

(*uh-BYOOZ*), verb

To use insulting, harsh, or unjust language to or about; to use improperly; misuse; to harm by treating badly; to treat in an offensive way.

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## VERBS

**revile** (*rih-VILE*). To curse or abuse in harsh language.

*Realizing that he was REVILED by those opposing his stand on the military buildup, the senator decided to cancel his appearance at the campus.*

## ADJECTIVES

**contumelious** (*kon-too-MEE-lee-us*). Insolently humiliating and abusive; contemptuous; insulting.

*The defendant passively endured the prosecutor's CONTUMELIOUS speech.*

**opprobrious** (*uh-PRO-bree-us*). Abusive; disrespectful.

*Martha was caught off guard by her friend's sudden OPPROBRIOUS attack on her behavior of the previous night.*

**scurrilous** (*SKUR-ih-luss*). Offensive to civilized discourse; verbally abusive; vulgar; coarse; slanderous.

*Because they were made on the floor of the Senate, the senator's SCURRILOUS accusations against me were protected, but if he should dare to repeat them in another setting, I will sue him for every penny he's worth.*

**truculent** (*TRUK-you-lent*). Rude; mean; scathingly harsh.

*He knew the play was not his best, but James was not prepared for the TRUCULENT reviews by all the critics.*

**virulent** (*VIR-yuh-lent*). Poisonously or intensely hostile.

*Marla's VIRULENT words were meant to hurt her sister deeply.*

**vitriolic** (*vit-ree-OL-ik*). Acidic; harsh; caustic.

*McCarthy's VITRIOLIC attacks on organizations with no actual communist ties went completely unchallenged in the Senate.*

**vituperative** (*vie-TOO-per-uh-tive*).

Scathing and harshly abusive, as criticism.

*You can't hide your VITUPERATIVE attack behind a few surface pleasantries!*



## NOUNS

**invective** (*inn-VEK-tiv*). Criticism or negative observations expressed in the strongest, harshest possible terms.

*“The art of INVECTIVE resembles the art of boxing. Very few fights are won with the straight left. It is too obvious, and it can be too easily countered.”*

—Gilbert Highet, Scottish-born, American biographer and essayist

**obloquy** (*OB-luh-kwee*). Censure or verbal abuse of a person, especially by many people or the public; public discredit.

*There appears to be no end to the number of celebrities whose activities result in dramatic and lengthy OBLOQUY.*

## ANTONYMS

**extol** (*eks-TOLE*). To praise with great enthusiasm.

*William has not ceased to EXTOL the virtues of his new girlfriend.*

**laud** (*LAWD*). Commend; praise.

*Rebecca loves her history teacher and LAUDS him constantly.*

See also: Criticize

## 2. Achievement

(*uh-CHEEV-muhnt*), noun

Something accomplished, especially by skill, work, courage, etc.; feat; exploit; a great deed.

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## NOUNS

**accomplishment** (uh-KOM-plish-muhnt). Something successfully completed.

*To the casual observer it was just a sidewalk, but Simon was proud of his ACCOMPLISHMENT.*

**attainment** (uh-TEYN-muhnt). An achievement.

*“I declare, on my soul and conscience, that the ATTAINMENT of power, or of a great name in literature, seemed to me an easier victory than a success with some young, witty, and gracious lady of high degree.”*

—Honoré de Balzac, French novelist

**capstone** (CAP-stone). A crowning achievement; a finishing touch; originally, a protective stone at the top of an arch.

*When she won the Pulitzer Prize for her last novel, it was the CAPSTONE to a long and distinguished literary career.*

**eminence** (EM-ih-nunce). Superiority or outstanding notability; having great achievements or high rank.

*Doctor Powers’s EMINENCE as a surgeon is well known.*

**fruition** (froo-ISH-un). That which has arisen from development, possession, use, or effort; the achievement of something desired or labored for.

*The novel was, in a sense, the FRUITION of a lifetime of work for Melville.*

**masterpiece** (MAS-ter-pees). A person’s greatest work; achievement of a lifetime.

*“When love and skill work together, expect a MASTERPIECE.”*

—John Ruskin, English art critic

## ADJECTIVES

**venerable** (*VEN-err-uh-bull*). Respected and revered, especially due to achievement, intelligence, or character.

*After many years of performing to the highest standards, our orchestra has achieved a VENERABLE reputation.*

## ANTONYMS

**debacle** (*dih-BA-kull*). Utter collapse or rout; a complete (often ludicrous) failure.

*The initiative seemed promising enough, but turned out to be another of George's DEBACLES.*

### 3. Agree

(*uh-GREE*), verb

To consent or concede; to be in harmony; have the same opinion; to come to an understanding.

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## VERBS

**accede** (*ak-SEED*). To give approval, consent, or approval.

*The college president eventually ACCEDDED to the demands of the student demonstrators.*

**acquiesce** (*ak-wee-ES*). To accept or consent silently without protest or enthusiasm.

*When he saw the policeman approach with his gun drawn, the bandit ACQUIESCED to his arrest.*

**mollify** (*MOL-uh-fye*). To soothe, soften in temper; pacify; appease.

*The umpire's attempts to MOLLIFY the two screaming managers with some risqué humor were to no avail.*

**pacify** (*PASS-uh-fye*). To appease; bring to a state of peace or calm; tranquilize.

*Her suggestion that she offer a written apology to the offended client seemed to PACIFY Mr. Peters.*

**placate** (*PLAY-kate*). To reduce the anger of; appease.

*Although the company was unable to raise wages, it did make an effort to PLACATE the union by extending the afternoon coffee break.*



# ADJECTIVES

**amenable** (*ah-MEE-nah-bull*). Agreeable to the wishes and desires of others.

*Mark considers himself AMENABLE, but the rest of us just think he's a pushover.*

**complaisant** (*kuhm-PLAY-zuhnt*). Agreeable and eager to please.

*Eleanor is far too COMPLAISANT with common strangers.*

**conciliatory** (*kon-SILL-ee-ah-tore-ee*). Reconciling; able to settle a dispute or resolve a conflict in a manner that leaves no hard feelings on either side.

*"If you are not very clever, you should be CONCILIATORY."*

—Benjamin Disraeli, British statesmen and literary figure

**palatable** (*PAL-uh-tuh-bull*). Agreeable; acceptable.

*You have two options, Mr. Mayor, neither very PALATABLE.*

## NOUNS

**accord** (uh-KORD). Official agreement or treaty; harmony.

*After a prolonged strike, with the issue of healthcare benefits resolved, the representatives finally reached an ACCORD acceptable to both labor and management.*

**appeasement** (ah-PEEZ-meant). The act of making others happy by agreeing to their demands.

*Charlene realized too late that her policy of APPEASEMENT would not cause Warren to treat her with more respect.*

**assent** (uh-SENT). Agreement that an opinion, view, or proposal is correct; corroboration.

*You forget, Mr. Jameson, that it is only with the ASSENT of the stockholders that the CEO can be ousted.*

**collusion** (kuh-LOO-zhun). A conspiratorial or secret understanding or agreement entered into for an illicit or fraudulent end.

*The leaders were arraigned on price COLLUSION in violation of antitrust laws.*

**conspiracy** (kun-SPEER-uh-see). A treacherous plan involving two or more persons; an agreement among conspirators.

*Your contention that Lyndon Johnson was part of a CONSPIRACY to assassinate President Kennedy amounts to what, in an earlier day, would have been called seditious libel, Mr. Oliver.*

## ANTONYMS

**dissension** (*dih-SEN-shun*). Disagreement, especially among people in a group.

*New rules favoring older members of the club caused great DISSENSION and a fracturing of long-standing alliances.*

## 4. Alone

(*uh-LOHN*), adjective, adverb

Apart from anything and anyone else; separate; within nothing more; only; solitary.

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## VERBS

**disenfranchise** (*dis-en-FRAN-chyz*). To deny someone a right or privilege; to make someone feel rejected and apart.

*“Some states specify felonies that condemn the citizen to DISENFRANCHISEMENT for life.”*

—Andrew Hacker, American political scientist

**immure** (*ih-MYOOR*). To confine, imprison, or enclose behind walls.

*Whitney remained IMMURED in her room as she pondered the itinerary for her luxury vacation to Italy.*

**prescind** (*pree-SIND*). To detach, separate, or isolate; to cut off, terminate.

*Working on the latest project has made me want to PRESCIND my thoughts from all contact with the team.*

**sequester** (*see-KWESS-ter*). To remove and isolate a portion from a larger whole.

*“A great deal of genetic engineering must be done before we have carbon-eaters SEQUESTERING carbon in sufficient quantity to counteract the burning of fossil fuels.”*

—Freeman Dyson, English-born American physicist and mathematician

## ADJECTIVES

**monastic** (*moh-NAS-tik*). Relating to the practice of withdrawing from society to live a quiet, contemplative life, often dedicated to religious faith.

*Saint Pachomius founded the first organized Christian MONASTIC community.*

## NOUNS

**monophobia** (*MON-uh-foe-bee-uh*). An abnormal dread of being alone.

*Al's MONOPHOBIA has gotten much worse since the death of his wife.*

**recluse** (*REK-loos, rih-KLOOS*). A person who lives apart from society, or in seclusion, often for religious contemplation.

*When Jim reaches a certain age, his solitary lifestyle might brand him as a hermit, but for now he considers himself a RECLUSE.*

## ANTONYMS

**gregarious** (*greh-GARE-ee-us*). Enjoying the company of other people, sociable.

*“We are easy to manage, a GREGARIOUS people, / Full of sentiment, clever at mechanics, and we love our luxuries.”*

—Robinson Jeffers, American poet

See also: Eliminate, Isolated, Reject



## 5. Amount

(*uh-MOUNT*), noun

A quantity; measure; the sum total; the whole of something.

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## NOUNS

**argosy** (are-guh-SEE). A rich supply of something.

*When the villagers walked into the deceased hermit's home, they found his domicile to be an ARGOSY of discarded bottles, cans, and comic books.*

**cornucopia** (korn-yuh-COE-pee-uh). A hornlike container overflowing with nature's bounty; an overabundance; a seemingly inexhaustible supply of something.

*Jenny returned from the beach with a CORNUCOPIA of beach junk: T-shirts, coffee mugs, and liquefied bags of saltwater taffy.*

**dearth** (DURTH). An inadequate supply, especially one that leads to a catastrophic event.

*The DEARTH of rice worldwide has sparked fears of a global famine.*

**et al.** (et AL). The abbreviation for the Latin term *et alia*, meaning "and others."

*Members of Congress, the justices of the Supreme Court, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ET AL. waited for President Clinton to enter and give his first State of the Union address.*

**nonillion** (no-NILL-yun). A very large number equal to one followed by thirty zeros.

*My parents' claim that they had asked me to clean the garage one NONILLION times struck me as the sort of irresponsible exaggeration that relieved me of any obligation to do my chores.*

**profusion** (pro-FYOOZH-un). An abundance or extravagance.

*Jane's fiancé insisted on sending her such a PROFUSION of flowers that she soon ran out of places to put them.*

**quantum** (KWAHN-tuhm). A share or portion; something that can be counted.

*Mike assumed that his bridges were burned, without assessing the QUANTUM of the changes he had brought about.*

## VERBS

**teem** (*TEEM*). To abound or swarm.

*As we walked into the nightclub, the paparazzi TEEMED around us like so many manic worker bees.*

## ADJECTIVES

**copious** (*KO-pee-us*). Abundant; large or generous in extent; broad in scope.

*The winter's COPIOUS rainfall was welcomed by area farmers.*

## ANTONYMS

**devoid** (*dih-VOID*). Lacking utterly; without.

*“No matter how skilled a surgeon you become,” Dr. Smith told the intern, “you’ll fail as a doctor if you continue to be DEVOID of compassion and sympathy for patients.”*

## 6. Angry

(*ANG-gree*), adjective

Feeling, showing, or resulting from anger; strong resentment; wrath.

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## ADJECTIVES

**acrimonious** (*ak-rih-MOAN-ee-us*). Bitter or caustic, especially in language or manner; disputed.

*“There is something about the literary life that repels me, all this desperate building of castles on cobwebs, the long-drawn ACRIMONIOUS struggle to make something important which we all know will be gone forever in a few years . . .”*

—Raymond Chandler, American author

**apoplectic** (*ap-up-PLECK-tic*). An extremely agitated state of rage.

*Emily’s careless event planning makes me APOPLECTIC, and I just want to step in and plan the luncheon myself.*

**fractious** (*FRACK-shuss*). Easily angered or irritable; quarrelsome; unruly.

*In movies of a certain vintage, the local police were always portrayed as FRACTIOUS.*

**livid** (*LIHV-id*). Enraged or extremely angry.

*Jennifer was LIVID when we suggested that her new outfit was out of date.*

## NOUNS

**cholers** (*KOH-lers*). The mood of anger, irritability, grumpiness, or being short-tempered and impatient.

*When Franklin is in the grip of CHOLERS, even his closest friends avoid his table at the club.*



## ANTONYMS

**placid** (*PLAS-id*). Calm; peaceful; serene.

*In contrast to my excitable and angry father, my mother was always PLACID and able to keep the peace in our household.*

## 7. Animals

*(AN-uh-muhls)*, noun

Any living organisms capable of locomotion but not of making their own food by photosynthesis; distinguished from plants; members of the kingdom Animalia.

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# ADJECTIVES

**anthropomorphic** (an-thruh-puh-MAWR-fik). Attributing human characteristics to animals.

*Children's literature, and much adult fantasy, is filled with ANTHROPOMORPHIC animals.*

**aquiline** (ACK-wuh-line). Resembling an eagle or curving like an eagle's beak.

*Neil wasn't sure that it was a compliment when Julie described his features as AQUILINE.*

**bovine** (BO-vine). Of or resembling a cow or ox; dull.

*The hardest part of teaching high school for me has been getting used to the look of BOVINE submissiveness on most of my students' faces.*

**leonine** (LEE-uh-nine). Describes something or someone characteristic of a lion.

*Ben's LEONINE mane of hair makes most of his girlfriends jealous.*

**lupine** (LOO-pine). Describes someone who acts like a wolf; savage and predatory.

*Sid's LUPINE behavior makes you feel like you should go home and take a shower after you've been around him for a little while.*

**ophidian** (oh-FIDD-ee-un). Describes snakes or something snakelike; dishonest or mean-spirited.

*The lawyer's OPHIDIAN eyes made me second-guess myself with every question he asked.*

**ovine** (OH-vine). Characteristic of sheep.

*The earliest classes at school were marked by the OVINE migration of students to lecture halls.*

**oviparous** (oh-VIH-per-uhs). Producing eggs that mature and hatch after being deposited outside the body, as birds, most reptiles, and fishes.

*Because they are unprotected much of the time, eggs of OVIPAROUS animals often have a tough and leathery shell.*

**ovoviviparous** (oh-voh-vi-VIP-er-uhs). Producing eggs that are hatched within the mother's body so that the young are born alive, as certain reptiles and fishes.

*It seems as if OVOVIVIPAROUS animals couldn't decide to lay eggs or produce live young.*

**porcine** (PORE-sine). Reminiscent of or pertaining to a pig; resembling a pig.

*Mike's constant description of his heavysset blind date as "my PORCINE companion" may have had something to do with her early departure from the party.*

**simian** (SIM-ee-uhn). Characteristic of or pertaining to apes or monkeys.

*Taking care of the children for the day was fun, even if their SIMIAN antics resulted in a lot of misunderstandings and tears.*

**ursine** (UR-sine). Characteristic of a bear.

*Mr. Hess was so glad to see me that he ran across the hall and gave me a fierce (I might say URSINE!) embrace.*

**viviparous** (vih-VIP-er-uhs). Producing live young instead of eggs, as mammals and some reptiles and fishes.

*The young of VIVIPAROUS animals require a long period of care before they can survive on their own.*

**vulpine** (VUHL-pine). Like a fox; cunning or crafty.

*My son's VULPINE grin let me know he was up to something of which I would not approve.*

**zoomorphic** (zoh-uh-MAWR-fik). Pertaining to a deity or other being conceived of in animal form or with animal features.

*Some cultures worshipped ZOOMORPHIC beings that had special qualities.*

## NOUNS

**fauna** (FAW-nuh). The animal population of a particular region or time period.

*According to this article, the FAUNA of Australia include more marsupials than are found on any other continent.*

**marsupial** (mar-SOUP-ee-uhl). A mammal that carries its young in a pouch on the outside of her body, where the baby continues to develop.

*The kangaroo is the best-known MARSUPIAL, but wombats also carry their babies in a pouch.*

## ANTONYMS

**herbaceous** (*hur-BEY-shus*). Characteristic of an herb; plantlike.

*Some wines can have a HERBACEOUS odor and taste that is quite disagreeable.*

## 8. Annoy

(*uh-NOY*), verb

To irritate or bother, as by a repeated action; to make angry.

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## ADJECTIVES

**irascible** (*ih-RASS-uh-bull*). Easily irritated or annoyed; prone to losing one's temper; quick to anger.

*"I have never known anyone worth a damn who wasn't IRASCIBLE."*

—Ezra Pound, American expatriate poet

**niggling** (*NIG-ling*). Petty; annoying.

*I could usually deal with my roommate's NIGGLING complaints about hairs in the sink and my forgetting to take out the trash, but I was in no mood for it today.*

**officious** (*oh-FISH-us*). Asserting authority or power in an obnoxious, overbearing, or pompous manner.

*"There is immunity in reading, immunity in formal society, in office routine, in the company of old friends and in the giving of OFFICIOUS help to strangers, but there is no sanctuary in one bed from the memory of another."*

—Cyril Connolly, British literary critic and writer



## VERBS

**nettle** (*NET-uhl*). To provoke, irritate, or annoy.

*“The comic spirit is given to us in order that we may analyze, weigh, and clarify things in us which NETTLE us, or which we are outgrowing, or trying to reshape.”*

—Thornton Wilder, American playwright and novelist

## NOUNS

**gadfly** (*GAD-fly*). A fly that bites livestock; also, one who annoys, irritates or provokes.

*With his constant grumbling and irritating habits, Morton has turned into the GADFLY of our department.*

**vexation** (*vek-SAY-shin*). Frustration, annoyance, or irritation resulting from some action, occurrence, or statement.

*“There is not much less VEXATION in the government of a private family than in the managing of an entire state.”*

—Michel de Montaigne, Renaissance scholar

## VERBS

**glower** (GLOU-ur). To give a brooding, annoyed, or angry look.

*Mark hoped GLOWERING at our mother would convey that he didn't appreciate her telling his new girlfriend how difficult he had been to toilet train, but Mom didn't seem to notice.*

## ANTONYMS

**affable** (AF-uh-buhl). Pleasant and polite; agreeable; warm.

*No one we knew had a more AFFABLE personality than Grace, and we always enjoyed being in her company no matter the occasion.*

**complaisant** (kuhm-PLAY-zuhnt). Agreeable and eager to please.

*Eleanor is far too COMPLAISANT with common strangers.*

## 9. Answer

(*AN-ser*), verb

To reply to a question, argument, letter, etc.; to respond in kind; to retaliate.

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## VERBS

**countervail** (*kown-tur-VAIL*). To use equal force against; to compensate.

*The challenger hit the champion with two quick left jabs and a right uppercut, but the champion COUNTERVAILED with a left hook.*

**rebut** (*ree-BUT*). To provide a reply that opposes a position.

*Bill never simply answered questions; he saw them as opportunities to REBUT other peoples' opinions.*

**reciprocate** (*rih-SIP-ruh-keyt*). To give or act in turn following the lead of another; to reply with a courtesy, gift, or example from another.

*Mr. Powers has shown evidence that he wants to end the feud; the least you can do is RECIPROCATE.*

**refute** (*ree-FYOOT*). To produce evidence or proof that an argument is incorrect; to deny the truth or accuracy of something.

*My lawyer could REFUTE his own existence if necessary.*

**retort** (*rih-TORT*). To reply in a sharp, retaliatory manner.

*Carl had to bite back a sharp RETORT when Sallee criticized the couture gown his mother wore to the soirée.*

## NOUNS

**acknowledgment** (*ak-NOL-ij-muhnt*). A recognition and expression of receipt.

*June always sent a formal ACKNOWLEDGMENT in answer to any invitation.*

**rejoinder** (*rih-JOIN-der*). A clever or witty reply to a question or comment.

*Lydia's often catty REJOINDERS quickly made her the bane of our group.*

**riposte** (*rih-POST*). A quick, often witty or cutting, response to a comment or question.

*Eileen was unable to offer one of her usual RIPOSTES when we decried her decision to eschew the season's fashion.*

## ANTONYMS

**inquisitorial** (*in-kwiz-ih-TAWR-ee-uhl*). Having the nature of an investigator; extremely curious; inquisitive.

*As Nick was growing up, he would face an INQUISITORIAL confrontation with his mother every time he came home late.*



## 10. Anxiety

(*ang-ZAHY-i-tee*), noun

A state of unease, apprehension, or misgiving.

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## NOUNS

**angst** (ANGKST). A feeling of anxiety, dread, or anguish.

*Carolyn's self doubts caused her much ANGST prior to the meeting with her potential in-laws.*

**apprehension** (ap-ri-HEN-sun). Uneasiness about the future; suspicion of impending bad fortune.

*A vague feeling of APPREHENSION came over Gordon as he stepped into the old house.*

**compunction** (kuhm-PUHNGK-shun). Anxiety caused by regret for doing another harm.

*Thomas never feels COMPUNCTION for the bruises he leaves on the lacrosse field.*

**inquietude** (in-KWY-ih-tood). A state of disturbance; restlessness; uneasiness.

*Amy's INQUIETUDE at the prospect of going to school made her feel physically sick.*

**solicitude** (suh-LIS-ih-tood). The state of being concerned and anxious.

*The number of comments on the local blog indicated the town's growing SOLICITUDE over a possible increase in property taxes.*

**trepidation** (trep-ih-DAY-shun). A state of fear or agitation.

*At first, I approached the task of writing this book with some TREPIDATION.*

## ADJECTIVES

**frenetic** (*fruh-NET-ick*). Frantic and frenzied.

*“I love my work with a FRENETIC and perverse love, as an ascetic loves the hair shirt which scratches his belly.”*

—Gustave Flaubert, French writer

## VERBS

**disquiet** (*dis-KWAHY-it*). To make anxious, restless, or uneasy; disturb.  
*The absolute silence of the forest WOULD DISQUIET anyone.*

## ANTONYMS

**aplomb** (*uh-PLOM*). Self possession; assurance; poise.

*Even under conditions that would make the most resolute among us anxious, Ralph's APLOMB was intact.*

**certitude** (*SUR-ti-tood*). Absence of doubt; assurance.

*For the first time in his college career, Arthur had studied sufficiently for the exam and walked to class with a pleasant feeling of CERTITUDE.*

## 11. Appearance

*(uh-PEER-ahnts)*, noun

The state or condition in which a person or object appears; the outward aspect of something.

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## NOUNS

**façade** (*fah-SAHD*). The front of a building; a deceptive appearance masking a thing's true nature.

*"A good man often appears gauche simply because he does not take advantage of the myriad mean little chances of making himself look stylish. Preferring truth to form, he is not constantly at work upon the FAÇADE of his appearance."*

—Iris Murdoch, Irish writer and philosopher

**guise** (*GUYS*). General outward appearance; a false or assumed appearance; pretense.

*Having assumed the GUISE of a pirate for the costume ball, Tom looked dashing and dangerous for what may well have been the first time in his life.*

**metamorphosis** (*met-ah-MOR-foe-sis*). A change of shape, form, structure, or appearance; a physical transformation.

*Darryl's friends viewed his entry into reactionary politics with some concern; because of his past history, they feared his METAMORPHOSIS into a militant.*

**mien** (*MEEN*). A person's look or manner.

*Dan's country-bumpkin MIEN effectively hides his shrewd business tactics.*

**physiognomy** (*fiz-ee-OG-nuh-mee*). The human face (especially when regarded as a mirror of one's emotional state); the practice of determining a person's inclination or character from facial signals.

*There was a noticeable change in Doris's PHYSIOGNOMY as Todd read her the news.*

**semblance** (*SEM-blinss*). Outward aspect; likeness.

*Dorothy's apology barely gave a SEMBLANCE of contrition.*

**transfiguration** (*trans-fig-yuh-RAY-shun*). An extreme change in appearance; a metamorphosis.

*By the time of her coming-out party, Brigitte had undergone a TRANSFIGURATION from gawky child to poised and beautiful adolescent.*

**veneer** (*vuh-NEER*). A superficial or deceptive appearance; a thin layer or coating.

*It quickly became clear that Alan's nonchalance was just a VENEER, and he was actually a nervous and timid individual.*

**visage** (VIZ-aj). Face or overall appearance.

*When the doctor entered the visitors' lounge, his grim VISAGE told the whole story before he could say a word.*



## ADJECTIVES

**photogenic** (*fo-tih-GEN-ik*). Having physical characteristics or qualities that are suitable for being photographed.

*After looking through the family's collection of photographs, Emily concluded that she was not as PHOTOGENIC as her sister.*

## VERBS

**transmogrify** (*trans-MOG-ruh-fie*). To change in appearance or form in a disturbing way.

*We cannot abide that particular interior decorator because he always manages to TRANSMOGRIFY tasteful displays of luxury into pompous tableaux of arrogant wealth.*

## ANTONYMS

**imperceptible** (*im-per-SEP-tuh-buhl*). Not perceptible; not seen or noticed by the senses.

*After speaking seemingly for hours about the truth of his beliefs and the necessity of his position, the candidate's purpose was IMPERCEPTIBLE to the crowd.*

**metaphysical** (*met-ih-FIZ-ih-kuhl*). Beyond the physical or material; supernatural or transcendental; abstract.

*"A poet without love were a physical and METAPHYSICAL impossibility."*

—Thomas Carlyle, Scottish historian and essayist.

## 12. Appropriate

(*ah-PRO-pree-it*), adjective

Fitting or suitable for a particular purpose; proper; especially compatible.

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## ADVERB

**apropos** (*ah-pro-POE*). Appropriate, or at an opportune time.

*Charlie began screaming the words “Too late! Too late!” APROPOS of nothing.*

## ADJECTIVES

**apposite** (APP-uh-zit). Relevant, pertinent, or appropriate to a given situation.

*Your objections are extremely APPOSITE, but I wish you would let me finish describing my plan before you fill it full of holes!*

**apt** (APT). Suitable for the purpose or occasion; fitting.

*Roger could always be counted on to provide an APT comment, whatever the occasion.*

**concinuous** (kon-SIN-us). Characterized by a harmonious arrangement of parts; a congruous style especially in literary works.

*Peter found the CONCINNOUS expressions of baroque symphonies particularly pleasing and satisfying.*

**condign** (kon-DYEN). Fitting, suitable; deserved: used especially in connection with punishment for wrongdoing.

*Twenty years at hard labor was a perfectly CONDIGN punishment for Bill's vicious crime.*

**de rigueur** (duh-rih-GUR). Conforming to current standards of behavior, fashion, style, and etiquette.

*A two-carat diamond engagement ring that cost a young man a year's salary was DE RIGUEUR for proposing to a girl in the 1950s.*

**felicitous** (fih-LISS-ih-tuss). Well suited for a particular occasion.

*"O to be a dragon / a symbol of the power of Heaven—of silkworm / size or immense; at times invisible. FELICITOUS phenomenon!"*

—Marianne Moore, Modernist American poet and writer

**germane** (jehr-MANE). Relevant, pertinent, and fitting.

*"Quotes from Mao, Castro, and Che Guevara . . . are as GERMANE to our highly technological, computerized society as a stagecoach on a jet runway at Kennedy airport."*

—Saul Alinsky, American activist

## NOUNS

**decorum** (*di-COR-um*). Social propriety; dignified conduct.

*Though the delegates were extremely frustrated at the chairman's move, they betrayed no emotion, and strict DECORUM was observed in the meeting hall.*

# ANTONYMS

**aberrant** (AB-uh-runt). Abandoning the correct, expected, or proper way of doing things; straying from the “right” or norm.

*Alice’s decision to quit college and tour the country on a motorcycle seemed so ABERRANT to her parents that they asked her to get a psychiatric evaluation.*

**gratuitous** (grah-TOO-ih-tuss). Unnecessary; inappropriately excessive; uncalled for.

*“Being accused of making money by selling sex in Hollywood, home of the casting couch and the GRATUITOUS nude scene, is so rich with irony that it’s a better subject for a comic novel than a column.”*

—Anna Quindlen, American author and opinion columnist

**impropriety** (im-pro-PRY-ih-tee). Something that has the quality of being improper.

*Beverly’s minor IMPROPRIETY at the dinner table was overlooked; the conversation turned quickly to other topics.*

**incongruous** (in-KAHNG-grew-us). Describes something that does not belong in its current place, setting, or role; out of place; not fitting in.

*“The taste for quotations (and for the juxtaposition of INCONGRUOUS quotations) is a Surrealist taste.”*

—Susan Sontag, American literary theorist, philosopher, and political activist

**solecism** (SOL-ih-si-zum). Something that deviates from the normal, accepted, or proper order; inconsistency.

*She told her husband not to worry, that forgetting a host’s name was only a minor SOLECISM and certainly nothing to be concerned about.*

**unseemly** (un-SEEM-ly). Inappropriate; unbecoming.

*The family felt that Bill’s presence at the memorial service would have been UNSEEMLY, as he had been my sister-in-law’s bitterest business rival.*

**unsuitable** (uhn-SOO-tuh-buhl). Not suitable, inappropriate; unfitting.

*“This mode of electioneering suited neither my taste nor my principles. I thought it equally UNSUITABLE to my personal character and to the station in which I am placed.”*

—John Quincy Adams, American president



## 13. Approval

(*uh-PROOV-uhl*), noun

The act of approving; a favorable attitude or opinion; consent; sanction.

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## NOUNS

**approbation** (ap-ruh-BAY-shun). Official approval or commendation.

*“In a virtuous and free state, no rewards can be so pleasing to sensible minds, as those which include the APPROBATION of our fellow citizens. My great pain is, lest my poor endeavours should fall short of the kind expectations of my country.”*

—Thomas Jefferson

**commendation** (kom-uhn-DAY-shun). Something that commends; a recommendation; approval; praise.

*For bravery beyond the call, Jones received an official COMMENDATION at the ceremony.*

**imprimatur** (im-pruh-MAH-ter). Sanction; approval, usually by the Roman Catholic Church, to publish a book.

*After directing several revisions of the controversial book’s text, the Church finally gave its IMPRIMATUR.*

## VERBS

**acclaim** (*uh-KLAYM*). To greet with loud and boisterous approval; applaud.

*Not content with applause and shouts of joy, the citizens would ACCLAIM the dictator by firing rifles into the air.*

**countenance** (*KOUNT-nunce*). To indicate approval, to sanction something.

*I'm afraid I can't COUNTENANCE your dangerous exploits, so please take me home.*

## ANTONYMS

**askance** (*uh-SKANTS*). With suspicion, mistrust, or disapproval; looking obliquely at an object, person, or situation.

*I looked ASKANCE at Philip when he left the store without paying for his bubble gum.*

**stigmatize** (*STIG-muh-tize*). To mark or describe something in a way that shows disgrace or strong disapproval.

*Many people with AIDS find that coping with the physical trauma of their disease is only part of their difficulty; another part is being STIGMATIZED by others as somehow deserving of punishment.*

See also: Help, Support

## 14. Argue

(*ARE-gyoo*), verb

To present reasons for or against a proposal, proposition, etc: to dispute or contend something with or against another person.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bellicose** (*BELL-ih-kose*). Belligerent, surly, ready to argue or fight at the slightest provocation.

*Doug is so touchy about his new car that he'll instantly turn BELLICOSE if you so much as brush against it.*

**contentious** (*kuhn-TEN-shus*). Having the tendency to argue; quarrelsome; characterized by dispute or controversy.

*I walked away when the discussion heated up and became too CONTENTIOUS.*

**dialectical** (*die-uh-LEK-tic-ul*). Having to do with logical arguments.

*Paul employed a DIALECTICAL thoroughness to destroy an opponent's argument.*

**eristic** (*ur-ISS-tik*). Characterized by argument or controversy with often subtle and superficial reasoning.

*Henry tried to understand, but Martha's ERISTIC explanation left him as clueless as he had been before she started speaking.*

**pugnacious** (*pug-NAY-shus*). Always wanting to argue and debate every last thing; quarrelsome.

*Teenagers are PUGNACIOUS by nature: if I say "no," he invariably asks "why?"*

## VERB

**controvert** (KON-truh-vert). To oppose with logical reasoning; to dispute or contradict.

*No matter how many attempts the defense makes to CONTROVERT the details of this sequence of events, the fact remains that the defendant was seen leaving the building immediately after the murder.*

**expostulate** (ek-SPAS-chew-layte). To reason earnestly with a person in opposition to something he has done or intends to do.

*I EXPOSTULATED with Nora about the mistake I believed she was about to make, but she was immutable.*

**oppugn** (uh-PYOON). To reason against; oppose with argument; call in question; fight against.

*Alice bridled easily and would OPPUGN every judgment her boss made about her work.*

**quibble** (KWIB-ul). To argue over a minor matter; to voice a niggling objection.

*If you are not 100 percent satisfied, your money will promptly be refunded without question or QUIBBLE.*

**remonstrate** (rih-MON-strate). To present and urge reasons in complaint or opposition; protest; object.

*When Carlotta REMONSTRATED our snubbing of Julia, we simply began to snub Carlotta as well.*

## NOUNS

**imbroglio** (*im-BRO-lee-oh*). An involved and confusing or bitter disagreement, as between persons or nations.

*Our inability to decide which New Year's Eve party to attend created an IMBROGLIO that disrupted our social calendar for months.*

**logomachy** (*low-GOM-uh-kee*). An argument or dispute distinguished by the incorrect or reckless use of words; meaningless battle of words.

*One of the primary sources of entertainment during election season is the candidates' LOGOMACHY.*

**polemic** (*pah-LEM-ik*). An aggressive argument against or refutation of the opinions of another; a person who argues in opposition to another; controversialist.

*"He had a strong will and a talent for POLEMIC."*

—Saul Bellow, American author

**sophistry** (*SOF-iss-tree*). A seemingly convincing argument that is logically flawed.

*I believe this jury is too sophisticated to be taken in by the SOPHISTRIES the defense has offered.*



## ANTONYMS

**incontestable** (*in-kuhn-TES-tuh-bull*). Cannot be argued with because it is unquestionable.

*The fact that Lloyd thinks his talent for birdcalls will be found attractive by women is INCONTESTABLE proof that he will remain a lifelong bachelor.*

**indubitable** (*in-DOO-bih-tuh-bull*). Absolutely unquestionable and completely beyond doubt.

*Warren's confidence in his judgment is INDUBITABLE, which is not to say that it is warranted.*

**unimpeachable** (*un-ihm-PEE-chuh-bull*). Above reproach; impossible to discredit or slander.

*Jason is not a great manager, but his technical credentials are UMIMPEACHABLE.*

## 15. Arrogance

*(AR-uh-guhns)*, noun

Condition of unjustified pride or self-importance.

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## ADJECTIVES

**fastuous** (FASS-chew-us). Haughty and arrogant.

*Despite her beauty, Jenny rarely got asked out, due to her FASTUOUS behavior.*

**haughty** (HAW-tee). Snobbish and arrogant.

*“The HAUGHTY sommelier, with his talismanic tasting cup and sometimes irritating self-assurance, is perceived more as the high priest of some arcane rite than as a dining room functionary paid to help you enjoy the evening.”*

—Frank J. Priol, former New York Times wine columnist

**imperious** (im-PEER-ee-us). Haughty; dictatorial.

*Mrs. Banks rushed around the kitchen, issuing a series of IMPERIOUS commands to the cook.*

**presumptuous** (pri-ZUHMP-choo-us). Too bold or forward; showing overconfidence; taking too much for granted; taking liberties.

*Michael was PRESUMPTUOUS in assuming on his first day that he would be invited to board meetings.*

**supercilious** (sue-per-SILL-ee-us). Having a low opinion of or contempt for others based on a belief in one's superiority.

*Too many get-rich-quick promoters imbue their advertisements with a SUPERCILIOUS attitude toward the wealth seekers they profess to want to help.*

## NOUNS

**braggadocio** (*brag-uh-DOH-see-oh*). Empty boasting or bragging.

*Eric claims he is a consummate wine connoisseur, but it is just BRAGGADOCIO.*

**jackanapes** (*JAK-uh-napes*). An arrogant or impertinent person; especially, an impudent young man.

*If that JACKANAPES tells you to put his photo on the book jacket one more time, it will be the last day he works here as an editor.*

## ANTONYMS

**obeisance** (*oh-BEE-sance*). Deferential respect or homage; an act or gesture showing respect; deference.

*Margaret knew when to pick her battles: when her chances of winning an argument were good, she would stand up for her opinions, but at other times would show OBEISANCE to her colleagues.*

**unassuming** (*uhn-uh-SOOM-ing*). Modest and unpretentious.

*The Binghamtons just bought a lovely, UNASSUMING starter home in the town where their families live.*

## 16. Art

(*ARHT*), noun

The ability to make things; creativeness; the creative process applied to aesthetic principles; the objects subject to aesthetic standards; works of art including painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, drama, the dance, etc.

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# NOUNS

**art nouveau** (ART-new-VOH). A popular form of design that originated in the 1880s, characterized by wavy objects such as flower stems, flowing hair, flames, etc.

*That museum's collection of ART NOUVEAU jewelry makes it one of the town's best-kept secrets.*

**auteur** (oh-TER). A filmmaker who establishes complete control and imposes his distinctive style on a film.

*"Miles is so caught up with being an AUTEUR that he's ruining the production!" Marla complained.*

**avant-garde** (ahv-ahnt GARD). Relating to the latest trends, especially in the world of art; of a new or experimental nature.

*As a sculptor, Milton found keeping pace with the AVANT-GARDE both challenging and rewarding for his own work.*

**baroque** (buh-ROKE). A style of art and architecture originating in Italy in the early seventeenth century and characterized by much ornamentation and curved lines.

*Paula decided not to buy the house because she feared its BAROQUE ornamentation would make it a difficult resell.*

**chiaroscuro** (kee-are-uh-SCURE-oh). A pattern of light and dark (or light and shadow) in a painting or literary work.

*The power of the painting comes from its CHIAROSCURO, which seems to indicate looming disaster.*

**expressionism** (ex-PRESH-un-iz-um). An art movement with roots in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which external forms of reality are distorted as a means of communicating an interior vision of the artist.

*For Edvard Munch, whose painting The Scream is perhaps the single most recognizable image of EXPRESSIONISM, the themes of isolation and anxiety were of paramount importance.*

**futurism** (FYOO-chur-ih-zim). An early twentieth-century arts movement stressing the dynamics and movements of the industrial age.

*Jones was fascinated by early industrial art; last semester he took a course on FUTURISM.*

**genre** (ZHAWN-ruh). A particular style that characterizes a type of music, art, literature, film, etc.

*Though their GENRE doesn't make for pleasant or easy reading, one has to admire muckrakers like Upton Sinclair, who aimed to bring about important social reforms with their novels.*

**impressionism** (im-PRESH-un-iz-im). An art movement of the late nineteenth century dedicated to reproducing the effect of light on objects, typically by means of short brush strokes.

*The painter and sculptor Edgar Degas was one of the foremost practitioners of IMPRESSIONISM.*

**labanotation** (la-bah-no-TAY-shun). A nomenclature used to choreograph ballets, modern dance, and other performances so the dancers can follow the steps.

*Even with the best-available LABANOTATION, Walker was unable to adequately perform a Viennese waltz at Natasha's coming-out party.*

**leitmotif** (LIGHT-moe-teef). A recurring theme in a musical or opera associated with a particular character, situation, setting, etc.; a dominant theme.

*Ian's LEITMOTIF is the smell of never-washed and often-worn clothing.*

**libretto** (li-BRET-oh). The text of a musical work, such as a cantata or opera, often accompanied by a translation.

*As she is fluent in Italian, Maria rarely needs to refer to the LIBRETTO when attending the opera.*

**mimesis** (mi-MEE-sis). Imitation or representation, especially of human speech, behavior, etc.

*The play's MIMESIS made me temporarily forget I was watching actors.*

**minimalism** (MIN-ih-mull-iz-um). A school of art in which "less is more"— clean and uncluttered paintings; sculpture with simple lines; fiction written in a lean and spare style; music with uncomplicated scores and minimal instruments.

*John Cage's MINIMALIST composition 4'33" consists of four and a half minutes of silence.*

**modernism** (MOD-er-nih-zum). Describes a modern avant-garde style of painting, sculpture, or architecture.

*"Postmodernism is MODERNISM with the optimism taken out."*

—Robert Hewison, British historian



**montage** (mon-TAZH). A work of art made up of a variety of visuals—photographs, film clips, etc.—brought together to present an idea.

*The documentary's excellent use of MONTAGE really brought to life the triumphs and heartbreaks of World War II.*

**muse** (MEWS). The source of one's creative or artistic inspiration, named after the mythical Greek Muses said to be patrons of the fine arts.

*"O for a MUSE of fire, that would ascend / The brightest heaven of invention."*

—William Shakespeare

**pastiche** (pah-STEESH). A piece of music, writing, or art made up mostly of material taken from existing sources.

*Some folks consider hip-hop music nothing but mindless PASTICHE, but I heartily disagree.*

**repertoire** (REH-per-twahr). A library of works that a group knows and regularly performs.

*The philharmonic's REPERTOIRE includes most of the classical standards from Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Mozart.*

**rococo** (ruh-KOH-koh). A style of architecture and design developed in France from the baroque and characterized by elaborate and profuse delicate ornamentation.

*Henry enjoys the elaborate shell designs of ROCOCO art, although I consider it excessively ornate.*

**surrealism** (suh-REE-uh-liz-um). A twentieth-century movement in art and literature that emphasized the subconscious or irrational nature of perceived forms through the illogical placing and presentation of subject matter.

*Dali's The Persistence of Memory, which features the now-famous melting watches, was immediately hailed as a masterpiece of SURREALISM.*

**thespian** (THESS-pee-un). An actor; especially a person who performs onstage in a play.

*Sir Laurence Olivier was rightly regarded as the most versatile THESPIAN of his era.*

**tragedian** (truh-JEE-dee-un). An actor noted for performing tragic parts.

*Richard Burbage was the premier TRAGEDIAN of the Elizabethan era.*

**triptych** (TRIP-tick). A picture or carving on three panels, or a set of three associated paintings or other works of art.

*Scott wanted to buy just the center painting, but the gallery owner refused to break up the TRIPTYCH.*

**trompe l'oeil** (tromp LOY). An instance of visual trickery, as, for instance, an optical illusion giving the impression of three dimensions in a two-dimensional artistic medium.

*The painter specialized in TROMPE L'OEIL murals that often fooled passersby into thinking they were walking toward a storefront.*

**verism** (VEER-iz-uhm). The theory that art and literature should closely represent reality, including the ugly and distasteful.

*The artists from the VERISM school are usually responsible for the works that create the most public outrage.*

**virtu** (ver-TOO). A knowledge or appreciation for artistic objects or curios; the quality of being artistic, beautiful, rare, or otherwise of interest to collectors.

*Uncle David was known for his VIRTU and his gifts were eagerly anticipated.*

## ANTONYMS

**elemental** (*el-uh-MEN-tul*). Primitive; starkly simple; basic.

*It was clear even to the untrained eye how the artist's work progressed from ELEMENTAL depictions to more sophisticated forms later in his career.*

**vestigial** (*ve-STIJ-ee-uhl*). Imperfectly developed.

*This pottery shows VESTIGAL attempts at artistry that would mature later.*

## 17. Ask

(ASK), verb

To seek the answer to a question; inquire of; request; solicit; beg.

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## VERBS

**adjure** (uh-JOOR). To entreat earnestly or request solemnly.

*The witnesses were ADJURED to avoid any contact with the accused.*

**beseech** (bih-SEECH). To entreat, implore, or request earnestly. It reflects either great (or even fawning) politeness or urgency of the highest order.

*We BESEECH you, Mr. Prime Minister: think twice before committing the lives of so many of our countrymen to this cause.*

**canvass** (KAN-vus). To solicit support, opinions, votes, subscriptions, etc.

*Virgil and I spent all Sunday walking around the city CANVASSING for our candidate.*

**catechize** (KAT-ih-kize). To question fully or closely; to question with reference to someone's beliefs.

*The hiring manager CATECHIZED every applicant to weed out any with negative attitudes.*

**entreat** (en-TREET). To ask earnestly for (something); beseech; beg.

*Smitten by remorse, Ted ENTREATED Lorna to take him back once again.*

**exhort** (ig-ZORT). To urge or entreat; to plead with (usually in an attempt to warn or advise).

*"The function of the moralist is not to EXHORT men to be good but to elucidate what the good is."*

—Walter Lippmann, American journalist

**implore** (im-PLORE). To beseech or beg for fervently; entreat; to plead urgently.

*She IMploRED him to attend the party.*

**importune** (im-poor-TOON). To bother with requests or demands; urge or demand persistently or repeatedly.

*After months of IMPORTUNING his employer for a promotion that did not yet exist, Hank was asked to leave the company.*

**interpellate** (in-tur-PELL-ate). To formally ask about an official action or policy or personal conduct.

*Protocol dictated that the ambassador INTERPELLATE through proper channels.*

**obtest** (ob-TEST). To beg for; supplicate; beseech.

*Higgins decided that he would wait as long as necessary in order to OBTEST the king for clemency.*

**supplicate** (SUP-lih-kate). To make a humble, sincere, and earnest request of someone.

*The department heads decided their best bet was to assemble as a group in the president's office and SUPPLICATE her to approve the budget increases.*

## NOUNS

**invocation** (*in-vuh-KAY-shun*). The process or act of invoking; a call to a higher power (usually God) for help.

*The priest offered a special INVOCATION at the beginning of the service.*

**mendicant** (*MEN-dih-kunt*). Beggar.

*There, among the castoffs of society, the lepers, MENDICANTS, and prostitutes of the city, he decided to begin his ministry.*

## ADJECTIVES

**precatory** (*PREK-uh-tor-ee*). Expressing or characterized by an entreaty or wish.

*The government ministers listened intently to the PRECATORY address and after thirty seconds of consideration, dismissed it as impractical.*

**suppliant** (*SUH-plee-unt*). Characterized by humble imploring.

*After he had an affair, Steve's SUPPLIANT behavior toward his wife became almost nauseating to his friends.*



## ANTONYMS

**affirm** (*uh-FURM*). To state positively; declare; assert to be true.

*“The more I read, the more I meditate; and the more I acquire, the more I am enabled to AFFIRM that I know nothing”*

—Voltaire, French philosopher and writer

**profess** (*pro-FES*). To make an open declaration of: affirm.

*Marcia was quick to PROFESS her involvement in the scheme when asked.*

## 18. Astronomy

*(uh-STRON-uh-mee)*, noun

The science that deals with objects and matter outside earth's atmosphere.

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## NOUNS

**Kelvin** (KEL-vin). A temperature scale in which absolute zero is zero degrees, and there are no negative values.

*The temperature in outer space is slightly above absolute zero, or 2.7 degrees KELVIN.*

**libration** (li-BRAY-shun). The oscillation of Earth's moon around its axis.

*LIBRATIONS are caused by changes in the intensity of Earth's gravitational pull on the moon.*

**selenography** (sel-uh-NOG-ruh-fee). The branch of astronomy that pertains to the charting of the moon's surface.

*Charles became an expert in SELENOGRAPHY and believed that he could find his way around the moon if he ever had a chance to visit.*

**syzygy** (SIZ-ih-gee). In astronomy, syzygy takes place when the Earth, sun, and moon all line up along a straight path.

*Astronomers predict an eclipse for the next SYZYGY.*

**umbra** (UM-brah). A planet's shadow, especially the shadow of the Earth upon the moon.

*A solar eclipse is caused by the Earth passing through the moon's UMBRA upon the sun.*

## ADJECTIVES

**celestial** (*suh-LESS-chul*). Relating to the skies or the heavens.

*At first Sam thought that the CELESTIAL body he had picked up on his telescope was a spaceship, but it turned out to be a meteor.*

**geostationary** (*GEE-oh-STAY-shin-air-ee*). A satellite in orbit 22,300 miles above the Earth's surface so that the satellite is always directly over the same spot of ground.

*Arthur C. Clark was the first to propose that three GEOSTATIONARY satellites orbiting Earth could provide a global communications network effectively covering every location on the planet.*

**sidereal** (*SIGH-der-eel*). Determined by or related to the stars or constellations.

*"Thoughts give birth to a creative force that is neither elemental nor SIDEREAL."*

—Philippus Paracelsus, Swiss alchemist, astrologer, and physician

## ANTONYMS

**astrology** (*uh-STROL-uh-gee-*). A pseudoscience that claims to foretell the future through the study of celestial objects.

*Arthur attempted to convince his friends of the value and accuracy of ASTROLOGY, but they found the premise ludicrous.*

## 19. Attractive

(*ah-TRAK-tihv*), adjective

Pleasing in appearance or manner; alluring.

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# ADJECTIVES

**aesthetic** (us-THET-ik). Of or related to a sense of what is attractive or beautiful.

*Covering your walls with pictures torn from the newspaper does not constitute a genuine AESTHETIC sense, Harold.*

**beguiling** (bee-GUY-ling). Charming; bewitching; enchanting.

*The BEGUILING charm Monica learned at finishing school more than makes up for her vapid personality.*

**bucolic** (byoo-KOL-ick). Expressive of rural serenity and charm.

*We bought a weekend place in a BUCOLIC little village.*

**comely** (KUM-lee). Pleasing or attractive.

*Jane is COMELY, but her mother fears that the men she attracts will not make her happy.*

**idyllic** (eye-DILL-ick). Pleasing; peaceful; ideal.

*Our IDYLLIC honeymoon in the tropics was interrupted by a hurricane.*

**meretricious** (mer-i-TRISH-us). Attracting attention in an unseemly or inappropriate fashion.

*His favorite brand of beer used MERETRICIOUS ads—TV commercials showing scantily clad young women—to attract more attention.*

**pulchritudinous** (pul-krah-TOOD-in-us). Having or characterized by physical beauty; comely.

*Many in the crowd were not particularly interested in the football game itself, but attended the event to observe firsthand the PULCHRITUDINOUS cheerleaders.*

**statuesque** (statch-oo-ESK). Having a tall and well-proportioned form; like or resembling a statue; graceful; shapely.

*Although he had won many gold medals, news reporters only focused on the swimmer's STATUESQUE physique.*

**winsome** (WIN-suhm). Winning and engaging; charming.

*Lydia looked quite WINSOME throughout her coming-out party.*

## VERBS

**captivate** (*KAP-tiv-ate*). To capture the affection or attention of, as by beauty; charm.

*Of all the girls at the dance, only Betty could CAPTIVATE the boys without seeming to try.*

**enthrall** (*en-THRALL*). To charm or captivate; to put under strong influence; enchant.

*Garbo's performance was simply ENTHRALLING.*

**entice** (*in-TICE*). To tempt in a pleasing fashion; to attract or lure.

*The delicious aroma emanating from the bakeshop often ENTICES me to stop in and pick up a doughnut or muffin on my way to work.*

**gorgonize** (*GORE-guh-nize*). To paralyze or mesmerize with one's looks or personality.

*Even without her family's wealth and connections, Marla would likely GORGONIZE all the men who enter her orbit.*

**inveigle** (*in-VEY-gull*). To lure, entice; to win over by ingenuity or flattery.

*Craig INVEIGLED the dean to allow him to graduate even though he failed to meet the foreign-language requirement of the university.*



## NOUNS

**siren** (SY-ren). A destructive, but seductively beautiful, beguiling woman; or, anything considered dangerously seductive.

*“It is natural to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes to that SIREN until she ‘allures’ us to our death.”*

—Gertrude Stein, American author

## ANTONYMS

**repugnant** (ri-PUHG-nunht). Distasteful; objectionable.

*“The very word ‘secrecy’ is REPUGNANT in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths, and to secret proceedings.”*

—John F. Kennedy, American president

**repulsive** (ri-PUHL-siv). Causing strong dislike or aversion; offensive; disgusting.

*Kathy was surprised by the new art exhibit; instead of beautiful, well-formed, and harmonious images, they were distinctly and utterly REPULSIVE.*

## 20. Authority

(*uh-THAWR-ih-tee*), noun

The power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action, or make final decisions; jurisdiction.

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## NOUNS

**bureaucracy** (byoo-ROK-ruh-see). The concentration of power and authority in administrative bodies; an administrative body; a group of nonelective government officials.

*As the company grew, the entrenched BUREAUCRACIES in the accounting and finance departments gained more and more influence.*

**fiat** (FEE-aht). An authoritative decree or order.

*Everyone interested in receiving a sizeable portion of his inheritance simply allows grandfather to rule the household by FIAT.*

**hegemony** (hih-JEH-muhn-ee). Domination of a region or the entire world by a single nation, or the authority of one individual over an entire group.

*Alison should not achieve HEGEMONY over the rest of us merely because her list of social contacts is slightly longer than ours.*

**hierarchy** (HIGH-uhr-ahr-key). A pecking order or ranking according to status or level of authority.

*In the HIERARCHY of the military, a medical doctor, who is assigned the rank of captain but is not a military man, automatically outranks a lieutenant, who may have years of battle experience.*

**judicature** (JOO-di-kuh-choor). The authority of jurisdiction of a court of law.

*This case is in fact within my JUDICATURE, despite counsel's arguments to the contrary.*

**purview** (PURR-vyoo). A person's range of authority and control.

*Yes, Junior, I'm afraid that taking out the garbage DOES in fact fall into your PURVIEW.*

**recusancy** (REK-yuh-zun-see). The refusal to recognize or obey established authority.

*At one time, an individual's religious RECUSANCY could result in punishment.*

**sedition** (sih-DISH-uhn). An action that promotes discontent or rebellion against authority.

*In an act of childish SEDITION, Alex quit the club after we refused to play a round of golf with him.*

**suzerainty** (*SUH-zer-ant-tee*). Paramount, unquestioned authority.

*“The account executives are sufficiently mature to manage every phase of their accounts without challenging the ultimate SUZERAINITY of the copywriter.”*

—David Ogilvy, British advertising executive

## ADJECTIVES

**contumacious** (*kon-too-MAY-shus*). Obstinately resisting authority; disobedient; insubordinate.

*The CONTUMACIOUS defendant eventually had to be gagged.*

**insubordinate** (*in-suh-BOR-dn-it*). Failing to accept or obey proper authority. *Frank, not eager to be branded INSUBORDINATE, did his best to carry out the colonel's strange orders.*

**magisterial** (*madge-ih-STEER-ee-uhl*). Having the authority, weight, and gravity of someone considered a master of a particular art, task, ability, etc.

*With MAGISTERIAL grace, the conductor lifted her baton.*

**martial** (*MAR-shull*). Appropriate to wartime; pertaining to military control over a civilian population.

*After capturing Richmond, the commander issued an order placing it under MARTIAL law.*

**officious** (*oh-FISH-us*). Asserting authority or power in an obnoxious, overbearing, or pompous manner.

*Bill was an old-school manager who believed it was proper to be OFFICIOUS and condescending in the treatment of his employees.*

## VERBS

**arrogate** (AIR-uh-gate). To demand something for oneself or to take control without authority.

*The way Nelson ARROGATES office meetings drives his coworkers crazy!*

**depose** (dih-POZE). To oust or remove from office or a position of power and authority.

*After the dictator was DEPOSED, the country set about healing the wounds of a long civil war.*

**usurp** (yoo-SURP). To assume control forcibly and/or without right or authority; to take over.

*The authority of Congress was indeed USURPED by Lincoln during the war, but legislators briskly reasserted themselves once the crisis was past.*

## ANTONYMS

**derelict** (*dare-uh-LIKT*). Willfully neglected; shirking responsibility; knowingly failing to perform one's duty.

*The sheriff was typically drunk, usually nasty, and always DERELICT in the performance of his duties.*

**lax** (*LAX*). Not strict; careless; not stringent.

*The new teacher took a LAX view of authority and could not control his classroom.*



## 21. Avoid

(*uh-VOID*), verb

To keep away from; to prevent contact; to prevent from happening.

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## VERBS

**abscond** (ab-SKOND). To depart quickly and in secret, especially to avoid criminal charges.

*The bank robbers immediately ABSCONDED with the money to Mexico.*

**circumvent** (sir-kum-VENT). To avoid by means of artful contrivance; to maneuver around; bypass.

*In CIRCUMVENTING the will of the board of directors, the CEO knew he was taking a risk.*

**eschew** (ess-CHOO). To shun; to stay away from, especially as a result of moral or ethical concerns.

*Chuck ESCHEWED his coworkers' nights out on the town, knowing they almost always concluded with a visit to a strip club.*

**evade** (ee-VADE). To sidestep or dodge; to flee from (a pursuer).

*The fugitives EVADED the authorities for three months, but were finally apprehended near Scottsdale, Arizona.*

**malinger** (muh-LING-ger). To avoid work by making up excuses.

*"There will be no MALINGERING in this office," the new supervisor said sternly.*

**preclude** (pri-KLOOD). To hinder; prevent; make impossible, especially in advance.

*"Don't rule out working with your hands. It does not PRECLUDE using your head."*

—Andy Rooney, American journalist and writer

**shun** (shun). To keep away from or avoid.

*Wade's parents thought he would be glad they had agreed to chaperone the school dance, and seemed surprised when he SHUNNED them for the entire evening.*

## NOUNS

**pariah** (*puh-RIE-uh*). An outcast; one who is shunned, avoided, or despised.

*After his firing, Milton had the nerve to show up unannounced at the company picnic, then seemed surprised when he was treated as a PARIAH.*

## ANTONYMS

**accost** (*uh-KAWST*). To approach and speak to; to confront.

*As time went on, the old man became less and less stable and would ACCOST everyone he met on the street, asking questions no one could answer.*

**confront** (*kuhn-FRUHNT*). To face; stand or meet face-to-face; to face in defiance; oppose.

*“All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: It was the willingness to CONFRONT unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time.”*

—John Kenneth Galbraith, Canadian-American economist

## 22. Aware

(*uh-WEAR*), adjective

Having knowledge of something through alert observation or interpretation of what one sees, hears, or feels; conscious.

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## ADJECTIVES

**astute** (uh-STUTE). Skilled; quick to learn or grasp; shrewd; sharp-witted.

*Carl was an ASTUTE investor who knew when to follow the crowd and when to ignore it.*

**au courant** (oh kuh-RONT). Up-to-date; current.

*Mary Ann prided herself on her ability to stay AU COURANT with the latest trends in fashion.*

**cognizant** (KOG-nih-zint). Aware of the realities of a situation; well informed.

*The attorney angrily denied the charges that his client had been COGNIZANT of the scheme to defraud consumers.*

**discerning** (dih-SUR-ning). Showing good insight, judgment, and understanding; discriminating.

*Although Jamie is excellent at acquiring reference works, she is not the most DISCERNING editor when it comes to evaluating children's book proposals.*

**percipient** (pur-SIP-ee-int). Keenly or readily perceiving; discriminating.

*Arthur was a PERCIPIENT gourmet, so we always let him choose the restaurant for a celebratory meal.*

**perspicacious** (pur-spi-KAY-shuss). Characterized by keen mental perception and understanding.

*Amanda's PERSPICACIOUS powers of observation made her particularly effective as a psychologist.*

**pervious** (PUR-vee-us). Open or accessible to reason, influence, or argument.

*The new teacher was thrilled at the prospect of a classroom full of smiling faces and PERVIOUS minds.*

**sentient** (SEN-tea-ent). Having or capable of perception or feeling; conscious.

*"Many years ago, a particular creature was selected to develop into the dominant life form on this planet. It was given certain breaks and certain*

*challenges, all of which, when utilized or overcome, marked it indelibly with particular traits as it moved along the road to a higher SENTIENCE.”*

—Roger Zelazny, American science fiction writer

**subliminal** (*sub-LIM-inn-uhl*). Operating below the threshold of consciousness, but still having an effect on the mind.

*SUBLIMINAL advertising was a big fad in advertising in the 1970s.*

**trenchant** (*TREN-chunt*). Keen; sharply perceptive; incisive; discerning.

*Michael’s TRENCHANT commentary on American politics and society have made him a popular radio talk show host.*

## VERBS

**annunciate** (*uh-NUN-see-ate*). To proclaim or announce.

*Jackie chose to ANNUNCIATE her engagement at her sister's birthday party thus turning the attention on herself.*

**apprise** (*uh-PRIZE*). To notify; to cause to be aware of.

*Have you been APPRISED of the most recent news from home?*

**disabuse** (*diss-uh-BYOOZ*). To free oneself or someone else from an incorrect assumption or belief.

*We had to DISABUSE Lorraine of her belief that her family connections would immediately make her a member of our group.*

**promulgate** (*PROM-ul-gate*). To put forward publicly; to announce in an official capacity.

*The news of the British attack was PROMULGATED by town criers.*



## ANTONYMS

**heedless** (*HEED-lis*). Unmindful; careless; thoughtless.

*Jack was HEEDLESS of the effects of his comments and without meaning to, often hurt the feelings of his friends and family.*

**nescience** (*NESH-uhns*). Ignorance; lack of knowledge.

*The townspeople were not evil by nature, but were afraid of and hostile to strangers from their NESCIENCE.*

# B

## 23. Bad

(*bad*), adjective

Not good; defective in quality; not sound; not an acceptable standard; lacking worth; unfit.

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## ADJECTIVES

**calamitous** (kuh-LAM-uh-tuss). Catastrophic; disastrous.

*The stock market's CALAMITOUS crash gave rise to a nationwide panic.*

**cataclysmic** (kat-uh-KLIZ-mik). Of or caused by a cataclysm (deluge); disastrous.

*The assassination of the prime minister was a CATACLYSMIC event that led to a lengthy civil war.*

**egregious** (E-GREE-jus). Remarkable in a bad way; having extremely undesirable qualities.

*Pauline made the EGREGIOUS mistake of asking the price of a piece of jewelry that caught her eye, rather than simply asking to purchase the necklace.*

**grievous** (GREE-vuhss). Flagrant and outrageous; atrocious; causing grief and great sorrow.

*"Jealousy is a GRIEVOUS passion that jealously seeks what causes grief."*

—Franz Grillparzer, Austrian poet

**hellacious** (hel-AYE-shus). Extremely brutal, violent, and severe; remarkably difficult.

*Madison's HELLACIOUS foray into the corporate world resulted in her quickly going back to being supported solely by her trust fund.*

**macabre** (muh-KAH-bruh). Horrifying; ghastly; reminiscent of death.

*The old man's MACABRE tales frightened the children.*

**odious** (OH-dee-us). So offensive or disgusting that people are repulsed or experience revulsion.

*"To depend upon a profession is a less ODIOUS form of slavery than to depend upon a father."*

—Virginia Woolf, British essayist and novelist

**odoriferous** (oh-duh-RIFF-er-us). Bad smelling; foul.

*Eleanor believed she would enjoy her weekend trek through the South American rainforest, but she found the animals too noisy, the constant rain unpleasant, and the forest's ODORIFEROUS vegetation distasteful.*

**putrescent** (pyoo-TRESS-unht). Rotten; decayed; decomposed.

*Roger was concerned only with the welfare of big cats and after many years in the field wasn't bothered by the PUTRESCENT remains of their prey animals.*

## NOUNS

**abomination** (*uh-bom-ih-NAY-shen*). Anything disgusting or hateful; a shameful, vile, or disgusting act or condition.

*“Not just a vile act, your honor, the defendant committed an ABOMINATION!” thundered the prosecutor, pointing at my client.*

**nadir** (*NAY-der*). Rock-bottom, the worst a thing can get or become; point of greatest despair or adversity.

*We always have to attend the Wallingtons’ Christmas party, due to their standing, but, in truth, that boringly dreadful event is always the NADIR of our social calendar.*

## ANTONYMS

**pukka** (*PUCK-uh*). Authentic; genuine; proper; first-class.

*He had never driven one before, but Frank could recognize immediately that this classic was PUKKA.*

**recherché** (*ruh-shair-SHAY*). Sought with care; rare; choice; uncommon. *Brian was not content having the same possessions as other people and continually searched for RECHERCHÉ items to show off.*

See also: Abuse, Crimes, Evil

## 24. Banter

(*BAN-ter*), noun

Good-natured teasing or light, playful remarks.

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## NOUNS

**badinage** (*bah-dih-NAHZH*). Light, good-natured, even playful banter.

*“If you don’t care for me, you can move out now. I’m frankly not up to BADINAGE.”*

—Harlan Ellison, American author

**chaff** (*CHAF*). Good-natured teasing or ridicule.

*It seemed easy at first, but keeping up the CHAFF throughout the party turned out to be quite a chore.*

**facetiousness** (*fuh-SEE-shus-nes*). Conversation that lacks serious intent and is concerned with something nonessential and amusing.

*I could see by the amount of liquor flowing that the party would be characterized by awkward dancing and FACETIOUSNESS.*

**persiflage** (*PUR-suh-flahzh*). A light, flippant, or frivolous style of writing or speaking; banter.

*The room was filled with the sounds of the string quartet and the guests’ PERSIFLAGE.*

**pleasantry** (*PLEZ-uhn-tree*). The quality of being pleasant or playful in conversation; courteous social remark.

*He now faced an enemy on the battlefield who was once his good neighbor with whom he had exchanged many PLEASANTRIES.*

**raillery** (*RAIL-err-ee*). Good-natured teasing.

*“RAILLERY,” said Montesquieu, is “a way of speaking in favor of one’s wit at the expense of one’s better nature.”*

**repartee** (*rep-ar-TAY*). Conversation characterized by witty banter.

*Our galas and balls are always marked by delightful REPARTEE around the grand dinner table.*



## ANTONYMS

**churlishness** (*CHUR-lish-nes*). A mean, boorish, or rude outlook; lack of civility or graciousness.

*Neil was surprised by Susan's CHURLISHNESS when discussing a mutual friend.*

**disputatious** (*dis-pyoo-TEY-shus*). Inclined to dispute; fond of arguing; contentious.

*Laura brought her DISPUTATIOUS brother with her to the movie, so we were prepared for an unpleasant evening.*

## 25. Beginning

*(bee-GIN-ing)*, noun

The time or place of starting; the initial stage of something; the origin or source.

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## ADJECTIVES

**germinal** (JUHRM-nuhl). Related to the earliest stage of development.

*Roland's foray into art buying is in its GERMINAL phase.*

**incipient** (in-SIH-pee-ent). In the early stages of development; developing but not fully formed.

*The chef's INCIPIENT cuisine already surpasses the fare of other, more established, culinary artists.*

**inchoate** (in-KOH-it). Only partly developed or in existence; rudimentary.

*The concept, which Glenn readily admitted was INCHOATE, showed promise despite its flaws.*

**initiatory** (ih-NISH-ee-uh-tor-ee). Constituting an introduction; initial.

*Holding hands was considered an INITIATORY act in a typical, old-fashioned courtship.*

**nascent** (NAY-sent). Having just been born or invented and still in the early stages of growth and development.

*It's always amusing to watch the nouveau riche during their NASCENT adjustment to luxury.*

**neonatal** (NEE-oh-NAY-tul). Of, or relating to newborn children.

*Honestly, the Atkinsons treat their grown children as though they still require NEONATAL care. No wonder they never get invited to any of our galas.*

**neoteric** (nee-uh-TER-ik). Recent in origin; modern.

*The botanist was excited to discover a specimen with new leaf features and thought that it must be a NEOTERIC species.*

**primordial** (pry-MORE-dee-ul). Relating to the beginning of time or the early periods of Earth's developments.

*The Summerfelds' fortune has been in the family for so long that many of us joke that it has PRIMORDIAL origins.*

**seminal** (SEM-uh-null). Constituting a source for later development; original.

*Dr. Westfield was known for his SEMINAL work in the field and was highly respected for his scholarship.*

## NOUNS

**gestation** (*jes-TAY-shun*). Conception and development, particularly in the mind.

*The ad campaign's GESTATION was fraught with conflict, but the end result was well worth all the quarrelling.*

**inception** (*in-SEP-shun*). Beginning; the generation of an idea or organism, from its initial developmental stages.

*The car was riddled with design flaws, most dating back to the auto's INCEPTION in 1972.*

**juvenilia** (*joo-vuh-NILL-yuh*). Early work by a creative artist, typically produced when the artist or writer was young.

*Lorna turned toward the stock market and away from poetry after we read her JUVENILIA and laughed uproariously.*

**neophyte** (*NEE-uh-fight*). A beginner or novice.

*"Like footmen and upstairs maids, wine stewards are portrayed as acolytes of the privileged, ever eager to intimidate the NEOPHYTE and spurn the unwary."*

—Frank J. Prial, former *New York Times* wine columnist

**prolusion** (*pro-LOO-zhun*). A preliminary performance, exercise, or trial; introductory discourse.

*Having made a discovery of importance, astronomers must decide whether to issue a PROLUSION revealing the finding, or wait and conduct further study.*

# ANTONYMS

**finale** (fi-NAL-ee). The conclusion or last part; end.

*My uncle, diagnosed with cancer but still full of vigor, decided to leave this world with a bang and not a whimper, choosing to sail around the world solo as his FINALE.*

**terminal** (TUR-muh-nul). At or forming the end; concluding; closing; final.

*My uncle's TERMINAL disease might have depressed most people, but he thought of it as an unplanned feature of his life.*

## 26. Behave

*(bee-HAYV)*, verb

To manage or conduct oneself, especially in a proper or correct way; to act or react.

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## VERBS

**acquit** (*uh-KWIT*). To behave in accordance with a person's position or obligations.

*It had been years since the actors had worked together on stage, but they both ACQUITTED themselves like professionals.*

**bestir** (*bee-STUR*). To rouse to action; stir up; busy or exert (oneself).

*Having made elaborate preparations to watch the game without interruption, Arthur did not plan to BESTIR himself for the rest of the afternoon.*

**comport** (*kum-PORT*). To conduct oneself; to behave in a particular way.

*Roger always embarrasses us because he seems to think his family name frees him to COMPORT himself foolishly.*

**discharge** (*dis-CHARJ*). To perform, execute, or fulfill a duty or function.

*The soldier took his position seriously and always DISCHARGED his duties to the best of his ability.*

## NOUNS

**demeanor** (*dih-MEE-ner*). Outward conduct; deportment.

*In an effort to teach behavior, primary schools graded students on their DEMEANOR.*

**habitude** (*HAB-uh-tyood*). Customary behavior or customary procedure.

*Alistair's HABITUDE is for the servants to awake him just prior to noon.*

**portance** (*POR-tens*). Conduct; carriage, bearing; demeanor.

*My grandmother grew up in a more civilized period, or so she claimed, and appreciated the value of proper PORTANCE.*

**praxis** (*PRAK-sis*). Established practice; custom.

*At one time, killing and stuffing specimens was the PRAXIS for many branches of biology.*

**propriety** (*pro-PRY-ah-tee*). Behaving in a way that conforms to the manners and morals of polite society.

*"PROPRIETY is the least of all laws, and the most observed."*

—François de La Rochefoucauld, French author



## ADJECTIVES

**inveterate** (*in-VET-uh-rett*). Never changing; persisting by habit.

*“Take all the garden spills, / INVETERATE, / prodigal spender / just as summer goes.”*

—Hilda Doolittle, American poet and memoirist

## ANTONYMS

**dysfunctional** (*diss-FUNK-shun-uhl*). Characterized by abnormal functioning; poor interpersonal behavior within a group.

*Charlie always blames his rotten behavior on being the product of a DYSFUNCTIONAL family.*

## 27. Belief

(*bee-LEEF*), noun

A state of mind in which confidence is placed in a person or thing; a conviction that certain things are true; faith.

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## ADJECTIVES

**egalitarian** (*ih-gal-uh-TARE-ee-uhn*). To be fair and balanced in the extreme; to act in the belief that all men are created equal and should be treated so.

*“Chinks in America’s EGALITARIAN armor are not hard to find. Democracy is the fig leaf of elitism.”*

—Florence King, American author

**existential** (*eggs-ih-STEN-shul*). Refers to ideas, beliefs, and philosophies that support the belief in free will and the freedom of the individual.

*“No phallic hero, no matter what he does to himself or to another to prove his courage, ever matches the solitary, EXISTENTIAL courage of the woman who gives birth.”*

—Andrea Dworkin, American radical feminist and author

**implausible** (*im-PLAWZ-ih-bull*). Difficult to believe; highly unlikely to be true.

*“At first glance, most famous fairy tales seem so IMPLAUSIBLE and irrelevant to contemporary life that their survival is hard to understand.”*

—Alison Lurie, American novelist and academic

**monistic** (*moh-NIS-tik*). Characterized by the idea that everything—including philosophy, religion, and mysticism—can be reduced to a single substance or explained by a single principle.

*Of course we believe the world is MONISTIC. Wealth is the source of everything in the universe.*

**orthodox** (*OR-thuh-docks*). Mainstream; conventional; adhering to the strictest interpretation of a law or religion.

*ORTHODOX medicine has long ignored the obvious effect diet and nutrition have on health and illness.*

**staunch** (*stonch*). Firm in resolution or belief; fixed.

*Mr. West, a STAUNCH conservative, believed that government waste was the main problem requiring attention in Washington.*

**syncretistic** (*sin-kre-TIH-stik*). A set of beliefs obtained by combining elements of multiple cultures, religions, societies, or schools of thought.

*Pauline's SYNCRETISTIC worldview comes from the fact that her family has traveled extensively across the globe.*

**teleological** (tee-lee-uh-LOJ-ik-uhl). The notion that things exist for a purpose.

*The fact that we have unsurpassable wealth and taste, while others who are less important endure hardship, is surely proof that we live in a TELEOLOGICAL universe.*

## NOUNS

**agnostic** (*ag-NOS-tik*). A person who believes it is impossible to know the essential nature of things and whether or not an ultimate cause (as God) exists.

*Frank, who had been raised in a deeply religious home, knew that it would hurt his parents if they discovered he was an AGNOSTIC.*

**determinism** (*dih-TUR-mun-iz-um*). The belief that a person's course of action is not free but predetermined by external circumstances.

*A true disciple of DETERMINISM, Jerry felt he should not be held accountable for having married three women—since, as he argued, each of the relationships had been “meant to be.”*

**ethos** (*EE-thos*). The core principles or beliefs of a religion, culture, or community.

*Even the eating of cheese violates the ETHOS of the vegan culture.*

**humanism** (*HEW-man-iz-um*). The philosophy or belief that the highest ideals of human existence can be fulfilled without regard to religion or supernatural intervention.

*“The four characteristics of HUMANISM are curiosity, a free mind, belief in good taste, and belief in the human race.”*

—E. M. Forster, English novelist

**hypothesis** (*high-POTH-uh-sis*). A principle derived from limited evidence, seen as sensible based on an analysis of available data, but not proven to the point where it is an accepted theory, rule, or law.

*“In order to shake a HYPOTHESIS, it is sometimes not necessary to do anything more than push it as far as it will go.”*

—Denis Diderot, French philosopher

**iconoclast** (*eye-KAHN-uh-clast*). An individual who is contrarian in thought, rebellious in spirit, oppositional, and who applies himself to battling established institutions, existing governments, religious doctrine, and popular notions and beliefs.

*The late George Carlin saw the role of the comic in society as one of ICONOCLAST.*

**ideologue** (*EYE-dee-oh-log*). A person who rigidly adheres to an ideology with a closed mind regarding other points of view.

*“An IDEOLOGUE may be defined as a mad intellectual.”*

—Clifton Fadiman, American critic

**martyrdom** (MAR-ter-dum). The condition of having suffered death as a martyr, a person who has died or been killed rather than give up his faith or principles.

*Many say that John Brown’s MARTYRDOM served his cause more effectively than anything he did at Harper’s Ferry.*

**mores** (MORE-ayz). The accepted norms of social behavior for the time and society in which one lives.

*Grant learned the hard way that MORES vary from country to country when he made the faux pas of trying to shake the hand of the Thai businessman.*

**nihilism** (NIE-uh-liz-im). The belief that life is meaningless.

*A profound NIHILISM seems to have fallen over the poet during the last six months she spent in London; her letters to her mother indicate a severe depression.*

**pragmatism** (PRAG-muh-tiz-um). The belief that one’s actions should be guided primarily based on knowledge or opinion of what is likely to work best in a given situation; the imperative to always do what is practical and effective.

*Our families have succeeded in amassing great wealth over many generations because we are all, at heart, practitioners of PRAGMATISM.*

**predestination** (pree-dess-tih-NAY-shun). The belief that we do not have free will and that our lives and destinies are preordained and beyond our control.

*The problem with PREDESTINATION is that whatever happens, you can say that it was meant to be, and no one can prove you wrong.*

**solipsism** (SAHL-ip-sihz-uhm). The notion that one’s own experiences and thoughts are the only source of true knowledge.

*The SOLIPSISM of some members of the leisure class is distasteful to those of us who, for example, know what our servants need even more than they do.*

**tabula rasa** (TAB-yuh-luh-RAH-suh). A clean slate; lacking preconceived notions, prejudices, beliefs, and attitudes; receptive to instruction and information.

*“Classic writers’ fear of the blank page: call it TABULA-RASA-phobia.”*

—John Jerome, American nonfiction writer

**Taoism** (DOW-is-um). A system of philosophy identified with the sage Laotzu, and embodied most notably in his work *Tao Te Ching*, which holds that life lived simply and in accordance with natural laws and events is most in keeping with the Tao, or way, that underlies all existence.

*Scholars may debate the fine points of a rational understanding of TAOISM, but a true practitioner probably expresses it best when she gracefully and thankfully accepts a proffered cup of tea.*

**tenet** (TEN-it). A central doctrine; a core belief; a rule or principle one lives by.

*“Christian writers from the third century on pointed out the deleterious effect of Platonism on Christian belief—even while adopting many of its fundamental TENETS.”*

—Harold Attridge, Dean of Yale University Divinity School

**weltschmerz** (VELT-shmayrtz). A lingering sorrow that some believe is a given in life.

*When we snubbed Margaret for buying so many fashion knockoffs, her WELTSCHMERZ lasted until we forgave her.*

**zealot** (ZEL-it). A rabid follower; a true believer; a fanatical advocate.

*“What a noble aim is that of the ZEALOT who tortures himself like a madman in order to desire nothing, love nothing, feel nothing, and who, if he succeeded, would end up a complete monster!”*

—Denis Diderot, French philosopher

**zeitgeist** (ZITE-gahyst). The prevailing viewpoints, attitudes, and beliefs of a given generation or period in history.

*In the twenty-first century, “going green” is very much at the forefront of the nation’s ZEITGEIST, as people have been made aware of the importance of being good stewards of our planet’s natural resources.*



## ANTONYMS

**apostasy** (*a-PA-stah-see*). The act of abandoning, ignoring, or openly flaunting an accepted principle or belief.

*Paul was a believer in his parents' religion for most of his life, until his faith was overrun and crushed by unstoppable APOSTASY.*

**dubiety** (*doo-BAHY-ih-tee*). The state of doubt; doubtfulness; uncertainty.

*The financial reports were inconsistent and confusing, and caused rampant DUBIETY within both chambers of Congress.*

## 28. Best

(*BEST*), adjective

Having the highest quality, standing, or excellence; most suitable, desirable, or advantageous; superior to all others.

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## NOUNS

**apotheosis** (ah-pa-thee-OH-sis). The culmination or highest point.

*Winning the Silver Gutter Award at his local bowling alley was the APOTHEOSIS of Wendell's less-than-stellar sports legacy.*

**epitome** (ee-PIT-uh-mee). The highest or supreme example.

*Many people consider The Mary Tyler Moore Show to be the EPITOME of a 1970s situation comedy.*

**exemplar** (eggs-EM-plar). A role model, a shining example of a desired state, status, or behavior.

*"The system—the American one, at least—is a vast and noble experiment. It has been polestar and EXAMPLAR for other nations."*

—Phyllis McGinley, American poet

**ne plus ultra** (nay plooce OOL-truh). The highest possible embodiment (of something).

*Many consider Oedipus Rex the drama's NE PLUS ULTRA.*

**paragon** (PARE-uh-gone). A peerless model or pattern of perfection.

*Even if we could live our lives in accordance with the PARAGONS of right living, would we not still experience conflict and misunderstanding with others?*

**primacy** (PRY-muh-see). First in order, rank, importance, etc.

*Physics is thought, by physicists, to hold PRIMACY over other sciences.*

**zenith** (ZEE-nith). The highest point attained; the peak.

*"This dead of midnight is the noon of thought, / And Wisdom mounts her ZENITH with the stars."*

— Anna Laetitia Barbauld, English poet and children's author

## ADJECTIVES

**efflorescent** (ef-luh-RES-uhnt). Describes something that has reached the final stage of its development or is at the peak of perfection.

*Thomas is convinced that the Bugatti Veyron Fbg represents the EFFLORESCENT automobile.*

**empyreal** (em-PEER-ee-uhl). Elevated and sublime; or, of the sky.

*The beautiful three-carat sapphire her fiancé gave her shone with an EMPYREAL, almost celestial, light.*

**maximal** (MAK-suh-mull). The highest or greatest possible; at the upper limit.

*Once it reached its MAXIMAL height, the test plane could be returned to base for examination.*

**nonpareil** (non-pah-RAYLE). Without equal or peer.

*We could tell Jeanette was a typical parvenu when she attempted to convince us that Bennington Posh Couture golf bags are NONPAREIL.*

**optimum** (AHP-ti-mum). The most favorable degree, point, or condition; the best result for given conditions.

*George knew his fish and arrived at the best spot on the lake at the OPTIMUM moment.*

**paramount** (PARE-uh-mount). Supreme; superior; excellent.

*It is of PARAMOUNT importance that we complete this project on time.*

**peerless** (PEER-luss). Without peer; above others with regard to ability or quality; beyond compare.

*Mrs. Reilly's PEERLESS skills as a mediator soon earned her a special position of respect on the school board.*

**quintessential** (kwin-tuh-SEN-shul). The most perfect or typical example of its category or kind.

*"Craving that old sweet oneness yet dreading engulfment, wishing to be our mother's and yet be our own, we stormily swing from mood to mood, advancing and retreating—the QUINTESSENTIAL model of two-mindedness."*

—Judith Viorst, American author and psychoanalyst

**rarefied** (RARE-uh-fyed). Lofty; exalted; of high class or caliber.

*Most copywriters don't operate in the RAREFIED environment in which Clayton makes his millions.*

**superlative** (*sue-PURR-lah-tiv*). The quality of something's being the best in its class or quality.

*Our family's show horses are SUPERLATIVE in every way.*

## ANTONYMS

**nadir** (*NAY-der*). Rock-bottom, the worst a thing can get or become; point of greatest despair or adversity.

*Everyone quietly prayed that the market had reached its NADIR and would bounce back quickly and completely.*

See also: Big, Grand

## 29. Big

*(BIG)*, adjective

Large; of great size, capacity, or extent; full-grown; important; impressive; prominent.

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# ADJECTIVES

**Brobdingnagian** (*brahb-ding-NAG-ian*). Describes a thing or person of enormous size; huge.

*Andre the Giant was a man of BROBDINGNAGIAN proportions, standing seven foot five inches and weighing over five hundred pounds.*

**capacious** (*kuh-PAY-shus*). Able to contain a great quantity; spacious; roomy.

*All of our meetings take place in the golf club's CAPACIOUS private auditorium.*

**commodious** (*kah-MOW-dee-us*). Very spacious.

*Though COMMODIOUS, the Barrows' Cape Cod home is austere and lacks charm.*

**corpulent** (*KORP-you-lunt*). Obese; portly; fat; bulky.

*A CORPULENT waiter, apparently meant to frighten us into sensible eating, waddled out to ask us whether we were interested in hearing about the restaurant's special low-calorie entrees.*

**elephantine** (*ELL-uh-fun-tine*). Huge in size or scope; massive.

*I figured out that the ELEPHANTINE present had to be a new refrigerator.*

**gargantuan** (*gar-GAN-choo-un*). Enormous; colossal.

*The GARGANTUAN scale of the budget deficit caught both Congress and the financial markets by surprise.*

**monolithic** (*mon-uh-LITH-ik*). Unwieldy or cumbersome; huge; showing solidity and uniformity.

*The MONOLITHIC presence of IBM in the computer field is sobering enough to make any competitor think twice before introducing a new product.*

**omnifarious** (*ahm-nuh-FAIR-ee-us*). Of all varieties, forms, or kinds.

*Corporations can specialize, outselling the competition by delivering the best and most desired product of its kind, or can overcome the vagaries of any single market and develop an OMNIFARIOUS product line.*

**prodigious** (*proh-DIJ-is*). Extraordinary in size, extent, amount, degree, bulk, etc.; enormous; monstrous.



*Clark's PRODIGIOUS collection of old movie posters led many of his friends to ask whether he had once owned a theatre.*

## NOUNS

**leviathan** (*le-VY-ah-thun*). A gigantic creature, structure, or thing, awe-inspiring in its sheer size.

*“Wilson looked out through the window at the LEVIATHAN glitter of the terminal.”*

—Richard Matheson, American science fiction writer

**magnum** (*MAG-num*). An extra-large wine bottle twice the size of a regular wine bottle; a powerful handgun firing large bullets.

