

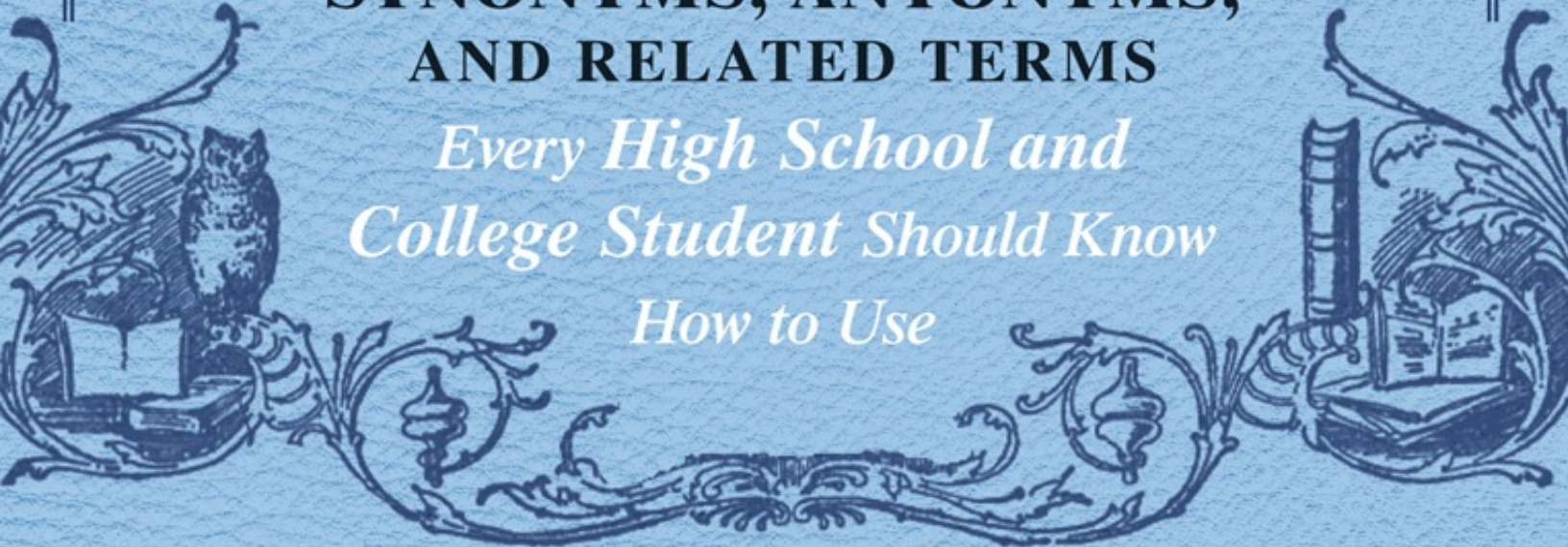
**ROGET'S THESAURUS**  
of  
**WORDS**  
for  
*Students*



DAVID OLSEN, MICHELLE BEVILACQUA,  
JUSTIN CORD HAYES,  
& BURTON JAY NADLER

**HELPFUL, DESCRIPTIVE, PRECISE  
SYNONYMS, ANTONYMS,  
AND RELATED TERMS**

*Every High School and  
College Student Should Know  
How to Use*





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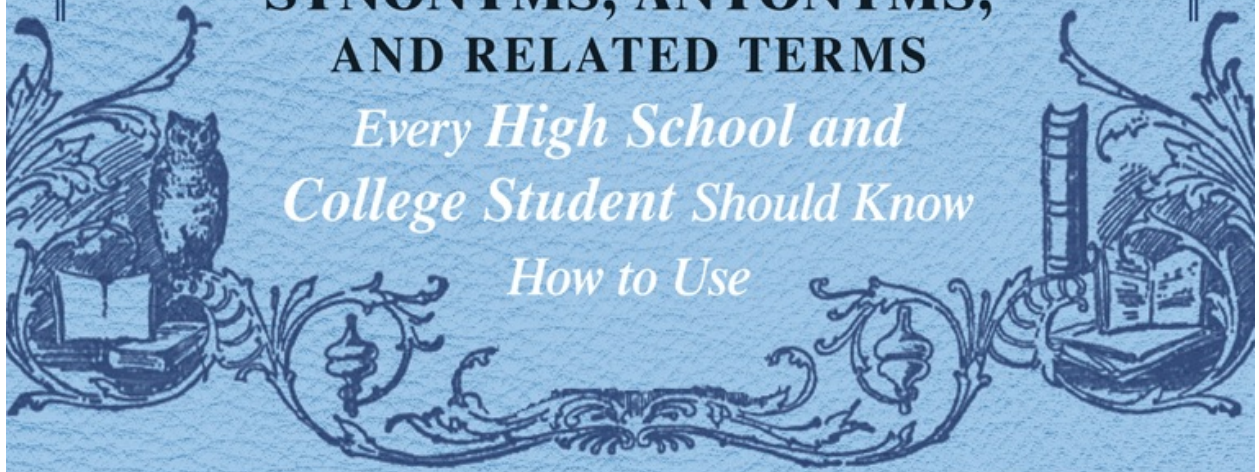


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# Roget's Thesaurus of Words for Students



Helpful, Descriptive, Precise Synonyms,  
Antonyms, and Related Terms Every High  
School and College Student Should Know  
How to Use

David Olsen, Michelle Bevilacqua, Justin Cord Hayes,  
& Burton Jay Nadler

**A**adamsmedia  
Avon, Massachusetts

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# Introduction

No matter where you're at in school, the words you know can help you. They'll make your papers better and your oral presentations stronger and more powerful. They'll help you ace exams. And when, after college, you start looking for a job, they'll make you a better candidate, qualified for higher-paying jobs. Having a good vocabulary pays off—literally!

That's where *Roget's Thesaurus of Words for Students* comes in. Unlike some thesauruses you may have seen before, this one does more than simply list words that are related to the main entry. Instead, the book you're holding gives you definitions of the words so you'll know exactly what they mean, and examples so you can see how the words are used in sentences. For instance, if you're working on an English paper and want to find a term related to the word **context**, look up the entry for **context** in this book. There (among many other words) you'll find the word **etymology** and an entry that reads: "The study of word origins and how words have evolved into their current forms or meanings. The lineage of a word; description of origin and how the word came into its current use. *Those who have studied Greek or Latin can make educated and often correct guesses regarding a word's ETYMOLOGY.*" You can imagine how impressed your English teacher is going to be when she sees that you not only know a word like that ... but you can also use it correctly.

For each key word you'll find a list of related words sorted by their part of speech: adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, and antonyms. Go through them until you find the one best suited to the sentence you're crafting. Highlight ones that you'll want to use in future projects.

No matter what field of study you eventually choose, words are important. Even mathematicians and computer programmers have to be able to explain

what they're doing in clear, understandable, precise language. Sure, some of these words are going to be new to you and are going to sound strange—even weird and exotic. But that's the fun of learning new words; you find new ways to express yourself.

The words in this thesaurus have been chosen with an eye to expanding your vocabulary and making it easier for you to express yourself in well-developed language. Using sophisticated and interesting words such as **ameliorate** (“To improve or upgrade; to make better or put right”), **circumvent** (“To avoid by means of artful contrivance; to maneuver around; bypass”), or **onomatopoeia** (“The naming of a thing by creating a vocal imitation of its sound”) marks you out as someone teachers will watch and encourage.

This book is a tool that can help you not only to do well in school but to excel; use it well and wisely and you'll go to the head of the class!



# A

## 1. Abstemious

(*ab-STEE-me-us*), adjective

Not overindulgent in food or drink; moderate in terms of consumption.

---

### ADJECTIVES

**culinary** (*KYOO-lih-nare-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.*

**curative** (*KYOOR-uh-tiv*). Able to restore health; curing; serving to provide a remedy.

*The CURATIVE regimen of the spa involved diet and hot baths, as well as exercise and massage.*

**haggard** (*HAG-urd*). Showing signs of tiredness, anxiety, or hunger. Wild and unruly in appearance.

*After a twelve-hour shift at the hospital, anyone would look HAGGARD.*

**herbivorous** (*her-BIV-er-us*). Eating only grass and plants, not meat.

*Even HERBIVOROUS dinosaurs would have been intimidating by virtue of their size, though not necessarily their eating habits.*

### NOUNS



**libation** (*lie-BAY-shun*). An alcoholic beverage offered or accepted in celebration.

*Some think it is adult to consume a LIBATION every evening, and others think it quite immature.*

## VERBS

**abash** (*uh-BASH*). To make someone, including yourself, feel ashamed, embarrassed, or uncomfortable; to cause someone to lose composure.