*We doubted the taste of the event planner when we saw that the tables were filled with distasteful MAGNUMS of wines of questionable vintage.*

# ANTONYMS

**inconsequential** (*in-kon-si-KWEN-shul*). Of no consequence; trivial; insignificant; irrelevant.

*“Given a sufficient number of people and an adequate amount of time you can create insurmountable opposition to the most INCONSEQUENTIAL idea.”*

—Anonymous

**negligible** (*NEG-li-juh-buhl*). So small as to be safely disregarded or ignored.

*The winter sun’s effect on the snow was NEGLIGIBLE and no melting took place.*

## 30. Blame

(*BLEYM*), verb

To accuse someone of being at fault; to hold responsible; to attribute responsibility.

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## VERBS

**censure** (SEN-sheer). A show of disapproval or blame; a formal rebuke or stern reproof.

*You could not have acted as you did without expecting a CENSURE from this organization.*

**condemn** (kuhn-DEM). To place an unfavorable judgment on; to pronounce guilt.

*No one who knew the facts of the case could help but CONDEMN the perpetrator as guilty.*

**criminate** (KRIM-uh-neyt). To charge with a crime; incriminate; to censure.

*Arthur's act was so unforgivable that his own mother would CRIMINATE him without compunction.*

**impute** (im-PYOOT). To attribute something, to assign responsibility or blame.

*"The sin I IMPUTE to each frustrate ghost / Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin, / Though the end in sight was a vice, I say."*

—Robert Browning, British poet and playwright

**inculpate** (in-KOOL-pate). To incriminate, blame, or charge with a crime.

*Thanks to our connections, none of us were INCULPATED in the nightclub melee.*

## ADJECTIVES

**culpable** (*KUL-puh-bull*). Blameworthy; accountable for error or wrongdoing.

*After Ryan was found CULPABLE for the financial mismanagement at his firm, he was forced to resign.*

## ANTONYMS

**exonerate** (*ig-ZON-uh-rate*). To clear or free from blame or guilt; to restore (one's reputation).

*After the charges were thrown out and Brian was completely EXONERATED, he was free to continue his work in the securities industry.*

See also: Criticize, Reputation

## 31. Brave

(*BRAYV*), adjective

The characteristic of fearlessness in meeting danger or difficulty; having courage.

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## ADJECTIVES

**audacious** (aw-DAY-shuss). Extremely bold; reckless; daring; adventurous; defiant in the face of convention.

*His AUDACIOUS behavior at the family reunion shocked even his brothers and sisters.*

**dauntless** (DAWNT-liss). Fearless, intrepid, and bold.

*“For Thought has a pair of DAUNTLESS wings.”*

—Robert Frost, American poet

**intrepid** (in-TREP-id). Resolutely brave.

*The INTREPID climber made her way down the icy mountain alone.*

**valorous** (VAL-er-us). Characterized by fearlessness, bravery, especially in battle.

*My uncle’s office was filled with citations commemorating his many VALOROUS acts in World War II.*

## NOUNS

**bravado** (*bruh-VA-do*). An open show of bravery; characterized by a display of boldness.

*The mayor's swaggering attitude of BRAVADO was of little help when the town was finally attacked.*

**sangfroid** (*san-FWAH*). The attitude or state of possessing a cool head and steadfast composure in the face of danger, adversity, or stressful situations.

*The car crash shook him, but within seconds he recovered his SANGFROID and went to check on his driver.*

# ANTONYMS

**pavid** (PAV-id). Timid and fearful.

*Charlie's cat must have been abused as a kitten, because it sleeps with one PAVID eye open.*

**pusillanimous** (pyoo-suh-LAN-ih-muss). Being mild or timid by nature; a shrinking violet; a person who seeks to avoid conflict, challenge, and danger.

*L. Frank Baum's most PUSILLANIMOUS fictional creation is the Cowardly Lion of Oz.*

**recreant** (REHK-ree-ant). Craven; cowardly; crying for mercy.

*Victory seemed likely because we were facing a reputedly RECREANT foe.*

**tremulous** (TREHM-yuh-luss). Timid and fearful.

*With TREMULOUS mien, Anthony asked Gwendolyn if she would consent to a joining of their families.*

**trepidation** (trep-ih-DAY-shun). A state of fear or agitation.

*Continual tremors created TREPIDATION in the entire population.*

# C

## 32. Careful

(*KAYR-full*), adjective

Exercising caution; dealing thoughtfully with a situation; wary; showing close attention or great concern.

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## ADJECTIVES

**chary** (CHAIR-ee). Describes someone who is very cautious or wary.

*I was CHARY of Lillian's new business scheme because her "great" ideas always result in spectacular disasters.*

**circumspect** (SIR-kum-spekt). Prudent, cautious; considering from all sides.

*"I smiled, / I waited, / I was CIRCUMSPECT; / O never, never, never write that I / missed life or loving."*

—Hilda Doolittle, American poet and memoirist

**fastidious** (fah-STID-ee-us). To be particular about things, particularly good housekeeping and personal hygiene; to place great importance on even the smallest of details.

*"A FASTIDIOUS person in the throes of love is a rich source of mirth."*

—Martha Duffy, Arts editor, *Time magazine*

**meticulous** (meh-TICK-yuh-luhss). Extremely precise; fussy about details.

*As a radiologist, Arthur was required to give METICULOUS attention to reading test results.*

**parsimonious** (par-sih-MOAN-ee-us). To be conservative in spending and tight with a dollar; to agree to part with money or other resources only grudgingly and after much cajoling.

*Esmerelda can be surprisingly PARSIMONIOUS, considering that her family's fortune is among the greatest possessed by our social contacts.*

**punctilious** (punk-TILL-ee-uss). Overly attentive to trifling details; taking great care to dispose of seemingly small matters in a formally correct way.

*The PUNCTILIOUS Mrs. Smith took issue with the seating arrangements we had suggested.*

**scrupulous** (SKROO-pyoo-lus). Characterized by a conscientious adherence to what is considered true, right, or accurate.

*The CFO was replaced by a financial expert who also exercised SCRUPULOUS control of the company's expense accounts, much to the chagrin of the sales force.*

## NOUNS

**preciosity** (*presh-ee-OS-uh-tee*). Carefully affected or fastidious refinement.

*It was unclear why Ralph adopted his PRECIOSITY, but we know he didn't inherit it from his guileless parents.*

## ANTONYMS

**prodigal** (PRAHD-ih-gull). Characterized by reckless wastefulness; spendthrift; excessively generous.

*Known for his PRODIGAL spending habits, William always caused a stir among waitstaff in the restaurants he frequented.*

**profligate** (PROF-lih-gayt). Extravagant; wasteful; activity, expenditures, or indulgences beyond what any reasonable person would desire.

*“The official account of the Church’s development viewed alternative voices as expressing the views of a misguided minority, craven followers of contemporary culture, PROFLIGATE sinners, or worse.”*

—Harold Attridge, Dean of Yale University Divinity School

**slatternly** (SLAT-urn-lee). Untidy and careless; slovenly; disorderly.

*Dorothy’s SLATTERNLY habits make her an interesting choice for “mother of the year.”*

**slovenly** (SLUHV-in-lee). Dirty or untidy in one’s personal habits.

*Burt’s SLOVENLY room is at odds with his tidy personal appearance.*

## 33. Chance

(*CHANS*), noun

Happenings that occur unpredictably in the absence of cause or design; fortuity; luck; uncertainty.

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## ADJECTIVES

**aleatory** (*AIL-ee-ah-tore-ee*). An action that is unplanned, spontaneous, or spur of the moment rather than deliberately thought out and carefully considered; an outcome that is anything but certain and depends on luck, randomness, or chance.

*“Of course you lost the election!” Miranda yelled. “An ALEATORY, fly-by-theseat-of-your-pants campaign is never going to be a recipe for success!”*

**auspicious** (*aws-PISH-us*). Promising; seemingly favorable or likely to be accompanied by good fortune; encouraging signals or reasons for optimism at the beginning of an undertaking.

*The trip did not begin AUSPICIOUSLY; our car broke down within an hour.*

**fortuitous** (*for-TOO-ih-tuss*). A happy event taking place by accident or chance. *“The most FORTUITOUS event of my entire life was meeting my wife Eleanor.”*

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt

**hapless** (*HAP-liss*). Luckless; unfortunate.

*Oliver presented a rather HAPLESS figure during his first few days on the job, but he soon mastered his new responsibilities.*

**inauspicious** (*in-oss-PISH-uss*). Accompanied by or predictive of ill luck; not favorable in portent.

*Who could have predicted that from such INAUSPICIOUS beginnings Grant would rise to command great armies and, eventually, lead his nation?*

**precarious** (*prih-KAYR-ee-us*). Tenuous; dependent upon circumstances; uncertain; unsecured.

*During that time of civil unrest, Jack thought frequently about his PRECARIOUS future.*

**propitious** (*pruh-PISH-us*). Presenting a good omen; auspicious.

*We all hoped that the beautiful sunset was a PROPITIOUS omen for our camping vacation.*

**providential** (*prahv-uh-DEN-shul*). Fortunate; as if occurring by or resulting from divine intervention.

*Fastening my seat belt was a PROVIDENTIAL act, as the accident made apparent.*

## NOUNS

**deus ex machina** (DAY-oos-eks-MA-keen-uh). An unexpected and fortunate event solving a problem or saving someone from disaster; a stroke of good luck.

*Harry had reached a financial threshold and it would take a DEUS EX MACHINA to rescue him from bankruptcy.*

**entropy** (EN-troh-pee). The tendency of any system to run down and revert to total chaos.

*“Just as the constant increase of ENTROPY is the basic law of the universe, so it is the basic law of life to be ever more highly structured and to struggle against ENTROPY.”*

—Václav Havel, Czech playwright, writer, and politician

**kismet** (KIHZ-met). Fate or destiny.

*A hopeless romantic, Brian believed KISMET was responsible for his arranged marriage.*

**serendipity** (ser-en-DIP-it-ee). The attaining of success, good fortune, or an object of desire through luck and random circumstance.

*What made him an Internet billionaire was SERENDIPITY more than brains or talent.*

# ANTONYMS

**ascribe** (*uh-SKRYBE*). To attribute or assign causal responsibility to a person or thing.

*This work has been ASCRIBED to Rousseau, but his authorship now seems uncertain.*

**etiology** (*ee-tee-OL-uh-gee*). The assignment of a cause; the science of origins or causes.

*The ETIOLOGY of the disease was clear; David developed mesothelioma from his years of working, unprotected, with asbestos.*

## 34. Change

(*CHEYNJ*), noun, verb

A transformation; substitution; alteration or modification; to cause to become different; convert

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## NOUNS

**acculturation** (*ah-kul-cherr-AYE-shin*). The process of adapting to a different culture; cultural modification.

*New citizens are formed through ACCULTURATION at the cost of their heritage and culture.*

**flux** (*FLUKS*). Unceasing change.

*The organization's plans were in a state of constant FLUX.*

**mutability** (*myoo-tuh-BIL-ih-tee*). The condition of being able to change at a moment's notice.

*"For is the same! For, be it joy or sorrow, / The path of its departure still is free: / Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow; / Nought may endure but MUTABILITY"*

—Percy Bysshe Shelley, English Romantic poet

**permutation** (*per-myoo-TAY-shun*). A transformation leading to a complete change.

*After exploring numerous PERMUTATIONS of its style, the band returned to the sound with which it had first attracted fans.*

**transubstantiation** (*tran-sub-STAN-she-aye-shun*). The changing of one substance into another; transmutation; transformation.

*TRANSUBSTANTIATION is used as a technique in marketing, transforming shabby and gauche items into supposed examples of tasteful luxury.*

**vicissitudes** (*vi-SIS-ih-toods*). The constant change of one's situation or condition, common throughout life.

*"VICISSITUDES of fortune, which spares neither man nor the proudest of his works, which buries empires and cities in a common grave."*

—Edward Gibbon, British historian

## VERBS

**abrade** (uh-BRADE). To wear away or rub off; to wear down in spirit.

*The campaign had hoped for a hard-hitting, informative television commercial, but the ad—widely perceived as negative and mean-spirited—served only to ABRADE voter support.*

**acclimate** (AK-lih-mayt). Adapting or becoming accustomed to a new altitude, climate, environment, or situation.

*At first Joan found college life lonely and stressful, but after a few weeks she was able to ACCLIMATE, and never longed for home again.*

**assimilate** (uh-SIM-uh-layt). To acquire and incorporate as one's own; to absorb; to alter by adoption.

*Dorothy could ASSIMILATE information more quickly and completely than any student in the school.*

**emend** (ee-MEND). To change by means of editing; to correct (a text or reading).

*Many of Shakespeare's most famous lines, such as "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," are the result of a critic's choice to EMEND a troublesome source text.*

**macerate** (MASS-uh-rayt). To waste away; to become thin or emaciated; to soften or decompose.

*It was painful for his family to watch Harold, who had been so vigorous and robust, slowly MACERATE.*

**metamorphose** (met-uh-MAWR-fohz). To change completely the character or nature of; to change into a different physical form.

*The boarding school experience gave Martha new friends and the impetus to METAMORPHOSE into a young woman.*

**permute** (per-MYOOT). To alter; make different; to change the order or sequence of.

*John had spent more than fifty hours creating what he thought was the perfect presentation until his boss asked him to PERMUTE much of the statistical data.*

**shunt** (SHUNT). To change the direction of; to divert.

*When his proposal was dismissed after less than a minute of discussion, Mark felt more than ever that his ideas were being SHUNTED aside without*

*due consideration.*



## ADJECTIVES

**capricious** (*Kah-PREE-shus*). Prone to quickly change one's mind, decision, or course of action at the drop of a hat or on impulse.

*"I do not understand the CAPRICIOUS lewdness of the sleeping mind."*

—John Cheever, American novelist

**malleable** (*MAL-yah-bull*). Easily molded into different shapes; easily influenced to change one's opinion or actions.

*"I did not know that mankind was suffering for want of gold. I have seen a little of it. I know that it is very MALLEABLE, but not so MALLEABLE as wit."*

—Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist

**mercurial** (*mer-KYOOR-ee-uhl*). Volatile, fickle, and erratic.

*Joe thought his MERCURIAL boss was exhausting but highly entertaining.*

**pliable** (*PLY-uh-bull*). Able to be changed in shape, form, or inclination; capable of being directed or influenced.

*Gold, one of the world's most valuable metals, is also one of the most PLIABLE.*

**protean** (*PRO-tee-en*). Highly changeable; readily taking on different characters or forms.

*A willing, brave, and PROTEAN actress will tend to be employed more frequently.*

# ANTONYMS

**immutable** (im-MYOO-tuh-bull). Unable, or unwilling, to change.

*“I don’t know what IMMUTABLE differences exist between men and women apart from differences in their genitals.”*

—Naomi Weisstein, American feminist

**incorrigible** (in-KORE-ij-uh-bul). Incapable of being reformed; not easily changed or influenced.

*Young Pete was an INCORRIGIBLE boy, forever getting into scrapes and causing mischief.*

**ossify** (OS-uh-fye). To harden and become unable to change.

*Due to his lack of contact with others, Jack’s opinions have OSSIFIED.*

**Rubicon** (ROO-bih-kon). A point beyond which permanent change is unavoidable.

*In signing the bill, the Governor may have crossed the RUBICON and forever closed the door on his prison reform program.*

See also: Reduce

## 35. Chemistry

*(KEM-uh-stree)*, noun

The science that deals with the composition and properties of substances and with the reactions of those substances.

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## NOUNS

**humectant** (*hue-MEK-tant*). A substance that absorbs moisture or retains water.

*Sorbitol, a HUMECTANT, is used in the processing of dried fruit.*

**oxidation** (*oks-ih-DAY-shin*). A chemical reaction that increases the oxygen content of a compound or material.

*When Carlton viewed the wreck of the Titanic from the window of a submersible, he was shocked to see how OXIDATION had ravaged the ship.*

**zymurgy** (*ZIE-mur-jee*). The branch of chemistry concerned with fermentation.

*Though not true chemists, brewers and winemakers could be considered lay experts in the field of ZYMURGY.*

## VERBS

**coagulate** (*ko-AG-yoo-late*). To change from a liquid to a solid-like mass.

*As someone who claims to be qualified to teach high school chemistry, you should certainly be able to answer a question on what makes blood COAGULATE.*

## ADJECTIVES

**hygroscopic** (*high-grow-SKOP-ick*). Capable of absorbing moisture from the air.

*Prescription pills are often packed with a container of HYGROSCOPIC material to keep the drugs dry.*

**miscible** (*MIS-uh-buhl*). Capable of being mixed.

*Oil and water are two liquids that are not MISCIBLE; they will separate if placed together in the same container.*

**potable** (*POH-tuh-bull*). Safely drinkable.

*No amount of boiling could make the water from the stagnant lake POTABLE.*

## ANTONYMS

**alchemy** (*AL-kuh-mee*). The magical process of turning a base or worthless material into a substance of great value.

*Before the principles of chemistry were discovered and came into wide practice, many people were entranced with the practice of ALCHEMY and the wealth it promised.*

## 36. Color

(*KULL-er*), noun

The portion of the visible light spectrum reflected by an object; the resulting sensation of light waves on the eye.

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# ADJECTIVES

**bice** (BYCE). Azurite blue; medium blue.

*Peter and Martha simultaneously decided that BICE would be the best color for the dining room.*

**cerulean** (suh-RUE-lee-an). The blue of the sky.

*Boys lined up everywhere that Janis went just to look into her CERULEAN eyes.*

**cyan** (sigh-EN). Greenish blue; one of the primary colors used in printing.

*The entire printing run had to be discarded because CYAN was missing.*

**jacinth** (JAY-sinth). Reddish orange.

*JACINTH seemed like a good choice for the kitchen until John finished painting one wall.*

**metachromatism** (met-ah-KRO-ma-tiz-um). A change of color, especially as the result of a change in temperature.

*Spring causes a welcome METACHROMATISM of the forest.*

**monochromatic** (mon-owe-kru-MAT-ik). Of a single color.

*The sweep and power of Ansel Adams's MONOCHROMATIC photography proves how much can be accomplished with a roll of black-and-white film.*

**murrey** (MURR-ee). A dark purplish-red.

*Peter's "black" eye actually had a MURREY cast.*

**ocher** (OH-kur). Dark yellow.

*The traffic lights in the artists' colony displayed red, OCHER, and green.*

**olivaceous** (ol-uh-VAY-shus). Dark green, olive.

*The Springfield Golf Club was known for its OLIVACEOUS fairways.*

**opalescence** (OH-puh-LESS-sense). Characterized by a play of colors; iridescence.

*A random mixture of tints gave the vase an OPALESCENCE that Nancy couldn't reproduce despite her best efforts.*

**oxblood** (OKS-blud). Dark, dull red.

*Greg bought OXBLOOD shoes because he believed he could wear them with blue, gray, and brown suits.*

**pallid** (PAL-id). Pale; faint; lacking in color.

*Nancy's PALLID complexion was the result of poor health rather than a desire to avoid UV rays.*

**pavonine** (PAHV-uh-nine). Resembling the colors of a peacock; rainbowlike.

*Nature at its finest is demonstrated by the peacock's PAVONINE tail feathers.*

**perse** (PURSS). Very dark blue or purple.

*Luckily, Betty thought better of buying a PERSE purse.*

**pie** (PIED). Describes animals, plants, cloth designs, etc. featuring blotches of two or more colors.

*The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins believed the strangeness of PIED creatures and plants was a sign of God's grace.*

**polychrome** (POHL-ee-krome). Having many colors.

*The office was a more cheerful place with Mary's POLYCHROME outfits.*

**puce** (PYOOS). Dark or brownish purple.

*Eventually, Peter's bruise turned PUCE.*

**raddle** (RAD-el). Red ocher.

*RADDLE was not a better choice for the dining room walls as it turned out.*

**roseate** (ROH-zee-it). Rosy; rose-colored.

*The ROSEATE glass in the windows gave the room a faintly bordello flavor.*

**sallow** (SAL-low). Sickly; grayish greenish yellow.

*The SALLOW tone of Melanie's skin led us to wonder whether she was ill.*

**sepia** (SEE-pee-uh). Brown, grayish brown, or olive brown.

*The SEPIA of the photographs gave them a vintage feel.*

**solferino** (sawl-fuh-REE-nah). Vivid, purplish pink.

*Jane's scarf demonstrated that a little SOLFERINO goes a long way.*

**spadiceous** (spay-DISH-uhs). Bright brown.

*It took years for the paint maker to develop a bright brown, but they finally released a SPADICEOUS enamel.*

**variegated** (VAIR-ee-ih-gate-ed). Changing color or containing different hues of the same color.

*A lawn covered in VARIEGATED fallen leaves is the sign that autumn is finally here.*

**verdant** (VUR-dant). Green, especially with foliage.

*With its careful mix of plants, the Whittingtons' formal garden remains VERDANT year-round.*

**vermilion** (vur-MILL-yun). Scarlet red; bright red.

*In her trademark VERMILION pantsuit, Carrie really stood out in a crowd.*

**xanthic** (ZAHN-thik). Yellow or yellowish.

*Carrie's pantsuit was electrified by the addition of a XANTHIC scarf.*

## ANTONYMS

**achromatic** (*ak-ruh-MAT-ik*). Having no color.

*Marcia was quite insistent in asking us to help her interpret her ACHROMATIC dreams.*

**neutral** (*NOO-truhl*). Having little or no color; not vivid.

*Having become weary of her home's vibrant color scheme, Anne decided to try the opposite tack and painted all her walls with NEUTRAL shades.*

## 37. Combine

(*kuhm-BAHYN*), verb

To bring together into a whole; gather; assemble or accumulate.

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## VERBS

**accrete** (uh-KREET). To accumulate or cause to become attached.

*Every time I park my car under a tree a layer of bird droppings ACCRETES on its candy-apple red finish.*

**agglomerate** (uh-GLAHM-uh-rate). To gather items into a ball or cluster.

*Phil is so lazy he seems to think his job is just to AGGLOMERATE all the pieces of paper in the recycle bin.*

**aggregate** (AG-rih-gate). To combine or collect parts into a whole or mass.

*Many social websites are attempting to AGGREGATE other social sites to capture as much traffic as possible.*

**amalgamate** (uh-MAL-guh-mate). To blend into a coherent single unit; to combine a number of elements into a whole.

*The two boards voted to AMALGAMATE the firms as soon as possible.*

**conjoin** (kuhn-JOIN). To join together or unite; to wed.

*After the battling factions CONJOINED, they were able to accomplish peacefully most of their separate goals.*

**convene** (kon-VEEN). To bring together or assemble in a body, usually for some public purpose.

*The board of trustees will CONVENE on the first Tuesday of each month until further notice.*

**cull** (KULL). To gather or collect a portion of a larger group.

*Consumer behavior data was CULLED from online surveys and focus groups.*

**marshal** (MAR-shul). To bring together all the resources at one's disposal to achieve a goal.

*Patricia MARSHALED all of her social contacts to try to get a front-row ticket for fashion week.*

**muster** (MUHS-ter). To gather or assemble (soldiers, etc.) for roll call, inspection, etc.; to summon.

*The bystanders paused for a moment to MUSTER their courage before rushing into the burning building.*

**syncretize** (*SINK-rih-tize*). To combine or unite varying parties, ideas, principles, etc.

*As the denomination's local attendance began to fall sharply, several churches SYNCRETIZED their efforts to improve overall attendance.*

# NOUNS

**cache** (KASH). Something hidden or stored.

*Everyone was jealous when they learned of Moira's CACHE of acceptances to the finest schools.*

**miscellany** (MISS-uh-lay-nee). A grouping or collection of various elements.

*The volume, which featured a hodgepodge of essays, poems, and interviews relating to the Beats, was an intriguing MISCELLANY of writings from the bohemian world of the fifties.*

**pastiche** (pah-STEESH). A haphazard collection of items from various sources.

*Ronald's carefully crafted sculpture looked like a PASTICHE to our untrained eyes.*

**synergy** (SIN-er-gee). The combined effort of two or more groups, agents, businesses, etc. to accomplish a common goal.

*The SYNERGY demonstrated by the two departments quickly sparked amazing results.*

**synthesis** (SIN-thuh-suss). A combination of elements to form a new whole.

*The writer's latest book is an intriguing SYNTHESIS of classical Greek tragedy and cyberpunk elements.*



## ADJECTIVES

**concerted** (*kun-SUR-tid*). Mutually devised or planned; done or performed in cooperation or together.

*The two made a CONCERTED effort to get Vivian to change her mind, but she was resolute.*

## ANTONYMS

**apportion** (*uh-POOR-shun*). To distribute, divide, or assign appropriate shares of.

*It was the lawyer's duty to APPORTION the sad remains of a once-proud manufacturing empire.*

**disseminate** (*diss-SEM-in-ate*). To distribute something so as to make it available to a large population or area.

*The Internet is rapidly replacing newspapers as the primary medium for the DISSEMINATION of news.*

**mete** (*MEET*). To distribute or allot.

*After Elyssia's shopping spree, her father METED out substantial punishment by taking away her credit cards.*

## 38. Command

(*ka-MAND*), verb

To issue an order or orders; direct with authority; to have authority over; control.

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## VERBS

**adjure** (*ad-JOOR*). To command solemnly as if under oath, often under the threat of some sort of penalty.

*The witnesses were ADJURED to avoid any contact with the accused.*

**enjoin** (*ehn-JOYN*). To direct or order someone to do something.

*After purchasing one too many Bentleys, Alex's father ENJOINED him to be more frugal.*

**interdict** (*in-ter-DIKT*). To prohibit; forbid the use of something.

*The court's emergency decision was designed to INTERDICT the strike and prevent the violence that had occurred during the last workers' demonstration.*

**proscribe** (*pro-SCRIBE*). To forbid or prohibit.

*State law PROSCRIBES the keeping of wild animals as house pets.*

**stipulate** (*STIP-yoo-late*). To make a specific demand or arrangement as a condition of agreement.

*The contract was quite clear; it STIPULATED the delivery date.*

## NOUNS

**imperative** (*im-PAIR-uh-tiv*). A command or an essential objective.

*Peggy's mother considered the 11:00 p.m. curfew as a nonnegotiable IMPERATIVE even if the teenager had a more casual interpretation.*

**mandate** (*MAN-date*). Authoritative command, endorsement, or instruction; an order issued by one court of law to another, lower court.

*When the MANDATE was issued, we discovered our business plan had become illegal.*

## ADJECTIVES

**peremptory** (*puh-REMP-tuh-ree*). Allowing for no rebuttal or overturning.

*Kings may issue PEREMPTORY declarations of war, Mr. Secretary; presidents are obliged to discuss such matters with Congress.*

## ANTONYMS

**countermand** (*KOUNT-er-mand*). To cancel officially, especially to cancel a previous order.

*Once Harold began smoking again, he COUNTERMANDED the no-smoking policy he'd recently adopted for his business.*

See also: Authority

## 39. Commotion

*(kuh-MOH-shun)*, noun

Violent motion; turmoil; agitation; confusion; disturbance.

---



## ADJECTIVES

**clamorous** (KIAM-uhr-uss). Loud; expressively vehement; noisy and demanding.

*The throngs in the street roared with CLAMOROUS applause.*

**clarion** (KLAR-ee-uhn). Describing a sound that is clear and shrill.

*On the first day back to school, Robby groaned at the CLARION call of his morning alarm.*

**tempestuous** (tem-PESS-chew-us). Tumultuous and turbulent, as a personality.

*Claire's TEMPESTUOUS personality is most likely linked to the fact that her father has married and remarried an excessive number of times.*

**vociferous** (vo-SIF-er-uss). Loud and insistent so as to gain the listener's attention.

*"Let the singing singers / With vocal voices, most VOCIFEROUS, / In sweet vociferation out-vociferize / Even sound itself."*

—Henry Carey, English poet

## NOUNS

**fracas** (*FRAK-us*). Commotion; a noisy disagreement.

*The nightly FRACAS between the couple next door is always loud enough to wake me out of a sound sleep.*

**hubbub** (*HUB-ub*). A commotion; an outburst.

*The HUBBUB outside our window came as a surprise; the parade was not due for an hour, yet the streets were already thronged with people.*

**perturbation** (*purr-ter-BAY-shun*). Any disturbance that alters the normal functioning of a system, moving object, person, or process.

*“O polished PERTURBATION! golden care! / That keep’st the ports of slumber open wide / To many a watchful night.”*

—William Shakespeare

**yawp** (*YAWP*). A raucous, clamorous noise; or, to make such a noise.

*“I sound my barbaric YAWP over the roofs of the world.”*

—Walt Whitman, American poet and humanist

## ANTONYMS

**halcyon** (*HAL-see-on*). Calm, peaceful, tranquil.

*After a hard, stormy winter, townspeople were entranced by the HALCYON weather of our spring.*

**tranquility** (*trang-KWIL-ih-tee*). The state of being tranquil; calmness; serenity; peacefulness.

*After a long day in the city, Andrew longed for the TRANQUILITY of his house buried in the country.*

## 40. Complain

*(kuhm-PLEYN)*, verb

To express pain or dissatisfaction; to find fault; declare annoyance, resentment, or grief.

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## VERBS

**carp** (*KARP*). To raise picky, trivial objections; find fault; complain habitually.

*All the CARPING at the staff meeting kept anything substantive from being done.*

**cavil** (*KAV-il*). To find fault with something; raise objections needlessly.

*Town meetings take twice as long as they should because some citizens use the event as a forum to CAVIL.*

**grouse** (*GRAUSS*). To complain or grumble about one's situation.

*We decided not to return to the restaurant after the maître d' continuously GROUSED about the slovenliness of his waitstaff.*

**inveigh** (*in-VAY*). To protest or complain strongly.

*The crowd INVEIGHED against the governor's decision to commute Davidson's sentence.*

**remonstrate** (*rih-MON-strate*). To present and urge reasons in complaint or opposition; protest; object.

*When Carlotta REMONSTRATED our snubbing of Julia, we simply began to snub Carlotta as well.*

## ADJECTIVES

**querulous** (*KWER-eh-luss*). Describes a person who continually whines and complains about practically everything.

*Their QUERULOUS manner with the waiter made them unpleasant and embarrassing dinner companions.*

## NOUNS

**malcontent** (*mal-kuhn-TENT*). Someone unhappy with his or her circumstances or with his or her government, job, lifestyle, etc.; a discontented person.

*Harvey is such a MALCONTENT that he'll argue with you if you tell him it's a nice day!*

## ANTONYMS

**rejoice** (ri-JOIS). To be glad and take delight in.

*“Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who REJOICE, but for those who love, time is eternity.”*

—Henry Van Dyke, American short story writer and poet

**revel** (REV-uhl). To take much pleasure, delight.

*“From every blush that kindles in thy cheeks, Ten thousand little loves and graces spring To REVEL in the roses.”*

—Nicholas Rowe, English dramatist and poet



## 41. Complex

(*kuhm-PLEKS*), adjective

Not simple; complicated; intricate; characterized by many related parts.

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## ADJECTIVES

**anfractuous** (*an-FRACK-chuh-wuss*). Full of windings and intricacies, like a good mystery novel.

*The novel's ANFRACTUOUS plot worked on paper, but it became stupefyingly confusing—actually, just plain stupid—onscreen.*

**convoluted** (*KON-vuh-loo-tid*). Complicated; intricate; twisted and coiled.

*After listening to his CONVOLUTED directions, I thanked the farmer and drove away vowing to buy a GPS device as soon as possible.*

**daedal** (*DEE-duhl*). Extremely intricate and complex; skillfully made.

*I thought I could repair my computer until I got a look at the machine's DAEDAL circuitry.*

**inextricable** (*in-ick-STRICK-uh-bull*). Incapable of being disentangled or untied; hopelessly complex.

*The INEXTRICABLE problem remained unsolved, even after the company's best minds spent three days attacking it.*

**involute** (*IN-vuh-loot*). Intricate; involved.

*The INVOLUTE diagrams in the owner's manual did not help George sort out his old sports car's electrical system.*

**tortuous** (*TORE-choo-uss*). Winding; full of twists and turns.

*Drive safely; the road leading from the center of town up the side of the mountain is a TORTUOUS one.*

## VERBS

**obfuscate** (*OB-fuss-kate*). To muddy or confuse an issue; to muddle facts important to someone else's judgment or decision.

*The defense has put up with enough of these attempts to OBFUSCATE, Your Honor.*

## ANTONYMS

**unalloyed** (*un-uh-LOID*). Not mixed with any other materials; pure.

*John found it refreshing to watch his toddler's UNALLOYED pleasure when playing with soap bubbles.*

**unpretentious** (*uhn-pri-TEN-shus*). Modest; without showy display; simple; plain.

*"Those who are firm, enduring, simple and UNPRETENTIOUS are the nearest to virtue."*

—Confucius

See also: Difficult

## 42. Compliment

*(KOM-pluh-ment)*, verb

To express or convey a compliment; confer admiration, respect, or praise; politely flatter.

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## ADJECTIVES

**adulatory** (*ad-JYOO-lah-tore-ee*). Complimentary; giving effusive praise.

*“He includes in his final chapter a passage of ADULATORY prose from Henry James.”*

—Joyce Carol Oates, American author

**laudable** (*LAW-duh-bull*). Commendable; deserving of praise.

*Rebecca’s decision to tell her mother that she lost the emerald broach she borrowed without permission was LAUDABLE.*

# NOUNS

**blandishments** (BLAN-dish-ments). Compliments rendered primarily to influence and gain favor with the person you are praising.

*The BLANDISHMENTS heaped upon the consultant by his client were not sufficient to persuade him to take a staff position with them.*

**claque** (KLAK). A group of people hired to applaud at an entertainment event.

*The first comedian was absolutely terrible; if it hadn't been for the CLAUQUE the management had assembled at the last minute, there wouldn't have been any applause at all.*

**encomium** (en-KO-me-um). Effusive praise given in a public forum.

*The CEO's ENCOMIUM at Phil's retirement dinner caused his eyes to mist over.*

**hagiography** (hag-ee-OG-ruh-fee). A biography that idealizes its subject.

*The Van Gelders were disappointed with the volume written about their illustrious descendants because the book fell far short of being a HAGIOGRAPHY.*

**hosanna** (ho-ZAN-uh). An expression of praise, exaltation, and adoration typically heard in religious ceremonies; an instance of excessive praise.

*Mel's agent warned him not to take too seriously the HOSANNAS that came his way after he won the acting award.*

**plaudit** (PLAW-dit). An expression of gratitude or praise; applause.

*I am unworthy, my friends, of the PLAUDITS you have bestowed on me this evening.*

**sycophant** (SIK-uh-fuhnt). A self-seeking person attempting to get on your good side with constant flattery.

*Outwardly polite, the rock star secretly viewed his fans as slobbering SYCOPHANTS.*

## VERBS

**extol** (*eks-TOLE*). To praise with great enthusiasm.

*Iris has not ceased to EXTOL the virtues of her new Romain Jerome Day & Night watch.*



## ANTONYMS

**deprecate** (DEPP-rih-kate). To express severe disapproval of another's actions.

*“Those who profess to favor freedom and yet DEPRECATE agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground.”*

—Frederick Douglass, American abolitionist and orator

**disparage** (dih-SPAIR-ihj). To bring reproach or discredit upon; belittle.

*“But the DISPARAGING of those we love always alienates us from them to some extent. We must not touch our idols; the guilt comes off in our hands.”*

—Gustave Flaubert, French novelist

## 43. Concise

(*kon-SISE*), adjective

Brief and to the point; expressing a great deal in a few words.

---

# ADJECTIVES

**compendious** (*kuhm-PEN-dee-us*). Concise, succinct; to the point.

*Sheila is unable to tell COMPENDIOUS stories about her trips to the Riviera.*

**elliptical** (*uh-LIP-tuh-kuhl*). Expressed with extreme economy, free of extraneous matter.

*Ernest Hemingway was known for his ELLIPTICAL style of writing.*

**epigrammatic** (*eh-pih-grah-MAT-ik*). Similar to an epigram; terse and clever in expression.

*All of us in the office looked forward to receiving one of Tony's EPIGRAMMATIC e-mail messages.*

**gnomic** (*NOH-mik*). Pithy; pertaining to a writer of aphorisms.

*It was difficult to grasp whether the speaker's GNOMIC remembrances were meant to be complimentary.*

**laconic** (*luh-KON-ik*). Being a person of few words; expressing oneself with an economy of words.

*Harold may be LACONIC, but when he does speak, he is worth listening to.*

**pauciloquent** (*paw-SIL-oh-kwent*). Using few words; concise in speech.

*My father, PAUCILOQUENT to the end, simply said "Goodbye" and expired.*

**sententious** (*sen-TEN-shuss*). Tending to use many pithy aphorisms or maxims in order to enlighten others.

*Polonius's SENTENTIOUS manner of speaking clearly irritates Hamlet in this scene.*

**succinct** (*suck-SINKT*). Brief; pithy; concise.

*Norman preferred to say a SUCCINCT goodbye to his brother before getting into the cab, rather than engaging in a long, drawn-out scene at the train station.*

**synoptic** (*sin-OP-tik*). Forming or involving a synopsis or summary.

*The close of a presentation should be SYNOPTIC in nature.*

**taciturn** (*TA-sih-turn*). Reserved; uncommunicative; a person of few words.

*“Nature is garrulous to the point of confusion, let the artist be truly  
TACITURN.”*

—Paul Klee, German-born Swiss painter

## NOUNS

**brevity** (*BREV-ih-tee*). Shortness; terseness.

*Paine's argument was stated with such BREVITY and passion that within one short month of its publication it seemed every colonist was in favor of independence from Britain.*

## VERBS

**recapitulate** (*re-kuh-PIT-yoo-late*). To summarize in concise form; restate briefly.

*Sgt. Dennis, an eyewitness, RECAPITULATED the incident to his superiors at headquarters.*

# ANTONYMS

**diffuse** (*dih-FYOOS*). Widely spread; characterized by great length in writing or speech; wordy.

*“To get the right word in the right place is a rare achievement. To condense the DIFFUSED light of a page of thought into the luminous flash of a single sentence, is worthy to rank as a prize composition just by itself.”*

—Mark Twain, American humorist and writer

**expansive** (*ik-SPAN-siv*). Widely extended; broad; extensive.

*Having been severely criticized for his reticence during previous press conferences, the spokesman gave an EXPANSIVE account of the situation for the audience.*

See also: Change, Reduce

## 44. Conflict

*(KON-flikt)*, noun

A fight, battle, or struggle; controversy; incompatibility.

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## NOUNS

**contention** (kuhn-TEN-shun). Strife, especially verbal conflict; argument.

*Suddenly, the town meeting was the scene of heated political CONTENTION.*

**contravention** (kon-truh-VEN-shun). An instance of contradiction or opposition; violation; the condition of being overruled or disobeyed.

*Your appearance here without the full report is in blatant CONTRAVENTION of the instructions laid out in my memo.*

**discord** (DIS-kawrd). Lack of harmony; disagreement; quarreling between parties.

*Lack of communication skills is responsible for much marital DISCORD.*

**dissension** (dih-SEN-shun). Disagreement, especially among people in a group.

*New rules favoring older members of the club caused great DISSENSION and a fracturing of long-standing alliances.*

**melee** (MAY-lay). A confused struggle involving many people.

*“The man who is in the MELEE knows what blows are being struck and what blood is being drawn.”*

—Woodrow Wilson, American president

**nemesis** (NEM-uh-sis). An opponent one is unable to defeat.

*“How wonderful to live with one’s NEMESIS! You may be miserable, but you feel forever in the right.”*

—Erica Jong, American author and teacher

**rancor** (RAYN-core). Conflict between individuals or groups, usually resulting from disagreement over an action or issue, and accompanied by ill will, bad feelings, and an escalation of the dispute over time.

*“They no longer assume responsibility (as beat cops used to do) for averting RANCOR between antagonistic neighbors.”*

—Harlan Ellison, American author

## ANTONYMS

**conciliation** (*kuhn-sil-ee-AY-shun*). The act of making peace; reconciliation; appeasement.

*“I appeal to all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and CONCILIATION, to forgive and forget, and to join with me in making for the land they love a new era of peace, contentment and goodwill.”*

—George V, English king

**concord** (*KON-kawrd*). Friendly and peaceful relations, as between nations; agreement; harmony.

*“If there is a country in the world where CONCORD, according to common calculation, would be least expected, it is America.”*

—Thomas Paine, English-American writer and political pamphleteer

## 45. Confused

(*kon-FYOOZD*), adjective

Perplexed or disconcerted; disordered; mixed up.

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## ADJECTIVES

**addled** (ADD-ulld). Thrown into confusion; confounded.

*After studying all night, Aaron's ADDLED brain couldn't focus on the exam.*

**bemused** (bee-MYOOZD). Bewildered, perplexed, or lost in reflection.

*Victor stared BEMUSED at the photograph of his father in full military dress—a man he had never thought of in quite that way.*

**discombobulated** (diss-kum-BOB-yoo-late-ed). Confused or thrown into an awkward predicament; utterly disconcerted.

*The frenzied pace of eight hours on the trading floor had left me utterly DISCOMBOBULATED.*

**flummoxed** (FLUHM-uckst). Completely bewildered.

*The appearance of his ex-wife was so unexpected that Jason was momentarily FLUMMOXED.*

**nebulous** (NEB-yoo-luhs). Vague and not well thought out; ill-defined; lacking concretes.

*Jay's plans for what he would do when he graduated college were NEBULOUS at best.*

**obscurant** (uhb-SKYOOR-unt). Tending to make obscure; preventing understanding.

*Jason often used OBSCURANT terms when talking with people he didn't like.*

**quizzical** (KWIHZ-ih-kuhl). Showing puzzled amusement or disbelief.

*The QUIZZICAL look on Amanda's face, when a perfect stranger proposed marriage, was absolutely priceless.*

## VERBS

**conflate** (*kuhn-FLATE*). To fuse together; especially to mistakenly think of separate concepts, actions, or things as identical.

*The lawyer told the jury they should not CONFLATE a warning with a threat.*

**nonplussed** (*none-PLUST*). A state of utter perplexity in which one is unable to act further.

*Arthur admitted later that he was NONPLUSSED by Jean's unexpected admission of complicity in the plot to steal the physics final exam.*

**obfuscate** (*OB-fuh-skate*). To talk or write about a subject in a way that deliberately makes it unclear, selectively omits certain facts, or communicates wrong ideas or impressions, so that the listener or reader does not grasp the whole truth of the situation.

*Despite his Ivy League education, Alexander seems able only to OBFUSCATE any subject upon which he touches.*

## NOUNS

**farrago** (*fuh-ROG-oh*). A careless, confused mixture; mish-mash.

*My four-year-old, who picked out his own outfit for the first time this morning, walked into the kitchen sporting a FARRAGO of mismatched clothing.*

**quandary** (*KWON-dree*). A state of uncertainty about one's next move.

*Estelle realized that her unrestrained comments to the society pages had left the rest of us quite upset, and she was in a QUANDARY as to how to repair the situation.*

**snafu** (*sna-FOO*). An egregious but common error.

*Supposedly, the word "SNAFU" is an acronym of the phrase "Situation normal, all fouled up" or something similar.*

## ANTONYMS

**decipher** (*dih-SAHY-fer*). To translate from meaningless code; to discover the meaning of; to interpret.

*“All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by DECIPHERING and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.”*

—Marcel Duchamp, French artist

**illuminate** (*ih-LOO-muh-neyt*). To make clear; to enlighten intellectually.

*“Derive happiness in oneself from a good day’s work, from ILLUMINATING the fog that surrounds us.”*

—Henri Matisse, French painter

## 46. Consistent

*(kuhn-SIS-tuhnt)*, adjective

Holding to the same practice or principles; constant adherence; compatible; harmonious.

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## ADJECTIVES

**assiduous** (*uh-SID-joo-us*). Constant; unceasing in effort; persistent; diligent; unremitting and attentive.

*Karen was ASSIDUOUS in completing her final project, but was still one day late.*

**coherent** (*koh-HEER-uhnt*). Logically arranged; consistent; harmonious.

*The marketing team was able to develop a COHERENT promotional plan for maximum effect.*

**homogeneous** (*ho-mo-JEE-nee-uss*). The same throughout; made up of like parts; not heterogeneous.

*The island supported a small HOMOGENEOUS population of Aboriginal tribes.*

**isochronous** (*EYE-so-krone-us*). Occurring consistently at regular intervals.

*The ticking of a clock is ISOCHRONOUS, but the arrival of the elevator at different floors is not.*

**symmetrical** (*si-MEH-tri-kuhl*). Having a shape or form that is regular and uniform.

*Because the disease was SYMMETRICAL in its progression, treatment could be directed more accurately.*

## ANTONYMS

**erratic** (*ih-RAT-ik*). Inconsistent; lacking a set course; wandering or fluctuating unpredictably.

*Elaine's ERRATIC writing style irritated her superiors, who had no time to puzzle over an indecipherable and meandering memo.*

**oscillate** (*OSS-ih-late*). To sway back and forth; vacillate.

*My two-year-old nephew was mesmerized by the fish tank, with its colorful fish, OSCILLATING plants, and soft lighting.*

## 47. Correct

*(kuh-REKT)*, verb

To make right, accurate, or true; remove errors from; to cause to conform to a standard; to point out the errors; to scold (someone) in order to make improvements.

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## VERBS

**ameliorate** (uh-MEEL-yuh-rate). To improve or upgrade; to make an unacceptable state of affairs better or put right.

*The ambassador's midnight visit was the first step to AMELIORATE the poor relations between the two countries, and may actually have averted war.*

**amend** (uh-MEND). To modify or update; to remove or correct faults; improve.

*In light of the testimony we've heard tonight, Madame President, I'd like to AMEND my earlier remarks.*

**castigate** (KAS-tuh-gate). To scold or criticize harshly, with the objective of assigning blame and motivating others to correct their errors.

*The bartender was CASTIGATED by his boss for serving alcohol to two teenage girls without checking their IDs first.*

**emend** (ee-MEND). To correct or remove faults, as from a text.

*Blanche EMENDED her holiday wish list, removing the Ferrari watch and replacing it with a Versace dinner plate.*

**rectify** (REK-tih-fie). To put right; to correct.

*Ellen RECTIFIED her previous mistakes and filed the report.*

**redress** (ree-DRES). To make right; rectify.

*"When griping grief the heart doth wound, / and doleful dumps the mind opresses, / then music, with her silver sound, / with speedy help doth lend REDRESS."*

—William Shakespeare

**revamp** (re-VAMP). To redo; to renovate thoroughly.

*The playwright decided to REVAMP several of the weaker scenes in the first act.*

## ADJECTIVES

**curative** (KYOO-uh-tiv). Providing a remedy; able to provide alleviation of an ailment.

*The CURATIVE measures were slow but effective; Joseph eventually recovered completely.*

## ANTONYMS

**irremediable** (*ihr-ree-MEE-dee-uh-bull*). Unable to be repaired, cured, or remedied.

*One too many arguments between Rose and Jim finally caused an IRREMEDIABLE rift in their fragile relationship.*

## 48. Craftsperson

*(KRAFTS-pur-suhn)*, noun

A person who practices or is skilled in a craft; a specialist in a particular field or endeavor.

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## NOUNS

**amanuensis** (uh-man-you-WHEN-suss). A secretary, especially one whose principal duties involve copying manuscripts or taking dictation.

*I didn't spend seven years in college to be an AMANUENSIS to a no-talent hack who calls himself a writer!*

**boatswain** (BOH-suhn). A ship's petty officer or warrant officer who is in charge of maintenance, rigging, cables, anchors, etc.

*Mary's experience in the service as a BOATSWAIN prepared her for her current position as project manager.*

**farrier** (FAR-ee-er). A person who shoes horses.

*The equestrian lifestyle was so well established in the region that even during a recession, Walter found steady employment as a FARRIER.*

**horologist** (haw-RAWL-uh-jist). A person who makes clocks and watches.

*After months of searching, I was able to find the HOROLOGIST who made my grandfather's pocket watch.*

**lapidary** (LAP-uh-der-ee). A person who cuts, polishes, and engraves precious stones.

*Among his circle of friends, Paul was the only LAPIDARY, and needed to attend trade shows in order to "talk shop."*

**lumper** (LUHM-per). A person who handles cargo or freight; a stevedore.

*Jackie was proud of her great uncle and still had pictures of him from his days as a LUMPER on the docks of New York.*

**luthier** (LOO-tee-er). A person who makes or repairs stringed instruments such as violins and guitars.

*Because he was so busy after a long, dry winter, my local LUTHIER took six months to repair a hairline crack in the top of my classical guitar.*

**mahout** (muh-HOWT). A keeper and driver of elephants, primarily in India and the East Indies.

*On holidays and for special occasions, a MAHOUT may adorn his elephant with metallic and colorful decorations.*

**manciple** (MAN-suh-pull). A steward or buyer of provisions, especially in a college or monastery.



*Ralph's experience as a boatswain in the navy enabled him to become a MANCIPILE when his seasickness finally became intolerable.*

**melodist** (MEL-uh-dist). A person who composes or sings melodies.

*Betty always claimed that her father, whom we all knew as a mechanic, originally made a living as a MELODIST and had once met George Gershwin—in the men's room at Sardi's.*

**mesmerist** (MEZ-muh-rizt). A person who practices hypnotism.

*Huey Long was considered a MESMERIST for his ability to captivate his audiences.*

**numismatist** (noo-MIZ-muh-tist). A person who studies or collects coins, tokens, paper money, and occasionally similar objects such as medals.

*Gail made a fine living as a NUMISMATIST, although her friends viewed her coin collection, and her obsession, as the sign of a serious character flaw.*

**oenophile** (EE-nuh-file). A wine connoisseur.

*Len, a lifelong OENOPHILE, shuddered as I produced a bottle of Ripple to accompany our dinner of fish sticks and macaroni and cheese.*

**oneirocritic** (oh-nahy-ruh-KRIT-ik). A person who interprets dreams.

*Try as he might, Horace couldn't find an ONEIROCRITC to help him understand his strange and frightening dreams.*

**preceptor** (pri-SEP-tur). A school principal, teacher, or instructor.

*Our elementary school's PRECEPTOR was a stern man who handed out swift discipline to troublemakers.*

**quartermaster** (KQAWR-tur-mass-tur). In the navy, a petty officer who's in charge of signals, navigation equipment, etc. In the army, an officer who's responsible for quarters, clothing, transportation, and materials for a body of troops.

*Connie's grandfather did not see combat during World War II, but his experiences as a QUARTERMASTER made for many fascinating stories.*

**scrivener** (SKRIV-nur). A public or professional clerk, draftsman, or copyist; scribe; notary public.

*When he applied for the position of SCRIVENER, Fred wondered if he would be required to wear a green eyeshade.*

**spurrier** (SPUHR-ee-ur). A person who makes spurs.

*After visiting the Museum of the Wild West, Frank had a much greater appreciation for the SPURRIER's art.*

## ANTONYMS

**amateur** (AM-uh-choor). One who does something for pleasure rather than pay; unprofessional and unskilled.

*“The world’s greatest thinkers have often been AMATEURS; for high thinking is the outcome of fine and independent living, and for that a professional chair offers no special opportunities.”*

—Havelock Ellis, British psychologist and author

**apprentice** (uh-PREN-tis). A learner or beginner; novice.

*“We are all APPRENTICES in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.”*

—Ernest Hemingway, American novelist

## 49. Crimes

(*KRAHYMZ*), noun

Acts committed in violation of a law prohibiting them or omitted in violation of a law ordering them; acts that are punishable by law.

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## NOUNS

**arson** (AR-son). The act of destroying property with fire.

*After Councilor Perry's campaign headquarters burned down, his supporters were quick to accuse their opponents of ARSON; in fact, one of their own neglected cigarette butts was to blame.*

**bigamy** (BIG-uh-mee). The crime of taking marriage vows while still legally married to someone else.

*By marrying June before her divorce was finalized, Stanley was technically guilty of BIGAMY.*

**complicity** (kum-PLIS-ity). To be involved in or associated with, or to participate in or have previous knowledge of, an instance of wrongdoing.

*Although he did not receive money for throwing the 1919 World Series, Buck Weaver was nevertheless suspended from baseball for life, because his failure to expose the scheme was seen as COMPLICITY in his teammates' plans.*

**contraband** (KAHN-truh-band). Illegal or prohibited goods.

*Jean tried to smuggle a tape recorder into the concert, but her CONTRABAND was quickly discovered and taken from her.*

**pyromania** (pye-roe-MAY-nee-uh). The compulsion to set fires.

*Police believe that the blaze is not the work of an arsonist out for commercial gain, as was initially suspected, but an act of PYROMANIA.*

**transgression** (trans-GRESH-un). A violation of a rule; the breaking of a law or guideline.

*David was perhaps a little too eager to cross over into Mr. Peterson's yard to play ball, but this was a minor transgression.*

**uxoricide** (uk-SOR-ih-side). The crime of murdering one's wife.

*Eventually, the defendant was acquitted of UXORICIDE when his wife's death was ruled a suicide.*

**vaticide** (VAT-uh-side). The act of murdering a prophet.

*Tom took the reviewer's negative article on his religious poetry as an act tantamount to VATICIDE.*

## VERBS

**embezzle** (im-BEZ-ul). To appropriate funds for oneself that were placed in one's care for another party.

*Bill had always seemed to be a model employee, so the news that he had been EMBEZZLING money from the company for some years came as a complete shock to us all.*

**indict** (in-DITE). To charge formally with a crime or offense.

*Rumors that Mr. Brown would soon be INDICTED for his part in the scandal swept the city.*

**pilfer** (PIL-fer). To take without authorization or permission; to steal.

*I had a feeling the tickets Wayne was trying to sell me had been PILFERED from someone, but he assured me that was not the case.*

## ADJECTIVES

**felonious** (*fuh-LONE-ee-uss*). Criminal; villainous; reminiscent of or relating to a felony crime.

*Although no court in the land would consider it FELONIOUS, my brother's attempt to blackmail me over that little dent I put in my parents' car was, in my mind, worthy of a long jail sentence.*

**illicit** (*ih-LISS-it*). Illegal or morally unjustifiable; something not sanctioned by custom or law.

*We all know now that the money was acquired through ILLICIT means, don't we?*

## ANTONYMS

**sanctioned** (SANGK-shund). Officially authorized; approved; allowed; permitted.

*“The principles on which we engaged, of which the charter of our independence is the record, were SANCTIONED by the laws of our being, and we but obeyed them in pursuing undeviatingly the course they called for.”*

—Thomas Jefferson, American president

**scrupulous** (SKROO-pyoo-lus). Characterized by a conscientious adherence to what is considered true, right, or accurate; honest.

*The success of John’s nefarious plan depended on his assumption that law enforcement was less SCRUPULOUS in that part of the world.*

See also: Dishonest



## 50. Criticize

*(KRIT-uh-sahyz)*, verb

To analyze and judge as a critic; to find fault with or censure; to make judgments.

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## VERBS

**castigate** (KAS-tuh-gate). To scold or criticize harshly, with the objective of assigning blame and motivating the other person to correct their error.

*The bartender was CASTIGATED by his boss for serving alcohol to two teenage girls without checking their IDs first.*

**cavil** (KAV-ihl). To find fault in trivial matters or raise petty objections.

*Susan CAVILED for some time about the lateness of the milk delivery, but since it was only a matter of minutes, she eventually gave in and paid the bill.*

**chide** (chide). To scold or lecture; to reprove.

*My brother CHIDED me for neglecting to visit our grandparents during my trip to California.*

**disparage** (dih-SPAIR-ihj). To bring reproach or discredit upon; belittle.

*“Man’s constant need to DISPARAGE woman, to humble her, to deny her equal rights, and to belittle her achievements—all are expressions of his innate envy and fear.”*

—Elizabeth Gould Davis, American feminist and author

**excoriate** (eggs-KORE-ee-ate). To criticize; to attempt to censure or punish.

*We EXCORIATED Melanie for inviting people with no family connections to her birthday party.*

**fulminate** (FUL-mih-nate). To explode. Also: to denounce loudly or forcefully.

*Edmond FULMINATED against the bill on the floor of the Senate, but he knew he did not have the votes to defeat it.*

**lambaste** (lam-BAST). To berate or criticize harshly, especially in an unkind way.

*We LAMBASTED Marla for not visiting Comme des Garçons during her recent weekend to Beijing.*

**objurgate** (OB-jur-gayt). To chide sharply; rebuke; upbraid vehemently; berate.

*Mr. Williams worked himself into a frenzy waiting to OBJURGATE his new salesman for losing the Duckhorn account.*

**oppugn** (uh-PYOON). To reason against; oppose with argument; call in question.

*Matt made a critical mistake when he OPPUGNED his rival's credentials.*

**reprehend** (rep-ruh-HEND). To find fault with; voice disapproval of.

*That Arnold REPRENDS his daughter's wayward behavior seems somewhat hypocritical to those of us who knew him in his youth.*

**reprove** (ree-PROOV). To criticize and correct others.

*We found it necessary to REPROVE Elyssia for some of her fashion choices.*

**scarify** (SKARE-ih-fie). To wound with harsh criticism.

*We deemed it necessary to SCARIFY Eileen for criticizing our motives.*

**upbraid** (up-BRAYD). To censure or to find fault with.

*We had to UPBRAID our butler severely when we learned he was gossiping to other members of our staff.*

## NOUNS

**diatribe** (*DIE-uh-tribe*). A speech railing against injustice; a vehement denunciation.

*The editorial was a mean-spirited DIATRIBE against school vouchers written to prevent children from other towns from being sent by bus to Centerville High School.*

**screed** (*SKREED*). A long written argument; an argumentative essay; a long monotonous speech or piece of writing; diatribe.

*The newspaper's editor was the recipient of a mountain of SCREEDS from outraged citizens criticizing the board of selectmen's policies.*

## ADJECTIVES

**ensorious** (*sen-SOR-ee-us*). Critical; easily finding fault.

*When it came to grading term papers, Mrs. Edwards was seen by many as overly CENSORIOUS, even taking off points for using a paper clip instead of a staple.*

**hypercritical** (*high-purr-KRIT-ih-kuhl*). Excessively or meticulously critical.

*“Good writers have two things in common: they would rather be understood than admired, and they do not write for hairsplitting and HYPERCRITICAL readers.”*

—Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher

## ANTONYMS

**unimpeachable** (*un-ihm-PEE-chuh-bull*). Above reproach; impossible to discredit or slander.

*We promoted Carla to upstairs maid because her job performance has been UNIMPEACHABLE.*

See also: Abuse

## 51. Cross

(*KRAWS*), adjective

Contrary; ill-tempered; cranky; easily annoyed.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bellicose** (BELL-ih-kose). Belligerent, surly, ready to argue or fight at the slightest provocation.

*Doug is so touchy about his new car that he'll instantly turn BELLICOSE if you so much as brush against it.*

**cantankerous** (kan-TANG-ker-us). Ill-tempered; grumpy.

*"You kids stay off my lawn!" our CANTANKEROUS old neighbor barked.*

**captious** (KAP-shus). Fond of finding faults in others; ill-natured and overly critical; carping.

*Ed's CAPTIOUS remarks were entirely inappropriate and showed his lack of self-esteem.*

**churlish** (CHUR-lish). Surly; mean; boorish; rude; characterized by a lack of civility or graciousness.

*We found it almost impossible to believe that Diane's new boyfriend was more CHURLISH than his predecessor.*

**dyspeptic** (diss-PEP-tick). Describes someone who is irritable and ill humored.

*No wonder Fred can't get a girlfriend. His DYSPEPTIC temperament drives all potential mates away.*

**farouche** (fuh-ROOSH). Unsociable; cranky; withdrawn; fierce.

*Your FAROUCHE behavior will not win you any friends. In fact, it will simply alienate you from everyone.*

**peevish** (PEE-vish). Irritable; fretful; hard to please; easily and often showing impatience or ill humor.

*Brock is normally pleasant and good-humored, but his illness with its persistent fever has made him PEEVISH.*

**petulant** (PET-yoo-lunt). Impatiently peevish; showing great annoyance or irritation with minor problems.

*He dismissed their questions with a PETULANT wave of the hand and quickly changed the subject.*

**pugnacious** (pug-NAY-shus). Inclined to argue and debate every last thing.



*Joey was PUGNACIOUS by nature and could never let go of an argument until he believed he had won.*

**splenetic** (spli-NET-ik). Bad tempered; irritable; spiteful; malevolent.

*As soon as we met her mother, we could see that Jane's SPLENETIC comments were a self-defense mechanism.*

**waspish** (WOS-pish). Irascible and petulant; given to resentment.

*Rebecca can be WASPISH, but we forgive her because she throws the best galas.*

## NOUNS

**Xanthippe** (*zan-TIP-ee*). Wife of Socrates; an ill-tempered, shrewish woman.

*Felicia is far from a XANTHIPPE simply because she interacts only with certain members of the household staff.*

## ANTONYMS

**affable** (*AF-uh-buhl*). Pleasant and polite; agreeable; warm.

*We believed that Grace had such an AFFABLE personality because she grew up with seven siblings.*

**sympathetic** (*sim-puh-THET-ik*). In agreement with one's mood, feelings, disposition, etc.; congenial.

*“Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, SYMPATHETIC with the striving, and tolerant with the weak and the wrong. Sometime in your life you will have been all of these.”*

—Robert Goddard, American rocket engineer

# D

## 52. Deceitful

(*dih-SEET-fuhl*), adjective

Tending or apt to deceive, lie, or cheat; misleading; false; fraudulent.

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## NOUNS

**artifice** (ARE-ti-fis). The use of clever strategies and cunning methods to fool or best others and tip an outcome in your favor.

*“Every art and ARTIFICE has been practiced and perpetrated to destroy the rights of man.”*

—Robert Ingersoll, American orator

**charlatan** (SHAR-luh-tun). A fake; fraud; a person falsely claiming to possess a given level of status, skills, or knowledge in order to deceive others.

*The defendant, it has been claimed, is a CHARLATAN and a liar—but where is the evidence for this?*

**chicanery** (shih-KAIN-uh-ree). Cheating or deception, especially through the use of language.

*The way the candidate consistently quibbled about the precise meaning of his statements made me feel he was guilty of CHICANERY.*

**mountebank** (MOUNT-uh-bank). A charlatan; one who sells worthless medicines, potions, and the like; a fake; an unscrupulous pretender.

*The line between visionary romantic and common MOUNTEBANK, for my father, was often a thin one.*

**poseur** (poh-ZUR). A person who attempts to impress or obtain the approval of others by assuming characteristics not truly his own; an affected person.

*Whenever Bobby saw a POSEUR, he would comment: “Big hat, no cattle.”*

**red herring** (red HAIR-ing). Something intended to mislead others from the real issue or problem; a deception.

*The board of selectmen’s discussion of sewers was a RED HERRING and nothing to do with the increase in taxes.*

**sophistry** (SOF-iss-tree). Subtly misleading argument or reasoning.

*I believe this jury is too sophisticated to be taken in by the SOPHISTRIES the defense has offered.*

**subterfuge** (SUB-tur-fyoodge). A misleading ruse or cunning evasion; a strategic avoidance employing deceit.

*Nick knew he would have to come up with a clever SUBTERFUGE to get out of going to another boring Sunday dinner at his grandparents' home.*

**wile** (WILE). A clever trick meant to attain a goal; an instance of or talent for beguiling deceit.

*Headquarters trusts, as always, that the information with which you have been entrusted is secure even from the WILES of a spy of the opposite sex.*

## ADJECTIVES

**duplicitous** (*doo-PLIS-ih-tus*). Characterized by hypocritical deception or cunning; double-dealing.

*His DUPLICITOUS behavior disappointed and hurt his friends, and eventually Mike found himself alone.*

**gullible** (*GULL-ih-bull*). Easily cheated, tricked, or deceived.

*I'm afraid Terry is a little too GULLIBLE to survive for long as an aspiring actor in a city like New York.*

**illusory** (*ih-LOO-suh-ree*). Giving a false appearance of being real; seeming genuine but probably fake or deceptive.

*After she moved to the beach, Lorna expected to feel joy but instead found that joy ILLUSORY.*

**insidious** (*in-SID-ee-uss*). Designed to entrap; happening or spreading harmfully but subtly; stealthily and seductively treacherous.

*Mark's chess games were full of INSIDIOUS traps meant to lull his opponent into a sense of complacency.*

**Machiavellian** (*mack-ee-uh-VEL-ee-uhn*). Somewhat unscrupulous and self-centered; always looking out for one's own good.

*We can hardly be called MACHIAVELLIAN simply because we do what we need to do to hold on to the luxurious lifestyle to which we have become accustomed.*

**perfidious** (*per-FID-ee-us*). Faithless; treacherous; not able to be trusted.

*Once again, Heather's heart was broken by a PERFIDIOUS lover.*

**sanctimonious** (*sank-tih-MOAN-ee-us*). Overbearingly self-righteous and smug in the (perhaps mistaken) belief that one's opinion is correct; hypocritically righteous.

*"Not but I've every reason not to care / What happens to him if it only takes / Some of the SANCTIMONIOUS conceit / Out of one of those pious scalawags."*

—Robert Frost, American poet

**unctuous** (*UNK-chew-us*). Possessing an untrustworthy or dubious nature; characterized by an insincere manner.

*Local car dealers doing their own TV commercials often communicate in an UNCTUOUS, almost laughable manner.*



## VERBS

**bamboozle** (bam-BOO-zul). To deceive; trick.

*Fred was BAMBOOZLED out of \$15,000 by a con artist who convinced him to invest money in nonexistent real estate.*

**dissemble** (diss-SEM-bul). To act with an insincere or disguised motive.

*Although many on the committee were convinced that the undersecretary was DISSEMBLING about how much he knew of rebel activities, there was no hard proof to support this view.*

**finagle** (fih-NAY-gul). To wangle; to use clever, often underhanded methods to achieve one's desires.

*Justin FINAGLED his way into the press conference by borrowing a pass from another reporter.*

**purport** (per-PORT). Claiming to be something you are not; pretending to do something you aren't in fact doing.

*"Doris Lessing PURPORTS to remember in the most minute detail the moth-eaten party dresses she pulled, at age thirteen, from her mother's trunk."*

—Tim Parks, British novelist

**wangle** (WANG-guhl). To accomplish by underhanded methods.

*Jennifer managed to WANGLE an invitation to the Clarksons' party, even though she is the most gauche of the area's parvenus.*

## ANTONYMS

**guileless** (GAHYL-lis). Without guile; candid; frank.

*“There is a strange glow on the face of a GUILLELESS person. Inner cleanliness has its own soap and water—the soap of strong faith and the water of constant practice.”*

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Indian spiritual leader

**veracious** (vuh-RAY-shuss). Honest; truthful.

*Your Honor, I ask that the defense’s assertion that none of the prosecution’s witnesses are VERACIOUS be stricken from the record.*

## 53. Declare

*(dih-KLAIR)*, verb

To make clearly known; state or announce in definite or formal terms; to announce officially or emphatically.

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## NOUNS

**avowal** (*uh-VOW-uhl*). An open admission or statement.

*He had run as a Democrat for over thirty years, so his AVOWAL of support for the Republican ticket shocked many supporters.*

**postulate** (*PA-stew-late*). A theory, belief, hypothesis, or principle based on an analysis of known facts.

*“The primacy of human personality has been a POSTULATE both of Christianity and of liberal democracy.”*

—Julian Huxley, English evolutionary biologist

## VERBS

**allege** (uh-LEJ). To state without proof; to declare as reason or excuse.

*The media is usually quick to ALLEGE a celebrity's mistake or wrongdoing in order to create interest.*

**aver** (uh-VER). To assert the truthfulness of a statement.

*“‘Has she no faults, then (Envy says), sir?’ / Yes, she has one, I must AVER: / When all the world conspires to praise her, / The woman's deaf, and does not hear.”*

—Alexander Pope, British poet

**contend** (kuhn-TEND). To maintain; to hold to be a fact; assert.

*After years in prison, Arthur would still CONTEND his innocence.*

**tout** (TOWT). To publicize in a boastful, extravagant manner.

*The studio TOUTED its latest picture as “the greatest story ever told.”*

## ANTONYMS

**gainsay** (*GANE-say*). To deny, dispute, or contradict.

*Michael has made no attempt to GAINSAY the persistent rumors that his family's fortune rests solely on insider trading.*

**recant** (*rih-KANT*). To withdraw or disavow formally.

*"I cannot and will not RECANT anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe."*

—Martin Luther, the father of Protestantism

## 54. Defense

(*dee-FENSE*), noun

Protection from harm or danger; guarding from attack; support against a foe.

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## NOUNS

**aegis** (EE-jis). The protection, support, and help rendered by a guardian, supporter, backer, or mentor.

*Jill thinks she's above reproach because she's under the AEGIS of that marketing vice president with a penchant for younger women.*

**bastion** (BAS-chuhn). An institution, individual, or something else protecting or preserving a particular way of life, society, set of beliefs, or moral code.

*Cliff, a Yale BASTION, continuously quibbles with Irene, who graduated summa cum laude from Harvard.*

**bulwark** (BULL-wark). A defensive, protective barrier, wall, or force.

*"Since he aims at great souls, he cannot miss. But if someone should slander me in this way, no one would believe him. For envy goes against the powerful. Yet slight men, apart from the great, are but a weak BULWARK."*

—Sophocles, Greek tragedian

**cannonade** (can-non-AYD). A continuous, relentless bombardment or effort.

*A CANNONADE of questioning greeted Eva's statement that she was quitting the club's tennis team.*

**muniment** (MYOO-nuh-munt). A means of defense; in law, a document, such as a title or deed, used to defend or maintain rights or privileges.

*Sam was prepared to support his claims to ownership and brought all the necessary MUNIMENTS to the hearing.*

**paladin** (PAL-uh-din). A knight or heroic champion, a defender or advocate of a noble cause; any of the twelve peers who attended Charlemagne.

*The fictional character of Superman represented society's need for a PALADIN during the 1950s.*

**palisade** (pal-ih-SADE). A defensive barrier or fence comprising a row of tall stakes driven into the ground; also, a line of steep cliffs along a river.

*As we drove along the PALISADES of the river gorge, my wife and I lamented that we had forgotten to bring our camera.*



## VERBS

**adduce** (*uh-DUCE*). To cite as an example or justification; to bring something forward for consideration.

*I would ADDUCE the following reasons in support of rewriting the club charter.*

**forfend** (*for-FEND*). To protect, defend, secure, etc.

*After he bought a television with a fifty-five-inch screen, Keith bought an alarm system to FORFEND it.*

**indemnify** (*in-DEM-nih-fy*). To protect from or provide compensation for damages; to shield against the loss, destruction, or damage of something.

*This policy INDEMNIFIES my house against fire, flood, and burglary.*

**vindicate** (*VIN-dih-kate*). To prove your opinion is correct, or your action justified, or that you are innocent of a misdeed you stand accused of, despite opinions and evidence to the contrary; to defend one's rights.

*We laughed at Paulette's predictions about the imminent fall fashions, but, once the couture was unveiled, Paulette was VINDICATED.*

# ANTONYMS

**untenable** (*uhn-TEN-uh-bull*). Not possible to defend, as an argument or position.

*“Are the legitimate compensation and honors that should come as the result of ability and merit to be denied on the UNTENABLE ground of sex aristocracy?”*

—Bertha Honore Potter Palmer, American socialite

## 55. Defiant

(*dih-FYE-unht*), adjective

Characterized by defiance; resistant or challenging; rebellious

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## ADJECTIVES

**contumacious** (*kon-too-MAY-shus*). Obstinate; resisting authority; disobedient; insubordinate.

*The CONTUMACIOUS defendant eventually had to be gagged.*

**obstreperous** (*ob-STREP-er-us*). Uncontrollably aggressive; defiant, boisterous.

*Before announcing the plan for massive layoffs to his workers, the boss hired an extra security force to prevent certain OBSTREPEROUS persons from inciting a riot.*

**recalcitrant** (*rih-KAL-sih-trunt*). Unwilling to cooperate voluntarily; resisting control or authority; hesitant to step forward and do what one is asked or told to do.

*On the witness stand, the mobster was RECALCITRANT and uncommunicative.*

**renitent** (*ri-NAHYT-int*). Steadfastly resisting pressure, constraint, or compulsion.

*Dorothy's RENITENT efforts proved superior to her mother's attempts to modify her behavior.*

**subversive** (*sub-VER-siv*). Describes an act performed to challenge or overthrow the authority of those in power.

*"If sex and creativity are often seen by dictators as SUBVERSIVE activities, it's because they lead to the knowledge that you own your own body."*

—Erica Jong, American author and teacher

## VERBS

**beard** (*BEERD*). To defy boldly, oppose.

*To ensure the measure would pass, supporters needed to be ready to BEARD the opposition.*

**contravene** (*kon-truh-VEEN*). To go against or deny; to oppose something by action or argument.

*The orders I left were to be CONTRAVENED by no one but the colonel.*

**remonstrate** (*rih-MON-strate*). To protest, object, or to show disapproval.

*When Carlotta REMONSTRATED our snubbing of Julia, we simply began to snub Carlotta as well.*

**restive** (*RESS-tihv*). Impatient and stubborn; contrary.

*Audrey was so worked up about her first summer abroad that her excitement came across as RESTIVE.*

## NOUNS

**dissentient** (*dih-SEN-shunt*). A person who dissents, especially in opposition to the majority opinion.

*The group of close-knit political activists, for all their discussion of free thought, could never tolerate a true DISSENTIENT.*

**recusancy** (*REK-yuh-zun-see*). The refusal to recognize or obey established authority.

*At one time, an individual's religious RECUSANCY could result in punishment.*

**sedition** (*sih-DISH-uhn*). An action that promotes discontent or rebellion against authority.

*In an act of childish SEDITION, Alex quit the club after we refused to play a round of golf with him.*

## ANTONYMS

**milquetoast** (*MILK-toast*). An unassertive, timid, spineless person who is easily intimidated.

*Unless you just want to be a pencil-pusher all your life, you've got to stop being such a MILQUETOAST, Arthur!*

**verecund** (*VER-ih-kuhnd*). Bashful; modest.

*Paul's VERECUND manner makes it difficult to carry on a conversation with him.*

## 56. Desire

*(dih-ZAHYR)*, verb

To want or crave.

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## NOUNS

**ardor** (AHR-der). Emotional warmth; passion; eagerness; intense devotion.

*The author's ARDOR for the environment is obvious in all of his writings.*

**aspiration** (ass-puh-RAY-shun). Goal; desire; something one wishes to achieve.

*Marco, whose ASPIRATION was to be a concert violinist, practiced his instrument at least eight hours a day.*

**desideratum** (deh-sih-deh-RAH-tum). Something that one covets or desires.

*Ever since she was an adolescent, Evangeline's DESIDERATUM has been a first edition of Virginia Woolf's first novel, The Voyage Out.*

**ebullition** (ebb-uh-LISH-un). A sudden outpouring of strong emotion; passion.

*The concert closed with an inspired EBULLITION from the entire orchestra.*

**yen** (YEN). A strong desire or urge.

*"Perhaps one subtext of the health care debate is a YEN to be treated like a whole person, not just an eye, an ear, a nose or a throat."*

—Anna Quindlen, American author and opinion columnist

## VERBS

**covet** (*KUHV-it*). To strongly desire; to desire something that another person has.

*As a young boy, I was taught not to COVET my neighbor's tricycle.*

## ADJECTIVES

**esurient** (ih-SOOR-ee-uhnt). Hungry; greedy; voracious.

*Because he was raised by wolves, Jack often displayed ESURIENT habits.*

**orectic** (aw-REK-tik). Characterized by appetite or desire.

*Unfortunately, Michael was compelled by ORECTIC thoughts about girls to the exclusion of any interest in schoolwork.*

**wistful** (WIHST-full). Yearning, pensive; having an unfulfilled desire.

*“I never saw a man who looked / With such a WISTFUL eye / Upon that little tent of blue / Which prisoners call the sky.”*

—Oscar Wilde, Irish playwright and poet

## ANTONYMS

**animosity** (*an-ih-MOS-ih-tee*). Strong dislike for; open and active hostility toward.

*“Life appears to me too short to be spent nursing ANIMOSITY, or registering wrongs.”*

—Charlotte Bronte, English novelist

**spurn** (*SPURN*). To reject with scorn; disdain.

*“If the riches of the Indies, or the crowns of all the kingdoms of Europe, were laid at my feet in exchange for my love of reading, I would SPURN them all.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet

## 57. Determined

(*dih-TUR-mind*), adjective

Having one's mind made up; settled; decided; resolved.

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## ADJECTIVES

**indefatigable** (*in-deh-FAT-uh-guh-bull*). Capable of continuing along one's current course of action without wavering, tiring, or faltering.

*"We are truly INDEFATIGABLE in providing for the needs of the body, but we starve the soul."*

—Ellen Wood, British playwright

**indomitable** (*in-DOM-ih-tuh-bull*). Not easily discouraged or subdued; unyielding; unconquerable.

*When it came to a cause she believed in, Paula's INDOMITABLE spirit was not to be denied.*

**intractable** (*in-TRACK-tuh-bull*). Difficult to control or manage; stubborn.

*"It is precisely here, where the writer fights with the raw, the INTRACTABLE, that poetry is born."*

—Doris Lessing, British author

**intransigent** (*in-TRANZ-ih-gent*). Stubborn; refusing to consider opinions other than one's own.

*"Lamont stared for a moment in frustration but Burt's expression was a clearly INTRANSIGENT one now."*

—Isaac Asimov, Russian-born American author and biochemist

**obdurate** (*OB-doo-rit*). Stubborn and unyielding; hardhearted; unsympathetic.

*"The fates are not quite OBDURATE; / They have a grim, sardonic way / Of granting them who supplicate / The thing they wanted yesterday."*

—Roselle Mercier Montgomery, American poet

**obstinate** (*AHB-stih-nit*). Inflexible in one's opinions and attitudes; refusing to change or accede to the wishes of others.

*"The male sex still constitutes in many ways the most OBSTINATE vested interest one can find."*

—Francis Pakenham, British social reformer

**pertinacious** (*per-tih-NAY-shuss*). Persistent or obstinate to the point of annoyance.

*The car salesman's PERTINACIOUS patter caused me to leave the lot immediately.*

**resolute** (REZ-uh-loot). Unyielding in determination; firm of purpose.

*We remain RESOLUTE on the question of the hostages: they must be released without precondition.*

**sedulous** (SEJ-yuh-luss). Done or crafted with perseverance, diligence, and care.

*The teen's SEDULOUS labors at the desert site were rewarded by the discovery of triceratops bones in the third week of the dig.*

**staunch** (STONCH). Firm in resolution or belief; fixed.

*Mr. West, a STAUNCH conservative, believed that government waste was the main problem requiring attention in Washington.*

**tenacious** (tuh-NAY-shuss). Persistent, stubborn, obstinate.

*"Women are TENACIOUS, and all of them should be TENACIOUS of respect; without esteem they cannot exist; esteem is the first demand that they make of love."*

—Honoré de Balzac, French novelist and playwright

## VERBS

**indurate** (*IN-doo-rate*). To become hard; harden; stubborn.

*His friends were concerned that Paul's rejection by his latest girlfriend would INDURATE him to future relationships.*



## ANTONYMS

**falter** (FAWL-ter). To act hesitantly; show uncertainty; waver.

*“We shall neither fail nor FALTER; we shall not weaken or tire. . . .  
Give us the tools and we will finish the job.”*

—Winston Churchill, British prime minister

**vacillate** (VAS-uh-layt). To waver; show indecision; be irresolute.

*“It seems to me that the problem with diaries, and the reason that most  
of them are so boring, is that every day we VACILLATE between examining  
our hangnails and speculating on cosmic order.”*

—Ann Beattie, American novelist

## 58. Difference

*(DIF-er-ense)*, noun

The condition, quality, state, or fact of being unlike something else; dissimilarity.

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## NOUNS

**anomaly** (An-AHM-ah-lee). An exception to the norm; something different and unexpected that logically should not exist.

*“After a thousand meters of this broken-field walking, Mitsuno came upon an ANOMALY: a patch of sand perhaps ten meters square.”*

—Fred Pohl and Thomas Thomas, American science fiction authors

**dichotomy** (die-KOT-uh-me). Division into two parts, especially into two seemingly contradictory parts.

*A DICHOTOMY between good and evil is present in every human heart.*

**heretic** (HER-eh-tik). A person who boldly, loudly, and publicly defies the conventions of a religion, society, culture, or set of beliefs.

*“The HERETIC is always better dead. And mortal eyes cannot distinguish the saint from the HERETIC.”*

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright

**imparity** (ihm-PAR-ih-tee). Inequality or disparity.

*There is little, if any, IMPARITY between the chateaubriand offered at the two bistros.*

**nuance** (NOO-ahnts). A subtle difference in meaning, expression, or tone.

*“[Venice] in winter is rich with the bittersweet NUANCE and somber beauty of the once-was.”*

—Terry Weeks, American travel writer

# ADJECTIVES

**asynchronous** (ay-SINK-crow-nuss). At different times; acting or functioning with no regularity or discernible time schedule.

*Maggie's ASYNCHRONOUS habits drive her friends crazy because they can never make advance plans with her.*

**disparate** (dis-PAHR-at). Describes two or more things that differ greatly from one another and cannot be logically reconciled.

*"As if, as if, as if the DISPARATE halves / Of things were waiting in a betrothal known / To none."*

—Wallace Stevens, American modernist poet

**dissimilar** (dih-SIM-uh-ler). Not similar; unlike.

*The twins may look alike but their personalities are DISSIMILAR.*

**incommensurable** (in-co-MEN-ser-uh-bull). Two things that cannot be measured or judged by the same standards.

*"Two men who perceive the same situation differently but employ the same vocabulary in its discussion speak from INCOMMENSURABLE viewpoints."*

—Thomas Kuhn, American philosopher

# ANTONYMS

**analogous** (*an-AL-a-gus*). Similar or comparable in some respects.

*“You expect far too much of a first sentence. Think of it as ANALOGOUS to a good country breakfast: what we want is something simple, but nourishing to the imagination.”*

—Larry McMurtry, American novelist

**cognate** (*KOG-neyt*). Having the same nature or quality.

*After taking a course in linguistics, David was struck by the COGNATE nature of languages despite the fact that many arose in isolation.*

See also: Opposite

## 59. Difficult

*(DIF-ih-kult)*, adjective

Not easy to do, make, or understand; requiring significant labor, skill, or knowledge to be performed successfully.

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## ADJECTIVES

**abstruse** (ab-STROOS). Arcane, complex, difficult to understand and learn.

*Bob began to wish there was, in fact, a Santa Claus because he found the “simple instructions” to his son’s bicycle far too ABSTRUSE.*

**arduous** (AR-joo-us). Requiring exceptional effort or care; mentally or physically challenging; laborious.

*Stacy has been preparing all week for the ARDUOUS marathon competition.*

**anfractuous** (an-FRACK-chuh-wuss). Full of windings and intricacies, like a good mystery novel.

*The novel’s ANFRACTUOUS plot worked on paper, but it became stupefyingly confusing—actually, just plain stupid—onscreen.*

**byzantine** (BIZ-un-teen). Convoluted; overly complicated; difficult to figure out because of its complexity.

*We found it impossible to follow the BYZANTINE plot of how Eileen made Mariah a laughingstock by replacing her Prada shoes with nearly identical knockoffs.*

**circuitous** (sir-CUE-uh-tuss). Extremely twisty and winding; indirect.

*Blanche called it a shortcut, but her CIRCUITOUS route caused us to arrive very late to the party.*

**herculean** (her-kyuh-LEE-uhn). Of extraordinary power or difficulty. Often capitalized because the word alludes to Hercules.

*“We found it a HERCULEAN effort not to chortle at the outlandish clothing of the nouveau riche attendees of our party,” said Lillian. “How inappropriate to wear evening attire to an afternoon garden party!”*

**impalpable** (im-PAL-puh-bull). Difficult to understand easily; or, intangible.

*“The soul is so IMPALPABLE, so often useless, and sometimes such a nuisance, that I felt no more emotion on losing it than if, on a stroll, I had mislaid my visiting card.”*

—Charles Baudelaire, French poet, critic, and translator

**insuperable** (in-SOO-per-uh-bull). Not possible to overcome or surmount.

*“Conceit is an INSUPERABLE obstacle to all progress.”*

—Ellen Terry, British actress

**onerous** (*OH-nerr-us*). Describes a difficult task or heavy responsibility that one does not desire.

*Caring for his son’s large aquarium quickly went from an interesting hobby to an ONEROUS burden.*



## NOUNS

**asperity** (a-SPARE-ih-tee). Something hard to endure; roughness; harshness.

*Sorry, I can't handle the ASPERITY of his politics. Could we skip the speech?*

**conundrum** (kuh-NUN-drum). A difficult problem or situation that is not easily resolved.

*Knowing whether to attend MIT, Yale, or Harvard was quite a CONUNDRUM: MIT had the courses he wanted, but Harvard and Yale offered him full sports scholarships.*

**labyrinth** (LA-buh-rinth). A mazelike series of connected tunnels and passages through which it is difficult to find one's way.

*He ran, terrified, as the Minotaur chased him throughout the LABYRINTH.*

**morass** (muh-RASS). A confusing or troublesome situation from which it is difficult to disentangle oneself.

*"One idea is enough to organize a life and project it / Into unusual but viable forms, but many ideas merely / Lead one thither into a MORASS of their own good intentions."*

—John Ashbery, American poet

**nodus** (NOH-dus). A difficult point; knotty situation, such as in a story or play.

*Jason reached a NODUS in his relationship with Gail and was determined to find a solution while there was still a chance.*

**straits** (STRAYTS). A position of difficulty and challenge, often brought on by making bad decisions.

*After a series of bad investments, I found myself in dire financial STRAITS.*

## ANTONYMS

**elementary** (*el-uh-MEN-tuh-ree*). Of first principles; of the rudiments or fundamentals of something; introductory; simple.