*Traditionally, high school athletes ABASH new team members; some call it freshman hazing.*

**abjure** (*ab-JOOR*). To renounce, repudiate, or give up one's previously held beliefs; to solemnly swear off or recant.

*When taking the U.S. oath of citizenship, one must ABJURE allegiance to any other nation.*

## ANTONYMS

**epicure** (*EH-pih-kyoor*). Someone with a refined taste for food and drink; a connoisseur.

*To an EPICURE, a fast food restaurant is an affront and not worthy of discussion.*

**garnish** (*GAHR-nihsh*). To add something to food or drink to enhance flavor or appearance; to decorate something, usually food, with an ornament.

*They would GARNISH his wedding cakes with rose blossoms, enhancing the cakes' appearance as well as fragrance.*

**gastronomy** (*gas-TRAH-nah-mee*). The art or appreciation of preparing and eating good food.

*Those knowledgeable in GASTRONOMY don't consider hot dogs bought and eaten at a sporting event to be epicurean delights—but true sports fans do.*

**haute cuisine** (OAT kwi-ZEEN). Traditional, classic, high-quality French cooking or general gourmet preparation of food. Can refer to the preparation of meals like artwork.

*Gourmets, though not necessarily gourmands, prefer HAUTE CUISINE because they believe more in quality than in quantity.*

**imbibe** (im-BYB). To drink something, especially alcoholic or alcoholic beverages; to take in or absorb something into the mind, like an idea.

*Although it sounds much better to say “IMBIBE” and “inebriated,” you might as well say “booze it up” and “drunk.”*

## 2. Achievement

(uh-CHEEV-muhnt), noun

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

---

### ADJECTIVES

**venerable** (VEN-err-uh-bull). An individual or institution that is respected and revered, sometimes because of achievement, intelligence, or character, but just as often as a result of being around a long time.

*“Is the babe young? When I behold it, it seems more VENERABLE than the oldest man.” —Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist*

### 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-TAYN-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-nence). Superiority or outstanding notability; having great achievements or high rank.

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

**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.*

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

*“When love and skill work together, expect a MASTERPIECE.” —John Ruskin, English art critic*

## ANTONYMS

**debacle** (dih-BAH-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. Acrophobia

(ak-ruh-FO-bee-uh), noun

An irrational fear of high places, characterized by feelings of dread, danger, and helplessness.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**deleterious** (deh-luh-TEE-ree-us). With harmful or damaging effect on something or someone. As a legal term, communicates the assessment of harm, injury, or loss.

*It is now accepted as fact that smoking is DELETERIOUS to one's health as well as highly addictive, but year after year more teenagers take it up.*

**queasy** (KWEE-zee). Feeling ill in the stomach, as if on the verge of vomiting; easily nauseated. Causing a feeling of uneasiness or nausea.

*Driving a long distance on the bumpy road made almost everyone on the team bus feel QUEASY.*

## NOUNS

**aberration** (ab-uh-RAY-shun). A departure from what is normal, desirable, or expected; divergence from a moral standard. Also, a defect in a lens or mirror that causes a distorted image.

*"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*

**anathema** (uh-NATH-uh-muh). Someone or something that is greatly disliked, detested, or shunned; one that is cursed, denounced, or excommunicated by a religious authority.

*The events of the Holocaust are ANATHEMA to all moral and civilized human beings.*



## VERBS

**debilitate** (*dih-BILL-uh-tayt*). To make weak or feeble.

*ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, DEBILITATES those who suffer from it, and it is ultimately fatal.*

**palpitate** (*PAL-puh-tayt*). To have the heart beat in an irregular or unusual way, because of a medical condition, exertion, fear, or anxiety.

*Those who have been in life-and-death situations say that they heard their hearts PALPITATE and actually tasted fear.*

## ANTONYMS

**curative** (*KYOOR-uh-tiv*). Able to restore health; curing; serving to provide a remedy.

*The CURATIVE regimen of the spa involved diet and hot baths, as well as exercise and massage.*

**palliative** (*PAL-ee-a-tiv*). Calming; capable of soothing anxieties or other intense emotions. Alleviating pain and symptoms without eliminating the cause.

*The little girl found her mother's singing of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" PALLIATIVE even during times when she was most upset.*

**terra firma** (*TARE-uh FER-muh*). Solid ground; not water or air. From the Latin for "firm ground."

*After the harrowing airline flight, the passengers were so grateful to be on TERRA FIRMA that they kissed the ground.*

## 4. Aggrandize

(*uh-GRAN-dyz*), verb

To increase the size, scope, power, wealth, status, or influence of someone or something; to exaggerate, put on a false front, and make something look greater

and grander than it really is.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**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.*

**faux** (*FOH*). Fake; phony; artificial.

*She wore a cheap secondhand dress and a FAUX pearl necklace made out of white beads.*

**ostentatious** (*ah-sten-TAY-shuss*). Pretentious; presented in a showy manner so as to impress others; meant to flaunt 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*

**unbridled** (*un-BRY-duld*). Without limitations or boundaries; uncontrolled and unrestrained.

*Rick's UNBRIDLED fury at being denied a refund on his tuition was a sight to behold.*

**vainglorious** (*vayn-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

**hyperbole** (*hy-PUR-buh-lee*). Extravagant overstatement.

*"The final key to the way I promote is bravado. I play to people's fantasies. People may not always think big themselves, but they can still get very excited by*

*those who do. That's why a little HYPERBOLE never hurts.” —Donald Trump, American entrepreneur*

**jactitation** (*jak-ti-TAY-shun*). A false boast, especially one that is harmful to others.

*Beatrice tried impress her classmates by telling them her last name was Kennedy. However, her JACTITATION was discovered and her peers returned to ignoring her.*

## VERBS

**bloviate** (*BLOH-vee-ayt*). To speak pompously and at length.

*Maxwell BLOVIATES about his “excellent” test scores, but everyone knows he cheated outrageously.*

## ANTONYMS

**diffident** (*DIFF-ih-dent*). Uncertain or unsure 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.*

**laconic** (*luh-KAWN-ik*). Of few words; expressing oneself with an economy of words.

*Harold may be LACONIC, but when he does speak, he is worth listening to.*

## 5. Agree

(*uh-GREE*), verb

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

---

## ADJECTIVES

**amenable** (uh-MEE-nuh-bull). Agreeable to suggestions; likely to cooperate; accountable for actions.

*Students were AMENABLE to a new dress code if they were asked to give input when it was being decided.*

**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 statesman and literary figure*

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

*After failing his midterms, Ron had two options, neither very PALATABLE: drop the course or improve his study skills.*

## NOUNS

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

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

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

*Charlene realized too late that her policy of APPEASEMENT might please Warren, but it would not cause him 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 Bill and Hillary Clinton were part of a CONSPIRACY to assassinate Vincent Foster amounts to what, in an earlier day, would have been called seditious libel, Mr. Oliver.*

## VERBS

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

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

**acquiesce** (*ak-wee-ESS*). 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-kayt*). 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.*

## 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.*

## 6. Alone

(*uh-LOHN*), adjective, adverb

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

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## ADJECTIVES

**monastic** (*muh-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*). 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.*

## VERBS

**disenfranchise** (*diss-en-FRAN-chyz*). To deny someone a right or privilege; to make someone feel rejected and apart. Often specifically applied to voting rights.

*“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*

## ANTONYMS

**gregarious** (*grih-GAIR-ee-us*). Very friendly, sociable, outgoing, or cordial; happy in the company of others.

*GREGARIOUS individuals are often suspected of having hidden agendas when they are really just being friendly.*

See also: [Eliminate](#)

## 7. Ambiguity

(*am-bih-GYOO-ih-tee*), noun

Uncertainty; lack of clear definition.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**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*

**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*

**nebulous** (*NEB-yoo-luss*). 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.*

**opaque** (*oh-PAYK*). Impenetrable to light; hard to understand; obscure.

*“The bottom of being is left logically OPAQUE to us, as something which we simply come upon and find, and about which (if we wish to act) we should pause and wonder as little as possible.” —William James, American psychologist and philosopher*

## NOUNS

**zelig** (*ZEH-lig*). A chameleonlike person who seems omnipresent.



*The parvenus try so hard to be ZELIGS, blending in seamlessly at our functions, but we can always spot them for the intruders they are.*

## VERBS

**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.*

**vacillate** (*VASS-uh-layt*). To swing back and forth between two points.  
*“But modern character is inconstant, divided, VACILLATING, lacking the stone-like certitude of archaic man. . . .” —Saul Bellow, American author*

## ANTONYMS

**mot juste** (*MOW-zhoost*). 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.*

## 8. 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.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**anthropomorphic** (*an-thruh-puh-MOOR-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). Having characteristics of a lion.  
*Ben's LEONINE mane of hair makes most of his girlfriends jealous.*

**lupine** (LOO-pine). 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). Of snakes or 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-VIP-er-uss). 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-vye-VIP-er-uss). 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 whether to lay eggs or produce live young.*

**porcine** (PORE-sine). Reminiscent of, resembling, or pertaining to a pig.  
*Mike's constant description of his heavyset 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 bears.  
*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** (vye-VIP-er-uss). 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-MOOR-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-SOOP-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-BAY-shuss*). Characteristic of an herb; plantlike.

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

## 9. Annoy

(*uh-NOY*), verb

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

---

## 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.

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



## NOUNS

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

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

**vexation** (vek-SAY-shun). 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.*

**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*

## ANTONYMS

**affable** (AFF-uh-bull). Pleasant and polite; agreeable; warm.

*We believed that Grace had such an AFFABLE personality because she grew up with seven siblings.*

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

*Eleanor is far too COMPLAISANT with common strangers.*

## 10. Answer

(AN-ser), verb

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

---

### 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.*

### VERBS

**rebut** (ree-BUT). To provide a reply that opposes a position.  
*Bill never simply answered questions; he saw them as opportunities to REBUT other people's opinions.*

**reciprocate** (rih-SIP-ruh-kayt). 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 soiree.*

## ANTONYMS

**inquisitorial** (*in-kwiz-ih-TOR-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.*

## 11. Anxiety

(*ang-ZY-uh-tee*), noun

A state of unease, apprehension, or misgiving.

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## ADJECTIVES

**frenetic** (*fruh-NET-ik*). 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*

## 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-ruh-HEN-shun*). 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-PUNGK-shun*). Anxiety caused by regret for doing harm to another.

*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.*

## VERBS

**disquiet** (*diss-KWY-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.*

## 12. Appropriate

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

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

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## 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 shoot 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.*

**condign** (kon-DINE). 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** (jer-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 Alinksy, American activist*

## ADVERBS



**apropos** (ap-rih-POE). Appropriate, or at an opportune time.

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

## NOUNS

**decorum** (dih-KOR-um). Social propriety; dignified conduct.

*The teacher insisted that students observe strict DECORUM both in her class and outside of it.*

## 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** (gruh-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-KONG-groo-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** (SOLL-ih-siz-um). 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** (un-SOO-tuh-bull). 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** (komm-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-MAW-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** (KOUN-tih-nence). 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; with an oblique look 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-tyz). 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

(AR-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

**contentious** (kuhn-TEN-shuss). 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-tih-kul). 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-shuss). Always wanting to argue and debate every last thing; quarrelsome.

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

## 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** (*puh-LEH-mik*). 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** (*SOFF-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.*

## VERBS

**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-SPOSS-chuh-layt*). 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.

*Matt made a critical mistake when he OPPUGNED his rival’s credentials.*

**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-strayt*). To protest, object, or show disapproval.

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

## ANTONYMS

**incontestable** (*in-kuhn-TES-tuh-bull*). Inarguable because 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 UNIMPEACHABLE.*

## 15. 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 noo-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 is one of the town's best-kept secrets.*

**auteur** (*oh-TUR*). 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** (*uh-vahnt 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 AVANT-GARDE art 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 decor would make it a difficult resell.*

**chiaroscuro** (*kee-are-uh-SKURE-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-uh-niz-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-iz-um*). 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-uh-niz-um). 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-beh-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-niz-um*). 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-TAHZH*). 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; a haphazard collection of items from various sources.  
*Ronald’s carefully crafted sculpture looked like a PASTICHE to our untrained eyes.*

**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-tik*). 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** (*VAIR-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 of 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.*

## 16. Ask

(ASK), verb

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

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## 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.*

## 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.*

## VERBS

**adjure** (uh-JOOR). To command as if under oath; to solemnly entreat or request.

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

**beseech** (bih-SEECH). To beg, implore, or ask, with great politeness, fawning, or urgency.

*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-kyz). 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); appeal; supplicate.

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

**exhort** (ig-ZORT). To urge; 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; crave; to demand 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-ayt). 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-kayt). 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.*

## 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-FESS). To make an open declaration of; affirm.

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

## 17. ATTRACTIVE

(uh-TRAK-tihv), adjective

Pleasing in appearance or manner; alluring.

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## ADJECTIVES

**aesthetic** (ess-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-GY-ling). Charming; bewitching; enchanting.

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

**bucolic** (byoo-KALL-ik). 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-ik). 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-krih-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.*

## 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*

## VERBS

**captivate** (KAP-tih-vayt). 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-THRAWL). To charm or captivate; to put under strong influence; enchant.

*Garbo's performance was simply ENTHRALLING.*

**entice** (en-TYSS). 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.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**repugnant** (rih-PUG-nunt). 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** (rih-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.*

## 18. Augur

(AW-ger), verb

To predict or foretell the future.

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## ADJECTIVES

**arcane** (ar-KAYN). Strange and mysterious; understood by only a few.

*Bill’s ARCANE knowledge of all Lexus models and their accessories is just a waste of gray matter.*

**auspicious** (aw-SPISH-us). Promising; seemingly favorable or likely to be accompanied by good fortune; having encouraging signals or reasons for

optimism at the beginning of an undertaking.

*The blind date did not have an AUSPICIOUS start because Max kept calling his friend's cousin "Mallory" instead of "Mary."*

**inscrutable** (in-SKROO-tuh-bull). Mysterious and not easy to understand.

*The Mona Lisa's INSCRUTABLE smile has inspired eclectic emotions and thoughts in those privileged to view the painting.*

**premonitory** (preh-MAWN-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.*

## NOUNS

**bellwether** (BELL-weh-thur). A leading indicator or important factor in determining a course of action or outcome.

*The fact that Robert got thrown out of Groton and Exeter was a BELLWETHER for his lackadaisical years at Dartmouth.*

**harbinger** (HAR-bin-ger). 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 sign that something 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.*

## VERBS

**betoken** (bee-TOE-kin). To foreshadow; to indicate something is about to occur.

*For Mary and Paul, the breakdown of their new Porsche while they were still two hours away from their summer home BETOKENED a disastrous vacation.*

## ANTONYMS

**belie** (*bee-LYE*). To contradict or misrepresent.

*Luther's mild-mannered, almost sickly appearance BELIED his physical conditioning and surprising strength.*

**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.*

## 19. 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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## ADJECTIVES

**contumacious** (*kon-too-MAY-shuss*). 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** (*madj-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.*

## NOUNS

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

*The student government turned into an inefficient BUREAUCRACY, not a group representing the interests of its constituents.*

**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-JEM-uh-nee). 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-uh-rahr-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-dih-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** (SOO-zer-en-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*

## VERBS

**arrogate** (AIR-uh-gayt). 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** (dair-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** (LAKS). Not strict, tight, or tense; not easily controlled; lacking attention to detail.

*After the investigation it was concluded that Bob had been LAX when inspecting the bridge for structural faults.*

## 20. Avoid

(uh-VOID), verb

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

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## NOUNS

**pariah** (puh-RYE-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.*

## 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-gur). 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.*

## **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*

## 21. 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-SURN-ing). 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.*

**perspicacious** (*pur-spih-KAY-shuss*). Characterized by acute 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-tee-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-ayt). To proclaim or announce.

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

**apprise** (uh-PRYZ). 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-gayt). To put forward publicly; to announce in an official capacity.

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

## ANTONYMS

**heedless** (HEED-liss). 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-ehns). Ignorance; lack of knowledge.

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

# B

## 22. Banter

(BAN-ter), noun

Good-natured teasing or light, playful remarks.

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### NOUNS

**badinage** (bad-ih-NAHZH). Light-hearted banter, not meant to be taken seriously.

*“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-shuss-ness). 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** (RAY-luh-ree). 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-er-TEE). Conversation characterized by witty banter.