*“By respect for life we become religious in a way that is ELEMENTARY, profound, and alive.”*

—Albert Schweitzer, German missionary and theologian

**facile** (*FASS-ill*). Accomplished easily and with little effort.

*“Sometimes there is a greater lack of communication in FACILE talking than in silence.”*

—Faith Baldwin, American author

## 60. Dirty

(*DUR-tee*), adjective

Unclean; soiled with dirt; foul; vile; mean.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bedraggled** (*bee-DRAG-eld*). Harried or in a condition of disarray; unkempt; dirty and limp.

*A group of BEDRAGGLED orphans stood outside begging by the flickering gaslight.*

**sordid** (*SAWR-did*). Characterized by grossness or baseness; vile; wretched; squalid.

*The movie opened with a scene showing the hero boldly walking into a SORDID tenement house to find the villain.*

## VERBS

**contaminate** (*kuhn-TAM-uh-neyt*). To make unclean, impure, or corrupt by contact; to make unusable or harmful by adding impure materials.

*If the reactor is breached, the cooling water will CONTAMINATE the bay and render its marine life radioactive.*

**defile** (*dih-FILE*). To pollute; to corrupt or make unclean.

*The river that only a few years ago ran clean and clear is now DEFILED with a witches' brew of chemicals, thanks to the new tanning plant.*

**sully** (*SUL-ee*). To besmear or make foul; to cast aspersions.

*I will not allow you to SULLY the good name of my family with such baseless accusations.*

**taint** (*TEYNT*). To make morally corrupt; to infect, contaminate, or spoil; to affect with something harmful or unpleasant.

*The senator's actions, no matter how noble in intent, are forever TAINTED by his previous transgressions.*

## NOUNS

**squalor** (SKWAL-ur). The state or quality of being filthy.

*My mother knew full well that my roommates were not the tidiest men in the world, but she still seemed shocked when confronted with the unrepentant SQUALOR of our apartment.*

## ANTONYMS

**hygienic** (*hahy-jee-EN-ik*). Promoting health; healthful; sanitary.

*Aunt Charlotte's HYGIENIC practices made it quite possible to eat off her floors.*

**immaculate** (*ih-MAK-yuh-lit*). Perfectly clean; without a spot or stain; unsoiled.

*"His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles; his love sincere, his thoughts IMMACULATE; his tears pure messengers sent from his heart; his heart as far from fraud, as heaven from earth."*

—William Shakespeare

## 61. Disagree

*(dis-uh-GREE)*, verb

To differ; dissent; to quarrel about or disapprove of something.

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## VERBS

**demur** (di-MURR). To make an objection on the grounds of scruples.

*“Assent, and you are sane; / DEMUR,—you’re straightway dangerous, / And handled with a chain.”*

—Emily Dickinson, American poet

**deprecate** (DEPP-rih-kate). To express severe disapproval of another’s actions.

*“Those who profess to favor freedom and yet DEPRECATE agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground.”*

—Frederick Douglass, American abolitionist and orator

**gainsay** (GANE-say). To deny, dispute, or contradict.

*Michael has made no attempt to GAINSAY the persistent rumors that his family’s fortune rests solely on insider trading.*

**harangue** (ha-RANG). Verbally accost; yell at; berate.

*“But on that hot July day she breaks—HARANGUING strangers in the street.”*

—Oliver Sacks, British neurologist

**inveigh** (in-VAY). To protest or complain strongly.

*The crowd INVEIGHED against the governor’s decision to commute Davidson’s sentence.*

**negate** (nih-GATE). To cause to be ineffectual; to deny; to reverse.

*I imagine that double hot fudge sundae I ate completely NEGATED the effects of my morning exercises.*

## NOUNS

**apostasy** (A-PA-stah-see). The act of abandoning, ignoring, or openly flaunting an accepted principle or belief.

*“It was his idea of grand APOSTASY to drive to the reform synagogue on the high holidays and park his pink-eye nag among the luxurious, whirl-wired touring cars of the rich.”*

—Saul Bellow, American author

**dissidence** (DISS-uh-dents). Strong disagreement, especially with a government.

*The newly-formed government decided to crack down on DISSIDENCE by jailing anyone who disagreed with governmental policies.*

## ADJECTIVES

**bilious** (*BILL-yuss*). Having a nasty temperament or disagreeable disposition; to be “full of bile” and hatred.

*The polo team’s BILIOUS captain made his team miserable as he proceeded to criticize their every move.*

**discordant** (*dis-KOR-dunt*). Conflicting; lacking in harmony.

*I find that composer’s DISCORDANT style difficult to listen to.*

**dyslogistic** (*diz-luh-JISS-tick*). Showing disapproval or censure.

*We gave Elizabeth DYSLOGISTIC glances when she told us she had decided to stop shopping at Cartier.*

## ANTONYMS

**amenable** (*ah-MEE-nah-bull*). Readily agreeable to the wishes and desires of others.

*Mark considers himself AMENABLE, but the rest of us just think he's a pushover.*

**complaisant** (*kuhm-PLAY-zuhnt*). Agreeable and eager to please.

*Eleanor is far too COMPLAISANT with common strangers.*

## 62. Dishonest

(*dis-ON-ist*), adjective

Not honest; the tendency to lie, cheat, or steal; untrustworthy; fraudulent.

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## ADJECTIVES

**collusive** (*kuh-LOO-siv*). Involving or characterized by collusion; conspiring for fraudulent purposes.

*The brothers' COLLUSIVE tendencies were well known to high school administration.*

**disingenuous** (*diss-in-JEN-yoo-uss*). Not inclined toward open dealing; less than truthful; other than appearances would suggest; insincere.

*The mayor's carefully worded denials never explicitly touched on her involvement in her campaign's alleged effort to buy votes, leading many to conclude that she was being DISINGENUOUS.*

**duplicitous** (*doo-PLIS-ih-tus*). Characterized by hypocritical deception or cunning; double-dealing; intentionally deceptive.

*His DUPLICITOUS acts were second nature to Jim after years of living on the mean streets of Newark.*

**knaveish** (*NAY-vish*). Untrustworthy, dishonest, and mischievous.

*Despite, or perhaps because of, his KNAVEISH behavior, Jonathan is always a success at our society balls.*

**smarmy** (*SMAR-mee*). Insincerely earnest.

*In between syrupy love songs, the SMARMY lounge singer repeatedly assured the crowd it was by far the best audience he'd ever performed for.*

**unconscionable** (*un-KONSH-un-uh-bul*). Lacking in principles or conscience; beyond any reasonable boundary.

*Your decision to destroy those letters without attempting to get permission from the poet's widow was UNCONSCIONABLE.*

## NOUNS

**covin** (KUV-in). In law, a conspiracy of two or more people to defraud or swindle others.

*After the coven members were found guilty, their COVIN made newspaper headline fodder for days.*

**grifter** (GRIFF-ter). A person who engages in unseemly activities; a swindler, a dishonest gambler, etc.

*The small-town bar was filled with reprobates, toothless legions, and GRIFTERS. I felt right at home.*

**pettifoggery** (PET-ee-fog-er-ee). Petty dishonesty or trickery.

*“Let’s put all this PETTIFOGGERY behind us,” said Mr. Powers, “and start dealing with each other in a more straightforward manner.”*

**rogue** (roag). A scoundrel; a dishonest person; a person known to have low morals and habits.

*Everyone in Savannah knew that Rhett was a ROGUE, but somehow he managed to use that fact to his advantage.*

## VERBS

**bilk** (*BILK*). To swindle or cheat.

*The accountant, investigators learned, had been BILKING the company of nearly a quarter of a million dollars a year.*

**filch** (*FILCH*). To steal, especially to steal petty amounts or inexpensive goods.

*Brian is proud of how many motel towels he's FILCHED over the years.*

**mulct** (*MUHLKT*). To get something from someone else by fraud or extortion; swindle.

*The con man MULCTED ten bucks from the unsuspecting couple.*

**perjure** (*PUR-jer*). To lie or give false and misleading testimony; to commit the crime of testifying to something one knows is untrue.

*Although Mr. Frattori was not convicted on the main charges he faced, he may serve time in prison for having PERJURED himself during the trial.*

**purloin** (*PURR-loin*). To steal or to take by dishonest means.

*Bobby PURLOINED almost all the contents of his dad's change jar before being discovered.*



## ANTONYMS

**conscionable** (*KON-shuh-nuh-buhl*). That which agrees with one's ideas of right and wrong; just.

*Arthur and Carolyn considered their relationship with friends and neighbors and tried to treat everyone as CONSCIONABLE people would.*

**reputable** (*REP-yuh-tuh-buhl*). Respectable; honorable.

*When a natural disaster occurs, an unfortunate result is the appearance of charitable organizations that are not completely REPUTABLE.*

## 63. Dull

(*DUHL*), adjective

Lacking sensitivity or spirit; causing boredom; tedious.

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## ADJECTIVES

**aseptic** (uh-SEP-tick). Lacking emotion or vibrancy.

*Jordan's ASEPTIC performance at the job interview is probably the reason he didn't get the job, despite his qualifications.*

**banal** (buh-NAHL). Trite; lacking originality.

*Aaron always dismissed the insights of the other philosophers as BANAL, but I for one never heard him utter a single profound idea.*

**bourgeois** (BOO-zhwah). Characteristic of the middle class; having material concerns, an interest in respectability, and a tendency toward mediocrity.

*Dave is so BOURGEOIS he goes to a liquor store across town so his neighbors won't know he drinks.*

**bromidic** (bro-MID-ick). Trite and commonplace.

*The marketing executive groaned as one BROMIDIC ad campaign after another crossed her desk.*

**insipid** (in-SIP-id). Lacking in vigor; dull.

*In Frank's opinion, the novel's plot was INSIPID and left much to be desired.*

**jaded** (JAY-dud). Worn out; dulled or satiated due to overindulgence.

*Her parents thought that providing Tracy with everything her heart desired as a child would make her a happy person, but she grew up to be a JADED and selfish woman.*

**lackluster** (LACK-lus-tur). Dull; not shiny or brilliant.

*Wanda's LACKLUSTER performance as Hedda Gabler led one critic to remark that she probably had a long career ahead of her in the theater—as a stage weight.*

**mundane** (mun-DANE). Ordinary, practical, or everyday.

*Everett's concerns were MUNDANE enough: keep a roof over his head, track down the occasional meal.*

**pedestrian** (puh-DESS-tree-uhn). Lacking in originality or vitality.

*If you really want to advance in this company, you're going to have to come up with something better than the PEDESTRIAN ideas we've already tried and rejected.*

**trite** (TRYTE). Lacking in effectiveness or freshness due to continual use and excessive repetition; hackneyed; stale.

*“The TRITE subjects of human efforts, possessions, outward success, luxury have always seemed to me contemptible.”*

—Albert Einstein

**vapid** (VA-pid). Dull; void of intellectual curiosity or intelligence; lacking spirit and enthusiasm; dull, routine, unchallenging.

*What irked him most about his sister-in-law were her VAPID stares in response to simple questions, conversation, and jokes.*

## NOUNS

**pabulum** (*PAB-yuh-lum*). Writing or speech that is simplistic, insipid, or bland.

*Christie could be counted on to deliver the sort of PABULUM that would distract the media from the real and sordid activities of the actor.*

## ANTONYMS

**exuberant** (ig-ZOO-ber-uhnt). Overflowing with spirit; uninhibitedly enthusiastic; abounding in vitality.

*“Nothing ever succeeds which EXUBERANT spirits have not helped to produce.”*

—Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher

**provocative** (pruh-VOK-uh-tiv). Tending to provoke; inciting; stimulating.

*Andrew’s visits to the art museum filled him with PROVOCATIVE images and gave him new energy.*

See also: Ordinary

# E

## 64. Easy

(*EE-zee*), adjective

That which can be accomplished, obtained, completed, mastered, etc. without difficulty; characteristic of ease or comfort; not harsh or strict.

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## ADJECTIVES

**amiable** (AY-me-uh-bul). Possessing a pleasant, cordial nature; happy disposition and easy to get along with.

*Jeanne made it a point to speak to everyone at the party; she came across as quite an AMIABLE hostess.*

**effortless** (EF-ert-lis). Requiring or seeming to require no effort; displaying no signs of effort.

*Eric Clapton's EFFORTLESS guitar playing earned him the nickname "Slowhand."*

**facile** (FASS-ill). Accomplished easily and with little effort.

*"The hunger for FACILE wisdom is the root of all false philosophy."*

—George Santayana, author and philosopher

**straightforward** (streyt-FAWR-werd). Free from obscurity, deceit, or evasiveness; clear-cut.

*Once he overcame his initial trepidation, Cal found that operating the crane was relatively STRAIGHTFORWARD.*



## NOUNS

**perspicuity** (*purrr-spi-KYOO-ih-tee*). Clear and easy to understand, generally used with regard to speech or writing.

*The report from the accounting office was loaded with technical jargon; writing with PERSPICUITY is not one of the talents of the people who work there.*

## ANTONYMS

**burdensome** (*BUR-din-sum*).

Excessively heavy to carry or accommodate; onerous.

*Jack found that his classes were easy; it was the homework that proved most BURDENSOME.*

**insuperable** (*in-SOO-per-uh-bull*). Not possible to overcome or surmount.

*“Conceit is an INSUPERABLE obstacle to all progress.”*

—Ellen Terry, British actress

## 65. Eat

*(EET), verb*

To consume for nourishment; take in food.

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## VERBS

**gormandize** (GORE-mun-dize). To eat like a glutton, as if one were starving.

*We find GORMANDIZING on even the finest French cuisine to be quite tasteless and, therefore, to be avoided.*

**imbibe** (im-BIBE). To drink, especially alcoholic beverages.

*Donald once had a drinking problem, but now he no longer IMBIBES.*

**masticate** (MAS-tih-kate). To chew, especially to chew thoroughly.

*The best way to appreciate the gustatory arts is to MASTICATE your personal chef's creations at as relaxed a pace as possible.*

**quaff** (KWAF). To drink with gusto and in large volume.

*"We QUAFF the cup of life with eager haste without draining it, instead of which it only overflows the brim."*

—William Hazlitt, English literary critic and philosopher

**raven** (RAV-un). To eat or feed greedily or voraciously.

*To watch Harold RAVEN his meals is to observe the most primitive of human instincts.*

## ADJECTIVES

**bibulous** (BIB-yuh-luss). Related to drinking or to drunkenness; fond of alcoholic beverages.

*You may think you're "fine," but your BIBULOUS activities will put you in the poorhouse or in jail one of these days!*

**crapulous** (KRAP-yuh-luss). To eat and drink too much; the effects of eating and drinking too much.

*Jim spent the day after the party in a CRAPULOUS state.*

**dipsomaniacal** (dip-so-muh-NIE-ih-kul). Having an uncontrolled craving for alcohol.

*The private detective summed up his latest client, a booze-loving gold digger, as the "DIPSOMANIACAL dame."*

**gustatory** (GUSS-tuh-tore-ee). Of the sense of taste.

*"Food has it over sex for variety. Hedonistically, GUSTATORY possibilities are much broader than copulatory ones."*

—Joseph Epstein, American author and critic

**herbivorous** (hur-BIV-er-us). Eating plants rather than meat.

*The HERBIVOROUS animals are not considered predators unless plants can be thought of as prey.*

**macrobiotic** (mack-row-bi-AHT-ick). Describes a diet rich in whole grains and beans, which some believe lengthens one's lifespan.

*After she had a few health scares, Jean turned to a MACROBIOTIC diet.*

**omnivorous** (om-NIV-er-uss). Accustomed to eating both animal and vegetable food items.

*The Cantonese, I am told, are OMNIVOROUS, and it is said that the traveler is best advised not to inquire too closely into exactly what he is eating.*

**omophagous** (oh-MAH-Fuh-guss). Eating raw food, especially raw meat.

*Peggy considered becoming OMOPHAGOUS, but was concerned about her ability to digest raw food.*

**seminivorous** (sem-uh-NIV-er-us). Eating seeds.

*Now that Diane has adopted SEMINIVOROUS habits, we often see her hovering near bird feeders.*

**voracious** (vo-RAY-shuss). Possessing a huge and insatiable appetite, whether for food, knowledge, amusement, or something else.

*Her son always had a VORACIOUS desire for knowledge. He read anything he could get his hands on and was always willing to experience something new.*

## NOUNS

**polydipsia** (pol-ee-DIP-see-uh). An abnormal or excessive thirst.

*The bartender, clearly uninterested in Ralph's claim to suffer from POLYDIPSIA, told him flatly that he'd had enough.*

**polyphagia** (pol-ee-FEY-gee-uh). An excessive desire to eat.

*Ray's POLYPHAGIA was successfully diverted into an excessive desire to talk.*

**refection** (ri-FEK-shun). Food and drink; nourishment; refreshment.

*As I recall, REFLECTIONS were not the high point of my college experience.*

**repast** (ri-PAST). Food provided or consumed for a meal.

*Obviously a frustrated comedian, Jack entitled his most recent painting The Last REPAST.*

**vegan** (VEH-jun). A person who eats only vegetables, fruits, and grains and no animal products whatsoever.

*A VEGAN since college, Wanda had a hard time finding restaurants that offered entrées she could eat.*

**viand** (VIE-und). An article of food.

*Chef Jacques thought that any VIAND, whether prime rib or meatloaf, should be served to the customer in a visually appealing way.*

## ANTONYMS

**emaciated** (*ih-MEY-see-ey-tid*). Abnormally lean; wasted away as from starvation.

*Janet had lost the will to live and the desire to eat, becoming more EMACIATED with each passing week.*

**malnourished** (*mal-NUR-isht*). Poorly nourished; badly fed; suffering from malnutrition.

*Experts in the field believe that we already have the means to help all the MALNOURISHED of the world.*

See also: Foods



## 66. Economics

*(ek-uh-NOM-iks)*, noun

That which pertains to the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth and with the problems of labor, finance, taxation, and government's role.

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## VERBS

**defalcate** (*dih-FAL-kate*). To embezzle.

*No one knew for certain how the corrupt banker had made his fortune, but it was rumored that he had DEFALCATED funds from a bogus charitable organization.*

**remunerate** (*rih-MYOO-nuh-rate*). To settle a debt or other financial obligation by making a payment.

*Peter's supervisor at the insurance company would do anything to avoid REMUNERATING policyholders for the claims they made.*

## NOUNS

**coffers** (KAH-furs OR KAW-furs). A treasury, a place in which money is kept or stored.

*When the minister suddenly bought a brand-new sports car, his flock began carefully checking the church's COFFERS.*

**deflation** (dee-FLAY-shun). A weakened economy in which prices fall because of a decline in consumer spending.

*We were pleased to learn that DEFLATION has not harmed sales at Wempe on Fifth Avenue, our favorite purveyor of watches.*

**hypothecation** (hi-POTH-ih-KAY-shun). The practice of using property or other assets as the collateral for a loan.

*Buying stock on margin is a useful form of HYPOTHECATION that encourages unsophisticated individual investors to buy more stock than they can afford.*

**lapping** (LAP-ing). The practice of falsifying accounting records to conceal a shortage caused by theft or loss, usually by posting a financial transaction to an accounting period other than the one during which it actually took place.

*Even after Skyler was indicted, he could not accept that LAPPING was an objectionable practice.*

**lien** (LEAN). A creditor's right to have debts paid out of the debtor's property, if necessary by selling it.

*It's sad that we, at times, must place LIENS on our servants' automobiles, but that is why they are the servers and we the "servees."*

**lucre** (LOO-ker). Monetary reward or gain.

*"I fear the popular notion of success stands in direct opposition in all points to the real and wholesome success. One adores public opinion, the other, private opinion; one, fame, the other, desert; one, feats, the other, humility; one, LUCRE, the other, love."*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**metallism** (MEH-tah-liz-um). The belief that money must either be made of precious metal or backed by precious metal held in reserve—usually gold or silver.

*Richard Nixon abolished the gold standard for U.S. currency, and METALLISM declined as a result.*

**oligopoly** (oh-lih-GAH-poll-lee). Control of an industry, sector, or market by a small number of companies dominating that particular niche.

*One can argue that Intel and Microsoft collectively are an OLIGOPOLY in personal computing.*

**penury** (PEN-you-ree). Extreme poverty.

*Not many of us would be willing to exchange our lot in life for the simple life of PENURY taken on by these monks.*

**recession** (ree-SESH-in). A troubled economy characterized by a decline in gross domestic product for two consecutive quarters; a period during which unemployment is on the rise, inflation is increasing, and consumer confidence and spending power is eroded.

*The RECESSION has the effect of hurting everyone in the economy.*

**remittance** (ree-MITT-inss). A payment for goods or services purchased on credit.

*Lacking a credit card, he made a REMITTANCE on his account online using PayPal.*

**reparations** (reh-par-AYE-shins). Payments made by nations defeated in war to the victors, who impose these payments to recover some of the costs of battle.

*After World War I, REPARATIONS of 132 billion gold marks were imposed on Germany by the French.*

**stipend** (STIE-pend). A periodic payment, such as a scholarship or other allowance; remuneration for a service.

*A small monthly STIPEND from the Institute made it possible for Vernon to continue his biography of Yeats.*

**tariff** (TARE-if). Duties or taxes placed on imports or exports.

*In an effort to balance trade, the government levied a TARIFF on most imported goods.*

**usury** (YOO-zhuh-ree). The act of charging excessive interest on money loaned.

*The rates we agreed to when we bought the house seem like USURY compared to current loan terms.*

## ADJECTIVES

**pecuniary** (*pih-KYOO-nee-air-ee*). Related to money.

*Because all of Craig's articles had a strong PECUNIARY slant, his editor moved him from the features page to the finance page.*

## ANTONYMS

**barter** (*BAHR-ter*). To trade by exchanging goods or services without using money.

*The practice of BARTER between peoples and cultures predates the use of money.*

## 67. Eliminate

(*uh-LIM-uh-nayt*), verb

To take out; remove; get rid of; to remove from consideration; reject; eradicate.

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## VERBS

**depose** (*dih-POZE*). To oust or remove from office or a position of power and authority.

*After the dictator was DEPOSED, the country set about healing the wounds of a long civil war.*

**deracinate** (*dee-RASS-ih-nate*). To uproot or to remove by force.

*The hurricane DERACINATED populations all over the island.*

**efface** (*ih-FAYSS*). To erase, obliterate, make inconspicuous.

*“It is also true that one can write nothing readable unless one constantly struggles to EFFACE one’s own personality. Good prose is like a windowpane.”*

—George Orwell, British author

**estrangle** (*ih-STRANGE*). To alienate or remove from a position or relationship.

*Michelle’s refusal to give up her self-destructive habits ESTRANGED her brother.*

**eviscerate** (*ee-VIS-uh-rate*). To disembowel; to remove essential components.

*Having EVISCERATED the novel’s key chapter, the censor was content to let the earlier exposition stand.*

**excise** (*ECK-size*). To cut a passage from a text or, in general, to cut something out or off.

*I went to the dermatologist and had that mole EXCISED.*

**expunge** (*eks-PUNJ*). To rid oneself of an annoyance; to cast out; to get rid of; to forcibly eject.

*“There is no man, however wise, who has not at some period of his youth said things, or lived in a way the consciousness of which is so unpleasant to him in later life that he would gladly, if he could, EXPUNGE it from his memory.”*

—Marcel Proust, French novelist, essayist, and critic

**expurgate** (*EKS-per-gate*). To purge sexually inappropriate, objectionable, or otherwise undesirable material prior to presentation.

*For her parents’ benefit, Marina EXPURGATED stories related to the weekend she spent slumming in Greenwich Village.*



**extirpate** (EK-ster-payt). To do away with; remove or destroy completely; exterminate.

*John hoped that his new insecticide would successfully EXTIRPATE the ants in his kitchen.*

**extricate** (EKS-trih-kate). To remove from an entanglement.

*Having gotten us into an impossible dilemma, Warren appeared to have no idea how we should go about EXTRICATING ourselves from it.*

**ostracize** (OS-truh-size). To exclude from society, friendship, community, etc.

*Once we learned that Sasha had been planting stories about us in the society pages, we, of course, had to OSTRACIZE her permanently from our group.*

**redact** (re-DAKT). To remove a comment, thought, or passage from a written document before going public with it.

*“You may want to REDACT your opinion on your opponent’s health care policies,” his campaign manager warned him.*

**rescind** (ree-SINNED). Take away, revoke, cancel, withdraw, remove.

*Richard RESCINDED his order for a yacht, opting instead to purchase a private aircraft.*

**winnow** (WIN-oh). To analyze carefully in order to separate valuable parts from worthless parts.

*I WINNOWNED through the stack of personal papers, looking for the ones I needed to present to the IRS.*

## NOUNS

**catharsis** (*kah-THAR-sis*). The purging of the senses through tragic drama or through music; or, in general, a discharge of negative emotions.

*After losing matches at the club's courts, Puccini's Madama Butterfly always leads Celeste to CATHARSIS.*

## ANTONYMS

**adjoin** (*uh-join*). To be close to or in contact with; to attach or append.

*The architect's plans clearly show a number of secondary buildings ADJOINING the main structure.*

**annex** (*uh-NEKS*). To add on or attach, as a smaller thing to a larger; to add; to incorporate, as a country or territory.

*"Every other sin hath some pleasure ANNEXED to it, or will admit of an excuse: envy alone wants both."*

—Robert Burton, English writer and clergyman

See also: Alone, Isolated, Reject

## 68. Embarrassment

(*em-BAR-uhs-muhnt*), noun

The state of being ill at ease and losing composure; self-consciousness; confusion; disconcertment.

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## VERBS

**discomfit** (*diss-KUM-fit*). To embarrass someone to the point where they become uncomfortable.

*Maggie's public mispronunciation of the organizer's name at the charity benefit DISCOMFITED her mother.*

**mortify** (*MAWR-tuh-fye*). To shame or humiliate; to injure someone's pride or dignity.

*Oscar had no shame, and when discovered in compromising situations that would MORTIFY anyone else, he was unrepentant.*

## NOUNS

**effrontery** (eh-FRON-ter-ee). Offensive and aggressive behavior; audacity.

*After doing a terrible job on the project, he had the EFFRONTERY to ask me, "Can I do extra credit?"*

**humiliation** (hyoo-mil-ee-EY-shun). The state in which one's pride or dignity is reduced or feelings hurt.

*When she was discovered with her arms around Harry, Janet's HUMILIATION was so profound that she could never again look him in the eye.*

**ignominy** (ig-NOM-uh-knee). Personal shame and disgrace.

*After he accidentally burned down the writer's home, Wally's IGNOMINY was such that he was forced to move out of town.*

**opprobrium** (uh-PRO-bree-uhm). Disgrace incurred by outrageously shameful conduct.

*Natasha incurred OPPROBRIUM when, in a fit of anger, she deliberately smashed her Waterford crystal wine glass at the Smythingtons' annual Thanksgiving gala.*

## ADJECTIVES

**invidious** (*in-VID-ee-us*). Designed to give offense or to create ill will.

*“In the name of all lechers and boozers I most solemnly protest against the INVIDIOUS distinction made to our prejudice.”*

—Aldous Huxley, British author and humanist

## ANTONYMS

**amenity** (*uh-MEN-ih-tee*). Any feature that provides comfort or convenience; a courteous act; civility.

*Edith, unsure of herself and terribly shy, was buoyed by her mentor's AMENITY.*

**reassure** (*ree-uh-SHOOR*). To restore to confidence.

*"It is far better to grasp the Universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and REASSURING."*

—Carl Sagan, American astronomer and writer



## 69. Empty

(*EMP-tee*), adjective, verb

Containing or having nothing; vacant; unoccupied; to discharge.

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## ADJECTIVES

**arid** (AR-id). Unproductive due to lack of rain; unfertile; barren; sterile.

*The instructor's presentation, rote and ARID, put the entire class to sleep.*

**bereft** (Beh-REFT). Lacking a certain characteristic, possession, or trait.

*"A woman moved is like a fountain troubled. / Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, BEREFT of beauty, / And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty / Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it."*

—William Shakespeare

**desolate** (DES-uh-let). Lacking signs of life; barren; deserted.

*We drove over a hill and suddenly the landscape was as DESOLATE as if we had landed on the moon.*

**devoid** (dih-VOID). Lacking utterly; without.

*"No matter how skilled a surgeon you become," Dr. Smith told the intern, "you'll fail as a doctor if you continue to be DEVOID of compassion and sympathy for patients."*

**vacuous** (VAK-yoo-uss). Lacking content or substance; empty.

*Televised debates are so potentially dangerous that most candidates settle for offering VACUOUS recitations of campaign speeches rather than saying something new and unexpected.*

## VERBS

**deplete** (*dih-PLEET*). To use up completely; to exhaust.

*Once the coal deposits in the valley had been DEPLETED, the town of Harlenville, which had thrived for thirty years, virtually ceased to exist.*

**disembogue** (*dis-em-BOHG*). To empty by discharging; to pour forth.

*Many streams DISEMBOGUE into and create a large river that empties into the ocean.*

**purge** (*PURJ*). To free (someone or something) of all that is perceived as bad; to take steps to cleanse or purify.

*I tried to PURGE my system of the flu virus by drinking endless glasses of fruit juice, but I still ended up missing a week of work.*

## ANTONYMS

**permeated** (*PUR-mee-ayt-ed*). Diffused through; saturated; pervaded.

*As the concert started, a feeling of goodwill and brotherhood PERMEATED the crowd.*

**turgescient** (*tur-JESS-ent*). Becoming or appearing swollen or distended.

*The rains overnight were so intense that by morning all the region's rivers were TURGESCENT with water.*

See also: Eliminate, Reject

## 70. End

(*END*), verb  
To conclude.

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## VERBS

**abrogate** (AB-ro-gate). To nullify or cancel; to formally and unilaterally conclude an agreement or deed.

*The United States ABROGATED the treaty after evidence appeared suggesting that the other nations had failed to honor the agreement.*

**consummate** (KON-sum-mate). To complete or finalize; to bring to a point of finality or a desired end.

*The real estate agent CONSUMMATING the deal realized a substantial commission.*

**wane** (WAYN). To gradually decrease; to fade away; to become diminished.

*Once she finally received the Cartier watch from her father, Karen's interest in the timepiece quickly WANED.*

# ADJECTIVES

**climactic** (*klee-MAK-tik*). Of or pertaining to a climax; concerning the last point in a series of events.

*The CLIMACTIC moment of the play comes when Hamlet finally kills Claudius.*

**defunct** (*dih-FUNKT*). No longer existing or functioning.

*“Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some DEFUNCT economist.”*

—John Maynard Keynes, British economist.

**moribund** (*MOR-ih-bund*). Lacking vigor; soon to be dead or defunct.

*Ever since its head chef left for the Food Network, that gourmet restaurant has become MORIBUND and is likely to close soon.*

## NOUNS

**cessation** (sess-SAY-shun). The condition of drawing to a close; ceasing or reaching a point of abatement.

*Continued diplomatic effort may well bring about a CESSATION of hostilities.*

**coup de gr ce** (koo-duh-GRAHS). Deathblow; a decisive act or event that brings a situation to a close; the finishing blow.

*The COUP DE GR CE came when Paul threw his bowl of oatmeal at Mona's feet, leading her to reevaluate their relationship.*

**denouement** (day-new-MAH). The resolution of any complex series of events, especially in a drama or novel.

*I was disappointed with the play because I felt its DENOUEMENT left too many loose ends.*

**desuetude** (DEHZ-wih-tyood). Disuse; discontinuance.

*Telephones plugged into walls are one of many once-ubiquitous items that have fallen into DESUETUDE.*

**dissolution** (diss-so-LOO-shun). The condition of dissolving into fragments or parts; disintegration.

*The union's DISSOLUTION seemed imminent, but a change of leadership forestalled that crisis.*

**perdition** (per-DISH-in). Complete and irreversible loss; the condition of final spiritual ruin.

*Her mother's confiscation of Laura's phone and iPod cast her into teenaged PERDITION.*

**quietus** (kwy-EET-uhs). Something that ends or settles a situation.

*"For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, / Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, / The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay, / The insolence of office, and the spurns / That patient merit of th'unworthy takes, / When he himself might his QUIETUS make / With a bare bodkin?"*

—William Shakespeare



## ANTONYMS

**ad infinitum** (*ad in-fi-NEYE-tum*). Without end or limit.

*Wilbur remarked wryly that he could probably discuss the treatment facility's weaknesses AD INFINITUM.*

**interminably** (*in-TUR-min-uh-blee*). Seemingly without end or going on for an indeterminate period of time.

*"The body dies; the body's beauty lives. / So evenings die, in their green going, / A wave, INTERMINABLY flowing."*

—Wallace Stevens, American Modernist poet

**perpetuity** (*pur-pi-TOO-ih-tee*). The state or quality of being perpetual; of indefinite duration; endless.

*In his will, Horace bequeathed his home and property to the town in PERPETUITY.*

**Sisyphean** (*sis-uh-FEE-uhn*). Unavailing and endless, as a task.

*Some days, keeping paperwork under control seems a SISYPHEAN task.*

## 71. Enthusiasm

(*en-THOO-zee-az-im*), noun

Intense or eager interest; zeal; fervor.

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## NOUNS

**aficionado** (*uh-fish-ee-uh-NAH-doe*). A devotee; someone who is enthralled with and supports a particular activity; enthusiast.

*My dad can't get enough of it, but I've never really been a baseball AFICIONADO.*

**alacrity** (*ah-LAK-rih-tee*). Cheerful cooperation rendered with enthusiasm, promptness, and politeness.

*The ALACRITY with which Steve responded to Helen's invitation is nothing short of astonishing.*

**élan** (*ey-LAN*). Enthusiasm, energy, flair, zest.

*Bryanna reacted with ÉLAN when she was tapped to be part of a feature for Elite Travel magazine.*

**monomania** (*mon-uh-MAY-nee-uh*). An excessive or obsessive interest in a single thing; a psychosis characterized by focus on a single subject.

*Bird watching has become a MONOMANIA for my parents, but it's harmless and appears to make them happy.*

**verve** (*vurv*). A spirited and enthusiastic manner, particularly when embodied in an artistic performance; an air of vitality.

*The critics were unanimous in their opinion that, although the plot of the play was implausible and its production values poor, the actress playing the librarian brought a unique VERVE to the role.*

## ADJECTIVES

**ardent** (AR-dent). Intense, passionate, devoted; characterized by high emotion.

*Barbara, an ARDENT stamp collector, has the most impressive collection of French stamps in the school.*

**fervent** (FUR-vuhnt). Showing great enthusiasm and intensity of spirit.

*Packing up the family's castoffs for myriad charities each December places Contessa in a FERVENT state.*

**perfervid** (per-FUR-vid). Overly intense and passionate; overblown and dramatic.

*We laughed at the distastefully PERFERVID love letters that Roland sent to Germaine.*

**rambunctious** (ram-BUHNGK-shuhss). Difficult to handle; wild and boisterous.

*"The golden age, when RAMBUNCTIOUS spirits were regarded as the source of evil."*

—Friedrich Nietzsche, nineteenth-century German philosopher

**unbridled** (un-BRY-duld). Without limitations or boundaries; uncontrolled and unrestrained.

*The customer's UNBRIDLED fury at being denied a refund was a sight to behold.*

## ANTONYMS

**tepid** (*TEHP-id*). Characterized by a lack of enthusiasm.

*We greeted the new opera, with its mawkish plot and poor acting, with TEPID applause.*

## 72. Equipment

(ih-KWIP-muhnt), noun

Articles or materials kept or furnished for a specific purpose; furnishings.

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## NOUNS

**accoutrement** (uh-KOO-truh-mint). An accessory item of clothing or equipment.

*Five televisions per household is just one of the ACCOUTREMENTS of American life.*

**appurtenances** (uh-PUR-tin-uhns-iz). Accessory objects.

*When Roger bought a car, he equipped it with just about all of the available APPURTENANCES.*

**contrivance** (kuhn-TRIV-uhns). A clever object or piece of equipment.

*Many companies are created and fortunes made because of the public's demand for new and fancier CONTRIVANCES.*

**habiliment** (huh-BIL-eh-ment). A piece of clothing; a garment.

*Much to the puzzlement of his staid colleagues, Professor Herriot looked upon the hippies of the 1960s, with their unorthodox choices in lifestyle and HABILIMENT, as welcome additions to a stagnant social order.*

**materiel** (muh-teer-ee-EL). Military equipment and weapons.

*We have solid evidence that enemy MATERIEL has been making it past the embargo, Mr. President.*

**paraphernalia** (pare-uh-fur-NALE-ee-uh). Possessions; accessory items relating to a particular profession, hobby, or activity.

*The abundance of drug PARAPHERNALIA found in his hotel room did not do much to support the rock star's claim that he abstained from all intoxicating substances on religious grounds.*

**raiment** (RAY-munt). Clothing or apparel, often of the best quality.

*Clyde stood uncomfortably at the party in his stiff RAIMENT.*

# ANTONYMS

**dispossess** (*dis-puh-ZES*). To deprive of the possession of something, as property or equipment.

*“Why does my blood thus muster to my heart, / Making both it unable for itself, / And DISPOSSESSING all my other parts / Of necessary fitness?”*

—William Shakespeare

**divest** (*dih-VEST*). To strip of clothing, arms, etc.; to deprive or dispossess of something.

*“It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were DIVESTED of their clothes.”*

—Henry David Thoreau, American essayist, poet, and philosopher



## 73. Essence

(*ESS-uhns*), noun

Something that exists; the intrinsic, fundamental nature and features of something.

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## ADJECTIVES

**basal** (*BAY-suhl*). Fundamental and basic.

*“The BASAL issue here,” Donny said, “is what is right versus what is wrong!”*

**fundamental** (*fuhn-duh-MEN-til*). Of or forming a foundation or basis; basic; underlying; essential.

*The discussion was wide ranging, but Roger insisted on bringing the focus back to the FUNDAMENTAL issues facing the company.*

**intrinsic** (*in-TRIN-zik*). In the essential nature of a thing.

*The INTRINSIC value of gold was one of the few common economic factors the nations could take advantage of.*

# NOUNS

**milieu** (mill-YOU). Cultural, social, and physical surroundings; environment.

*When I walked into the skateboard store, I knew immediately that I was out of my MILIEU.*

**ontology** (on-TALL-uh-gee). A branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature of being and existence.

*For several minutes, we had a lively conversation about the ONTOLOGY of human perceptions.*

**quintessence** (kwin-TESS-uhns). The pure, concentrated embodiment of something.

*“The earth is the very QUINTESSENCE of the human condition.”*

—Hannah Arendt, German-American political theorist

**status quo** (STA-tus KWO). The existing state of affairs or condition.

*Although Bill desperately wanted to get married, Melanie was more interested in preserving the STATUS QUO.*

## ANTONYMS

**nihilism** (*nahy-NIL-ih-tee*). The condition of nothingness.

*Benjamin wondered if anything existed after this life or if death brought about NIHILISM.*

**nonexistence** (*non-ig-ZIS-tuhns*). The condition of not existing; something that does not exist.

*“Excepting for knowledge nothing has any meaning, and to have no meaning is to be NONEXISTENCE.”*

—Richard Burdon Haldane, British politician and philosopher

## 74. Evil

(*EE-vuhl*), adjective

Wrong or bad morally; wicked.

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# ADJECTIVES

**abhorrent** (ab-HOR-ent). Loathsome or contemptible; reprehensible; repulsive; repugnant; detestable.

*Julie found the book's recounting of the details of serial murders particularly ABHORRENT.*

**barbarous** (BAR-ber-us). Uncivilized or primitive; characterized by brutality or savagery; uncivilized; cruel and brutal.

*Their captivity was marked by BARBAROUS living conditions, psychological abuse, and little or no news of outside events.*

**diabolical** (die-uh-BOL-ih-kul). Devilish, evil; wicked or cruel.

*The terrorists, the papers claimed, had a DIABOLICAL agenda.*

**draconian** (drah-KONE-ee-an). Strict; mean-spirited; excessively harsh; cruel, as punishment or restriction.

*Ophelia was distraught over the DRACONIAN way that her father forced her to stay with her chaperone throughout their vacation on the Greek Isles.*

**execrable** (EG-zek-ruh-bul). Disgusting; detestable; vulgar.

*Collectors of unauthorized Beatles records must be prepared to pay high prices for the illegal discs, which often feature tracks of EXECRABLE recording quality.*

**Faustian** (FOW-stee-in). Relating to actions taken for selfish present gain without care for future consequences, as in a pact with the Devil.

*The candidate made a FAUSTIAN bargain and aligned himself with a popular rabble rouser.*

**flagitious** (fluh-JISH-uss). Shamefully wicked or particularly heinous.

*Now that the paparazzi hangs on her every move, Natasha goes out of her way to engage in FLAGITIOUS behavior.*

**heinous** (HAY-nuss). Evil; reprehensible; exceeding the bounds of morality.

*Because of the HEINOUS nature of this crime, I am forced to pass a stern sentence.*

**infernal** (in-FER-nul). Fiendish; devilish; of or pertaining to hell.

*This INFERNAL copier keeps breaking down!*

**malicious** (muh-LISH-uss). Spitefully mean; evil; bad in intent.

*Fred said his comments were all intended as constructive criticism, but I detected a MALICIOUS note in some of his suggestions.*

**miscreant** (MISS-kree-unt). Villainous; depraved; vicious.

*Examples of Arthur's MISCREANT behavior filled police files in three cities.*

**nefarious** (nih-FARE-ee-us). Inherently evil, malicious, and unjust.

*"You were preceded by your NEFARIOUS reputation," the sheriff said to the gunslinger who had just sidled up to the bar.*

**reprehensible** (rep-ri-HEN-sih-bull). Abhorrent; morally inexcusable.

*I agree that the crimes were REPREHENSIBLE; they were not, however, committed by my client.*

**sadistic** (suh-DISS-tick). Marked by delight in being cruel to others.

*Only a SADISTIC creep would give out as much homework as Mr. Thomas.*

**sinister** (SIN-uh-ster). Unfavorable and potentially harmful or dangerous; having an evil appearance.

*The SINISTER music gave me gooseflesh.*

**venal** (VEE-null). Refers to people who can be bought, bribed, or otherwise persuaded to deviate from their beliefs and purpose; mercenary; corrupt.

*"Give me but the liberty of the press, and I will give to the minister a VENAL House of Commons."*

—Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Irish playwright and statesman

## NOUNS

**anathema** (uh-NATH-eh-muh). A person or thing regarded as wrong in the highest degree; a loathsome, detestable entity.

*The ambassador warned us ahead of time not to attempt to discuss the issue of dropping sanctions against the dictator; that subject is ANATHEMA to his government.*

**iniquity** (ih-NIK-wih-tee). Injustice or immoral action.

*The many INIQUITIES suffered by American Indians at the hands of government authorities is only now being widely acknowledged.*

**maleficence** (muh-LEF-ih-sence). The undertaking of evil or harmful acts.

*The long-ignored MALEFICENCE of the county's corrupt prison system was finally exposed by a rookie Globe reporter.*

**reprobate** (REH-pro-bait). A person who routinely commits illegal, immoral, or unethical acts without hesitation or remorse.

*One reason that Anthony continues to be a REPROBATE is because his father, as well as his social contacts, keep bailing him out of jail.*

**turpitude** (TUR-pi-tood). Vileness; baseness; depravity.

*It's astonishing how many untalented musicians have turned a case of TURPITUDE into a successful career.*



## ANTONYMS

**benign** (*Beh-NINE*). Kindly, gentle, generous of spirit, not harmful.

*“The universe seems neither BENIGN nor hostile, merely indifferent.”*

—Carl Sagan, American astronomer and writer

**clement** (*KLEM-uhnt*). Forbearing; lenient; merciful in disposition or character.

*The defendant was fortunate that his trial was held before a CLEMENT judge.*

## 75. Exaggerate

*(ig-ZAJ-uh-reyt)*, verb

To think, write, or speak of something as greater than it is; magnify beyond the truth; overstate.

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## VERBS

**aggrandize** (*ah-GRAND-ize*). To exaggerate, put on a false front, and make something look greater and grander than it really is.

*Phil tries to AGGRANDIZE his reputation by stating that he belongs to the yacht club, but everybody just thinks this elaboration makes him pathetic.*

**apotheosize** (*uh-POTH-ee-uh-siyz*). To make into a god; deify; glorify.

*Mark APOTHEOSIZED his new girlfriend for the rest of the evening.*

**embellish** (*em-BELL-ish*). To ornament and beautify; to improve in appearance by adornment; a convenient exaggeration of the facts.

*Marie's gown was EMBELLISHED with tiny pearls.*

**embroider** (*em-BROY-dur*). To add fanciful details to; embellish.

*Matt has been known to EMBROIDER the history of his love life.*

## NOUNS

**hyperbole** (*hie-PUR-buh-lee*). Extravagant overstatement.

*I think you can safely regard his promise to eat his hat if proven wrong as a HYPERBOLE.*

**jactitation** (*jak-ti-TAY-shun*). A false boast, especially one that is harmful to others.

*Beatrice tried to impress her classmates by telling them her last name was Kennedy. However, her JACTITATION was discovered and her peers returned to ignoring her.*

## ADJECTIVES

**magniloquent** (*mag-NILL-uh-kwuhnt*). Pompous, bombastic, and boastful.

*The nouveau riche try to atone for their lack of polish with MAGNILOQUENT speech, but the result is ludicrous.*

# ANTONYMS

**deemphasize** (*dee-EM-fuh-sahyz*). To reduce in importance; place lower emphasis upon.

*After sideswiping a telephone pole with my father's car on the way home from a date, I did my best to DEEMPHASIZE the damage.*

**understate** (*uhn-der-STEYT*). To make a weaker statement than is warranted by truth, accuracy, or importance; to state something weakly.

*UNDERSTATEMENT can be seen as a virtue in the friend or acquaintance, but when companies UNDERSTATE their debt and misrepresent themselves to investors and the public, the quality is distinctly malicious.*

## 76. Excess

(*ek-SESS*), noun

Going beyond what is needed, required, or considered customary; superabundance; extreme.

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## NOUNS

**encomium** (en-KO-me-um). Effusive praise given in a public forum.

*Harvey was completely unprepared for the ENCOMIUMS the critics bestowed on his new play.*

**nimiety** (ni-MAHY-ih-tee). Overabundance; excess.

*The NIMIETY of his favors made Bertha question Bart's sanity.*

**plethora** (PLETH-uh-ruh). An excessive amount of something.

*Agnes tried a PLETHORA of wines before she finally decided on her favorite vintage.*

**saturnalia** (sat-uhr-NAIL-yuh). Unrestrained merrymaking; excess; extravagance.

*Anyone looking at the party's aftermath the next day would have thought it was a SATURNALIA, not a fairly quiet reunion of five old friends.*

**surfeit** (SUR-fit). Having too much of a good thing, especially generous servings of food and drink.

*"A SURFEIT of the sweetest things / The deepest loathing to the stomach brings."*

—William Shakespeare



## ADJECTIVES

**arrant** (*AIR-ant*). Thorough; complete; through-and-through; without qualification; unmitigated.

*Mindy considers Jack an ARRANT fool because he refuses to respond to her advances.*

**exorbitant** (*egg-ZORE-bih-tunt*). Beyond what is reasonable; extreme or excessive.

*Christopher had thought he needed a laptop computer to make his business trips easier, but after seeing the EXORBITANT prices, he decided he could go without for another year.*

**florid** (*FLOOR-id*). Excessively ornate and showy, as prose.

*“All men are really most attracted by the beauty of plain speech, and they even write in a FLORID style in imitation of this.”*

—Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist

**fulsome** (*FULL-sum*). Describes words or actions that praise or flatter someone to an excessive degree.

*Katie’s FULSOME introduction prompted the keynote speaker to open his speech with a few self-effacing remarks.*

**inordinate** (*in-OR-den-it*). Excessive; beyond reasonable limits; immoderate.

*An INORDINATE number of students failed the last test, leading Professor Harris to believe he’d made it too difficult.*

**ostentatious** (*ah-sten-TAY-shus*). Pretentious; presented in a showy manner so as to impress others; visibly flaunting one’s wealth or success.

*“The man who is OSTENTATIOUS of his modesty is twin to the statue that wears a fig-leaf.”*

—Mark Twain

**redundant** (*rih-DUN-dunt*). Unnecessarily repetitious.

*By the end of the lecture, Professor Smith’s points began to seem a little REDUNDANT, and I gave up taking notes when she said for the third time, “And as I stated earlier . . . .”*

## VERBS

**satiate** (SAY-shee-ate). Satisfy beyond reasonable expectation; to consume to excess.

*If this Thanksgiving dinner doesn't SATIATE your appetite, nothing will.*

## ANTONYMS

**deficit** (*DEF-uh-sit*). A lack or shortage; deficiency.

*“I am not worried about the DEFICIT. It is big enough to take care of itself.”*

—Ronald Reagan, American president

**insufficiency** (*in-suh-FISH-uhn-see*). A deficiency; inadequacy.

*“My feeling is religious insofar as I am imbued with the consciousness of the INSUFFICIENCY of the human mind to understand more deeply the harmony of the Universe which we try to formulate as ‘laws of nature.’”*

—Albert Einstein, German-American physicist

## 77. Excite

(*ek-SIGHT*), verb

To arouse or provoke sensations, feelings, or emotions; to awaken; to stir to action.

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# NOUNS

**brouhaha** (BROO-ha-ha). An event that involves or invokes excitement, turmoil, or conflict.

*The BROUHAHA in the hotel lobby was the result of a rock star making his way from his limousine to the elevator.*

**fillip** (FILL-uhp). Something that revives or arouses excitement.

*“Faithful horoscope-watching, practiced daily, provides just the sort of small, but warm and infinitely reassuring FILLIP that gets matters off to a spirited start.”*

—Shana Alexander, American author

**frenzy** (FREN-zee). A state of wild excitement; extreme emotional or mental agitation.

*What with studying for the bar exam and planning her wedding, Sara had been in an almost constant FRENZY for nearly two months.*

**frisson** (FREE-son). A sudden strong feeling of excitement, conflict, or danger.

*“Pregnant women! They had that weird FRISSON, an aura of magic that combined awkwardly with an earthy sense of duty.”*

—Ruth Morgan, American novelist

**furor** (FYOOR-ur). Widespread excitement or anger; fury or uproar among persons or institutions.

*Governor White’s indictment for embezzlement caused a FUROR in the state.*

## VERBS

**exhilarate** (ig-ZILL-uh-rate). To make lively; to excite or energize.

*Those evening runs in the cool air of the spring always EXHILARATED Tom, especially after a day spent cooped up in a stuffy office.*

**ferment** (furr-MENT). To cause agitation or excitement, typically in order to incite drastic change.

*High oil prices began to FERMENT efforts to find alternative fuel sources.*

**foment** (foe-MENT). To rouse or incite.

*“If perticuliar care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to FOMENT a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.”*

—Abigail Adams, second First Lady of the United States

**titillate** (TIT-l-ate). To excite in an agreeable way.

*With its stirring performance of Beethoven’s Eroica Symphony, the full orchestra TITILLATED us at the Van Gelders’ gala.*

# ADJECTIVES

**incendiary** (*in-SEN-dee-air-ee*). Inflammatory or exciting; deliberately provocative.

*Adam's INCENDIARY remarks about my mother's parentage resulted in a bloody nose for him and a night in jail for me.*

**lascivious** (*luh-SIV-ee-us*). Arousing sexual desire.

*Grandmother Jones, upon being informed that the dancers at the club had done a can-can for us, denounced such LASCIVIOUS goings on.*

## ANTONYMS

**blasé** (*blah-ZAY*). Unimpressed; bored; apathetic to pleasure because of excessive indulgence.

*I told Jim that he stood a very good chance of being fired this week, but to tell you the truth he seemed rather BLASÉ about the whole thing.*

**imperturbable** (*im-per-TUHR-buh-bull*). Describes someone or something incapable of being agitated or disturbed.

*During the air turbulence, I felt calmer due to my father's IMPERTURBABLE demeanor.*

**phlegmatic** (*fleg-MAT-ic*). Having a calm, unexcitable temperament.

*Allan's PHLEGMATIC personality was certainly helpful during the deadline crunch in keeping us all from panicking.*



# F

## 78. Fail

(*FEYL*), verb

To be lacking or deficient; to fall short of a goal or be unsuccessful.

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## VERBS

**founder** (*FOUN-der*). To fail utterly or to become a complete wreck.

*“Who would not rather FOUNDER in the fight / Than not have known the glory of the fray?”*

—Richard Hovey, American poet

# ADJECTIVES

**abortive** (*uh-BOR-tive*). Unsuccessful or fruitless; not coming to fruition.

*Although it was the astronauts' failure to dock at the station that drew media attention, the ABORTIVE mission had many potentially more serious problems as well.*

**fallible** (*FAL-ih-bull*). Capable of screwing up, making errors, or being wrong.

*At a fairly young age children realize their parents are eminently FALLIBLE.*

**ignominious** (*ig-no-MIN-ee-us*). Marked by failure or humiliation in public.

*After his IGNOMINIOUS defeat in the election, Frank never ran for Congress again.*

## NOUNS

**debacle** (*dih-BA-kull*). Utter collapse or rout; a complete (often ludicrous) failure.

*The initiative seemed promising enough, but turned out to be another of George's DEBACLES.*

**dereliction** (*dare-uh-LIK-shun*). Willful neglect; shirking of responsibility; the knowing failure to perform one's duty.

*The sergeant's inaction that night led to troubling accusations of DERELICTION of duty.*

**fiasco** (*fee-ASS-koe*). An utter and pathetic failure.

*The failure of the administration to get the housing bill through Congress is only the latest in a series of legislative FIASCOS.*

**nonfeasance** (*non-FEEZ-unce*). Failure to perform (a given duty).

*The failure of the passersby to aid the injured woman was a heart rending example of urban apathy and NONFEASANCE.*

**underdog** (*UN-dur-dog*). A person or entity expected to fail or to fare poorly.

*San Diego, a decided UNDERDOG, somehow managed to pull out a win against the division-leading Miami team.*

## ANTONYMS

**consummation** (*kon-suh-MEY-shun*). The state of being consummated; fulfillment; perfection.

*“The American Revolution was a beginning, not a CONSUMMATION.”*

—Woodrow Wilson, American president

**triumphant** (*trahy-UHM-fuhnt*). Successful; victorious.

*“I know nothing grander, better exercise, better digestion, more positive proof of the past, the triumphant result of faith in human kind, than a well-contested American national election.”*

—Walt Whitman, American poet

## 79.Fair

(*FAIR*), adjective

Treating all sides alike, free from influence by outside or internal interests; unbiased.

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## ADJECTIVES

**disinterested** (*dis-IN-tuh-res-tid*). Not influenced by personal motives or selfish interest; unbiased; impartial.

*Kurt went out of his way to reinforce the reasons for his DISINTERESTED involvement in the project, but his ardor made us suspect that he stood to benefit from its outcome.*

**dispassionate** (*dis-PASH-uh-nit*). Not affected or influenced by emotions; not influenced by personal involvement.

*A referee must be DISPASSIONATE in order to officiate effectively.*

**egalitarian** (*ih-gal-uh-TARE-ee-uhn*). To be fair and balanced in the extreme; to act in the belief that all men are created equal and should be treated so.

*“Chinks in America’s EGALITARIAN armor are not hard to find. Democracy is the fig leaf of elitism.”*

—Florence King, American author

**equitable** (*EK-wih-tuh-bull*). Free from bias; just to all involved.

*The parties have reached what both sides believe to be an EQUITABLE settlement.*

**impartial** (*im-PAHR-shul*). Not partial or biased; considering all equally; without favoritism.

*The defendants were fortunate to have an IMPARTIAL judge presiding at their trial because they looked quite guilty.*

**nonpartisan** (*non-PAR-tih-zun*). Not a member of a party (political group) or association; unbiased.

*Although the commission was supposed to be NONPARTISAN, Martin knew for a fact that three of the members were dyed-in-the-wool Democrats who would never vote against the interests of their party.*

**objective** (*uhb-JEK-tiv*). Unaffected by personal feelings or external influences; based on facts; unbiased.

*Even though many of his minions did their best to sway the outcome, we could count on the general to issue completely OBJECTIVE directives.*

## ANTONYMS

**biased** (BYE-ussed). Predisposed to a particular view or direction; prejudiced.

*“Of all the causes which conspire to blind Man’s erring judgment, and misguide the mind; What the weak head with strongest bias rules,—Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.”*

—Alexander Pope, English poet

**iniquity** (ih-NIK-wih-tee). Injustice or immoral action.

*The many INIQUITIES suffered by American Indians at the hands of government authorities are only now being widely acknowledged.*

See also: Independence



## 80.False

(*FAWLS*), adjective

Not correct or true; fake; deceptive; not genuine; erroneous.

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# ADJECTIVES

**ersatz** (Er-ZATS). A phony, a fake, a counterfeit, an inferior copy, a pale imitation of an original.

*Before his sentencing and jail term, the artist made an impressive living selling ERSATZ Rembrandt paintings.*

**factitious** (fack-TISH-uss). Contrived; fabricated.

*At first, we thought the rumor FACTITIOUS, but then we learned that couture-producer Hermes does, in fact, plan to design and market a helicopter.*

**fallacious** (fuh-LAY-shus). An idea or conclusion based on one or more false assumptions.

*Since my online subscriber list is double opt-in, accusing me of being a spammer is a wholly FALLACIOUS assumption.*

**faux** (FOH). Fake; phony; artificial.

*She wore a cheap second-hand dress and a FAUX pearl necklace made out of white beads.*

**sophistic** (sahf-IS-tik). Sounding reasonable, yet patently false.

*One can argue that what is learned in law school is largely the skill of making SOPHISTIC arguments that a jury can believe.*

**specious** (SPEE-shus). Something that appears correct on the surface but is in fact wrong.

*The judge summarily rejected the SPECIOUS arguments put forth by the defendant, which seemed to have no evidence to back them up.*

**spurious** (SPYOOR-ee-us). False; inauthentic; not well thought out.

*Every week I get SPURIOUS accusations of being a spammer even though my list is entirely double opt-in.*

**supposititious** (suh-poz-ih-TISH-us). Substituted with the intent of deceiving or defrauding; counterfeit.

*The SUPPOSITITIOUS documents looked genuine, even bearing the secret markings designed to prevent deception.*

## NOUNS

**canard** (*kuh-NARD*). A fabrication or unfounded story.

*The claim that the president of the company is likely to resign soon has been thoroughly discredited, but you will still hear some members of the opposition spreading the CANARD.*

**fallacy** (*FAL-uh-see*). A misconception; an erroneous perception; a deceit.

*For some, childhood is a time of innocence; but it's a FALLACY to say it is like this for all children.*

**feint** (*FAINT*). A false advance or attack intended to catch an opponent off guard.

*Jim made a FEINT with his left before decking his opponent with a fierce right cross.*

**subreption** (*sub-REP-shun*). The dishonest misrepresentation or concealment of facts.

*The board's report was replete with statistics but as a summary of the situation was a complete SUBREPTION.*

## VERBS

**gainsay** (*GANE-say*). To declare false; to oppose or contradict.

*The principles of the Bill of Rights, Mr. Secretary, will admit no GAINSAYING.*

**misconstrue** (*miss-kuhn-STROO*). To misinterpret or to take in a wrong sense.

*The disagreement over the price of the yacht was due merely to the fact that David MISCONSTRUED the terms of the offer.*

## ANTONYMS

**unerring** (*uhn-UR-ing*). Consistently accurate; invariably precise or correct.

*“The British public has always had an UNERRING taste for ungifted amateurs.”*

—John Osborne, British playwright

**veracious** (*vuh-RAY-shuss*). Honest; truthful.

*Many readers of a novel will feel cheated and complain if it fails to provide a VERACIOUS account of fictional circumstances.*

See also: Mistake

# 81.Fight

(FYTE), verb

To be involved in a physical struggle or battle; to try to overcome someone or something; contend.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bellicose** (BELL-ih-kose). Belligerent, surly, ready to argue or fight at the slightest provocation.

*Doug is so touchy about his new Jaguar that he'll instantly turn BELLICOSE if you so much as brush against it.*

**belligerent** (buh-LIJ-er-ent). Aggressive or pugnacious; eager to instigate a fight.

*Don became overbearing and BELLIGERENT with his employees after his divorce, causing many of them to resign.*

**internecine** (in-ter-NEH-seen). Involving or relating to conflict within a group.

*The INTERNECINE conflict became so intense that it prevented the board from functioning.*

**pugnacious** (pug-NAY-shus). Inclined to fight or quarrel; belligerent; quarrelsome.

*Teenagers are PUGNACIOUS by nature: If I say "no," he invariably asks "why?"*

**truculent** (TRUK-you-lent). Belligerent; argumentative; always ready for a fight.

*Short-tempered and TRUCULENT, Lucy could be set off by the slightest incident or comment.*

## NOUNS

**donnybrook** (DAH-ee-brook). A free-for-all, knock-down, drag-out fight.

*Police expected a DONNYBROOK at the protest march, but both those for and those against the issue were peaceful and courteous.*

**guerrilla** (guh-RILL-uh). A member of an informal group of fighters that attacks enemies with surprise raids, sabotage, booby traps, etc.

*The nation's army could not defeat the GUERRILLAS, who seemed to swoop down invisibly from the mountains, wreak havoc, then disappear.*

**pugilist** (PYOO-juh-list). A person who fistfights; a boxer.

*Finally, the two PUGILISTS stepped into the ring; the match was about to begin.*

**sciamachy** (sahy-AM-uh-kee). Fighting with imaginary enemies; a sham fight.

*Arthur refused to believe that we supported him; believing the worst, he engaged in a SCIAMACHY of his own making.*



# ANTONYMS

**conciliatory** (*kon-SILL-ee-ah-tore-ee*). Actions or words meant to settle a dispute or resolve a conflict in a manner that leaves no hard feelings on either side.

*“If you are not very clever, you should be CONCILIATORY.”*

—Benjamin Disraeli, British statesmen and literary figure

**harmony** (*HAHR-muh-nee*). Agreement in feeling, action, ideas, interests, etc.; peaceable or friendly relations.

*“With an eye made quiet by the power of HARMONY, and the deep power of joy, we see into the life of things.”*

—William Wordsworth, English poet

## 82. Flaws

(*FLAWS*), noun

An imperfection or defect that impairs the quality of and detracts from one's character.

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## NOUNS

**Achilles' heel** (*uh-KILL-eez HEEL*). A vulnerable point.

*Bob was a hard worker, but he often lost jobs because of his ACHILLES' HEEL, his temper.*

**bibliomania** (*bib-lee-oh-MAY-nee-uh*). A preoccupation with the acquisition and ownership of books.

*Lauren's BIBLIOMANIA extends only to her stockpile of catalogs for exclusive shops.*

**foible** (*FOY-bull*). A small flaw, weakness, or defect.

*For all his flaws and FOIBLES, Richard Nixon was perhaps the most effective President on foreign policy in the twentieth century.*

**histrionics** (*hiss-tree-AHN-iks*). Over-the-top, unnecessarily dramatic behavior.

*"Enough with the HISTRIONICS!" his mother scolded, immediately shutting off the flow of tears and silencing his bawling.*

**hypocrisy** (*hi-POK-ruh-see*). Pretending to be something one is not, or pretending, for the sake of appearance, to have high moral beliefs; pretense.

*In Marilyn's view, a marriage counselor who advises others to live up to the ideal of fidelity but who cheats on his own wife exemplifies the worst kind of HYPOCRISY.*

**schadenfreude** (*SHAH-dun-froy-duh*). Satisfaction or pleasure felt at the misfortune of another.

*Wilson's conviction on perjury charges set off a festival of SCHADENFREUDE among his many conservative detractors.*

## ADJECTIVES

**bibulous** (BIB-yuh-luss). Related to drinking or to drunkenness.

*Arthur thinks he's "fine," but his BIBULOUS activities are causing the club to consider permanent expulsion.*

**bilious** (BILL-yuss). Having a nasty temperament or disagreeable disposition; to be "full of bile" and hatred.

*The polo team's BILIOUS captain made his team miserable as he proceeded to criticize their every move.*

**bumptious** (BUMP-shuss). Overbearing or crudely assertive; overly pushy or impertinent.

*We had difficulty crossing the border because Nan got into a squabble with a BUMPTIOUS border guard.*

**capricious** (Kah-PREE-shus). Prone to quickly change one's mind, decision, or course of action at the drop of a hat or on impulse.

*"I do not understand the CAPRICIOUS lewdness of the sleeping mind."*

—John Cheever, American novelist

**captious** (KAP-shus). Fond of finding faults in others; ill-natured and overly critical; carping.

*Ed's CAPTIOUS remarks were entirely inappropriate and showed his lack of self-esteem.*

**churlish** (CHUR-lish). Surly; mean; boorish; rude; characterized by a lack of civility or graciousness.

*We found it almost impossible to believe that Diane's new boyfriend was more CHURLISH than his predecessor.*

**déclassé** (day-klass-AY). Of a fallen social position or inferior status.

*Jean thought her imitation designer bag looked exactly like the real thing, but the other girls in her exclusive private school quickly ridiculed Jean—and her bag—for being DÉCLASSÉ.*

**desultory** (DEH-sul-tor-ee). Lacking guidance or progressing randomly; aimless; fitful.

*Unable to believe it was his last day on the job, Bill's DESULTORY thoughts wandered through his mind.*

**effete** (eh-FEET). Decadent and lacking in vigor due to decadence or self-indulgence.

*The Eddingtons donated one of their serving sets to charity, so only the truly EFFETE would deign to label the family as snobs.*

**farouche** (fuh-ROOSH). Unsociable; cranky; withdrawn; fierce.

*Your FAROUCHE behavior will not win you any friends. In fact, it will simply alienate you from everyone.*

**gauche** (GOHSH). Sorely lacking in the social graces and good manners; crude behavior.

*Rhett was under the impression that one needed only money to join the country club. However, his GAUCHE demeanor caused him to be denied membership.*

**hapless** (HAP-liss). Luckless; unfortunate.

*Oliver presented a rather HAPLESS figure during his first few days on the job, but he soon mastered his new responsibilities.*

**hidebound** (HIDE-bound). Inflexible and holding narrow opinions.

*Arthur can be rather HIDEBOUND when pontificating on the virtues of the classic era versus the condition of the automobile industry at present.*

**jaundiced** (JAWN-dist). Demonstrating prejudice, due to envy or resentment.

*The Blythingtons' JAUNDICED view of our dinner parties is due to their financial inability to entertain so lavishly.*

**maladroit** (mal-uh-DROIT). Lacking adroitness; inept; awkward.

*Ernie came in for a lot of teasing for his MALADROIT negotiations with the used car dealer.*

**parasitic** (pair-uh-SIT-ick). Describes something or—more often—someone who acts like a parasite and lives off of another while doing little if anything useful.

*My PARASITIC brother-in-law said he was just going to stay with us until he got back on his feet, but he's been sitting around on our couch for nearly a month now!*

**pedantic** (puh-DAN-tik). Intellectually showy or overblown; making a great display of knowledge; overly concerned with formal rules.

*I found James's PEDANTIC manner quite condescending.*

**ungainly** (un-GANE-lee). Graceless.

*Wilma, who had always thought of herself as UNGAINLY, was surprised at the ease with which she and Clive moved across the dance floor.*

# ANTONYMS

**impeccable** (im-PEK-uh-buhl). Without defect or error; faultless; flawless.

*“No office anywhere on earth is so puritanical, IMPECCABLE, elegant, sterile or incorruptible as not to contain the yeast for at least one affair, probably more.”*

—Helen Gurley Brown, American editor

**paragon** (PARE-uh-gone). A peerless model or pattern of perfection.

*“What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god—the beauty of the world, the PARAGON of animals!”*

—William Shakespeare

## 83. Foods

(*FOODS*), noun

Substances consumed by eating or drinking for nourishment, to provide energy, to sustain life, or promote growth.

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## NOUNS

**aperitif** (uh-pair-uh-TEEF). An alcoholic beverage consumed before a meal.

*The clock struck six o'clock and the guests at the dinner party were served APERITIFS.*

**bisque** (BISK). A thick and creamy soup made with meat, fish, or shellfish.

*Mom didn't care what else was on the menu, as long as the restaurant offered lobster BISQUE.*

**bouillabaisse** (BOO-yuh-base). A stew made from various kinds of fish, usually shellfish.

*After Uncle Charlie helped us clean the fish and clams we'd caught, Aunt Pattie showed us how to make her famous BOUILLABAISSE.*

**compote** (KOM-poat). A stewed fruit and sugar dessert.

*In addition to an unidentifiable brownish meat in a dark, concealing sauce, many of the TV dinners I ate as a child included a rather leaden strawberry COMPOTE.*

**grenadine** (GREN-uh-deen). A pomegranate-flavored syrup used in preparing mixed drinks.

*Ted had planned to make tequila sunrises for the party, but as he had no GRENADINE to add a hint of red, he called the drinks "tequila sunbursts."*

**gruel** (GROOL). A thin, soup-like dish made from cooked cereal or grain.

*In one of the most memorable scenes Dickens ever wrote, young Oliver Twist loses a lottery among the workhouse boys and must ask for an unprecedented second helping of GRUEL.*

**haggis** (HAG-iss). A dish originating in Scotland made by combing the diced heart, liver, and lungs of a sheep or cow with onions, suet, oatmeal, and seasonings, and placing the mixture into the animal's stomach, and boiling it.

*Ivan had been enjoying the HAGGIS Mrs. MacIntyre had prepared for him until he asked her how it was made.*

**hardtack** (HARD-tak). A hard biscuit once common in the rations of sailors and soldiers. *Hardtack* did not spoil—a major logistical benefit.



*By the end of the war, the Union soldiers were thoroughly sick of the HARDTACK and vegetable soup that had been the mainstay of their diet.*

**jambalaya** (jam-buh-LIE-uh). A spicy Cajun dish featuring rice cooked with ham, sausage, chicken, shrimp, or oysters, and seasoned with herbs.

*Anna had so much ham left over from Easter dinner that she decided to try to whip up a JAMBALAYA.*

**marzipan** (MAR-zuh-pan). A popular candy made from almonds, egg whites, and sugar, often molded into the shapes of animals.

*In Europe it is quite common to decorate a Christmas tree with edible decorations, including gingerbread men, MARZIPAN animals, and miniature fruitcakes.*

**petit four** (PET-ee FORE). A small decorated cake. Plural: *petits fours*.

*Aunt Marcia always served tea and PETITS FOURS at three o'clock.*

**quahog** (KO-hog). An edible clam found off of the Atlantic coastline of North America.

*Every summer Grandpa would take us to his beach house in Maine, where we'd fish and dig for QUAHOGS in the quiet hours before dawn.*

**sake** (SAH-kee). A wine-like Japanese beverage made with fermented rice.

*When he returned from California, my father and I dined on sushi and drank warm SAKE at his favorite Japanese restaurant.*

**tangelo** (TAN-juh-lo). A kind of citrus fruit; hybrid of a tangerine and a grapefruit.

*The corner fruit market specialized in stocking the more exotic fruits and vegetables, and for most of the year was the only place in town where one could regularly purchase TANGELOS.*

## VERBS

**flambé** (*flom-BAY*). To serve in flaming liquor (usually brandy).

*Although the dinner was only so-so, the raspberry custard that the waiter FLAMBÉD at our table was both dramatic and delicious.*

# ADJECTIVE

**culinary** (KYOO-lih-nar-ee). Relating to cooking or the preparation of food.

*My CULINARY efforts these days are much humbler than my library of cookbooks would lead you to believe.*

**julienne** (joo-lee-EN). In thin strips (of vegetables); the soup containing such vegetables.

*Lisa knew JULIENNE vegetables would look more elegant on the plates of her dinner guests than those cut in the normal way, but she wasn't up for the hours of preparation it would take to slice up carrots and celery for a party of twenty.*

## ANTONYMS

**abstain** (*ub-STANE*). To refrain from; to refuse to partake in; to go without voluntarily.

*Maria, who had ABSTAINED from eating meat while in high school, was persuaded to try a cheeseburger on her graduation night.*

See also: Eating

## 84. Fool

(*FOOL*), verb

To trick; deceive; dupe.

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## NOUNS

**artifice** (*ARE-ti-fis*). The use of clever strategies and cunning methods to fool or best others and tip an outcome in your favor.

*“Every art and ARTIFICE has been practiced and perpetrated to destroy the rights of man.”*

—Robert Ingersoll, American orator

**gambit** (*GAM-bit*). A remark used to redirect a conversation; or, a maneuver used to seek advantage.

*“The catchphrase positively rejoices in being a formula, an accepted GAMBIT, a ready-made reaction.”*

—John Gross, British literary critic

**guile** (*GUY-ul*). The act of being deliberately deceitful and treacherous, so as to gain advantage at someone else’s expense.

*I was amazed at the GUILE Richard displayed in going after my biggest account.*

**legerdemain** (*le-juhr-duh-MAYN*). Magic tricks; or, generally speaking, trickery and deception.

*The Wilkinsons are one of the few of our families whose initial wealth did not come as a result of financial LEGERDEMAIN.*

## VERBS

**equivocate** (ee-KWIV-uh-kate). To deceive through the use of ambiguous language.

*The candidate seemed to EQUIVOCATE on the energy crisis with each speech he made.*

**palter** (PAWL-ter). To talk or act insincerely; deal crookedly.

*It seemed that in every conversation I had with her, Janice would PALTER and I would pretend to believe it.*

**prevaricate** (pri-VARE-uh-kate). To avoid revealing the true nature of one's position, actions, feelings, etcetera; to be untruthful.

*My opponent has chosen to PREVARICATE rather than address his role in the scandal.*

**temporize** (TEM-puh-rize). To gain time by being evasive or indecisive.

*I unleashed a longwinded backstory in an effort to TEMPORIZE and come up with a logical explanation for my earlier behavior.*

## ADJECTIVES

**oblique** (*oh-BLEAK*). Indirectly or deviously achieved; evasive; underhanded.

*If direct appeals do not work, Amanda is always quick to use OBLIQUE methods in order to get her father to buy her whatever luxury item she wants.*



## ANTONYMS

**ingenuous** (*in-JEN-yoo-us*). Candid; frank; open; sincere; free from reserve or restraint.

*Dorothy's INGENUOUS remarks revealed the depth of her friendship toward the deceased.*

**naïveté** (*nah-eev-TAY*). The state of being naïve; simplicity; artlessness.

*Mother's NAIÏVETÉ was no act; she could not deceive and firmly believed everyone else was just as honest.*

## 85. Forgive

*(fer-GIV)*, verb

To give up the desire to punish or resentment against; to stop being angry with; grant remission of an offense; pardon.

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## VERBS

**absolve** (*ab-ZOLV*). To formally pronounce guiltless or blameless; to relieve of any responsibility for an actual or alleged misdeed.

*The judge ABSOLVED the accused of any wrongdoing.*

**acquit** (*uh-KWIT*). To release from a duty or obligation; to declare not guilty (of something); exonerate.

*With little evidence of guilt, the jury had to ACQUIT the defendant.*

**exonerate** (*ig-ZON-uh-rate*). To clear or free from blame or guilt; to restore (one's reputation).

*After the charges were thrown out and Brian was completely EXONERATED, he was free to continue his work in the securities industry.*

**exculpate** (*EKS-kull-payte*). To free someone from an obligation or burden, or prove the innocence of someone suspected of being guilty.

*Gerald Ford's pardon EXCULPATED Richard Nixon legally, but history consigned him to the role of a disgraced president forever.*

## NOUNS

**amnesty** (*AM-nuh-stee*). Freedom from imprisonment for large numbers of people, initiated by a government.

*The prisoners of war waited years for AMNESTY.*

**clemency** (*KLEM-uhn-see*). Forbearance or mercy toward a wrongdoer or opponent; lenience in cases where circumstances warrant.

*The governor's show of CLEMENCY for Callahan may come back to haunt him at election time.*

## ADJECTIVES

**venial** (VEE-nee-uhl). Forgivable; not serious; excusable.

*Stealing a kiss may be a VENIAL offense depending on the circumstances.*

## ANTONYMS

**chastise** (*chas-TAHYZ*). To punish in order to correct; to criticize severely.

*The boarding school lived up to its reputation as a severe environment where a boy would be CHASTISED for every infraction no matter how small.*

**oppressed** (*uh-PREST*). Kept down by the unjust or cruel use of authority or power; burdened with harsh, rigorous impositions.

*“Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the OPPRESSED.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr., American minister and civil-rights leader

## 86. Full

(*FUHL*), adjective

Containing all that is possible, all there is space for; filled; crowded.

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## ADJECTIVES

**effusive** (eh-FEW-siv). Profuse and overflowing, without reservation.

*In an effort to butter up the senator, the lobbyist was transparently EFFUSIVE in his praise of the new bill.*

**replete** (rih-PLEET). Abundantly provided; complete.

*“The highway is REplete with culinary land mines disguised as quaint local restaurants that carry such reassuring names as Millie’s, Pop’s and Capt’n Dick’s.”*

—Bryan Miller, American food critic

**rife** (RIFE). Prevalent, abundant, abounding.

*The hotel was RIFE with tourists, so we quickly went upstairs to the penthouse.*

**tumescant** (too-MESS-ent). Becoming or already engorged, full, swollen, or rigid.

*After the hurricane, our Florida compound was flooded by the TUMESCENT intra-coastal waterway.*

**voluminous** (vuh-LOO-mih-nuss). Possessing great volume or fullness.

*Michelle’s wedding dress was so VOLUMINOUS that there was barely room for Jon to stand next to her at the altar.*



## NOUNS

**gamut** (GAM-utt). The full spectrum of possibilities or choices.

*The choice of places to eat near the mall ran the GAMUT from chain restaurants to five-star dining.*

**satiety** (suh-TIE-ih-tee). The sensation or feeling of being full or having eaten too much.

*Although we knew we would be struck by SATIETY, we could not resist the gustatory delights offered at the Whittingtons' New Year's gala.*

## ANTONYMS

**devoid** (*dih-VOID*). Lacking utterly; without.

*“He who is DEVOID of the power to forgive, is devoid of the power to love.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr., American minister and civil-rights leader

**vacuous** (*VAK-yoo-uss*). Lacking content or substance; empty.

*The critics were consistent in their dismissal of the new television series as VACUOUS, pointless, and amateurish.*

## 87. Fun

(*FUHN*), noun

A source or cause of amusement or merriment; enjoyment.

---

## VERBS

**carouse** (*kuh-ROWZ*). To engage in boisterous social activity.

*We CAROUSED until dawn at the New Year's Eve party that the Weathertons hold every year.*

**disport** (*dih-SPOHRT*). To amuse oneself.

*Felicia loved to disport with the proprietors of her favorite boutiques by arguing over price.*

**gambol** (*GAM-bowl*). To run, skip, or jump about in a playful or joyous fashion.

*"We all have these places where shy humiliations GAMBOL on sunny afternoons."*

—W. H. Auden, Anglo-American poet

## NOUNS

**revelry** (*REV-uhl-ree*). Boisterous festivity and merrymaking.

*“Midnight shout and REVELRY, / Topsy dance and jollity.”*

—John Milton, English poet

## ADJECTIVES

**facetious** (*fuh-SEE-shus*). Meant to get a laugh rather than to be taken seriously; sarcastic.

*“Boarding school manners and attitudes—stoic denial, FACETIOUS irony—are still deeply entrenched in the character of the country.”*

—Jonathan Raban, British travel writer and novelist

**gamesome** (*GAYM-suhm*). Playful and frolicsome.

*“[Nature] is GAMESOME and good, / But of mutable mood,— / No dreary repeater now and again, / She will be all things to all men.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**risible** (*RIZZ-uh-bull*). Capable of causing laughter due to its ludicrous nature.

*Janine’s decision to summer in the Hamptons instead of on the French Riviera was deemed RISIBLE by the rest of us.*

**waggish** (*WAG-ish*). Joking, witty, and mischievous; occasionally, dog-like.

*“This species of ‘fame’ a WAGGISH acquaintance says can be manufactured to order, and sometimes is so manufactured.”*

—Herman Melville, American author

## ANTONYMS

**dishearten** (*dis-HAHR-tin*). To deprive of enthusiasm; to depress the spirits or courage of; discourage.

*“A cynic can chill and DISHEARTEN with a single word.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**somber** (*SOM-ber*). Depressed or depressing; gloomy; dismal, melancholy; sad.

*Due to the seriousness of the situation, the television announcer spoke in SOMBER tones.*

# G

## 88. Geography

(jee-OG-ruh-fee), noun

Pertaining to the earth's surface and features, topography, climate, and vegetation.

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## NOUNS

**enclave** (ON-klayv). A small territory surrounded by a larger (and usually foreign) one; also, any secluded area.

*The garden, filled with fragrant flowers and a small, babbling fountain, was an ENCLAVE of serenity in the midst of the busy city.*

**hinterlands** (HIN-tur-lands). An area far away from the coastline; also, an area far removed from a city.

*The blizzard dumped nearly three feet of snow on my relatives in the HINTERLANDS, while those of us in town had to deal with icy rain and flooding.*

**hyperborean** (high-per-BORE-ee-an). A person or animal living at or near the North Pole.

*The polar bear, one of the great HYPERBOREANS, is in danger of extinction as the melting of the polar cap makes the ice floes on which they live disappear.*

**levant** (leh-VANT). The countries on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

*Ties between Western Europe and the LEVANT were first established during the Crusades.*

**meridian** (mer-ID-ee-en). Any line that runs from north to south on a map or globe.

*He sailed his yacht straight along a MERIDIAN to the Arctic Circle.*

**Pangaea** (pan-GEE-uh). The name for the hypothetical single continent that comprised all the land on the Earth before the crust shifted and divided the land mass into many smaller continents.

*PANGAEA existed until Mesozoic times, when it divided into two separate continents.*

**purlieu** (PUR-loo). An adjacent area or region.

*We often visited the city's PURLIEU to walk its trails.*

**topography** (tuh-POG-ruh-fee). The arrangement of the physical features of a place, area, or physical object; the "lay of the land."

*After her return from Europe, Lauren spent most of her time talking about the dazzling alpine TOPOGRAPHY of Switzerland.*

**urbanization** (*ur-ban-ih-ZAY-shun*). The growth of cities brought about by a population shift from rural areas and small communities to larger ones.

*URBANIZATION, which began in the United States in the late 1800s, was in part triggered by the shift from an agricultural economy to an industrial one.*

# ADJECTIVES

**Holarctic** (*hole-ARK-tik*). Relating to the habitats and life-forms of the Arctic region.

*Our so-called Arctic safari was a bust. No one told us that, due to HOLARCTIC conditions, we would find no polar bears near our encampment.*

**indigenous** (*in-DIJ-uh-nuhs*). Born, growing, originating, or produced in a particular region or country; native; innate.

*The grocery store stocks many fruits and vegetables INDIGENOUS to countries of Central and South America.*

**limicolous** (*lahy-MIK-uh-luhs*). Living in mud or muddy regions.

*As its name implies, the mudskipper is an amphibious fish that has adopted a LIMICOLOUS lifestyle.*

**nival** (*NAHY-vuhl*). Of or growing under snow.

*NIVAL flora tends to be hardy and is not found in many ornamental gardens.*

**occidental** (*ok-si-DEN-til*). Of or pertaining to the Occident, the countries of Europe and America.

*In today's world economy, OCCIDENTAL and Oriental interests have merged.*

**pandemic** (*pan-DEM-ik*). Widespread; general, common, or all-encompassing.

*We must begin to appeal not to universal fears, but to PANDEMIC human values.*

**pelagic** (*puh-LAJ-ik*). Of or pertaining to the open seas or oceans.

*The largest sea mammals are found in the PELAGIC zone, away from coastal areas.*

**sylvan** (*SIL-vuhn*). Of, about, or characteristic of the woods.

*The bed and breakfast deep in the forest was a SYLVAN paradise.*

**terrestrial** (*tuh-RESS-tree-ul*). Of or pertaining to the earth, or to life on earth.

*Although life on a space station is interesting to read about, I still believe I'd be most comfortable in a TERRESTRIAL setting.*

## VERBS

**rusticate** (*RUSS-ti-kate*). To move (a person) to the country; to accustom to country living.

*I am afraid you will be unable to RUSTICATE Ken; he is a city boy through and through.*

## ANTONYMS

**cosmic** (KOZ-mik). Relating to the universe as a whole; of the universe, exclusive of the Earth.

*“The surface of the Earth is the shore of the COSMIC ocean. From it we have learned most of what we know. Recently, we have waded a little out to sea, enough to dampen our toes or, at most, wet our ankles.”*

—Carl Sagan, American astronomer and writer

See also: Topography

## 89. Gift

(*GIFT*), noun

Something given or bestowed; a present.