*It was amusing to watch the girls practice their REPARTEE, hoping not to be embarrassed on their first dates.*

## ANTONYMS

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

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

**disputatious** (diss-pyoo-TAY-shuss). 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.*

## 23. Bathos

(BAY-thoss), noun

A sudden change in mood from the solemn and serious to a more light-hearted, relaxed, and humorous outlook. Also, insincere pathos.

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## ADJECTIVES

**effervescent** (ef-ur-VESS-ent). Bubbly; upbeat; cheerful; possessing a positive attitude and joyful personality.

*After getting the acceptance letter from Cornell, Sabrina was EFFERVESCENT and celebrated with a trip to Neiman Marcus.*

## 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.*

## VERBS

**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*

## ANTONYMS

**dyslogistic** (diss-luh-JISS-tik). Showing disapproval or censure.

*We gave Elizabeth DYSLOGISTIC glances when she told us she had decided to stop shopping at Cartier.*

**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*

## 24. Behave

(bee-HAYV), verb

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

react.

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## ADJECTIVES

**inveterate** (in-VET-er-it). Never changing; persisting by habit.

*“Take all the garden spills, / INVETERATE, / prodigal spender / just as summer goes.” —Hilda Doolittle, American poet and memoirist*

## 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** (PORT-ens). 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-uh-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*

## 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.*

**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** (*diss-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**dysfunctional** (*diss-FUNK-shun-uhl*). Characterized by abnormal functioning, or poor interpersonal behavior within a group.  
*Charlie always blames his rotten behavior on being the product of a DYSFUNCTIONAL family.*

## 25. 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

**existential** (*eggs-ih-STEN-shul*). Pertaining to ideas, beliefs, and philosophies that support the concept of 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-krih-TIH-stik*). Pertaining to 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-ih-kuhl*). Concerning the belief 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-muh-niz-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-muh-niz-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** (*hy-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, and 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-uh-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 Harpers 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 theory that only the self exists; a complete absorption in oneself.

*The professor's egotistical and self-centered philosophy promoted the advantages of SOLIPSISM, as opposed to interest in the concerns of other people.*

**tabula rasa** (TAB-yuh-luh RAW-suh). Something that is pristine and new without any preconceptions or existing features. Literally, a clean slate; in psychological terms, the mind before it takes on any impressions from society or experience.

*Teaching kindergarten is rewarding, for each child's mind is in many ways a TABULA RASA.*

**Taoism** (DOW-is-um). A system of philosophy identified with the sage Lao Tzu, 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-shmertz). 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** (ZYT-gyst). 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** (uh-POSS-tuh-see). The act of abandoning, ignoring, or openly flouting 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*

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

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

## 26. Best

(BEST), adjective

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

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## ADJECTIVES

**efflorescent** (ef-luh-RESS-ehnt). 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-RELL). 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** (OP-tih-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** (PAIR-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** (RAIR-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** (soo-PURR-luh-tiv). The quality of something’s being the best in its class or quality.

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

## NOUNS

**apotheosis** (ah-paw-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** (ig-ZEM-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 EXEMPLAR 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** (*PAIR-uh-gone*). The very best example of something; a peerless model or pattern or perfection. Also, a perfect diamond or large pearl that is perfectly round.

*“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, *English dramatist*

**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 or climax of a thing or event; the point or apex.

*“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*

## ANTONYMS

**nadir** (*NAY-dur*). The lowest possible point; the bottom; a state of despair.

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

## 27. Blather

(*BLA-thur*), verb

To talk nonsense in an inane manner and at great length; to gabble or talk ridiculously.

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## ADJECTIVES

**garrulous** (*GAR-uh-lus*). Excessively talkative; using too many words.

*Drunks are often described as GARRULOUS, since they tend to latch onto the nearest person and start babbling incoherently.*

**loquacious** (loh-KWAY-shuss). Tending to talk a great deal; prone to nervous chatter.

*It was difficult to tell whether Julia's LOQUACIOUS behavior was caused by nervousness or whether she always spoke incessantly.*

## NOUNS

**balderdash** (BALL-der-dash). Senseless or nonsense talking or writing; a ridiculous, senseless, or worthless idea or suggestion.

*How embarrassing to have your favorite English teacher call your essay BALDERDASH.*

**bombast** (BOM-bast). Speech or writing full of long and pretentious words, usually meant to impress others; haughty, overblown, or pompous language.  
*The senatorial candidate did not instill confidence in voters, for his announcement speech seemed little more than BOMBAST.*

**grandiloquence** (gran-DIH-luh-kwence). A pompous or lofty manner of speech; language that is full of long, pretentious words. Also, an attitude of haughtiness.  
*Politicians in love with their own GRANDILOQUENCE may not always be good at solving problems and keeping campaign promises.*

## VERBS

**bluster** (BLUSS-ter). To speak loudly, arrogantly, and boisterously; to behave in a bullying way; to blow in loud gusts, as in the wind.  
*Senators filibuster while bullies BLUSTER, and both verbal strategies yield little action.*

**confabulate** (*kuhn-FAB-yuh-layt*). To chat or discuss something informally; to indulge in engaging, extravagant storytelling. Also, to invent and believe stories to fill mental gaps due to memory loss or dementia.

*The two drivers stopped the flow of traffic east and west in order to CONFABULATE about who had caused the accident.*

**fulminate** (*FULL-mih-nayt*). To criticize or denounce loudly, dramatically, and forcefully. Also, to detonate an explosion.

*Edmond FULMINATED against the bill on the floor of the Senate, but he knew he did not have the votes to defeat it.*

**pontificate** (*pon-TIFF-ih-kayt*). To speak in a dogmatic or pompous manner; to officiate when celebrating Mass, or making a church decree.

*Can I assume the senator now intends to PONTIFICATE on the many virtues of our current trade policy?*

## ANTONYMS

**edification** (*eh-dih-fuh-KAY-shun*). Instruction or enlightenment, often involving moral or spiritual teachings.

*The evangelical preacher's EDIFICATION of church members and others in the community was known to all.*

**eloquence** (*EH-luh-kwents*). The ability to speak forcefully, expressively, and persuasively; convincing and pleasant language.

*The professor's ELOQUENCE made her very popular among students and ultimately led to her being granted tenure.*

**repartee** (*rep-er-TEE*). Conversation characterized by witty banter.

*It was amusing to watch the girls practice their REPARTEE, hoping not to be embarrassed on their first dates.*

**taciturn** (TASS-ih-turn). Quiet, of few words; regularly uncommunicative or reserved in manner and speech; avoiding conversation.

*Kenny was concerned that Emily's father's TACITURN nature indicated he disapproved of their dating.*

## 28. Bona fide

(BO-nah fyed), adjective

Authentic, actual, or genuine. Not deceptive; indisputably legitimate.

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### ADJECTIVES

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

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

**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

**exemplar** (ig-ZEM-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 EXEMPLAR for other nations." —Phyllis McGinley, American poet*

**rectitude** (REHK-tih-tood). Moral virtue; rightness.

*"The mind that's conscious of its RECTITUDE, / Laughs at the lies of rumor." —Ovid, Roman poet*

**veracity** (ver-ASS-ih-tee). 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*

## VERBS

**vindicate** (VIN-dih-kayt). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**clandestine** (klan-DESS-tin). Pertaining 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*

**fallacious** (fuh-LAY-shuss). 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 secondhand dress and a FAUX pearl necklace made out of white beads.*

**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.*

**traduce** (*truh-DOOCE*). 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.*

**usurper** (*yoo-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*

## 29. Bowdlerize

(*BODE-ler-ize*), verb

To remove parts of a work of literature considered objectionable, indecent, or offensive.

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### ADJECTIVES

**pedantic** (*pih-DAN-tik*). Lacking in imagination; intellectually showy or overblown; making an ostentatious display of knowledge.

*Professor Anthony’s PEDANTIC manner was thought entertaining by some students and condescending by others.*

### NOUNS

**balderdash** (*BALL-der-dash*). Senseless or nonsense talking or writing; a ridiculous, senseless, or worthless idea or suggestion.

*How embarrassing to have your favorite English teacher call your essay BALDERDASH!*

**circumlocution** (*sir-kum-low-KYOO-shun*). Evasiveness in speech or writing; the use of excess language to avoid saying something directly or truthfully; overblown and tedious writing or speech.