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## NOUNS

**bequest** (bih-KWEST). Something (property, etc.) given to another in a will; a legacy.

*My uncle's BEQUEST was the stuff of fantasy: a house in the south of France.*

**douceur** (doo-SIR). A bribe or a conciliatory gift.

*After Francine's father refused to buy her another polo pony, he offered her the DOUCEUR of a weekend at an exclusive spa.*

**endowment** (en-DOW-munt). Income derived from donations; a grant.

*The research project did not need to campaign for money, as its expenses were funded by an ENDOWMENT.*

**lagniappe** (lan-YAP). An unexpected bonus gift or extra benefit; the icing on the cake.

*Frederick would have bought the expensive car, even without the LAGNIAPPE of a voice-activated navigation system.*

**largesse** (lar-JESS). The generous bestowal of gifts; or, generosity in general.

*"A LARGESS universal, like the sun, / His liberal eye doth give to everyone, / Thawing cold fear."*

—William Shakespeare

**oblation** (ob-LAY-shun). A religious offering; a holy gift typically offered at an altar or shrine.

*Sophia could be counted on to say a prayer and offer an OBLATION every day she was healthy enough to walk to church.*

**offertory** (AW-fer-tawr-ee). Elements used during a Christian communion service.

*The OFFERTORY is preceded and followed by a prayer.*

**recompense** (REE-kum-pense). Something of value given to make up for injury or inconvenience suffered at your hands, either accidentally or deliberately.

*"To be remembered after we are dead, is but poor RECOMPENSE for being treated with contempt while we are living."*

—William Hazlitt, English literary critic and philosopher

**subvention** (*sub-VEN-shun*). Money granted, usually from a government or other authority, to be used in the support of an institution, study, or program; subsidy; grant.

*Many nonprofit art and humanitarian organizations owe their existence to government's SUBVENTION.*



## ADJECTIVES

**eleemosynary** (*eh-lee-MAHSS-uh-nair-ee*). Having to do with charity or charitable activity.

*Our boss is always reminding us that we're a for-profit business, not an ELEEMOSYNARY organization.*

## ANTONYMS

**forfeit** (FAWR-fit). Something a person loses or has to give up; a fine; penalty.

*“If once you FORFEIT the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem.”*

—Abraham Lincoln, American president

**relinquish** (ri-LING-kwish). To give up; to surrender or forswear something.

*“Time does not RELIQUISH its rights, either over human beings or over mountains.”*

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German playwright and novelist

## 90. Government

(*GUHV-ern-muhnt*), noun

The exercise and practice of authority over a state, organization, or institution; the power, right, and function of governing.

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## NOUNS

**despotism** (DESS-po-tiz-um). Authoritarian rule; a system of government in which one dominant figure exercises complete power.

*It was not until some years after the revolution began that the general's DESPOTISM passed into history.*

**fascism** (FASH-iz-um). A governmental system that elevates the nation and often race over the individual, is run with an iron grip by a dictator, and severely regiments society and the economy.

*FASCISM arose in both Germany and Italy, precipitating World War II.*

**gerontocracy** (jare-un-TOCK-ruh-see). A group in which the order and rule is kept by a group of elders; government by the older members of a society.

*One of the potential drawbacks of a GERONTOCRACY, of course, is that people entrusted with great political power may well become mentally infirm.*

**meritocracy** (mer-ih-TOK-ruh-see). Government or leadership by talented people chosen on the basis of their achievement, rather than by people with great wealth.

*Corporate leadership in a family-owned business is determined by nepotism, not MERITOCRACY.*

**ochlocracy** (ok-LOK-ruh-see). Government by the mob; mob rule.

*Democracy may have its problems, but it's light years ahead of OCHLOCRACY.*

**oligarchy** (OH-lih-gar-kee). A nation, state, or other place where the population is governed by a relatively small group of people, especially when all are members of the same family.

*Most family owned businesses are OLIGARCHIES, not democracies.*

**plutocracy** (ploo-TOK-ruh-see). Rule by the rich; the overall influence of the wealthy in social affairs.

*"If PLUTOCRACY were likely to improve the nation's standard of living," Gerald said haughtily, "then I would be a PLUTOCRAT."*

**regime** (ruh-ZHEEM). A government or ruling system in power; a period of rule.

*The fascist REGIME was toppled by freedom fighters.*

**stratocracy** (struh-TOK-ruh-see). Government by the military.

*A third-world country may evolve into a STRATOCRACY if it does not have democratic processes in place.*

**technocracy** (tek-NOK-ruh-see). Government by engineers, technicians, or other highly skilled members of society.

*The claim that I would institute some sort of TECHNOCRACY simply because I am a skilled manager ignores my years of service as a district attorney.*

**theocracy** (thee-AH-krah-see). A system of government in which priests claim to rule with divine authority.

*The Vatican is the ultimate THEOCRACY.*

**totalitarianism** (toe-tahl-ih-TARE-ee-un-iz-um). A system of government in which political power is highly centralized and in which authorities tolerate no dissent, punishing efforts at pluralistic discourse; a governmental system that controls or dictates many aspects of life.

*Although the worldwide fall of Communism has been widely discussed, several examples of TOTALITARIANISM—notably those of China and North Korea—are still alive and kicking.*

**tyranny** (TEER-uh-nee). The abusive and unrestrained exercise of power.

*Paine's bold arguments against the TYRANNY of George III made Common Sense powerful reading.*

# ANTONYMS

**anarchy** (*AN-ar-key*). The absence of government; a disordered and uncontrolled situation; a temporarily chaotic social situation in which no central authority exists.

*After the death of the Queen, many in the council feared a return to the ANARCHY of a decade earlier.*

**nihilism** (*NIE-uh-liz-im*). The belief that all social, political, and economic institutions must be completely destroyed in order to make way for new institutions; any violent revolutionary movement involving some use of terrorism.

*The terrorist's NIHILISM gave him a cause and a motive for his acts of violence.*

See also: Politics

## 91. Grand

(*GRAND*), adjective

Imposing due to size, beauty, or extent; magnificent; splendid; majestic.

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## ADJECTIVES

**august** (aw-GUHST). Inspiring awe, reverence, or admiration; imposing; eminent.

*After waiting for hours, we were finally escorted to the dean's office and found ourselves in his AUGUST presence.*

**epic** (EP-ik). Of major proportions; extraordinary.

*Rosa Park's refusal to sit at the back of the bus would take on legendary status in the EPIC struggle for civil rights.*

**regal** (REE-gull). Fit for or characteristic of a king; royal.

*The king exercised his REGAL powers for the benefit of his subjects and kingdom.*

**reginal** (ri-JAHY-nul). Like or characteristic of a queen; queenly; royal.

*In the event she rise to the throne, the princess was given instruction and training in REGINAL duties and conduct.*

**resplendent** (reh-SPLEN-dent). Full of splendor; shining brightly; dazzling.

*The bride was RESPLENDENT in a beaded silk gown.*

**sublime** (suh-BLYME). Reaching new levels of quality and perfection unduplicated elsewhere; of such immense beauty that the viewer's breath is taken away, metaphorically speaking.

*"The SUBLIME and the ridiculous are often so nearly related, that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the SUBLIME makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the SUBLIME again."*

—Thomas Paine, English revolutionary and intellectual

**sui generis** (SOO-ahy JEN-er-is). Of its own kind; individual; unique.

*The royal wedding was a SUI GENERIS event.*

**sumptuous** (SUMP-choo-us). Extravagant; lavish.

*A SUMPTUOUS feast awaited the couple at the hotel.*

**transcendent** (tran-SEN-dent). Going beyond normal everyday experience; existing beyond the known physical universe and its limitations.

*"Genius . . . means the TRANSCENDENT capacity of taking trouble."*

—Thomas Carlyle, Scottish satirist and historian



## ANTONYMS

**menial** (*MEE-nee-uhl*). Of or fit for servants; low; mean.

*“Such MENIAL duties; but her way / Of looking at them lent a grace / To things the world deemed commonplace.”*

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox, American poet and writer

**unassuming** (*uhn-uh-SOOM-ing*). Modest and unpretentious.

*The Binghamtons just bought a lovely, UNASSUMING starter home in the town where their families live.*

## 92. Greed

(*GREED*), noun

Excessive desire to acquire possessions, wealth, etc.; craving more than is necessary or appropriate.

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## NOUNS

**avarice** (AV-er-iss). The insatiable desire to have a lot of money, greed.

*“What you call AVARICE,” Mary said, “I just call getting my share.”*

**cupidity** (kyoo-PID-ih-tee). Greed; extreme desire for wealth.

*Paul’s CUPIDITY led to much unhappiness and sorrow in later life, though his wealth was not to be denied.*

**harpy** (HAR-pee). A greedy and predatory person; or, a scolding and shrewish woman.

*“That HARPY Charlotte can’t wait to get her claws into Bruce,” Nancy observed.*

## ADJECTIVES

**edacious** (ih-DAY-shuss). Greedy, eager, and consumed with consumption.

*It's not fair to label Rosella EDACIOUS because she only wants the same luxury items the rest of us desire.*

**rapacious** (ruh-PAY-shus). Taking by force; plundering; predatory.

*It appeared that Jon set out to prove that power corrupts with his RAPACIOUS habits.*

**voracious** (vo-RAY-shuss). Possessing a huge and insatiable appetite, whether for food, knowledge, amusement, or something else.

*Her son always had a VORACIOUS desire for knowledge. He read anything he could get his hands on and was always willing to experience something new.*

## ANTONYMS

**munificent** (*myoo-NIFF-uh-suhnt*). Characterized by great generosity.

*The Pattersons are so MUNIFICENT that they give to charity year-round rather than merely at times when giving offers tax benefits.*

**noblesse oblige** (*no-BLESS-oh-BLEEZH*). An act of generosity, charity, or kindness performed by a rich person for the benefit of someone less fortunate than himself, viewed by the giver as paying the universe back for his good fortune.

*Donald gave the young man a job not out of a sense of pity or guilt, but out of a sense of NOBLESSE OBLIGE.*

**philanthropist** (*fill-ANN-throw-pist*). A person who generously gives of his or her time, energy, and money to charity.

*Bill Gates is the most proactive PHILANTHROPIST out of all the billionaires who care to invest their time in contributing to charitable causes.*

## 93. Group

(*GROOP*), noun

A collection or assembly of persons or things; a meeting.

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## NOUNS

**cabal** (*kah-BAHL*). An underground society, secret religious sect, or other private group assembled for purposes hidden from those around them.

*I was shocked when our neighbors asked us to join a CABAL of devil worshippers; after all, he is a deacon at the local church!*

**cadre** (*KAH-dray*). A group of trained personnel capable of forming and training a larger organization, typically a government or military agency.

*Even after the war ended, a number of officers were left to form a CADRE in order to quell future unrest in the region.*

**cartel** (*kar-TELL*). A group assembled with the objective of establishing mutual control over prices, production, and marketing of goods by the members; a coalition of political figures united for a particular cause.

*The oil CARTEL had succeeded in driving world energy prices up significantly.*

**confraternity** (*kahn-fruh-TURN-ih-tee*). An association of people united for a common cause.

*Eager to improve the condition of our neighborhood playgrounds, Carol and I joined a town CONFRATERNITY that had formed for that purpose.*

**consortium** (*kon-SOR-tee-um*). A union, partnership, or alliance, especially one among financial or business entities.

*Mr. Sparks represented a CONSORTIUM of firms.*

**convocation** (*kon-vo-KAY-shun*). An assembly of people gathered in response to a summons.

*The address Mr. Freling gave at the CONVOCATION challenged all graduates to excel.*

**coterie** (*KOH-tuh-ree*). An exclusive group of people, often meeting with a specific goal in mind.

*Those in favor of the proposal formed a COTERIE that quickly became a very vocal minority.*

**faction** (*FAK-shin*). A small dissenting group within a larger one.

*"I will keep where there is wit stirring, and leave the FACTION of fools."*

—William Shakespeare

**guild** (*GILD*). A group of people dedicated to common interests or goals; an association of like-minded individuals.

*Although she knew it was only a first step, Andrea couldn't help feeling that joining the Screen Actors GUILD meant she was on her way to becoming a star.*

**kaffeeklatsch** (*CAW-fee-klatch*). An informal social gathering, typically including coffee and gossip.

*Jeanette is not welcome at our KAFFEEKLATSCH because she refuses to gossip about her social contacts.*

**phalanx** (*FAY-lanks*). A group of closely assembled people or animals, usually working together for a specific purpose, such as launching an attack.

*The geek tried not to show his fear in the hallway, as the PHALANX of jocks walked in his direction.*

**retinue** (*RET-n-oo*). A group of companions or followers (of a person of great importance); an entourage.

*The president and his RETINUE are expected here just before noon.*



## ADJECTIVES

**sectarian** (*sek-TAYR-ee-in*). Relating to the practices, nature, or activities of a sect.

*“In the early 1990s, as the insurgency took on a more unambiguously religious and SECTARIAN flavor, several Pandits were killed, and most of the rest fled for their lives.”*

—William Dalrymple, Scottish historian and author

## ANTONYMS

**anchorite** (ANG-kuh-rahyt). A person who lives alone and apart from society for religious meditation; recluse; hermit.

*“And even in the most refined circles and with the best surroundings and circumstances, one must keep something of the original character of an ANCHORITE, for otherwise one has no root in oneself.”*

—Vincent van Gogh, Dutch painter

**hermite** (ER-uh-mahyt). A hermit; religious recluse.

*John chose the life of an EREMITE as the way to spiritual salvation and moral redemption.*

**ochlophobia** (ok-luh-FO-be-uh). An illogical fear or dread of crowds.

*Betty never realized she suffered from OCHLOPHOBIA until she moved to the city, where she had great difficulty walking to and from work during rush hour.*

See also: Meet

## 94. Grow

(*GROH*), verb

To develop naturally, as any living organism; increase in size or amount.

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## VERBS

**burgeon** (BURR-jin). To sprout, to grow; to blossom and flourish.

*Natalia does her part for the BURGEONING “green” movement by having her gardener turn manure from her stables into fertilizer.*

**coalesce** (ko-uh-LESS). To unite or grow into a single whole.

*No amount of pleading from Jones could convince the two unions to COALESCE.*

**dilate** (DIE-late). To expand.

*The rock star’s pupils had DILATED, leading some to believe that he had been experimenting again with narcotics, and quite recently.*

**mature** (MATCH-uh-reyt). To mature; ripen; develop.

*The pediatrician told Alice that her son would one day MATURATE, but his teen years have come and gone and she is still waiting for the evidence.*

**propagate** (PRAH-pah-gayt). To grow, breed, or cause to multiply and flourish.

*“The fiction of happiness is PROPAGATED by every tongue.”*

—Samuel Johnson, British moralist and poet

**ripen** (RAHY-puhn). To become ripe; to reach maturity or a state of full physical and/or emotional development.

*Arthur was pleased to watch his granddaughter grow and RIPEN intellectually.*

## ANTONYMS

**subside** (*suhb-SAHYD*). To become less active; to become quiet; abate.

*“Friendship may, and often does, grow into love, but love never SUBSIDES into friendship.”*

—Lord Byron, English poet

**wither** (*WITH-er*). To dry up; shrivel; to lose vigor or freshness; become wasted or decayed.

*“The person who tries to live alone will not succeed as a human being. His heart WITHERS if it does not answer another heart. His mind shrinks away if he hears only the echoes of his own thoughts and finds no other inspiration.”*

—Pearl Buck, American author

# H

## 95. Happy

(*HAP-ee*), adjective

Having, showing, or causing a feeling of great pleasure, contentment, or joy; lucky.

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## ADJECTIVES

**convivial** (kuhn-VIV-ee-ull). Fond of feasting, drinking, and companionship.

*“One does not leave a CONVIVIAL party before closing time.”*

—Winston Churchill, British statesman and orator

**ebullient** (eh-BOOL-yint). Feeling joy and positive emotions at an extreme level; the state of being wildly enthusiastic about something.

*Lorne was EBULLIENT when he found that his mother had given the college enough money to overturn his rejection.*

**effervescent** (ef-ur-VES-ent). Bubbly; upbeat; cheerful; possessing a positive attitude and joyful personality.

*After getting the acceptance letter from Cornell, Sabrina was positively EFFERVESCENT and celebrated with a trip to Neiman Marcus.*

**gregarious** (greh-GARE-ee-us). An extrovert; an outgoing person; one who is friendly and cheerful in nature.

*“We are easy to manage, a GREGARIOUS people, / Full of sentiment, clever at mechanics, and we love our luxuries.”*

—Robinson Jeffers, American poet

**halcyon** (HAL-see-on). Calm, peaceful, carefree, prosperous.

*“It was the most HALCYON summer I ever spent.”*

—Rick Bass, American author and environmental activist

**jocose** (joe-KOSE). Humorous, playful, and characterized by good humor.

*Her son’s JOCOSE nature marked him for a career in sales, rather than administration.*

**jocund** (JOE-kund). Having a lust for life; possessing a positive attitude and desire to enjoy life to the fullest.

*Ron’s JOCUND façade shattered when he found himself the victim of identity theft.*

**orgiastic** (or-jee-AS-tick). Arousing unrestrained emotional release.

*William becomes loathsomely ORGIASTIC when he attends and bids at art auctions.*

**sanguine** (SANG-gwihn). Accepting of circumstances with good cheer and a positive attitude.

*“Many marketers were SANGUINE about the Do Not Call introduction, saying that it helped better focus their telephone communications.”*

—Eleanor Trickett, *DM News* editor



## NOUNS

**beatitude** (*Bee-AT-it-tood*). Being in the highest possible state of happiness, good humor, and contentment.

*“Kindness is a virtue neither modern nor urban. One almost unlearns it in a city. Towns have their own BEATITUDE; they are not unfriendly; they offer a vast and solacing anonymity or an equally vast and solacing gregariousness.”*

—Phyllis McGinley, American author and poet

**bon vivant** (*bon vih-VAHNT*). A person who enjoys living well.

*In Paris with her rich aunt, Janice lived the life of a BON VIVANT, shopping and dining out to her heart’s content.*

**felicity** (*fih-LISS-ih-tee*). A state of blissful happiness.

*“Never lose sight of the fact that all human FELICITY lies in man’s imagination, and that he cannot think to attain it unless he heeds all his caprices.”*

—Marquis de Sade, French aristocrat and revolutionary

**levity** (*LEH-vih-tee*). Lightness; insubstantiality.

*Gentlemen, with all due respect, we face a crisis; this is no time for LEVITY.*

**roisterer** (*ROY-stir-er*). Partyer, celebrator, one who has a good time in a loud and boisterous manner.

*The ROISTERERS’ enjoyment of the party was so infectious, their neighbors joined them instead of complaining about the noise.*

## ANTONYMS

**defeatist** (*dih-FEET-ist*). Accepting defeat as an unavoidable consequence of life; pessimistic.

*Sheldon's DEFEATIST attitude led Monica, his supervisor, to wonder whether he would ever complete the project he was working on.*

**malcontent** (*mal-kuhn-TENT*). Someone unhappy with his or her circumstances or with his or her government, job, lifestyle, etc.; a discontented person.

*Harvey is such a MALCONTENT that he'll argue with you if you tell him it's a nice day!*

**saturnine** (*SAT-ur-neen*). Moody; morose; gloomy; unhappy; having a pessimistic outlook on life.

*Ever since his father told him he could not have another Lotus Esprit, Williams has acted positively SATURNINE.*

## 96. Harass

*(huh-RASS)*, verb

To bother persistently; torment; disturb continually; pester; persecute.

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## VERBS

**badger** (BAJ-er). To torment as if baiting a badger; to pester or urge persistently; nag.

*Martha was convinced that she had to BADGER her daughter to do her homework.*

**beleaguer** (beh-LEE-gir). To persistently surround, harass, or pester until you get what you want.

*To the embarrassment of her friends, Kristen BELEAGUERED the sommelier until he brought her a satisfactory Bordeaux.*

**besiege** (bih-SEEJ). To submit a person or body to insistent demands from all sides; to crowd around; to harass.

*Everywhere he went, the movie idol was BESIEGED by crazed fans looking for autographs and even pieces of his hair or clothing.*

**harry** (HAR-ee). To torment with constant attacks.

*“At middle night great cats with silver claws, / Bodies of shadow and blind eyes like pearls, / Came up out of the hole, and red-eared hounds / With long white bodies came out of the air / Suddenly, and ran at them and HARRIED them.”*

—William Butler Yeats, Irish poet and dramatist

**hector** (HEK-ter). To bully; torment; dominate.

*The coach HECTORED the boys so often that they quit the team in disgust.*

**inculcate** (IN-kul-kate). To impress an idea or belief upon someone by repeating it to that person over and over until the idea is firmly lodged in his brain.

*New cult members are quickly INCULCATED with the cult leader’s beliefs and world view.*

## ANTONYMS

**facilitate** (*fuh-SIL-ih-teyt*). To make easier; to lighten the work of; help; assist.

*“Every human being must find his own way to cope with severe loss, and the only job of a true friend is to FACILITATE whatever method he chooses.”*

—Caleb Carr, American novelist

**respite** (*RESS-pit*). A temporary delay or postponement, especially of something distressing.

*“Sweet Flower of Hope! free Nature’s genial child! / That didst so fair disclose thy early bloom, / Filling the wide air with a rich perfume! / For thee in vain all heavenly aspects smiled; / From the hard world brief RESPITE could they win.”*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, English poet

## 97. Harm

(*HARM*), verb

To hurt, damage, or impair; injure.

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## VERBS

**debilitate** (*dih-BILL-uh-tayt*). To make weak or feeble.

*Several hours on the polo fields are enough to DEBILITATE even the most robust player.*

**decimate** (*DESS-ih-mate*). To reduce something greatly, to the point of wiping it out.

*“Every doctor will allow a colleague to DECIMATE a whole countryside sooner than violate the bond of professional etiquette by giving him away.”*

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright

**deface** (*dih-FACE*). To disfigure or damage.

*It breaks my heart to see the old stone bridge, my one unchanging companion from boyhood, DEFACED with the spray-painted grumblings of drunken teenagers.*

**defile** (*dih-FILE*). To pollute; to corrupt or make unclean.

*The river that only a few years ago ran clean and clear is now DEFILED with a witches’ brew of chemicals, thanks to the new tanning plant.*

**desecrate** (*DESS-ih-krate*). To abuse the sacred character of a thing; to treat disrespectfully or irreverently.

*Such profane language from our organization’s current leader serves only to DESECRATE the memory of the founder.*

**enervate** (*EN-er-vayt*). To rob a person, organization, place, or thing of its energy, strength, and vitality.

*Greenhouse gases ENERVATE the protective ozone layer surrounding the Earth.*

**exacerbate** (*egg-ZASS-err-bayt*). To take action that makes a situation worse or aggravate it further.

*The problem with the mission was further EXACERBATED when the outer tiles ripped away from the space shuttle.*

**raze** (*RAYZ*). To tear down or demolish.

*We had to RAZE our Cape Cod home and rebuild it entirely, due to some structural damage caused by high winds.*

**vitiate** (*VISH-ee-et*). To spoil or impair the quality of; corrupt.

*“A VITIATED state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom.”*

—Patrick Henry, American patriot



## ADJECTIVES

**baleful** (BAIL-ful). Ominous; signaling evil to come.

*It always seemed to me that Mrs. Howard had a BALEFUL gleam in her eye as she passed out her absurdly difficult tests.*

**baneful** (BAYN-full). Venomous; deadly; ruinous.

*Austin relaxed when he learned that the outback did not contain all the BANEFUL plants and animals that he had imagined.*

**deleterious** (dell-ih-TEAR-ee-us). Harmful; damaging.

*Smoking has been proven to have a DELETERIOUS effect on one's health.*

**internecine** (in-ter-NEH-seen). Characterized by slaughter; deadly.

*The INTERNECINE conflict was particularly unfortunate in its thoroughness.*

**noisome** (NOY-suhm). Harmful or injurious to the health; offensive.

*The NOISOME chemicals were placed in a locked room.*

**noxious** (NOCK-shuss). Morally harmful and pernicious.

*Even with his wealth, good looks, and charm, Steven has such a NOXIOUS personality that we always feel awful after spending time with him.*

**pernicious** (Purr-NISH-us). Resulting in damage or harm; having a debilitating effect.

*We believe that, once the producers of luxury items become publicly traded companies, the results will be PERNICIOUS.*

## NOUNS

**juggernaut** (*JUG-er-nawt*). A large, overpowering, destructive force.

*Once he begins arguing about the superiority of Maseratis, Jefferson becomes a JUGGERNAUT, capable of deflating anyone else's arguments.*

**maleficence** (*muh-LEF-ih-sense*). Action that deliberately causes harm; behavior driven by evil intentions.

*Our upstairs maid's various acts of MALEFICENCE finally caused her to be released from our family's employment.*

**scourge** (*SKUHRJ*). A cause of widespread or great affliction.

*Famine is one of humanity's most horrific SCOURGES.*

## ANTONYMS

**innocuous** (*ih-NAHK-yew-us*). Not harmful or offensive; innocent, incidental, and hardly noticeable.

*“I know those little phrases that seem so INNOCUOUS and, once you let them in, pollute the whole of speech.”*

—Samuel Beckett, Irish writer, dramatist, and poet

See also: Abuse

## 98. Hate

(*HAYTE*), verb

To have intense dislike or ill will for; despise; detest; loathe.

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## VERBS

**abhor** (*ab-HOR*). To experience a feeling of great repugnance or disgust.

*It was clear almost as soon as the dinner party had begun that Jennifer ABHORRED her half-sister.*

**execrate** (*EGGS-eh-krayt*). To loathe; to subject to scorn and derision.

*We EXECRATED William for weeks due to his casual rejection of an invitation to join Yale's Skull and Bones.*

## NOUNS

**animadversion** (an-uh-mad-VER-zhun). Very harsh criticism that suggests disapproval of what is being criticized.

*My boss's frequent ANIMADVERSIONS have led to high staff turnover.*

**animus** (AN-uh-muss). Prejudiced ill will.

*Don's ANIMUS toward a former colleague drove him to thoughts of violence until therapy helped him to diminish his hatred.*

**aversion** (uh-VUR-zhun). Extreme dislike; loathing.

*My AVERSION to soap operas leaves me with little to discuss at coffee breaks.*

**enmity** (EN-mih-tee). Mutual dislike, animosity, hatred, antagonism, or disagreement between two groups or parties.

*Was the ENMITY between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier an act, genuine, or a combination of both?*

**misandry** (MIS-an-dree). Hatred of men.

*After twenty years of feeling the effects of the glass ceiling, she was entitled to MISANDRY in all its manifestations.*

**misanthrope** (MISS-en-throwp). A person of antisocial nature who dislikes other people and thinks poorly of them until they give him reason not to.

*Harold has become a veritable MISANTHROPE since Anabelle refused to go on any more dates with him.*

**misogamy** (mih-SOG-uh-mee). Hatred of marriage.

*After his divorce, Brent's mistrust of marriage bordered on MISOGAMY.*

**misogyny** (mih-SAHJ-uh-nee). Hatred of women.

*A lifetime of rejection had filled him with a rabid MISOGYNY.*

**rancor** (RAYN-core). Conflict between individuals or groups, usually resulting from disagreement over an action or issue, and accompanied by ill will, bad feelings, bitterness and an escalation of the dispute over time.

*"They no longer assume responsibility (as beat cops used to do) for averting RANCOR between antagonistic neighbors."*

—Harlan Ellison, American author

**repugnance** (ri-PUG-nunce). To show strong aversion, dislike, or disgust for something.

*We can greet the news of the terrorist bombing only with REPUGNANCE.*

**vitriol** (*vih-tree-AWL*). An attitude of bitterness, hatred, or mean-spiritedness.

*The school board reprimanded the coach with VITRIOL.*

## ADJECTIVES

**contemptuous** (*kun-TEMP-choo-us*). Feeling or expressing disdain, disapproval, deep hatred, or scorn.

*The defendant's CONTEMPTUOUS behavior on the stand was, amazingly, overlooked by the judge.*

**xenophobic** (*zee-nah-FOE-bik*). Having an irrational fear or hatred of foreigners and immigrants.

*We are not XENOPHOBIC; we dislike all strangers, regardless of their backgrounds, unless they are brought to us by other social contacts.*



## ANTONYMS

**adulate** (AJ-uh-leyt). To show excessive praise or admiration; flatter or admire servilely.

*“I have been very happy, very rich, very beautiful much ADULATED, very famous and very unhappy.”*

—Brigitte Bardot, French actress

**esteem** (ih-STEEM). To value highly; have great respect and regard for; prize.

*“The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we ESTEEM too lightly, it is dearness only that gives everything its value.”*

—Thomas Paine, English-American writer and political pamphleteer

## 99. Health

(*HEALTH*), noun

The general condition or soundness of the body and mind; the state of injury and disease.

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## ADJECTIVES

**lissome** (LISS-um). Lithe; supple; flexible.

*Moirra acquired her LISSOME frame from years of swimming in her family's Olympic-sized pool.*

**lithe** (LITHE). Having a body and/or mind that is limber, flexible, and supple.

*"The coconut trees, LITHE and graceful, crowd the beach . . . like a minuet of slender elderly virgins adopting flippant poses."*

—William Manchester, American historian

**salubrious** (suh-LOO-bree-us). Favorable to one's health.

*After father's asthma reasserted itself, the family began to spend more time at its Arizona compound due to the area's dry weather, which is SALUBRIOUS toward asthmatics.*

**salutary** (SAL-you-tore-ee). To have a soothing or healing effect; an act that helps one recover or benefit from a situation.

*Tuberculosis patients were often sent to the mountains, where the fresh air was thought to have a SALUTARY effect on their condition.*

**sanative** (SAN-uh-tiv). Having the power to cure or heal.

*Not that long ago, bloodletting was thought to have a SANATIVE effect.*

## NOUNS

**convalescence** (*kon-vuh-LESS-unce*). The process of regaining one's health after an illness.

*Her CONVALESCENCE was impeded by the primitive medical facilities on the island.*

**valetudinarian** (*val-uh-tood-in-AIR-ee-uhn*). A person overly concerned about his health and ailments; an invalid.

*Because he was such a VALETUDINARIAN, we wouldn't let Paul watch a television program or movie that concerned health or contained people with health problems.*

**weal** (*WEEL*). Prosperous well-being; vitality.

*Jordan is convinced that expensive jewelry is necessary for one's WEAL and welfare.*

## ANTONYMS

**etiolate** (*EE-tee-uh-late*). To cause to become weak and appear sickly.

*Over time, Brad's excesses—and his refusal to see a plastic surgeon—increasingly ETIOLATED his once-handsome appearance.*

**malaise** (*muh-LAZE*). A vague feeling of illness, uneasiness, or sadness.

*"Sheer idiocy," commented the professor at the end of my paper, in which I argued that Shakespeare's King Lear suffered only a passing MALAISE, not madness.*

**miasma** (*my-AZ-mah*). An unhealthy atmosphere or environment; an unpleasant feeling pervading the air.

*"These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon—or it may be there they have their ghastly origin in the rank MIASMA of the tarn."*

—Edgar Allan Poe, American author and poet

**tabescent** (*tuh-BES-uhnt*). Becoming progressively emaciated; wasting away.

*Paul's plans for the future, once so vivid and real, had with time become stale and TABESCENT.*

**valetudinary** (*val-uh-tood-uhn-AIR-ee*). Sickly to the point of being an invalid.

*After catching the disease, Val stayed at home for three months in a VALETUDINARY state.*

**wan** (*WAHN*). Showing or suggesting ill health or unhappiness.

*"So shaken as we are, so WAN with care, / Find we a time for frightened peace to pant."*

—William Shakespeare

See also: Illness

## 100. Help

(*HELP*), noun, verb

To give assistance and make it possible or easier to accomplish a task;  
aid.

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## NOUNS

**aegis** (*EE-jis*). The protection, support, and help rendered by a guardian, supporter, backer, or mentor.

*Jill thinks she's above reproach because she's under the AEGIS of that marketing vice-president with a penchant for younger women.*

## VERBS

**abet** (uh-BET). To encourage or assist a plan or activity, usually a misdeed.

*Though Michael did not participate in the actual kidnapping, he ABETTED the perpetrators by hiding them from the police.*

**adjudicate** (ah-JOO-dih-kate). To preside over or listen to opposing arguments and help two parties settle their difference and come to an agreement.

*As my daughters pummeled each other while screaming at top volume, I tried desperately to ADJUDICATE their quarrel.*

**assuage** (ah-SWAYJ). To put someone at ease; to comfort or soothe; to erase doubts and fears.

*“But history must not yet tell the tragedies enacted here; let time intervene in some measure to ASSUAGE and lend an azure tint to them.”*

—Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist

**exhort** (ig-ZORT). To urge or advise earnestly.

*“The function of the moralist is not to EXHORT men to be good but to elucidate what the good is.”*

—Walter Lippmann, American journalist

**minister** (MIN-us-stur). To give help; fill wants; to serve as a nurse.

*It was touching to watch Calvin MINISTER to his wife during her recovery.*

**mitigate** (MITT-ih-gayt). To make or become milder, less severe, or less painful.

*The medication should MITIGATE John’s symptoms within twenty-four hours.*



## ANTONYMS

**sabotage** (*SAB-uh-tahzh*). Intentional obstruction of or damage to some process or activity; the undermining of a cause.

*“Self-SABOTAGE is when we say we want something and then go about making sure it doesn’t happen.”*

—Alyce P. Cornyn-Selby, American manager and author

**thwart** (*THWAWRT*). To hinder, obstruct, frustrate, or defeat a person, plans, etc.

*“Instinct must be THWARTED just as one prunes the branches of a tree so that it will grow better.”*

—Henri Matisse, French painter

## 101. Hide

(*HYDE*), verb

To place or keep out of sight; conceal; secrete; to keep from the knowledge of others; keep secret.

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## VERBS

**camouflage** (KAM-uh-flazh). To hide or make something less visible by changing its appearance.

*Dave became one of the company's best salesmen because he was able to CAMOUFLAGE his real feelings.*

**dissimulate** (diss-IHM-you-late). To hide one's feelings from another, often by using untruths.

*Feeling extremely guilty about his affair, Jake would DISSIMULATE behind a wall of anger whenever Tricia asked him pointed questions.*

**seclude** (sih-KLOOD). To hide or keep apart; to keep in isolation.

*Jared SECLUDED himself in his room in order to meet the project's deadline.*

## ADJECTIVES

**covert** (KOH-vert). Concealed; disguised; secret.

*Try as we might, we never managed to get our uncle to discuss his experiences conducting COVERT ops at the CIA.*

**ulterior** (uhl-TEER-ee-er). Beyond what is being shown, as motives.

*“When one has extensively pondered about men, as a career or as a vocation, one sometimes feels nostalgic for primates. At least they do not have ULTERIOR motives.”*

—Albert Camus, Algerian-born French author and philosopher

## NOUNS

**occultation** (*ahk-uhl-TAY-shin*). The act of hiding or blocking from view.

*With disguises offering a bit of needed OCCULTATION, we were able to hit Manhattan's hot spots away from the glare of the dreaded paparazzi.*

## ANTONYMS

**manifest** (*MAN-uh-fest*). To make clear or obvious; clear; plain; patent.

*“MANIFEST plainness, embrace simplicity, reduce selfishness, have few desires.”*

—Lao-Tzu, Chinese Taoist philosopher

**overt** (*oh-VURT*). Open, public, and observable.

*Americans must insist that local, state, and federal government operations remain OVERT.*

## 102. Honor

(*ON-ur*), noun

Great regard or respect given or received; glory; fame; renown; strong sense of right and wrong; the application of integrity and principles.

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## NOUNS

**accolade** (AK-uh-lade). A mark of acknowledgment or expression of praise; that which confers praise or honor.

*The firm's president had hung on his office wall many plaques, citations, and ACCOLADES.*

**éclat** (ay-KLAH). Great public acclaim; or, great public notoriety.

*Although they are the height of Paris fashion, Martina's five-inch heels earned her much ÉCLAT in the society pages.*

**fealty** (FEE-ul-tea). A sense of obligation or loyalty, usually existing because one person feels beholden to another.

*The only reason that Bryson pledged FEALTY to David is because David's social connections helped Bryson get a job on Wall Street.*

**homage** (HOM-ij). Respect paid and deference shown to a superior or other person one admires, fears, or wishes to emulate or praise.

*Gary took black and white photos with a nondigital camera in HOMAGE to Ansel Adams, whose works he greatly admired.*

**honorific** (on-err-IF-ik). A tribute or reward given in an effort to honor someone as a sign of deep respect.

*Lifetime achievement awards aren't for any single work, but an HONORIFIC for long service and a track record of excellence.*

**laureate** (LORE-ee-ut). A person who has been singled out for a particular high honor or award.

*The group included a remarkable cross-section of accomplished scientists, some of whom were Nobel LAUREATES.*

**obeisance** (oh-BEE-sance). Deferential respect or homage, or an act or gesture expressing the same.

*In an act of OBEISANCE Rachael brought the elderly woman up to sit in her plush opera box, rather than in the mezzanine.*

**panegyric** (pan-uh-JEER-ick). Formal, elaborate praise.

*After Coach Henry retired, her former athletes filled the local paper with PANEGYRICS concerning her character and accomplishments.*

**perquisite** (PURK-wuh-zit). An incidental privilege other than payment that accompanies a position of responsibility; an extra payment beyond what is owed.



*Among the president's PERQUISITES were two front-row seats to all the Celtics's regular-season home games.*

## ADJECTIVES

**dauntless** (*DAWNT-liss*). Fearless, intrepid, and bold.

*“For Thought has a pair of DAUNTLESS wings.”*

—Robert Frost, American poet

**emeritus** (*ih-MARE-ih-tuss*). Retired but still holding an honorary title corresponding to the position held prior to retirement.

*Watkins has been awarded the position of Professor EMERITUS.*

**meritorious** (*mare-uh-TORE-ee-uss*). Worthy of praise, laudable.

*Earl’s work at the homeless shelter was MERITORIOUS, but it left him little time for his family and friends.*

## ANTONYMS

**ignoble** (ig-NO-bull). Dishonorable in nature; not deserving respect; characterized by baseness or lowness.

*Peter's IGNOBLE aims were well known to all in the room.*

**infidelity** (in-fi-DEL-ih-tee). The quality or act of having been untrue or inconsistent with an (often implied) standard; disloyalty; marital unfaithfulness.

*Although Gwen suspected her husband of INFIDELITY, she had not come across any tangible proof.*

**renege** (ri-neg). To go back (on one's word); to break a promise or commitment.

*Dalton was supposed to have been named vice president in exchange for his support, but Peterson RENEGED on the deal after assuming control.*

# I

## 103. Illness

(*IL-nis*), noun

An unhealthy condition of the body or mind; sickness; disease.

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## NOUNS

**autism** (AW-tiz-um). A condition characterized by difficulty with or indifference to social contact and impaired ability to communicate.

*Often subjected to abuse and inhumane treatment two or three decades ago, people with AUTISM are now more likely to receive a meaningful therapeutic regimen.*

**bulimia** (buh-LEE-mee-uh). An eating disorder in which sufferers alternately binge, then purge, forcing themselves to vomit.

*The faculty health center featured a nurse with special training in dealing with BULIMIA and other eating disorders.*

**carbuncle** (KAR-bunk-uhl). A painful inflammation of the skin similar to, but more serious than, a boil.

*Jimmy's inventive excuses for his absences reached a new level when he told his teacher he had been unable to attend Spanish class because of a CARBUNCLE.*

**eczema** (EG-zuh-muh). An inflammatory skin condition, characterized by red, itching skin that erupts into lesions that later become scaly, hard, and crusty.

*The skin cleanser Noxzema was named after its supposed ability to "knock ECZEMA."*

**gingivitis** (jin-jih-VIE-tuss). A gum disease; the condition of having swollen gums.

*The rinse promised lifetime protection against GINGIVITIS, a claim Fred viewed with some skepticism.*

**hemophilia** (hee-mo-FEE-lee-uh). A blood defect usually affecting males but transmitted by females in which the blood fails to clot normally, often leading to uncontrolled hemorrhaging.

*Because so many HEMOPHILIA patients have contracted the AIDS virus from contaminated blood, many will only accept transfusions using blood that has been donated by family and friends.*

**hypertension** (hi-pur-TEN-shun). High blood pressure.

*Some over-the-counter cough, cold, and allergy medicines tend to cause elevated blood pressure, and include a warning that they may be hazardous to those suffering from HYPERTENSION.*

**hyperthermia** (hie-pur-THUR-mee-uh). Extreme increase of body heat.  
*The reading is 108 degrees; we are dealing not with a simple fever, but with severe HYPERTHERMIA.*

**hypothermia** (hie-po-THER-mee-uh). Extreme loss of body heat.  
*After several hours in the freezing water, the victims had already succumbed to the effects of HYPOTHERMIA.*

**influenza** (in-floo-EN-zuh). A contagious respiratory virus characterized by inflammation of the mucous membrane, fever, prostration, aches, and pains.

*David was still weak from his bout with INFLUENZA.*

**kyphosis** (ki-FOE-sis). Excessive curvature of the spine suffered by hunchbacks.

*After William's father forced him to help out the family gardener, William complained for weeks afterward that the outdoor work gave him KYPHOSIS.*

**migraine** (MIE-grane). An excruciating headache, caused by expanding capillaries, that occurs on one (usually the left) side of the head, and causes the sufferer nausea, vomiting, and extreme sensitivity to light.

*As a treatment for my MIGRAINES, the doctor gave me a new prescription, suggesting I take two tablets and lie down in a very dark room whenever I feel one coming on.*

**mononucleosis** (mon-oh-noo-kee-OH-siss). An infectious illness caused by an increase of mononuclear leukocytes in the blood, and characterized by extremely swollen glands, a sore throat, and exhaustion.

*Erika's MONONUCLEOSIS caused her to miss nearly two months of school.*

**narcolepsy** (NAR-ko-lep-see). The disorder of suddenly and unpredictably falling asleep.

*After learning he suffered from NARCOLEPSY, Brian realized how dangerous it would be for him to drive, and voluntarily returned his license to the registry.*

**osteoporosis** (oss-tee-oh-puh-ROE-sis). A condition of fragile, brittle bones, particularly common in women of advanced age.

*The doctor advised all of his female patients over fifty to make sure they took in plenty of calcium as a precaution against OSTEOPOROSIS.*

**psoriasis** (*suh-RIE-uh-suss*). A chronic skin disease causing the skin to become covered with red patches and white scales.

*Emmett treated his first bout of PSORIASIS by applying copious amounts of moisturizer, but it did no good.*

**schizophrenia** (*skits-uh-FREEN-ee-uh*). A mental condition that often causes sufferers to hallucinate, to be disoriented, and often to withdraw from society.

*It is a common misconception that SCHIZOPHRENIA is the condition of having multiple personalities.*

## ANTONYMS

**eupepsia** (yoo-PEP-shuh). Good digestion.

*John enjoyed EUPEPSIA and could eat almost anything, including very spicy foods, without gastric distress or physical regret.*

**euphoria** (yoo-FAWR-ee-uh). A feeling of well-being; an abnormal feeling of buoyant vigor and health.

*“The writer who loses his self-doubt, who gives way as he grows old to a sudden EUPHORIA, to prolixity, should stop writing immediately: the time has come for him to lay aside his pen.”*

—Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, French novelist

See also: Health



## 104. Imagine

(*ih-MAJ-in*), verb

To create a mental image of; form an idea or notion; to think or fancy; conceive in the mind.

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## VERBS

**envisage** (*en-VIZ-ij*). To envision, imagine, or create a mental picture.

*“I don’t ENVISAGE collectivism. There is no such animal, it is always individualism.”*

—Gertrude Stein, American author

**fabricate** (*FAB-rih-kait*). To create something; often used negatively, to suggest that one is lying, or “creating” false information.

*Mom shook her head because she could tell I was just FABRICATING my explanations.*

## ADVERBS

**vicariously** (vye-KARE-ee-uss-lee). To enjoy imagined feelings and experiences largely by observing or hearing about another person's life and adventures.

*Married for over twenty-five years, Roger often told his single friends that he lived VICARIOUSLY through them.*

## NOUNS

**chimera** (*kih-MER-uh*). An illusion of the mind or a dream that can't possibly be realized.

*Leon's idea of the perfect woman is a CHIMERA that keeps him from realizing his goal of finding true love.*

**epiphany** (*eh-PIH-fan-ee*). A sudden, unexpected insight that seems to come from nowhere and throws great illumination on a subject previously not well understood.

*One day Marcus had an EPIPHANY and realized that, to find true happiness, he should become a philanthropist.*

**phantasmagoria** (*fan-taz-muh-GORE-ee-uh*). A dreamlike, constantly changing series of visions.

*The avant-garde film had no dialogue or plot in the traditional sense; it was essentially a PHANTASMAGORIA set to music.*

## ADJECTIVES

**apocryphal** (*uh-POK-ri-fuhl*). Of dubious authenticity; having been fabricated long after the fact.

*The story of Shakespeare's having shared a mistress with Richard Burbage is almost certainly APOCRYPHAL.*

**factitious** (*fack-TISH-uss*). Contrived; fabricated.

*At first, we thought the rumor FACTITIOUS, but then we learned that couture-producer Hermes does, in fact, plan to design and market a helicopter.*

**pensive** (*PEN-siv*). Thoughtful; having wistful or dreamy thoughts.

*My girlfriend was ready for a riotous night on the town, but I was feeling PENSIVE, so we ended up going to a cafe and talking well into the night.*

# ANTONYMS

**discerning** (*dih-SUR-ning*). Showing good insight, judgment and understanding; discriminating.

*“Children, who play life, DISCERN its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure.”*

—Henry David Thoreau, American essayist, poet, and philosopher

**percipient** (*pur-SIP-ee-int*). Keenly or readily perceiving; discriminating.

*Arthur was a PERCIPIENT gourmet, so we always let him choose the restaurant for a celebratory meal.*

## 105. Immature

*(im-uh-CHoor)*, adjective

Not developed emotionally or physically; not ripe or perfected; childish.

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## ADJECTIVES

**adolescent** (*ad-ih-LESS-uhnt*). Of or relating to adolescence; behaving in an immature way.

*Alan earned exemplary grades and athletic honors in college, but retained his ADOLESCENT outlook on life.*

**callow** (*KAL-oh*). Lacking experience; immature.

*Ellis, a CALLOW youth accompanying Madame Hempstead, seemed not to understand that his joke about the ambassador's choice of underwear was inappropriate for a state dinner.*

**jeune** (*ji-JOON*). Immature or lacking in insight; dull or lackluster.

*Ralph's JEUNE fantasies of stardom brought only laughs of derision from his friends.*

**naïve** (*nah-EEV*). Unaffectedly simple; childlike; innocent; unworldly.

*Patricia was refreshingly but dangerously NAÏVE about the world and all the people in it.*

**petulant** (*PET-chew-lant*). Describes someone who sulks, complains, and whines like a child or is ill-tempered.

*Emma was sick and tired of her husband's PETULANT pouting.*

**puerile** (*PYOO-er-ill*). Immature, babyish, infantile.

*"An admiral whose PUERILE vanity has betrayed him into a testimonial . . . [is] sufficient to lure the hopeful patient to his purchase."*

—Samuel Hopkins Adams, American journalist

**sophomoric** (*sof-uh-MORE-ik*). Immature; overbearing in a conceited or pretentious way; characteristic of one with little learning but convinced that he or she is brilliant.

*Preston was intrigued by the fraternity's offer of fun and games, but I found their SOPHOMORIC initiation rituals and elitist attitudes tough to take.*



## ANTONYMS

**cultivated** (KUHL-tuh-vey-tid). Trained and developed; refined; cultured.

*“I do not want to die . . . until I have faithfully made the most of my talent and CULTIVATED the seed that was placed in me until the last small twig has grown.”*

—Käthe Kollwitz, German painter

**seasoned** (SEE-zuhnd). Matured, ripened, or experienced from exposure to suitable conditions or instruction.

*We were amazed by the changes in Roy from just one year away at school; he left a confused youth and returned a SEASONED scholar.*

See also: Novice

## 106. Impatient

(*im-PAY-shunt*), adjective

Feeling or showing a lack of patience; annoyance due to delay or opposition; restless.

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## ADJECTIVES

**brusque** (BRUSK). Short; abrupt or curt in manner.

*Her BRUSQUE exterior put Tom off at first, but he later discussed many important issues with Ann in depth.*

**bumptious** (BUMP-shuss). Overbearing or crudely assertive; overly pushy or impertinent.

*We had difficulty crossing the border because Nan got into a squabble with a BUMPTIOUS border guard.*

**impetuous** (im-PET-you-us). Impulsive; driven by sudden force or emotion.

*Dirk's IMPETUOUS remark may well cost him his job.*

**importunate** (im-PORE-chuh-nit). Demanding or impatient in issuing repeated requests.

*Two-year-olds, though lovable, can be IMPORTUNATE; Wesley seemed unprepared for this.*

**irascible** (ih-RASS-uh-bull). Easily provoked or annoyed; prone to losing one's temper; quick to anger.

*"I have never known anyone worth a damn who wasn't IRASCIBLE."*

—Ezra Pound, American expatriate poet

**restive** (RESS-tihv). Impatient and stubborn; contrary.

*Audrey was so worked up about her first summer abroad that her excitement came across as RESTIVE.*

**unceremonious** (un-sare-uh-MONE-ee-uss). Rude or abrupt; tactlessly hasty; inappropriate.

*June made an UNCEREMONIOUS exit just as the chairman was beginning his remarks on the Fentworth project.*

## ANTONYMS

**abide** (*uh-BIDE*). To withstand, patiently wait for, or tolerate.

*I could ABIDE my dinner companion's bigotry for only so long; by evening's end, I had to challenge him.*

**philosophic** (*fil-uh-SOF-ik*). Rational; sensibly composed; calm.

*Harry hated to wait, but over time he saw that his impatience harmed only himself, and when necessary, was PHILOSOPHIC about periods of forced inactivity.*

## 107. Improve

(*im-PROOV*), verb

To make better; to raise to a better quality or condition; increase the worth of.

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## VERBS

**aggrandize** (ah-GRAND-ize). To exaggerate, put on a false front, and make something look greater and grander than it really is.

*Phil tries to AGGRANDIZE his reputation by stating that he is a charter member of the Bill O'Reilly fan club, but everybody just thinks this "feat" makes him pathetic.*

**augment** (awg-MENT). To make greater in size, amount, strength, etc.

*The contributions collected for the library addition were AUGMENTED by a large anonymous donation.*

**bowdlerize** (BOWED-ler-eyes). To remove obscenity, violence, and other inappropriate content from a novel, play, or story so as to make it appropriate for a younger reader.

*Hollywood BOWDLERIZED his script, so, instead of being R-rated, the film was rated PG-13.*

**elevate** (EL-ih-vayt). To raise up, make higher; to raise to a higher intellectual or moral level; to raise the spirits; lift.

*Only a visit from her favorite nephew could ELEVATE Ann's spirits and calm her feelings of depression and loss.*

**gentrify** (JENN-truh-fie). To take something rundown, such as a neighborhood, and improve it.

*Attempts to GENTRIFY the historic neighborhood failed because of community apathy.*

## NOUNS

**meliorism** (*MEE-lee-uh-riz-um*). A philosophy of optimism that says the world is gradually improving through divine intervention or human effort—or both.

*Thomas Hardy's philosophy of MELIORISM showed in his belief in the ultimate goodness of humankind.*

## ADJECTIVES

**didactic** (*dye-DAK-tik*). Designed, made, or tailored for purposes of education, self-improvement, or ethical betterment.

*“The essential function of art is moral. But a passionate, implicit morality, not DIDACTIC.”*

—D. H. Lawrence, British author



## ANTONYMS

**deteriorate** (*dih-TEER-ee-uh-reyt*). To make or become worse; lower in quality or value; depreciate.

*“Writing, at its best, is a lonely life. Organizations for writers palliate the writer’s loneliness, but I doubt if they improve his writing. He grows in public stature as he sheds his loneliness and often his work DETERIORATES.*

—Ernest Hemingway, American novelist

**exacerbate** (*egg-ZASS-err-bayt*). To take action that makes a situation worse or aggravate it further.

*The problem with the mission was further EXACERBATED when the outer tiles ripped away from the space shuttle.*

## 108. Inappropriate

*(in-uh-PRO-pree-it)*, adjective

Not appropriate, suitable, or usable; not fitting or proper; out of place.

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## ADJECTIVES

**eccentric** (ik-SEN-trik). Deviating from the norm, as in conduct; odd; peculiar; unconventional.

*Late in life, my uncle often walked to town, muttering to himself and gesticulating —acting with the ECCENTRIC mannerisms of the elderly and harmless, yet like someone who should be avoided.*

**disproportionate** (dis-pruh-POOR-shun-it). Out of proportion in size or number.

*Ralph always cooked a DISPROPORTIONATE amount of food for the number of guests at his dinner parties.*

**gratuitous** (grah-TOO-ih-tuss). Unnecessary; inappropriately excessive; uncalled for.

*“Being accused of making money by selling sex in Hollywood, home of the casting couch and the GRATUITOUS nude scene, is so rich with irony that it’s a better subject for a comic novel than a column.”*

—Anna Quindlen, American author and opinion columnist

**incongruous** (in-KAHNG-grew-us). Describes something that does not belong in its current place, setting, or role; out of place; not fitting in.

*“The taste for quotations (and for the juxtaposition of INCONGRUOUS quotations) is a Surrealist taste.”*

—Susan Sontag, American literary theorist, philosopher, and political activist

**indecorous** (in-DEK-uh-rus). Lacking in decorum, propriety, good taste; unseemly.

*The apartment’s INDECOROUS furnishings made it impossible for us to imagine living there.*

**unseemly** (un-SEEM-ly). Inappropriate; unbecoming.

*The family felt that Bill’s presence at the memorial service would have been UNSEEMLY, as he had been my sister-in-law’s bitterest business rival.*

**unsuitable** (uhn-SOO-tuh-buhl). Not suitable, inappropriate; unfitting.

*“This mode of electioneering suited neither my taste nor my principles. I thought it equally UNSUITABLE to my personal character and to the station in which I am placed.”*

—John Quincy Adams, American president

## ANTONYMS

**apt** (*APT*). Suitable for the purpose or occasion; fitting.

*Roger could always be counted on to provide an APT comment, whatever the occasion.*

**congruous** (*KONG-groo-uhs*). Fitting; appropriate.

*They chose this particular concert hall for the performance because its acoustics were especially CONGRUOUS for their music.*

## 109. Independence

*(in-duh-PEN-dunce)*, noun

The condition of being free of the influence, determination, or control of others; self-determination; lack of bias.

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## NOUNS

**autonomy** (aw-TAHN-ah-mee). Independent thought and action; freedom; self-governance.

*Herb claims he wants AUTONOMY, but he goes absolutely nuts whenever his boss gives him unstructured assignments.*

**discretion** (dih-SKRESH-uhn). The freedom or authority to make decisions and choices; the power to act according to one's own judgment.

*Harry was not averse to use his DISCRETION as a member of the board of selectmen.*

**maverick** (MAV-rik). An unorthodox or unconventional person who does what it takes to get things done.

*"The rugged individualist is too often mistaken for the misfit, the MAVERICK, the spoilsport, the sore thumb."*

—Lewis H. Lapham, former editor of *Harper's* magazine

**separatists** (SEP-prah-tists). Those who believe a particular region or group should be separated from a larger whole.

*Some SEPARATIST Canadians want Quebec to be a separate nation from the rest of Canada.*

**sovereignty** (SOV-rin-tee). A nation's self-determination and right to exist as a separate, independent entity.

*The border incursion should be accepted for what it is: an affront against the SOVEREIGNTY of our country.*

## ADJECTIVES

**nonpartisan** (*non-PAHR-tih-zuhn*). Not in support of a particular political party or special interest group.

*The Vallinghams pride themselves in being NONPARTISAN, but they have never been known to vote even for a moderate Democrat.*

## ANTONYMS

**contingent** (*kuhn-TIN-juhnt*). Dependent on something for existence or occurrence; conditional.

*“The radical novelty of modern science lies precisely in the rejection of the belief, which is at the heart of all popular religion, that the forces which move the stars and atoms are CONTINGENT upon the preferences of the human heart.”*

—Walter Lippmann, American journalist

**subjection** (*suhb-JEK-shun*). Under the authority or control of; owing allegiance to.

*“There being nothing more evident than that creatures of the same species should be equal amongst one another without subordination or SUBJECTION.”*

—John Locke, English philosopher

See also: Fair



## 110. Indicate

*(IN-dih-kate)*, verb

To show; point out, or direct attention to; to give a sign of; signify.

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## VERBS

**augur** (AW-gur). To foretell future events, as though by supernatural knowledge or power; to divine; to indicate a future trend or happening.

*The chairman's sour mood this morning does not AUGUR well for that budget proposal we made.*

**denote** (de-NOTE). To indicate or make clear; to serve as sign or symbol for something else.

*Her chills and discoloration, Dr. Smith observed, DENOTED severe hypothermia.*

**evince** (ee-VINCE). To reveal or indicate the presence of a particular feeling or condition.

*The blocky lines of Van Gogh's paintings EVINCE a feeling of depression and madness.*

**presage** (press-ij). To foretell or indicate.

*Such provocation may PRESAGE armed conflict in the region.*

## NOUNS

**bellwether** (*BELL-weather*). A leading indicator or important factor in predicting a trend or outcome.

*The fact that Robert got thrown out of Groton and Exeter was a BELLWETHER for his lackadaisical years at Dartmouth.*

**indicant** (*IN-di-kuhnt*). Something that indicates or points out.

*The loss of electricity was the first INDICANT that the presentation would not be successful.*

**premonition** (*pree-muh-NISH-un*). A feeling of anticipation; a forewarning.

*Bob had daily PREMONITIONS of disaster, but they were all unfounded.*

## ANTONYMS

**ensconce** (*en-SKONTS*). To hide something in a secure place.

*Paul hoped that once the statue was ENSCONCED on board ship, they would have no trouble with customs officers.*

**veil** (*VEYL*). To cover or conceal; to hide the actual nature of something; mask; disguise.

*“A poet dares be just so clear and no clearer. . . . He unzips the VEIL from beauty, but does not remove it. A poet utterly clear is a trifle glaring.”*

—E. B. White, American writer

## 111. Inevitable

(*in-EV-uh-tuh-bull*), adjective

Unavoidable; sure to occur; certain; necessary.

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## ADJECTIVES

**assured** (ah-SHOORD). Certain; guaranteed; with great confidence.

*“Just as I know the sun will rise tomorrow,” my lawyer told me, “you can be ASSURED that you’ll be acquitted.”*

**ineluctable** (In-el-LUCK-tah-bull). Unavoidable, inevitable, with a sense of being unfortunate, sad, or even tragic.

*Our inability to procure Pratesi linens for our Colorado ski lodge created an INELUCTABLE sadness among the members of our family.*

**inescapable** (in-uh-SKAY-puh-buhl). Incapable of being avoided, ignored, or escaped.

*“We are caught in an INESCAPABLE network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr., American minister and civil-rights leader

**inexorable** (in-EKS-zor-ah-bull). Unstoppable; relentless; persistent.

*“I know enough to know that most of the visible signs of aging are the result of the INEXORABLE victory of gravity over tissue.”*

—Isaac Asimov, Russian-born American author and biochemist

**irrevocable** (ih-REV-uh-kuh-bull). Not to be recalled or revoked; unalterable.

*“Education is our greatest opportunity to give an IRREVOCABLE gift to the next generation.”*

—Ernie Fletcher, governor of Kentucky and U.S. representative

**obligatory** (uh-BLIG-uh-tawr-ee). Having the nature of an obligation; binding; required; mandatory.

*By making taxes OBLIGATORY, we’ve made them inevitable.*

## VERBS

**ordain** (*or-DAYN*). To decree; order; predetermine.

*John felt that fate had ORDAINED that he would encounter his minister at the worst possible time.*

## ANTONYMS

**adventitious** (*add-vin-TISH-us*). Arising or occurring sporadically or in unusual locations; accidental.

*Every time I plant a garden, ADVENTITIOUS wildflowers pop up to ruin my design.*

**aleatory** (*AIL-ee-ah-tore-ee*). Unplanned, spontaneous, on the spur of the moment rather than deliberately thought out and carefully considered; dependent on luck, randomness, or chance.

*Most sporting events have rules that attempt to eliminate or at least diminish ALEATORY factors so the skill of the participants becomes the primary influence on the outcome.*



## 112. Insane

(*in-SANE*), adjective

Not sane; mentally ill or deranged; completely senseless.

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## ADJECTIVES

**frenetic** (*fruh-NET-ik*). Wild; frenzied; excessively excited.

*Wilbur's FRENETIC behavior has resulted in hospitalization on more than one occasion.*

**ludicrous** (*LOO-dih-kruss*). Absurd to the point of being laughable; obviously implausible or impractical.

*Your proposal that I accept a 75 percent pay cut is LUDICROUS, Mr. Robinson.*

**maniacal** (*muh-NYE-uh-kull*). Overly emphatic; frenzied; having a fanatical devotion to a certain pursuit.

*Chuck's obsession with baseball statistics bordered on the MANIACAL.*

**non compos mentis** (*NAHN-KAHM-pohs-MEN-tiss*). Not in one's right mind.

*When Bryce suggested he was considering the ministry rather than joining the family bond business, we were certain he was NON COMPOS MENTIS.*

**pathological** (*Path-a-LODGE-ick-uhl*). Involving or caused by disease; evidencing or caused by an abnormal or extreme condition.

*Diane's PATHOLOGICAL need for attention has caused her, on more than one occasion, to plant lies about herself in the society pages.*

**quixotic** (*kwik-SOT-ik*). Absurdly romantic; impractical; impulsive and rash; in the manner of Cervantes's character Don Quixote.

*We all loved Arthur dearly but could not support his continual QUIXOTIC quests to save the environment.*

**unhinged** (*uhn-HINJD*). Confused; disordered; distraught; unbalanced.

*Rose became UNHINGED at the news of the death of her college roommate.*

## NOUNS

**dementia** (*duh-MEN-chuh*). A mental illness characterized by loss of reason.

*Owing to the deceased's DEMENTIA at the time the will was signed, there was considerable legal wrangling over the estate.*

**imbecility** (*im-buh-SILL-ih-tee*). Foolishness; simplemindedness.

*Although he disdained the IMBECILITY of mainstream television, Arnie was not above an occasional viewing of American Gladiators or Geraldo.*

**megalomania** (*meg-uh-lo-MAY-nee-uh*). A psychopathological condition in which a person is obsessed with fantasies of riches, grandeur, or authority; people whose ambitions and sense of self-importance are overblown.

*Some have interpreted the tycoon's purchase of the old castle as an uncharacteristically bad real estate deal; I see it as pure MEGALOMANIA.*

**quirk** (*KWIHRK*). A peculiarity of one's personality or manner.

*One of the most omnipresent QUIRKS of the nouveau riche is that they still ask the price of a luxury item, rather than simply offering to purchase it.*

**sociopath** (*SO-see-uh-path*). A person who, because of mental illness, lacks restraint or moral responsibility toward fellow members of society.

*Although motion pictures and popular fiction have shown an unending fascination with serial killers, the fact is that such SOCIOPATHS are quite rare.*

## ANTONYMS

**lucid** (*LOO-sid*). Possessed of a clear mental state; having full use of one's faculties; intelligible.

*Although he lost consciousness for a few minutes, Glenn was LUCID before the ambulance arrived.*

**rational** (*RASH-uh-nul*). Having the ability to reason logically without emotion.

*“Man is a RATIONAL animal who always loses his temper when he is called upon to act in accordance with the dictates of reason.”*

—Oscar Wilde, Irish poet, novelist, and dramatist

## 113. Insensitive

(*in-SEN-sih-tiv*), adjective

Lacking in human sensibility; not capable of being impressed or influenced.

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## ADJECTIVES

**aloof** (uh-LOOF). Indifferent or uninterested; unsociable.

*Chuck's ALOOF attitude at our dinner party made us wonder if our usually talkative friend was trying to tell us something.*

**blithe** (BLITHE). Cheerful or merry in disposition; carefree or indifferent; unconcerned with petty cares or problems.

*Rod dismissed the accountant's objections with a BLITHE wave of his hand.*

**callous** (KAL-uss). Unfeeling; insensitive; hardened.

*The chauffeur couldn't understand how Mr. Jensen could be so CALLOUS as to ride by the crowd of homeless people every day without taking the least notice of them.*

**pachydermatous** (pak-ee-DERM-ah-tus). Having a thick skin; not sensitive to criticism, ridicule, etc.

*As a used car salesman, Ed had developed a PACHYDERMATOUS outlook on life.*

**reflexive** (reh-FLEK-siv). Happening through reflex or habit rather than considered action.

*We don't mean to act imperiously toward the nouveau riche; it's just a REFLEXIVE and conditioned response.*

**stoic** (STOH-ik). Able to endure pain or suffering without complaining.

*"He soldiered through his duties with what looked like cheerful STOICISM."*

—Thomas Pynchon, American author

**stolid** (STAHL-id). Unemotional and impassive.

*Thomas's STOLID demeanor hides the heart of a jet-setting playboy.*

## ANTONYMS

**impressionable** (*im-PRESH-uh-nuh-buhl*). Easily affected by impressions; capable of being influenced; sensitive.

*Brian was a good friend and quite bright, but he was as IMPRESSIONABLE as the average twelve-year-old child.*

**susceptible** (*suh-SEP-tuh-buhl*). Easily affected emotionally; having a sensitive nature or feelings; responsive.

*“History has informed us that bodies of men as well as individuals are SUSCEPTIBLE of the spirit of tyranny.”*

—Thomas Jefferson, American president

## 114. Insult

(*in-SUHLT*), verb

To attack the feelings of another; to treat with scorn and indignity.

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## VERBS

**denigrate** (DEN-ih-grayt). Insult; put down; demean; belittle.

*“Everything we shut our eyes to, everything we run away from, everything we deny, DENIGRATE or despise, serves to defeat us in the end.”*

—Henry Miller, American author and painter

**malign** (muh-LINE). To defame; to besmirch (the reputation of).

*The much-MALIGNED team owner’s decision to trade his star quarterback turned out to be one of the best moves he ever made.*

**traduce** (truh-DOOSS). To speak maliciously of; slander.

*We have snubbed Katrina permanently because she has, at one time or another, TRADUCED each one of us in the society pages.*

**vilify** (VIL-ih-fie). To defame; to slander.

*My opponent’s ceaseless attempts to VILIFY me during this campaign reached a new low when she accused me of being a neo-Nazi.*

# ADJECTIVES

**derogatory** (*dih-ROG-uh-tore-ee*). Tending to lessen or impair someone or something; disparaging and negative.

*Butch's DEROGATORY remarks about my girlfriend were meant to goad me into a fight, but I was determined to keep my cool.*

**insolent** (*IN-suh-lnt*). Rude and arrogant; insulting and contemptuous.

*Her INSOLENT retorts to Joan's well-intentioned queries stunned the dinner party.*

**pejorative** (*pih-JOR-a-tiv*). Insulting; meant as a put-down or to belittle.

*"Wordsmith" is a corporate term used to denote someone who is a good writer, but professional writers see it as PEJORATIVE.*

## NOUNS

**defamation** (*def-uh-MAY-shun*). False, baseless attack on a person's or group's reputation.

*After the last of the magazine's articles on her, Virginia decided she had put up with enough DEFAMATION and decided to sue.*

**umbrage** (*UM-bridge*). To take exception to and be offended by a comment or action seen as a slight or insult.

*"I take UMBRAGE with people who post comments on my blog that are patently false," Bob said.*

## ANTONYMS

**felicitate** (*fi-LIS-ih-teyt*). To compliment; to congratulate; wish happiness to.

*“Remind me,” said Robin’s mother, “to FELICITATE your sister on having received an ‘A’ in biology.”*

**plaudit** (PLAW-dit). An expression of gratitude or praise; applause.

*“Not in the shouts and PLAUDITS of the throng, but in ourselves, are triumph and defeat.”*

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, American poet

## 115. Introduce

*(in-tre-DOOS)*, verb

To put into place; insert.

---

## VERBS

**infuse** (in-FYUZE). To introduce; cause to penetrate; instill.

*The dynamic commissioner INFUSED a new sense of pride into the beleaguered department.*

**insinuate** (in-SIN-you-ate). To introduce slowly, indirectly, but skillfully.

*I had great confidence that we were headed in the right direction until the guide's comments INSINUATED doubts in my mind.*

**intercalate** (in-TUR-kuh-layt). To interpose between or among existing elements; to insert one or more days into the calendar.

*The book's design was improved by INTERCALATING quotations and aphorisms between sections of straight text.*

**interject** (in-ter-JEKT). To insert in between; interpose.

*My mother always tried to INTERJECT herself when my brother and I were fighting.*

**interpolate** (in-TER-poh-late). To introduce something—often something unnecessary or incorrect—between other things or parts.

*Dexter could not help but continuously INTERPOLATE critical remarks into the descriptions of the latest Parisian designs.*

**interpose** (in-ter-POZ). To aggressively insert unsolicited opinion, assistance, or presence into a situation.

*"I hope I am not INTERPOSING," Eileen said as she walked in on our meeting—which of course, she was.*

**intersperse** (in-tur-SPURSE). To scatter here and there; to distribute or place at intervals.

*INTERSPERSED throughout the studio audience were "clappers" whose sole purpose was to motivate the rest of the crowd into laughing and applauding for the show.*

**intromit** (in-tra-MIT). To admit; to cause to enter; put in.

*"I never tire of INTROMITTING a hardboiled egg into a milk bottle, shell and all."*

—Raymond Sokolov

**obtrude** (uhb-TROOD). To impose oneself or one's ideas on others.

*Paul saw no problem OBTRUDING his opinions on complete strangers.*

## ANTONYMS

**rescind** (*ree-SINNED*). Take away, revoke, cancel, withdraw, remove.

*The town RESCINDED all their restrictions on water use after we received two weeks of heavy rain.*

**revoke** (*ri-VOKE*). To take back or withdraw; reverse; rescind.

*“Knowledge is that possession that no misfortune can destroy, no authority can REVOKE, and no enemy can control. This makes knowledge the greatest of all freedoms.”*

—Bryant H. McGill, American editor and author

## 116. Isolated

(*EYE-suh-layt-ed*), adjective  
Separated from other persons.

---



## ADJECTIVES

**cloistered** (KLOI-sturd). Secluded; isolated; removed or hidden.

*Shocked by the news of the shooting on our street, we remained CLOISTERED in our house for days afterward.*

**hermetic** (her-MET-ick). Isolated, or unaffected by outside influences.

*“Reality, whether approached imaginatively or empirically, remains a surface, HERMETIC.”*

—Samuel Beckett, Irish writer, dramatist, and poet

**insular** (INN-suh-ler). Self-contained and therefore isolated from the world and unaffected by outside influences, usually to one’s detriment.

*The Pricewaters moved from the family’s traditional home to a more INSULAR compound farther up the coast.*

**taciturn** (TAS-ih-turn). Reserved; uncommunicative; a person of few words.

*“Nature is garrulous to the point of confusion, let the artist be truly TACITURN.”*

—Paul Klee, German-born Swiss painter

## NOUNS

**segregation** (*seg-ruh-GAY-shun*). The separation of people by class, race, or ethnicity, either enforced or voluntarily, geographically or by the restriction of access to facilities or services.

*As the judge seemed doomed to have to point out for the rest of his life, his order affected only those school districts whose officials deliberately practiced SEGREGATION in violation of law—not SEGREGATION that was purely the result of existing demographic patterns.*

**solitude** (*SOL-i-tood*). The state of seclusion.

*Although Peter maintained that he thought better in SOLITUDE, we considered him antisocial.*

## VERBS

**quarantine** (*KWOR-un-teen*). To set apart; to isolate from others in order to prevent the spread of disease.

*An elementary knowledge of public health procedures would have led you to QUARANTINE this area immediately, Dr. Miller.*

## ANTONYMS

**commingle** (*kuh-MING-guhl*). To mix together; combine.

*“All human beings are COMMINGLED out of good and evil.”*

—Robert Louis Stevenson, Scottish essayist, poet, and author

**integrate** (*IN-ti-greyt*). To bring together or combine parts into a whole; to unite or combine.

*“If we make room for everybody, there will be more room for everybody. An integrated America, where each and every American is treated with the same dignity and respect, is a better America for everyone.”*

—General Wesley Clark, American general

See also: Alone, Eliminate, Reject

# J

## 117. Judgment

(*JUHJ-muhnt*), noun

A formed opinion; a decision made by objective deliberation; the capacity to judge.

---

## VERBS

**glean** (*GLEEN*). To discover or learn slowly and deliberately.

*Jacob GLEANED from the drop in Ferrari sales that a looming recession even had some of his social contacts feeling nervous.*

# NOUNS

**acumen** (uh-CUE-men). Keenness of judgment; the ability to make quick, accurate decisions and evaluations; characterized by rapid discernment and insight.

*After only two years as a restaurant owner, Clyde developed a remarkable business ACUMEN; in a supposedly “bad location,” he had little trouble coming up with promotions that attracted customers.*

**inference** (IN-fer-ence). The process of reaching a logical conclusion by examining and analyzing the evidence.

*Watson solved cases through INFERENCE, while Sherlock Holmes was seemingly gifted with flashes of brilliant insight.*

**noesis** (no-EE-sis). The functioning of the intellect; the exercise of reason.

*Researchers in the field of artificial intelligence dedicate much of their time to the study of human NOESIS.*

**osmosis** (oz-MOW-sis). A subtle and effortless assimilation of ideas or influences.

*Just hanging out with Bob, who was an A student, seemed to help Vincent improve his grades, as if he was learning what Bob knew through OSMOSIS.*

**rumination** (roo-muh-NAY-shun). The act of thinking about something in great detail, weighing the pros and cons over and over in your mind.

*For busy people under stress, RUMINATION after going to bed is a frequent contributor to insomnia.*

## ADJECTIVES

**sagacious** (*suh-GAY-shuss*). Perceptive; showing sound judgment.

*Brian is the perfect candidate for chairman of the board: experienced, patient, and SAGACIOUS enough to help us counter the threat from our competitor.*



## ANTONYMS

**impolitic** (*im-PAWL-i-tick*). Not prudent; injudicious; unwise.

*After a few drinks, Uncle Roland has an unfortunate habit of making IMPOLITIC remarks about my father's failed business ventures.*

**indiscreet** (*in-dih-SKREET*). Lacking good judgment and prudence; apt to talk about things that others would like left private.

*Don't get alcohol near Melanie. It makes her go from prudent to INDISCREET in less than sixty seconds!*

**indiscriminate** (*in-dih-SKRIM-uh-net*). Lacking clear judgment and careful distinction; haphazard; random.

*The INDISCRIMINATE shelving of books made it almost impossible to do any successful browsing in the bookshop.*

**myopic** (*my-AHP-ick*). Narrow-mindedness or short-sightedness in one's views; lack of discernment.

*Your MYOPIC views will win you few votes during the election, Senator.*

**promiscuity** (*prom-ih-SKYOO-ih-tee*). Not restricted by type; indiscriminate; casual; irregular.

*The comparatively tolerant attitude toward the PROMISCUITY of the late 1970s and early 1980s changed dramatically with the onset of the AIDS crisis.*

See also: Knowledge, Learn, Think, Understanding

# K

## 118. Kill

(*KIL*), verb

To cause the death of; deprive of life; put an end to.

---

## NOUNS

**fratricide** (FRAT-rih-side). The act of killing a brother; the murder of a male sibling.

*It is only when Hamlet is told of the king's FRATRICIDE that a tragic chain of events is initiated.*

**genocide** (JENN-uh-side). The deliberate, systematic destruction of a culture, people, or nation.

*Attempts at tribal GENOCIDE have drawn attention to the African province of Darfur.*

**herbicide** (URB-ih-syde). A chemical that kills plants, especially that which eradicates weeds.

*Although originally described as a comparatively harmless HERBICIDE, Agent Orange was (as thousands of soldiers learned much later) anything but.*

**sororicide** (suh-RAWR-uh-side). The act of killing one's own sister.

*Once past their teenage years, most sisters get over the feelings of SORORICIDE.*

**uxoricide** (uk-SOR-ih-side). The crime of murdering one's wife.

*Eventually, the defendant was acquitted of UXORICIDE; his wife's death was ruled a suicide.*

**vaticide** (VAT-uh-side). The act of murdering a prophet.

*Tom took the reviewer's negative article on his religious poetry as an act tantamount to VATICIDE.*

## VERBS

**decapitate** (dee-KAP-ih-tate). To remove the head of.

*Although the guillotine was initially proposed as a humane method of execution, the idea of using a machine to DECAPITATE criminals now strikes most people as barbaric.*

**defenestrate** (de-FEN-uh-strayt). To throw something or someone through or from a window.

*Successful completion of the plan to DEFENESTRATE the dictator depended upon timing, luck, and courage.*

**fumigate** (FYOO-mih-gate). To release fumes in order to get rid of insects or other pests.

*We had the place FUMIGATED, used sound-waves, and set dozens of traps, but our house continued to be plagued by cockroaches.*

**immolate** (IM-uh-late). To kill as if as a sacrifice, especially by fire.

*The monk's dramatic act of self-IMMOLATION made headlines around the world.*

**lapidate** (LAP-ih-dayt). To stone to death.

*Due to worldwide outrage and diplomatic pressure, the decision to LAPIDATE a person for infidelity was rescinded.*

**martyr** (MAR-ter). To put to death for adhering to a belief or particular faith.

*Many religions have historically seen fit to MARTYR disbelievers.*

## ANTONYMS

**contrive** (*kuhn-TRAHYV*). To invent; design; fabricate; to bring about.

*“There is nothing which has yet been CONTRIVED by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern.”*

—Samuel Johnson, English poet, critic and writer

**spawn** (*SPAWN*). To bring forth or be the source of; to give birth to; to give rise to.

*The national games served to SPAWN athletes for future Olympic competitions.*

## 119. Kind

(*KIND*), adjective

Possessing sympathetic or generous qualities; of a benevolent nature.

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## ADJECTIVES

**avuncular** (A-VUN-cue-lar). Kind, genial, benevolent, like an uncle.

*Myron's AVUNCULAR personality makes women think of him as a friend, not as a lover.*

**beneficent** (be-NE-fih-sent). Kindly in action, purpose, or speech.

*In a BENEFICENT gesture, the neighborhood raised \$10,000 to help pay for the young boy's leukemia treatments.*

**benevolent** (buh-NEV-uh-lent). Characterized by feelings of charity and good will; kindly feelings.

*As spring approaches and the weather warms, it seems that BENEVOLENT attitudes are in greater supply.*

**benign** (Beh-NINE). Kindly, gentle, generous of spirit, not harmful.

*We thought Amanda BENIGN until she began to inflate her family pedigree.*

**magnanimous** (mag-NAN-ih-mus). A kind and generous act.

*"In a serious struggle there is no worse cruelty than to be MAGNANIMOUS at an inopportune time."*

—Leon Trotsky, Bolshevik revolutionary and Marxist theorist

## NOUNS

**bonhomie** (*bon-uh-MEE*). A good-natured, genial manner.

*Even though he has no family pedigree, Walker is accepted into our group because of his contagious BONHOMIE.*

**chivalry** (*SHIV-ul-ree*). Brave, kind, courteous, or gentlemanly behavior.

*“We hear much of CHIVALRY of men towards women; but . . . it vanishes like dew before the summer sun when one of us comes into competition with the manly sex.”*

—Martha Coston, American author



## ANTONYMS

**malevolent** (*muh-LEV-uh-luhnt*). Wishing harm or evil to others; having ill will; malicious.

*“Writers take words seriously . . . and they struggle to steer their own through the crosswinds of meddling editors and careless typesetters and obtuse and MALEVOLENT reviewers into the lap of the ideal reader.”*

—John Updike, American writer

**malignant** (*muh-LIG-nuhnt*). Having an evil influence; wishing evil; very harmful.

*“Doubtless criticism was originally benignant, pointing out the beauties of a work rather than its defects. The passions of men have made it MALIGNANT.”*

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, American poet

## 120. Knowledge

(*NOL-ij*), noun

Facts, truths, and principles as obtained and accumulated by study and investigation; all that has been perceived and grasped by the mind.

---

## NOUNS

**cognition** (*kog-NISH-un*). Perception; the process of knowing.

*The process of COGNITION develops with amazing rapidity over the first two years of life.*

**epistemology** (*uh-PIST-uh-mall-uh-jee*). The study of the nature of knowledge and understanding.

*An interest in people's purchasing habits led Martina to begin studying EPISTEMOLOGY.*

**pansophy** (*PAN-suh-fee*). Universal knowledge.

*It's safe to say that PANSOPHY is a goal as unreachable as world peace and an end to hunger.*

**prescience** (*PRESS-ee-unce*). The knowledge of events before they take place; foreknowledge.

*Lacking PRESCIENCE, I really can't tell you what Sally intends to do.*

**sagacity** (*suh-GASS-ih-tee*). Wisdom; soundness of judgment; keen perceptivity or shrewdness.

*"Our minds are endowed by nature with such activity and SAGACITY that the soul is believed to be produced from heaven."*

—Quintilian, Roman rhetorician

## ADJECTIVES

**cerebral** (*suh-REEB-rul*). Appealing to or involving the human mind; characteristic of intellectual pursuits; pertaining to the brain.

*Bill's lofty observations on the nature of existence are a little too CEREBRAL for a party like this; you'd be better off inviting Charlie, who tells such funny stories.*

**empirical** (*imm-PEER-ih-kuhl*). Describes knowledge that is based on direct observation or practical experience.

*Phyllis failed her science class because her experiment was based on EMPIRICAL evidence rather than on scientific verification.*

**erudite** (*AIR-yoo-dyte*). Sophisticated; well educated; deeply learned; knowledgeable; scholarly.

*Beneath his ERUDITE image, Dr. John Brinkley was a money-grubbing con man.*

**gnostic** (*NOSS-tik*). Possessing spiritual knowledge.

*The ancient GNOSTIC gospels, while not part of my formal church teaching, nevertheless made for illuminating reading.*

**omniscient** (*ahm-NIH-shent*). Describes someone who knows everything.

*"The god of love, if omnipotent and OMNISCIENT, must be the god of cancer and epilepsy as well."*

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright

**sapient** (*SAY-pee-ent*). Wise; sagacious.

*The judge made a SAPIENT ruling in splitting custody between the two parents.*

# ANTONYMS

**dilettante** (*DIL-uh-tont*). Someone with only an amateurish or superficial interest in a subject or discipline.

*The cafe was once a meeting place for struggling artists and poets of genuine talent, but by 1970 it was nothing more than a swamp of DILETTANTES.*

**hearsay** (*HEER-say*). Unverified information gathered from another that is not part of one's direct knowledge; gossip; rumor.

*"My talk to thee must be how Benedick / Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter / Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made, / That only wounds by HEARSAY."*

—William Shakespeare

**sciolism** (*SIGH-uh-liz-im*). Superficial knowledge; shallow learning; charlatanism.

*We were shocked and annoyed when we discovered that the "professor" had been guilty of blatant SCIOLISM all these years.*

See also: Judgment, Learn, Think, Understanding

# L

## 121. Language

(*LANG-gwij*), noun

A collection of words and the rules and methods for their use common to a people living in a community, geographical area, or nation; the means of communicating through sounds and symbols; speech.

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# NOUNS

**aphasia** (uh-FAY-zhuh). The inability, brought on by brain damage, to understand words and/or ideas.

*After his car accident Marcus retained all of his physical faculties, but suffered minor APHASIA that made it difficult for him to speak coherently.*

**argot** (are-GO). Special words and idioms used by particular groups or professions.

*With the advent of text messaging, it has become even more difficult to follow the ARGOT of teenagers.*

**circumlocution** (sir-kum-low-CUE-shun). Language that is pompous, overly formal, wordy, and redundant.

*Grant's CIRCUMLOCUTION was an attempt to suggest that he attended a prep school, but all of us know he is a product of public education.*

**etymology** (et-ih-MOLL-uh-gee). The study of the development and history of words; the derivation of word.

*I took a little Greek in school, so I think I can make an educated guess at this word's ETYMOLOGY.*

**euphemism** (YOU-feh-miz-im). A synonym that is less offensive than the word it is used to replace.

*"The doctor told me I'm big boned," said Chuck defensively. "That's just a EUPHEMISM for fat," his brother said meanly.*

**euphuism** (YOU-few-iz-im). Ornate, flowery, overly elaborate language, often making the exact meaning difficult to discern.

*Felicia's words are full of EUPHUISM, particularly when describing the architecture of her family's various houses.*

**homonym** (HOM-uh-nim). A word with the same pronunciation and spelling as another but with a different meaning.

*Most serious writing does not use HOMONYMS except occasionally by accident.*

**lexicon** (LEK-sih-kahn). The language or vocabulary of a specialized discipline or profession.

*"In the LEXICON of lip-smacking, an epicure is fastidious in his choice and enjoyment of food, just a soupçon more expert than a gastronome."*

—William Safire, American journalist and presidential speechwriter  
**neologism** (nee-AHL-uh-jizm). A new word, or an “old” word used in a new way.

*William Shakespeare coined such NEOLOGISMS as “gossip,” “swagger,” and “domineering.”*

**nomenclature** (NO-men-klay-cherr). A labeling or naming system used in a specialized field or industry.

*Even an activity as seemingly simple as macramé has a NOMENCLATURE all its own, indecipherable to the layperson or newbie.*

**onomatopoeia** (on-uh-ma-tuh-PEE-uh). Words that sound like, or suggest, their meaning.

*The spring gala, with its popping corks, fizzing champagne glasses, and thumping music was a cornucopia of ONOMATOPOEIA.*

**oxymoron** (ok-see-MORE-on). A phrase made by combining two words that are contradictory or incongruous.

*Melissa sheepishly used the OXYMORON “accidentally on purpose” to explain to her father why her emergency credit card included a charge for \$500 Manolo Blahnik heels.*

**palindrome** (pal-in-DROHM). A word or sentence that reads the same forward as backward.

*At private school, Evelyn learned about PALINDROMES, including, “Madam, I’m Adam.”*

**philology** (fi-LOL-uh-gee). The study of ancient written records and texts.

*Arthur’s interest in linguistics and the origins of words naturally led him to a serious involvement in PHILOLOGY.*

**pidgin** (PIDJ-in). A type of language created by the interaction of two distinct languages, used to help people communicate across language barriers.

*We spoke PIDGIN to each other, and I finally was able to understand how to get to the nearest bathroom.*

**polyglot** (POL-ee-glot). A person who speaks a number of languages.

*The president’s translator, a POLYGLOT, served him well in missions to Germany, Portugal, and Mexico.*

**rhetoric** (REH-tore-ik). The art or science of using words effectively in writing or speaking as a means of communication and persuasion.



*Plato called RHETORIC “the art of ruling the minds of men.”*

**semantics** (suh-MAN-tiks). The science of the way meaning is communicated through language.

*Whether we say the compensation will be “appropriate” or “competitive” is really a matter of SEMANTICS; we know exactly how much we intend to pay the person we finally hire.*

**solecism** (SOL-uh-siz-um). A violation of rules of grammar and usage.

*We all waited eagerly for the president’s next SOLECISM.*

**synecdoche** (sih-NECK-duh-kee). A type of shorthand speech in which a partial description is understood by the reader or listener to represent the whole; e.g., saying “New York” in a discussion of baseball when you mean “the New York Yankees.”

*Marla could not stop using a SYNECDOCHE after she returned from her trip to England at which time she met the royal family, saying repeatedly that she had met and socialized with “the crown.”*

**vernacular** (ver-NAK-you-lar). The language of a particular region or specific group of people.

*Communicating with stockbrokers is difficult for many investors because they do not speak the VERNACULAR of the financial world.*

## ADJECTIVES

**colloquial** (kah-LOW-kwee-ul). Informal, conversational, everyday language.

*“COLLOQUIAL poetry is to the real art as the barber’s wax dummy is to sculpture.”*

—Ezra Pound, American expatriate poet

**demotic** (dih-MAH-tik). Relating to simplified, common language.

*Eileen always avoids DEMOTIC speech because she does not want to be mistaken for someone from the middle class.*

**proverbial** (pruh-VER-bee-ul). Calling to mind (a familiar) proverb; showing an immediate parallel with a well-known saying, story, or maxim.

*Stan considered his younger brother about as useful as the PROVERBIAL fifth wheel.*

**sesquipedalian** (ses-kwi-pih-DAL-yin). Preferring or having long, complex words with many syllables.

*“Recently a strange whimsy has started to creep in among the SESQUIPEDALIAN prose of scientific journals.”*

—Stephen Hall, American architect

**stilted** (STILL-tud). Stiff and formal; rigid and unspontaneous in nature.

*The letter was composed in such STILTED, elaborately correct language that Sergeant Ryan surmised it was written by someone whose native language was not English.*

# ANTONYMS

**abridge** (*uh-BRIJ*). To shorten by decreasing the number of words; shorten; curtail.

*“Many a long dispute among divines may be thus ABRIDGED: It is so. It is not so. It is so. It is not so.”*

—Benjamin Franklin, American statesman and scientist

See also: Speech, Talk

## 122. Learn

(*LURN*), verb

To acquire knowledge or skill by study; To become well informed.

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## NOUNS

**clerisy** (KLER-uh-see). Learned persons as a class; intellectuals collectively.

*The society struggled for recognition because it could not support a CLERISY.*

**cognoscente** (kon-yuh-SHEN-tee). Person with superior knowledge or understanding of a particular field.

*As a result of my many years living in the Bordeaux region of France, I am very much a COGNOSCENTE of wine and winemaking.*

**intelligentsia** (in-tell-ih-GENT-see-uh). The class of people who are cultured, educated, intellectual, and interested in art and literature.

*“You see these gray hairs? Well, making whoopee with the INTELLIGENTSIA was the way I earned them.”*

—Dorothy Parker, American author and poet

**literati** (lih-ter-AH-tee). The segment of society comprised of learned or literary men and women.

*We attract the LITERATI because of our constantly carefree and exciting exploits.*

**luminary** (LOO-muh-nair-ee). A person recognized as an inspirational leader in his or her field.

*Frederick’s father is a LUMINARY in the field of circumventing most income tax.*

**lyceum** (LIE-see-um). A school or other place of learning.

*“[Television] should be our LYCEUM, our Chautauqua, our Minsky’s, and our Camelot.”*

—E. B. White, American author

**mentat** (MEN-tat). A human being capable of performing mental tasks with the accuracy and speed of a computer.

*Our accountant is a veritable MENTAT! Did you see how fast he determined all of our charitable deductions!*

**oracle** (OR-uh-kul). Someone who is seen as wise and authoritative, who offers completely dependable counsel or advice.

*After Appomattox, Grant’s words seemed (much to his surprise) to be regarded as having issued from an ORACLE.*

**pedagogue** (PED-ah-gog). A strict, humorless, no-nonsense teacher.

*“The negative cautions of science are never popular. If the experimentalist would not commit himself, the social philosopher, the preacher, and the PEDAGOGUE tried the harder to give a short-cut answer.”*

—Margaret Mead, American cultural anthropologist

**polymath** (POHL-ee-math). A person with a wide range of intellectual interests or a broad base of knowledge in many different disciplines.

*“I had a terrible vision: I saw an encyclopedia walk up to a POLYMATH and open him up.”*

—Karl Kraus, Austrian writer

**savant** (sah-VANT). A person with a natural talent or genius in a particular field or skill.

*With her family’s background in finance, it was a given that Francine would be a Wall Street SAVANT.*

**tutelage** (toot-l-ij). Guided instruction or protection.

*It was under Dr. Clay’s TUTELAGE that he came to understand how much craft was required to write a solid play.*

**yeshiva** (yuh-SHEE-vuh). A place of instruction in the Orthodox Jewish tradition for children of elementary school age.

*When the YESHIVA released its children in the afternoon, the sounds of laughter echoed through the neighborhood.*

## VERBS

**indoctrinate** (*in-DOCK-truh-nate*). To teach; to impart with the knowledge or views of a particular group, philosophy, or theory.

*Max's earnest attempts to INDOCTRINATE me with the ideals of the Communist Party left me unimpressed.*

## ANTONYMS

**illiteracy** (*ih-LIT-er-uh-see*). The inability to read and write; lack of education.

*“Ignorance and ILLITERACY are obviously not synonymous; even illiterate masses can cast their ballots with intelligence, once they are informed.”*

—William Douglas, associate Supreme Court justice

See also: Judgment, Knowledge, Think, Understanding



## 123. Legal

*(LEE-guhl)*, adjective

Of or pertaining to law or the administration or practice of law; lawful.

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## NOUNS

**compurgation** (*kom-purr-GAY-shun*). A practice by which an accused person can be found not guilty if twelve or more people take an oath testifying to the validity of his claim of innocence.

*The Anglo-Saxon process of COMPURGATION is the basis of the modern American jury system.*

**habeas corpus** (*HAY-bee-us-CORE-puss*). A written order requiring a prisoner or person under arrest or confinement to be brought before a judge to assess whether the restraint of said person is lawful and proper.

*Following the nightclub brawl, Chad and Wendell managed to receive a writ of HABEAS CORPUS only after their father called the authorities and reminded them of his social contacts.*

**jurisprudence** (*joor-iss-PROO-dense*). The philosophy and methodology behind the practice of law.

*The study of JURISPRUDENCE was interminably dull to John; he longed to work with real clients and real court cases.*

**malefaction** (*mal-uh-FAK-shun*). A crime; evil deed; wrongdoing.

*It seems there is no shortage of public figures who are linked to indiscretions and MALEFACTIONS.*

**mandamus** (*man-DEY-mus*). A written order issued by a superior court to a lower one or to a corporation, official, etc. that a specific thing be done.

*The MANDAMUS is issued only when other remedies are not available.*

**manumission** (*man-yuh-MISH-uhn*). The formal act of freeing from slavery; emancipation.

*Prior to the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, MANUMISSION of slaves could occur upon the death of the slaveholder.*

**nomology** (*noh-MOL-uh-jee*). The science of law and lawmaking.

*Martha enjoyed learning about our legal system so much, that after earning her J.D., she continued her study of NOMOLOGY.*

**nonfeasance** (*non-FEEZ-unce*). Failure to perform (a given duty). Someone who is bound to act in a certain way and does not is guilty of nonfeasance.

*The failure of the passersby to aid the injured woman was a heart rending example of urban apathy and NONFEASANCE.*

**ordinance** (OR-dih-nance). A specific law or regulation.

*The lavish tree house Roger built for his kids was in clear violation of at least half a dozen local ORDINANCES.*

**tort** (TORT). In law, a civil misdeed requiring compensation of the victims.

*Cutting the branches off a neighbor's tree that went over the fence into your yard is, at most, a TORT, not a felony.*

## ADJECTIVES

**litigious** (*lih-TIJ-us*). Readily inclined to take someone to court; or, very argumentative.

*“Our wrangling lawyers . . . are so LITIGIOUS and busy here on earth, that I think they will plead their clients’ causes hereafter,—some of them in hell.”*

—Robert Burton, English scholar and vicar at Oxford University

**prima facie** (*pree-ma-FAY-shuh*). Something accepted upon the face of the evidence until further examination proves or disproved it.

*We have PRIMA FACIE evidence that it was Evelyn who fed those lies to the society page gossip columnists.*

## VERBS

**promulgate** (*PRAH-mull-gate*). To elevate a behavior or action—or the prohibition of a particular behavior or action—to the status of a law, rule, or regulation through public decree.

*The Department of Public Works PROMULGATED mandatory recycling of all paper waste in Bergen County.*

## ANTONYMS

**illicit** (*ih-LISS-it*). Illegal or morally unjustifiable; something not sanctioned by custom or law.

*We all know now that the money was acquired through ILLICIT means.*

**peccant** (*PEK-uhnt*). Breaking or disregarding a rule, principle, or established practice; wrong.

*John's PECCANT act landed him in hot water with the school administration.*

## 124. Limited

(*LIM-ih-tid*), adjective

Confined within bounds; restricted.

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## VERBS

**circumscribe** (SUR-kuhm-scrib). To encircle or encompass; confine.

*After the incident in the student union, our social activities were CIRCUMSCRIBED for the remainder of the semester.*

**constrain** (kuhn-STRAYN). To force into or hold in boundaries; confine.

*Alice felt the social mores of her family and friends would eventually CONSTRAIN her to a life of mediocrity and unhappiness.*

**constrict** (kuhn-STRIKT). To make smaller or tighter by binding or compressing.

*Refusing to be CONSTRICTED, Jack joyfully colored outside the lines.*

**delimit** (dih-LIM-it). To establish or mark the boundaries or limits of; demarcate.

*After squabbling with the neighbors for years, we had professional surveyors DELIMIT the property once and for all.*

**demarcate** (de-MAHR-kayt). To set the limits of; to distinguish; separate.

*All of our working areas were DEMARCATED with cubicles of various sizes.*

**prescribe** (pri-SKRIB). To set down or give rules or directions to be followed; direct.

*We thought we could build whatever we wanted on the land, but discovered that the town had PRESCRIBED the nature of all construction.*



## ADJECTIVES

**topical** (*TOP-uh-kul*). Having to do with matters of local or current interest.

*John wanted to learn about events in the Middle East, but the newscast only covered TOPICAL occurrences.*

## ANTONYMS

**boundless** (*BOUND-lis*). Unlimited; infinite; vast.

*“The world of reality has its limits; the world of the imagination is BOUNDLESS.”*

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher and writer

**fathomless** (*FATH-uhm-lis*). Too deep to be measured; bottomless; boundless.

*Try as we might, none of the students in class have stumped the professor with a question on any topic; his knowledge seems FATHOMLESS.*

## 125. Literature

*(LIT-er-uh-chur)*, noun

The body of writings of a specific language, people, or period; the profession and output of an author, especially creative prose or verse.

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## NOUNS

**belles-lettres** (bell-LET-reh). Literature considered as fine art; fictional work having a solely aesthetic function.

*Those who study rhetoric speak derisively of literature that exists for an aesthetic purpose only, and therefore ignore BELLES-LETTRES.*

**bibliomania** (bib-lee-oh-MAY-nee-uh). A preoccupation with the acquisition and ownership of books.

*Lauren's BIBLIOMANIA extends only to her stockpile of catalogs for exclusive shops.*

**bildungsroman** (BILL-dungs-roh-man). A coming-of-age novel, such as *The Catcher in the Rye* or *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

*Alex has started writing a BILDUNGSROMAN about his experiences in prep school.*

**breviary** (BREE-vee-air-ee). A brief summary or abridgement.

*She called it a BREVIARY, but Lana's recounting of her family's month on the Riviera was anything but short.*

**corrigendum** (kor-ih-JEHN-dum). An error to be corrected in a manuscript.

*The proofreader handed the manuscript back to Bill, who was horrified to find that it still contained hundreds of CORRIGENDA.*

**gazetteer** (gaz-ih-TEER). A geographical index or dictionary of places organized by name.

*The Rothschilds prefer their pilot simply head for the sun, rather than consult a GAZETTEER prior to short flights.*

**lexicography** (lex-ih-KOG-ruh-fee). The compiling, writing, and editing of dictionaries.

*Though he had never intended to pursue a career in LEXICOGRAPHY, Jeremy spent twenty years with Merriam-Webster, working his way up from researcher to editor.*

**lexicon** (LEK-sih-kon). A dictionary composed for a specific, narrowly defined (professional) audience; the vocabulary associated with a specific discipline or group.

*Arthur, though not a doctor, was well versed in the LEXICON of medicine.*

**magnum opus** (MAG-nem OH-pes). A great work, especially of art or literature; the chief work of an artist or author.

*All the King's Men could be considered Robert Penn Warren's MAGNUM OPUS.*

**monograph** (MON-uh-graff). A scholarly article or essay on a certain topic usually intended for an academic audience and not for the general public.

*Peterson's MONOGRAPH on theoretical physics was well received in the scientific community, although it certainly makes for tough reading for the layman.*

**necrology** (nuh-KROL-uh-jee). A list of people who have recently died; an obituary.

*Benjamin scoured the long NECROLOGY for the name of his father, but it was not there.*

**oeuvre** (OO-vruh). An artist's, writer's, or composer's body of work, treated as a whole.

*Esmerelda is familiar with and adores all of Puccini's OEUVRE, but many find his operas overly mawkish.*

**opus** (OH-puss). A major literary or musical work.

*The Breckinridges commissioned the composer's next OPUS, which will be debuted at the family's fall ball.*

**paleography** (pay-lee-OG-rah-fee). The study of ancient writings and inscriptions.

*In order to understand their discoveries, archeologists study PALEOGRAPHY.*

**palimpsest** (PAL-imp-sest). A parchment manuscript on which the text is written over older, earlier text, much like an oil portrait or landscape painted over another painting.

*The newest addition to the Pattersons' rare manuscript collection turned out to be a PALIMPSEST, covering a text nearly one thousand years old.*

**précis** (pray-SEE). A concise summary; abridgement; abstract.

*The authors were too invested in the work to be able to write an acceptable PRÉCIS.*

**protagonist** (pro-TAG-uh-nist). The lead character in a story, play, novel, etc.

*I stopped reading the book because I found the PROTAGONIST so unbelievable.*

**recension** (ree-SEN-shun). A critical revision of a literary work.

*Changes in literary tastes make a RECENSION of standard works seem like a good idea.*

**roman à clef** (ro-MON ah KLAY). A purportedly fictional work that only thinly veils the actual experiences of the author or of characters based on real personages.

*Truman Capote was ostracized by those in his circle when he published a devastating excerpt from a ROMAN À CLEF, Unanswered Prayers, that lampooned the frailties and indiscretions of the people who had been closest to him.*

**strophe** (STRO-fee). A stanza containing lines that do not conform to the type, style, or form of the poem in which they appear.

*Those not wearing haute couture stick out at our gatherings like STROPHES stick out in short poems.*

**tome** (TOAM). A large or scholarly book.

*“She carries a book but it is not / the TOME of the ancient wisdom, / the pages, I imagine, are the blank pages / of the unwritten volume of the new.”*

—Hilda Doolittle, American poet and memoirist

**tractate** (TRAK-tayt). A treatise.

*Jason spent more than six months polishing his first TRACTATE.*

**treatise** (TREE-tiss). A formal and systematic written work on the principles, facts, evidence, and conclusions of a subject.

*Mill’s TREATISE on the equality of women was revolutionary for its time.*

**variorum** (vair-ee-OR-em). An edition of a literary work containing alternative readings or notes by various editors or scholars.

*The publisher believed that the quantity of reviews warranted issuing a VARIORUM.*

**vignette** (vin-YET). A brief story, incident, or episode, usually told to illustrate some point.

*Adding a VIGNETTE or two to a speech can help make abstract ideas clearer.*

## VERBS

**emend** (*ee-MEND*). To change by means of editing; to correct (a text or reading).

*Many of Shakespeare's most famous lines, such as "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," are the result of a critic's choice to EMEND a troublesome source text.*

## ANTONYMS

**token** (TOH-kuhn). Something used to represent a fact or event.

*Archaeologists have evidence that the use of TOKENS predated writing.*



## 126. Live

(*LIV*), verb

To be alive; to be capable of vital functions; to continue to exist.

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## VERBS

**vivify** (VIV-ih-fie). To bring to life; to make lively or active.

*The characters in Keillor's stories are VIVIFIED through his almost uncanny sense of human nature and his knowledge of the importance of seemingly small events.*

## NOUNS

**modus vivendi** (MO-duss vih-VEN-dee). Lifestyle; a way of living.

*While most envied his seemingly carefree existence, Glen often found his extravagant MODUS VIVENDI rather empty and lonely.*

**sojourn** (SO-jern). A temporary visit or stay.

*The Israelites' SOJOURN in the desert lasted for forty long years.*

**subsistence** (sub-SIS-tense). The minimum—of food, water, clothing, shelter, and money—a person or family needs to survive.

*All we need for SUBSISTENCE are the basics: the finest of everything.*

**symbiosis** (sim-bee-OH-sis). A close interdependency between two organisms from two different species.

*The nouveau riche would like to believe they have a SYMBIOSIS with us, but, in fact, they remain wholly separate and distinct.*

## ADJECTIVES

**pastoral** (*PAS-tur-ul*). Pertaining to life in the country.

*To many critics, the novel's PASTORAL setting jarred against its themes of urban angst.*

**vivacious** (*vy-VAY-shuss*). Joyful; happy, spirited; possessing a positive attitude about and enthusiasm for life; living life to the fullest.

*Even after her family maintained some steep revenue losses, Sandra retained her VIVACIOUS character.*

## ANTONYMS

**defunct** (*dih-FUNKT*). Having ceased to exist.

*Milton continued to live in the past, following the dictates of old rules and DEFUNCT wisdoms.*

**inert** (*in-URHT*). Tending to be physically or mentally inactive.

*“Congress seems drugged and INERT most of the time. . . . Its idea of meeting a problem is to hold hearings or, in extreme cases, to appoint a commission.”*

—Shirley Chisholm, American congressional representative

## 127. Logical

*(LOJ-ih-kuhl)*, adjective

Correct reasoning; in accordance with the rules of logic; properly or correctly considered.

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## ADJECTIVES

**cogent** (*KOH-gent*). A case or argument presented in a reasoned, well-thoughtout, logical, compelling, and persuasive argument.

*Corey offered a very COGENT argument in favor of insider trading.*

## NOUNS

**equanimity** (*ee-kwa-NIM-ih-tee*). The ability to keep one's cool during times of stress, conflict, or trouble.

*When his mother locked her keys in the car, her young son responded with surprising EQUANIMITY.*

**syllogism** (*SIL-uh-jiz-um*). A form of logical argument that features two propositions and finishes with a conclusion. For example: "All elected Republican officials will be at the meeting; all the members of Congress from my state are elected Republican officials; therefore all the members of Congress from my state will be at the meeting."

*Aristotle's formulation of the SYLLOGISM as a tool for logical analysis is one of the most significant contributions to Western thought.*



## VERBS

**ratiocinate** (*rash-ee-OSS-inn-ate*). To work toward the solution of a problem through logical thinking and reason.

*Since the dawn of humanity, our best minds have failed to RATIOCINATE a way to avoid war.*

# ANTONYMS

**non sequitur** (*non-SEK-wi-tur*). Something that does not follow logically; a statement that has no basis in what has gone before.

*The professor pointed out the many NON SEQUITURS contained in the pamphlet.*

**paralogize** (*puh-RAL-uh-gize*). To draw conclusions that are illogical; faulty thinking.

*During times of stress, Michael was prone to PARALOGIZE.*

**quixotic** (*kwik-SOT-ick*). Pursuing a seemingly unreachable or at least extremely ambitious and difficult goal—one considered by many to be either idealistic or impractical, or both.

*“There is something QUIXOTIC in me about money, something meek and guilty. I want it and like it. But I cannot imagine insisting on it, pressing it out of people.”*

—Brenda Ueland, American author

## 128. Love

(*LUHV*), noun, verb

A strong and passionate affection or attachment to another person or persons.

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## NOUNS

**agape** (ah-GAH-pay). In Christianity, divine love for humanity, or human love that transcends customary boundaries; often used to describe an unselfish love that goes beyond sexuality or worldly concerns.

*The nurse's work among the poor and dispossessed seemed rooted not in a well-meaning and temporary humanitarian instinct but in a deeper and more profound AGAPE, totally unfamiliar to most of us.*

**billet-doux** (bill-ay-DOO). A love letter. (Plural: *billets-doux*.)

*The young couple exchanged BILLETS-DOUX almost every day the summer they were apart.*

**Casanova** (kaz-uh-NO-vuh). A man noted for his amorous activities.

*Phil likes to think of himself as a CASANOVA, but most women just think he's pathetic.*

**paramour** (PARE-uh-more). An illicit lover.

*Although the women in her circle made high-minded speeches about her morality, Mrs. Able knew full well that most of them had had a PARAMOUR at one time or another.*

**philogyny** (fi-LOJ-uh-nee). The love of or fondness for women.

*Zack's PHILOGYNY came naturally to him, having grown up with seven sisters.*

**polyandry** (POL-ee-an-dree). The practice of having two or more husbands at the same time.

*Women who practice POLYANDRY, when questioned closely, typically advise against it.*

**polygamy** (puh-LIG-uh-mee). The societal practice of having more than one spouse (especially, more than one wife) at a time.

*The sect's advocacy of POLYGAMY and group parenting eventually brought it into bitter conflict with the stern-minded townsfolk of Harris Hollow.*

**polygyny** (puh-LIJ-uh-nee). The practice of having two or more wives at the same time.

*POLYGNY is more common than most people realize, but when revealed, such examples always create public outrage.*

**swain** (SWAYN). A male lover.

*The regency romance was teeming with would-be SWAINS.*

**tryst** (*TRIST*). An appointment made by lovers to meet at a certain place and time.

*Since their families are of equal station, no one worries much about the supposedly secret TRYSTS between Josephine and Brock.*

## ADJECTIVES

**amatory** (AM-uh-tore-ee). Having to do with sexual love.

*Pete hasn't stopped sulking since Alice spurned his AMATORY advances at the office Christmas party.*

**narcissistic** (nar-sis-SIS-tik). Self-loving; egotistic; indifference to others.

*Self-promotion is one thing; the NARCISSISTIC zeal with which Gerald asserts himself is quite another.*

**smitten** (SMIT-uhn). Very much in love; struck, as though by a hard blow.

*Warren is so SMITTEN with Ellen that he's no longer productive.*

**uxorious** (uk-SORE-ee-us). Submissive or doting toward one's wife.

*Although Grandpa makes a show of rebellion against Grandma's strictures every now and then for our sake, he's as UXORIOUS as they come.*

## VERBS

**ogle** (OH-guhl). To look at in an amorous or impertinent way.

*No one would want to trade places with us if they only knew how tiresome it becomes to have the paparazzi constantly OGLING you.*

**osculate** (OS-kyuh-layt). To kiss.

*With practice, Jack was able to perfect his ability to OSCULATE.*

## ANTONYMS

**abhor** (*ab-HOR*). To experience a feeling of great repugnance or disgust.

*It was clear almost as soon as the dinner party had begun that Jennifer ABHORRED her half-sister.*

**antagonistic** (*an-tag-uh-NIS-tik*). Acting in a hostile, unfriendly manner; in opposition.

*“There must always remain something that is ANTAGONISTIC to good.”*

—Plato, Greek philosopher

See also: Sex



# M

## 129. Masculine

(*MAS-kyuh-lin*), adjective

Having qualities traditionally attributed to men; pertaining to male interests.

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## NOUNS

**androcentrism** (*an-druh-SEN-tri-zum*). An outlook that emphasizes a masculine point of view.

*“Larry,” Joan warned, “that ANDROCENTRISM may be all the rage in the locker room, but you’d better leave it out of our bedroom if you know what’s good for you.”*

**machismo** (*mah-CHEEZ-moh*). An exaggerated sense of manliness; a dominant perspective.

*These days, an expression of MACHISMO is rare in polite society and usually a target for ridicule.*

**patriarchy** (*PAY-tree-ark-ee*). A group ruled by a patriarch; an organization or clan in which lines of descent and inheritance are traced through the male.

*Martha accused her father of running a PATRIARCHY, arguing that she deserved to take on the leadership of the company far more than her younger brother.*

## ADJECTIVES

**priapic** (*pry-AP-ick*). Related to the phallus or to a man who is obsessed with his masculinity.

*The medication's warnings that some erections could last longer than four hours, led to a series of jokes of a PRIAPIC nature by late-night comics.*

**virile** (*VIR-ul*). Forcefully masculine; having the drive and energy thought to be common among men.

*It was hard for me to picture my grandfather as the VIRILE young man beaming out from that old photograph.*

## ANTONYMS

**gelding** (*GEL-ding*). A castrated animal and, by extension, an emasculated man.

*We called Al a GELDING, but he said he had no problem letting his wife, Mary, take charge of the couple's financial decisions.*

**muliebrity** (*myoo-lee-EB-ri-tee*). Having qualities traditionally attributed to women.

*Janet had been raised in a traditional household and taught to embrace her MULIEBRITY.*

## 130. Medicine

(*MED-uh-sin*), noun

The practice of preserving and restoring health through various therapies; treating disease.

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## ADJECTIVES

**congenital** (*kun-JEN-it-ul*). Present or existing from birth.

*The young child suffered from a CONGENITAL heart defect.*

**febrile** (*FEE-brul*). Feverish; marked by elevated body temperature.

*Due to Mother's current FEBRILE condition, we are uneasy about her accompanying us on the trip.*

**gravid** (*GRAV-id*). Large, due to pregnancy.

*Jean's GRAVID condition made it difficult for her to climb stairs.*

**hirsute** (*HUR-soot*). Very hairy.

*"Here you are, my HIRSUTE friend," Dr. Fredericks called out, "a nice juicy bone from the butcher."*

**pathological** (*Path-a-LODGE-ick-uhl*). Involving or caused by disease; evidencing or caused by an abnormal or extreme condition.

*Diane's new diet was so extreme it had PATHOLOGICAL effects that required hospitalization.*

## NOUNS

**genome** (*GEE-nome*). The collection of chromosomes that makes an individual organism unique from all others except its clone or identical twin.

*Blake has become convinced that the GENOMES of those among his most important social contacts have more commonalities than differences.*

**homeopathy** (*ho-mee-OP-uh-thee*). A means of treating a disease by administering small doses of medicine that in large doses would bring about effects similar to the disease being treated.

*HOMEOPATHY relies on the body's ability to develop immune responses in warding off disease.*

**lactation** (*lak-TAY-shun*). The production of milk from the breasts of a mother mammal so her young can feed by sucking on the nipple.

*When mother took us to visit the farm on one part of our property, she shielded our young eyes from the LACTATION of the various animals.*

**lysis** (*LYE-sis*). The gradual, successful conclusion of a disease.

*Martha was a real trooper and stayed with me through the entire LYSIS of my illness.*

**myalgia** (*mayh-AL-gee-uh*). Pain in the muscles.

*Peter experienced MYALGIA after every ride, but it always subsided by the next day.*

**myasthenia** (*my-us-THEE-nee-uh*). Muscle weakness.

*As people age, they often suffer from MYASTEHNIA, but physical exercise and activity can keep muscles healthy.*

**neuralgia** (*noo-RAL-juh*). Convulsive pain felt along one or more nerves.

*Janet didn't appreciate her sister's discomfort until she also started to feel the effects of NEURALGIA.*

**sternutation** (*stur-nyuh-TEY-shun*). A sneeze; sneezing.

*Cases of STERNUTATION, while amusing to the onlooker, can be seriously disruptive for the sufferer.*

## VERBS

**metastasize** (*meh-TA-sti-size*). The tendency of cancer cells to spread from a tumor throughout the body.

*Byron's cancer METASTASIZED to his brain despite his recent progress in treatment.*

**micturate** (*MIK-chuh-reyt*). To urinate.

*After taking the medication for a while, Ralph was relieved to find that he could MICTURATE without pain.*

**nictitate** (*NIK-ti-teyt*). To wink.

*Paul suffered from a rare condition that made him NICTITATE frequently, and it caused him considerable grief when he was around strangers.*

**palliate** (*PAL-ee-ate*). To treat a patient so that his symptoms abate even though he still has the disease.

*We gave Roberto some antacid in an attempt to PALLIATE his heartburn after eating the salsa.*



## ANTONYMS

**charlatan** (*SHAR-luh-tun*). A fake; fraud; a person falsely claiming to possess a given level of status, skills, or knowledge in order to deceive others.

*“No psychologist should pretend to understand what he does not understand. . . . Only fools and CHARLATANS know everything and understand nothing.”*

—Anton Chekhov, Russian playwright

**quackery** (*KWAK-uh-ree*). The methods of someone who pretends to have a knowledge of medicine.

*His practice was nothing more than expensive QUACKERY.*

## 131. Meeting

*(MEE-ting)*, noun

The process by which people come together; an assembly of or encounter between people.

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## NOUNS

**assignation** (as-ig-NAY-shun). A secret meeting between lovers.

*The countess's ASSIGNATIONS with the stable boy caused tongues to wag throughout the town.*

**conclave** (KON-klave). A secret meeting; also, the room in which this meeting is held.

*Fearing he might crack under pressure, the rebels did not include Eli in the CONCLAVE in which they planned their attack strategy.*

**confluence** (KON-flu-ence). A point of meeting or flowing together.

*It is on the issue of human spiritual growth that the two philosophies find their CONFLUENCE.*

**forum** (FOR-um). A gathering, meeting, or program held for the purpose of discussing matters of public or common concern.

*"Although I am sure your neighbor's constantly barking dog is irritating, Mrs. Wakefield," the chairman intoned, "the purpose of this FORUM is to discuss the proposed waste site."*

**liaison** (lee-AY-zawn). A romantic affair; the meeting of lovers.

*My LIAISONS with Margaret were held in such romantic locales that I believed we should arrive on horseback to complete the image.*

**rendezvous** (RON-day-voo). A meeting; especially, a secret meeting between lovers.

*Claire knew that if her mother found out about her RENDEZVOUS with Elton, she would be grounded for at least a week.*

**symposium** (sim-POSE-ee-um). A gathering of experts before an audience whose members may pose questions.

*The SYMPOSIUM was a disaster; both professors arrived an hour late, after most of the audience had given up and left.*

**tête-à-tête** (TET-ah-tet). A face-to-face meeting.

*Some of us had begun to believe that neighborhood children were pilfering from us, so we sat down the allegedly guilty parties and had a TÊTE-À-TÊTE.*

**tryst** (TRIST). An appointment made by lovers to meet at a certain place and time.

*Since their families are of equal station, no one worries much about the supposedly secret TRYSTS between Josephine and Brock.*

## VERBS

**convoke** (*kuhn-VOKE*). To call together for a meeting; to summon.

*An announcement went out over the intercom to CONVOKE seminar participants.*

## ANTONYMS

**discrete** (*dih-SKREET*). Separate and distinct; apart or detached from others.

*Each work was DISCRETE and stood on its own.*

**divergent** (*dih-VUR-juhnt*). Differing; diverging from others.

*“Music creates order out of chaos: for rhythm imposes unanimity upon the DIVERGENT, melody imposes continuity upon the disjointed, and harmony imposes compatibility upon the incongruous”*

—Yehudi Menuhin, Russian-American violinist

See also: Together

## 132. Memory

*(MEM-uh-ree)*, noun

The act or process of remembering; the mental ability to retain and revive facts, events, or impressions; the sum of what one remembers.

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## NOUNS

**anamnesis** (an-am-NEE-sis). A recalling or recollection of the past.

*Jack's ANAMNESES were vivid and painful, evoking powerful recollections of the one true love of his life now lost.*

**memoir** (MEM-wahr). A series of written reminiscences about people, places, and events composed by and from the point of view of someone with intimate knowledge of the details.

*The pretense extended even to the former president's MEMOIRS, in which he repeated his assertion that he had no knowledge of how or why the crucial minutes were erased from the tape.*

**memorabilia** (mem-er-uh-BIL-ee-uh). Things worth remembering or recording; things that stir recollections; mementos; souvenirs.

*John had a separate collection of MEMORABILIA for each of the family's vacations.*

**mnemonic** (neh-MON-ik). A rhyme, sentence, or other word pattern designed to help one memorize facts.

*"Roy G. Biv" is a MNEMONIC for the colors of a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.*

**reminiscence** (rem-uh-NIS-uhns). The act of remembering; a mental impression; memory.

*Confined to her bed, unable to read due to failing eyesight, Jane's dying grandmother hung on to the many happy REMINISCENCES of her life.*



## ADJECTIVES

**eidetic** (*EYE-dett-ick*). Describes a memory or mental image recalled with perfect clarity.

*I'd studied the travel brochures so much that I had a perfectly EIDETIC vision of what to expect on the cruise ship.*

**nepenthean** (*ni-PEN-thee-uhn*). Inducing a pleasurable feeling of forgetfulness, especially that of sorrow or trouble.

*Attending the concert and losing himself in the beautiful melodies had a NEPENTHEAN effect on Jack.*

## VERBS

**evoke** (*ee-VOKE*). To call forth or summon; to bring back to life through appeal to memory.

*The sight of the old mansion EVOKED many bittersweet memories for Charles.*

# ANTONYMS

**amnesia** (*am-NEE-zhuh*). Partial or total loss of memory.

*“A nation that forgets its past can function no better than an individual with AMNESIA.”*

—David McCullough, American author

**oblivion** (*uh-BLIV-ee-un*). The state of being beyond memory and utterly forgotten; lost to human recollection.

*To Tim, the fact that his book was being allowed to go out of print meant that he as an author had been consigned to OBLIVION.*

## 133. Mistake

(*mi-STAYK*), noun

An error in understanding or perception; a blunder; fault.

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## NOUNS

**aberration** (*ab-uh-REY-shun*). A departure from what is true, correct, or right; a deviation from the normal or typical.

*“When will we reach the point that hunting, the pleasure in killing animals for sport, will be regarded as a mental ABERRATION?”*

—Albert Schweitzer, German missionary and philosopher

**blunder** (*BLUHN-der*). A significant, foolish, or thoughtless mistake; stupid and careless error.

*Driving drunk is a BLUNDER that most thoughtful people make only once.*

**contretemps** (*KON-truh-tahn*). An inopportune occurrence with embarrassing results.

*“Pan had been amongst them . . . the little god Pan, who presides over social CONTRETEMPS and unsuccessful picnics.”*

—E. M. Forster, English novelist

**faux pas** (*FOH pah*). A serious breach of social protocol or etiquette.

*Looking a Japanese business customer directly in the eye during conversation is considered an egregious FAUX PAS.*

**gaffe** (*GAF*). A social blunder.

*When he was shown the door, Jack realized that his latest thoughtless remark was a bigger GAFFE than he realized.*

**mea culpa** (*me-uh-KULP-uh*). An acknowledgement, usually public, of a blunder or mistake.

*After the politician made racially tinged comments, he spent the better part of a month offering MEA CULPAS on national television.*

**solecism** (*SOL-ih-si-zum*). Something that deviates from the normal, accepted, or proper order; inconsistency.

*She was sure that her SOLECISM would be forgiven and forgotten in time.*

## ANTONYMS

**definitude** (*dih-FIN-ih-tyood*). Definiteness; precision.

*There was no question about the solution; Jason had studied the problem and could provide the correct answer with DEFINITUDE.*

**faultless** (*FAWLT-lis*). Without fault or defect; perfect.

*“Whoever thinks a FAULTLESS piece to see, / Thinks what ne’er was, nor is, nor e’er shall be.”*

—Alexander Pope, English poet

See also: False

## 134. Moderation

*(mod-uh-RAHY-shun)*, noun

An absence of excess or extremes; calmness; the practice of restraint.

---

## NOUNS

**abstinence** (AB-ste-nence). Voluntarily foregoing the indulgence of an appetite; denial of certain foods and drinks thought to be harmful to one's health; refraining from behavior considered immoral.

*After years of indulgence, it was difficult for Evelyn to follow her doctor's order of complete ABSTINENCE from liquor.*

**ascetic** (ah-SEE-tick). A person who deliberately chooses to live a plain and simple life; characterized by lack of material possessions and strong self-discipline in all matters of behavior.

*When Steve Jobs started Apple, a magazine profile portrayed him as an ASCETIC, noting that he had no furniture in his apartment.*

**temperance** (TEM-per-ance). Moderation in eating and drinking; abstinence from consuming alcoholic beverages.

*Cicero said that TEMPERANCE is "the firm and moderate dominion of reason over passion and other unrighteous impulses of the mind."*



## VERBS

**sublimate** (*SUB-lih-mate*). To transfer the force of an unacceptable inclination or impulse to a pursuit considered proper or wholesome.

*There is a popular—but unproven—notion that butchers are secretly violent, and that they choose their profession as a means of SUBLIMATING their passions.*

## ADJECTIVES

**abstemious** (*ab-STEE-me-us*). To eat plain and simple food in moderation, avoiding overindulgence in drink and gluttony at the table.

*Gandhi led an ABSTEMIOUS life.*

**monastic** (*moh-NAS-tik*). Relating to the practice of withdrawing from society to live a quiet, contemplative life, often dedicated to religious faith.

*Saint Pachomius founded the first organized Christian MONASTIC community.*

**spartan** (*SPAHR-tin*). Self-disciplined, frugal, and stoic. People who lived in the ancient Greek city of Sparta were known for their discipline and austerity.

*Paul lives such a SPARTAN life that his apartment has more exercise equipment than furniture.*

**staid** (*STAYD*). Fixed and settled; not distinctive; sedate; prim.

*Even though the Sandersons are an important family, we could hardly last the requisite hour at the family's STAID winter ball.*

## ANTONYMS

**libertine** (*LIB-er-teen*). Licentious and free of moral restraint; or, a person so characterized.

*“It is easier to make a saint out of a LIBERTINE than out of a prig.”*

—George Santayana, author and philosopher

**licentious** (*ly-SEN-shus*). Promiscuous; slutty; someone who is sexually uninhibited and free.

*Janine’s LICENTIOUS behavior was really a cry for attention, the school psychologist was convinced.*

**profligate** (*PROF-lih-gayt*). Extravagant; wasteful; activity, expenditures, or indulgences beyond that any reasonable person would desire.

*My PROFLIGATE expenditures quickly came to a halt when my bank account reached zero.*

**roué** (*roo-AY*). A licentious man; a libertine or lecher.

*Although Ernest’s dalliances might have been understandable when he was a young man, they were more difficult for his family to forgive in his later years, when he came to resemble nothing so much as a tired and lonely old ROUÉ.*

## 135. Modest

*(MOD-ist)*, adjective

Having or showing an unassuming or humble opinion of one's own achievements, merits, abilities, etc.; free from vanity or pretension.

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## ADJECTIVES

**chary** (CHAIR-ee). Shy; timid; careful; wary.

*Martha was CHARY of trying anything new, whether restaurants, movies, vacation destinations, or even grocery stores.*

**circumspect** (SIR-kum-spekt). Prudent, cautious, considering from all sides.

*“I smiled, / I waited, / I was CIRCUMSPECT; / O never, never, never write that I / missed life or loving.”*

—Hilda Doolittle, American poet and memoirist

**deferential** (def-uh-REN-shul). Showing respect to someone as a superior; having a humble demeanor.

*A DEFERENTIAL attitude has no place in a respectful relationship.*

**demure** (di-MYOOR). Affecting a reserved and shy appearance; outwardly retiring.

*Mr. Atkins found the Hallis twins DEMURE, and wondered what they would say about him when he left.*

**diffident** (DIFF-ih-dent). Uncertain about making a decision or taking an action; lacking confidence and boldness.

*If you feel DIFFIDENT about driving a Rolls Royce, you can always buy a Bentley.*

**dubious** (DOO-bee-uss). Tending to be skeptical, uncertain, or doubtful.

*His lack of esteem made him DUBIOUS about forming relationships.*

**reticent** (REH-tih-scent). Reluctance to openly express one's thoughts, feelings, and personal business to other people; reserved; behaving like an introvert in social situations.

*“The shorter poems tend to be RETICENT, psychologically acute love poems about the shifting inequalities of love.”*

—Edward Mendelson, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University

**unassuming** (uhn-uh-SOOM-ing). Modest and unpretentious.

*The Binghamtons just bought a lovely, UNASSUMING starter home in the town where their families live.*

**verecund** (VER-ih-kuhnd). Bashful; modest.

*Paul's VERECUND manner makes it difficult to carry on a conversation with him.*

## ANTONYMS

**brazen** (*BREY-zuhn*). Having no shame; impudent; bold.

*The prosecutor expertly summarized the defendant's BRAZEN disregard for the health and safety of innocent bystanders in the commission of his heinous crime.*

**depraved** (*dih-PREYVD*). Morally bad; corrupt; perverted.

*"We Americans have always considered Hollywood, at best, a sinkhole of DEPRAVED venality. And, of course, it is."*

—David Mamet, American playwright

See also: Moderation

## 136. Mourn

(*MAWRN*), verb

To feel or express sorrow; lament; grieve; to show the conventional signs of grief.

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## NOUNS

**dirge** (DURJ). A funeral song; a song of mourning.

*The DIRGE from Cymbeline, according to Professor Alpert, is the only worthwhile passage to be found in that seldom-produced Shakespeare play.*

**elegy** (ELL-uh-jee). A poem of mourning; a poem reflecting on and praising the deceased.

*At the funeral, Mitch read a touching ELEGY for his grandmother, reminding all present of the life of kindness and sacrifice she had led.*

**eulogy** (YOO-luh-gee). Speech or writing in praise of a person, typically used for a person who has recently died.

*Diane delivered a EULOGY for her uncle that managed to be simultaneously sad and heart-warming.*

**lamentation** (lam-en-TAY-shun). An expression of mourning.

*Karl heard groans of LAMENTATION from his mother's room.*

**solace** (SOL-uss). Consolation; to sympathize with and console.

*The fact that he had thrown three touchdowns was little SOLACE to Jim; all he could think about was losing the game.*

## ADJECTIVES

**bereaved** (*bih-REEVD*). In a state of mourning; deeply sorrowful because of the loss of a loved one.

*The most difficult part of Father Maurice's job was providing solace for those in his parish who were BEREAVED.*

**funereal** (*fyoo-NIR-ee-uhl*). Reminiscent of a funeral; dark, brooding, and mournful.

*The FUNERIAL tone of the meeting was not at all what we had in mind to raise morale.*

**lugubrious** (*loo-GOO-bree-us*). Mournful in the extreme.

*You may consider Steven's poems "dark"; to me, they are simply LUGUBRIOUS.*

**plaintive** (*PLAIN-tive*). Expressing sorrow or sadness; mournful.

*Even the singing of birds had a PLAINTIVE sound at the house for weeks after our dog Sasha died.*

## VERBS

**rue** (ROO). To be sorrowful; to mourn or regret bitterly.

*After spending prom night at home watching movies by herself, Susan began to RUE the day she had rejected Mark so cruelly.*

## ANTONYMS

**exult** (ig-ZUHLT). To rejoice greatly; be jubilant; to feel triumphant joy.

*“Arms are instruments of ill omen. When one is compelled to use them, it is best to do so without relish. There is no glory in victory, and to glorify it despite this is to EXULT in the killing of men.”*

—Lao Tzu, Chinese Taoist philosopher

**fete** (FEYT). To celebrate; to honor or entertain.

*In honor of their victory, the baseball team was FETED at a celebratory dinner sponsored by the town’s recreation department.*

See also: Sad

## 137. Movement

(*MOOV-muhnt*), noun

The act or result of moving; a style or manner of moving.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**gyrating** (*JYE-ray-ting*). Of a circular or spiral pattern.

*When he first appeared on the Ed Sullivan show, Elvis Presley's GYRATING hips during his act caused quite a stir.*

**serpentine** (*SUR-pen-teen*). Snakelike in shape or movement.

*The dancer's SERPENTINE movements transfixed the crowd.*

## VERBS

**maunder** (MAWN-dehr). To move, speak, or act in a random, meaningless manner.

*Ricardo's speech MAUNDERS so much that you'd never know he was heir to one of Central America's largest fortunes or was educated in the finest schools.*

**undulate** (UN-jew-late). To move back and forth or from side to side in a smooth, slow motion.

*Barbara and Bentley UNDULATED gracefully at their family's private ice rink.*

**yaw** (YAW). An erratic, side-to-side motion; or, to swerve.

*A fast-moving cold front caused the airplane to YAW dangerously for several minutes.*

# ANTONYMS

**quiescent** (kwee-ESS-ehnt). Being at rest, inactive, or motionless.

*“There is a brief time for sex, and a long time when sex is out of place. But when it is out of place as an activity there still should be the large and quiet space in the consciousness where it lives QUIESCENT.”*

—D. H. Lawrence, British author

**recumbent** (rih-KUHM-bent). Inactive, idle; lying down.

*During our Italian cruise, we spent most of our time RECUMBENT on the bow of the yacht, soaking up the sun’s rays.*

**repose** (rih-POHZ). To be in a position or state of rest.

*“The wholesome relief, REPOSE, content; / And this bunch, pluck’d at random from myself; / It has done its work—I tossed it carelessly to fall where it may.”*

—Walt Whitman, American poet and humanist

**sedentary** (SEHD-n-tare-ee). Sitting a great deal and taking little exercise.

*All we have to do is hire a personal trainer if our SEDENTARY habits begin to have negative effects on our well-being.*

**transfix** (trans-FIKS). To hold motionless; to fasten as if pierced through.

*The sound of a slamming door instantly TRANSFIXED Martha and her husband.*

See also: Travel



## 138. Mysterious

(*mi-STEER-ee-us*), adjective

Of, containing, implying, or characterized by mystery; that which excites curiosity and wonder but is difficult or impossible to explain.

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## ADJECTIVE

**arcane** (Are-CAYNE). Strange and mysterious; understood only by the initiated.

*Bill's ARCANÉ knowledge of all Lexus models and their accessories is just a waste of gray matter.*

**enigmatic** (en-ig-MATT-ik). Mysterious, puzzling, and difficult to figure out.

*"The interest in life does not lie in what people do, nor even in their relations to each other, but largely in the power to communicate with a third party, antagonistic, ENIGMATIC, yet perhaps persuadable, which one may call life in general."*

—Virginia Woolf, British essayist and novelist

**inscrutable** (in-SKROO-tuh-bull). Mysterious and not easy to understand.

*"I suppose I now have the reputation of being an INSCRUTABLE dipsomaniac. One woman here originated the rumour that I am extremely lazy and will never do or finish anything."*

—James Joyce, Irish author and playwright

**metaphysical** (met-ih-FIZ-ih-kuhl). Beyond the physical or material; supernatural or transcendental.

*"Art is the highest task and proper METAPHYSICAL activity of this life."*

—Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher

**recondite** (REHK-un-dite). Beyond typical knowledge and understanding.

*For most people, opera, polo, and fine wine remain RECONDITE subjects.*

**spiritual** (SPIR-ih-choo-uhl). Of or pertaining to the spirit as distinguished from the body; supernatural.

*"Military power wins battles, but SPIRITUAL power wins wars."*

—General George Marshall, American military commander

## NOUNS

**prestidigitation** (*PRESS-tih-dih-ji-TAY-shun*). The performance of sleightof-hand magic tricks.

*The New Year's Eve gala at the Worthingtons' included sumptuous meals, a full orchestra, and even a practitioner of PRESTIDIGITATION who amazed the children with her performance.*

## ANTONYMS

**palpable** (*PAL-pah-bull*). Capable of being touched, felt, or handled; tangible.

*“Popular opinions, on subjects not PALPABLE to sense, are often true, but seldom or never the whole truth.”*

—John Stuart Mill, English ethical theorist

**tangible** (*TAN-juh-buhl*). Able to be touched or felt by hand; having form and substance; real or actual; definite.

*“The distinctive nature of a child is to always live in the TANGIBLE present.”*

—John Ruskin, English writer and critic

# N

## 139. Name

(*NAYME*), noun

A word or phrase by which a person or thing is known.

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# NOUNS

**appellation** (ap-pull-AYE-shun). A formal name, label, or title.

*Even though he has only an honorary degree, he insists on being called by the APPELLATION “doctor” everywhere he goes.*

**cognomen** (kog-NO-muhn). A nickname; a surname.

*He doesn’t mind being called “Leopold,” but he prefers his COGNOMEN, “Lee.”*

**misnomer** (miss-NO-mur). An incorrect or inappropriate name.

*Vlad the Impaler, the historical antecedent for the Dracula character, was a man apparently intent on demonstrating to the world that his name was no MISNOMER.*

**moniker** (MON-ih-kur). Name; nickname.

*The rock star Sting has revealed in interviews that even his parents and children refer to him by his famous MONIKER.*

**nom de guerre** (nom duh GARE). A name taken or bestowed during wartime.

*Fred’s NOM DE GUERRE in the regiment was Rookie, and he did not like it.*

**nom de plume** (nom duh PLOOM). An author’s pseudonym or pen name.

*The writer Samuel Langhorne Clemens is better known by his NOM DE PLUME, Mark Twain.*

**sobriquet** (SOH-bri-kay). A nickname; an assumed name.

*Terrence was never comfortable with his given name and preferred to use the SOBRIQUET “Terry.”*

# ADJECTIVES

**eponymous** (*eh-PON-eh-muss*). Having a name derived from a real or fictional person, such as a comet being named after its discoverer or the mythical Romulus giving his name to Rome.

*Josephine spends as much time as possible sailing in her EPONYMOUS yacht.*

**innominate** (*ih-NOM-uh-nit*). Having no specific name; not named; anonymous.

*The INNOMINATE character in last night's movie revealed himself at the conclusion as the hero's long-lost brother.*

**nominal** (*NAHM-ih-nl*). In name only; supposed.

*As our NOMINAL leader, the chairman was permitted to attend any meeting he wished to, although he never spoke.*

**patronymic** (*pat-ruh-NIM-ik*). Derived from the name of one's father or ancestor; indicating descent.

*In that community, the PATRONYMIC "Williamson" was very common.*

**soi-disant** (*swah-dih-SAHNT*). Self-styled; so-called.

*A SOI-DISANT lady's man, Gary's focus was always on his next conquest.*

**titular** (*TITCH-uh-luhr*). A person who is a leader by title only, but lacks any real power.

*The queen is the TITULAR head of the United Kingdom.*

# ANTONYMS

**allonym** (AL-uh-nim). Someone else's name taken by an author; a book carrying such a name.

*Charlie thought that by using an ALLONYM his work would be taken more seriously, but using "Washington Irving" only brought him ridicule.*

**incognito** (in-cog-NEE-to). Hidden or unknown; having one's real identity unknown.

*"The INCOGNITO of an inn is one of its striking privileges."*

—William Hazlitt, British writer



## 140. Narrow-minded

(*NAR-oh-MAHYN-did*), adjective

Limited in outlook; bigoted; not receptive to new ideas.

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# ADJECTIVES

**bourgeois** (*boor-ZHWAH*). Pertaining or relating to the middle-class values; conventional viewpoints.

“The representation of the garrison thus turned out to be incomparably more moderate and BOURGEOIS than the soldier masses.” —Leon Trotsky, Bolshevik revolutionary and Marxist theorist

**doctrinaire** (*DOK-truh-NAIR*). To apply theories without consideration for practical problems; impractically visionary; dictatorial.

*When he returned from the management workshop, Dave was somewhat less DOCTRINAIRE in his approach with the team.*

**hidebound** (*HIDE-bound*). Inflexible and holding narrow opinions.

*Arthur can be rather HIDEBOUND when pontificating on the virtues of the classic era versus the condition of the automobile industry at present.*

**myopic** (*my-AHP-ick*). Narrow-mindedness or short-sightedness in one's views; lack of discernment.

*Your MYOPIC views will win you few votes during the election, Senator.*

**parochial** (*puh-ROH-kee-uhl*). Very restricted in outlook; narrow views.

*They may talk “big picture” but voters can generally be counted on to express PAROCHIAL views at the ballot box.*

**provincial** (*pruh-VIN-shuhl*). Having the characteristics of someone unsophisticated; limited in outlook.

*From his PROVINCIAL outlook on life, you would never guess that Paul attended an Ivy League college.*

**puritanical** (*pyoor-ih-TAN-ih-kuhl*). Extremely or excessively strict in matters of morals and religion.

*Judith could almost see the PURITANICAL fire in her mother's eyes when they started to discuss dating habits.*

**sectarian** (*seck-TARE-ee-un*). Narrow-minded and limited in outlook.

*The competing cliques' SECTARIAN squabbles captured the interest of the entire school.*

## NOUNS

**Babbitt** (*BAB-it*). A person who clings to narrow-minded, materialistic ideals of the middle class; the main character in Sinclair Lewis's novel *Babbitt* (1922).

*Jerome may not be the most open-minded businessman, but he's no BABBITT.*

# ANTONYMS

**catholic** (*KATH-uh-lik*). Having broad sympathies or understanding; universal in extent; liberal.

*Margaret's CATHOLIC taste in art was well known, and her house was an explosion of styles and genres.*

**cosmopolitan** (*koz-muh-POL-ih-tuhn*). Belonging to the whole world, not national or local; a person who is free from local or provincial bias.

“To be really COSMOPOLITAN, a man must be at home even in his own country.”

—Thomas W. Higginson, American clergyman and author

## 141. Necessary

(*NESS-uh-ser-ee*), adjective

That which cannot be dispensed with; essential; indispensable.

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## ADJECTIVES

**de rigueur** (*deuh-rih-GER*). Strictly required by etiquette, taste, fashion, or usage.

*Since black tie and tails were DE RIGUEUR for the social events his new wife attended regularly, Julian found himself buying a tuxedo for the first time in his life.*

**inherent** (*in-HARE-unt*). Intrinsic; necessary; an important or essential part of something.

*Dwayne's INHERENT reluctance to entrust newcomers with tasks of any significance was a major problem for the company.*

## NOUNS

**manifest destiny** (*MAN-ih-fest-DESS-tin-ee*). Expansion into foreign lands, justified as being necessary or benevolent.

*“It’s not greed and ambition that makes wars—it’s goodness. Wars are always fought for the best of reasons, for liberation or MANIFEST DESTINY, always against tyranny and always in the best interests of humanity.”*

—James Garner in *The Americanization of Emily*

**requisite** (*REK-wiz-it*). A mandatory action, requirement, or condition; or, necessary and mandatory.

*Being physically fit is a REQUISITE for getting a job as a fireman.*

**sine qua non** (*SEE-nay kwa NON*). An essential feature (of something).

*Many people consider a happy ending to be the SINE QUA NON of a proper comedy.*

## VERBS

**necessitate** (*nuh-SESS-ih-tate*). To make necessary; to obligate.

*“Each coming together of man and wife, even if they have been mated for many years, should be a fresh adventure; each winning should NECESSITATE a fresh wooing.”*

—Marie Carmichael Stopes, British scientist and birth-control pioneer



# ANTONYMS

**extrinsic** (iks-TRINZ-ik). Not part of the true nature of something; not essential.

*The revolution was less of a spontaneous eruption of anger against capitalism as a system, and more of a reaction to EXTRINSIC forces like the constant oil shortages that came about because of international sanctions.*

**gratuitous** (gruh-TOO-ih-tuss). Unnecessary; inappropriately excessive; uncalled for.

*His GRATUITOUS attacks on the popular governor only weakened his standing among voters.*

**obviate** (OB-vee-ate). To anticipate, and therefore prevent, difficulties or disadvantages; make unnecessary.

*The research department provided sufficient data, thus the problem was OBVIATED before it reached crisis proportions.*

**rigmarole** (RIG-muh-roll). Absurdly complicated procedures and instructions; a bunch of unnecessary baloney.

*The club had some value to him in business, but he quickly grew tired of all the RIGMAROLE at meetings.*

**superfluous** (soo-PER-flew-us). Excessive and unnecessary.

*Some people never seem to be aware that wearing more than a hint of fine jewelry is SUPERFLUOUS.*

## 142. Novice

(*NOV-iss*), noun

One who is new to a profession, trade, or sport; a beginner.

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## NOUNS

**abecedarian** (ay-bee-see-DARE-ee-un). A beginner; someone just learning the rudiments of a task, skill, job, etc.

*Paul is an expert in a sea kayak, but when it comes to snow skiing, he's an ABECEDARIAN.*

**ingénue** (AHN-zhuh-new). From the French, meaning “naive,” an actress who specializes in playing the part of an innocent or unworldly young woman.

*“I always chose sophisticated parts because you can't really be interesting as a young girl or outstanding as an INGÉNUE.”*

—Norma Shearer, American actress

**juvenilia** (joo-vuh-NILL-yuh). Early work by a creative artist, usually produced when the artist was young.

*Lorna turned toward the stock market and away from poetry after we read her JUVENILIA and laughed uproariously.*

**neophyte** (NEE-uh-fyte). A recent convert; someone whose newfound zeal is not balanced by experience.

*“Like footmen and upstairs maids, wine stewards are portrayed as acolytes of the privileged, ever eager to intimidate the NEOPHYTE and spurn the unwary.”*

—Frank J. Priol, former *New York Times* wine columnist

**parvenu** (PAR-vuh-new). Someone who has recently gained wealth, prestige, or an important position but has not yet figured out how to act appropriately in that new position.

*Jed Clampett, of classic television's Beverly Hillbillies, is a great example of a PARVENU.*

**protégé** (PRO-tuh-zhay). Someone aided by another influential person; a person who is protected, encouraged, or helped (for instance, in career matters) by another of superior status or rank.

*Harry was always willing to mentor new hires and would often seek out a willing PROTÉGÉ to support.*

**tenderfoot** (TEN-der-foot). A newcomer.

*Walking into the project team meeting, Alice hoped that she didn't look like a complete TENDERFOOT.*

**tyro** (TIE-roh). From the Latin, meaning “recruit,” a beginner or a novice.

*Though a TYRO, Madeline quickly mastered cross-country skiing during her jaunt to Switzerland.*

**whelp** (HWELP). The offspring of a female dog or of certain other animals.

*Dorothy thought it amusing to refer to her new assistant by the term “WHELP.”*

**wunderkind** (VOON-der-kint). One who succeeds in business, or a similar endeavor, at a comparatively young age.

*Alex would be a WUNDERKIND in the firm even without his father’s connections.*

**yearling** (YEER-ling). An animal that has entered its second year; also, a horse that is one year old, dating from the beginning of the year following its foaling.

*Many of our family’s racehorses are YEARLINGS, which we put to pasture after their retirement.*

## ADJECTIVES

**callow** (KAL-oh). Lacking experience, immature.

*Ellis, a CALLOW youth accompanying Madame Hempstead, seemed not to understand that his joke about the ambassador's choice of underwear was inappropriate for a state dinner.*

**fledgling** (FLEJ-ling). Young or inexperienced.

*The FLEDGLING reporter had little respect around the newsroom.*

**puerile** (PYOO-er-ill). Immature, babyish, infantile.

*"An admiral whose PUERILE vanity has betrayed him into a testimonial . . .[is] sufficient to lure the hopeful patient to his purchase."*

—Samuel Hopkins Adams, American journalist

## ANTONYMS

**adroit** (*ah-DROYT*). Skilled or clever in a particular pursuit.

*Years of experience have made Janet an ADROIT organizer and her events are always flawless.*

**doyen** (*doi-EN*). The senior member of a group; a person considered as knowledgeable or skilled as a result of experience in some field.

*Paul felt that his education had enabled him to become a valuable mentor and DOYEN at the museum.*

# O

## 143. Obstruct

(*uhb-STRUKT*), verb

To block or stop up with obstacles or impediments; bar; hinder.

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## VERBS

**encumber** (in-KUHM-ber). To load something—or someone—down with burdens; in legal terms, to place a lien on something.

*You can't lift your backpack if you ENCUMBER it with all sorts of stuff you don't need!*

**fetter** (FET-er). To put restraints on; confine.

*Unnatural fears FETTER David's imagination and keep him locked inside his house.*

**impede** (im-PEED). To obstruct progress; to block.

*The fire regulations are quite clear on the question of storage in this hallway; nothing is allowed to IMPEDE access to the main exit.*

**mire** (MIRE). To cause to be stuck in mire; hamper; hold back.

*In the early going, the administration found itself MIREN in issues far from its stated goal of improving the economy.*

**occlude** (oh-KLOOD). To block or obstruct; to close off a passage or entranceway.

*Debris from the second-floor construction OCCLUDES the entryway to the laundry room in Linda's beach house.*

**stymie** (STYE-mee). To thwart; to prevent (another) from achieving a goal.

*The reporter's attempts to get to the bottom of the scandal were STYMIED by the refusal of the principals to talk to him—either on or off the record.*

**trammel** (TRAM-uhl). To entangle; confine; restrain.

*Jason is an intelligent person, so it surprised us when he explained his theory that education TRAMMELS the thought process.*



## ANTONYMS

**expedite** (*EK-spi-dahyt*). To speed up or make easy the progress of; hasten; facilitate.

*“The art of statesmanship is to foresee the inevitable and to EXPEDITE its occurrence.”*

—Charles M. de Talleyrand, French statesman

**precipitate** (*pri-SIP-ih-teyt*). To hasten the occurrence of; to cause to happen before expected.

*“It is always one’s virtues and not one’s vices that PRECIPITATE one’s disaster.”*

—Rebecca West, English writer

## 144. Old

(*OHLD*), adjective

Having lived or been in existence for a long time; not young; aged.

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## NOUNS

**anachronism** (*ah-NAK-ruh-niz-em*). A person, place, thing, or idea whose time has passed, and that seems to belong to an earlier age.

*His three record players—and the fact that he doesn't even know what an mp3 is—make Jim something of an ANACHRONISM.*

**antecedent** (*an-tih-SEE-dent*). The ancestor of an existing product, idea, etc.

*IBM's electronic typewriter with storage was the ANTECEDENT of the modern PC.*

**déjà vu** (*day-zhuh VOO*). The experience of seeming to have seen or experienced a present event at some time in the past.

*Those who remember the format of last year's test may feel a sense of DÉJÀ VU upon reviewing this year's.*

**flashback** (*FLASH-back*). A scene containing events from the past interjected into a chronological series of present-day events.

*Casablanca's FLASHBACK scenes of the two lovers during their time in Paris give us a sense of the love they shared—and the magnitude of Rick's loss.*

**mossback** (*MAWSS-back*). A person with outdated values and beliefs, especially someone who tries to foist those beliefs and values onto others; old-fashioned.

*Far from being a MOSSBACK, my grandfather remains committed to new ideas.*

**recidivism** (*rih-SID-ih-viz-um*). Repeated relapse into a past condition or behavior.

*The rate of RECIDIVISM for inmates in this institution is woefully high, Warden.*

**restitution** (*res-ti-TOO-shun*). Compensation for a past misdeed; acknowledgment of the wrongness of an act and the attempt to repair the damage caused by it.

*A bill authorizing RESTITUTION to the citizens interned in prison camps recently cleared Congress.*

**yore** (*YORE*). Former days; an era long past.

*In days of YORE, scribes sat in their chambers copying out long manuscripts and dreaming, I like to believe, of copiers and word processors.*

## ADJECTIVES

**antediluvian** (an-ti-de-LOO-vee-en). Literally, before the (Biblical) flood, thus woefully out-of-date; extremely old-fashioned.

*Rachel's ideas are outmoded, but those in Paul's report are practically ANTEDILUVIAN.*

**archaic** (ar-KAY-ik). Relating to or resembling something from the past; antiquated.

*Grandma refused to use our washing machine to clean clothes, insisting instead on her ARCHAIC washboard and bucket.*

**atavistic** (at-uh-VIS-tic). Having characteristics regressing to a more primitive type; resembling a distant relative.

*I can't help thinking that when the men all congregate around the barbecue, some ATAVISTIC instinct from the stone age is at work.*

**belated** (bee-LAY-ted). Late or tardy; delayed. *Belated* refers to anything past due.

*Jane sent a BELATED birthday card, but still felt guilty about forgetting her mother's birthday.*

**bygone** (BYE-gone). Something gone by; having taken place in the past. *The inn calls to mind a BYGONE era of Southern hospitality.*

**erstwhile** (URST-hwile). Former; of or pertaining to a long-past time.

*Boston Red Sox fans can only dream of what might have been had their ERSTWHILE star Babe Ruth not been sold to their archrivals, the New York Yankees.*

**hoary** (HOAR-ee). Impressively old; ancient.

*"Feminism has tried to dismiss the femme fatale as a misogynist libel, a HOARY cliché. But the femme fatale expresses women's ancient and eternal control of the sexual realm."*

—Camille Paglia, American author, feminist, and social critic

**retroactive** (ret-ro-AK-tiv). Effective back to a stated point in time.

*We will be raising your salary to \$100,000 a year, Perkins, RETROACTIVE to January 1.*

**whilom** (HWHY-lum). Former, erstwhile.

*I'm afraid our WHILOM friendship has not survived this last betrayal.*

**wizened** (WIZ-und). Old; shriveled.

*The subject of the documentary was a WIZENED old man of ninety-seven who happened to be the oldest living Bolshevik.*

## VERBS

**reminisce** (*rem-uh-NISS*). To recall the past; to remember; to have memories.

*I used to like to sit on the porch swing with Grandma on those cool summer nights and listen to her REMINISCE about her childhood in Italy.*

## ANTONYMS

**embryonic** (*em-bree-ON-ik*). In an early stage; undeveloped; rudimentary; incipient.

*In certain developing countries, democracy or any sort of representative government is still in an EMBRYONIC stage.*

**juvenescent** (*joo-vuh-NES-uhnt*). Becoming young; growing youthful.

*A great and profitable industry is built upon the public's desire for products that claim JUVENESCENT effects.*



## 145. Opinion

*(uh-PIN-yihn)*, noun

A belief not based on absolute certainty or real knowledge but on what seems to be true, valid, or likely to one's own mind; what one thinks; judgment.

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## VERBS

**concur** (kun-KUR). To agree; to share the same opinion.

*The prosecutor felt that Jim's crime deserved the maximum penalty, but the judge did not CONCUR.*

**counsel** (KOWN-sul). To discuss ideas or opinions.

*Katrina's advisor was always available to COUNSEL her about work-related issues.*

**opine** (oh-PYNE). To give an opinion.

*The way that Charlotte OPINES about fashion, you'd think she created couture rather than just purchased it.*

## NOUNS

**manifesto** (*man-ih-FESS-toe*). A public declaration of one's intentions or motives, typically of a political nature.

*Instead of galvanizing the crowd to action, the poet's MANIFESTO collapsed the audience in laughter.*

**obiter dictum** (*OB-ih-ter DIK-tuhm*). An incidental opinion or remark; an incidental and nonbinding remark expressed by a judge.

*Frank couldn't refrain from offering an OBITER DICTUM every time we made a turn without consulting the map.*

**pundit** (*PUN-dit*). A person who gives opinions as an authority.

*The political PUNDITS had all decreed that Truman would be defeated in a head-to-head contest with Governor Dewey, but the voters had other ideas.*

**vox populi** (*VOKS-POP-you-lye*). Expression of the prevailing mood, concerns, and opinions in a country.

*In response to an environmentally friendly VOX POPULI, more and more corporations are "going green."*

## ADJECTIVES

**heterodox** (*HETT-uh-ruh-docks*). Holding unorthodox opinions, especially opinions concerned with religion.

*I believe George will grow out of his HETERODOX beliefs as he gets older.*

## ANTONYMS

**apathetic** (*ap-uh-THET-ik*). Feeling no emotion; not interested; indifferent.

*“He wasn’t exactly hostile to facts, but he was APATHETIC about them.”*

—Wolcott Gibbs, American writer

**egocentric** (*ee-goh-SEN-trik*). Viewing everything in relation to oneself; having little regard for interests other than one’s own.

*We are conditioned to anticipate the EGOCENTRIC Hollywood celebrity, and they rarely disappoint.*

## 146. Opposite

(*OP-uh-zit*), adjective

In opposition to; exactly contrary in relation to.

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## ADJECTIVES

**antipodal** (an-TIP-uh-del). Directly opposite; completely opposed.

*As a youngster, Harry was convinced he could dig his way to Ohio's ANTIPODAL point, China.*

**bipolar** (bye-POE-luhr). Possessing two sides or poles; marked by diametrically opposed extremes; a relationship between two opposites or counterparts.

*Frank's behavior on the job was generally unremarkable, but we later learned that his severe mood swings were symptoms of a BIPOLAR personality disorder.*

**disparate** (dis-PAHR-at). Describes two or more things that differ greatly from one another and cannot be logically reconciled.

*"As if, as if, as if the DISPARATE halves / Of things were waiting in a betrothal known / To none."*

—Wallace Stevens, American modernist poet

**inimical** (ih-NIM-ih-kull). Working in opposition to your goal; having a harmful effect, particularly on an enterprise or endeavor.

*Clarissa's work ethic is INIMICAL to earning an advanced degree in botany.*

# NOUNS

**antithesis** (*an-TIH-thess-iss*). The exact opposite; a thing that is completely different from another thing.

*He tries so hard to be smooth, but Charles is the ANTITHESIS of cool.*

**antonym** (AN-tuh-nim). A word having an opposite meaning to that of another word.

*“Rapid” and “slow” are ANTONYMS.*

**brummagem** (BRUHM-uh-juhm). Describes something that looks great but performs poorly.

*“Our press is certainly bankrupt in . . . reverence for nickel plate and BRUMMAGEM.”*

—Mark Twain

**dichotomy** (*die-KOT-uh-me*). Division into two parts, especially into two seemingly contradictory parts.

*A DICHOTOMY between good and evil is present in every human heart.*



## ANTONYMS

**coequal** (*koh-EE-kwuhl*). Equal with another in ability, extent, etc.

*The United States Congress is COEQUAL to the executive branch of government.*

**fungible** (*FUHN-jih-bull*). Freely exchangeable for another of like nature; interchangeable.

*Stella was incensed to find that diamonds are not FUNGIBLE commodities.*

See also: Difference

## 147. Ordinary

(*AWR-din-er-ee*), adjective

Having no special quality or interest; plain or undistinguished; customary; usual; regular; normal; familiar; common.

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## ADJECTIVES

**consuetudinary** (*kon-swe-TOOD-in-er-ee*). Customary or traditional.  
*CONSUETUDINARY laws are based on long-standing customs.*

**hackneyed** (*HAK-need*). Rendered less significant by common use; lacking in originality or freshness.

*The primitive construction and reliance on HACKNEYED expressions make it perfectly clear: this is not the work of Shakespeare.*

**indiscriminate** (*in-dih-SKRIM-uh-net*). Lacking clear judgment and careful distinction; haphazard; random.

*The INDISCRIMINATE shelving of books made it almost impossible to do any successful browsing in the bookshop.*

**nondescript** (*non-dih-SKRIPT*). Lacking distinction; ordinary.

*“Actors ought to be larger than life. You come across quite enough ordinary, NONDESCRIPT people in daily life and I don’t see why you should be subjected to them on the stage too.”*

—Donald Sinden, British actor

**prosaic** (*pro-ZAY-ik*). Commonplace or workaday; unromantic; matter-of-fact.

*Banks, whose PROSAIC outlook on life left little room for frivolity, was a stern father.*

**quotidian** (*kwo-TID-ee-an*). Familiar; commonplace; occurring every day.

*Despite closets full of the latest Parisian couture, Alison’s QUOTIDIAN complaint is that she has “nothing to wear.”*

## ANTONYMS

**heteroclite** (*HET-er-uh-klahyt*). Irregular or abnormal; anomalous.

*Paul's songs were filled with HETEROCLITE chord changes that made them difficult to sing.*

**unwonted** (*un-WOHNT-id*). Not typical, habitual, or ordinary.

*January's UNWONTED warm weather was far from unwanted!*

See also: Dull

## 148. Organize

(AWR-guh-nahyz), verb

To provide with a structure; to arrange or establish; systematize.

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## VERBS

**codify** (KAHD-uh-fye). To organize into a system of rules, codes, or principles; to make clear and coherent.

*Fiona set out to CODIFY the rules associated with her exclusive clique.*

**delineate** (dih-LINN-ee-ate). To use words to outline or describe with precision an object or person.

*With efficiency, Prescott DELINEATED plans for the new wing of his family's Connecticut beach house.*

**enumerate** (eh-NOO-muh-rate). To list or to count off individually, one by one.

*"One might ENUMERATE the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left."*

—Henry James, American-born British author

**seriate** (SER-ee-it). To arrange in a series.

*Even as a toddler, Mark liked to SERIATE his possessions.*

**stratify** (STRAT-uh-fye). To arrange in layers.

*"You will notice," said the geology professor, trying to get our attention, "that these deposits have STRATIFIED over time."*

# NOUNS

**echelon** (ESH-uh-lonn). A level of command or authority.

*Family connections helped Michael ascend quickly to the upper ECHELON of his brokerage firm.*

**hierarchy** (HIGH-uhr-ahr-key). A pecking order or ranking according to status or level of authority.

*In the HIERARCHY of the military, a medical doctor, who is assigned the rank of captain but is not a military man, automatically outranks a lieutenant who may have years of battle experience.*

**logistics** (loe-JIS-tiks). The essential details of how something is to be accomplished; in military usage, the discipline addressing supply and procurement.

*Jane knew the trip could not begin until the LOGISTICS were worked out.*

**regimentation** (rej-uh-men-TAY-shun). Discipline and uniformity of action and appearance; rigid organization.

*Fred passed the exit that would take him to his job, ripped off his tie and threw it out the window, and generally rebelled against the REGIMENTATION of his daily life.*

**schema** (SKEE-mah). A plan or diagram; an underlying organizational structure; framework.

*“In the mythic SCHEMA of all relations between men and women, man proposes, and woman is disposed of.”*

—Angela Carter, British author

**syllabus** (SIL-uh-bus). A summary or outline that includes the main points, especially of a course of study.

*Harry was anxious to see the SYLLABUS to find out if he would have to read Beowulf again.*

# ADJECTIVES

**granular** (*GRAN-you-ler*). Able to divide, organize, and search through something at a fine level of detail.

*Julian's GRANULAR abilities allow him to extract the absolute best from among even the largest pile of uncut diamonds.*

**sequential** (*sih-KWEN-shul*). An order of arrangement or succession; one after another in arrangement.

*The class graduation proceeded in SEQUENTIAL order from the beginning of the alphabet to the end, which Jane Zsilow found disheartening.*



## ANTONYMS

**promiscuous** (*pruh-MIS-hyoo-uhs*). Characterized by indiscriminate or random behavior or association; indiscriminate.

*Alan was PROMISCUOUS in his choice of subjects to study in college.*

**vagary** (*VAY-guh-ree*). A random or unexpected occurrence.

*One needs to accept the VAGARIES of life if one is to be happy or at least content.*

# P

## 149. Part

(*PAHRT*), noun

A portion or division of and distinct from a whole; piece; fragment; section; constituent.

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## NOUNS

**facet** (*FASS-it*). A component or aspect.

*I am afraid I am unfamiliar with this FACET of the case.*

**moiety** (*MOY-ih-tee*). A part, portion, or share; half.

*A surveyor was hired so the land would be divided into equal MOIETIES.*

## ADJECTIVES

**asunder** (uh-SUN-dur). Into pieces or parts; separated.

*The lightning bolt had torn the old hickory tree ASUNDER, and it now lay shattered and twisted in my grandparents' yard.*

**episodic** (ep-ih-SOD-ik). Made up of episodes; consisting of a group of separate but only externally related anecdotes; tending to digress.

*Although the novels of Dickens and Twain still enthrall modern readers, many are puzzled by their EPISODIC structures.*

**integral** (IN-tuh-grul). Acting as a constituent and essential member of a whole.

*Jane played an INTEGRAL role in the production's success.*

**motley** (MOT-lee). Of diverse composition; showing many colors or facets.

*It was Frederick's job to mold the MOTLEY assemblage he had been given into a powerful fighting force.*

**multifaceted** (mul-tee-FASS-ih-tid). Possessing many facets or dimensions.

*Joan, a MULTIFACETED writer, had published poems, essays, and novels.*

**multifarious** (mul-tih-FARE-ee-uss). Made of many components; having a large number of parts.

*From the air, New York's MULTIFARIOUS skyline sparkled—as if beckoning to Mary to try her hand there.*

**tripartite** (try-PAR-tite). Consisting of three elements; involving three participants.

*The TRIPARTITE trade agreement was signed by representatives of Canada, Mexico, and the United States.*

## VERBS

**bifurcate** (*BI-fur-kait*). To divide one thing into two.

*The group seemed unified at first, but it soon BIFURCATED into two very disagreeable factions.*

# ANTONYMS

**aggregation** (*ag-ri-GEY-shun*). A mass or group of distinct things; collection into an organized whole.

*Often the collection of intelligence results in an AGGREGATION that is incoherent and difficult to decipher.*

**assemblage** (*uh-SEM-blij*). A collection of things; a fitting together of parts; a whole that results from such fitting together.

*“One of the loveliest women I know has the most unrelieved ASSEMBLAGE of homely features I’ve ever seen.”*

—Loretta Young, American actress

**omnibus** (*OHM-nih-bus*). Something that covers many areas or subjects.

*The OMNIBUS law passed shortly after the publication of Sinclair’s The Jungle was meant to assure consumers that blatant violations of basic health and quality standards would never again be seen in the food industry.*

## 150. Persuade

*(pur-SWAYD)*, verb

To influence a person to an action, belief, etc.; to urge or induce; to convince through reasoning.

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## VERBS

**adumbrate** (ADD-um-brate). To suggest or disclose something partially.

*The factory workers were nervous when they learned the owner had ADUMBRATED a plan for layoffs.*

**blandish** (BLAN-dish). To coax someone to do something for you through the use of flattery.

*Your attempts to BLANDISH me into giving in to your point of view will not work.*

**inveigle** (in-VAY-gull). To convince or persuade someone through trickery, dishonesty, or flattery.

*Craig INVEIGLED the dean to allow him to graduate even though he failed to meet the foreign language requirement of the university.*

**jawbone** (JAW-bone). To attempt to get someone to do something through persuasion rather than by force.

*No matter how much he JAWBONED, Karl could not get Alison to sell her stock prior to the unveiling of the company's disastrous new line of parvenu fashion.*

**posit** (PAHZ-it). To suggest or propose a theory or explanation, especially one that represents new, unusual, or non-obvious thinking and conclusions.

*Astronomers POSIT that Jupiter may sustain life in its clouds.*



## NOUNS

**leverage** (*LEH-veh-ridge*). Possessing an advantage or extra degree of influence in a given situation.

*With his family's connections, Eldridge required no LEVERAGE to obtain a sinecure in the financial industry.*

## ADJECTIVES

**tendentious** (*ten-DEN-she-us*). Describes statements or actions designed to promote one's beliefs or point of view.

*Laura is TENDENTIOUS in her efforts to prove that she believes that a plentitude of fine jewelry is the key to happiness.*

## ANTONYMS

**dissuade** (*diss-SWADE*). To convince to take alternate action; to advise against.

*Marge DISSUADED her brother from joining the army.*

## 151. Phobia

*(FO-bee-uh)*, noun

An irrational, excessive, and persistent fear of a particular thing or situation.

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## NOUNS

**acrophobia** (ak-ruh-FO-bee-uh). An abnormal fear of heights.

*Of course, his ACROPHOBIA ruled out any ride in the hot-air balloon.*

**monophobia** (MON-uh-foe-bee-uh). An abnormal dread of being alone.

*Susan's MONOPHOBIA never manifested until she moved to a different city to start a new job.*

**nyctophobia** (nik-toh-FO-bee-uh). A severe fear of the dark.

*William never outgrew his NYCTOPHOBIA and still sleeps with the light on.*

**ochlophobia** (ok-luh-FO-bee-uh). An illogical fear or dread of crowds.

*Betty never realized she suffered from OCHLOPHOBIA until she moved to the city, where she had great difficulty walking to and from work during rush hour.*

**ophidiophobia** (oh-fid-ee-oh-FO-bee-uh). An abnormal fear of snakes.

*My father wasn't afraid of much, but his well-developed case of OPHIDIOPHOBIA indicated a bad experience with snakes at some point in his youth.*

**taphophobia** (taff-uh-FOE-bee-uh). The abnormal fear of being buried alive.

*After seeing the final scene of that horror film, The Grave Claims Its Own, I couldn't sleep, and I had an inkling of what it must be like to suffer from TAPHEPHOBIA.*

**trypanophobia** (try-pan-uh-FO-bee-uh). An abnormal fear of medical procedures involving injections or hypodermic needles.

*My nephew, suffering from TRYPANOPHOBIA, considered terminating his education before high school so as to avoid the physical exam.*

**xenophobia** (zee-nah-FOE-bee-uh). Having an irrational fear or hatred of foreigners and immigrants.

*We are not XENOPHOBIC; we dislike all strangers, regardless of their backgrounds, unless they are brought to us by other social contacts.*

## ANTONYMS

**impavid** (*im-PAH-vid*). Not afraid; fearless.

*Our IMPAVID guide was not averse to tangling with snakes, spiders, scorpions, or any other nasty and intimidating creature we encountered on the trip.*

**valiant** (*VAL-yuhnt*). Brave; courageous; stout-hearted.

*“Cowards die many times before their deaths; the VALIANT never taste death but once.”*

—William Shakespeare

## 152. Place

(*PLEYS*), noun

Defined portion of space that can be occupied, whether actually or virtually; area or location real or imagined.

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## NOUNS

**domicile** (DOM-ih-sile). A residence; one's legal, permanent home.

*The defendant at that time had no DOMICILE, your honor; she was a homeless person.*

**environs** (en-VYE-rehnz). The area surrounding a town or city; suburbs; vicinity.

*Washington D.C. and its ENVIRONS contain as many lobbyists as government workers.*

**epicenter** (EPP-ih-cent-uhr). The spot on the surface of the Earth directly above the site where an earthquake occurs; the focal point or origin of an activity, event, fad, etc.

*I wonder when it was that Seattle became the EPICENTER of gourmet coffee.*

**hinterland** (HIN-tir-land). An area bordering on a coast or river; inland region; an area removed from populated areas; back country.

*Tired of the pressures and compromises of urban living, Martha moved her family to the more gentle HINTERLAND.*

**hovel** (HUV-ul). A modest, humble home or hut; a rude or dirty dwelling-place.

*In the storm scenes of King Lear, Edward is disguised as Poor Tom, a lunatic who has sought shelter in a HOVEL on the barren heath.*

**natatorium** (nay-tuh-TOR-ee-um). An indoor swimming pool.

*Although he had swum in hundreds of venues, Melvin still had a dream of competing in the world's largest NATATORIUM.*

**periphery** (puh-RIFF-uh-ree). The area at the extreme of a given boundary.

*There among the homeless, at the furthest PERIPHERY of society, Maria found her calling.*

**pied-a-terre** (pee-ay-duh-TARE). A second home or apartment, usually small, used as a place to stay for short trips to the location in lieu of renting a hotel room.

*Alison and her family acquired a PIED-A-TERRE in the city because her work often requires her to spend days at corporate headquarters.*

**sanctum** (SANK-tum). A holy, sacred place; a private place; retreat.



*Brandon's small home office contained little more than a computer, an encyclopedia, and a few pieces of furniture, but it was in this unprepossessing SANCTUM that he wrote his Pulitzer Prize-winning play.*

## VERBS

**egress** (*ee-GRESS*). Exit; to go out; to leave a place.

*The stewardess's earnest request that we try to EGRESS from the burning plane in an orderly fashion had little effect.*

## ANTONYMS

**abyss** (*uh-BIS*). A bottomless gulf; deep fissure; vast chasm; anything profound or infinite.

*“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an ABYSS, the abyss will gaze back into you.”*

—Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher

**vacuity** (*va-KYOO-ih-tee*). The state of emptiness; without contents.

*“Once you fully apprehend the VACUITY of a life without struggle, you are equipped with the basic means of salvation.”*

—Tennessee Williams, American playwright

## 153. Politics

*(POL-ih-tiks)*, noun

The science and practice of political government; political affairs; the profession or practice of political conduct.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bicameral** (by-KAM-er-el). A government or parliament with two chambers or houses.

*With a Senate and a House of Representatives, the United States has a BICAMERAL legislature.*

**bilateral** (By-LAT-ur-ul). Touching, existing on, or having or being agreed to by two sides.

*The president signed a BILATERAL disarmament agreement with the nation bordering to the north.*

**geopolitical** (gee-oh-poh-LIH-tih-kull). Anything having to do with the politics affecting the relationships of two or more countries, especially when influenced by geographical factors.