*The use of CIRCUMLOCUTION can lengthen term papers and help students meet a predetermined word count or page requirement, but it can also often lead to lower grades.*

**synopsis** (sih-NOP-sis). A condensed version of a text; an outline or summary of principal points.

*The small paperback books that contain a SYNOPSIS of books high school students are supposed to read should never take the place of reading the assigned book.*

## VERBS

**ameliorate** (uh-MEEL-yuh-rayt). To improve or upgrade; to make better or put right.

*The ambassador's midnight visit was the first step taken 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. *Representative Smith's expertise surfaced when she was asked to AMEND the appropriations bill in various ways amenable to both parties.*

**expurgate** (EK-spur-gayt). 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.*

**pander** (PAN-der). To indulge someone's weaknesses or questionable wishes or tastes; to appeal to the worst in someone. To serve as a pimp.

*The director refused to PANDER to the wishes of some of his greedy advisers, and he left the film PG so children could see it.*

**proscribe** (pro-SKRIBE). To forbid or prohibit.

*State law PROSCRIBES the keeping of wild animals as house pets.*

## ANTONYMS

**aggrandize** (*uh-GRAN-dyz*). To increase the size, scope, power, wealth, status, or influence of someone or something; 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.*

**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.*

**embellish** (*ihm-BEH-lish*). To ornament and beautify; to improve in appearance by adornment; to exaggerate or add false details to facts.

*Jim EMBELLISHED his tale of almost catching an elusive catfish until it began to resemble Ahab's quest for the white whale.*

**quintessence** (*kwin-TESS-ehns*). The pure, concentrated embodiment of something. In medieval philosophy, the fifth element after earth, air, fire, and water.

*The announcer commented that those who competed in the triathlon were the QUINTESSENCE of speed, strength, and endurance.*

## 30. 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-uss). Characterized by fearlessness and bravery, especially in battle.

*My uncle’s office was filled with citations commemorating his many VALOROUS acts in World War II.*

## NOUNS

**bravado** (bruh-VAW-doe). Real or pretended display or courage; an open 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. *At first, I approached the task of writing this book with some TREPIDATION.*

## 31. Burgeon

(BURR-jin), verb

To sprout, to grow; to blossom and flourish.

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## ADJECTIVES

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

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

**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.*

**germinal** (JUHR-mih-nuhl). Related to the earliest stage of development.  
*Roland's foray into art-buying is in its GERMINAL phase.*

## NOUNS

**apotheosis** (ah-paw-thee-OH-siss). 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.*

**concupiscence** (kon-KYOO-pih-sehns). Unbridled lust in the extreme—horniness.  
*"You're talking to a young vampire, a fountain of CONCUPISCENCE." — Mario Acevedo, American fantasy author*

## VERBS

**foment** (foe-MENT). To rouse or incite.  
*"If perticular 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*

**metastasize** (meh-TASS-tih-syz). To spread harmfully from an original source, as with cancer cells.  
*Byron's ugly nature quickly METASTASIZED in our group, as he spread lies and gossip among more and more of our social contacts.*

## ANTONYMS

**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*

# 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). Very cautious or wary; stingy.

*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). Particular about things, especially good housekeeping and personal hygiene; placing 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-TIK-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*). Conservative in spending and tight with a dollar; parting 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-luss*). Characterized by a conscientious adherence to what is considered true, right, or accurate; honest.

*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-OSS-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-git*). Extravagant; wasteful; excessive.

*My PROFLIGATE expenditures quickly came to a halt when my bank account reached zero.*

**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. Catalyst

(KAT-uhl-ist), noun

Something that increases the rate of a chemical reaction; a person or thing that makes a change happen or initiates a process of events.

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### ADJECTIVES

**kinetic** (kih-NET-ik). Pertaining to, caused by, or producing motion.

*Alexander Calder is credited for inventing the mobile, a KINETIC sculpture with hanging pieces that move and flow.*

### NOUNS

**catharsis** (kuh-THAR-siss). The purging of the senses through tragic drama or through music; in general, a discharge of negative emotions.

*Characters in many novels undergo a CATHARSIS after dramatic or traumatic experiences, thereby revealing much to readers.*

**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.*

**transfiguration** (*tranz-FIG-yoor-ay-shun*). A dramatic change in appearance, especially one that glorifies or exalts the one changed.

*The popular makeover shows bring about physical and emotional TRANSFIGURATIONS for their participants.*

## VERBS

**consummate** (*KON-suh-mayt*). To bring something such as a business deal to a conclusion or desired end; to achieve, fulfill, complete, or finalize. Also, for a couple to make a marriage legally valid by having sexual relations.

*By CONSUMMATING an agreement, and then signing the letter of intent, the high school All-American football player committed to attending Notre Dame.*

**exacerbate** (*ig-ZASS-er-bayt*). To worsen or aggravate an already bad situation; to make something even more unpleasant or severe.

*Lying almost always EXACERBATES a bad situation; that's one reason that honesty is the best policy.*

**galvanize** (*GAL-vuh-nyz*). To stimulate someone or something into action, especially muscle fibers by means of electric current. In a technical sense, to coat a metal with zinc to prevent corrosion.

*The hardships of winter GALVANIZE the isolated residents of Maine to help one another whenever needed.*

## ANTONYMS

**abrogate** (*AB-ro-gayt*). To formally (and with authority) repeal or cancel something, such as an agreement or a contract; to take official action leading to such an end.

*The two business partners agreed to ABROGATE their contract after they discovered their venture was no longer profitable.*



**languid** (LANG-gwid). Lacking vigor and energy; listless, indifferent, sluggish, or slow.

*Those who are frequently LANGUID may be suffering from some malady or disability.*

**lethargic** (luh-THAR-jik). Sluggish; inactive to such a degree as to resemble sleep or unconsciousness.

*After many long hours of work, Pat and Corey were LETHARGIC but still unable to call it a night.*

## 34. Chance

(CHANSS), noun

Happenings that occur unpredictably in the absence of cause or design; fortuity; luck; uncertainty.

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### ADJECTIVES

**aleatory** (A-lee-uh-tore-ee). Unplanned, spontaneous, or spur of the moment; depending 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.*

**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-aw-SPISH-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-KAIR-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-uhs eks MA-keh-nuh*). 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-ih-tee*). 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-SKRYB*). 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-jee*). 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.*

## 35. Change

(*CHEYNJ*), noun, verb

A transformation; substitution; alteration or modification; to cause to become different; convert.

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## ADJECTIVES

**capricious** (*kuh-PRISH-uss*). Unpredictable, impulsive; prone to making sudden unplanned changes.

*“I do not understand the CAPRICIOUS lewdness of the sleeping mind.” —John Cheever, American novelist*

**malleable** (MAL-yuh-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-KYOOOR-ee-uhl). Volatile, fickle, 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.*

## NOUNS

**acculturation** (ah-kul-chuh-RAY-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.

*"It 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-A-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** (*vhi-SISS-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

**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-MORE-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**immutable** (ih-MYOO-tuh-bull). Unchanging; not able to be changed.

*“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-ih-juh-bull). 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-kawn). 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](#)

## 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

**cerulean** (suh-RUE-lee-uhn). Being the blue of the sky.

*Boys lined up everywhere that Janis went just to look into her CERULEAN eyes.*

**monochromatic** (mawn-owe-kruh-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.*

**olivaceous** (all-uh-VAY-shuss). Dark green, olive.

*The Springfield Golf Club was known for its OLIVACEOUS fairways.*

**pallid** (PAL-id). Pale; faint; lacking in color; lacking vitality.

*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.*

**pied** (PYED). Having 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** (PAWL-ee-krome). Having many colors.

*The office was a more cheerful place with Mary's POLYCHROME outfits.*

**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.*

**spadiceous** (spay-DISH-uhs). Of a bright brown color.

*It took years for the paint maker to develop a bright brown, but they finally released a SPADICEOUS enamel.*

**variegated** (VAIR-ee-uh-gay-tid). 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-duhnt). Lush with trees, bushes, and other green foliage.

*With its careful mix of plants, the Whittingtons' formal garden remains VERDANT year-round.*

**xanthic** (ZAN-thik). Of yellow; yellowish.

*Carrie's pantsuit was electrified by the addition of a XANTHIC scarf.*

## NOUNS

**bice** (BYSS). Azurite blue; medium blue.

*Peter and Martha simultaneously decided that BICE would be the best color for the dining room.*

**cyan** (SY-an). 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-uh-KRO-muh-tiz-um). A change of color, especially as the result of a change in temperature.

*Spring causes a welcome METACHROMATISM of the forest.*

**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.*

**opalescence** (OH-puh-LESS-enss). 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.*

**perse** (PURSS). Very dark blue or purple.

*Luckily, Betty thought better of buying a PERSE purse.*

**puce** (PYOOCE). Dark or brownish purple.

*Eventually, Peter's bruise turned PUCE.*

**raddle** (RAD-uhl). Red ocher.

*RADDLE was not a better choice for the dining room walls as it turned out.*

**sepia** (SEE-pee-uh). Brown, grayish brown, or olive brown.

*The SEPIA of the photographs gave them a vintage feel.*

**solferino** (sowl-fuh-REE-noh). Vivid, purplish pink.

*Jane's scarf demonstrated that a little SOLFERINO goes a long way.*

**vermilion** (vur-MILL-yun). Scarlet red; bright red.

*In her trademark VERMILION pantsuit, Carrie really stood out in a crowd.*

## 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-BYN), verb

To bring together into a whole; gather; assemble or accumulate.

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## 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.*

## NOUNS

**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 piece of music, writing, or art made up mostly of material taken from existing sources; a haphazard collection of items from various sources.

*Ronald's carefully crafted sculpture looked like a PASTICHE to our untrained eyes.*

**synergy** (*SIN-er-jee*). 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.*

## 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-rayt*). 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-gayt*). 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-mayt). To blend into a coherent single unit; to combine a number of elements into a whole. In technical terms, to alloy or unite a metal with mercury.

*Anticipating that the two departments would soon AMALGAMATE, the members held several strategic planning meetings.*

**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** (MUSS-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** (SING-krih-tyz). 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.*

## 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-ayt). 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

(kuh-MAND), verb

To issue an order or orders; direct with authority; to have authority over; control.

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## 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.*

## 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-dayt). 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.*

## VERBS

**adjure** (uh-JOOR). To command as if under oath; to solemnly entreat or request.

*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 was ENJOINED by his father to be more frugal.*

**interdict** (in-ter-DIKT). To prohibit; to forbid the use of something.

*The border patrol attempts to INTERDICT the flow of illegal or banned substances.*

**proscribe** (pro-SKRIBE). To forbid or prohibit.

*State law PROSCRIBES the keeping of wild animals as house pets.*

**stipulate** (STIP-yoo-layt). To make a specific demand or arrangement as a condition of agreement.

*The contract was quite clear; it STIPULATED the delivery date.*

## 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.

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## ADJECTIVES

**clamorous** (*KLAM-uhr-uss*). Loud; expressively vehement; noisy and demanding.

*The throngs in the street roared with CLAMOROUS applause.*

**clarion** (*KLAR-ee-uhn*). Clear and shrill.

*On the first day back to school, Robby groaned at the CLARION call of his morning alarm.*

**tempestuous** (*tem-PESS-chew-uss*). 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*). Noise and confusion; 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.

*“I sound my barbaric YAWP over the roofs of the world.” —Walt Whitman, American poet and humanist*

## ANTONYMS

**halcyon** (*HAL-see-un*). Calm, peaceful, carefree, prosperous.

*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-PLAYN*), verb

To express pain or dissatisfaction; to find fault; declare annoyance, resentment, or grief.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**querulous** (*KWAIR-eh-luss*). Habitually whining and griping.

*Their QUERULOUS manner with the waiter made them unpleasant and embarrassing dinner companions.*

## NOUNS



**malcontent** (*mal-kuhn-TENT*). A discontented, resentful, or rebellious person.  
*Harvey is such a MALCONTENT that he'll argue with you if you tell him it's a nice day!*

## VERBS

**carp** (*KARP*). To raise picky, trivial objections; complain peevishly.  
*All the CARPING at the staff meeting kept anything substantive from being done.*

**cavil** (*KAV-uhl*). To find fault in trivial matters or raise petty objections.  
*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 strongly; to rail.  
*The crowd INVEIGHED against the governor's decision to commute Davidson's sentence.*

**remonstrate** (*rih-MON-strayt*). To protest, object, or show disapproval.  
*When Carlotta REMONSTRATED our snubbing of Julia, we simply began to snub Carlotta as well.*

## ANTONYMS

**rejoice** (*rih-JOYCE*). 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; elaborate; 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). Too complex or intricate to understand easily; complicated, with many twists or folds; an extreme state of complication, intricacy, or interdependency. Literally, folded into a coil or spiral.

*Relationships can be CONVOLUTED and difficult, but they are ultimately worth the effort.*

**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-eck-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-kayt). To make something unclear or obscure, especially unnecessarily complicated; to muddy or confuse an issue; to make something dark or hard to see.

*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** (un-prih-TEN-shuss). 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** (AJ-uh-luh-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 brooch 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 clients 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 ancestors 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.

*“Not in the shouts and PLAUDITS of the throng, but in ourselves, are triumph and defeat.” —Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, American poet*

**sycophant** (SIK-uh-fahnt). Someone who flatters a powerful person for personal gain; an ambitious flatterer who tries to improve his status by fawning over those in authority.

*Presidents and world leaders should not surround themselves with SYCOPHANTS, for they need to hear critical and realistic views regarding critical issues.*

## VERBS

**extol** (ik-STOHL). To praise highly; laud.

*When talking about his new girlfriend, Larry would EXTOL her virtues in reverential terms.*

## ANTONYMS

**deprecate** (DEP-rih-kayt). 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. 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** (*DISS-kord*). 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*

**nemesis** (*NEM-ih-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.*

**rancor** (*RANG-ker*). 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-sill-ee-A-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-kord*). 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*

## 44. 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-SOCK-ruh-ness*). Occurring consistently at regular intervals.

*The ticking of a clock is ISOCHRONOUS, but the arrival of the elevator at different floors is not.*

**symmetrical** (*sih-MET-rih-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-layt*). 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.*

## 45. Context

(*KON-tekst*), noun

The words, phrases, or passages before and after a particular word or passage that help to explain its complete meaning; the circumstances or events related to an incident or action.

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## ADJECTIVES



**cogent** (KOE-junt). Forceful, convincing, compelling; appealing effectively to the intellect or reason.

*Although it took a while, he eventually convinced the rest of the student council with his COGENT arguments.*

## NOUNS

**derivation** (dare-uh-VAY-shun). The path of descent for something, such as a name or word, that traces back to the source; a mathematical or logical argument flowing from initial assumptions to proofs and then to conclusions.

*Etymologists who study the DERIVATION of words should not be confused with entomologists, who study insects.*

**etymology** (eh-tih-MAH-luh-jee). The study of word origins and how words have evolved into their current forms or meanings. The lineage of a word; description of origin and how the word came into its current use.

*Those who have studied Greek or Latin can make educated and often correct guesses regarding a word's ETYMOLOGY.*

**homonym** (HOM-uh-nim). A word that is pronounced the same as another word of different meaning.

*The relationship between the words "accept" and "except" is a good example of a HOMONYM.*

**idiom** (IH-dee-uhm). A phrase whose usage is peculiar to a particular language, in terms of grammar or in meaning; an expression whose meaning cannot be determined from the grammatical combination of individual words.

*For the recent immigrant from Brazil, the IDIOM "beating a dead horse" was both incomprehensible and disturbing.*

**lexicon** (LEK-sih-kawn). A dictionary composed for a specific, narrowly defined or professional audience; the vocabulary associated with a specific discipline or group.

*The LEXICON of rap music seems a different language to many parents, but it is an adaptation of street English.*

**semantics** (*suh-MAN-tiks*). The study of how language conveys meaning; an excessive focus on the way something is phrased rather than what it says.

*The coach's urging to "play aggressive" rather than "hurt the opponents" was a matter of SEMANTICS, and its interpretation depended on which team you wanted to win.*

**thesaurus** (*thuh-SOR-us*). A book that lists words related to each other in meaning, usually presenting synonyms and antonyms.

*Today, word-processing software usually includes a dictionary, a THESAURUS, and a spell checker.*

## VERBS

**denote** (*dih-NOTE*). To designate or refer to a person or thing in particular; to define something literally, as in a dictionary definition; to announce or make known.

*Before the camping trip, each student received specific instructions regarding what would DENOTE a rules infraction for which they would be punished by being sent home.*

## ANTONYMS

**anachronism** (*uh-NAK-ruh-niz-em*). Something out of place because it is from a different period of time; a person, idea, or action that belongs to a different time in history.