*GEOPOLITICAL instability in the Middle East is fueling rising crude oil prices.*

**multilateral** (mull-tea-LAT-er-ul). Requiring several nations or states to take the same position or action on an issue or problem.

*A pacifist, he frequently spoke out for MULTILATERAL nuclear disarmament.*

## NOUNS

**amity** (AM-ih-tee). Friendship, particularly between nations.

*Delegations were formed and talks were arranged to preserve the fragile AMITY between our countries.*

**cabotage** (KAB-uh-tazh). The right of a country to control all air traffic flying in its skies.

*After 9/11, CABOTAGE became a major concern of New York City and its mayor.*

**coup d'état** (koo-day-TAH). The seizing of control of a government by a small group.

*Sophia took control of her father's company while he was in the hospital, an act the investors considered a bit of a COUP D'ÉTAT.*

**globalization** (glow-bull-ih-ZAY-shin). The movement toward a true world economy with open and free trading across national borders.

*"Proponents of GLOBALIZATION insist that, as trade and investment move across borders, economic efficiencies raise the standards of living on both sides of the exchange."*

—Arthur Goldwag, American author

**hegemony** (he-JEM-uh-nee). Predominant influence, especially in reference to the affairs of nations.

*Our foe's HEGEMONY will not stop with his control of smaller nations; his aim is world domination.*

**isolationism** (eye-so-LAY-shin-iz-um). A foreign policy in which a country deliberately keeps its relationships and interactions with other nations to a bare minimum, effectively isolating itself from world affairs.

*In the early twentieth century, American ISOLATIONISM stopped the United States from joining the League of Nations.*

**jingoism** (JING-go-iz-um). Extreme nationalism, backed up by the explicit or implied threat of military force; more broadly, extreme enthusiasm and support for an idea or position without being open to contrary arguments or notions.

*We cannot countenance JINGOISM, especially since it has such a negative impact on overseas markets.*

**junta** (HOON-tuh). A group that rules a country, unofficially, following a coup d'état.

*The JUNTA declared control of the country, but control was wrested away by former members of the ruling party.*

**laissez faire** (leh-zay-FAIR). The belief that government should not interfere in economic affairs, but should instead let the economy take its natural course.

*Our family began to place most of its money in hedge funds when we became convinced that the government intended to forego LAISSEZ FAIRE and take a more active part in the nation's financial system.*

**lese majeste** (LEZ maj-uh-STEY). A crime committed against the sovereign; an offense against any custom or belief held by a majority of people; treason.

*By committing an offense of LESE MAJESTE, Hurlburt most assuredly would be executed.*

**Magna Carta** (MAG-nah-KAR-tah). Any constitution that guarantees rights and liberties.

*The club's charter is a MAGNA CARTA that will ensure we are able to keep our tennis courts and swimming pools open only to our most significant social contacts.*

**manifest destiny** (MAN-ih-fest-DESS-tin-ee). Expansion into foreign lands, justified as being necessary or benevolent.

*"It's not greed and ambition that makes wars—it's goodness. Wars are always fought for the best of reasons, for liberation or MANIFEST DESTINY, always against tyranny and always in the best interests of humanity."*

—James Garner in *The Americanization of Emily*

**McCarthyism** (muh-KAHR-thee-iz-uhm). The use of indiscriminate, unsupported accusations of disloyalty, supposedly in the effort to suppress communism.

*MCCARTHYISM, with its mindless oppression of the innocent, was a dark period in the history of a free country.*

**nationalism** (NASH-in-ul-iz-um). The idea that citizens should take great pride in their country and support it to the hilt; extreme patriotism.

*Albert Einstein called NATIONALISM "the measles of mankind."*

**neoconservative** (NEE-oh-kon-SERVE-ah-tiv). A liberal who has become a conservative.

*We've removed Bradley from our list of social contacts because he has become such a NEOCONSERVATIVE.*

**polity** (POL-ih-tee). A system of government; a nation's structure of social and political functioning.

*The POLITIES of the Greek city-states, admired as they may be, cannot serve as a literal model for a modern industrial society.*

**populism** (POP-you-liz-um). A political movement or policy that appeals to the masses—the average working man or woman—not the upper class.

*"Being naked approaches being revolutionary; going barefoot is mere POPULISM."*

—John Updike, American novelist and literary critic

**reparations** (reh-par-AY-shins). Payments made by nations defeated in war to the victors, who impose these payments to recover some of the costs of battle.

*After World War I, the French imposed crushing REPARATIONS of 132 billion gold marks on Germany.*

**Zionism** (ZYE-on-iz-um). The modern political movement to establish a Jewish homeland Palestine.

*The Wassersteins give charitably not only to the community, but also in support of ZIONISM because the family has many relatives living in Palestine.*



## ANTONYMS

**apolitical** (AYE-puh-lit-ih-kul). Having no involvement or interest in political matters; averse to politics.

*Although she grew up in Washington, D.C. surrounded by political activity, Carolyn remained thoroughly APOLITICAL.*

See also: Government

## 154. Poor

(PAWR), adjective

Lacking material possessions; having little or no means to support oneself; impoverished.

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## ADJECTIVES

**destitute** (*DES-ti-toot*). Without the means of self-support; unable to subsist.

*“When a rich man becomes poor it is a misfortune, it is not a moral evil. When a poor man becomes DESTITUTE, it is a moral evil, teeming with consequences and injurious to society and morality.”*

—Lord Acton, English thinker and professor

**impecunious** (*im-puh-KYOON-ee-us*). To be poor or broke; to have little or no money.

*Alex has been raving about his IMPECUNIOUS state ever since his trust fund was cut.*

**impoverished** (*im-POV-er-isht*). Reduced to poverty.

*“The Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more IMPOVERISHED than these who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving.”*

—H. U. Westermayer

**indigent** (*IN-dih-junt*). Lacking the essentials of life; impoverished.

*At the shelter, I came across many INDIGENT families who had fallen victim to the failing economy.*

**penurious** (*peh-NOOR-ee-uss*). Lacking in means; extremely poor; destitute.

*Joan, raised in comfortable surroundings, was not cut out for such a PENURIOUS lifestyle.*

**proletarian** (*pro-luh-TARE-ee-un*). The poorest class of people; the working class.

*The politician’s appeals to her PROLETARIAN constituents earned her many votes during the election.*

## ANTONYMS

**opulent** (AHP-yoo-lent). Reflecting wealth and affluence.

*Donald Trump showcases his OPULENT lifestyle by wearing designer suits, drinking Cristal champagne, and traveling in private airplanes.*

## 155. Powerful

(*POW-ur-full*), adjective

Having or showing great power or force; mighty; influential; strong.

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## ADJECTIVES

**authoritarian** (aw-thor-uh-TARE-ee-un). Describes a form of social control in which the government demands absolute, blind assent of its citizens.

*The eerie, AUTHORITARIAN world of George Orwell's 1984 continues to resonate today.*

**Herculean** (hur-kyuh-LEE-un). Strong and powerful; reminiscent of the Greek hero Hercules in vitality.

*Robert made a HERCULEAN effort to complete the project before midnight.*

**omnipotent** (ahm-NIP-uh-tuhnt). All powerful.

*"An OMNIPOTENT God is the only being with no reason to lie."*

—Mason Cooley, American author

**redoubtable** (rih-DOW-tuh-bull). The quality of being a formidable opponent.

*Michael's REDOUBTABLE nature made him a successful negotiator and trial attorney.*

**stalwart** (STAL-wart). Strong, steadfast, loyal; a staunch supporter of a group or cause.

*Although Wayne is no longer a working engineer, he is a STALWART member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.*

**vehement** (VEE-heh-ment). Acting with great force and energy; intensely emotional; passionate.

*Milly, a chronic worry wart, was VEHEMENT about her children calling her if they were going to be late getting home from school.*

## NOUNS

**carte blanche** (KART BLONSH). Unrestricted power, access, or privilege; permission to act entirely as one wishes.

*Jean had CARTE BLANCHE during her first month or so as office manager, but the vice president eventually came to supervise her much more closely.*

**forte** (FORT). One's niche or strong point; that at which one excels.

*Interior decorating was Frank's FORTE, but he resisted making a career of it for fear of what the guys would say.*

**juggernaut** (JUG-ur-not). An object or force so powerful that it flattens or destroys anything in its path.

*The earthquake did some minor structural damage to the city, but the tornado that followed a week later was a JUGGERNAUT, destroying every home and building it touched.*

**magnate** (MAG-nayt). An industrial leader; a powerful business figure.

*Your Honor, I am no communications MAGNATE; I run a small-town newspaper.*

**potentate** (POH-ten-tayt). A powerful dictator, king, leader, or ruler.

*A much-feared POTENTATE, Victor Von Doom ruled Latveria with an iron fist.*

## ANTONYMS

**tenuous** (*TEN-you-us*). Unsubstantiated and weak.

*Roland's arguments to prove to us that it's better to give than to receive were TENUOUS at best.*

**titular** (*TITCH-uh-luhr*). A person who is a leader by title only, but lacks any real power.

*The queen is the TITULAR head of the United Kingdom.*



## 156. Predict

(*pri-DIKT*), verb

To state in advance; make known beforehand; foretell.

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## VERBS

**augur** (AW-ger). To predict or foretell the future.

*The three witches of Shakespeare's Macbeth AUGUR the cataclysmic fate of the play's titular character.*

**portend** (por-TEND). To suggest or foretell.

*The tone of Joan's voice this morning PORTENDS trouble.*

**prognosticate** (prog-NOSS-tih-kate). To predict; to foretell the future.

*As to the game's final outcome, I refuse to PROGNOSTICATE.*

**vaticinate** (vuh-TIS-uh-nayt). To prophesy.

*The ominous dark clouds and rising wind seemed to VATICINATE the end of the world or just a thunderstorm.*

## NOUNS

**bellwether** (*BELL-weth-er*). A leader, or something that indicates future developments.

*We may have to change our plans. I'm afraid those dark clouds are a BELLWETHER of today's weather shifts.*

**bibliomancy** (*BIB-lee-oh-man-see*). Telling or divining the future using a book, especially the Bible, through interpretation of a passage chosen at random.

*Our experience with the practitioner of BIBLIOMANCY was brief and unprofitable.*

**necromancy** (*NEH-kroh-man-see*). The ability to gain new knowledge by communicating with the dead; magic and trickery in general.

*"The so-called science of poll-taking is not a science at all but mere NECROMANCY."*

—E. B. White, American author

**numerology** (*noo-muh-ROL-uh-jee*). The supposed practice of divining the future through analyzing the occult significance of numbers.

*Judy's interest in NUMEROLOGY is the latest in a series of mystic doings; she was very big on Tarot cards last week.*

**presentiment** (*prih-ZEN-tuh-ment*). A feeling that something—especially something bad—is going to happen.

*The flight was uneventful, despite Clyde's PRESENTIMENT that a mid-air disaster would occur.*

**pyromancy** (*PAHY-ruh-man-see*). Divining the future by means of fire or flames.

*Brian skillfully parlayed a love of sitting around campfires into a profitable business of PYROMANCY.*

## ADJECTIVES

**delphic** (DELL-fick). Obscurely prophetic.

*For years, other economists, reporters, and just plain folks scrambled to interpret Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan's DELPHIC comments about the strength or weakness of the economy.*

**prophetic** (pruh-FET-ik). Of or having the powers of a prophet or prophesy; predictive.

*When I was growing up, my mother seemed to have a PROPHEPIC gift when it came to predicting my future.*

## ANTONYMS

**myopia** (*mye-OH-pee-uh*). Inability to see close things clearly; to lack foresight.

*My feeling is that by turning down that project, Fenster showed once again that he suffers from MYOPIA when it comes to marketing new consumer products.*

## 157. Preference

(*PREF-er-uhns*), noun

A greater liking for; one's first choice; a priority of something over others.

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## NOUNS

**partiality** (*par-shee-AL-ih-tee*). A favorable bias; a special liking or preference.

*Alan always had a PARTIALITY for redheads, although he married a brunette.*

**penchant** (*PEN-chunt*). A liking or inclination.

*Over dinner, Vicky, who had a PENCHANT for speaking her mind no matter what, asked the congressman what he thought his chances were of being imprisoned as a result of his recent indictment for embezzlement*

**precedence** (*PRESS-uh-dunce*). The right of coming first in order or priority.

*To his credit, the president of the toy company agreed that the safety of children took PRECEDENCE over profits and promptly recalled the defective item from the stores.*

**predilection** (*pre-de-LEK-shun*). An established or preconceived liking.

*The English PREDILECTION for warm beer is changing as they've become accustomed to the American style.*

**proclivity** (*pro-KLIV-ih-tee*). A predisposition; particularly a strong inclination toward something objectionable.

*Allen has a PROCLIVITY to untidiness that will not go over well with Esther.*

**propensity** (*pro-PEN-sih-tee*). A tendency to behave in a certain way.

*Despite her vehement denials, Virginia has shown us a PROPENSITY toward pomposity.*

## ADJECTIVES

**biased** (BYE-ussed). Predisposed to a particular view or direction; prejudiced.

*Mr. Anderson's claim that he has never made a BIASED hiring decision is undercut by the fact that his staff is composed exclusively of white male Ivy League graduates.*



## ANTONYMS

**averse** (*uh-VERCE*). Holding a disinclination.

*I'm afraid the problem is not that Tom can't find a field of study he enjoys; it's that he's AVERSE to the idea of doing any work.*

**undisposed** (*un-dis-POZED*). Not inclined; not favoring; unwilling.

*Jim was not crazy about having to find a job, but he was also UNDISPOSED to letting his children go hungry.*

## 158. Pride

(*PRYDE*), noun

A sense of one's own dignity or worth; self-respect; an overly high opinion of oneself; self-esteem; conceit; satisfaction in one's own achievements, possessions, children, etc.

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## ADJECTIVES

**grandiose** (GRAN-dee-oce). Pompous; having pretensions or ambitions that exceed one's abilities, sensitivities, or means.

*His GRANDIOSE scheme for career advancement simply will not pan out.*

**haughty** (HAUT-ee). Snobbishly proud.

*I tried to apologize for bumping into the woman, but she only gave me a HAUGHTY glance and inspected her fur coat for damage.*

**overweening** (OH-ver-WEE-ning). Extremely presumptuous, arrogant, and overconfident.

*"Golf is an open exhibition of OVERWEENING ambition, courage deflated by stupidity, skill soured by a whiff of arrogance."*

—Alistair Cooke, British-born American journalist and broadcaster

**tumid** (TOO-mid). Pompous and swollen with pride.

*We cannot stand it when Katherine wins arguments about couture and art collecting because the TUMID expression that crosses her face after a conversational victory is so loathsome.*

**vainglorious** (vayne-GLOR-ee-us). Conceited; boastful; prone to showing off and bragging.

*Although the scion of a well-established family, Gordon is so VAINGLORIOUS that you'd think him a parvenu!*

## NOUNS

**hubris** (HYOO-briss). Excessive pride.

*Colin may have begun as a pleasant and unassuming clerk, but by the time he took over the company in 1987 he showed signs of the HUBRIS that would accompany his downfall.*

## VERBS

**pique** (*PEEK*). To injure a person's pride and thereby engender harsh feelings.

*Marcia was PIQUED at not having been invited to the party.*

**preen** (*PREEN*). To take pride (in oneself or one's accomplishments).

*Barry PREENED himself on having received Broadcaster of the Year awards for three consecutive years.*

## ANTONYMS

**chagrin** (*shuh-GRIN*). A feeling of disappointment, humiliation, embarrassment, etc. caused by failure of some kind; mortification.

*Much to the team's CHAGRIN, they could not score a single point in the entire last half of the game, and lost to a much inferior opponent.*

**contrite** (*kuhn-TRAYT*). Crushed in spirit by a feeling of remorse or guilt.

*After the media reported his drunken and loutish behavior, the actor appeared CONTRITE but it was clear that he was sorry only for having been caught.*

## 159. Problem

(*PROB-luhm*), noun

A question proposed for consideration or solution; a perplexing or difficult matter.

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# NOUNS

**conundrum** (*kuh-NUN-drum*). A riddle or puzzle.

*“I don’t understand anything,” Stan said, in the months following graduation. “Now that I’m out on my own, my whole life is one big CONUNDRUM.”*

**dilemma** (*dih-LEM-uh*). An argument necessitating a choice between equally unfavorable or disagreeable alternatives.

*“Our DILEMMA is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better.”*

—Sydney Harris, American journalist

**exigency** (*EKS-ih-jen-see*). A condition of some urgency requiring an immediate effort to alleviate or solve it.

*“We should never despair, our Situation before has been unpromising and has changed for the better, so I trust, it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth New Exertions and proportion our Efforts to the EXIGENCY of the times.”*

—George Washington

**imbroglio** (*im-BRO-lee-oh*). Colloquially referred to as a “sticky situation”—a predicament that is difficult to get out of.

*Our inability to decide which New Year’s Eve party to attend created an IMBROGLIO that disrupted our social calendar for months.*

**parameter** (*pah-RAM-ih-terr*). A factor or variable that must be taken into account when solving a problem or understanding a situation.

*The weight of Paul’s grand piano is a PARAMETER that must be taken into account when building the mansion’s new music room and ballroom.*

**predicament** (*pri-DIK-ih-muhnt*). A condition or situation that is dangerous, unpleasant, or embarrassing; quandary.

*Having moved in with Max, Alice now faced the PREDICAMENT of wanting to be alone.*

**quagmire** (*KWAG-myer*). A thorny problem for which there is no ready solution; a messy situation from which there is no expeditious means of escape.

*After years of fighting during which no visible progress occurred, the media and many vocal opponents started to refer to the Vietnam War as a*



*QUAGMIRE.*

## ANTONYMS

**exposition** (*ek-spuh-ZISH-uhn*). A setting forth of facts; detailed explanation.

*“People who lean on logic and philosophy and rational EXPOSITION end by starving the best part of the mind.”*

—William Butler Yeats, Irish dramatist and poet

**resolution** (*rez-uh-LOO-shun*). A solving, as of a puzzle; answering, as of a question; solution.

*“Through the centuries, men of law have been persistently concerned with the resolution of disputes in ways that enable society to achieve its goals with a minimum of force and maximum of reason.”*

—Archibald Cox, American lawyer

## 160. Productive

(*pruh-DUHK-tiv*), adjective

Having a generative power; creative; producing abundantly or readily.

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## NOUNS

**catalyst** (KAT-uh-list). That which initiates a process or event and is itself unaffected.

*The film served as a CATALYST for Peter; he began keeping a journal regularly soon after he saw it.*

**fecundity** (Fe-KUN-di-tee). A person, organization, resource, or activity that is exceptionally productive, creative, fertile, or fruitful.

*“Blistering heat suddenly took the place of Carboniferous moisture and FECUNDITY.”*

—Simon Winchester, British author and journalist

**fruition** (froo-ISH-un). The completion of a task; the achievement of a goal as the result of significant and persistent effort.

*John Nash, a mathematician whose life was featured in A Beautiful Mind, received the Nobel Prize for the FRUITION of his work in game theory decades after he completed it.*

## ADJECTIVES

**philoprogenitive** (*fil-oh-pro-JEN-ih-tiv*). Productive of offspring; prolific.

*For those animals that don't take parenthood seriously, quantity of offspring rather than quality is key and PHILOPROGENITIVE habits ensure reproductive success.*

**prolific** (*pruh-LIFF-ick*). Extremely fruitful and productive.

*Joyce Carol Oates is one of America's most PROLIFIC writers, turning out three or four books a year.*

**Promethean** (*pruh-ME-THee-un*). Visionary; original; bold.

*Who could have foretold in the 1950s that people tinkering around with computers would be such PROMETHEAN pioneers?*

## VERBS

**germinate** (*JUHR-muh-nate*). To cause something, such as a concept, to come into existence.

*The ideas we GERMINATED that day have led to numerous improvements in the area of global communication.*

## ANTONYMS

**fallow** (*FAL-oh*). Not in use; inactive.

*“A mind once cultivated will not lie FALLOW for half an hour.”*

—Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton, British politician and novelist

**otiose** (*OH-shee-ohs*). At leisure; idle; ineffective.

*Jim was pragmatic and refused to indulge in an OTIOSE lifestyle.*

## 161. Punishment

(*PUHN-ish-muhnt*), noun

The act or fact of punishing; a penalty imposed on an offender for a wrongdoing.

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## NOUNS

**ferule** (FER-uhl). A stick used to punish children; punishment.

*Spare the FERULE and spoil the child.*

**forfeiture** (FAWR-fi-cher). A forfeiting; payment of a penalty or fine.

*The vandal's FORFEITURE was thirty days of public service and six months probation.*

**mortification** (mawr-tuh-fi-KAY-shun). The practice of penitential discipline by controlling physical desires and passions.

*In modern times, the practice of MORTIFICATION has either decreased or manifests itself differently from bygone days.*

**penance** (PEN-uhns). A punishment undertaken or imposed as repentance for a sin or wrongdoing.

*As PENANCE, Matt chose to give up chocolate ice cream.*

**reparations** (reh-par-AYE-shins). Payments made by nations defeated in war to the victors, who impose these payments to recover some of the costs of battle.

*After World War I, REPARATIONS of 132 billion gold marks were imposed on Germany by the French.*

**retribution** (ret-ruh-BYOO-shun). Punishment (as from God) for past wrongdoing.

*Some saw the mafia don's debilitating illness as a form of divine RETRIBUTION for a life of crime.*

**sanction** (SANGK-shun). A penalty as discipline or punishment.

*The United Nations imposes SANCTIONS on countries that violate international rules or regulations.*

## ADJECTIVES

**baculine** (*BAK-yuh-lin*). Concerning a rod or stick, or with punishment administered with a rod.

*It wasn't that long ago when BACULINE discipline was common in American schoolrooms.*

## VERBS

**amerce** (*uh-MERSS*). To punish, especially to punish with a monetary amount set by a court.

*Barbara always watches her speed since she was AMERCED to the tune of a week's pay.*

## ANTONYMS

**dispensation** (*dis-puhn-SEY-shun*). A release from obligation; special exemption or remission; the suspension of a statute for extenuating circumstances.

*Fortunately for him, William received a DISPENSATION and he was able to complete the building although it violated use restrictions of the town.*

**impunity** (*im-PYOO-nih-tee*). Freedom from punishment or penalty.

*We cannot let such an act of naked aggression stand with IMPUNITY.*

# R

## 162. Rash

(*RASH*), adjective

Acting too hastily without deliberation or caution; reckless.

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## ADJECTIVES

**brash** (BRASH). Impudent; hasty; acting impetuously and quickly.

*The action you have taken is BRASH; you will regret your recklessness.*

**foolhardy** (FOOL-har-dee). Rash; hasty; unthinking.

*Mack's FOOLHARDLY decision to leave his job and visit Trinidad and Tobago for two years was apparently the result of a chance encounter with a palm reader he met in a Greyhound station in West Covina, California.*

**improvident** (ihm-PRAHV-ih-dent). Not planning for the future; acting without thinking.

*It was cute when he was younger, but now Mike's IMPROVIDENT behavior just makes him look like a total loser.*

**impulsive** (im-PUHL-siv). Inclined to act without conscious thought.

*Teenagers tend to be IMPULSIVE, but most learn from their actions and grow up to be rational adults.*

**quixotic** (kwik-SOT-ik). Impractical; foolishly impulsive; rash; unpredictable in the manner of Cervantes's character Don Quixote.

*We all loved Arthur dearly, but could not support his continual QUIXOTIC quests to save the environment.*

**reckless** (REK-les). Disregarding consequences.

*Jane's approach to affairs of the heart was RECKLESS and she invariably paid a terrible price.*

## NOUNS

**temerity** (*tuh-MARE-uh-tee*). Rashness; recklessness.

*You have the TEMERITY to ask for a raise after showing up late forty percent of the time over the last three months?*

## ANTONYMS

**discreet** (*dih-SKREET*). Careful about what one says or does; prudent.

*“We are DISCREET sheep; we wait to see how the drove is going, and then go with the drove.”*

—Mark Twain, American humorist and writer

**judicious** (*joo-DISH-uhs*). Having or applying sound judgment; wise and careful.

*“Originality is nothing but JUDICIOUS imitation. The most original writers borrowed from one another.”*

—Voltaire, French philosopher and writer



## 163. Real

(*REEL*), adjective

Existing or happening in fact; actual; true; authentic; genuine.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bona fide** (BO-nah-fyed). Legitimate, the real thing, the genuine article.

*He may not come across as particularly intelligent, but Brian's Phi Beta Kappa key is, in fact, BONA FIDE.*

**corporeal** (kor-PORE-ee-ul). Tangible; having material existence.

*The estate sold the late author's CORPOREAL assets, but it retained the copyright of all his intellectual properties, both published and unpublished.*

**de facto** (dih-FAK-toe). Existing in fact, but without official title.

*Although we eschew titles, Sasha clearly is the DE FACTO head of our arts-patronage club.*

**equable** (ECK-wuh-bull). Unvarying, steady, and free from extremes.

*"He spake of love, such love as spirits feel / In worlds whose course is EQUABLE and pure."*

—William Wordsworth, British Romantic poet

**palpable** (PAL-pah-bull). Capable of being touched, felt, or handled; tangible.

*When Alistair did not give Lorissa the luxury watch she was expecting for her birthday, the silence was PALPABLE.*

**veritable** (VER-ih-tah-bull). Genuine; perfect as a specimen or example.

*"For me, the child is a VERITABLE image of becoming, of possibility, poised to reach towards what is not yet, towards a growing that cannot be predetermined or prescribed."*

—Maxine Greene, American philosopher and educator

**viable** (VIE-uh-bul). Capable of occurring or working; practicable; real; capable of living.

*Mike argued quite persuasively that the only VIABLE solution to the company's financial dilemma was for it to go public and raise money by selling stock.*

## VERBS

**corroborate** (*kuh-ROB-uh-reyt*). To make more certain; to confirm.

*The witness was able to CORROBORATE the defendant's testimony.*

**substantiate** (*Sub-STAN-shee-ayt*). To give substance or true existence to: to show to be real or true by giving evidence; prove; confirm.

*Jack tried for years to SUBSTANTIATE his rightful claim to ownership of the property.*

**vet** (*VET*). To appraise or evaluate for authenticity.

*The campaign manager thoroughly VETTED the short list of vice presidential candidates.*

## ANTONYMS

**conjectural** (*kuhn-JEK-chur-uhl*). Of the nature of guesswork; involving inference and theories.

*“The present policy path makes current promises, at least in real terms, highly CONJECTURAL.”*

—Alan Greenspan, former chairman of the Federal Reserve

**incorporeal** (*in-core-PORE-ee-al*). Lacking form.

*The moanings and low rumblings in the old house suggested INCORPOREAL visitors to Kate.*

## 164. Reduce

(*ri-DOOS*), verb

To lessen in any way such as size, amount, number, etc.

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## VERBS

**abate** (*ah-BAIT*). To reduce or eliminate a tax, claim, fine, etc.; to diminish, subside.

*John sold his car in February and when he received a bill for the year's excise tax, asked the town to ABATE the amount.*

**curtail** (*ker-TALE*). To abridge or truncate; to lessen, usually by taking or cutting away from.

*His new office's 8:00 A.M. meetings meant Dwight would have to CURTAIL his late-night television watching.*

**decimate** (*DESS-ih-mate*). To reduce something greatly, to the point of wiping it out.

*"Every doctor will allow a colleague to DECIMATE a whole countryside sooner than violate the bond of professional etiquette by giving him away."*

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright

**dilute** (*die-LOOT*). To make something, such as a mixture, thinner or weaker by adding additional objects, ingredients, compounds, etc. to it; to reduce force, strength, or effectiveness of.

*Frederica never DILUTES her words. She'll tell you exactly how she feels.*

**extenuate** (*ik-STEN-yoo-ate*). To reduce in seriousness, external aspect, or extent; to make a fault or error less grave.

*The case was dismissed because circumstances EXTENUATED his negligence.*

## ADJECTIVES

**curtate** (*KUR-tayte*). Reduced; shortened; abbreviated.

*The committee could not get a good idea of the building plans from the CURTATE descriptions at the luncheon.*

## NOUNS

**diminution** (*dim-ih-NOO-shen*). Reduction or decrease due to outside influence.

*The stock fell in value by 75 percent in just over three hours; few issues can fully recover from such DIMINUTION.*



## ANTONYMS

**accretion** (*uh-KREE-shun*). Growth in size, especially by addition or accumulation.

*“The most successful men in the end are those whose success is the result of steady ACCRETION.”*

—Alexander Graham Bell, Scottish-American inventor

**aggrandizement** (*uh-GRAN-dahyz-muhnt*). An increase in power, position, riches, etc.; widening in scope or intensity.

*Margaret had a well-developed skill for self-AGGRANDIZEMENT.*

See also: Change, Harm

## 165. Regret

(ree-GRET), verb, noun

To feel sorrow over; mourn for; to feel remorse for.

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## NOUNS

**compunction** (*kum-PUNK-shun*). Unrest or uneasiness arising out of a feeling of guilt; a sensation of remorse or uncertainty about a decision or course of action.

*I will sign her dismissal notice myself without COMPUNCTION; she is easily the most incompetent salesperson I have ever worked with.*

**contrition** (*kuhn-TRISH-uhn*). A feeling of remorse for sins or guilt.

*“I shall never send for a priest or recite an Act of CONTRITION in my last moments. I do not mind if I lose my soul for all eternity.”*

—Mary McCarthy, American author

**qualm** (*KWAHM*). A sudden feeling of uneasiness, often linked to a pang in one’s conscience.

*Of course we feel no QUALMS about wanting the finest things in life; that is the legacy our forefathers bequeathed to us.*

**repentance** (*ri-PEN-tns*). A feeling of sorrow for a wrongdoing.

*“Prostitutes have very improperly been styled women of pleasure; they are women of pain, or sorrow, of grief, of bitter and continual repentance, without a hope of obtaining a pardon.”*

—Anonymous

## ADJECTIVES

**penitent** (*PEN-ih-tent*). Feeling sorry and regretful that you have done something wrong.

*According to Ambrose Bierce's jaded view, the PENITENT are typically those undergoing or awaiting punishment.*

**rueful** (*ROO-ful*). Regretful; pitiable.

*In the terminal, Jean gave a RUEFUL sigh as she stared at the plane that was to carry her away from San Francisco forever.*

## VERBS

**bemoan** (*bih-MOAN*). To regret passionately or to complain about an ill turn of events.

*Joel could not stop BEMOANING the fact that he was only three numbers off of the Powerball jackpot.*

## ANTONYMS

**appeased** (*uh-PEEZED*). Placated; soothed or satisfied.

*Sally was easily APPEASED, rarely feeling negative emotions or behaving in a way that would cause regret.*

**complacent** (*kum-PLAY-sent*). Satisfied with oneself; smug; content.

*Brian was so COMPLACENT during the practice scrimmages before the big game that his coach considered benching him and playing the backup quarterback instead.*

See also: Sad

## 166. Reject

(*ree-JEKT*), verb

To refuse to accept; to discard, cast off; rebuff; decline.

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## VERBS

**abjure** (ab-JOOR). To renounce or turn your back on a belief or position you once held near and dear.

*After some soul-searching following his financial and domestic problems, Brad ABJURED drinking and gambling.*

**blacklist** (BLAK-list). To place on a list of disapproved or rejected persons and organizations.

*Many prominent entertainment figures were BLACKLISTED in Hollywood for alleged ties with Communism.*

**dismiss** (dis-MIS). To discharge or remove from office, service, or use.

*“A new idea is first condemned as ridiculous and then DISMISSED as trivial, until finally, it becomes what everybody knows.”*

—William James, American philosopher

**excommunicate** (eks-kuh-MYOO-nih-kate). To banish; to revoke formally one’s status as member of a group.

*The priest knew that he would be EXCOMMUNICATED if he refused to resign from the legislature.*

**repudiate** (rih-PYOO-dee-ate). To disprove and thereby render obsolete.

*This survey totally REPUDIATES the findings Geraldson claims in his earlier paper; his model can no longer stand.*

**slough** (SLUFF). To shed or cast off, like the slough—or outer skin layer—of a snake.

*I did my best to SLOUGH off my feelings of uncertainty and to move ahead optimistically.*

**spurn** (SPURN). To reject with scorn; disdain.

*Marjorie was quick to SPURN my advances, and in so doing, me.*



## ANTONYMS

**accommodate** (*uh-KOM-uh-deyt*). To make room for; to become reconciled; adapt.

*“If you ACCOMMODATE others, you will be accommodating yourself.”*

—Chinese proverb

**subsume** (*sub-SOOM*). To include an idea, term, etc., as part of a more comprehensive group.

*There are many examples of individuals who start by representing a cause and being SUBSUMED by it.*

See also: Alone, Isolated, Eliminate

## 167. Relationship

(*ri-LAY-shun-ship*), noun

A state of being related; a connection or association.

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## NOUNS

**dalliance** (DAL-ee-anss). A brief, casual flirtation with or interest in someone or something; the act of tarrying rather than proceeding swiftly and deliberately.

*Her DALLIANCE with the pool boy made her husband angry and jealous.*

**détente** (day-TAHNT). From the French, meaning “to slacken,” a loosening of strained relations.

*After Graham and Heather stopped yelling at and started listening to each other, the DÉTENTE between them began.*

**liaison** (lee-AY-zawn). An adulterous relationship; or, a kind of illicit sexual relationship.

*LIAISONS are much more common within our group than are stable marriages.*

**lineage** (LIN-ee-ij). Ancestry; your family tree.

*We still consider Rachel nouveau riche because her family can only trace its American LINEAGE to the mid-eighteenth century.*

**nepotism** (NEP-uh-tiz-um). The practice of favoring relatives.

*The company practiced shameless NEPOTISM, regularly passing up qualified applicants and hiring the underqualified sons, daughters, and cousins of board members.*

**rapport** (rah-PORE). A trusting and harmonious relationship.

*Although the Wilsons found their neighbors odd at first, the four soon developed a strong RAPPORT.*

**rapprochement** (rah-proshe-MAHNT). Re-establishment of friendly relations between nations following a period of hostility.

*Lydia spoke at length about how RAPPROCHEMENT between the United States and some former Soviet nations has been a real boon to her family's prestige and wealth.*

**schism** (SKIZ-um). A division; a break or rupture of relations, especially one due to ideological or political differences.

*The SCHISM in the party over the issue of slavery reflected a division in the country itself.*

**scion** (SIGH-uhn). A descendant or heir.

*“SCION of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou? / Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?”*

—Lord Byron, British Romantic poet

**sociometry** (so-see-OM-uh-tree). The determination of preference among members of distinct social groups.

*What we found is that the brand’s success or failure in a given area was due not mainly to income level, but to SOCIOMETRY.*

## VERBS

**correlate** (*KORE-uh-late*). To relate logically or systematically; to link.

*I believe I can demonstrate convincingly that the increased cancer rate in the town can be directly CORRELATED to the dumping practices of your firm over the past twenty years.*

# ADJECTIVES

**collegial** (*kuh-LEE-juhl*). An effective working relationship among colleagues characterized by collective responsibility and minimal supervision.

*The COLLEGIAL structure of the organization is one reason there's very little turnover there.*

**consanguineous** (*con-san-GWIN-ee-us*). Related by blood; of common lineage.

*The two brothers learned of their CONSANGUINEOUS relationship after a series of blood tests.*

**filial** (*FILL-ee-ull*). That which is due from or befitting a son or daughter; pertaining to a son or daughter.

*Mother considered it my FILIAL responsibility to take over the family business when I graduated, but I wanted to pursue a career of my own.*

**platonic** (*pluh-TON-ik*). Free of sexual or romantic relations; also refers to the ideal form of something.

*Emily knew that her relationship with Paul had to remain PLATONIC if they were going to continue working together.*

**symbiotic** (*sim-bee-OTT-ik*). Characteristic of an intimate or mutually advantageous relationship, especially (in biology) one between dissimilar organisms.

*In ocean life you often see SYMBIOTIC relationships between large and small fish, in which the smaller feed off of organisms existing on the larger, thereby keeping the larger fish clean and healthy.*

## ANTONYMS

**estrangle** (*ih-STRANGE*). To alienate or remove from a position or relationship.

*Michelle's refusal to give up her self-destructive habits ESTRANGED her brother.*

**misanthrope** (*MISS-en-throwp*). A person of antisocial nature who dislikes other people and thinks poorly of them until they give him reason not to.

*Harold has become a veritable MISANTHROPE since Anabelle refused to go on any more dates with him.*

## 168. Relieve

(*ri-LEEVE*), verb

To ease, lighten, reduce, or free from pain, anxiety, etc.

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## VERBS

**alleviate** (uh-LEE-ee-ate). To make more bearable; to relieve.

*The only thing that will ALLEVIATE the fatigue I'm feeling right now is a good night's sleep.*

**assuage** (uh-SWAJE). To ease; to make less severe; to mitigate.

*Gary tried to ASSUAGE his grief at the loss of his lover by taking a long trip to Europe.*

**palliate** (PAL-ee-ate). To treat a patient so that his symptoms abate even though he still has the disease.

*We introduced Amanda to Roberto, in attempt to PALLIATE the broken heart that Amanda suffered over her breakup with one of the scions of the Chesterfield family.*

**salve** (SAV). To soothe as with salve (medicinal ointment).

*Luckily for Jim, roses would usually SALVE his wife's distress whenever he forgot their anniversary.*

**temper** (TEM-per). To moderate or mitigate; soften.

*After the accident, Paul found that the monetary settlement was able to TEMPER his discomfort to a great extent.*

## NOUNS

**anodyne** (*an-uh-DYNE*). Anything that relieves or lessens pain; something that soothes.

*“Novels so often provide an ANODYNE and not an antidote, glide one into torpid slumbers instead of rousing one with a burning brand.”*

—Virginia Woolf, British novelist

**unguent** (*UNG-gwunt*). A locally applied ointment or salve.

*In treating poison ivy, calamine lotion or some similar UNGUENT is usually recommended.*

## ANTONYMS

**aggravate** (AG-ruh-veyt). To make worse or more severe; to intensify.

*“Truth is neither alive nor dead; it just AGGRAVATES itself all the time.”*

—Mark Twain, American humorist and writer

**foment** (foe-MEHNT). To rouse or incite.

*Many social advocates have been considered as rebellious and often are arrested for attempting to FOMENT trouble.*

## 169. Religion

*(rih-LIJ-uhn)*, noun

A set of beliefs about the nature, cause, and purpose of the universe; a belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshipped; a fundamental set of beliefs and practices as observed by a number of persons.

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## NOUNS

**ablution** (ab-BLOO-shun). Washing or cleansing the body of sin or spiritual uncleanness as part of a religious rite; any cleansing, purification, or purging.

*Pilate turned away from the crowd and called for a bowl of scented water with which to perform his ABLUTIONS.*

**apostate** (uh-POSS-tate). One who renounces a religious faith or, more generally, one who turns his or her back on previous loyalties.

*Melinda's new stance on pro-life issues caused her church to label her an APOSTATE.*

**canon** (KAN-un). A principle governing a political or religious group; a law or set of laws.

*Early in the play, Hamlet expresses his wish that God "had not fix'd his CANON 'gainst self-slaughter."*

**doxology** (doks-AH-lo-jee). A hymn praising God.

*This morning's ceremony will conclude with the DOXOLOGY found on page 312 of your hymnals.*

**Gnosticism** (NAH-stih-sih-zim). The religious belief that salvation is attained through secret knowledge rather than through prayer, ritual, faith, divine grace, or good works.

*Many of the key principles of Christianity were formed as a direct response to GNOSTICISM.*

**heresy** (HARE-uh-see). An instance of espousing religious beliefs contrary to a church doctrine.

*After having been suppressed centuries ago as HERESY, the newly discovered Gospel of Thomas has given scholars and lay readers valuable insights on the teachings of Jesus.*

**homiletics** (hom-ih-LET-iks). The art of preaching.

*Rather than risk being swayed by the HOMILETICS of its proponents and opponents, Grandpa made it a point to read the text of every ballot initiative in full before deciding how he would vote on it.*

**infidel** (IN-fih-del). A person who does not accede to a particular set of religious beliefs; an unbeliever; also, anyone who is unpersuaded of the wisdom and/or righteousness of a position or principle.

*Because he failed to express the proper enthusiasm for Riley's campaign proposal, Wilson was regarded as something of an INFIDEL.*

**jihad** (gee-HOD). Striving toward an important goal; in modern usage, a holy war conducted in the name of Islam.

*"The tradition I cherish is the ideal this country was built upon, the concept of religious pluralism, of a plethora of opinions, of tolerance and not the JIHAD. Religious war, pooh. The war is between those who trust us to think and those who believe we must merely be led."*

—Anna Quindlen, American author and opinion columnist

**Kabbalism** (KAH-bah-liz-um). A Jewish mystical tradition, based on revelation instead of reason, in which mystical feats can be performed by manipulating the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

*Through meditation, KABBALISM enables practitioners to become one with God.*

**laity** (LAY-uh-tee). A group of religious worshipers differentiated from the clergy; members of the lay community.

*Bishop Riley, ever mindful that his predecessor had been criticized for his inaccessibility, made a point of mingling with the LAITY as much as possible.*

**liturgy** (LIH-tur-jee). Worshipful ritual; the accepted public form of religious worship.

*Pat's attempts to reformulate the LITURGY in her church were greeted with great skepticism by the more conservative worshipers.*

**monolatry** (muh-NOL-uh-tree). The worship of a single god although other gods are recognized.

*A MONOLATRY accepts alternative religious beliefs.*

**monotheism** (MOH-no-THEE-iz-um). A belief in one omnipotent, omniscient God who is actively involved in the workings of both the physical universe that he created and the society of men who dwell in it.

*Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are all examples of MONOTHEISM.*

**ophiolatry** (of-ee-OL-uh-tree). The worship of snakes.

*After years of drug use, Brian took up OPHIOLATRY.*

**pantheism** (PAN-thee-iz-um). A doctrine that espouses God's manifestation in all things.

*It is fair to say that although she had no formal religious upbringing Edith tended toward the PANTHEISM she associated with certain Native*

*American religious rites.*

**pantheon** (PAN-thee-on). The group of all the gods of a particular religion or culture, or a group of important people in a particular field or region.

*The sons of Odin, Thor and Loki, represent good and evil in the PANTHEON of the Norse gods.*

**piety** (PIE-eh-tee). Devoutly religious behavior.

*“The path of true PIETY is so plain as to require but little political direction.”*

—George Washington

**simony** (SAHY-muh-nee). The practice of buying or selling of spiritual objects or benefits such as pardons, offices, etc.

*The practice of SIMONY is now usually regarded as a sin by the church.*

**theosophy** (thee-OS-uh-fee). Any of various philosophies that propose to establish direct contact with the divine through contemplation or revelation in order to gain spiritual insight not possible from empirical observation.

*The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 to advocate THEOSOPHY.*

## ADJECTIVES

**apostolic** (*ap-uh-STOLL-ic*). Of or relating to the New Testament apostles or their teachings.

*The pastor's fiery, anti-American sermons surely would not be considered APOSTOLIC by church fathers.*

**sacrilegious** (*sack-reh-LIH-juss*). Openly insulting or disrespectful to the beliefs, religion, ideas, and practices of others—especially the ones they hold most sacred.

*Bryson's insistence that Miró is more collectable than Warhol is positively SACRILEGIOUS.*

**sacrosanct** (*SACK-roh-sankt*). Beyond criticism because it is considered sacred.

*"If men could get pregnant, maternity benefits would be as SACROSANCT as the G.I. Bill."*

—Letty Cottin Pogrebin. American editor and writer

**teleological** (*tel-ee-uh-LAHJ-ick*). Describes the belief that there is an intelligent design or purpose discernible in nature.

*The natural camouflage some animals develop would seem to be proof that we live in a TELEOLOGICAL universe.*



## VERBS

**consecrate** (*KON-seh-KRAYT*). To declare something sacred, true, sacrosanct, or inviolable.

*“It is regarded as normal to CONSECRATE virginity in general and to lust for its destruction in particular.”*

—Karl Kraus, Austrian writer

**proselytize** (*PROSS-uh-luh-tize*). To attempt to convert others to one's own religious faith.

*It is not my intention to PROSELYTIZE, but rather to share some insights on my own experiences within the Jewish faith.*

# ANTONYMS

**profane** (*pruh-FEYN*). Not concerned with religion or religious matters; secular; showing disregard or contempt for sacred things.

*“The foolish and wicked practice of PROFANE cursing and swearing is a vice so mean and low that every person of sense and character detests and despises it.”*

—George Washington, American president

**secular** (*SEK-yuh-lehr*). Separate from or devoid of religious belief or connotation.

*“The liberal humanist assumption that American society, like that of Europe, would become progressively SECULAR was always something of a delusion.”*

—Gordon Wood, History Professor at Brown University

## 170. Repeat

(*re-PEET*), verb

To say, utter, do, or make again; to reproduce.

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## VERBS

**echo** (*EK-oh*). To resound with an echo; reverberate; to repeat another's words or ideas.

*"Kind words are short and easy to speak, but their ECHOES are truly endless."*

—Mother Teresa

**perpetuate** (*purr-PETCH-oo-ate*). To make everlasting; to prolong memory or use (of a thing).

*The rumor that I am resigning has been PERPETUATED by a number of sources, all completely unreliable.*

**recapitulate** (*ree-kah-PIT-chew-late*). To repeat something, but in a more concise form.

*"To RECAPITULATE: always be on time for my class," the professor told his freshman class on the first day of the semester.*

**replicate** (*REP-li-kayt*). To duplicate, repeat, or reproduce, particularly for experimental purposes.

*John had successfully developed a cure for the common cold, but could not REPLICATE the process.*

## NOUNS

**iteration** (*ih-ter-AYE-shun*). The process of performing a series of instructions or steps repeatedly; also refers to one repetition of those repeated steps.

*“Thou hast damnable ITERATION, and art indeed able to corrupt a saint.”*

—William Shakespeare

**tautology** (*taw-TAHL-uh-jee*). A needless repetition of an idea or statement; redundancy.

*After his wealthy father’s death, Gerald consistently referred to his mother with the TAUTOLOGY, “widow woman.”*

## ADJECTIVES

**recursive** (*ree-KURSS-iv*). Pertaining to a process in which each step makes use of the results of the earlier steps.

*The study of mathematics is a RECURSIVE learning experience.*

## ANTONYMS

**conclusive** (*kuhn-KLOO-sive*). Able to settle a question; definitive; final.

*Mary was tired of continually arguing with her parents about responsibility and felt that getting a full-time job would be a CONCLUSIVE demonstration.*

**unambivalent** (*uhn-am-BIV-uh-luhnt*). Not ambivalent, definite; certain.

*The score at the end of the game gave UNAMBIVALENT testimony of our team's superiority.*

## 171. Replace

*(ri-PLAYS)*, verb

To place again; put back in the previous position; to provide a substitute or equivalent for.

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## VERBS

**supersede** (*Sue-per-SEED*). When one thing takes the place of another or renders the former obsolete.

*“The classical laws [of physics] were SUPERSEDED by quantum laws.”*

—Stephen Hawking, British theoretical physicist

**supplant** (*suh-PLANT*). To take the place of.

*“If we would SUPPLANT the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and arguments so clear, that even their great authority fairly considered and weighted, cannot stand.”*

—Abraham Lincoln

## NOUNS

**prosthesis** (pross-*THEE*-sis). An artificially constructed member meant to replace a damaged or missing part of the human body.

*Several months after the accident, Greg was fitted for a PROSTHESIS for his lower left leg that would allow him to walk again.*

**quid pro quo** (KWID-pro-kwo). A fair exchange of assets or services; a favor given in return for something of equal value.

*In a QUID PRO QUO, Stephen helped Alex with his math homework, while Alex did Stephen's chores.*

**subrogation** (suh-bro-GAY-shin). The substitution of one person for another with respect to a lawful claim or right.

*The SUBROGATION clause in the lease says that if the landlord cannot collect rent from the tenant, she has the right to collect from the co-signer of the leasing agreement.*

## ADJECTIVES

**supposititious** (*sup-poz-ih-TISH-uhs*). Spuriously substituted or pretended; fraudulent; not genuine.

*The cook prepared the dessert according to a SUPPOSITITIOUS list of ingredients.*

**tantamount** (*TAN-tuh-mount*). Equivalent in value or effect.

*Eleanor considered our snub of her TANTAMOUNT to betrayal, and, in truth, she was correct.*

## ADVERBS

**vicariously** (vye-KARE-ee-uss-lee). To enjoy imagined feelings and experiences by observing or hearing about another person's life and adventures.

*Married for over twenty-five years, Roger often told his single friends that he lived VICARIOUSLY through them.*

## ANTONYMS

**abiding** (*uh-BAHY-ding*). Continuing without change; enduring.

*“Only on paper has humanity yet achieved glory, beauty, truth, knowledge, virtue, and ABIDING love.”*

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright

**perdure** (*per-DYOOOR*). To continue or last permanently; endure.

*Kevin knew that his life would change and friends would come and go, but his relationship with Jane would PERDURE.*

## 172. Reputation

(*rep-yuh-TEY-shun*), noun

The estimation in which a person is commonly held, whether favorable or not; character in the view of others; repute; fame.

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## NOUNS

**calumny** (*KAL-um-nee*). The act of libel or slander; besmirching of a person's reputation by spreading false statements and rumors.

*"To persevere in one's duty and be silent is the best answer to CALUMNY."*

—George Washington, American president

**innuendo** (*in-you-ENN-doe*). A subtle intimation; an indirect insinuation.

*Through hints and INNUENDO her opponent managed to plant seeds of doubt about Governor Williams's past.*

**libel** (*LIE-bull*). A written, printed, or pictorial statement or assertion that is unjustly negative, defaming, or hurtful to one's character and reputation.

*Several celebrities have sued the supermarket tabloid for LIBEL, but the parade of lurid and preposterous headlines has continued unabated.*

## VERBS

**exonerate** (ig-ZON-uh-rate). To clear or free from blame or guilt; to restore (one's reputation).

*After the charges were thrown out and Brian was completely EXONERATED, he was free to continue his work in the securities industry.*

**insinuate** (in-SIN-you-ate). To hint at darkly; to suggest (typically, with negative connotations).

*I hope you don't mean to INSINUATE that my husband is seeing another woman.*

**slander** (SLAN-dur). To make an untrue and malicious statement intended to damage the reputation of another.

*If you continue to SLANDER my father, Mr. Caen, you will be hearing from my attorney.*



## ANTONYMS

**notoriety** (*noh-tuh-RAHY-ih-tee*). The state of being widely and unfavorably known.

*“It takes very little fire to make a great deal of smoke nowadays, and NOTORIETY is not real glory.”*

—Lousia May Alcott, American author

**unsavory** (*un-SAYV-err-ee*). Distasteful; unpleasant; disreputable; of dubious reputation.

*“Our future is inextricably linked to what happens in Washington, D.C., and we know that is a very UNSAVORY reality.”*

—Don Libey, direct marketing advisor

See also: Blame

## 173. Responsibility

*(ri-spon-suh-BIL-i-tee)*, noun

The condition or state of being responsible; obligation; duty.

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## VERBS

**ascribe** (*uh-SKRYBE*). To attribute or assign causal responsibility to a person or thing.

*This work has been ASCRIBED to Rousseau, but his authorship now seems uncertain.*

## NOUNS

**onus** (*OH-nuss*). Obligation, responsibility, duty, or burden.

*The ONUS for choosing the color scheme for our new lacrosse uniforms fell ultimately to Tabitha, who had previously chosen the design for our polo uniforms.*

## ADJECTIVES

**onerous** (*OH-nerr-us*). Describes a difficult task or heavy responsibility that one does not desire.

*Caring for his son's large aquarium quickly went from an interesting hobby to an ONEROUS burden.*

# ANTONYMS

**abdicate** (AB-di-kate). To formally give up a position or responsibility; to step down from a high government office or other powerful position.

*The king, as we all know, ABDICATED rather than give up the woman he loved.*

**dereliction** (dare-uh-LIK-shun). Willful neglect; shirking of responsibility; the knowing failure to perform one's duty.

*The sergeant's inaction that night led to troubling accusations of DERELICTION of duty.*

**exculpate** (EK-skul-pate). To remove responsibility or guilt from.

*The fact that I was convicted is immaterial; I have been fully EXCULPATED.*

**fickle** (FIK-uhl). Changeable or unstable in interest or affection; capricious.

*"O, swear not by the moon, the FICKLE moon, the inconstant moon, that monthly changes in her circle orb, Lest that thy love prove likewise variable."*

—William Shakespeare

**remiss** (rih-MISS). Negligent or careless.

*Jon was REMISS in his relationships, never thanking anyone for the kindnesses he received.*

**sociopath** (SO-see-uh-path). A person who, because of mental illness, lacks restraint or moral responsibility toward fellow members of society.

*Although motion pictures and popular fiction have shown an unending fascination with serial killers, the fact is that such SOCIOPATHS are quite rare.*

## 174. Revenge

(*ri-VENJ*), verb, noun

To inflict punishment, damage, or injury in return for an insult, injury, etc.; an instance of such action.

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## NOUNS

**nemesis** (NEM-i-sis). An act or agent of retribution; an opponent motivated by revenge.

*Things looked bleak: Harold's NEMESIS, Mike, was in charge of all hiring decisions.*

**reprisal** (ri-PRIZ-uhl). An instance or the act of retaliation.

*Peter was confident that he was correct, but was just as sure he faced a REPRISAL for speaking up during the meeting.*

**retribution** (ret-ruh-BYOO-shun). Deserved punishment for evil done.

*Some saw the mafia don's debilitating illness as a form of divine RETRIBUTION for a life of crime.*

**vendetta** (ven-DET-uh). A bitter feud or grudge, especially one involving vengeance for a wrongdoing.

*Mark's arguments against my proposed project had less to do with its merits than with the VENDETTA he has waged against me since I was hired for the job he wanted.*



## VERBS

**reciprocate** (*rih-SIP-ruh-keyt*). To give or act in turn following the lead of another; to reply in kind.

*We cannot ignore an act of aggression; if we are attacked, then we must RECIPROCATE.*

**requite** (*rih-KWYTE*). To return for; to retaliate for an actual or assumed wrong.

*“Certain sets of human beings are very apt to maintain that other sets should give up their lives to them and their service, and then they REQUITE them by praise.”*

—Charlotte Brönte, British novelist

## ADJECTIVE

**vindictive** (*vin-DIK-tiv*). Mean-spirited; eager for revenge.

*When angered, Lynn can be quite VINDICTIVE; those who work with her know that the most painless course is to stay on her good side.*

## ANTONYMS

**condone** (*kuhn-DOHN*). To forgive, pardon, or overlook something.

*“One who CONDONES evil is just as guilty as the one who perpetrates it.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr., American minister and civil-rights leader

**vindicate** (*VIN-di-keyt*). To clear from criticism, censure, suspicion, etc.; to justify or defend.

*“Have patience awhile; slanders are not long-lived. Truth is the child of time; ere long she shall appear to VINDICATE thee.”*

—Immanuel Kant, German philosopher

## 175. Reverence

(*REV-er-uhns*), noun

A feeling of deep respect, awe, and love; veneration.

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## NOUNS

**deification** (*DEE-if-ih-kay-shin*). The process of making someone or something into—and worshipping them as—a god.

*“Poetry is the DEIFICATION of reality.”*

—Edith Sitwell, British poet

**fetish** (*FETT-ish*). Any object, idea, leader, etc. inspiring unquestioned awe and reverence.

*“It sickens me,” Nora said, “how so many colleges have made a FETISH of high grades on standardized tests.”*

## VERBS

**exalt** (ig-ZAWLT). To raise in honor, character, quality; to praise.

*“Civilization degrades the many to EXALT the few.”*

—Amos Bronson Alcott, American reformer and philosopher

**extol** (ik-STOHL). To praise highly; laud.

*when talking about his new girlfriend, Larry would EXTOL her virtues in reverential terms.*

**hallow** (HAL-low). To establish as holy; to sanctify.

*“But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not HALLOW this ground.”*

—Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address

**lionize** (LIE-uh-nize). To praise excessively; to idolize.

*For years young baseball fans LIONIZED Babe Ruth, whose many indiscretions were usually overlooked by the press.*

**venerate** (VEN-uh-rate). To regard or treat with reverence.

*“The way the United States VENERATES celebrities can be quite annoying,” Sylvia said.*

## ANTONYMS

**desecrate** (*DESS-ih-krate*). To abuse the sacred character of a thing; to treat disrespectfully or irreverently.

*Such profane language from our organization's current leader serves only to DESECRATE the memory of the founder.*

**impiety** (*im-PAHY-ih-tee*). Lack of reverence for sacred things; disrespect for persons or things to which one should be devoted.

*"To be in anger is IMPIETY; But who is man that is not angry?"*

—William Shakespeare

## 176. Ridicule

*(RID-ih-kyool)*, verb

To make fun of; to make the object of contempt; mock.

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## VERBS

**caricature** (KAR-ih-kuh-cher). To exaggerate the peculiarities or defects of someone or something for purposes of ridicule.

*Zealots of all stripes tend to CARICATURE those they despise in order to make them seem less powerful and frightening.*

**decry** (dih-CRY). To condemn, ridicule, or denounce as harmful.

*It is unconscionable to DECRY due process just because the system is sometimes abused.*

**deride** (dih-RIDE). To ridicule with cruelty; to laugh at and make fun of.

*His classmates DERIDED Joe for wearing argyle socks to the prom.*

**lampoon** (lam-POON). To mock or satirize.

*Many felt that Trina was cruel to LAMPOON Jessica's performance, including her nervous tic.*

**pillory** (PILL-uh-ree). To subject someone to merciless public ridicule or abuse.

*I sipped my morning coffee as the respective parties' pundits PILLORIED each other.*

**scoff** (SKAWF). To show mocking contempt; scorn.

*"You may SCOFF all you want," Dave told the crowd as he climbed into the basket of the hot air balloon "but you'll see who gets to the wedding first."*

## NOUNS

**contumely** (*kon-TYOO-muh-lee*). A rude display in speech or deed; contemptuous behavior; humiliating derision.

*No matter how long he had held the grudge against Aaron, his CONTUMELY at the wedding was uncalled for.*

## ANTONYMS

**applaud** (*uh-PLAWD*). To express approval; acclaim; give praise.

*“It often happens that those who in their lives were APPLAUDED and admired, are laid at last in the ground without the common honor of a stone.”*

—Samuel Johnson, English poet and critic

**esteem** (*ih-STEEM*). To value highly; have great respect and regard for; prize.

*“The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we ESTEEM too lightly, it is dearness only that gives everything its value.”*

—Thomas Paine, English-American writer and political pamphleteer

# S

## 177. Sad

(*SAD*), adjective

Having or expressing sorrow, grief, or low spirits; melancholy; mournful.

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# ADJECTIVES

**disconsolate** (*dis-KON-suh-lut*). Beyond consolation; unable to be comforted; deep in grief or sorrow.

*Jamie was DISCONSOLATE after missing what should have been the game-winning field goal.*

**doleful** (*DOLE-full*). Causing or expressing grief or affliction.

*I decided to rescue Rex from the animal shelter because I was entranced by his DOLEFUL expression.*

**lachrymose** (*LAK-rih-mose*). Describes someone who cries at the drop of a hat.

*She was so LACHRYMOSE, she cried at commercials for long-distance phone companies.*

**morose** (*muh-ROHSS*). Gloomy and ill-humored.

*Now that his parents have taken away his private plane, Anthony has become positively MOROSE.*

**plangent** (*PLAN-jent*). Having an expressive and particularly plaintive quality.

*The PLANGENT locomotive whistle made Henry drop a tear in his beer.*

**sepulchral** (*suh-PUHL-kruhl*). Suggesting a tomb; funereal or dismal.

*The SEPULCHRAL tones of the organ emphasized the solemnity of the service.*

**woeful** (*WOH-ful*). Filled with sorrow or woe; in a sorry state.

*When the home team lost the game in the final seconds, the WOEFUL crowd gasped then went silent.*

## VERBS

**bewail** (*bih-WAIL*). To express deep sorrow or regret over something, usually by weeping.

*After his marriage ended, Chuck spent months BEWAILING his fate.*

**commiserate** (*kuh-MIZ-uh-rate*). To share in another's sorrow or disappointment.

*Jane and Anita COMMISERATED with Frank over the failure of the business.*

## NOUNS

**pathos** (*PAY-thos*). A quality arousing or evoking pity or sorrow or eliciting tender sympathy from an observer.

*Chaplin's development of PATHOS as a component of film comedy was one of his most significant achievements.*

**tribulation** (*trib-yuh-LEY-shun*). Great misery or distress as from oppression.

*"Rivers of wings surround us and vast TRIBULATION."*

—John Ashbery, American poet and critic

**weltschmerz** (*VELT-shmayrtz*). A lingering sorrow that some believe is a given in life.

*When we snubbed Margaret for buying so many fashion knockoffs, her WELTSCHMERZ lasted until we forgave her.*

## ANTONYMS

**ebullient** (*eh-BOOL-yint*). Feeling joy and positive emotions at an extreme level; the state of being wildly enthusiastic about something.

*Lorne was EBULLIENT when he found that his mother had given the college enough money to overturn his rejection.*

**jubilant** (*JOO-buh-luhnt*). Joyful and triumphant; elated.

*After a hard-fought game, the winners were JUBILANT.*

See also: Regret



## 178. Saying

(SEY-ing), noun

A pithy expression of wisdom or truth.

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## NOUNS

**adage** (AD-ij). A short proverb or saying; a brief maxim.

*The old man quoted ADAGES endlessly, which the reporter dutifully took down in his notebook.*

**aphorism** (AF-or-iz-ihm). A proverb, often-repeated statement, or cliché.

*“The early bird catches the worm” is not an APHORISM I find very inspiring.*

**apothegm** (AP-uh-them). A short, instructive saying; maxim.

*My high school football coach was excessively fond of the APOTHEGM “There is no ‘I’ in team.”*

**axiom** (AKS-e-um). A truth or fact that is seen as self-evident, leaving no room for question or debate.

*Much to the chagrin of his creditors, Max adopted the AXIOM of those who have amassed great wealth: “Pay yourself first.”*

**bon mot** (BON MOE). A clever or witty comment.

*The secretary of state’s well-timed BON MOT about the shortcomings of American beer helped to put everyone at ease at a tense moment of the summit meeting.*

**bromide** (BRO-mide). A cliché or tired saying used to express an idea without any thought or originality.

*Helen’s Harvard education does not stop her from peppering her speech with insipid BROMIDES.*

**credo** (KREE-doh). A philosophy of belief; creed.

*The most popular CREDO heard in our elementary school was “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”*

**dictum** (DIK-tuhm). A formal statement of opinion; authoritative pronouncement.

*The judge presented the DICTUM that would forever change the relationship she had with her husband.*

**epigraph** (EH-pih-graf). A short quotation or saying at the beginning of a book or book chapter, or a brief inscription on a coin, statue, or building.

*“Benfey begins his book with a curious EPIGRAPH from John Ruskin.”*

—Joyce Carol Oates, American author

**litany** (LIT-n-ee). A prolonged and boring account.

*“With the supermarket as our temple and the singing commercial as our LITANY, are we likely to fire the world with an irresistible vision of America’s exalted purpose and inspiring way of life?”*

—Adlai Stevenson, American politician

**platitude** (PLAT-ih-tood). A commonplace or useless remark; a statement that is trite or unoriginal.

*You have taken a speech that seemed quite promising and filled it to the brim with PLATITUDES.*

**precept** (PREE-sept). A rule, order, or principle that sets up a standard guide for conduct.

*I make it a personal PRECEPT never to ask my staff to do anything I would not be willing to do myself.*

**shibboleth** (SHIB-uh-leth). A special term not widely known that, when used, identifies the user as a member of a group.

*The more cynical in the department will tell you that career advancement has less to do with ability than with contacts and memorizing SHIBBOLETHS.*

**spoonerism** (SPOON-er-iz-um). A phrase in which the syllables of neighboring words are accidentally interchanged.

*A popular SPOONERISM states: “Cook a grilled cheese sandwich in lots of butter, let it get cold, and you have a chilled grease sandwich.”*

**witticism** (WIT-ih-siz-um). A witty saying or remark.

*We like to invite Roger to our cocktail parties, as he is able keep other guests entertained for hours on end with his stories and WITTICISMS.*

## ADJECTIVES

**apocryphal** (*ah-POCK-rih-full*). Of doubtful authenticity and not verifiable.

*John Henry may have been based on a real man, but in the story he has grown to APOCRYPHAL proportions.*

## ANTONYMS

**canard** (*kuh-NARD*). A fabrication or unfounded story.

*Jon was guilty of spreading some vicious CANARDS about his opponent.*

**perfidious** (*per-FID-ee-us*). Faithless; treacherous; not able to be trusted.

*The old man seemed trustworthy but he was later revealed to be PERFIDIOUS.*

## 179. Science

(*SAHY-uhns*), noun

A body of knowledge concerned with establishing facts, principles, and methods through experimentation and study.

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## NOUNS

**biogenesis** (bye-oh-JEN-ih-siss). The process of life arising from other living things.

*BIOGENESIS involves an unending regenerative cycle of life and death.*

**entomology** (en-tuh-MOL-uh-jee). The study of insects.

*Judy's little boy so loved to collect bugs from the garden that we wondered if he might grow up to study ENTOMOLOGY.*

**eustasy** (YEW-stah-see). A change in sea level caused by melting of ice, movement of ocean floors, or major deposits of sediment.

*Global warming is already triggering EUSTASY by melting the polar ice caps.*

**kinesiology** (kih-nee-see-OL-uh-jee). The science of muscles and their function, physical movement, and muscular development.

*As a body builder, he studied both nutrition and KINESIOLOGY.*

**morphology** (more-FALL-uh-jee). The study of something's form or structure.

*We spent a surprisingly interesting few minutes discussing the MORPHOLOGY of the duck-billed platypus.*

**nanosecond** (NAN-oh-sek-uhnd). A time period equal to one-billionth of a second.

*Certain processes can now be measured in NANOSECONDS.*

**ornithology** (or-nih-THAHL-uh-jee). The study of birds.

*Her lifelong love of birds led Stella to seek a degree in ORNITHOLOGY.*

**taxonomy** (tak-SON-uh-mee). The science of formal classification and naming.

*The newly discovered insect was dubbed "Lilliput" by the researchers, although its formal name was a question of TAXONOMY that no one felt hurried to resolve.*

**xenogamy** (zih-NAHG-uh-me). Cross-pollination among plant species.

*The secret of our award-winning formal gardens is the careful use of XENOLOGY.*

## ANTONYMS

**sorcery** (SAWR-suh-ree). The use of supernatural powers and evil spirits; witchcraft.

*“The teaching of the church, theoretically astute, is a lie in practice and a compound of vulgar superstitions and SORCERY.”*

—Leo Tolstoy, Russian novelist, philosopher

**wizardry** (WIZ-er-dree). The art of a wizard; magic; sorcery.

*Brian was an accomplished politician; his diplomatic and rhetorical skills approached WIZARDRY.*



## 180. Secret

(*SEE-krit*), adjective, noun

To keep from public knowledge; something not revealed.

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## ADJECTIVE

**clandestine** (*klan-DES-tyne*). Refers to activities that are secret, covert, and perhaps not fully authorized or sanctioned.

*“CLANDESTINE steps upon imagined stairs / Climb through the night, because his cuckoos call.”*

—Wallace Stevens, American poet

**cryptic** (*KRIP-tik*). Having a hidden or ambiguous meaning; mysterious, secret.

*In an effort to make their messages interesting, advertisers have made them more CRYPTIC so that, at times, it's unclear what is being advertised or why.*

**incognito** (*in-cog-NEE-to*). Hidden or unknown; with an intentional change in appearance to make one's real identity unknown.

*The novelist wore sunglasses in hopes of remaining INCOGNITO at restaurants, but he was still pestered by autograph hounds.*

**surreptitious** (*suh-rep-TISH-us*). Done in secret.

*With little more than SURREPTITIOUS glances, Alison was able to entice Quentin to her side at the spring gala.*

## NOUNS

**cache** (KASH). Something hidden or stored.

*Everyone was jealous when they learned of Moira's CACHE of acceptances to the finest schools.*

**machination** (mak-uh-NAY-shun). A conniving plot; a crafty scheme meant to achieve an illicit end.

*Carrie was familiar with Desmond's MACHINATIONS when it came to winning raises.*

## VERBS

**encipher** (*en-SY-fur*). To scramble or convert data into a secret code, prior to transmission, thereby making it impossible for unauthorized users to understand or decipher.

*Mathematicians were employed by the army to crack ENCIPHERED messages during the war.*

## ANTONYMS

**candid** (*KAN-did*). Honest; outspoken.

*“Blame where you must, be CANDID where you can, and be each critic the good-natured man.”*

—Robert Burns, Scottish poet

**overt** (*oh-VURT*). Open, public, and observable.

*The enemy’s OVERT acts demonstrated a bravado indicating their complete confidence in success.*

## 181. Sensuous

(*SEN-shoo-us*), adjective

Affecting, appealing to, or perceived by the senses; enjoying the pleasures of the senses.

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## ADJECTIVES

**epicurean** (ep-ih-kyoo-REE-uhn). Fond of luxury and indulgence in sensual pleasures.

*Peter was fond of EPICUREAN delights of all kinds, but could only afford the most basic.*

**hedonistic** (HEED-in-ist-ik). Characteristic of a belief that pleasure or happiness is the chief goal in life.

*We were all amazed that our small-town friend could grow up and adopt such a HEDONISTIC lifestyle.*

**luxurious** (lug-ZHOOR-ee-uhs). Characterized by luxury; loving luxury or pleasure.

*“The sixties were an oyster decade: slippery, LUXURIOUS, and reportedly aphrodisiac they slipped down the historical throat without touching the sides.”*

—Julian Barnes, British critic and author

**sybaritic** (sih-bar-IT-ik). Relating to self-indulgent sensuous luxury and pleasure.

*Selena rubbed the suntan lotion over her tanned middle slowly, and the whole thing had an erotic, SYBARITIC quality that made the men’s eyes pop out of their heads.*

**toothsome** (TOOTH-suhm). Voluptuous and sexually alluring.

*Dorienne is TOOTHsome thanks mainly to her plastic surgeon and her family’s fortune.*

**voluptuous** (vuh-LUP-chew-us). Anything arising from or giving extreme sensory or sensual pleasure.

*A VOLUPTUOUS banquet was the highlight of the Masterlys’ Thanksgiving gala.*

## ANTONYMS

**astringent** (*uh-STRIN-juhnt*). Severe; harsh; austere.

*Her ASTRINGENT style was a perfect complement to the cold, chaste main character.*

**austere** (*aw-STEER*). Severe in appearance or nature; self-disciplined or strict to a high degree.

*George chose an AUSTERE lifestyle because he believed it was more wholesome and healthy.*

See also: Sex



## 182. Serious

(*SEER-ee-uhs*), adjective

Of, having, showing, or characterized by deep thought; grave or earnest disposition, character, or manner; important or weighty; requiring concentration and attention.

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## NOUNS

**gravitas** (*gra-vih-TAS*). Behavior or manner that is dignified and serious, perhaps even a bit stiff, formal, and pompous.

*The GRAVITAS with which Lionel viewed the Harvard-Yale football game was quite amusing to many of us.*

# ADJECTIVES

**cardinal** (KAR-dih-nul). Primarily important; vital; prominent; of great seriousness.

*Whatever you do, remember the CARDINAL rule we have in this house about avoiding the subject of religion.*

**climacteric** (klih-MACK-ter-ick). Characteristic of a time of great change; any pivotal time in a person's life.

*Gwen's graduation from college and move across the country proved to be CLIMACTERIC events.*

**seriocomic** (seer-ee-oh-KOM-ik). Having both serious and humorous characteristics.

*Like many of today's successful dramatists, Erica employs SERIOCOMIC themes in her work.*

**staid** (STAYED). Serious and dignified.

*Bert's fluorescent pinstripes and huge bow tie were not at all what his new supervisor had in mind for the STAID employee.*

**stolid** (STOL-id). Unemotional; impassive.

*The witness retained her STOLID, professional demeanor in the face of some intense cross-examination.*

## ANTONYMS

**extenuate** (*ik-STEN-yoo-ate*). To reduce in seriousness, external aspect, or extent; to make a fault or error less grave.

*The case was dismissed because circumstances EXTENUATED his negligence.*

**flippant** (*FLIP-unt*). Disrespectful or harsh in tone; shallow or frivolous.

*Mario, still upset about the previous night's quarrel greeted his wife's cheery "Good morning" with a FLIPPANT "Who says it is?"*

**frivolity** (*frih-VOL-ih-tee*). The quality of lacking seriousness; lighthearted or even ludicrous behavior.

*We have no time for FRIVOLITY; tomorrow morning, the manager is coming.*

## 183. Sex

(*SEKS*), noun

The division by gender; the manifestation of the physical and emotional attraction between individuals.

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## NOUNS

**androgynous** (Ann-DRAH-gen-us). Something or someone who is of indeterminate sex; or hermaphrodite (having characteristics of both a male and a female).

*The models at fashion week were so ANDROGYNOUS that Katherine couldn't tell if the clothes were designed for men or women.*

**coitus** (KO-uh-tus). Sexual intercourse.

*Professor Wells sternly informed me that he would prefer that I use the term "COITUS" in describing the activities of the test couples, rather than the less formal "making whoopee."*

**concupiscence** (kon-KYOO-pih-suhns). Unbridled lust in the extreme—horniness.

*"You're talking to a young vampire, a fountain of CONCUPISCENCE."*

—Mario Acevedo, American fantasy author

**debauchery** (deh-BAW-chair-ee). Frequent indulgence in sensual pleasures.

*"The geniuses, the mad dreamers, those who speak of DEBAUCHERY in the spirit, they are the condemned of our times."*

—Harlan Ellison, American author

**demimonde** (DEMM-ih-mond). Women who are considered to have loose morals due to their indiscreet or promiscuous behavior.

*Unless you're trying to get yourself labeled a DEMIMONDE, Sylvia, you need to stop hanging out with guys like Roger.*

**flagrante delicto** (fluh-GRAHN-tay di-LIK-toh). In the act of committing an offense; most widely used today to describe a couple caught in the act of sexual intercourse.

*"No cheating spouse, no teen with a wrecked family car, no mayor of Washington, D.C., videotaped in FLAGRANTE DELICTO has ever come up with anything as farfetched as U.S. farm policy."*

—P. J. O'Rourke, American satirist

**hermaphrodite** (hur-MAFF-ruh-dite). One who possesses both male and female reproductive organs.

*Sheldon brought back miniature statues of the island's mythic hero, a HERMAPHRODITE warrior.*

**lothario** (lo-THAR-ee-oe). A man who seduces women.

*Ryan is friendly, I'll admit, but he is certainly no LOTHARIO.*

**necrophilia** (nek-ruh-FEEL-ee-uh). An erotic attraction to corpses.

*For the lover concerned about rejection, NECROPHILIA may be the answer.*

**panderer** (PAN-der-ur). A person who obtains prostitutes for clients or supplies clients to prostitutes; a pimp.

*Ralph was so inept at meeting women that he seriously considered getting advice from a PANDERER.*

**roué** (roo-AY). A licentious man; a libertine or lecher.

*Although Ernest's dalliances might have been understandable when he was a young man, they were more difficult for his family to forgive in his later years, when he came to resemble nothing so much as a tired and lonely old ROUÉ.*

**sapphism** (SAF-iz-im). Lesbianism.

*After several failed relationships with men, Martha was ready to try SAPPHISM.*

**saturnalia** (sat-uhr-NAIL-yuh). Unrestrained, licentious merrymaking.

*Anyone looking at the party's aftermath the next day would have thought it was a SATURNALIA, not a fairly quiet reunion of five old friends.*

**satyr** (SAY-ter). A lascivious, lecherous man.

*Harold's graceful manners disappear once he has had a few glasses of champagne, and he becomes a veritable SATYR.*

## VERBS

**eroticize** (*ih-ROT-uh-size*). To take something “tame” and sexualize it.

*There's no need to EROTICIZE Shakespeare because his works are already filled with bawdy—sometimes downright filthy—puns.*

**philander** (*fi-LAN-der*). To engage in amorous flirtations or exploits with someone whom one cannot or does not intend to marry.

*These accusations of PHILANDERING, whether based in fact or not, have little to do with the question of whether the candidate will serve our state well in the United States Senate.*



## ADJECTIVES

**Dionysian** (die-uh-NIH-she-un). Frenzied; uninhibited; hedonistic; orgiastic; unrestrained.

*The fraternity's DIONYSIAN exploits were fun for a while, but when they resulted in his failing two classes, Emmett decided to go back to the quiet life.*

**lascivious** (luh-SIV-ee-us). Interested in and eager to engage in sexual activity; sexual in nature.

*"An impersonal and scientific knowledge of the structure of our bodies is the surest safeguard against prurient curiosity and LASCIVIOUS gloating."*

—Marie Carmichael Stopes, British scientist and birth-control pioneer

**lubricious** (loo-BRISH-us). Arousing or suggestive of sexual desire; lustful.

*All corporations require employees to attend a workshop on harassment in order to curb latent LUBRICIOUS instincts.*

**nubile** (NOO-bile). Sexually mature and/or prepared for marriage; sexually attractive.

*Art looked at his "baby" daughter Marie and realized that she had somehow become a NUBILE young woman of eighteen.*

**phallic** (FAL-ik). Of or pertaining to the phallus, or penis; reminiscent of a penis; reminiscent of the life-giving force of nature, as in ancient Dionysian festivals that made the phallus a central element.

*According to Freud, PHALLIC symbols (such as the sword of Unferth used by Beowulf) abound in both ancient and modern literature.*

**prurient** (PROOR-ee-ent). An excessive focus on sex.

*"The idea," Judge Cotlin wrote, "that Joyce's Ulysses is designed mainly to excite the reader's PRURIENT interest is absurd."*

**salacious** (suh-LAY-shuss). Having an unhealthy, obsessive, or addictive interest in sex.

*For weeks, the society pages were rife with SALACIOUS gossip, which turned out to originate from Mallory, who had lost her beau to Jeannette.*

**scabrous** (SKAB-russ). Indelicate; risqué; salacious.

*Joe believed that SCABROUS jokes were the most humorous.*

**sultry** (SUL-tree). Suggestive of passion or smoldering sexuality.

*Marjorie did nothing to accentuate her figure or appearance, but she still incurred the wrath of many women in the office who considered her to be naturally SULTRY.*

**tantric** (TAN-trik). Related to views of sex as a sacred and deeply spiritual act.

*“Both religions [Hinduism and Buddhism] were patronized by the same kings, ministers, and merchants, many of whom indulged in the same TANTRIC heterodoxies.”*

—William Dalrymple, Scottish historian and author

**wanton** (WAHN-tn). Loose, lascivious, and lewd.

*Robert is so WANTON that women stay away from him in spite of his family’s connections.*

## ANTONYMS

**celibacy** (*SELL-ih-bus-see*). The quality of being chaste; the state of abstaining from sexual activity.

*Although he took Holy Orders, David eventually found that he could not live a life of CELIBACY and left the priesthood.*

**chaste** (*CHEYST*). Not indulging in sexual activity; virginal; celibate.

*“Too CHASTE a youth leads to a dissolute old age.”*

—Andre Gide, French writer

See also: Love

## 184. Shape

(*SHAYPE*), noun

The quality of a thing that defines its external surface and physical form; something seen in outline; contour.

---

# ADJECTIVES

**conoidal** (kuh-NOYD-uhl). Shaped like, or nearly like, a cone.

*My son's paintings of CONOIDAL objects are all the rage in his preschool.*

**infundibular** (in-fuhn-DIB-yoo-lahr). Having the shape of a funnel.

*From years of erosion by rapidly moving water, the valley has acquired an INFUNDIBULAR appearance.*

**lunate** (LOO-nayt). Crescent-shaped.

*Looking like a partially eaten cookie, the LUNATE moon rose over the lake.*

**ovoid** (OH-void). Having the shape of an egg.

*The OVOID droppings were left by an unidentified but fastidious animal.*

**pyriform** (PIR-uh-fawrm). Having a pear shape.

*With their PYRIFORM outline, the apples looked like pears from a distance.*

**serriform** (SAIR-uh-form). Shaped like a saw-edge; having ridges reminiscent of saw-teeth.

*The two SERRIFORM pieces fit together perfectly, making a solid joint.*

**sigmoid** (SIG-moid). Having a double curve like the letter "S."

*The rather large serpent was resting in the classic SIGMOID position.*

**sinuous** (SIN-yoo-uhs). Bending in and out; having many curves; wavy.

*Flowing slowly across the plain, the great river followed a SINUOUS path to the ocean.*

**spheroidal** (sfi-ROID-uhl). In the shape of a sphere.

*Seemingly without effort, the toddlers were able to transform the SPHEROIDAL ball into one that was distinctly ovoid.*

**symmetrical** (si-MET-rih-kul). Characterized by a regularity of features and form; well-proportioned; agreeably arranged.

*The tree was so perfectly SYMMETRICAL that we wondered if it was real.*

**tauriform** (TAWR-uh-fawrm). Having the shape of a bull or the head or horns of a bull.

*Arthur was temporarily stumped when asked to draw an object with a TAURIFORM shape.*

**xiphoid** (ZIE-foid). Shaped like a sword.

*We can always spot Carlson's private plane because it is covered with the same XIPHOID shapes that adorn his family's crest.*

# ANTONYMS

**amorphous** (*ah-MORE-fis*). Without definite shape, substance, or form; lacking definition and boundaries.

*“Of course the illusion of art is to make one believe that great literature is very close to life, but exactly the opposite is true. Life is AMORPHOUS, literature is formal.”*

—Françoise Sagan, French novelist and playwright

**incoherent** (*in-koh-HEER-uhnt*). Not logically connected; disjointed; rambling.

*“Dreams are nothing but INCOHERENT ideas, occasioned by partial or imperfect sleep.”*

—Benjamin Rush, American physician and political leader

## 185. Short-lived

(*SHAWRT-LIVD*), adjective

Living only a short time.

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## ADJECTIVE

**caducous** (kuh-DOO-kuss). Transitory; short-lived; perishable.

*“Some thing, which I fancied was a part of me, falls off from me and leaves no scar. It was CADUCOUS.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**deciduous** (dih-SIJ-oo-uhs). Not permanent.

*After meeting Martha, Arnold was content to give up all of his DECIDUOUS pleasures.*

**ephemeral** (eh-FEM-er-uhl). Describes a short-lived condition, temporary event, or fleeting moment.

*“There remain some truths too EPHEMERAL to be captured in the cold pages of a court transcript.”*

—Irving Kaufman, Chief Judge, United States Court of Appeals

**evanescent** (ev-eh-NESS-ent). Having the qualities of a mist or vapor, capable of vanishing seemingly into thin air.

*“Nobody thinks it’s silly to invest two hours’ work in two minutes’ enjoyment; but if cooking is EVANESCENT, well, so is the ballet.”*

—Julia Child, American cook, author, and television personality

**fugacious** (fyoo-GAY-shuss). Fleeting, transitory, short-lived.

*The FUGACIOUS mid-summer cold snap was a welcome relief from the heat.*

**transitory** (TRAN-si-tawr-ee). Lasting only a short time; not permanent.

*“All forms of beauty, like all possible phenomena, contain an element of the eternal and an element of the transitory—of the absolute and of the particular.”*

—Charles Baudelaire, French poet

## ANTONYMS

**incessant** (*in-SES-uhnt*). Not stopping; never ceasing; continuing without end.

*“The longest absence is less perilous to love than the terrible trials of INCESSANT proximity.”*

—Edna St. Vincent Millay, American poet and dramatist

**perdurable** (*per-DOOR-uh-buhl*). Extremely durable or lasting; permanent; imperishable.

*Oscar’s aphorisms always expressed a PERDURABLE truth.*

**perennial** (*puh-REN-ee-uhl*). Lasting for a long time; enduring.

*“Folly is PERENNIAL and yet the human race has survived.”*

—Bertrand Russell, English logician and philosopher

## 186. Silly

(*SIL-ee*), adjective

Lacking good sense; foolish; absurd; ridiculous.

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## ADJECTIVES

**farcical** (*FAR-sih-kuhl*). Ludicrous, absurd, or laughably inept.

*“To conjure up such ridiculous questions, the answers to which we all know or should know are in the negative, is to build up a whimsical and FARCICAL straw man which is not only grim but Grimm.”*

—Tom C. Clark, Supreme Court Justice,

**fatuous** (*FACH-oo-us*). Trivial, silly, absurd, unimportant, pointless.

*“I’m sick of pretending that some FATUOUS male’s self-important pronouncements are the objects of my undivided attention.”*

—Germaine Greer, Australian writer and scholar

**maudlin** (*MAWD-lin*). Foolishly and mawkishly sentimental or emotional.

*“It is a MAUDLIN and indecent verity that comes out through the strength of wine.”*

—Joseph Conrad, Polish-born English novelist

**schmaltzy** (*SHMALT-see*). Overly sentimental (especially with regard to music or art); tastelessly overdone.

*Although Libby loved her great-grandfather, she found his SCHMALTZY taste in music hard to bear.*

## NOUNS

**bathos** (BAYTH-oss). Something excessively trivial, sentimental, or melodramatic; a ludicrous change from the high-minded to the commonplace.

*The play's BATHOS made it hard for me to take it seriously, but June thought it was the most moving drama she had ever seen.*

**frippery** (FRIHP-uh-ree). Ostentatious or affected elegance.

*The FRIPPERY of Lara's couture belied her nouveau riche origins.*

**imbecility** (im-buh-SILL-ih-tee). Foolishness; simplemindedness.

*Although he disdained the IMBECILITY of mainstream television, Arnie was not above an occasional viewing of American Gladiators or Geraldo.*

**rigmarole** (RIG-muh-roll). Absurdly complicated procedures and instructions; a bunch of unnecessary baloney.

*The club had some value to him in business, but he quickly grew tired of all the RIGMAROLE at meetings.*

## VERBS

**stultify** (*STUL-tih-fy*). To render foolish or unable to act intelligently.

*The intense heat had a STULTIFYING effect on Melanie; she found she had difficulty thinking clearly.*

## ANTONYMS

**somber** (SOM-ber). Depressed or depressing; gloomy; dismal, melancholy; sad.

*The house was old and SOMBER with dark paint, rusted hardware, and the threat of imminent collapse.*

**staid** (STAYED). Serious and dignified.

*Bert's fluorescent pinstripes and huge bow tie were not at all what his new supervisor had in mind for the STAID atmosphere of the office.*

## 187. Similar

(*SIM-uh-ler*), adjective

Having a general resemblance or likeness; nearly but not exactly the same.

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# ADJECTIVES

**akin** (uh-KIN). Showing a similar feature or quality; comparable or related in some important way.

*I feel that Harry's repeated falsification of his records is much more than a breach of policy: it is AKIN to outright perjury.*

**alliterative** (uh-LIT-er-ah-tive). Using the repetition of initial consonant sounds in language.

*"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" is an ALLITERATIVE tongue-twister.*

**analogous** (an-AL-a-gus). Similar or comparable in some respects.

*Nikki tried to argue that attending public school in Manhattan was ANALOGOUS to attending the prestigious boarding school in the country, but her argument was weak and her grandmother wasn't buying it.*

**derivative** (deh-RIV-uh-tiv). Copied or adapted from others.

*"Only at his maximum does an individual surpass all his DERIVATIVE elements, and become purely himself."*

—D. H. Lawrence, British author

**isomorphic** (ahy-suh-MAWR-fik). Having a similar form, shape, or structure.

*Jerry enjoyed traveling before all cities seemed to become endless mazes of ISOMORPHIC structures.*

# NOUNS

**metaphor** (MET-ah-for). A sentence or phrase in which a word ordinarily associated with one thing is applied to something else, to indicate that in some way they are similar.

*“If we are a METAPHOR of the universe, the human couple is the metaphor par excellence, the point of intersection of all forces and the seed of all forms.”*

—Octavio Paz Lozano, Mexican writer, poet, and diplomat

**parity** (PARE-ih-tee). The condition of everyone being more or less equal.

*The firemen received a raise to help them achieve pay PARITY with the sanitation workers and police department.*

**propinquity** (proh-PING-kwi-tee). Nearness in time or place; an affinity of nature.

*As more and more of the small ranches in his neighborhood were knocked down and replaced by mansion-like dwellings, Ralph felt wealthy by virtue of PROPINQUITY.*

**similitude** (sih-MIL-ih-tood). Likeness or similarity.

*Bea and Rosa have a SIMILITUDE of habits when it comes to cooking.*

**simulacrum** (sim-yuh-LAY-krum). A minor, unreal or eerie similarity.

*The boy possessed only the barest SIMULACRUM of the classic DeBerris brow, but something told me his claim to be a descendant was valid.*

# ANTONYMS

**heterogeneity** (*het-uh-roh-juh-NEE-ih-tee*). Characterized by dissimilarity; disparateness.

*HETEROGENEITY is found throughout the animal and plant world with each individual virtually unique.*

**impairity** (*ihm-PARE-ih-tee*). Inequality or disparity.

*Joyce was continually amazed by the IMPARITY of her children.*

## 188. Skilled

(*SKILD*), adjective

Having a particular ability from training or experience.

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## ADJECTIVES

**adroit** (*ah-DROYT*). Skilled or clever in a particular pursuit.

*“It’s kind of sad,” Betty said to Barbara, “that Will thinks his being ADROIT as an opera singer will impress women.”*

**consummate** (*KON-suh-mitt*). Complete or perfect; showing supreme skill.

*“[John F. Kennedy is] a new star with a tremendous national appeal, the skill of a CONSUMMATE showman.”*

—Russell Baker, American author

**efficacious** (*eff-ih-KAY-shuss*). Capable of having a desired effect.

*“Example is always more EFFICACIOUS than precept.”*

—Samuel Johnson, British moralist and poet

**habile** (*HAB-ill*). Skillful and able; handy.

*Our HABILE gardener has helped render our topiary into the shapes of dollar and pound signs.*

## NOUNS

**demiurge** (DEM-ee-urj). A powerful creative force or a creative personality.

*After trying a few different professions, Jackson realized that his ability with artifice, combined with his family connections, would make him a DEMIURGE of the marketing world.*

**journeyman** (JUR-nee-man). A person who, although not a top master of his profession, has become extremely competent, through long years of practice, at a particular craft or skill.

*“So this is happiness, / that JOURNEYMAN.”*

—Anne Sexton, American poet and author

**virtuoso** (vur-choo-OWE-so). A supremely skilled artist.

*Geena is a piano VIRTUOSO who has won dozens of competitions.*

## ANTONYMS

**inept** (*in-EPT*). Without judgment, discretion, aptitude, or skill.

*Williams, an INEPT craftsman, soon found that his goods would never fetch top dollar.*

**jejune** (*jih-JUNE*). Not well thought out or fully formed; poor in performance.

*Samantha snidely informed Blake that her JEJUNE entertaining efforts might someday grow to maturity.*

## 189. Sleepy

(*SLEE-pee*), adjective

Inclined to sleep; characterized by an absence of activity; drowsy; idle.

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## ADJECTIVES

**hypnopompic** (hip-nuh-PAHM-pick). Having to do with the semiconscious state that precedes wakefulness.

*With all of her partying at exclusive clubs, Madison spends most of her life in a HYPNOPOMPIC state.*

**lassitude** (LAS-ih-tood). Having little energy or motivation; weariness.

*“We know what boredom is: it is a dull / Impatience or a fierce velleity, / A champing wish, stalled by our LASSITUDE, / To make or do.”*

—Richard Wilbur, American poet

**lethargic** (luh-THAHR-jihk). Drowsy and sluggish; lacking vigor.

*“Great talents, by the rust of long disuse, / Grow LETHARGIC and shrink from what they were.”*

—Ovid, Roman poet

**logy** (LOW-Gee). Characterized by lethargy and sluggishness.

*“To be scared is such a release from all the LOGY weight of procrastination, of dallying and pokiness! You burn into work. It is as though gravity were removed and you walked lightly to the moon like an angel.”*

—Brenda Ueland, American author

**oscitant** (OS-ih-tuhnt). Drowsy, inattentive; dull.

*Before 10:00 A.M., any lecture hall on any campus will be filled with OSCITANT students.*

**recumbent** (rih-KUHM-bent). Inactive, idle; lying down.

*During our Italian cruise, we spent most of our time RECUMBENT on the bow of the yacht, soaking up the sun’s rays.*

**somniferous** (som-NIFF-er-us). Inducing sleep.

*The professor’s SOMNIFEROUS voice caused many students to fall asleep during her lectures.*

**somnolent** (SOM-nuh-lunt). Tired, sleepy.

*Having worked all night on the paper, Gaylord dragged himself into the lecture hall and spent the hour casting a well-meaning but SOMNOLENT gaze in the direction of his professor.*

**soporific** (sop-uh-RIFF-ick). Boring, tedious, or exhausting such that it brings on sleep.

*If Cassandra weren't such an important social contact, her SOPORIFIC speech would surely cause us to avoid her.*

## NOUNS

**inertia** (in-UR-shuh). Sluggishness; the quality of being inert.

*It is not a lack of opportunity that has hampered you, Jackson, but simple INERTIA.*

**narcoma** (nar-KO-muh). A hazy state between sleep and wakefulness reminiscent of or signaling use of narcotics.

*Because she had worked in a city emergency room for four years, Ellen knew that the boy had slipped into NARCOMA.*

**opiate** (OPE-ee-ut). An addictive narcotic, especially one with numbing or sleep-inducing qualities; anything that causes dullness or inaction.

*Whenever Roger was agitated by overwork, he would relax with classical music and allow its calming effect to act like an OPIATE on his mind.*

**torpor** (TORE-purr). Temporary loss of the power of motion or sensation; dormant; apathy; indifference.

*“A multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage TORPOR.”*

—William Wordsworth, British Romantic poet

## ANTONYMS

**animated** (AN-uh-mey-tid). Vigorous; lively.

*Their discussion was ANIMATED by the assurance that each was correct and the others were fools.*

**astir** (uh-STUR). In motion; in excited activity.

*My uncle's energy was such that he was constantly ASTIR; he even talked in his sleep.*

## 190. Small

(*SMAWL*), adjective

Little; of less than the usual quantity, size, amount, value, importance, etc.

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# ADJECTIVES

**diminutive** (*dih-MIN-yuh-tiv*). Small in stature.

*Marcia's forceful personality overcomes her DIMINUTIVE stature.*

**exiguous** (*ex-IG-you-uss*). Meager; small; scanty.

*Dinner turned out to be an EXIGUOUS offering of two thin slices of chicken, three green beans, and a potato—albeit quite artistically arranged.*

**infinitesimal** (*in-fin-uh-TESS-ih-mull*). So small that it can't accurately be measured.

*Which color lipstick to wear tonight is an INFINITESIMAL, not a major, issue, so let's get going already!*

**Lilliputian** (*lil-ee-PEW-shun*). Small in stature; tiny in comparison to one's peers.

*Jules Verne's LILLIPUTIAN appearance made people treat him like a child.*

**minuscule** (*MIN-uss-kyool*). Extremely small.

*Sometimes, trying to decipher the MINUSCULE names, numbers, and signs on a map only makes me feel more lost.*

**nominal** (*NAHM-ih-nl*). Relatively minor in importance; insignificant as an amount or volume of something.

*For a NOMINAL fee, the store delivers your new wide-screen TV to your home and sets it up for you.*

**trifling** (*TRY-fling*). Insignificant; unimportant; trivial.

*The fact is, you are unlikely to be called in for an audit over such a TRIFLING amount of money.*

## NOUNS

**globule** (GLAHB-yewl). A small globe or ball

*“In yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a GLOBULE of sap ascends.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**iota** (eye-OH-tuh). A minute quantity; an extremely small amount.

*The fact that the prisoner’s reprieve omits his middle initial doesn’t matter one IOTA, Warden Holloway.*

**microcosm** (my-kruh-KAHZ-uhm). A representation of something on a very small scale.

*“Each particle is a MICROCOSM, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**minutiae** (mih-NOO-shuh). Small, trifling matters that one encounters on an average day.

*The MINUTIAE of golf, tennis, and spa treatments at the club can become utterly tiresome.*

**modicum** (MOD-ih-kuhm). A modest amount; a small quantity.

*“To be human is to have one’s little MODICUM of romance secreted away in one’s composition.”*

—Mark Twain

**paucity** (PAW-city). A lack of something, a small supply or limited selection.

*“It is very strange, and very melancholy, that the PAUCITY of human pleasures should persuade us ever to call hunting one of them.”*

—Samuel Johnson, British moralist and poet

**pittance** (PIT-unce). A very small amount.

*My allowance in those days, of course, was a PITTANCE compared to my brother’s.*

**scintilla** (sin-TILL-ah). A spark; a tiny trace amount.

*“The air twittered with bright SCINTILLAS of fading light.”*

—Harlan Ellison, American author

**smattering** (SMAT-er-ing). A little bit; a small amount of something.

*Dean picked up a SMATTERING of Italian during his visit to Venice.*

**tincture** (*TINK-cherr*). A trace amount or slight tinge.  
*The tragic opera was leavened with a TINCTURE of comic relief.*



## VERBS

**dwindle** (DWIN-dul). To become smaller; to shrink or waste away; to decrease.

*I had planned to run away forever, but my supply of cookies and pennies DWINDLED, forcing me to return home by nightfall.*

**truncate** (TRUN-kate). To shorten by cutting (a segment).

*The director left the long passage about the “willow that grows aslant the brook” intact, but decided to TRUNCATE an earlier scene that had something to do with Hecuba.*

## ANTONYMS

**ponderous** (*PON-der-uhs*). Massive; heavy.

*“Ever since I was a boy, I regarded opera as a PONDEROUS anachronism, almost the equivalent of smoking.”*

—Frank Lloyd Wright, American architect

**prodigious** (*proh-DIJ-is*). Extraordinary in size, extent, amount, degree, bulk, etc.; enormous; monstrous.

*Clark’s PRODIGIOUS collection of old movie posters led many of his friends to ask whether he had once owned a theatre.*

## 191. Solution

(*suh-LOO-shun*), noun

The method or act of solving a problem; explanation; clarification; answer.

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## NOUNS

**catholicon** (*kuh-THOL-ih-kuhn*). A universal remedy; panacea.

*Money is often considered a CATHOLICON for many of the world's ills.*

**elixir** (*e-LIX-ur*). A solution meant to be used for medicinal purposes; in medieval times, a supposedly curative drink made from mixing alcohol and drugs in water.

*Dr. Callahan's ELIXIR of Life, a patent medicine popular in Kansas in the late 1880s, may have owed part of its popularity to the coca leaves used in its preparation.*

**panacea** (*pan-uh-SEE-uh*). A universal solution for all problems, diseases, or woes.

*Parents today see buying their kids everything they want as a PANACEA for misery, boredom, and unhappiness.*

## VERBS

**elucidate** (*ee-LOO-sih-date*). To lecture, explain, or pontificate about a subject in great detail so as to make it exceedingly clear.

*“It [was] the mission of the twentieth century to ELUCIDATE the irrational.”*

—Maurice Merleau-Ponty, French philosopher

**ratiocinate** (*rash-ee-OSS-inn-ate*). To work toward the solution of a problem through logical thinking and reason.

*Since the dawn of humanity, our best minds have failed to RATIOCINATE a method of proving God’s existence.*

## ANTONYMS

**impasse** (*IM-pass*). A situation that seems to offer no solution or escape; a point of stalemate. Literally, a dead-end street or passage.

*Torn realized that his relationship with Betty had come to an IMPASSE; divorce was now on her mind, and he knew it.*

**nostrum** (*NAH-strum*). An untested and questionable remedy made of secret ingredients; an ineffective solution.

*“America’s present need is not NOSTRUMS but normalcy.”*

—Warren G. Harding

## 192. Sound

(*SOUND*), noun

That which can be heard; the sensation produced when the organs of hearing are stimulated by vibrations transmitted through the air or another medium; noise.

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## ADJECTIVES

**euphonious** (you-PHONE-ee-uss). Pleasing to the ear.

*The low, EUPHONIOUS thrumming of the crickets outside my window those summer nights always put me to sleep quickly.*

**guttural** (GUTT-er-ul). Harsh or raspy; reminiscent of deep sounds produced in the throat.

*The dog let out a low, GUTTURAL growl that was likely to give pause to whoever was standing on the other side of the door.*

**plangent** (PLAN-jent). Resounding loudly and, typically, sorrowfully.

*The locomotive whistle is considered by many to be a PLANGENT sound.*

**polyphonic** (pahl-ee-FAHN-ik). Having many different sounds.

*“The guitar is a small orchestra. It is POLYPHONIC. Every string is a different color, a different voice.”*

—Andres Segovia, Spanish classical guitarist

**sonorous** (SON-er-russ). A deep, rich, resonant sound.

*The B-flat bass saxophone is the most SONOROUS member of the saxophone family, with the baritone saxophone coming in a close second.*

**stentorian** (sten-TORE-ee-uhn). A sound characterized as loud and powerful.

*The announcer’s STENTORIAN voice could be heard even after a storm knocked out the power to his microphone.*

**strident** (STRY-dnt). Harsh; obtrusively grating.

*Dennis’s appeals for money became more common—and more STRIDENT—as the year wore on.*



## NOUNS

**cacophony** (*kuh-KAHF-uh-nee*). Harsh, unpleasant sounds that can create a disturbing feeling.

*The CACOPHONY of the nearby construction site made it almost impossible for me to get any work done.*

**crescendo** (*kruh-SHEN-doe*). A gradual increase in volume or intensity (used especially in relation to musical works).

*As the orchestra reached a thundering CRESCENDO, my six-year-old son continued to sleep peacefully by my side.*

**knell** (*NELL*). The sound of a bell, especially when rung solemnly at a funeral.

*“They are of sick and diseased imaginations who would toll the world’s KNELL so soon.”*

—Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist

**sibilance** (*SIB-uh-lens*). A hissing sound.

*Electronic engineers try mightily to eliminate any SIBILANCE introduced by sound-reproduction equipment.*

**spirant** (*SPAHY-ruhnt*). A sound produced by the passage of breath through the partially closed oral cavity; fricative.

*The “sh” and “v” sounds are both SPIRANTS.*

**susurration** (*suss-uh-RAY-shun*). A soft, whispering sound.

*I sat there on the porch of my parents’ farmhouse, listening to the SUSURRATION of wind-driven stalks of wheat.*

**timbre** (*TAM-bur*). A quality of sound, usually musical, determined by its overtones; a distinctive quality or tone.

*I feel that the haunting TIMBRE of the oboe, when played by a master, is more moving than that of any other musical instrument.*

**tintinnabulation** (*tin-ti-nab-yuh-LEY-shun*). The sound of ringing bells.

*In my old neighborhood, we were always woken on Sunday mornings by the TINTINNABULATION of the local churches.*

**tremolo** (*TREMM-uh-lo*). A quality of musical sound marked by rapid repetition of one or two notes.

*The pianist played extravagantly, adding embellishments and trills of TREMOLO far too often for my taste.*

## VERBS

**crepitate** (*KREPP-uh-tate*). To crack, crinkle, or pop.

*Joe jumped up and sat down several times, as if to prove that his chair—and not he—was CREPITATING.*

## ANTONYMS

**aphonic** (*ey-FON-ik*). Not sounded; having aphonia, loss of voice.

*In certain English words, the initial “k” is APHONIC.*

**inaudible** (*in-AW-duh-buhl*). unable to be heard.

*The storm passed far to the south; we could see the lightning flashes but the thunder was INAUDIBLE.*

## 193. Speech

(*SPEECH*), noun

The act of speaking; communicating or expressing thoughts and ideas by spoken words, sounds, and gestures.

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## NOUNS

**elocution** (el-oh-CUE-shun). The ability to deliver a public speech in a clear and persuasive manner.

*He's a brilliant man, but he needs to work on his ELOCUTION.*

**euphony** (YOU-fone-ee). The arrangement or emphasis of words or phrases so they are pleasing to the ear and roll off the tongue with greater ease.

*In finishing school, Alsace learned the art of EUPHONY, and she has parlayed that into a hobby of earning roles in television commercials.*

**filibuster** (FILL-i-bus-ter). A prolonged speech used to delay legislative actions or other important decisions.

*The room breathed a collective sigh when the senator finally ended his eight-hour FILIBUSTER.*

**locution** (low-KEW-shin). A person's manner and style of speaking.

*Neil prides himself on his precise LOCUTION, but some of the guys think he sounds rather prissy.*

**malapropism** (MAL-ah-prop-ism). Misuse of a word or mangling of the English language, often done for comic effect.

*Since Emily refused to take elocution lessons like the rest of us, her speech is constantly marred by ridiculous MALAPROPISMS.*

**metaphor** (MEH-tah-for). A sentence or phrase in which a word ordinarily associated with one thing is applied to something else to indicate that in some way they are similar.

*"If we are a METAPHOR of the universe, the human couple is the metaphor par excellence, the point of intersection of all forces and the seed of all forms."*

—Octavio Paz Lozano, Mexican writer, poet, and diplomat

**mot juste** (MOE-zshoost). The perfect word or phrase to communicate precisely what you mean to say.

*Years of elocution lessons have left Paulina capable of leavening every occasion with a suitable MOT JUSTE.*

**orator** (OR-ray-ter). A skilled and persuasive public speaker.

*Tom overestimated his abilities as an ORATOR and, consequently, stayed at the podium far longer than the audience wanted him to.*

**palaver** (pa-LAH-ver). A rambling, meandering monologue spoken to prove or make a point.

*Don't ask Eileen about collecting art. The result will be twenty minutes of mind-numbing PALAVER.*

**parlance** (PAR-lunss). Vernacular or jargon used by a particular industry, profession, or group.

*By using the terms "discourse," "pedagogy," and "literary criticism," the professors spoke in the PARLANCE of academia.*

**patois** (PAT-wah). Rural speech or jargon; any language that deviates from standard usage.

*I've given up trying to follow the PATOIS of teenagers, the teacher complained.*

**periphrasis** (puh-RIF-ruh-sis). The use of many words where one or a few would suffice.

*The lecture always ran late due to the professor's habit of PERIPHRAISIS.*

**raconteur** (RA-kon-tour). Someone who enjoys telling stories, does so frequently, and is good at it.

*"O'Hara writes as a poetic one-man band, shifting rapidly among his roles as RACONTEUR, sexual adventurer, European traveler . . ."*

—Edward Mendelson, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University

**soliloquy** (suh-LIL-ih-kwee). A dramatic or literary monologue in which a character reveals his innermost thoughts.

*The most famous SOLILOQUY in all of literature is the "To be or not to be" speech in Hamlet.*

## ADJECTIVES

**bombastic** (*bom-BAS-tik*). Characterized by haughty, overblown or pompous talk or writing.

*We expected a compelling argument from our attorney, but he came to court offering little more than a BOMBASTIC harangue.*

**discursive** (*dis-KER-siv*). A manner or style of lecturing in which the speaker jumps back and forth between many topics.

*Paul's DISCURSIVE lectures on American history jumped from century to century, yet it all came together in an understandable and fresh fashion.*

**extemporaneous** (*eks-tem-puh-RAYNE-ee-us*). Off the cuff; done without preparation.

*His EXTEMPORANEOUS delivery made everyone in the public speaking class wonder why he had enrolled.*

**grandiloquent** (*grand-IL-oh-kwent*). Having a pompous, overly inflated, hyperbolic, or pretentious way of presenting oneself in speech and mannerism.

*The architect waxed GRANDILOQUENT about the visionary design of his new skyscraper.*

**laconic** (*luh-KON-ik*). Being a person of few words; expressing oneself with an economy of words.

*Harold may be LACONIC, but when he does speak, he is worth listening to.*

**prolix** (*pro-LIKS*). Tediously wordy; long and verbose.

*The report was so PROLIX, I gave up trying to finish reading it.*

**reticent** (*REH-tih-scent*). Reluctance to openly express one's thoughts, feelings, and personal business to other people; uncommunicative; behaving like an introvert in social situations.

*"The shorter poems tend to be RETICENT, psychologically acute love poems about the shifting inequalities of love."*

—Edward Mendelson, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University

**sententious** (*sen-TEN-shuss*). Tending to use many clichés or maxims in order to enlighten others.

*Polonius's SENTENTIOUS manner of speaking clearly irritates Hamlet in this scene.*



## VERBS

**pontificate** (*pon-TIF-ih-kate*). To speak in a dogmatic or pompous manner.

*Can I assume the senator now intends to PONTIFICATE on the many virtues of our current trade policy?*

## ANTONYMS

**censor** (*SEN-ser*). To examine, review, and change or delete a word or passage from a written work based on moral or political grounds.

*“If in other lands the press and books and literature of all kinds are CENSORED, we must redouble our efforts here to keep them free.”*

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, American president

**inarticulate** (*in-ahr-TIK-yuh-lit*). The inability to express oneself; lacking clear and expressive speech.

*“The INARTICULATE speak longest.”*

—Japanese proverb

See also: Language, Talk

## 194. Speed

(*SPEED*), noun

The act or rate of moving swiftly; swiftness; the rate of motion; velocity.

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## NOUNS

**alacrity** (uh-LACK-rih-tee). Eager, cheerful rapidity or promptness.

*Jones made a special effort to show ALACRITY his first day on the job.*

**andante** (on-DAHNT-ay). A moderately slow tempo.

*“Goodness, Sarah,” exclaimed the music teacher, “it says ‘ANDANTE,’ but you don’t have to play it like a dirge!”*

**celerity** (suh-LAIR-ih-tee). Speed; swiftness of action or motion.

*I will carry out your orders with CELERITY, sir.*

**tempo** (TEM-po). The speed or pace of something (particularly, of music).

*Our aerobics instructor will only play music with a fast TEMPO and a strong beat, although there are times, generally after a hard day at work, when I feel like introducing her to the wonders of Mantovani.*

## ADJECTIVES

**expeditious** (*ek-spuh-DISH-uss*). Speedy and efficient; conducted in a brisk manner.

*Ryan came upon an EXPEDITIOUS means of solving the problem that had vexed the firm for so long.*

**yare** (*Yahr*). Quick and agile; lively.

*Thanks to the gymnastics she performed at finishing school, Amanda has a YARE and limber body.*

## ANTONYMS

**costive** (KAH-stiv). Slow and sluggish; constipated.

*I took my car to a mechanic because of my car's increasingly COSTIVE performance.*

**dilatory** (DIL-uh-tore-ee). Tending to cause delay; intended to cause delay.

*The workers' DILATORY attitude lost them a large contract.*

**stagnation** (stag-NAY-shin). The condition of being inactive or the slowing of forward progress or lessening of activity.

*"Economists' statistical techniques are not refined enough to analyze unambiguously the causes of this long-term STAGNATION."*

—Jeff Madrick, director of policy research at the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis, The New School.

## 195. Stop

(*STAHP*), verb, noun

To suspend or cease motion, action, or progress.

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## VERBS

**abstain** (*ub-STANE*). To refrain from; to refuse to partake in; to go without voluntarily.

*Maria, who had ABSTAINED from eating meat while in high school, was persuaded to try a cheeseburger on her graduation night.*

**forbear** (*for-BEAR*). To not do something; to do without.

*The landlord decided to FORBEAR raising the rent until the repairs to the building had been completed.*

**forestall** (*for-STAWL*). To thwart an action in advance; or, to buy up goods in order to increase their resale price.

*Arthur's family thrives during financially insecure times because it always seems to FORESTALL exactly the right commodities.*

**obturate** (*OB-tuh-reyt*). To close (an opening); stop up; obstruct.

*The plumber hoped to OBTURATE the leaking pipe before anyone noticed.*

**obviate** (*OB-vee-ate*). To anticipate and eliminate difficulties or consequences by effective measures.

*The research department will provide sufficient data, which will OBIVIATE the need for a new study.*

**quash** (*KWAHSH*). To repress or subdue completely.

*She quickly QUASHED the rebellion of the other members of the PTO by reminding them of the superiority of her social contacts.*

**quell** (*KWELL*). To suppress or extinguish; or, to quiet anxieties.

*"O the orator's joys! / To inflate the chest, to roll the thunder of the voice out from the ribs and throat, / To make the people rage, weep, hate, desire, with yourself, / To lead America—to QUELL America with a great tongue."*

—Walt Whitman, American poet and humanist

**renounce** (*re-NOWNCE*). To abandon or deny any connection with; to sever all ties.

*Only by RENOUNCING all desire for possessions, the monks believed, could one attain enlightenment.*

**stanch** (*STANCH*). To stop a liquid's flow (usually said of the bleeding accompanying a wound).



*Dr. Cooper tied a tourniquet around Mark's injured arm to STANCH the flow of blood.*

**suppress** (*suh-PRESS*). To put down by force; to put an end to or do away with; subdue; crush.

*Fearful of losing power and position, despots will always attempt to SUPPRESS any threat to their power.*

## NOUNS

**kibosh** (*kih-BOSH*). Something that serves to stop something else.

*Father put the KIBOSH on my plans to extend my summer trip to Europe by another three months.*

**latency** (*LAY-ten-see*). A latent thing; a state of being dormant, or a period of dormancy preceding a period of action.

*We knew that Abigail's focus on extremely liberal causes was merely a LATENCY that would end with her focus solely on charitable giving to the proper charities.*

**moratorium** (*more-uh-TORE-ee-um*). A suspension of activity.

*The city council voted to place a six-month MORATORIUM on new commercial development.*

**stalemate** (*STEYL-meyt*). A situation in which further action is impossible; deadlock.

*The two armies reached a STALEMATE, to the relief of the exhausted soldiers.*

**surcease** (*sur-SEESE*). End. A cessation.

*It was only with the SURCEASE of hostilities that life began to return to normal for the region's civilian population.*

## ADJECTIVES

**suspensive** (*suh-SPEN-siv*). Causing something to be deferred, suspended, or temporarily stopped.

*The judge was about to issue a SUSPENSIVE order but allowed the trial to continue.*

# ANTONYMS

**segue** (*SEG-way*). In music, to pass from one section to another; to make a transition from one thing to another without interruption; an instance of such a transition.

*Tomlin's mature routines, which featured random observations on the eccentricities of life with few or no SEGUES, were risky but always rewarding.*

**unremitting** (un-ruh-MITT-ing). Incessant; persistent; relentless.

*An UNREMITTING rain spoiled our plans for a picnic.*

## 196. Stupid

(*STOO-pid*), adjective

Lacking normal intelligence, understanding, or keenness of mind; slow-witted; dull; foolish.

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# ADJECTIVES

**asinine** (ASS-ih-nine). Showing a very noticeable lack of intelligence and/or good sense.

*I left halfway through the latest thriller because I could feel its ASININE plot depleting my brain cells.*

**benighted** (bee-NYE-ted). To be lost, ignorant, or unenlightened.

*The medieval period was a BENIGHTED era of superstition.*

**besotted** (bih-SOTT-ed). Made foolish, stupid, or dull due to infatuation.

*Aline thinks Jake is BESOTTED with her, but he's really BESOTTED with her father's stock portfolio.*

**inane** (in-ANE). Pointless or lacking in substance; empty; vacuous.

*Among other INANE suggestions, Jeff proposed painting the lunchroom in a polka-dot pattern.*

**obtuse** (ahb-TOOS). Lacking understanding, intelligence, and perception; unable to comprehend; having a dense mind.

*Thomas was so OBTUSE, he didn't realize his inappropriate behavior was making his friends uncomfortable.*

**vacuous** (VAK-yoo-us). Characterized by emptiness; devoid of emotion or intelligence; stupid; moronic.

*The VACUOUS stare from her two eyes, looking like raisins pushed into a lump of dough, made him shiver with loathing and contempt.*

## NOUNS

**duffer** (DUFF-uhr). An incompetent or ineffectual person.

*Maxwell can't help being a DUFFER. After all, his family has only been wealthy for two generations.*

**lummoX** (LUM-ox). A dim-witted or clumsy person; an oaf.

*Sherman had a heart of gold, but when it came to social etiquette, he was something of a LUMMOX.*

**nescience** (NESH-uhns). Lack of knowledge; ignorance.

*Sociologists were sent to the region to determine if the inhabitants' poverty resulted in their NESCIENCE or vice versa.*

**yokel** (YOH-kuhl). A gullible inhabitant of a rural area; bumpkin.

*"[A human being] is the YOKEL par excellence, the booby unmatched, the king dupe of the cosmos."*

—H. L. Mencken, American magazine editor, essayist, and critic

## ANTONYMS

**acuity** (*uh-CUE-ih-tee*). Keeness of perception; the ability to make quick, accurate decisions and evaluations.

*Jane's mental ACUITY enabled her to think and respond quickly in a crisis.*

**ingenious** (*in-JEEN-yuhs*). Having great mental ability; clever; resourceful; inventive.

*"It will be found, in fact, that the INGENIOUS are always fanciful, and the truly imaginative never otherwise than analytic."*

—Edgar Allan Poe, American writer and critic



## 197. Style

(*STEYL*), noun

A manner of expression or custom of behaving; manner of conduct.

---

## NOUNS

**couture** (kuh-TOUR). Clothing in the latest and most popular styles created by in-vogue fashion designers.

*If Alyssia does not have the latest COUTURE prior to its debut on Paris runways, she will not deign to consider wearing it.*

**dishabille** (dis-uh-BEE-uhl). Casual dress, or a casual manner.

*Jensen is such a stickler for proper attire he feels he is in a state of DISHABILLE if he leaves the house without an ascot.*

**haute couture** (OAT-koo-TOOR). Highly fashionable clothing on the cutting edge of the latest design fads and trends.

*“HAUTE COUTURE should be fun, foolish, and almost unwearable.”*

—Christian Lacroix, French fashion designer

**haut monde** (oh-MAHND). High society.

*“The literary wiseacres prognosticate in many languages, as they have throughout so many centuries, setting the stage for new HAUT MONDE in letters and making up the public’s mind.”*

—Fannie Hurst, American novelist

**panache** (puh-NASH). A distinctive flair or style; a flamboyant manner.

*Rosamund was swept away by the charming stranger’s PANACHE—he seemed so dashing and romantic.*

**savoir faire** (SAV-whah FAIRE). Tact or social skill.

*I’m afraid Helen just doesn’t have the SAVOIR FAIRE necessary to build coalitions in such a fractious organization.*

## ADJECTIVES

**fin de siècle** (*fan-deh-see-ECK-luh*). Related to the fashions, art, ideas, etc. associated with the end of the nineteenth century.

*Martin is an aficionado of FIN DE SIÈCLE European art.*

**sartorial** (*Sar-TOR-ee-al*). Related to clothing, especially tailored clothing.

*Jonathan's personal tailor always makes sure that Jonathan radiates SARTORIAL splendor.*

**soigné** (*swahn-YEY*). Well taken care of, well-groomed, well-dressed.

*Arthur enjoyed interacting with the staff at the best hotels, even the SOIGNÉ parking attendants.*

**tawdry** (*TAW-dree*). Gaudy, showy, and cheap, as clothes; or, base and mean, as motives.

*"Far from being the basis of the good society, the family, with its narrow privacy and TAWDRY secrets, is the source of all our discontents."*

—Sir Edmund Leach, British author

**urbane** (*err-BANE*). Suave, sophisticated, refined, cosmopolitan, and well versed in the ways of high society.

*Even in his knock-around tennis whites, Brett always manages to appear URBANE.*

## ANTONYMS

**dowdy** (DOW-dee). Lacking stylishness or smartness; old-fashioned.

*After my grandmother retired, she dropped her DOWDY pantsuits and began to wear skirts and shoulder-exposing blouses.*

**passé** (pass-SAY). No longer fashionable or current.

*Marge's insistence that platform shoes were PASSÉ led me to believe that she hadn't been keeping up with fashion trends.*

See also: Tasteful

## 198. Subservient

(*sub-SUR-vee-uhnt*), adjective

Acting or serving in a subordinate capacity; subordinate.

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## NOUNS

**minion** (MIN-yuhn). A follower of someone in an important position.

*The boss's MINIONS were all yes-men, blindly faithful and protective of their position in the company hierarchy.*

**underling** (UHN-der-ling). A person with little authority or rank in comparison to the person he serves; subordinate.

*The police knew that the crime families were fighting because of all the UNDERLINGS who disappeared.*

## ADJECTIVES

**ancillary** (AN-se-lare-ree). Secondary or subordinate; serving an auxiliary or supportive function.

*He took a great deal of pride in his work, even though the pay was poor and most of his duties were ANCILLARY to those of the regional director.*

**obsequious** (uhb-SEE-kwi-us). Subservient; eager to listen to and please others to an excessive degree; behaving in the manner of a servant or slave.

*“[The political mind] is a strange mixture of vanity and timidity, of an OBSEQUIOUS attitude at one time and a delusion of grandeur at another time.”*

—Calvin Coolidge, American president

**sequacious** (si-KWEY-shus). Given to following another person, especially without reason.

*The king drew much of his strength from the SEQUACIOUS peasants.*

**servile** (SUR-vil). Overly eager to serve; slavish.

*Marion’s uncharacteristically SERVILE demeanor can only mean one thing: He wants a raise.*

**subaltern** (sub-AWL-turn). Lower in position or rank; secondary in importance.

*Stop giving me all these SUBALTERN reasons for your behavior and tell me what your true motivation is!*

**tractable** (TRACK-tuh-bull). Easygoing; compliant; easily managed.

*The occasional kind comment seems rather enough to keep our servants TRACTABLE.*

## VERBS

**genuflect** (JENN-you-flect). To bend one knee to the floor; to act in a servile or overly reverential way toward someone else.

*“The way Harold GENUFLECTS to Mr. Thomas at staff meetings just makes me want to barf,” Alice said.*

**prostrate** (PROSS-trait). To lie face down on the ground due to being weary, overthrown, or helpless, or as an act of humility.

*We were all embarrassed when Milt almost PROSTRATED himself in front of the boss.*

**subjugate** (SUB-juh-gate). To cause to become subservient; to bring under complete control.

*The dictator’s attempts to SUBJUGATE his country’s smaller neighbors will end in failure; mark my words.*

**truckle** (TRUHK-uhl). To submit obsequiously to a command.

*We have trained our servants to TRUCKLE to our every whim.*



## ANTONYMS

**eminent** (*EM-ih-nunt*). Prominent or noted; of high esteem; outstanding and distinguished.

*I found the prospect of studying physics under an EMINENT professor like Dr. Maxwell, who had just won a Nobel Prize, daunting to say the least.*

**supercilious** (*sue-per-SILL-ee-us*). Feeling superior to others; haughtily disdainful or contemptuous.

*Linda grew up surrounded by wealth and privilege and consequently adopted a SUPERCILIOUS attitude with everyone she met.*

## 199. Support

(*suh-PAWRT*), verb

To give comfort, courage, faith to; to approve; maintain; help; strengthen.

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## VERBS

**abet** (uh-BET). To encourage or assist a plan or activity; to entice or help, usually in a misdeed.

*Though Michael did not participate in the actual kidnapping, he ABETTED the perpetrators by hiding them from the police.*

**advocate** (ADD-voe-kait). To plead in favor of another; recommend publicly.

*If you need a recommendation, I'd be happy to ADVOCATE for you.*

**buttress** (buh-TRIS). To support; to strengthen by adding supportive features.

*The spokesman was prepared to BUTTRESS the president's argument for shutting down the branch office with a list of statistics.*

**espouse** (ih-SPOWZ). To advocate as though one's own.

*Do you have any idea how complicated it would be to implement the plans you are ESPOUSING?*

**underwrite** (UN-dur-rite). To support as by subsidy; to support in full as though undertaking (a risk or venture) oneself.

*A group of philanthropists UNDERWRITES our drama department's annual playwriting competition.*

## NOUNS

**adherent** (*ad-HERE-unt*). Someone who adheres to an opinion; one who is devoted to or strongly associated with a cause or opinion.

*The measure's ADHERENTS were outspent by its opponents.*

**benediction** (*ben-i-DIK-shun*). A formal blessing, an expression of good wishes.

*As the priest pronounced the BENEDICTION, Julia thought about how it would help her face the arduous day ahead.*

**succor** (*SUCK-ur*). Aid or assistance; relief.

*Although she did not participate in the crime, Mrs. Helm was sentenced to five years in prison for giving SUCCOR to men she knew to be kidnappers.*

## ANTONYMS

**discommode** (*dis-kuh-MOHD*). To inconvenience; trouble; disturb.

*Elizabeth turned over all the forms and paperwork for her business to her lawyer so it would not DISCOMMUNE her any further.*

**interdict** (*in-ter-DIKT*). To prohibit; forbid the use of something.

*The border patrol attempts to INTERDICT the flow of illegal or banned substances.*

See also: Approval, Help

## 200. Surrender

*(suh-REN-der)*, verb

To give up possession of something or to yield power to another; to relinquish voluntarily or under duress.

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## VERBS

**abdicate** (AB-di-kate). To formally give up a position or responsibility; to step down from a high government office or other powerful position.

*The king, as we all know, ABDICATED the throne in order to marry the woman he loved.*

**abnegate** (AB-ne-gate). To renounce, surrender, or deny privilege to oneself.

*The activist's fast lasted for forty-seven days; in an election year, such ABNEGATION draws headlines and attention from elected officials.*

**capitulate** (kah-pih-chew-LAYTE). To surrender or give up.

*Ross did not offer to CAPITULATE during the confrontational lacrosse game.*

**extradite** (EK-stra-dyte). To hand over an alleged fugitive from one country, state, etc., to another.

*Because there was no formal agreement between the two countries, it was two years after his arrest before he was EXTRADITED.*

**kowtow** (KOW-tow). To give in to someone's every wish; to grovel and behave in a subservient manner.

*Amy told Andrew that she was sick and tired of KOWTOWING to his every need.*

**relinquish** (ri-LING-kwish). To give up; to surrender or forswear something. *The king RELINQUISHED his throne to marry the woman he loved.*

## NOUNS

**inurement** (*inn-UR-meant*). Acceptance without resistance or fighting back of punishment, poor treatment, or unpleasant circumstances or conditions.

*“Perhaps others might respond to this treatment with INUREMENT,” Eloise hissed, “but I will buy my diamonds at another boutique from this point forward.”*



## ANTONYMS

**prevail** (*pri-VEYL*). To gain the mastery or advantage; be victorious; triumph.

*“The poet’s voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and PREVAIL.”*

—William Faulkner, American novelist

**subjugate** (*SUB-juh-gate*). To bring under complete control; conquer; master.

*The dictator’s attempts to SUBJUGATE his country’s smaller neighbors will end in failure; mark my words.*

## 201. Sweet

(*SWEET*), adjective

Having the flavor or taste characteristic of sugar or honey; not sour, bitter, or salty.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**cloying** (*KLOYE-ing*). Sickeningly sweet, sappy, or sentimental.

*“Minerva save us from the CLOYING syrup of coercive compassion!”*

—Camille Paglia, American author, feminist, and social critic

**mellifluous** (*muh-LIF-loo-us*). Flowing sweetly and smoothly.

*Jane’s MELLIFLUOUS cello playing was the envy of the other musicians.*

**saccharine** (*SAK-er-in*). Very sweet to the taste; sickeningly sweet.

*There is a lucrative market for SACCHARINE books and television programs.*

## VERBS

**dulcify** (DUHL-suh-fye). To sweeten; to make more agreeable.

*Adding enough sugar will DULCIFY almost anything.*

**edulcorate** (ih-DUHL-kuh-reyt). To make pleasant; to free from harshness; to free from impurities by washing.

*The ambassador hoped to EDULCORATE the relationship with his intransigent hosts.*

**mull** (MUHL). To heat, sweeten, and flavor with spices.

*Betsy loved to MULL cider; it filled her house with a wonderful aroma.*

## NOUNS

**confection** (*kuhn-FEK-shun*). A sweet food of no nutritional value; a frivolous or amusing artistic work.

*She knew the play was merely a CONFECTION for the masses, but Beatrice enjoyed the music and acting immensely.*

## ANTONYMS

**acerbic** (*uh-SUR-bik*). Sour in taste; severe or harsh.

*Many people, oblivious to his quiet attention, were crushed completely by Dan's ACERBIC wit.*

**piquant** (*PEE-kuhnt*). Biting or tart; pungent; stimulating.

*Mary loved the PIQUANT flavor of salsa and used it on almost everything.*

# T

## 202. Take

(*TAYHK*), verb

To get possession of by skill or force; seize; capture.

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## VERBS

**arrogate** (AIR-uh-gate). To demand something for oneself or to take control without authority.

*The way Nelson ARROGATES office meetings drives his coworkers crazy!*

**despoil** (dih-SPOIL). To deprive of possessions, things of value, etc. by force; rob; plunder.

*The unarmed citizens could only watch as the soldiers DESPOILED their town.*

**expropriate** (eks-PRO-pree-ate). To seize property or wealth from its owner for the public's use or benefit, as when the state takes someone's home under eminent domain to build a road through it.

*The Bradfords are still reeling from the fact that the state EXPROPRIATED a portion of their gardens for a new highway.*

**garnish** (GAR-nihsh). To legally take a portion of a person's wages, property, and assets to pay his debts.

*If you do not pay your taxes within thirty days, the county reserves the right to GARNISH a portion of your wages until the back taxes are paid in full.*

**maraud** (muh-ROD). To loot or invade for treasure.

*The ship was waylaid by pirates MARAUDING on the fourteenth of May.*

**procure** (pro-KYURE). To seek and eventually gain ownership of something.

*My book dealer recently PROCURED, at considerable expense, a first edition of Great Expectations for our library.*

**usurp** (yoo-SURP). To assume forcibly and/or without right; to take over.

*The authority of Congress was indeed USURPED by Lincoln during the war, but legislators briskly reasserted themselves once the crisis was past.*

**wrest** (REST). To pull away; to take something by force or threat.

*"WREST once the law to your authority: / To do a great right, do a little wrong."*

—William Shakespeare



## ADJECTIVES

**rapacious** (*ruh-PAY-shuss*). Given to plunder or the forcible overpowering of another.

*The foe we face is a RAPACIOUS one who thinks nothing of overrunning the weak if it suits his purposes.*

## NOUNS

**brigand** (*BRIG-und*). One who lives as a bandit, plundering riches.

*The BRIGANDS held up the stagecoach and terrified the passengers.*

**usurper** (*you-SIR-per*). A person who seizes a position of power through illegal means, force, or deception.

*“A USURPER in the guise of a benefactor is the enemy that we are now to encounter and overcome.”*

—William Leggett, American poet and fiction writer

## ANTONYMS

**inalienable** (*in-AY-lee-un-a-buhl*). Incapable of being taken away.

*Although I have always believed freedom of speech to be the INALIENABLE right of every American, I must admit that the diatribes of those who preach hate and violence against members of my race are awfully tough to stomach.*

**proffer** (*PROF-er*). To place (something) before someone; to offer.

*John self-consciously PROFFERED his homework to the teacher as if it were a valuable gift.*

## 203. Talk

(TAWK), verb

To put thoughts into and communicate by spoken words; speak; converse.

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## VERBS

**aver** (uh-VER). To assert the truthfulness of a statement.

*“‘Has she no faults, then (Envy says), sir?’ / Yes, she has one, I must AVER: / When all the world conspires to praise her, / The woman’s deaf, and does not hear.”*

—Alexander Pope, British poet

**blather** (BLATH-er). To gabble or talk ridiculously; to talk nonsense or discuss meaningless issues for extended periods.

*We tried to leave the party, but Mark insisted on BLATHERING endlessly to the hostess about his new car.*

**bloviate** (BLOH-vee-ayt). To speak pompously and at length.

*Maxwell BLOVIATES about his “excellent” golf game, but everyone knows he inflates his handicap exponentially.*

**confabulate** (kuhn-FAB-yuh-late). To chat or converse informally.

*Jarod proceeded to CONFABULATE about the wines most recently added to the family cellar.*

**descant** (des-KANT). To talk freely and without inhibition.

*Eloise is always more than willing to DESCANT concerning her past liaisons.*

**elide** (ee-LIDE). To leave out a sound or syllable when speaking; to eliminate the distinctive barrier separating levels.

*When Catherine ELIDES the “g” at the end of certain words, she betrays her southern origins.*

**elucidate** (ee-LOO-sih-date). To lecture, explain, or pontificate about a subject in great detail so as to make it exceeding clear.

*“It [was] the mission of the twentieth century to ELUCIDATE the irrational.”*

—Maurice Merleau-Ponty, French philosopher

**enunciate** (ee-NUN-see-ate). To pronounce words carefully and clearly; to speak in a manner that makes you easily understood.

*No one will listen to him until he stops mumbling and learns to ENUNCIATE.*

**expatiate** (ick-SPAY-she-ate). To speak or write in detail or at length.

*I just tuned out Tyrone as he began to EXPATiate again on his troubled relationship with Mavis.*

**gesticulate** (jes-TIH-cue-late). To use gestures when talking, especially when eager or excited to get ideas across.

*“Okay, the man in the yellow shirt,” the seminar leader said, pointing to an audience member who was GESTICULATING wildly.*

**natter** (NAT-ter). To talk ceaselessly; babble.

*The way Emily NATTERS endlessly about her family’s new yacht is revolting to those of us who have owned several yachts over the years.*

**perorate** (PER-uh-reyt). To speak at length; to conclude a speech.

*While Lincoln could be concise, Edward Everett was known for his ability to PERORATE.*

**prattle** (PRAT-l). To babble; to talk nonstop without regard as to whether what you are saying makes sense or is of any interest to the listener.

*“Infancy conforms to nobody: all conform to it, so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who PRATTLE and play to it.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**reiterate** (re-IT-uh-rate). To restate or say again; to repeat.

*Let me REITERATE: There will be no exception to the official policy on removing unauthorized recordings from the studio.*

## ADJECTIVES

**loquacious** (*loh-KWAY-shus*). Verbose; chatty; the habit of talking nonstop.

*Amy and Donna are each so LOQUACIOUS, their average phone call lasts ninety minutes.*

**orotund** (*OR-uh-tund*). Distinguished by strength, fullness, and clearness, as a voice.

*In a beguilingly OROTUND voice, the conductor offered a synopsis of the evening's opera.*

**voluble** (*VOL-yuh-buhl*). Characterized by a ready flow of words; talkative; glib.

*We chose a VOLUBLE candidate for the important public relations position.*

## NOUNS

**garrulity** (*gah-ROO-lih-tee*). The habit of talking way too much.

*“The interview is an intimate conversation between journalist and politician wherein the journalist seeks to take advantage of the GARRULITY of the politician and the politician of the credulity of the journalist”*

—Emery Klein, American journalist

**phraseology** (*fray-zee-AH-lo-jee*). The way phrases and words are employed.

*With her excellent diction, articulation, and PHRASEOLOGY, Holly had a gift for public speaking and debate.*

**somniloquence** (*som-NIL-oh-kwence*). The act of talking in one’s sleep.

*Jean’s SOMNILOQUENCE was responsible for revealing much more of her past than she had intended.*



## ANTONYMS

**mute** (MYOOT). Unable or unwilling to speak; silent.

*Throughout the long and contentious trial, the defendant remained impassive and MUTE.*

**tacit** (TAS-it). Making no sound; silent; saying nothing.

*Seeking every advantage, Carolyn offered a TACIT prayer before her physics exam.*

See also: Language, Speech

## 204. Tasteful

(*TEYST-fuhl*), adjective

Having or showing a good sense of aesthetic discernment, judgment, or appreciation.

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## ADJECTIVES

**decorous** (DEH-kore-us). Behaving in a manner acceptable to polite society; having good taste and good manners.

*“Another week with these DECOROUS drones and I’ll jump out the window,” the young girl complained to her mother of her fellow debutantes.*

**discriminative** (dih-SKRIM-uh-ney-tiv). Discriminating; discerning; making distinctions.

*We appreciated Alan’s DISCRIMINATIVE sensibilities and looked to him for guidance before any gastronomic outing.*

**genteel** (jehn-TEEL). Well-bred and possessing a refined temperament.

*“[I am] a journalist in the field of etiquette. I try to find out what the most GENTEEL people regularly do, what traditions they have discarded, what compromises they have made.”*

—Amy Vanderbilt, American etiquette expert

## NOUNS

**epicure** (*EP-ih-kyoor*). One who cultivates refined tastes, especially in reference to food and drink; connoisseur.

*Matt, who never seemed at all interested in gourmet dining, has suddenly become something of an EPICURE.*

**punctilio** (*pungk-TIL-ee-o*). A fine point of etiquette.

*“Don’t use dessert forks during the main course, please,” my grandmother intoned, reverting to one of her favorite PUNCTILIOS.*

## ANTONYMS

**brassy** (BRASS-ee). Brazen; cheap or showy.

*The promotional campaign struck a BRASSY, daring tone that instantly won consumer attention.*

**crass** (KRASS). Coarse and crude in actions, manner, and language.

*Will you please remember that you're over fifty and stop being so CRASS?*

**ribald** (RIB-uld). Lewd; off-color, as humor.

*"It is . . . useful to distinguish between the pornographic, condemned in every society, and the bawdy, the RIBALD, the shared vulgarities and jokes, which are the safety valves of most social systems."*

—Margaret Mead, American cultural anthropologist

**uncouth** (un-KOOTH). Crude, without manners, unrefined.

*Carl had an unfortunate way of belching loudly in public places, guessing (accurately and loudly) whether or not someone he just met had undergone plastic surgery, and otherwise acting in an UNCOUTH manner in front of strangers.*

**unsavory** (un-SAYV-err-ee). Distasteful; unpleasant; disreputable; of dubious reputation.

*"Our future is inextricably linked to what happens in Washington, D.C., and we know that is a very UNSAVORY reality."*

—Don Libey, direct marketing advisor

See also: Style

## 205. Think

(*THINK*), verb

To exercise rational judgment; to produce ideas, decisions, memories, etc.; to reflect upon.

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## VERBS

**cogitate** (KOJ-ih-tate). To think about or ponder seriously.

*The president, never one to be pressured into a decision, closed the discussion by saying he needed another week to COGITATE on the matter.*

**educe** (ee-DYOOCE). To come to a conclusion or solve a problem through reasoning based on thoughtful consideration of the facts.

*When we noticed that their house appeared to be abandoned, we EDUCED that the Wallertons were enduring financial difficulties.*

**excogitate** (ecks-CAHJ-ih-tate). To think something through carefully; to devise.

*Dad spent so much time EXCOGITATING a route to the airport that we missed our flight.*

**muse** (MYOOZ). To meditate on; to consider closely.

*Phyllis MUSED over the advertising campaign for some days before finally approving it.*

**ruminate** (ROO-muh-nate). To ponder or review; to go over in the mind repeatedly.

*Elaine was still RUMINATING over whether or not to attend college in the fall.*

**speculate** (SPEK-yoo-layt). To consider possible future events; to conjecture.

*“There are two times in a man’s life when he should not SPECULATE: when he can’t afford it, and when he can.”*

—Mark Twain, American humorist and author

**surmise** (sur-MIZE). To guess; to come to a conclusion (often without strong evidence).

*We SURMISED that Leanna had declined the invitation to Arthur’s birthday party simply because she didn’t want to buy him a gift.*

## NOUNS

**metaphysics** (*met-a-FIZ-iks*). The study of abstract ideas and principles that cannot be demonstrated through physical evidence.

*“During my METAPHYSICS final, I cheated by looking into the soul of the person sitting next to me.”*

—Woody Allen, American film director, writer, and comedian



## ANTONYMS

**disregard** (*dis-ri-GAHRD*). To pay little or no attention to; neglect.

*“Painting is a faith, and it imposes the duty to DISREGARD public opinion.”*

—Vincent van Gogh, Dutch painter

**inconscient** (*in-KON-shuhnt*). Mindless; unconscious.

*Alan acted with INCONSCIENT abandon at school and was consequently expelled.*

See also: Knowledge, Learn, Understanding

## 206. Time

(*TAHYM*), noun

The period between two events during which something happens, exists, or acts; duration considered as that in which events occur and succeed each other; a system to measure the relation between the occurrence of events.

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## ADJECTIVES

**biennial** (bye-EN-ee-yul). Happening every second year.

*Ms. Webster argues that the summer Olympics, which now occur every four years, should become a BIENNIAL event.*

**coeval** (koh-EE-vuhl). Of the same period, having the same duration, or being of the same age.

*It's interesting to think that the squeaky clean Cleavers of Leave It to Beaver and the society-shunning members of the Beat Generation were COEVAL.*

**diurnal** (die-URN-al). Taking place or being active during daylight hours.

*The house staff knows not even to approach Nora's bedroom door before twilight because she totally rejects a DIURNAL lifestyle.*

**ephemeral** (ih-FEMM-uh-rul). Lasting only a short while.

*Our school's joy at winning the state basketball championship turned out to be EPHEMERAL, as the title was suspended when officials learned of the presence of an ineligible player on the team's roster.*

**mensal** (MEN-suhl). Monthly.

*The board established MENSAL meetings.*

**prevenient** (pri-VEEN-yuhnt). Coming before; preceding.

*It was necessary to hold a PREVENIENT meeting to prepare for the primary meeting.*

**quondam** (KWAHN-dumm). Former; at-one-time.

*You should not hire the Wilkersons' QUONDAM servant because she has been known to break many objets d'art.*

**quotidian** (kwo-TID-ee-an). Familiar; commonplace; occurring every day.

*Despite closets full of the latest Parisian couture, Alison's QUOTIDIAN complaint is that she has "nothing to wear."*

**neolithic** (nee-oh-LITH-ik). Of or pertaining to the latter part of the Stone Age, when ground stone weapons and tools first came into use; unsophisticated; outdated; passé.

*In these days of computers and word processors, many consider the old-fashioned manual typewriter positively NEOLITHIC.*

**retrograde** (REH-trow-grayed). Reverting to an earlier state, condition, or style; harkening to an earlier time and place.

*William was unable to recognize his family or remember any events of his past due to a case of RETROGRADE amnesia.*

**senescent** (si-NESS-uhnt). Growing old; aging; characteristic of old age.

*His SENESCENT viewpoint put him at a disadvantage when competing with younger candidates.*

**sesquicentennial** (ses-kwi-sen-TEN-ee-uhl). Pertaining to a period of 150 years.

*A committee was formed to plan Civil War SESQUICENTENNIAL events for the town.*

**synchronous** (SIN-kro-nus). Taking place at the same time.

*The Smythingtons and the Lyttons caused quite a stir among their social contacts after they scheduled SYNCHRONOUS galas.*

**temporal** (tem-PORE-uhl). Relating to time.

*“Science is the language of the TEMPORAL world; love is that of the spiritual world.”*

—Honoré de Balzac, French novelist and playwright

**topical** (TOP-ih-kuhl). Having to do with issues of current or local interest.

*Glenda is always reading magazines so she can keep up with TOPICAL issues and have something to say when encountering new clients.*

**transient** (TRAN-shunt). Temporary; lacking permanence.

*“To the artist is sometimes granted a sudden, TRANSIENT insight which serves in this matter for experience. A flash, and where previously the brain held a dead fact, the soul grasps a living truth! At moments we are all artists.”*

—Arnold Bennett, English novelist

**ultimo** (UL-tih-mo). Of or in the calendar month preceding the current one.

*On the 23rd ULTIMO, I was informed by counsel that an indictment would be forthcoming.*

**vernal** (VER-nul). Related to spring.

*“One impulse from a VERNAL wood / May teach you more of man, / Of moral evil and of good, / Than all the sages can.”*

—William Wordsworth, British Romantic poet

## NOUNS

**equinox** (*EK-wih-nox*). The point in a year when the sun crosses the equator, causing night and day to be of roughly equal length everywhere on earth.

*The vernal (or spring) EQUINOX generally occurs around March 21; the autumnal EQUINOX, around September 22.*

**hiatus** (*high-AY-tuss*). An interruption or break in time or continuity.

*After a long HIATUS from the stage, Peter auditioned for a role in A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

**moratorium** (*more-uh-TORE-ee-um*). An authorized period of delay.

*The city council voted to place a six-month MORATORIUM on new commercial development.*

**nanosecond** (*NAN-o-sek-und*). One billionth of a second; an extremely short period of time.

*It seemed the phone was on the hook for only a NANOSECOND before it rang again.*

**respite** (*RESS-pit*). A reprieve; a temporary delay; an instance of temporary relief.

*The accused was granted a RESPITE before serving his sentence.*

**solstice** (*SOUL-stis*). A day of the year during which the sun is at its highest or lowest point in the sky, causing the shortest day of the year on December 21 (winter *solstice*) and the longest day of the year on June 21 (summer *solstice*).

*We open our lake house for the summer season every year at the SOLSTICE.*

## VERBS

**temporize** (*TEM-puh-rize*). To gain time by being evasive or indecisive; to suit one's actions to the time or occasion; to agree or comply temporarily.

*I unleashed a long-winded backstory in an effort to TEMPORIZE while I came up with a logical explanation for my behavior.*

## ANTONYMS

**amaranthine** (*am-uh-RAN-thin*). Unfading; undying; deathless; everlasting.

*Sally vowed her AMARANTHINE love to Brian.*

**infinite** (*IN-fuh-nit*). Lacking limits or bounds; of an unmeasurable duration.

*The recital lasted just forty-five minutes, but for Joyce, listening to the screeching violins and discordant tones, it seemed INFINITE.*

## 207. Together

(*tuh-GETH-er*), adverb

In or into a single collection, gathering, or group; in or into contact or proximity; in or into relationship, association.

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## ADVERBS

**en masse** (*on MASS*). Together; in one body or group.

*The mob moved EN MASSE toward the Capitol.*

**inextricably** (*in-eks-TRIK-uh-blee*). Inseparably; unbreakably, as a manner of being linked.

*“At its best, [Japanese cooking] is INEXTRICABLY meshed with aesthetics, with religion, with tradition and history.”*

—M. F. K. Fisher, American author

## NOUNS

**concomitant** (kon-KAH-mit-ant). Something that exists or occurs with something else.

*“Each action of the actor on the stage should be the visible CONCOMITANT of his thoughts.”*

—Sarah Bernhardt, nineteenth-century French actress and author

**juxtaposition** (juhk-stuh-puh-ZISH-uhn). The placement of items side by side for comparison or contrast.

*The JUXTAPOSITION of intricate detail with blank space makes the artist’s paintings so arresting.*

**liaison** (lee-AY-zawn). A connecting of the parts of a whole, especially for proper coordination or communication.

*Continual LIAISON between units was essential for the army’s victory.*

**nexus** (NEK-sus). A linkage or connection between two or more things.

*“Every time a message seems to grab us, and we think, ‘I just might try it,’ we are at the NEXUS of choice and persuasion that is advertising.”*

—Andrew Hacker, American media critic

**solidarity** (sol-ih-DARE-ih-tee). Bonding of people to others because of shared interests, beliefs, goals, or attitudes.

*“It was the middle-class female SOLIDARITY, defending a nice girl from charges of calculation and viciousness.”*

—Saul Bellow, American author

**symbiosis** (sim-bee-OH-sis). A close interdependency between organisms from two different species.

*The nouveau riche would like to believe they have a SYMBIOSIS with us, but, in fact, they remain wholly separate and distinct.*

## ADJECTIVES

**contiguous** (*kon-TIG-yew-us*). Adjacent; sharing a common border; sitting next to one another in a row or sequence.

*The network extends to the forty-eight CONTIGUOUS states.*

# ANTONYMS

**unilateral** (*you-nih-LAT-ur-uhl*). Made independently by a single authority, without consulting others.

*We made a UNILATERAL decision to exclude Edwin from our group of possible paramours due to his distasteful habit of kissing and telling.*

**sans** (*SANS*). Without.

*Occasionally a rock artist will perform an “unplugged” version of a song SANS electric instruments and amplifiers.*

## 208. Topography

*(tuh-POG-ruh-fee)*, noun

The arrangement of the physical and natural features of a place, area, or physical object; the “lay of the land.”

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## NOUNS

**esplanade** (ESS-pluh-nahd). An open, level strip of ground, usually near a body of water.

*While strolling along the ESPLANADE, we watched the rowing teams train for the upcoming regatta.*

**estuary** (ESS-choo-ayre-ee). The place where a river empties into a tidal area.

*Dr. Green argued against allowing the plant to be built so near the river on the grounds that it would threaten several important species living in the ESTUARY.*

**fjord** (FYORD). A thin strip of sea flowing between cliffs or hills.

*Prison officials were able to determine that the two escapees had managed to escape the island fortress by drugging the guards, crawling through a secret tunnel, and swimming out to the small motorboat accomplices had hidden in the FJORD.*

**isthmus** (ISS-mus). A narrow strip of land connecting two larger masses of land.

*The geologic evidence suggests that, long ago, an ISTHMUS linked Siberia and Alaska.*

**playa** (PLY-uh). The lowest area of a desert, usually flat and sometimes covered with water.

*The desert's undrained PLAYA contained the only water for hundreds of miles.*

**promontory** (PROM-uhn-tore-ee). A piece of land that projects from a coastline or lowland, which typically offers spectacular views.

*I spent all the time during our vacation sitting out on the balcony of our inn, enjoying the views from my PROMONTORY.*

**tombolo** (TOM-bo-low). A sandbar that joins an offshore island to the mainland or another island.

*Until they decide to build a bridge, the single-lane road on the TOMBOLO is the only way onto and off of the island.*

**tundra** (TUN-druh). A treeless arctic plain.

*For days the members of the search team trekked through the frigid TUNDRA, but they at last had to abandon the expedition without locating*

*any survivors.*

## ADJECTIVES

**littoral** (*LIT-er-uhl*). The shore region of a lake, sea, or ocean.

*The LITTORAL zone extends from the high water mark to shoreline areas that are permanently inundated.*

**riparian** (*ri-PAIR-ee-uhn*). Of or pertaining to the banks of a river or other body of water; situated on the banks of a river or other body of water.

*The RIPARIAN ecosystem of the Mississippi River has been altered over the years by the construction of levees.*

**submontane** (*suhb-MON-teyn*). Of or pertaining to the lower slopes of mountains.

*We discovered that the SUBMONTANE wildflowers are some of the most beautiful.*



## ANTONYMS

**astral** (AS-truhl). Pertaining to the stars; stellar.

*Ralph based many of his decisions on ASTRAL movements.*

**celestial** (suh-LESS-chul). Relating to the skies or the heavens.

*“Love is a portion of the soul itself, and it is of the same nature as the CELESTIAL breathing of the atmosphere of paradise.”*

—Victor Hugo, French poet and novelist

See also: Geography

## 209. Travel

(*TRAV-uhl*), verb

To go from one place to another; take a trip; journey.

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## VERBS

**amble** (AM-bul). To walk in an easy or leisurely manner; to saunter or stroll.

*The day's last customer AMBLED from one end of the shop to the other; no amount of staring from the clerk, it seemed, could make him come to the register.*

**gallivant** (GAL-uh-vant). To wander about seeking amusement or pleasure; to go about indiscreetly with members of the opposite sex.

*Because he required little sleep, Mark could GALLIVANT almost continuously.*

**gambol** (GAM-bowl). To run, skip, or jump about in a playful or joyous fashion.

*"We all have these places where shy humiliations GAMBOL on sunny afternoons."*

—W. H. Auden, Anglo-American poet

**maraud** (muh-ROD). To wander in search of booty; to loot or invade for treasure.

*The ship was waylaid by pirates MARAUDING on the fourteenth of May.*

**meander** (MEE-an-duhr). To wander aimlessly.

*We fired that particular servant because he MEANDERED far too slowly from task to task.*

**perambulate** (puh-RAM-byuh-late). To walk around; to stroll or saunter.

*The elderly couple PERAMBULATED the city streets every night after dinner.*

**peregrinate** (PER-ih-gruh-nayt). To travel about on foot.

*The ascetics preferred to PEREGRINATE, eschewing all motorized travel.*

**saunter** (SON-tur). To walk leisurely or for pleasure.

*On Sunday afternoons, Mr. Weeks would SAUNTER through Central Park gathering material for his short stories.*

**skulk** (SKULK). To move about furtively or quietly.

*After she lost her job, Lea SKULKED around the town at odd hours, hoping to avoid her former colleagues.*

**wend** (WEND). To go; to proceed.

*“As they WEND away / A voice is heard singing / Of Kitty, or Katy, / As if the name meant once / All love, all beauty.”*

—Philip Larkin, British poet, novelist, and jazz critic

## NOUNS

**conveyance** (kuhn-VAY-unts). A device that serves to transport something or someone.

*Our visit to the “wild west” site was greatly enhanced by a ride on an authentic CONVEYANCE: a Conestoga wagon.*

**jaunt** (JAWNT). A short journey taken for pleasure.

*Nicole plans to take a JAUNT across the southern tip of Africa next year.*

**sojourn** (SO-jern). A temporary visit or stay.

*The Israelites’ SOJOURN in the desert lasted for forty long years.*

**wanderlust** (WON-dehr-lust). A strong and innate desire to travel far from home.

*“In our WANDERLUST, we are lovers looking for consummation.”*

—Anatole Broyard, literary critic for the New York Times

## ADJECTIVES

**errant** (AIR-unt). Given to travel; wandering about aimlessly.

*The buzzing of ERRANT flies practically wrecked the contentment I had been feeling while sitting on the dock.*

**itinerant** (eye-TIN-er-unt). Traveling from place to place with a purpose.

*While I was between jobs, I worked as an ITINERANT farmer.*

**peripatetic** (per-ih-pa-TET-ik). Wandering without a clear goal or definiteness of purpose.

*While waiting to receive his trust fund at age thirty, Giles lived a PERIPATETIC lifestyle.*

**wayfaring** (WAY-fair-ing). Traveling on foot.

*We spent many WAYFARING weekends during our month-long jaunt in France last year.*

## ANTONYMS

**bide** (BAHYD). To abide; dwell; wait; remain.

*Martin did not like to travel but would BIDE at home without the least curiosity about other places.*

**tarry** (TAR-ee). To delay; linger; loiter; be tardy.

*“The life of man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may TARRY long.”*

—Bertrand Russell, English logician and philosopher

See also: Movement

## 210. True

(*TROO*), adjective

In accordance with fact; agreeing with reality; not false; loyal; faithful.

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## ADJECTIVES

**incontrovertible** (*in-kahn-trah-VER-tih-bull*). Beyond question or dispute.

*“Some minds are as little logical or argumentative as nature; they can offer no reason or “guess,” but they exhibit the solemn and INCONTROVERTIBLE fact.”*

—Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist

**veritable** (*VER-ih-tuh-bull*). Authentic; true; undeniably legitimate or actual.

*The cardboard boxes contained a VERITABLE treasure trove of Civil War artifacts, probably worth tens of thousands of dollars.*

## NOUNS

**paradox** (*PAIR-uh-doks*). A seemingly absurd and self-contradicting situation that seems impossible but may in fact be true.

*The article profiled a man who was a real PARADOX; he was grossly overweight, yet had tremendous athletic stamina.*

**veracity** (*ver-ASS-ih-tea*). The characteristic or habit of being truthful and conforming to accepted standards of behavior.

*“The world is upheld by the VERACITY of good men: they make the earth wholesome.”*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, essayist, and transcendentalist

**verisimilitude** (*ver-uh-si-MIL-ih-tood*). Having the appearance of truth; probability.

*The speech, while obviously heartfelt, unfortunately lacked VERISIMILITUDE.*

## ANTONYMS

**aspersion** (*uh-SPUR-zhun*). False accusation; slander.

*I will not allow you to cast these ASPERSIONS on a man whose career has been so distinguished.*

**fabulist** (*FAB-yuh-list*). A liar; someone who tells outrageously untrue stories.

*Sir Gerald, a notorious FABULIST, was not consulted for an authoritative account of the crime.*

**mendacity** (*Men-DA-sit-tee*). A tendency toward or habit of being dishonest.

*“The human condition is composed of unequal parts of courage, friendship, ethics, self-sacrifice, brutality, degeneracy, and MENDACITY.”*

—Harlan Ellison, American author

# U

## 211. Uncaring

(*uhn-KAR-ing*), noun

The state of unconcern; lack of worry; inattentiveness; thoughtlessness; apathy.

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## NOUNS

**ennui** (on-WEE). Apathy and lack of energy caused by boredom and disinterest.

*“And he spoke of ENNUI, of jaded appetites, of nights and days aboard a moonstone vessel as large as a city.”*

—Harlan Ellison, American author

**fainéant** (fay-nay-AHNT). Someone who is lazy and idle.

*I spent my vacation as a FAINÉANT, so I found it hard to focus on work once I returned to my “real life.”*

**improvidence** (im-PRAH-vih-dense). A rash action performed without careful consideration or deliberation.

*“This made him think of all the nights . . . spending his youth with the casual IMPROVIDENCE of a millionaire.”*

—Richard Matheson, American science fiction writer

**lotus-eater** (LOH-tus-ee-ter). A person who leads a life of indolence and ease, unaware of reality and duty.

*Raymond considered adopting the lifestyle of a LOTUS-EATER, but could not reconcile his income to the task.*

**torpor** (TORE-purr). Temporary loss of the power of motion or sensation; dormancy; apathy; indifference.

*“A multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage TORPOR.”*

—William Wordsworth, British Romantic poet

## ADJECTIVES

**cavalier** (kav-uh-LEER). Unconcerned with what is considered important; nonchalantly unengaged, especially with regard to serious matters.

*His CAVALIER attitude toward financial management may be his company's undoing.*

**cursor** (KUR-suh-ree). Performed with haste and without care.

*Mrs. Wallace avoided giving tests on the Friday before a vacation, as she knew her students' efforts would be CURSORY at best.*

**desultory** (DEH-sul-tor-ee). Lacking guidance or progressing randomly; aimless; fitful.

*Unable to believe it was his last day on the job, Bill's DESULTORY thoughts wandered through his mind.*

**feckless** (FEK-less). Ineffective; careless; lacking definitiveness of purpose.

*Some accuse us of being FECKLESS, but they have no idea how difficult it is to live a wealth-infused lifestyle.*

**incogitant** (in-KOJ-uh-tuhnt). Thoughtless, inconsiderate.

*Bill never became accustomed to Ann's continual INCOGITANT acts.*

**indolent** (IN-duh-lnt). Lazy, as a way of life; inactive and unlikely to exert oneself.

*Peter, an INDOLENT young man, spent his young days gazing out the window daydreaming.*

**insensate** (in-SENS-ate). Without human feeling, or lacking judgment and good sense.

*Owen's INSENSATE behavior the morning after their tryst made Amy realize she'd made a mistake in asking him to stay the night.*

**insouciant** (in-SOO-see-unt). Acting as if one has not a care in the world; free of worry and angst.

*We are never INSOUCIANT about our wealth because we must work at all times to ensure its protection.*

**intemperate** (in-TEM-prit). Refers to a person who indulges his own whims and fancies without regard to other people's feelings or inconvenience.

*“Certainly it was ordained as a scourge upon the pride of human wisdom, that the wisest of us all, should thus outwit ourselves, and eternally forego our purposes in the INTEMPERATE act of pursuing them.”*

—Laurence Sterne, Irish-born English novelist and Anglican clergyman  
**lackadaisical** (*lack-uh-DAY-zih-kuhl*). Lazy and indolent; lacking determination.

*No matter how many times a week her father allows her to go on a spending spree, Millicent is never LACKADAISICAL about her trips to Cartier.*

**laggard** (*LAG-uhrd*). Moving sluggishly and reacting slowly.

*“Reviewers . . . must normally function as huff-and-puff artists blowing LAGGARD theatergoers stageward.”*

—Walter Kerr, American theater critic

**perfunctory** (*per-FUNK-ter-ee*). Implemented or executed quickly, without much care or thought put into it.

*“The tale is so contrived and PERFUNCTORY that many readers will be tempted to skip to the real story in the second half of the book.”*

—Tim Parks, British novelist

**remiss** (*rih-miss*). Negligent or careless.

*Our servants know that if they ever are REMISS in their duties, we will quickly fire them.*

**supine** (*SOO-pine*). Apathetic; indolent; passive.

*Damon found the marketing department SUPINE when it came to implementing ideas.*

## ANTONYMS

**discernment** (*dih-SURN-muhnt*). The power of discerning; keen perception or judgment; insight.

*“The supreme end of education is expert DISCERNMENT of all things.”*

—Samuel Johnson, English poet and critic

**solicitude** (*suh-LIS-ih-tood*). The state of being concerned and anxious.

*Amy’s SOLICITUDE for John’s welfare while he was overseas demonstrated a newfound concern for him as a friend.*



## 212. Uncertain

(*uhn-SER-tin*), adjective

Not surely or certainly known; questionable; problematical; doubtful.

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## ADJECTIVES

**aleatory** (AY-lee-uh-tore-ee). Of or by chance; unpredictable.

*If you're honest with yourself, Bob, you'll have to admit that your current circumstances have more to do with your drinking than with the purely ALEATORY whims of nature.*

**counterintuitive** (kount-er-in-TOO-ih-tiv). Seeming illogical; counter to what intuition would lead one to expect.

*Since people have so much more control over local politics, it seems COUNTERINTUITIVE that they are more likely to vote for president of the United States than for city council members.*

**equivocal** (ee-KWIV-uh-kul). Capable of varying interpretation; dubious, uncertain, or ambiguous.

*The EQUIVOCAL nature of Paul's replies caused many to wonder about his suitability for the post.*

**moot** (MOOT). A fact or point that is uncertain or no longer relevant.

*Whether to continue injecting growth hormones became a MOOT point as Alex grew from five feet to five-nine in eighteen months.*

## NOUNS

**ambiguity** (*am-bih-GYOO-ih-tee*). Uncertainty; lack of clear definition.

*The reveling in AMBIGUITY is one of the reasons many people hate poetry.*

**maelstrom** (*MAIL-struhm*). A situation marked by violence, turbulence, and uncertainty.

*Many families who lost their fortunes during the MAELSTROM of the 1929 stock market crash are still trying to regain their social status today.*

# ANTONYMS

**infallible** (*in-FAL-uh-buhl*). Incapable of error; absolutely trustworthy or sure.

*“We like security: we like the pope to be INFALLIBLE in matters of faith, and grave doctors to be so in moral questions so that we can feel reassured.”*

—Blaise Pascal, French mathematician and philosopher

**unequivocal** (*un-ee-KWIV-uh-kul*). Unambiguous; unadorned; blatant or obvious in expression.

*My response to your suggestion that we lie to the judge is an UNEQUIVOCAL one: absolutely not.*

See also: Chance, Confused

## 213. Understanding

*(uhn-der-STAN-ding)*, noun

The mental state and process of a person who understands; comprehension; discernment.

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## NOUNS

**perspicacity** (*per-spih-KASS-ih-tee*). Insightfulness; keen understanding.

*The problem was a complex one that required the analysis of someone with great PERSPICACITY.*

**profundity** (*pruh-FUN-dih-tee*). Depth of reasoning or insight; great understanding and intellectual incisiveness.

*A paper's length is no indication of its PROFUNDITY.*

**savoir faire** (*SAV-wahr-FAIR*). An evident sense of confidence, optimism, and proficiency in the task at hand.

*Eileen hosted a charity luncheon for forty people with her usual SAVOIR FAIRE.*

# ADJECTIVES

**cognizant** (KOG-nih-sint). Aware of the realities of a situation.

*Amanda is always COGNIZANT of her acquaintances' pedigrees.*

**implicit** (im-PLIH-set). Understood but not stated directly.

*"The vanity of men, a constant insult to women, is also the ground for the IMPLICIT feminine claim of superior sensitivity and morality."*

—Patricia Meyer Spacks, American literary critic

**lucid** (LOO-sid). Intelligible; clear to the understanding.

*The documentary gave a LUCID account of the underlying causes of the events.*

**luciferous** (loo-SI-fuh-ruhs). Providing insight or enlightenment; illuminating.

*Blake did not find his college courses LUCIFEROUS, so he decided to devote his life to world travel instead.*

**recondite** (REHK-un-dite). Beyond typical knowledge and understanding.

*For most people, opera, polo, and fine wine remain RECONDITE subjects.*

**tacit** (TASS-it). Implied; understood without being openly explained or expressed.

*The men took their sergeant's harsh language toward Ned as TACIT approval of their own abusive behavior toward him.*

## VERBS

**peruse** (*puh-ROOZ*). To read through with attention; to examine with an eye to detail.

*The witness PERUSED the document for some time, then declared that it was not the one he had signed.*



## ANTONYMS

**transcendent** (*tran-SEN-dent*). Beyond the realm of normal experience or understanding; transcending customary bounds of perception.

*While the astronauts reacted in different ways to the TRANSCENDENT experience of space travel, all were profoundly affected by the experience.*

See also: Judgment, Knowledge, Learn, Think

## 214. Unreal

*(uhn-REE-uhl)*, adjective

Not real or actual; imaginary; fantastic; illusory; false; artificial.

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## NOUNS

**chimera** (*kih-MER-ah*). An illusion or fabrication; an imaginary monster.

*“What a CHIMERA then is humankind. What a novelty! What a monster, what a chaos!”*

—Blaise Pascal, French philosopher

**dystopia** (*diss-TOPE-ee-uh*). An imaginary society characterized by human misery, squalor, fear, oppression, and hunger.

*A popular genre of motion pictures features the postapocalyptic DYSTOPIA.*

**eidolon** (*eye-DOH-luhn*). A phantom or apparition; or, the image of an ideal.

*“By a route obscure and lonely, / Haunted by ill angels only, / Where an EIDOLON, named Night, / On a black throne reigns upright.”*

—Edgar Allan Poe, American author and poet

**nonentity** (*non-EN-tih-tee*). A person or thing considered completely unimportant or that exists only in the imagination.

*You may safely regard this clause of the contract as a NONENTITY; it is obsolete and completely unenforceable.*

**phantasmagoria** (*fan-taz-muh-GORE-ee-uh*). A dreamlike, constantly changing series of visions.

*The avant-garde film had no dialogue or plot in the traditional sense; it was essentially a PHANTASMAGORIA set to music.*

**philter** (*FIL-tur*). A magical love potion.

*Thinking the glass contained Evian water, Veronica drained the PHILTER to its dregs; her eyes met those of the startled butler, and she melted with tenderness.*

**phoenix** (*FEE-niks*). A mythical bird about the size of an eagle, but with brilliantly colored plumage, that dies by fire and then is reborn from the ashes.

*One day the PHOENIX appeared in the forests of France, and legend has it that all the other birds become instantly jealous.*

**thaumaturge** (*THAW-mah-turj*). A person who works miracles.

*If you were ever to see Hannah early in the morning, just after she has awoken, then you would know her personal make-up artist is the epitome of a THAUMATURGE.*

**Triton** (TRY-ton). A mythical creature, similar to a mermaid, with a human torso and arms, gills under the ears, and a tail like a dolphin.

*TRITONS served Neptune as his attendants.*

**utopia** (you-TOE-pee-uh). A perfect or ideal society.

*Many of us who are accustomed to wealth have learned to accept that we must make our own UTOPIAS, rather than to rely on the actions of outside forces or agencies.*

**Xanadu** (ZAN-uh-dyoo). A place of perfect, idyllic beauty.

*“In XANADU did Kubla Khan / A stately pleasure-dome decree: / Where Alph, the sacred river, ran / Through caverns measureless to man / Down to a sunless sea.”*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, English poet

**yeti** (YEH-tee). The (legendary) Abominable Snowman.

*Carl claims to have photographic evidence of the Loch Ness Monster, several UFOs, and a large gray YETI, but I have yet to see any of it.*

## ADJECTIVES

**incorporeal** (*in-core-PORE-ee-al*). Lacking form.

*The moanings and low rumblings in the old house suggested INCORPOREAL visitors to Kate.*

**ineffable** (*in-EF-uh-bull*). So fantastic, incredible, or difficult-to-grasp it cannot be described in words.

*Poet Ezra Pound wrote of “the infinite and INEFFABLE quality of the British empire.”*

**intangible** (*in-TAN-juh-bul*). Incapable of being touched, felt, or calculated.

*Friends berated me for breaking up with Matthew, but there was something INTANGIBLE missing from the relationship, something I couldn’t do without.*

**spectral** (*SPEK-trul*). Reminiscent of ghosts or spirits; gruesome and otherworldly.

*Scrooge’s SPECTRAL visitors take different forms, but each is interested in the same thing: the redemption of the old man’s heart.*

**surreal** (*suh-REEL*). Possessing a quality that makes something seem unreal; strange; bizarre; almost other-worldly.

*“He seemed to toss them all into the mixed salads of his poetry with the same indifference to form and logic, the same domesticated SURREALISM, that characterized much of the American avant-garde of the period.”*

—Frank O’Hara, American poet

# ANTONYMS

**de facto** (*dee-FAK-toe*). Existing in fact but not officially.

*Although we eschew titles, Sasha clearly is the DE FACTO head of our arts-patronage club.*

**substantive** (*SUHB-stuhn-tiv*). Existing independently; having a real existence; actual.

*After the election, the local blogs were full of criticism, written by people who did not vote and had no SUBSTANTIVE complaints.*

# V

## 215. Virtuous

(*VUR-choo-us*), adjective

Having or characterized by righteousness or moral virtue.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**exemplary** (ig-ZEM-pluh-ree). Serving as an example or model; worth imitating by others.

*William's EXEMPLARY behavior was repeated so frequently and embellished so enthusiastically, that the rest of us eventually turned to a life of crime.*

**inculpable** (in-KUHL-puh-buhl). Blameless; guiltless.

*Because John wasn't at the drinking party, he was deemed INCULPABLE.*

**seraphic** (si-RAF-ik). Characteristic of a seraph; angelic.

*Underneath her SERAPHIC appearance, Marjorie actually had a heart of gold.*



## NOUNS

**probity** (*PROH-bi-tee*). Integrity; uprightness in one's dealings with others; complete honesty.

*The new parents were convinced that by setting a good example, their child would grow up to embrace the virtues of cleanliness and PROBITY.*

**rectitude** (*REHK-ti-tood*). Conduct according to moral principles; moral virtue; strict honesty; rightness.

*"The mind that's conscious of its RECTITUDE, / Laughs at the lies of rumor."*

—Ovid, Roman poet

**veracious** (*vuh-RAY-shuss*). Honest; truthful.

*Your Honor, I ask that the defense's assertion that none of the prosecution's witnesses are VERACIOUS be stricken from the record.*

## ANTONYMS

**nefarious** (*nih-FARE-ee-us*). Inherently evil, malicious, and unjust.

*“Only a government that is rich and safe can afford to be a democracy, for democracy is the most expensive and NEFARIOUS kind of government ever heard of on earth.”*

—Mark Twain, American humorist and writer

**peccadillo** (*pek-uh-DIL-oh*). A slight offence; trifling fault, indiscretion.

*Bob knew that shoplifting the package of gum was just a PECCADILLO, but his secret tormented him for his entire adult life.*

# W

## 216. Warn

(*WAWRN*), verb

To caution others about a danger, impending evil, misfortune, etc.; to urge or advise to exercise care; caution.