*Shakespeare was famous for surprising readers and audiences with ANACHRONISMS, such as clock chimes during the days of Julius Caesar.*

**convoluted** (*kon-vuh-LOO-tid*). Too complex or intricate to understand easily; complicated, with many twists or folds; an extreme state of complication,

intricacy, or interdependency. Literally, folded into a coil or spiral.

*Relationships can be CONVOLUTED and difficult, but they are ultimately worth the effort.*

**eclectic** (eh-KLEK-tik). Made up of parts from various sources or origins; diverse items, styles, or things.

*ECLECTIC musical tastes are unusual in teenagers, as they most often focus on the most popular groups or styles.*

## 46. 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.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**curative** (KYOOR-uh-tiv). Able to restore health; curing; serving to provide a remedy.

*The CURATIVE regimen of the spa involved diet and hot baths, as well as exercise and massage.*

## VERBS

**ameliorate** (uh-MEEL-yuh-rayt). To improve or upgrade; to make better or put right.

*The ambassador's midnight visit was the first step taken 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.

*Representative Smith's expertise surfaced when she was asked to AMEND the appropriations bill in various ways amenable to both parties.*

**castigate** (KAS-tuh-gayt). 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 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.*

**rectify** (REK-tih-fy). To put right; to correct.

*Ellen RECTIFIED her previous mistakes and filed the report.*

**redress** (ree-DRESS). To remedy; 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** (ree-VAMP). To redo; to renovate thoroughly.

*The playwright decided to REVAMP several of the weaker scenes in the first act.*

## 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.*

## 47. Crimes

(KRYMZ), noun

Acts committed in violation of a law prohibiting them or omitted in violation of a law ordering them; wrongful acts that are punishable by law.

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## 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?*

## NOUNS

**arson** (*AR-suhn*). 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-PLISS-uh-tee*). 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** (KON-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-syd). 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-syd). 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.*

## 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-luss). Characterized by a conscientious adherence to what is considered true, right, or accurate; honest.

*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*

See also: [Dishonest](#)

## 48. Criticize

(KRIT-uh-syz), verb

To analyze and judge as a critic; to find fault with or censure; to make judgments.

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## 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** (hy-per-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*

## NOUNS

**diatribe** (DYE-uh-tryb). 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.*

## VERBS

**castigate** (KAS-tuh-gayt). 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.*

**cavil** (KAV-uhl). To find fault in trivial matters or raise petty objections.

*Town meetings take twice as long as they should because some citizens use the event as a forum to CAVIL.*

**chide** (chyd). 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.

*“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*

**excoriate** (*ik-SKORE-ee-ayt*). To criticize; to attempt to censure or punish.

*We EXCORIATED Melanie for inviting people with no family connections to her birthday party.*

**fulminate** (*FULL-mih-nayt*). To criticize or denounce loudly, dramatically, and forcefully. Also, to detonate an explosion.

*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-BAYST*). To berate or criticize harshly.

*We LAMBASTED Marla for not visiting Comme des Garçons during her recent weekender 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 REPREHENDS 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 had to REPROVE Elyssia for some of her questionable fashion choices.*

**scarify** (SKAIR-ih-fy). To wound with harsh criticism.

*We deemed it necessary to SCARIFY Eileen for having the nerve to criticize our motives.*

**upbraid** (up-BRAYD). To censure or to find fault with.

*Roger UPBRAIDED the butler severely when we learned he was gossiping to other members of our staff.*

## ANTONYMS

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

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

## 49. Cross

(KRAWSS), adjective

Contrary; ill-tempered; cranky; easily annoyed.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bellicose** (BELL-ih-kohss). Ready or inclined to quarrel, fight, or go to war; warlike or hostile in manner or temperament.

*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-shuss). Fond of finding faults in others; ill-natured and overly critical; carping; intending to confuse.

*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-tik). 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.

*His FAROUCHE demeanor gave people the impression that he didn't like them, when in fact he was merely an introvert.*

**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** (PETCH-uh-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-shuss). Always wanting to argue and debate every last thing; quarrelsome.

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

**splenetic** (*splih-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** (*WAWS-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** (*AFF-uh-bull*). 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

## 50. Declare

(*dih-KLAIR*), verb

To make clearly known; to state or announce in definite or formal terms; to announce officially or emphatically.

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### NOUNS

**avowal** (*uh-VOW-uhl*). A frank and open admission or statement.

*The teachers' AVOWAL of support for the students accused of cheating shocked almost everyone in the school.*

### 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.*

**postulate** (POSS-chuh-layt). 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*

**tout** (TOWT). To publicize in a boastful, extravagant manner.

*The studio TOUTED its latest picture as “the greatest story ever told.”*

## ANTONYMS

**gainsay** (GAYN-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 RECONT anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe.” —Martin Luther, the father of Protestantism*

## 51. 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** (BASS-chuhn). An institution, individual, or something else protecting or preserving a particular way of life, society, set of beliefs, or moral code.

*Cliff graduated from Yale, a BASTION of respectability and privilege.*

**bulwark** (BULL-werk). 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** (kan-uh-NAYD). 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.

*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-kayt*). 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*

## 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*

## 52. Defiant

(*dih-FYE-unht*), adjective

Characterized by defiance; resistant or challenging; rebellious.

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## ADJECTIVES

**contumacious** (*kon-teh-MAY-shuss*). Obstinately 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** (REN-eh-tent). Steadfastly resisting pressure, constraint, or compulsion. *Dorothy's RENITENT efforts proved superior to her mother's attempts to modify her behavior.*

**subversive** (sub-VER-sihv). Intended to undermine a government or other institution, usually by secret actions performed from the inside; undermining. *Antiwar protesters of the 1960s were thought by many to be SUBVERSIVE and by others to be patriots defending freedom of speech.*

## 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.*

## VERBS

**beard** (BEERD). To defy boldly; oppose.

*To ensure the measure would pass, supporters needed to be ready to BEARD the opposition.*

**contravene** (kawn-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-strayt). To protest, object, or show disapproval.

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

**restive** (RESS-tiv). Impatient and stubborn; contrary.

*Audrey was RESTIVE about her upcoming vacation abroad and thus found it difficult to concentrate on her schoolwork.*

## 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.*

## 53. Denote

(dih-NOTE), verb

To designate or refer to a person or thing in particular; to define something literally, as in a dictionary definition; to announce or make known.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bona fide** (BOE-nuh fyde). Authentic, actual, or genuine. Not deceptive; indisputably legitimate.

*Mr. and Mrs. Stevens bought a painting at a garage sale for \$50, and they later found it to be a BONA FIDE masterpiece worth \$50,000.*

**cogent** (KOE-junt). Forceful, convincing, compelling; appealing effectively to the intellect or reason.

*Although it took a while, he eventually convinced the rest of the student council with his COGENT arguments.*

**rhetorical** (ruh-TOH-rih-kul). Asked with no expectation of response; often describes sarcastic questions, or those the questioner knows cannot be answered. Also, persuasive and skillful, as in argumentation.

*The dean's RHETORICAL skills were much needed as he explained the new alcohol policy to the entire student body.*

## NOUNS

**accentuate** (ak-SEN-shoo-ayt). To make a feature of something more noticeable; to put emphasis on a syllable, word, or phrase; to strengthen or heighten the effect of something.

*The architects determined that large bay windows would ACCENTUATE the colonial style of the new house.*

**connotation** (KAH-noh-TAY-shun). The implied, figurative, or suggested additional meaning of a word or phrase, apart from the literal dictionary meaning.

*As society changes, the CONNOTATIONS of particular words also change, and what was once an appropriate word sometimes becomes politically incorrect.*

**interpolate** (*in-TER-puh-layt*). To insert something, often unnecessary, between two elements; to add comments or extra words to a written text or conversation, altering or falsifying its meaning; to estimate the value of a mathematical function that lies between known values, usually done by projecting graph points.

*Actuaries use statistics to INTERPOLATE customers' potential life expectancy, and that's how they figure out how much to charge for insurance policies.*

**portend** (*por-TEND*). To suggest or foretell.

*The tone of Joan's voice this morning PORTENDS trouble.*

## ANTONYMS

**bowdlerize** (*BODE-ler-ize*). To remove parts of a work of literature considered objectionable, indecent, or offensive.

*The editor BOWDLERIZED the author's first draft to make the book marketable to a wider audience.*

**canard** (*kuh-NARD*). A deliberate false report, rumor, or fabrication. Also, a small projection, like a wing near the nose of an airplane.