---

## VERBS

**admonish** (*ad-MON-ish*). To warn; caution against specific faults; to advise; exhort.

*On our first day, the counselor ADMONISHED all campers to avoid the poison ivy, the deep end of the lake, and the scrambled eggs.*

**betoken** (*bee-TOE-ken*). To serve as a warning.

*For Mary and Paul, the breakdown of their new car while they were still two hours away from their summer home BETOKENED a disastrous vacation.*

**presage** (*PRESS-ij*). To foretell or indicate.

*Such provocation may PRESAGE armed conflict in the region.*

## NOUNS

**caveat** (KAV-ee-ott). A precaution or warning.

*Before Arthur applied to college, his sister offered him a CAVEAT: "Many of us do not consider Columbia to be a true Ivy League school."*

**harbinger** (HAR-bin-jer). A forerunner or warning sign of a future event or trend.

*The asteroid's shadow blotted out the sun as it speeded on a collision course with Earth, a HARBINGER of impending doom.*

**portent** (POR-tent). A warning sign that something bad is going to happen.

*In Ray Bradbury's novel Something Wicked This Way Comes, the carnival coming to town is a PORTENT of evil things to come.*

## ADJECTIVES

**premonitory** (*preh-MAHN-ih-tor-ee*). Strongly indicative of or intuiting that something is going to happen.

*The Harrisons sold their stock in that company because they had a PREMONITORY vision that the company would soon go bankrupt.*

## ANTONYMS

**dissemble** (*diss-SEM-bul*). To act with an insincere or disguised motive.

*Although many on the committee were convinced that the undersecretary was DISSEMBLING about how much he knew of rebel activities, there was no hard proof to support this view.*

**obscure** (*uhb-SKYOOR*). To make unclear or conceal by confusing.

*The official explanation OBSCURED the fact that a number of people had been hurt by using the product in the way it was intended.*

## 217. Waste

(*WEYST*), noun

Useless, unneeded, or superfluous matter; garbage; refuse.

---



## NOUNS

**dreck** (DREK). Excrement; trash; junk.

*Jonathan made his works using found objects, although many critics referred to his materials as “DRECK.”*

**dross** (DROSS). Useless material; trash.

*The young poet was scarred for life when her father described her poems as “DROSS” and told her to throw them away.*

**effluent** (EF-loo-unt). A fluid discharged as waste; something that flows out.

*Uncontrolled EFFLUENT from the factory has been polluting the river for decades.*

**litter** (LIT-er). Objects scattered about; trash.

*His uncle’s house was full of LITTER, items of former value and plain junk gathered and retained for some unknown purpose.*

**offal** (AW-full). Rotting waste; decaying organic matter. In general, anything considered garbage or refuse.

*“I have often told you that I am that little fish who swims about under a shark and, I believe, lives indelicately on its OFFAL.”*

—Zelda Fitzgerald, American author

**recrement** (REK-ruh-muhnt). The worthless part of anything; waste; dross.

*Jim’s goal as process manager was to reduce the operation’s amount of RECREMENT by half.*

**swill** (SWIL). Otherwise worthless food items given to animals, especially kitchen waste given to swine.

*“Advertising is the rattling of a stick inside a SWILL bucket.”*

—George Orwell, English novelist

# ANTONYMS

**apposite** (APP-uh-zit). Relevant, pertinent, or appropriate to a given situation.

*Your objections are extremely APPOSITE, and I will address each of them.*

**beneficial** (ben-uh-FISH-uhl). Offering benefit; advantageous; helpful; favorable.

*“Learn to be pleased with everything; with wealth, so far as it makes us beneficial to others; with poverty, for not having much to care for, and with obscurity, for being unenvied.”*

—Plutarch, Greek biographer and author

See also: Worthless

## 218. Weak

(*WEEK*), adjective

Not strong; having no strength, stamina, vigor, power, etc.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**anemic** (*uh-NEE-mik*). Of or pertaining to a medical condition in which one's blood is deficient in red corpuscles; extraordinarily weak.

*I made a few ANEMIC efforts to get some work done last night, but I couldn't really focus on the job at hand.*

**decrepit** (*di-KREP-it*). Enfeebled or weakened by old age; worn out; infirm.

*The car's DECREPIT appearance was deceiving; Colin found it capable of 75 mph on the highway, and it got very good mileage.*

**flaccid** (*FLASS-id*). Lacking firmness, stiffness, vigor or force.

*The candidate's FLACCID speech left the listeners unimpressed.*

**languid** (*LANG-gwid*). Characterized by weakness and fatigue; or, lacking spirit and animation.

*"In doing good, we are generally cold, and LANGUID, and sluggish; and of all things afraid of being too much in the right."*

—Edmund Burke, Anglo-Irish statesman, orator, and author

**pallid** (*PAL-id*). A wan, sickly, washed-out appearance indicating illness or weakness, or lack of energy, strength, and vitality.

*Many of us maintain a PALLID pallor because we want to make it clear that we do not need to go outdoors unless we so choose.*

## NOUNS

**infirmity** (*in-FUR-mih-tee*). A physical weakness or ailment; mental or moral weakness.

*Randall, get over yourself. An ingrown toenail is annoying. It's not an INFIRMITY. You cannot park in the handicapped spot!*

**lassitude** (*LAS-ih-tood*). A lack of energy or motivation; weariness.

*"We know what boredom is: it is a dull / Impatience or a fierce velleity,  
/ A champing wish, stalled by our LASSITUDE, / To make or do."*

—Richard Wilbur, American poet

## VERBS

**attenuate** (*a-TEN-you-ate*). To weaken or reduce; spread thin; to cause a decrease in amount, value, power, or severity.

*Jim's strategy was to ATTENUATE the impact of Joan's accusations of harassment by suggesting that she had somehow invited his overtures.*

**debilitate** (*dih-BIIL-ih-tate*). To enfeeble or weaken; to devitalize deplete strength.

*Fran's DEBILITATING illness slowly sapped her will to live.*

**dilute** (*die-LOOT*). To thin or weaken by adding additional ingredients; to reduce force, strength, or effectiveness of.

*Frederica never DILUTES her words. She'll tell you exactly how she feels.*

**enervate** (*EN-ur-vate*). To weaken; to deprive of vitality, strength, or endurance.

*The vacation's whirlwind pace actually served to ENERVATE Madge.*

## ANTONYMS

**omnipotent** (*ahm-NIP-uh-tuhnt*). All powerful.

*“An OMNIPOTENT God is the only being with no reason to lie.”*

—Mason Cooley, American author

**puissant** (*PYOO-uh-suhnt*). Powerful; mighty.

*“Methinks I see in my mind a noble and PUISSANT nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.”*

—John Milton, English poet and historian

## 219. Whole

(*HOHL*), adjective

Containing all of its parts or elements; comprising the full amount; complete; not divided or separated.

---



## NOUNS

**gestalt** (*geh-STALT*). A unified and integrated structure or phenomenon.

*“Feminism is an entire world view or GESTALT, not just a laundry list of women’s issues.”*

—Charlotte Bunch, American feminist

## ADJECTIVES

**ecumenical** (*ek-yoo-MEN-ih-kul*). Universal; general; worldwide.

*This is not a question for a single party, but a matter of ECUMENICAL significance.*

**holistic** (*ho-LISS-tik*). Refers to medical practices that treat the whole person and not just a specific organ, condition, or disease.

*Marsha's HOLISTIC approach to healing involves channeling energy through crystals.*

**integral** (*IN-tuh-grul*). Acting as a constituent and essential member of a whole.

*Jane played an INTEGRAL role in the production's success.*

**involute** (*inn-VY-oh-late*). Without restriction or violation; undisturbed; unbroken.

*"INVIOLETE, he could rupture wires, mangle flaps, destroy the balance of the ship."*

—Richard Matheson, American science fiction writer

**plenary** (*PLEN-uh-ree*). Full; complete; entire; attended by all qualified members.

*The representative was somewhat nervous to be attending his first PLENARY session of Congress.*

**systemic** (*sih-STEM-ik*). Relating to a system as a whole and not just its component parts.

*The discarding of couture clothing that is less than a year old has become SYSTEMIC among our group.*

**unitary** (*YOU-ni-tare-ee*). A thing that exists or occurs in discrete units, sections, parts, or steps; having the indivisible nature of a unit.

*"Today we can see life as a UNITARY process, made up of a number of smaller processes."*

—Julian Huxley, English evolutionary biologist

## VERBS

**redintegrate** (*ri-DIN-ti-greyt*). To make whole or perfect again.

*After experiencing a psychotic episode, Peter worked diligently to REDINTEGRATE his psyche.*

## ANTONYMS

**moiety** (MOY-ih-tee). A part, portion, or share.

*When I go out to dinner with my wife and kids, I don't order a meal for myself, as my dinner is a MOIETY from each of theirs.*

**rive** (RAHYV). To tear apart; to separate; cleave; split.

*Driven by a tornado's winds, normally benevolent objects could RIVE houses and buildings with deadly force.*

**schism** (SKIZ-um). A division; a break or rupture of relations, especially one due to ideological or political differences.

*The SCHISM in the party over the issue of slavery reflected a division in the country itself.*

**severance** (SEV-uh-runce). A division; a breaking away, as of a relationship.

*Bill's SEVERANCE from the company had generous terms, including a bonus.*

## 220. Work

(*WURK*), noun

Physical or mental effort exerted to do or make something; labor; toil; employment.

---

## VERBS

**lucubrate** (*LOO-kyoo-breyt*). To work, study, or write laboriously; particularly at night.

*A night owl, Phyllis always LUCUBRATED into the wee hours.*

## NOUNS

**métier** (MAY-tee-yay). One's occupation, profession, field of work, etc.

*Since her family started one of Wall Street's most profitable houses, it's only natural that Ellen's MÉTIER would be finance.*

**moil** (MOYL). Hard, grinding work.

*The MOIL of paperwork made Sheila long for early retirement.*

**sinecure** (SIN-eh-KYOOR). A job or office without regular duties but with regular pay; a position requiring minimal labor but conveying prestige or status to one who holds it.

*Being elected as the new president of his trade association bestowed on Bill a much-needed SINECURE.*

**travail** (truh-VALE). Hard work, especially work causing physical pain; the labor of childbirth.

*It is not surprising that, given the TRAVAILS of the long journey westward, some settlers opted to return east rather than try to make a life on the frontier.*

# ADJECTIVES

**laborious** (*luh-BORE-ee-us*). Requiring a great deal of hard work and perseverance.

*Even though the years in school were LABORIOUS, they were worth the effort when I earned my PhD.*

**operose** (*OP-uh-roass*). Laborious; tedious; industrious.

*What's the point of taking on OPEROSE work when our social connections help us to achieve success with little effort?*

**sedulous** (*SEJ-yuh-luss*). Done or crafted with perseverance, diligence, and care.

*The teen's SEDULOUS labors at the desert site were rewarded by the discovery of triceratops bones in the third week of the dig.*

**yeoman** (*YOH-muhn*). Pertaining to or one who performs arduous tasks in a loyal and workmanlike manner.

*We promoted Helga to upstairs maid because of her YEOMAN work ethic.*



## ANTONYMS

**disport** (*dih-SPOHRT*). To amuse oneself.

*Felicia loved to DISPORT with the proprietors of her favorite boutiques by arguing over price.*

**diversion** (*dih-VUR-zhuhn*). A pastime; amusement.

*“Politics is the DIVERSION of trivial men who, when they succeed at it, become important in the eyes of more trivial men.”*

—George Jean Nathan, American journalist and critic

## 221. Worthless

(*WURTH-lis*), adjective

Without value or worth; of no use or importance.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**brummagem** (*BRUHM-uh-juhm*). Describes something that looks great but performs poorly.

*“Our press is certainly bankrupt in . . . reverence for nickel plate and BRUMMAGEM.”*

—Mark Twain

**nugatory** (*NOO-guh-tore-ee*). Trifling, worthless, and ineffective.

*We spend our time with the NUGATORY pastimes of polo, tennis on grass courts, and weekends in Europe.*

**paltry** (*PAHL-tree*). Trivial; insignificant; worthless.

*The PALTRY sum found in the cash register made us regret having picked this store for our first robbery.*

**picayune** (*pik-ee-YOON*). Petty; trifling or unimportant.

*Mr. Franks apparently couldn’t be bothered with such PICAYUNE concerns as what color shirt to wear.*

## NOUNS

**chaff** (CHAFF). Worthless stuff; material to be cast away.

*I usually write for an hour straight in my journal, knowing full well that much of what comes out will be drivel, and allowing myself to go back later and separate the wheat from the CHAFF.*

**cipher** (SIE-fur). A person or thing without meaning or value; a mystery; literally, the mathematical symbol for zero.

*Despite the best efforts of the intelligence community to gather evidence against him, Doctor Lysenko remained a CIPHER.*

**dregs** (DREGS). The leftover, least appealing or valuable part.

*Though many in her town looked on ex-convicts as the DREGS of society, it was Debbie's job as a social worker to try to rehabilitate everyone who came through her door, regardless of past history.*

**gimcrack** (JIHM-krack). A showy object of little or no value.

*"Haul them off! Hide them! / The heart winces / For junk and GIMCRACK, / for jerrybuilt things."*

—Richard Wilbur, American poet

**inutility** (in-yoo-TIL-ih-tee). Something that's useless.

*The puddle of oil beneath the car confirmed that it had become a very expensive INUTILITY.*

**kitsch** (KIHCH). Art, artifacts, or other objects of a cheap or junky nature produced by the popular culture.

*His room was filled with KITSCH: lava lamps, Farrah Fawcett and Cheryl Tiegs posters, and plastic models of Frankenstein and Dracula.*

**obsolescence** (ob-suh-LESS-uhnts). The state of being no longer current or useful.

*Roderick found, to his dismay, that some of the new Maserati models had lapsed into OBSOLESCENCE almost as soon as they hit the showroom floor.*

**trumpery** (TRUHM-puh-ree). Something without value; a trifle.

*The TRUMPERY that the Smythingtons collect and call "art" is, clearly, distasteful dreck.*

## VERBS

**marginalize** (*MAR-jin-ul-eyes*). To dismiss something as less important than it actually is.

*Francine has too many connections for us to snub her completely, but we have done our best to MARGINALIZE her influence.*

**nullify** (*NUHL-uh-fie*). To make something valueless or ineffective.

*We keep our collections under lock and key because, sometimes, merely breathing on them NULLIFIES their value.*

# ANTONYMS

**heirloom** (*AIR-loom*). A possession of commercial or sentimental value handed down from generation to generation.

*As the oldest child, I was given the most precious family HEIRLOOM, our old grandfather clock, when my mother passed away.*

**valuation** (*val-you-AYE-shun*). The calculated worth or value of an asset, based on a rigorous appraisal.

*One of the accounting firm's services is business VALUATION, which provides an accurate appraisal of what your business would sell for if acquired.*

## 222. Writing

(*RAHY-ting*), noun

The act of a person who writes; something written, such as a book, letter, document, inscription, etc.

---

# NOUNS

**elegy** (EL-eh-gee). A poem of lament and praise for the dead.

*“Modern ELEGIES tend to be unconvincing because the poet so clearly believes in the immortality that an ELEGY traditionally claims for its subject.”*

—Edward Mendelson, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University

**euphuism** (YOU-few-iz-im). Ornate, flowery, overly elaborate language, often making the exact meaning difficult to discern.

*Felicia’s words are full of EUPHUISM, particularly when describing the architecture of her family’s various houses.*

**kenning** (KEN-ing). A metaphorical compound word or phrase, used often in epic poetry.

*Cliff’s letter to Natasha included such KENNINGS as “pearl-eyed dove” and “crinkly gowned angel.” It’s no wonder she broke up with him soon after.*

**missive** (MISS-iv). An official or formal letter.

*He sent out a MISSIVE informing all employees that, henceforth, there would be no smoking in their quarters—but he forgot to remove the ashtrays.*

**passim** (PASS-im). A word used to indicate that a given source or element is used frequently throughout a written work.

*References to a fictitious writer named Kilgore Trout appear PASSIM in a number of Kurt Vonnegut’s novels.*

**verbiage** (VER-bee-ij). Words; in particular, prose written to fill space and impress others rather than communicate ideas and information.

*“There’s some white space on the back page of the sales brochure,” the marketing manager told his ad agency, “so let’s fill it with some VERBIAGE about service and quality.”*

**vers libre** (VERSS-LEE-breh). Free verse, a style of poetry requiring no rhyme or meter.

*H. L. Mencken observed that VERS LIBRE is “a device for making poetry easier to write and harder to read.”*



## VERBS

**elucubrate** (ih-LOO-kyoo-brait). To produce a written work through lengthy, intensive effort.

*Thanks to a few hundred bucks passed along to a classmate, Miles did not have to ELUCUBRATE a term paper and could, instead, attend parties with us.*

**indite** (in-DITE). To write or compose a literary work.

*“But if, both for your love and skill, your name / You seek to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame, / Stella behold, and then begin to INDITE.”*

—Sir Philip Sidney, English courtier, soldier, and poet

**limn** (LIM). To outline in detail, portray in words.

*With all of the expressive terms he could muster, the theologian proceeded to LIMN an exposition of the pious life.*

**paraphrase** (PARE-uh-frase). A restatement of a text or passage with a new meaning or as a clarification.

*To call this work a new translation of the original Greek texts is an overstatement; it is a capable, but by no means groundbreaking, effort to PARAPHRASE existing English editions.*

# ADJECTIVES

**verbose** (*ver-BOHS*). Describes a person or composition using more words than are needed to get the point across.

*Long-winded and VERBOSE, Mitch made his team members groan whenever he stood up to speak at a charity event.*

## ANTONYMS

**legible** (*LEJ-uh-buhl*). Capable of being read.

*John's handwriting was LEGIBLE but his writing was incomprehensible.*

**peruse** (*puh-ROOZ*). To read through with attention; to examine with an eye to detail.

*The witness PERUSED the document for some time, then declared that it was not the one he had signed.*

See also: Language

# ***Index***

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Note: References in **bold** indicate main entries in text.

Abate, 311  
Abdicate, 328, 378  
Abecedarian, 271  
Aberrant, 20  
Aberration, 256  
Abet, 193, 377  
Abhor, 189, 248  
Abhorrent, 142  
Abide, 205  
Abiding, 326  
Abjure, 312  
Ablution, 319  
Abnegate, 378  
Abomination, 44  
Abortive, 151  
Abrade, 66  
Abridge, 233  
Abrogate, 135  
Abscond, 39  
Absolve, 165  
Abstain, 163, 369  
Abstemious, 258  
Abstinence, 257  
Abstruse, 112  
Abuse, 1–2  
Abyss, 291  
Accede, 4  
Acclaim, 21  
Acclimate, 66  
Accolade, 196  
Accommodate, 313

Accomplishment, 3  
Accord, 5  
Accost, 40  
Accoutrement, 139  
Accrete, 72  
Accretion, 312  
Acculturation, 65  
Acerbic, 380  
Achievement, 2–3  
Achilles' heel, 158  
Achromatic, 72  
Acknowledgment, 14  
Acquiesce, 4  
Acquit, 48, 166  
Acrimonious, 9  
Acrophobia, 288  
Acuity, 373  
Acumen, 222  
Adage, 336  
Addled, 81  
Adduce, 104  
Adherent, 377  
Ad infinitum, 137  
Adjoin, 132  
Adjudicate, 193  
Adjure, 30, 75  
Admonish, 411  
Adolescent, 203  
Adroit, 273, 354  
Adulate, 191  
Adulatory, 83  
Adumbrate, 287  
Adventitious, 213  
Adverb, 19  
Advocate, 377  
Aegis, 103, 193

Aesthetic, 34  
Affable, 13, 98  
Affirm, 32  
Aficionado, 138  
Agape, 246  
Agglomerate, 72  
Aggrandize, 145, 205  
Aggrandizement, 312  
Aggravate, 319  
Aggregate, 72  
Aggregation, 286  
Agnostic, 51  
Agree, 4–5  
Akin, 353  
Alacrity, 138, 368  
Alchemy, 69  
Aleatory, 63, 213, 403  
Allege, 102  
Alleviate, 318  
Alliterative, 353  
Allonym, 267  
Alone, 6–7  
Aloof, 215  
Amalgamate, 72  
Amanuensis, 89  
Amaranthine, 390  
Amateur, 92  
Amatory, 247  
Ambiguity, 403  
Amble, 396  
Ameliorate, 88  
Amenable, 4, 118  
Amend, 88  
Amenity, 133  
Amerce, 306  
Amiable, 123

Amity, 292  
Amnesia, 256  
Amnesty, 166  
Amorphous, 349  
Amount, 7–8  
Anachronism, 275  
Analogous, 112, 353  
Anamnesis, 254  
Anarchy, 176  
Anathema, 144  
Anchorite, 181  
Ancillary, 375  
Andante, 368  
Androcentrism, 249  
Androgynous, 344  
Anemic, 414  
Anfractuous, 79, 113  
Angry, 9  
Angst, 15  
Animadversion, 189  
Animals, 10–12  
Animated, 357  
Animosity, 108  
Animus, 189  
Annex, 132  
**Annoy, 12–13**  
Annunciate, 41  
Anodyne, 318  
Anomaly, 111  
**Answer, 14–15**  
Antagonistic, 248  
Antecedent, 275  
Antediluvian, 276  
Anthropomorphic, 10  
Antipodal, 279  
Antithesis, 280

Antonym, 280  
**Anxiety, 15–16**  
Apathetic, 279  
Aperitif, 161  
Aphasia, 230  
Aphonic, 364  
Aphorism, 336  
Aplomb, 16  
Apocryphal, 202, 338  
Apolitical, 294  
Apoplectic, 9  
Apostasy, 53, 117  
Apostate, 319  
Apostolic, 322  
Apothegm, 336  
Apotheosis, 54  
Apotheosize, 145  
**Appearance, 16–18**  
Appeased, 315  
Appeasement, 5  
Appellation, 266  
Applaud, 333  
Apportion, 74  
Apposite, 19, 413  
Apprehension, 15  
Apprentice, 92  
Apprise, 41  
Approbation, 21  
**Appropriate, 18–21**  
**Approval, 21–22**  
Appurtenances, 140  
Apt, 19, 208  
Aquiline, 10  
Arcane, 264  
Archaic, 276  
Ardent, 138



Ardor, 107  
Arduous, 113  
Argosy, 7  
Argot, 230  
**Argue, 22–24**  
Arid, 134  
Arrant, 147  
**Arrogance, 25–26**  
Arrogate, 38, 381  
Arson, 92  
**Art, 26–30**  
Artifice, 99, 164  
Art nouveau, 26  
Ascetic, 258  
Ascribe, 64, 327  
Aseptic, 120  
Asinine, 371  
**Ask, 30–32**  
Askance, 22  
Asperity, 114  
Aspersions, 399  
Aspiration, 107  
Assemblage, 286  
Assent, 5  
Assiduous, 87  
Assignment, 253  
Assimilate, 66  
Assuage, 194, 318  
Assured, 212  
Astir, 357  
Astral, 395  
Astringent, 342  
Astrology, 33  
**Astronomy, 32–33**  
Astute, 40  
Asunder, 285

Asynchronous, 111  
Atavistic, 276  
Attainment, 3  
Attenuate, 415  
**Attractive, 34–36**  
Au courant, 40  
Audacious, 59  
Augment, 206  
Augur, 210, 298  
August, 176  
Auspicious, 63  
Austere, 342  
Auteur, 26  
Authoritarian, 296  
**Authority, 36–38**  
Autism, 198  
Autonomy, 209  
Avant-garde, 26  
Avarice, 178  
Aver, 102, 383  
Averse, 301  
Aversion, 189  
**Avoid, 39–40**  
Avowal, 102  
Avuncular, 226  
**Aware, 40–42**  
Axiom, 336  
Babbitt, 269  
Baculine, 306  
**Bad, 43–44**  
Badger, 185  
Badinage, 45  
Baleful, 187  
Bamboozle, 101  
Banal, 121  
Baneful, 188

**Banter, 45–46**

Barbarous, 142

Baroque, 27

Barter, 129

Basal, 141

Bastion, 103

Bathos, 352

Beard, 106

Beatitude, 184

Bedraggled, 115

**Beginning, 46–48**

Beguiling, 34

**Behave, 48–49**

Belated, 277

Beleaguer, 185

**Belief, 50–54**

Belles-lettres, 240

Bellicose, 22, 97, 156

Belligerent, 156

Bellwether, 211, 298

Bemoan, 315

Bemused, 81

Benediction, 377

Beneficent, 226

Beneficial, 413

Benevolent, 226

Benighted, 372

Benign, 144, 226

Bequest, 173

Bereaved, 261

Bereft, 134

Beseech, 30

Besiege, 185

Besotted, 372

**Best, 54–56**

Bestir, 48

Betoken, 411  
Bewail, 335  
Biased, 154, 300  
Bibliomancy, 298  
Bibliomania, 158, 240  
Bibulous, 125, 159  
Bicameral, 291  
Bice, 69  
Bide, 398  
Biennial, 387  
Bifurcate, 286  
Big, 56–58  
Bigamy, 92  
Bilateral, 291  
Bildungsroman, 240  
Bilious, 117, 159  
Bilk, 119  
Billet-doux, 246  
Biogenesis, 338  
Bipolar, 280  
Bisque, 161  
Blacklist, 312  
Blame, 58–59  
Blandish, 287  
Blandishments, 84  
Blasé, 150  
Blather, 383  
Blithe, 215  
Bloviolate, 383  
Blunder, 256  
Boatswain, 90  
Bombastic, 366  
Bona fide, 309  
Bonhomie, 226  
Bon mot, 336  
Bon vivant, 184

Bouillabaisse, 161  
Boundless, 239  
Bourgeois, 121, 268  
Bovine, 10  
Bowdlerize, 206  
Braggadocio, 25  
Brash, 308  
Brassy, 386  
Bravado, 60  
Brave, 59–60  
Brazen, 260  
Breviary, 240  
Brevity, 86  
Brigand, 382  
Brobdingnagian, 56  
Bromide, 336  
Bromidic, 121  
Brouhaha, 148  
Brummagem, 280, 419  
Brusque, 204  
Bucolic, 34  
Bulimia, 198  
Bulwark, 104  
Bumptious, 159, 204  
Burdensome, 124  
Bureaucracy, 36  
Burgeon, 181  
Buttress, 377  
Bygone, 277  
Byzantine, 113  
Cabal, 179  
Cabotage, 292  
Cache, 73, 340  
Cacophony, 363  
Cadre, 179  
Caducous, 350

Calamitous, 43  
Callous, 215  
Callow, 203, 272  
Calumny, 326  
Camouflage, 195  
Canard, 155, 338  
Candid, 341  
Cannonade, 104  
Canon, 319  
Cantankerous, 97  
Canvass, 30  
Capacious, 57  
Capitulate, 378  
Capricious, 67, 159  
Capstone, 3  
Captious, 97, 159  
Captivate, 35  
Carbuncle, 198  
Cardinal, 343  
Careful, 61–62  
Caricature, 332  
Carouse, 168  
Carp, 77  
Carte blanche, 297  
Cartel, 179  
Casanova, 247  
Castigate, 88, 94  
Cataclysmic, 43  
Catalyst, 302  
Catechize, 30  
Catharsis, 131  
Catholic, 269  
Catholicon, 360  
Cavalier, 401  
Caveat, 411  
Cavil, 77, 95

Celerity, 368  
Celestial, 33, 395  
Celibacy, 348  
Censor, 367  
Censorious, 96  
Censure, 58  
Cerebral, 228  
Certitude, 16  
Cerulean, 70  
Cessation, 136  
Chaff, 45, 419  
Chagrin, 305  
Chance, 63–65  
Change, 65–68  
Charlatan, 99, 252  
Chary, 61, 259  
Chaste, 348  
Chastise, 166  
Chemistry, 68–69  
Chiaroscuro, 27  
Chicanery, 99  
Chide, 95  
Chimera, 201, 406  
Chivalry, 226  
Cholers, 9  
Churlish, 97, 159  
Churlishness, 46  
Cipher, 419  
Circuitous, 113  
Circumlocution, 230  
Circumscribe, 238  
Circumspect, 61, 259  
Circumvent, 39  
Clamorous, 76  
Clandestine, 340  
Claque, 84

Clarion, 76  
Clemency, 166  
Clement, 144  
Clerisy, 234  
Climacteric, 343  
Climactic, 136  
Cloistered, 220  
Cloying, 379  
Coagulate, 69  
Coalesce, 182  
Codify, 282  
Coequal, 280  
Coeval, 387  
Coffers, 127  
Cogent, 245  
Cogitate, 391  
Cognate, 112  
Cognition, 227  
Cognizant, 40, 405  
Cognomen, 266  
Cognoscente, 234  
Coherent, 87  
Coitus, 344  
Collegial, 317  
Colloquial, 233  
Collusion, 5  
Collusive, 118  
**Color, 69–72**  
**Combine, 72–74**  
Comely, 34  
**Command, 74–76**  
Commendation, 21  
Commingle, 221  
Commiserate, 335  
Commodious, 57  
**Commotion, 76–77**



Compendious, 85  
Complacent, 315  
**Complain, 77–78**  
Complaisant, 4, 13, 118  
**Complex, 79–80**  
Complicity, 92  
**Compliment, 80–81**  
Comport, 49  
Compote, 162  
Compunction, 15, 314  
Compurgation, 236  
Concerted, 74  
Conciliation, 81  
Conciliatory, 5, 157  
Concinnous, 19  
**Concise, 82–83**  
Conclave, 253  
Conclusive, 324  
Concomitant, 393  
Concord, 81  
Concupiscence, 344  
Concur, 278  
Condemn, 58  
Condign, 19  
Condone, 330  
Confabulate, 383  
Confection, 380  
Conflate, 82  
**Conflict, 84–85**  
Confluence, 253  
Confraternity, 180  
Confront, 40  
**Confused, 85–87**  
Congenital, 250  
Congruous, 208  
Conjectural, 310

Conjoin, 73  
Conoidal, 348  
Consanguineous, 317  
Conscionable, 120  
Consecrate, 322  
**Consistent, 87–88**  
Consortium, 180  
Conspiracy, 5  
Constrain, 239  
Constrict, 239  
Consuetudinary, 281  
Consummate, 135, 355  
Consummation, 152  
Contaminate, 115  
Contemptuous, 190  
Contend, 103  
Contention, 80  
Contentious, 22  
Contiguous, 393  
Contingent, 210  
Contraband, 93  
Contravene, 106  
Contravention, 80  
Contretemps, 256  
Contrite, 305  
Contrition, 314  
Contrivance, 140  
Contrive, 225  
Controvert, 23  
Contumacious, 37, 105  
Contumelious, 1  
Contumely, 332  
Conundrum, 114, 301  
Convalescence, 192  
Convene, 73  
Conveyance, 397

Convivial, 183  
Convocation, 180  
Convoke, 254  
Convoluted, 79  
Copious, 8  
Cornucopia, 7  
Corporeal, 309  
Corpulent, 57  
**Correct, 88–89**  
Correlate, 316  
Corrigendum, 240  
Corroborate, 310  
Cosmic, 172  
Cosmopolitan, 269  
Costive, 368  
Coterie, 180  
Counsel, 278  
Countenance, 21  
Counterintuitive, 403  
Countermand, 76  
Countervail, 14  
Coup de grace, 136  
Coup d'état, 292  
Couture, 373  
Covert, 195  
Covet, 108  
Covin, 119  
**Craftsperson, 89–92**  
Crapulous, 125  
Crass, 397  
Credo, 336  
Crepitate, 364  
Crescendo, 363  
**Crimes, 92–94**  
Criminate, 58  
**Criticize, 94–96**

**Cross, 97–98**

Cryptic, 340

Culinary, 163

Cull, 73

Culpable, 59

Cultivated, 204

Cupidity, 178

Curative, 89

Cursory, 401

Curtail, 311

Curtate, 311

Cyan, 70

Daedal, 79

Dalliance, 315

Dauntless, 59, 197

Dearth, 7

Debacle, 3, 151

Debauchery, 345

Debilitate, 186, 415

Decapitate, 225

**Deceitful, 99–102**

Deciduous, 350

Decimate, 187, 311

Decipher, 83

**Declare, 102–3**

Déclassé, 159

Decorous, 386

Decorum, 20

Decrepit, 414

Decry, 332

Deemphasize, 146

Deface, 187

De facto, 309, 408

Defalcate, 127

Defamation, 217

Defeatist, 185

Defenestrate, 225  
**Defense, 103–5**  
Deferential, 260  
**Defiant, 105–7**  
Deficit, 148  
Defile, 115, 187  
Definitude, 257  
Deflation, 127  
Defunct, 136, 244  
Deification, 330  
Déjà vu, 275  
Deleterious, 188  
Delimit, 239  
Delineate, 282  
Delphic, 299  
Demarcate, 239  
Demeanor, 49  
Dementia, 214  
Demimonde, 345  
Demiurge, 355  
Demotic, 233  
Demur, 116  
Demure, 260  
Denigrate, 216  
Denote, 210  
Denouement, 136  
Deplete, 134  
Depose, 38, 130  
Depraved, 260  
Deprecate, 85, 116  
Deracinate, 130  
Derelict, 38  
Dereliction, 152, 328  
Deride, 332  
De rigueur, 19, 269  
Derivative, 353

Derogatory, 217  
Descant, 383  
Desecrate, 187, 331  
Desideratum, 107  
**Desire, 107–8**  
Desolate, 134  
Despoil, 381  
Despotism, 174  
Destitute, 295  
Desuetude, 136  
Desultory, 159, 401  
Détente, 315  
Deteriorate, 207  
**Determined, 109–10**  
Determinism, 51  
Deus ex machina, 64  
Devoid, 8, 134, 168  
Diabolical, 142  
Dialectical, 22  
Diatribes, 96  
Dichotomy, 111, 280  
Dictum, 337  
Didactic, 206  
**Difference, 111–12**  
**Difficult, 112–14**  
Diffident, 260  
Diffuse, 86  
Dilate, 182  
Dilatory, 369  
Dilemma, 301  
Dilettante, 229  
Dilute, 311, 415  
Diminution, 312  
Diminutive, 358  
Dionysian, 346  
Dipsomaniacal, 125

Dirge, 261  
**Dirty, 115–16**  
Disabuse, 42  
**Disagree, 116–18**  
Discerning, 41, 202  
Discernment, 402  
Discharge, 49  
Discombobulated, 82  
Discomfit, 132  
Discommode, 378  
Disconsolate, 334  
Discord, 80  
Discordant, 117  
Discreet, 309  
Discrete, 254  
Discretion, 209  
Discriminative, 386  
Discursive, 366  
Disembogue, 134  
Disenfranchise, 6  
Dishabille, 373  
Dishearten, 169  
**Dishonest, 118–20**  
Disingenuous, 118  
Disinterested, 153  
Dismiss, 313  
Disparage, 85, 95  
Disparate, 112, 280  
Dispassionate, 153  
Dispensation, 307  
Disport, 168, 418  
Dispossess, 140  
Disproportionate, 207  
Disputations, 46  
Disquiet, 16  
Disregard, 392

Dissemble, 101, 412

Disseminate, 74

Dissension, 5, 80

Dissentient, 106

Dissidence, 117

Dissimilar, 112

Dissimulate, 195

Dissolution, 136

Dissuade, 288

Diurnal, 388

Divergent, 254

Diversion, 418

Divest, 140

Doctrinaire, 268

Doleful, 334

Domicile, 289

Donnybrook, 157

Douceur, 173

Dowdy, 374

Doxology, 319

Doyen, 273

Draconian, 142

Dreck, 412

Dregs, 420

Dross, 412

Dubiety, 54

Dubious, 260

Duffer, 372

Dulcify, 380

**Dull, 120–22**

Duplicitous, 100, 118

Dwindle, 360

Dysfunctional, 49

Dyslogistic, 117

Dyspeptic, 97

Dystopia, 406



**Easy, 123–24**

**Eat, 124–27**

Ebullient, 183, 335

Ebullition, 107

Eccentric, 207

Echelon, 283

Echo, 323

Éclat, 196

**Economics, 127–29**

Ecumenical, 416

Eczema, 198

Edacious, 178

Educe, 391

Edulcorate, 380

Efface, 130

Effervescent, 183

Effete, 160

Efficacious, 355

Efflorescent, 55

Effluent, 413

Effortless, 123

Effrontery, 132

Effusive, 167

Egalitarian, 50, 153

Egocentric, 279

Egregious, 43

Egress, 291

Eidetic, 255

Eidolon, 406

Élan, 138

Eleemosynary, 174

Elegy, 261, 421

Elemental, 30

Elementary, 114

Elephantine, 57

Elevate, 206

Elide, 383

**Eliminate, 130–32**

Elixir, 361

Elliptical, 85

Elocution, 364

Elucidate, 361, 383

Elucubrate, 422

Emaciated, 126

**Embarrassment, 132–33**

Embellish, 145

Embezzle, 93

Embroider, 145

Embryonic, 277

Emend, 66, 88, 243

Emeritus, 197

Eminence, 3

Eminent, 376

Empirical, 228

**Empty, 134–35**

Empyreal, 55

Encipher, 341

Enclave, 170

Encomium, 84, 146

Encumber, 274

**End, 135–37**

Endowment, 173

Enervate, 187, 415

Enigmatic, 264

Enjoin, 75

En masse, 392

Enmity, 190

Ennui, 400

Ensconce, 211

Enthrall, 35

**Enthusiasm, 138–39**

Entice, 35

Entomology, 338  
Entreat, 31  
Entropy, 64  
Enumerate, 282  
Enunciate, 384  
Environs, 290  
Envisage, 201  
Ephemeral, 350, 388  
Epic, 177  
Epicenter, 290  
Epicure, 386  
Epicurean, 341  
Epigrammatic, 85  
Epigraph, 337  
Epiphany, 201  
Episodic, 285  
Epistemology, 227  
Epitome, 54  
Eponymous, 267  
Equable, 309  
Equanimity, 245  
Equinox, 389  
**Equipment, 139–40**  
Equitable, 153  
Equivocal, 403  
Equivocate, 164  
Eremitic, 181  
Eristic, 23  
Eroticize, 346  
Errant, 397  
Erratic, 88  
Ersatz, 154  
Erstwhile, 277  
Erudite, 228  
Eschew, 39  
Esplanade, 394

Espouse, 377  
**Essence, 141–42**  
Esteem, 191, 333  
Estrange, 130, 317  
Estuary, 394  
Esurient, 108  
Et al., 8  
Ethos, 51  
Etiolate, 192  
Etiology, 65  
Etymology, 230  
Eulogy, 261  
Eupepsia, 200  
Euphemism, 231  
Euphonious, 362  
Euphony, 364  
Euphoria, 200  
Euphuism, 231, 422  
Eustasy, 338  
Evade, 39  
Evanescent, 350  
**Evil, 142–44**  
Evince, 210  
Eviscerate, 130  
Evoke, 255  
Exacerbate, 187, 207  
**Exaggerate, 145–46**  
Exalt, 331  
**Excess, 146–48**  
Excise, 130  
**Excite, 148–50**  
Excogitate, 391  
Excommunicate, 313  
Excoriate, 95  
Exculpate, 166, 328  
Execrable, 143

Execrate, 189  
Exemplar, 54  
Exemplary, 409  
Exhilarate, 149  
Exhort, 31, 194  
Exigency, 301  
Exiguous, 358  
Existential, 50  
Exonerate, 59, 166, 326  
Exorbitant, 147  
Expansive, 87  
Expatiate, 384  
Expedite, 275  
Expeditious, 368  
Exposition, 302  
Expostulate, 23  
Expressionism, 27  
Expropriate, 381  
Expunge, 130  
Expurgate, 131  
Extemporaneous, 366  
Extenuate, 311, 344  
Extirpate, 131  
Extol, 2, 84, 331  
Extradite, 378  
Extricate, 131  
Extrinsic, 270  
Exuberant, 122  
Exult, 262  
Fabricate, 201  
Fabulist, 399  
Façade, 17  
Facet, 285  
Facetious, 169  
Facetiousness, 45  
Facile, 114, 123

Facilitate, 186  
Faction, 180  
Factitious, 154, 202  
**Fail, 151–52**  
Fainéant, 400  
**Fair, 152–54**  
Fallacious, 154  
Fallacy, 155  
Fallible, 151  
Fallow, 303  
**False, 154–56**  
Falter, 110  
Farcical, 351  
Farouche, 97, 160  
Farrago, 83  
Farrier, 90  
Fascism, 174  
Fastidious, 61  
Fastuous, 25  
Fathomless, 239  
Fatuous, 351  
Faultless, 257  
Fauna, 11  
Faustian, 143  
Faux, 154  
Faux pas, 256  
Fealty, 196  
Febrile, 250  
Feckless, 401  
Fecundity, 303  
Feint, 155  
Felicitate, 218  
Felicitous, 19  
Felicity, 184  
Felonious, 94  
Ferment, 149

Ferule, 305  
Fervent, 139  
Fete, 262  
Fetish, 330  
Fetter, 274  
Fiasco, 152  
Fiat, 36  
Fickle, 328  
**Fight, 156–57**  
Filch, 119  
Filial, 317  
Filibuster, 364  
Fillip, 149  
Finagle, 101  
Finale, 48  
Fin de siècle, 374  
Fjord, 394  
Flaccid, 414  
Flagitious, 143  
Flagrante delicto, 345  
Flambé, 163  
Flashback, 276  
**Flaws, 158–61**  
Fledgling, 273  
Flippant, 344  
Florid, 147  
Flummoxed, 82  
Flux, 65  
Foible, 158  
Foment, 149, 319  
**Foods, 161–63**  
**Fool, 164–65**  
Foolhardy, 308  
Forbear, 369  
Forestall, 369  
Forfeit, 174

Forfeiture, 306  
Forfend, 104  
**Forgive, 165–66**  
Forte, 297  
Fortuitous, 63  
Forum, 253  
Founder, 151  
Fracas, 76  
Fractious, 9  
Fratricide, 224  
Frenetic, 16, 213  
Frenzy, 149  
Frippery, 352  
Frisson, 149  
Frivolity, 344  
Fruition, 3, 303  
Fugacious, 350  
**Full, 167–68**  
Fulminate, 95  
Fulsome, 147  
Fumigate, 225  
**Fun, 168–69**  
Fundamental, 141  
Funereal, 261  
Fungible, 281  
Furor, 149  
Futurism, 27  
Gadfly, 13  
Gaffe, 257  
Gainsay, 103, 116, 155  
Gallivant, 396  
Gambit, 164  
Gambol, 168, 396  
Gamesome, 169  
Gamut, 167  
Gargantuan, 57



Garnish, 381  
Garrulity, 385  
Gauche, 160  
Gazetteer, 240  
Gelding, 250  
Genocide, 224  
Genome, 251  
Genre, 27  
Genteel, 386  
Gentrify, 206  
Genuflect, 376  
**Geography, 170–72**  
Geopolitical, 292  
Geostationary, 33  
Germane, 19  
Germinal, 46  
Germinate, 303  
Gerontocracy, 175  
Gestalt, 415  
Gestation, 47  
Gesticulate, 384  
**Gift, 172–74**  
Gimcrack, 420  
Gingivitis, 198  
Glean, 222  
Globalization, 292  
Globule, 359  
Glower, 13  
Gnomic, 85  
Gnostic, 228  
Gnosticism, 320  
Gorgonize, 35  
Gormandize, 124  
**Government, 174–76**  
**Grand, 176–78**  
Grandiloquent, 366

Grandiose, 304  
Granular, 284  
Gratuitous, 20, 207, 270  
Gravid, 250  
Gravitas, 343  
**Greed, 178–79**  
Gregarious, 7, 183  
Grenadine, 162  
Grievous, 43  
Grifter, 119  
**Group, 179–81**  
Grouse, 78  
**Grow, 181–82**  
Gruel, 162  
Guerrilla, 157  
Guild, 180  
Guile, 164  
Guileless, 102  
Guise, 17  
Gullible, 100  
Gustatory, 125  
Guttural, 362  
Gyrating, 262  
Habeas corpus, 236  
Habile, 355  
Habiliment, 140  
Habitude, 49  
Hackneyed, 281  
Haggis, 162  
Hagiography, 84  
Halcyon, 77, 183  
Hallow, 331  
Hapless, 63, 160  
**Happy, 183–85**  
Harangue, 117  
**Harass, 185–86**

Harbinger, 411  
Hardtack, 162  
**Harm, 186–89**  
Harmony, 157  
Harpy, 178  
Harry, 186  
**Hate, 189–91**  
Haughty, 25, 304  
Haute couture, 373  
Haut monde, 373  
**Health, 191–93**  
Hearsay, 229  
Hector, 186  
Hedonistic, 341  
Heedless, 42  
Hegemony, 36, 292  
Heinous, 143  
Heirloom, 421  
Hellacious, 43  
Help, 193–94  
Hemophilia, 199  
Herbaceous, 12  
Herbicide, 224  
Herbivorous, 125  
Herculean, 113, 296  
Heresy, 320  
Heretic, 111  
Hermaphrodite, 345  
Hermetic, 220  
Heteroclit, 282  
Heterodox, 279  
Heterogeneity, 354  
Hiatus, 389  
**Hide, 194–95**  
Hidebound, 160, 268  
Hierarchy, 37, 283

Hinterland(s), 170, 290  
Hirsute, 250  
Histrionics, 158  
Hoary, 277  
Holarctic, 171  
Holistic, 416  
Homage, 196  
Homeopathy, 251  
Homiletics, 320  
Homogeneous, 87  
Homonym, 231  
**Honor, 196–97**  
Honorific, 197  
Horologist, 90  
Hosanna, 84  
Hovel, 290  
Hubbub, 77  
Hubris, 304  
Humanism, 51  
Humectant, 68  
Humiliation, 133  
Hygienic, 116  
Hygroscopic, 69  
Hyperbole, 145  
Hyperborean, 170  
Hypercritical, 96  
Hypertension, 199  
Hyperthermia, 199  
Hypnopompic, 356  
Hypocrisy, 158  
Hypothecation, 128  
Hypothesis, 51  
Iconoclast, 51–52  
Ideologue, 52  
Idyllic, 34  
Ignoble, 197

Ignominious, 151  
Ignominy, 133  
Illicit, 94, 238  
Illiteracy, 236  
**Illness, 198–200**  
Illuminate, 83  
Illusory, 100  
**Imagine, 201–2**  
Imbecility, 214, 352  
Imbibe, 124  
Imbroglia, 24, 301  
Immaculate, 116  
**Immature, 203–4**  
Immolate, 225  
Immure, 6  
Immutable, 67  
Impalpable, 113  
Imparity, 111, 354  
Impartial, 153  
Impasse, 361  
**Impatient, 204–5**  
Impavid, 289  
Impeccable, 161  
Impecunious, 295  
Impede, 274  
Imperative, 75  
Imperceptible, 18  
Imperious, 25  
Imperturbable, 150  
Impetuous, 204  
Impiety, 331  
Implausible, 50  
Implicit, 405  
Implore, 31  
Impolitic, 223  
Importune, 31, 204

Impoverished, 295  
Impressionable, 216  
Impressionism, 27  
Imprimatur, 21  
Impropriety, 20  
**Improve, 205–7**  
Improvvidence, 400  
Improvident, 308  
Impulsive, 308  
Impunity, 307  
Impute, 59  
Inalienable, 382  
Inane, 372  
**Inappropriate, 207–8**  
Inarticulate, 367  
Inaudible, 364  
Inauspicious, 63  
Incendiary, 150  
Inception, 47  
Incessant, 350  
Inchoate, 46  
Incipient, 46  
Incogitant, 401  
Incognito, 267, 340  
Incoherent, 349  
Incommensurable, 112  
Incongruous, 20, 208  
Inconscient, 392  
Inconsequential, 58  
Incontestable, 24  
Incontrovertible, 398  
Incorporeal, 310, 407  
Incorrigible, 68  
Inculcate, 186  
Inculpable, 409  
Inculpate, 59

Indecorous, 208  
Indefatigable, 109  
Indemnify, 104  
**Independence, 209–10**  
Indicant, 211  
**Indicate, 210–11**  
Indict, 93  
Indigenous, 171  
Indigent, 295  
Indiscreet, 223  
Indiscriminate, 223, 281  
Indite, 422  
Indoctrinate, 235  
Indolent, 401  
Indomitable, 109  
Indubitable, 24  
Indurate, 110  
Ineffable, 407  
Ineluctable, 212  
Inept, 355  
Inert, 244  
Inertia, 357  
Inescapable, 212  
**Inevitable, 212–13**  
Inexorable, 212  
Inextricable, 79  
Inextricably, 392  
Infallible, 404  
Inference, 222  
Infernal, 143  
Infidel, 320  
Infidelity, 197  
Infinite, 390  
Infinitesimal, 358  
Infirmary, 414  
Influenza, 199

Infundibular, 348  
Infuse, 218  
Ingenious, 373  
Ingénue, 271  
Ingenuous, 165  
Inherent, 269  
Inimical, 280  
Iniquity, 144, 154  
Initiatory, 46  
Innocuous, 189  
Innominate, 267  
Innuendo, 326  
Inordinate, 147  
Inquietude, 15  
Inquisitorial, 15  
**Insane, 213–15**  
Inscrutable, 264  
Insensate, 401  
**Insensitive, 215–16**  
Insidious, 100  
Insinuate, 218, 327  
Insipid, 121  
Insolent, 217  
Insouciant, 402  
Insubordinate, 37  
Insufficiency, 148  
Insular, 220  
**Insult, 216–18**  
Insuperable, 113, 124  
Intangible, 407  
Integral, 285, 416  
Integrate, 221  
Intelligentsia, 234  
Intemperate, 402  
Intercalate, 218  
Interdict, 75, 378



Interject, 218  
Interminably, 137  
Internecine, 156, 188  
Interpellate, 31  
Interpolate, 218  
Interpose, 219  
Intersperse, 219  
Intractable, 109  
Intransigent, 109  
Intrepid, 60  
Intrinsic, 141  
**Introduce, 218–19**  
Intromit, 219  
Inurement, 379  
Inutility, 420  
Invective, 2  
Inveigh, 78, 117  
Inveigle, 35, 287  
Inveterate, 49  
Invidious, 133  
Inviolable, 416  
Invocation, 31  
Involute, 79  
Iota, 359  
Irascible, 12, 205  
Irremediable, 89  
Irrevocable, 212  
Isochronous, 87  
**Isolated, 220–21**  
Isolationism, 292  
Isomorphic, 353  
Isthmus, 394  
Iteration, 323  
Itinerant, 397  
Jacinth, 70  
Jackanapes, 25

Jactitation, 145  
Jaded, 121  
Jambalaya, 162  
Jaundiced, 160  
Jaunt, 397  
Jawbone, 287  
Jeune, 203, 355  
Jihad, 320  
Jingoism, 293  
Jocose, 184  
Jocund, 184  
Journeyman, 355  
Jubilant, 335  
**Judgment, 222–23**  
Judicature, 37  
Judicious, 309  
Juggernaut, 188, 297  
Julienne, 163  
Junta, 293  
Jurisprudence, 236  
Juvenescence, 278  
Juvenilia, 47, 271  
Juxtaposition, 393  
Kabbalism, 320  
Kaffeeklatsch, 180  
Kelvin, 32  
Kenning, 421  
Kibosh, 370  
**Kill, 224–25**  
**Kind, 226–27**  
Kinesiology, 338  
Kismet, 64  
Kitsch, 420  
Knavish, 118  
Knell, 363  
Knowledge, 227–29

Kowtow, 379  
Kyphosis, 199  
Labanotation, 27  
Laborious, 418  
Labyrinth, 114  
Lachrymose, 334  
Lackadaisical, 402  
Lackluster, 121  
Laconic, 85, 367  
Lactation, 251  
Laggard, 402  
Lagniappe, 173  
Laissez faire, 293  
Laity, 320  
Lambaste, 95  
Lamentation, 261  
Lampoon, 332  
**Language, 230–33**  
Languid, 414  
Lapidary, 90  
Lapidate, 225  
Lapping, 128  
Largesse, 173  
Lascivious, 150, 346  
Lassitude, 356, 414  
Latency, 370  
Laud, 2  
Laudable, 84  
Laureate, 196  
Lax, 38  
**Learn, 234–36**  
**Legal, 236–38**  
Legerdemain, 164  
Legible, 423  
Leitmotif, 28  
Leonine, 10

Lese majesty, 293  
Lethargic, 356  
Levant, 170  
Leverage, 287  
Leviathan, 57  
Levity, 184  
Lexicography, 241  
Lexicon, 231, 241  
Liaison, 253, 315, 393  
Libel, 326  
Libertine, 259  
Libration, 32  
Libretto, 28  
Licentious, 259  
Lien, 128  
Lilliputian, 358  
Limicolous, 171  
**Limited, 238–39**  
Limn, 422  
Lineage, 316  
Lionize, 331  
Lissome, 191  
Litany, 337  
Literati, 234  
**Literature, 240–43**  
Lithe, 191  
Litigious, 237  
Litter, 413  
Littoral, 395  
Liturgy, 321  
**Live, 243–44**  
Livid, 9  
Locution, 365  
**Logical, 245–46**  
Logistics, 283  
Logomachy, 24

Logy, 356  
Loquacious, 384  
Lothario, 345  
Lotus-eater, 400  
Love, 246–48  
Lubricious, 346  
Lucid, 215, 405  
Luciferous, 405  
Lucre, 128  
Lucubrate, 417  
Ludicrous, 213  
Lugubrious, 262  
Luminary, 234  
Lummox, 372  
Lumper, 90  
Lunate, 348  
Lupine, 10  
Luthier, 90  
Luxurious, 342  
Lyceum, 234  
Lysis, 251  
Macabre, 44  
Macerate, 66  
Machiavellian, 101  
Machination, 340  
Machismo, 249  
Macrobiotic, 125  
Maelstrom, 404  
Magisterial, 38  
Magna Carta, 293  
Magnanimous, 226  
Magnate, 297  
Magniloquent, 146  
Magnum, 58  
Magnum opus, 241  
Mahout, 90

Maladroit, 160  
Malaise, 192  
Malapropism, 365  
Malcontent, 78, 185  
Malefaction, 237  
Maleficence, 144, 188  
Malevolent, 227  
Malicious, 143  
Malign, 217  
Malignant, 227  
Malingering, 39  
Malleable, 67  
Malnourished, 127  
Manciple, 90  
Mandamus, 237  
Mandate, 75  
Maniacal, 213  
Manifest, 195  
Manifest destiny, 270, 293  
Manifesto, 278  
Manumission, 237  
Maraud, 381, 396  
Marginalize, 420  
Marshal, 73  
Marsupial, 12  
Martial, 38  
Martyr, 225  
Martyrdom, 52  
Marzipan, 162  
**Masculine, 249–50**  
Masterpiece, 3  
Masticate, 124  
Materiel, 140  
Maturate, 182  
Maudlin, 351  
Maunder, 263

Maverick, 209  
Maximal, 55  
McCarthyism, 293  
Mea culpa, 257  
Meander, 396  
**Medicine, 250–52**  
**Meeting, 253–54**  
Megalomania, 214  
Melee, 80  
Meliorism, 206  
Mellifluous, 380  
Melodist, 91  
Memoir, 255  
Memorabilia, 255  
**Memory, 254–56**  
Mendacity, 399  
Mendicant, 31  
Menial, 177  
Mensal, 388  
Mentat, 234  
Mercurial, 67  
Meretricious, 34  
Meridian, 170  
Meritocracy, 175  
Meritorious, 197  
Mesmerist, 91  
Metachromatism, 70  
Metallism, 128  
Metamorphose, 66  
Metamorphosis, 17  
Metaphor, 353, 365  
Metaphysical, 18, 264  
Metaphysics, 392  
Metastasize, 252  
Mete, 74  
Meticulous, 61

Métier, 417  
Miasma, 192  
Microcosm, 359  
Micturate, 252  
Mien, 17  
Migraine, 199  
Milieu, 141  
Milquetoast, 107  
Mimesis, 28  
Minimalism, 28  
Minion, 375  
Miniscule, 358  
Minister, 194  
Minutiae, 359  
Mire, 274  
Misandry, 190  
Misanthrope, 190, 317  
Miscellany, 73  
Miscible, 69  
Misconstrue, 156  
Miscreant, 143  
Misnomer, 266  
Misogamy, 190  
Misogyny, 190  
Missive, 421  
**Mistake, 256–57**  
Mitigate, 194  
Mnemonic, 255  
**Moderation, 257–59**  
Modernism, 28  
**Modest, 259–60**  
Modicum, 359  
Modus vivendi, 243  
Moiety, 285, 417  
Moil, 417  
Mollify, 4



Monastic, 6, 258  
Moniker, 266  
Monistic, 50  
Monochromatic, 70  
Monograph, 241  
Monolatry, 321  
Monolithic, 57  
Monomania, 138  
Mononucleosis, 199  
Monophobia, 6, 288  
Monotheism, 321  
Montage, 28  
Moot, 403  
Morass, 114  
Moratorium, 370, 390  
Mores, 52  
Moribund, 136  
Morose, 334  
Morphology, 339  
Mortification, 306  
Mortify, 132  
Mossback, 276  
Mot juste, 365  
Motley, 285  
Mountebank, 99  
**Mourn, 261–62**  
**Movement, 262–63**  
Mulct, 120  
Muliebrity, 250  
Mull, 380  
Multifaceted, 286  
Multifarious, 286  
Multilateral, 292  
Mundane, 121  
Munificent, 179  
Muniment, 104

Murrey, 70  
Muse, 28, 391  
Muster, 73  
Mutability, 65  
Mute, 385  
Myalgia, 251  
Myasthenia, 251  
Myopia, 299  
Myopic, 223, 268  
**Mysterious, 264–65**  
Nadir, 44, 56  
Naïve, 203  
Naïveté, 165  
**Name, 266–67**  
Nanosecond, 339, 390  
Narcissistic, 248  
Narcolepsy, 200  
Narcoma, 357  
**Narrow-minded, 268–69**  
Nascent, 47  
Natatorium, 290  
Nationalism, 294  
Natter, 384  
Nebulous, 82  
**Necessary, 269–71**  
Necessitate, 270  
Necrology, 241  
Necromancy, 298  
Necrophilia, 345  
Nefarious, 143, 410  
Negate, 117  
Negligible, 58  
Nemesis, 81, 329  
Neoconservative, 294  
Neolithic, 388  
Neologism, 231

Neonatal, 47  
Neophyte, 48, 271  
Neoteric, 47  
Nepenthean, 255  
Ne plus ultra, 54  
Nepotism, 316  
Nescience, 42, 372  
Nettle, 13  
Neuralgia, 251  
Neutral, 72  
Nexus, 393  
Nictitate, 252  
Niggling, 12  
Nihilism, 52, 176  
Nihility, 142  
Nimiety, 146  
Nival, 171  
Noblesse oblige, 179  
Nodus, 114  
Noesis, 222  
Noisome, 188  
Nom de guerre, 266  
Nom de plume, 266  
Nomenclature, 231  
Nominal, 267, 358  
Nomology, 237  
Non compos mentis, 213  
Nondescript, 281  
Nonentity, 406  
Nonexistence, 142  
Nonfeasance, 152, 237  
Nonillion, 8  
Nonpareil, 55  
Nonpartisan, 153, 209  
Nonplussed, 82  
Non sequitur, 246

Nostrum, 361  
Notoriety, 327  
**Novice, 271–73**  
Noxious, 188  
Nuance, 111  
Nubile, 347  
Nugatory, 419  
Nullify, 420  
Numerology, 299  
Numismatist, 91  
Nyctophobia, 288  
Obdurate, 109  
Obeisance, 26, 196  
Obfuscate, 79, 82  
Obiter dictum, 278  
Objective, 153  
Objurgate, 95  
Oblation, 173  
Obligatory, 212  
Oblique, 165  
Oblivion, 256  
Obloquy, 2  
Obscurant, 82  
Obscure, 412  
Obsequious, 375  
Obsolescence, 420  
Obstinate, 109  
Obstreperous, 105  
**Obstruct, 274–75**  
Obtest, 31  
Obtrude, 219  
Obturate, 369  
Obtuse, 372  
Obviate, 270, 369  
Occidental, 172  
Occlude, 274

Occultation, 195  
Ocher, 70  
Ochlocracy, 175  
Ochlophobia, 181, 288  
Odiferous, 44  
Odious, 44  
Oenophile, 91  
Oeuvre, 241  
Offal, 413  
Offertory, 173  
Officious, 12, 38  
Ogle, 248  
**Old, 275–78**  
Oligarchy, 175  
Oligopoly, 128  
Olivaceous, 70  
Omnibus, 286  
Omnifarious, 57  
Omnipotent, 296, 415  
Omniscient, 228  
Omnivorous, 125  
Omophagous, 125  
Oneirocritic, 91  
Onerous, 113, 328  
Onomatopoeia, 231  
Ontology, 141  
Onus, 328  
Opalescence, 70  
Operose, 418  
Ophidian, 10  
Ophidiophobia, 288  
Ophiolatry, 321  
Opiate, 357  
Opine, 278  
**Opinion, 278–79**  
**Opposite, 279–81**

Oppressed, 166  
Opprobrious, 1  
Opprobrium, 133  
Oppugn, 23, 95  
Optimum, 55  
Opulent, 296  
Opus, 241  
Oracle, 235  
Orator, 365  
Ordain, 212  
Ordinance, 237  
**Ordinary, 281–82**  
Orectic, 108  
**Organize, 282–84**  
Orgiastic, 184  
Ornithology, 339  
Orotund, 385  
Orthodox, 50  
Oscillate, 88  
Oscitant, 356  
Osculate, 248  
Osmosis, 223  
Ossify, 68  
Ostentatious, 147  
Osteoporosis, 200  
Ostracize, 131  
Otiose, 303  
Overt, 195, 341  
Overweening, 304  
Ovine, 10  
Oviparous, 11  
Ovoid, 348  
Ovoviviparous, 11  
Oxblood, 70  
Oxidation, 68  
Oxymoron, 231

Pabulum, 122  
Pachydermatous, 215  
Pacify, 4  
Paladin, 104  
Palatable, 5  
Palaver, 365  
Paleography, 241  
Palimpsest, 242  
Palindrome, 232  
Palisade, 104  
Palliate, 252, 318  
Pallid, 70, 414  
Palpable, 265, 310  
Palter, 164  
Paltry, 419  
Panacea, 361  
Panache, 374  
Pandemic, 172  
Panderer, 345  
Panegyric, 197  
Pangaea, 171  
Pansophy, 227  
Pantheism, 321  
Pantheon, 321  
Paradox, 399  
Paragon, 54, 161  
Paralogize, 246  
Parameter, 302  
Paramount, 55  
Paramour, 247  
Paraphernalia, 140  
Paraphrase, 423  
Parasitic, 160  
Pariah, 40  
Parity, 354  
Parlance, 365

Parochial, 268  
Parsimonious, 61  
**Part, 285–86**  
Partiality, 300  
Parvenu, 272  
Passé, 374  
Passim, 422  
Pastiche, 28, 73  
Pastoral, 244  
Pathological, 214, 251  
Pathos, 335  
Patois, 365  
Patriarchy, 249  
Patronymic, 267  
Pauciloquent, 86  
Paucity, 359  
Pavid, 60  
Pavonine, 70  
Peccadillo, 410  
Peccant, 238  
Pecuniary, 129  
Pedagogue, 235  
Pedantic, 160  
Pedestrian, 121  
Peerless, 55  
Peevish, 97  
Pejorative, 217  
Pelagic, 172  
Penance, 306  
Penchant, 300  
Penitent, 314  
Pensive, 202  
Penurious, 295  
Penury, 128  
Perambulate, 396  
Percipient, 41, 202



Perdition, 137  
Perdurable, 351  
Perdure, 326  
Peregrinate, 396  
Peremptory, 75  
Perennial, 351  
Perfervid, 139  
Perfidious, 101, 338  
Perfunctory, 402  
Peripatetic, 397  
Periphery, 290  
Periphrasis, 366  
Perjure, 120  
Permeated, 135  
Permutation, 65  
Permute, 67  
Pernicious, 188  
Perorate, 384  
Perpetuate, 323  
Perpetuity, 137  
Perquisite, 197  
Perse, 71  
Persiflage, 45  
Perspicacious, 41  
Perspicacity, 404  
Perspicuity, 124  
**Persuade, 287–88**  
Pertinacious, 110  
Perturbation, 77  
Peruse, 405, 423  
Pervious, 41  
Petit four, 162  
Pettifoggery, 119  
Petulant, 98, 203  
Phalanx, 180  
Phallic, 347

Phantasmagoria, 202, 406  
Philander, 346  
Philanthropist, 179  
Philogyny, 247  
Philology, 232  
Philoprogenitive, 303  
Philosophic, 205  
Philter, 406  
Phlegmatic, 150  
**Phobia, 288–89**  
Phoenix, 406  
Photogenic, 18  
Phraseology, 385  
Physiognomy, 17  
Picayune, 419  
Pidgin, 232  
Pied, 71  
Pied-a-terre, 290  
Piety, 321  
Pilfer, 93  
Pillory, 332  
Piquant, 380  
Pique, 305  
Pittance, 359  
Placate, 4  
**Place, 289–91**  
Placid, 9  
Plaintive, 262  
Plangent, 334, 362  
Platitude, 337  
Platonic, 317  
Plaudit, 84, 218  
Playa, 395  
Pleasantries, 45  
Plenary, 416  
Plethora, 146

Pliable, 67  
Plutocracy, 175  
Polemic, 24

**Politics, 291–94**

Polity, 294  
Polyandry, 247  
Polychrome, 71  
Polydipsia, 126  
Polygamy, 247  
Polyglot, 232  
Polygyny, 247  
Polymath, 235  
Polyphagia, 126  
Polyphonic, 362  
Ponderous, 360  
Pontificate, 367

**Poor, 295–96**

Populism, 294  
Porcine, 11  
Portance, 49  
Portend, 298  
Portent, 412  
Poseur, 99  
Posit, 287

Postulate, 103  
Potable, 69  
Potentate, 297

**Powerful, 296–97**

Pragmatism, 52  
Prattle, 384  
Praxis, 49  
Precarious, 63  
Precatory, 32  
Precedence, 300  
Precept, 337  
Preceptor, 91

Preciosity, 62  
Precipitate, 275  
Précis, 242  
Preclude, 39  
Predestination, 52  
Predicament, 302  
**Predict, 298–99**  
Predilection, 300  
Preen, 305  
**Preference, 300–301**  
Premonition, 211  
Premonitory, 412  
Presage, 211, 411  
Prescience, 228  
Prescind, 6  
Prescribe, 239  
Presentiment, 299  
Prestidigitation, 265  
Presumptuous, 25  
Prevail, 379  
Prevaricate, 165  
Prevenient, 388  
Priapic, 249  
**Pride, 301–2**  
Primacy, 54  
Prima facie, 238  
Primordial, 47  
Probity, 409  
**Problem, 302–4**  
Proclivity, 300  
Procure, 382  
Prodigal, 62  
Prodigious, 57, 360  
**Productive, 304–5**  
Profane, 322  
Profess, 32

Proffer, 382  
Profligate, 62, 259  
Profundity, 404  
Profusion, 8  
Prognosticate, 298  
Proletarian, 295  
Prolific, 303  
Prolix, 367  
Prolusion, 48  
Promethean, 303  
Promiscuity, 223  
Promiscuous, 284  
Promontory, 395  
Promulgate, 42, 238  
Propagate, 182  
Propensity, 300  
Prophetic, 299  
Propinquity, 354  
Propitious, 64  
Propriety, 49  
Prosaic, 281  
Proscribe, 75  
Proselytize, 322  
Prosthesis, 325  
Prostrate, 376  
Protagonist, 242  
Protean, 67  
Protégé, 272  
Proverbial, 233  
Providential, 64  
Provincial, 268  
Provocative, 122  
Prurient, 347  
Psoriasis, 200  
Puce, 71  
Puerile, 203, 273

Pugilist, 157  
Pugnacious, 23, 98, 157  
Puissant, 415  
Pukka, 44  
Pulchritudinous, 34  
Punctilio, 386  
Punctilious, 62  
Pundit, 279  
**Punishment, 306–7**  
Purge, 135  
Puritanical, 268  
Purlieu, 171  
Purloin, 120  
Purport, 101  
Purview, 37  
Pusillanimous, 60  
Putrescent, 44  
Pyriform, 348  
Pyromancy, 299  
Pyromania, 93  
Quackery, 252  
Quaff, 124  
Quagmire, 302  
Quahog, 163  
Qualm, 314  
Quandary, 83  
Quantum, 8  
Quarantine, 221  
Quartermaster, 91  
Quash, 370  
Quell, 370  
Querulous, 78  
Quibble, 23  
Quid pro quo, 325  
Quiescent, 263  
Quietus, 137

Quintessence, 141  
Quintessential, 56  
Quirk, 214  
Quixotic, 214, 246, 308  
Quizzical, 82  
Quondam, 388  
Quotidian, 282, 388  
Raconteur, 366  
Raddle, 71  
Raillery, 45  
Raiment, 140  
Rambunctious, 139  
Rancor, 81, 190  
Rapacious, 178, 382  
Rapport, 316  
Rapprochement, 316  
Rarefied, 56  
**Rash, 308–9**  
Ratiocinate, 245, 361  
Rational, 215  
Raven, 125  
Raze, 187  
**Real, 309–10**  
Reassure, 133  
Rebut, 14  
Recalcitrant, 105  
Recant, 103  
Recapitulate, 86, 323  
Recension, 242  
Recession, 129  
Recherché, 44  
Recidivism, 276  
Reciprocate, 14, 329  
Reckless, 308  
Recluse, 7  
Recompense, 173

Recondite, 264, 405  
Recreant, 60  
Recrement, 413  
Rectify, 89  
Rectitude, 409  
Recumbent, 263, 356  
Recursive, 324  
Recusancy, 37, 106  
Redact, 131  
Red herring, 100  
Redintegrate, 416  
Redoubtable, 296  
Redress, 89  
**Reduce, 311–12**  
Redundant, 148  
Refection, 126  
Reflexive, 216  
Refute, 14  
Regal, 177  
Regime, 175  
Regimentation, 283  
Reginal, 177  
**Regret, 312–13**  
Reiterate, 384  
**Reject, 314–15**  
Rejoice, 78  
Rejoinder, 14  
**Relationship, 315–17**  
**Relieve, 318–19**  
**Religion, 319–23**  
Relinquish, 174, 379  
Reminisce, 277  
Reminiscence, 255  
Remiss, 328, 402  
Remittance, 129  
Remonstrate, 23, 78, 106



Remunerate, 127  
Rendezvous, 253  
Renege, 197  
Renitent, 105  
Renounce, 370  
Reparations, 129, 294, 305  
Repartee, 45  
Repast, 126  
**Repeat, 323–24**  
Repentance, 314  
Repertoire, 29  
**Replace, 324–26**  
Replete, 167  
Replicate, 323  
Repose, 263  
Reprehend, 95  
Reprehensible, 143  
Reprisal, 329  
Reprobate, 144  
Reprove, 95  
Repudiate, 313  
Repugnance, 190  
Repugnant, 36  
Repulsive, 36  
Reputable, 120  
**Reputation, 326–27**  
Requisite, 270  
Requite, 329  
Rescind, 131, 219  
Resolute, 110  
Resolution, 302  
Respite, 186, 390  
Resplendent, 177  
**Responsibility, 327–28**  
Restitution, 276  
Restive, 106, 205

Reticent, 260, 367  
Retinue, 180  
Retort, 14  
Retribution, 306, 329  
Retroactive, 277  
Retrograde, 388  
Revamp, 89  
Revel, 78  
Revelry, 168  
**Revenge, 329–30**  
**Reverence, 330–31**  
Revile, 1  
Revoke, 219  
Rhetoric, 232  
Ribald, 397  
**Ridicule, 332–33**  
Rife, 167  
Rigmarole, 271, 352  
Riparian, 395  
Ripen, 182  
Riposte, 15  
Risible, 169  
Rive, 417  
Rococo, 29  
Rogue, 119  
Roisterer, 184  
Roman à clef, 242  
Roseate, 71  
Roué, 259, 345  
Rubicon, 68  
Rue, 262  
Rueful, 314  
Ruminate, 391  
Rumination, 223  
Rusticate, 172  
Sabotage, 194

Saccharine, 380  
Sacrilegious, 322  
Sacrosanct, 322  
**Sad, 334–35**  
Sadistic, 143  
Sagacious, 223  
Sagacity, 228  
Sake, 163  
Salacious, 347  
Sallow, 71  
Salubrious, 191  
Salutary, 192  
Salve, 318  
Sanative, 192  
Sanctimonious, 101  
Sanction, 306  
Sanctioned, 94  
Sanctum, 290  
Sangfroid, 60  
Sanguine, 184  
Sans, 394  
Sapient, 228  
Sapphism, 345  
Sartorial, 374  
Satiare, 148  
Satiety, 167  
Saturnalia, 147, 346  
Saturnine, 185  
Satyr, 346  
Saunter, 396  
Savant, 235  
Savoir faire, 374, 404  
**Saying, 336–38**  
Scabrous, 347  
Scarify, 96  
Schadenfreude, 158

Schema, 283  
Schism, 316, 417  
Schizophrenia, 200  
Schmaltzy, 351  
Sciamachy, 157  
**Science, 338–39**  
Scintilla, 359  
Sciolism, 229  
Scion, 316  
Scoff, 332  
Scourge, 188  
Screed, 96  
Scrivener, 91  
Scrupulous, 62, 94  
Scurrilous, 1  
Seasoned, 204  
Seclude, 195  
**Secret, 340–41**  
Sectarian, 181, 269  
Secular, 323  
Sedentary, 263  
Sedition, 37, 106  
Sedulous, 110, 418  
Segregation, 220  
Segue, 371  
Selenography, 33  
Semantics, 232  
Semblance, 17  
Seminal, 47  
Seminivorous, 126  
Senescent, 388  
**Sensuous, 341–42**  
Sententious, 86, 367  
Sentient, 41  
Separatists, 209  
Sepia, 71

Sepulchral, 334  
Sequacious, 375  
Sequential, 284  
Sequester, 6  
Seraphic, 409  
Serendipity, 64  
Seriote, 282  
Seriocomic, 343  
**Serious, 343–44**  
Serpentine, 263  
Serriform, 348  
Servile, 375  
Sesquicentennial, 389  
Sesquipedalian, 233  
Severance, 417  
**Sex, 344–48**  
**Shape, 348–49**  
Shibboleth, 337  
**Short-lived, 350–51**  
Shun, 39  
Shunt, 67  
Sibilance, 363  
Sidereal, 33  
Sigmoid, 349  
**Silly, 351–52**  
Simian, 11  
**Similar, 353–54**  
Similitude, 354  
Simony, 321  
Simulacrum, 354  
Sinecure, 418  
Sinister, 143  
Sin qua non, 270  
Sinuous, 349  
Siren, 35  
Sisyphean, 137

**Skilled, 354–55**

Skulk, 397

Slander, 327

Slatternly, 62

**Sleepy, 356–57**

Slough, 313

Slovenly, 62

**Small, 358–60**

Smarmy, 119

Smattering, 359

Smitten, 248

Snafu, 83

Sobriquet, 267

Sociometry, 316

Sociopath, 214, 328

Soi-disant, 267

Soigné, 374

Sojourn, 244, 397

Solace, 261

Solecism, 20, 232, 257

Solferino, 71

Solicitude, 16, 403

Solidarity, 393

Soliloquy, 366

Solipsism, 52

Solitude, 220

Solstice, 390

**Solution, 360–61**

Somber, 169, 352

Somniferous, 356

Somniloquence, 385

Somnolent, 357

Sonorous, 362

Sophistic, 155

Sophistry, 24, 100

Sophomoric, 203

Soporific, 357  
Sorcery, 339  
Sordid, 115  
Sororicide, 224  
**Sound, 362–64**  
Sovereignty, 209  
Spadiceous, 71  
Spartan, 258  
Spawn, 225  
Specious, 155  
Spectral, 408  
Speculate, 391  
**Speech, 364–67**  
**Speed, 368–69**  
Spheroidal, 349  
Spirant, 363  
Spiritual, 264  
Splenetic, 98  
Spoonerism, 337  
Spurious, 155  
Spurn, 108, 313  
Spurrier, 91  
Squalor, 116  
Stagnation, 369  
Staid, 258, 343, 352  
Stalemate, 371  
Stalwart, 296  
Stanch, 370  
Statuesque, 35  
Status quo, 141  
Staunch, 50, 110  
Stentorian, 362  
Sternutation, 252  
Stigmatize, 22  
Stilted, 233  
Stipend, 129

Stipulate, 75  
Stoic, 216  
Stolid, 216, 343  
**Stop, 369–71**  
Straightforward, 123  
Straits, 114  
Stratify, 283  
Stratocracy, 175  
Strident, 362  
Strophe, 242  
Stultify, 352  
**Stupid, 371–73**  
**Style, 373–74**  
Stymie, 274  
Subaltern, 376  
Subjection, 210  
Subjugate, 376, 379  
Sublimate, 258  
Sublime, 177  
Subliminal, 41  
Submontane, 395  
Subreption, 155  
Subrogation, 325  
**Subservient, 375–76**  
Subside, 182  
Subsistence, 244  
Substantiate, 310  
Substantive, 408  
Subsume, 313  
Subterfuge, 100  
Subvention, 173  
Subversive, 106  
Succinct, 86  
Succor, 378  
Sui generis, 177  
Sully, 115



Sultry, 347  
Sumptuous, 177  
Supercilious, 25, 376  
Superfluous, 271  
Superlative, 56  
Supersede, 324  
Supine, 402  
Supplant, 325  
Suppliant, 32  
Supplicate, 31  
**Support, 377–78**  
Supposititious, 155, 325  
Suppress, 370  
Surcease, 371  
Surfeit, 147  
Surmise, 391  
Surreal, 408  
Surrealism, 29  
**Surrender, 378–79**  
Surreptitious, 340  
Susceptible, 216  
Suspensive, 371  
Susurration, 363  
Suzerainty, 37  
Swain, 247  
**Sweet, 379–80**  
Swill, 413  
Sybaritic, 342  
Sycophant, 84  
Syllabus, 283  
Syllogism, 245  
Sylvan, 172  
Symbiosis, 244, 393  
Symbiotic, 317  
Symmetrical, 87, 349  
Sympathetic, 98

Symposium, 253  
Synchronous, 389  
Syncretistic, 51  
Syncretize, 73  
Synecdoche, 232  
Synergy, 74  
Synoptic, 86  
Synthesis, 74  
Systemic, 416  
Syzygy, 33  
Tabescent, 192  
Tabula rasa, 53  
Tacit, 385, 405  
Taciturn, 86, 220  
Taint, 115  
**Take, 381–82**  
**Talk, 383–85**  
Tangelo, 163  
Tangible, 265  
Tantamount, 325  
Tantric, 347  
Taoism, 53  
Taphephobia, 289  
Tariff, 129  
Tarry, 398  
**Tasteful, 386–87**  
Tauriform, 349  
Tautology, 324  
Tawdry, 374  
Taxonomy, 339  
Technocracy, 175  
Teem, 8  
Teleological, 51, 322  
Temerity, 309  
Temper, 318  
Temperance, 258

Tempestuous, 76  
Tempo, 368  
Temporal, 389  
Temporize, 165, 390  
Tenacious, 110  
Tendentious, 288  
Tenderfoot, 272  
Tenet, 53  
Tenuous, 297  
Tepid, 139  
Terminal, 48  
Terrestrial, 172  
Tête-à-tête, 254  
Thaumaturge, 407  
Theocracy, 175  
Theosophy, 321  
Thespian, 29  
**Think, 387–88**  
Thwart, 194  
Timbre, 363  
**Time, 389–92**  
Tincture, 359  
Tintinnabulation, 363  
Titillate, 149  
Titular, 267, 297  
**Together, 392–94**  
Token, 243  
Tombolo, 395  
Tome, 242  
Toothsome, 342  
Topical, 239, 389  
Topography, 171  
**Topography, 394–95**  
Torpor, 357, 401  
Tort, 237  
Tortuous, 79

Totalitarianism, 176  
Tout, 103  
Tractable, 376  
Tractate, 242  
Traduce, 217  
Tragedian, 29  
Trammel, 275  
Tranquility, 77  
Transcendent, 177, 405  
Transfiguration, 17  
Transfix, 263  
Transgression, 93  
Transient, 389  
Transitory, 350  
Transmogrify, 18  
Transubstantiation, 65  
Travail, 418  
**Travel, 396–98**  
Treatise, 242  
Tremolo, 363  
Tremulous, 60  
Trenchant, 41  
Trepidation, 16, 60  
Tribulation, 335  
Trifling, 358  
Tripartite, 286  
Triptych, 29  
Trite, 121  
Triton, 407  
Triumphant, 152  
Tromp l’oeil, 29  
Truckle, 376  
Truculent, 1, 157  
**True, 398–99**  
Trumpery, 420  
Truncate, 360

Trypanophobia, 289  
Tryst, 247, 254  
Tumescant, 167  
Tumid, 304  
Tundra, 395  
Turgescant, 135  
Turpitude, 144  
Tutelage, 235  
Tyranny, 176  
Tyro, 272  
Ulterior, 195  
Ultimo, 389  
Umbra, 33  
Umbrage, 217  
Unalloyed, 80  
Unambivalent, 324  
Unassuming, 26, 178, 260  
Unbridled, 139  
**Uncaring, 400–403**  
Unceremonious, 205  
**Uncertain, 403–4**  
Unconscionable, 119  
Uncouth, 397  
Unctuous, 101  
Underdog, 152  
Underling, 375  
**Understanding, 404–5**  
Understate, 146  
Underwrite, 377  
Undisposed, 301  
Undulate, 263  
Unequivocal, 404  
Unerring, 156  
Ungainly, 161  
Unguent, 318  
Unhinged, 214

Unilateral, 394  
Unimpeachable, 24, 96  
Unitary, 416  
Unpretentious, 80  
Unreal, 406–8  
Unremitting, 371  
Unsavory, 327, 397  
Unseemly, 20, 208  
Unsuitable, 21, 208  
Untenable, 105  
Unwonted, 282  
Upbraid, 96  
Urbane, 374  
Urbanization, 171  
Ursine, 11  
Usurp, 38, 382  
Usurper, 382  
Usury, 129  
Utopia, 407  
Uxoricide, 93, 224  
Uxorious, 248  
Vacillate, 110  
Vacuity, 291  
Vacuous, 134, 168, 372  
Vagary, 284  
Vainglorious, 304  
Valetudinarian, 192  
Valetudinary, 193  
Valiant, 289  
Valorous, 60  
Valuation, 421  
Vapid, 122  
Variegated, 71  
Variorum, 243  
Vaticide, 93, 225  
Vaticinate, 298

Vegan, 126  
Vehement, 297  
Veil, 211  
Venal, 144  
Vendetta, 329  
Veneer, 17  
Venerable, 3  
Venerate, 331  
Venial, 166  
Veracious, 102, 156, 410  
Veracity, 399  
Verbiage, 422  
Verbose, 423  
Verdant, 71  
Verecund, 107, 260  
Verisimilitude, 399  
Verism, 29  
Veritable, 310, 398  
Vermilion, 72  
Vernacular, 233  
Vernal, 389  
Vers libre, 422  
Verve, 138  
Vestigial, 30  
Vet, 310  
Vexation, 13  
Viable, 310  
Viand, 126  
Vicariously, 201, 325  
Vicissitudes, 66  
Vignette, 243  
Vilify, 217  
Vindicate, 105, 330  
Vindictive, 330  
Virile, 250  
Virtu, 30

Virtuoso, 355  
**Virtuous, 409–10**  
Virulent, 2  
Visage, 18  
Vitiate, 187  
Vitriol, 190  
Vitriolic, 2  
Vituperative, 2  
Vivacious, 244  
Vivify, 243  
Viviparous, 11  
Vociferous, 76  
Voluble, 385  
Voluminous, 167  
Voluptuous, 342  
Voracious, 126, 178  
Vox populi, 279  
Vulpine, 11  
Waggish, 169  
Wan, 193  
Wanderlust, 397  
Wane, 135  
Wangle, 102  
Wanton, 347  
**Warn, 411–12**  
Waspish, 98  
**Waste, 412–13**  
Wayfaring, 398  
**Weak, 414–15**  
Weal, 192  
Weltschmerz, 53, 335  
Wend, 397  
Whelp, 272  
Whilom, 277  
**Whole, 415–17**  
Wile, 100



Winnow, 131  
Winsome, 35  
Wistful, 108  
Wither, 182  
Witticism, 337  
Wizardry, 339  
Wizened, 277  
Woeful, 335  
**Work, 417–18**  
**Worthless, 418–21**  
Wrest, 382  
**Writing, 421–23**  
Wunderkind, 272  
Xanadu, 407  
Xanthic, 72  
Xanthippe, 98  
Xenogamy, 339  
Xenophobia, 289  
Xenophobic, 191  
Xiphoid, 349  
Yare, 368  
Yaw, 263  
Yawp, 77  
Yearling, 272  
Yen, 107  
Yeoman, 418  
Yeshiva, 235  
Yeti, 407  
Yokel, 372  
Yore, 276  
Zealot, 53  
Zeitgeist, 53  
Zenith, 55  
Zionism, 294  
Zoomorphic, 11  
Zymurgy, 68

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