*Wally's story that Leon had assaulted him on the playground was clearly a CANARD, and the teacher punished him for telling lies.*

**caricature** (*KAR-ih-kuh-chur*). A drawing, depiction, or other description that exaggerates someone's characteristics; an inappropriate and ridiculous version of an attempt to do something.

*Political cartoons always attempt to show a candidate's CARICATURE, magnifying a nose, ears, smile, or a particular body or head shape.*

**incognito** (*in-kog-NEE-toh*). Hidden or unknown; with an intentional change in appearance to make one's real identity unknown.

*Rock stars, actors, and other famous people wear sunglasses and hats, attempting to be INCOGNITO when in public.*

**obfuscate** (OB-fuss-kayt). To make something unclear or obscure, especially unnecessarily complicated; to muddy or confuse an issue; to make something dark or hard to see.

*When caught doing something wrong, some teens OBFUSCATE their explanation of events, hoping parents won't quite understand.*

## 54. Descant

(des-KANT), verb

To talk freely and without inhibition.

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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*

**discursive** (diss-KER-siv). A manner or style of lecturing in which the speaker rambles 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.*

**facile** (FASS-ul). Accomplished easily and with little effort.

*“The hunger for FACILE wisdom is the root of all false philosophy.” —George Santayana, author and philosopher*

**loquacious** (loh-KWAY-shuss). Tending to talk a great deal; prone to nervous chatter.

*It was difficult to tell whether Julia's LOQUACIOUS behavior was caused by nervousness or whether she always spoke incessantly.*

**mellifluous** (muh-LIF-loo-us). Flowing sweetly and smoothly.

*The MELLIFLUOUS tones of his voice brought Martin many high-paying gigs for voice-overs.*

**verbose** (vur-BOHSS). Using language that is long-winded, unnecessary, or complicated; wordy.

*I really wanted to vote for him, because he appears to be intelligent, but I find that his speeches are almost always VERBOSE.*

## NOUNS

**badinage** (bad-ih-NAHZH). Light-hearted banter, not meant to be taken seriously.

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

**diatribe** (DYE-uh-tryb). 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.*

**filibuster** (FILL-ih-buss-ter). A prolonged speech or other tactics to delay legislative actions or other important decisions.

*The room breathed a collective sigh when the senator finally ended his eight-hour FILIBUSTER.*

**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.” —Emory Klein, American journalist*

**kaffeeklatsch** (KAW-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.*

## VERBS

**bloviate** (BLOH-vee-ayt). To speak pompously and at length.

*Maxwell BLOVIATES about his “excellent” test scores, but everyone knows he cheated outrageously.*

**confabulate** (kuhn-FAB-yuh-layt). To chat or discuss something informally; to indulge in engaging, extravagant storytelling. Also, to invent and believe stories to fill mental gaps due to memory loss or dementia.

*The two drivers stopped the flow of traffic east and west in order to CONFABULATE about who had caused the accident.*

**natter** (NATT-er). 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.*

**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*

## ANTONYMS

**farouche** (fah-ROOSH). Unsociable; cranky; withdrawn; fierce.

*His FAROUCHE demeanor gave people the impression that he didn’t like them, when in fact he was merely an introvert.*

**laconic** (*luh-KAWN-ik*). Of few words; expressing oneself with an economy of words.

*Harold may be LACONIC, but when he does speak, he is worth listening to.*

**taciturn** (*TASS-ih-turn*). Quiet, of few words; regularly uncommunicative or reserved in manner and speech; avoiding conversation.

*Kenny was concerned that Emily's father's TACITURN nature indicated he disapproved of their dating.*

## 55. Desire

(*dih-ZYR*), verb

To want or crave.

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### 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*

### NOUNS

**ardor** (*AR-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). A strong desire to achieve something; a motivating goal or ambition.

*Most Little Leaguers have ASPIRATIONS to become famous major league baseball stars.*

**desideratum** (deh-sih-deh-RAY-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.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**animosity** (an-ih-MOSS-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 Brontë, 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*

## 56. Didactic

(dy-DAK-tik), adjective

Designed, made, or tailored for purposes of education, self-improvement, or ethical betterment.

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## ADJECTIVES

**erudite** (AIR-yoo-dyt). Sophisticated; well educated; deeply learned; knowledgeable; scholarly.

*Once you complete college, one should at least be able to describe you as ERUDITE.*

**hypercritical** (hy-per-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*

**meticulous** (meh-TIK-yuh-luhss). Extremely precise; fussy about details.

*As a radiologist, Arthur was required to give METICULOUS attention to reading test results.*

## NOUNS

**autodidact** (aw-toe-DY-dakt). A self-educated person.

*In the twentieth century, the library was the university of the AUTODIDACT; in the twenty-first century, it is the Internet.*

**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*

**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*

## VERBS

**elucubrate** (ih-LOO-kyoo-brayt). 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 his term paper and could, instead, attend parties with us.*

## ANTONYMS

**dilettante** (DILL-ih-tont). A person who studies a subject in a casual fashion, learning the topic for the fun of it rather than to apply it to solve real problems. *Joseph Priestley could be considered a DILETTANTE, and yet his work led to the discovery of oxygen.*

**vacuous** (VAK-yoo-uss). Devoid of emotion, intelligence, or any normal human thought processes; 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.*

## 57. 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-STROOCE). Arcane, complex, difficult to understand and learn.

*After the first few classes, Jack thought that calculus was an ABSTRUSE collection of ideas.*

**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.*

**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.*

**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-KYOO-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.

Capitalized: pertaining to or resembling Hercules.

*The HERCULEAN efforts of the 2004 Red Sox to win the World Series will go down in baseball history.*

**impalpable** (im-PAL-puh-bull). Difficult to understand; 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). Impossible to overcome or surmount.

*“Conceit is an INSUPERABLE obstacle to all progress.” —Ellen Terry, British actress*

**onerous** (OWE-nur-uss). Difficult; imposing heavy responsibility.

*Caring for his son’s large aquarium quickly went from an interesting hobby to an ONEROUS burden.*

## NOUNS

**conundrum** (kuh-NUN-drum). A riddle or puzzle; a difficult problem or situation that is not easily resolved.

*“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.”*

**labyrinth** (LAB-uh-rinth). A maze or maze-like structure. In Greek mythology, the maze designed by Daedalus for King Minos of Crete to confine the Minotaur.

*The hallways of the new high school seemed like a LABYRINTH to the new freshmen.*

**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; a knotty situation.

*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.

*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-ul). Accomplished easily and with little effort.

*“The hunger for FACILE wisdom is the root of all false philosophy.” —George Santayana, author and philosopher*

## 58. Disagree

(diss-uh-GREE), verb

To differ; dissent; to quarrel about or disapprove of something.

---

### ADJECTIVES

**discordant** (diss-KOR-dunt). Conflicting; lacking in harmony.

*I find that composer’s DISCORDANT style difficult to listen to.*

**dyslogistic** (diss-luh-JISS-tik). Showing disapproval or censure.

*We gave Elizabeth DYSLOGISTIC glances when she told us she had decided to stop shopping at Cartier.*

### NOUNS

**apostasy** (uh-POSS-tuh-see). The act of abandoning, ignoring, or openly flouting 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-dehnts*). Strong disagreement, especially with a government.

*The newly formed government decided to crack down on DISSIDENCE by jailing anyone who disagreed with governmental policies.*

## 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** (*DEP-rih-kayt*). 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** (*GAYN-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.*

**inveigh** (*in-VAY*). To protest strongly; to rail.

*The crowd INVEIGHED against the governor’s decision to commute Davidson’s sentence.*

**negate** (*nih-GAYT*). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**amenable** (*uh-MEE-nuh-bull*). Agreeable to suggestions; likely to cooperate; accountable for actions.

*Students were AMENABLE to a new dress code if they were asked to give input when it was being decided.*

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

*Eleanor is far too COMPLAISANT with common strangers.*

## 59. Discombobulate

(*DISS-kum-BOB-yoo-layt*), verb

To throw someone into a state of confusion; to utterly take aback.

---

### ADJECTIVES

**convoluted** (*kon-vuh-LOO-tid*). Too complex or intricate to understand easily; complicated, with many twists or folds; an extreme state of complication, intricacy, or interdependency. Literally, folded into a coil or spiral.

*Relationships can be CONVOLUTED and difficult, but they are ultimately worth the effort.*

**haphazard** (*hap-HA-zurd*). Happening or done in a way not planned; irregular; governed by chance. Something not guided by a regular or predetermined method.

*After several rounds using a HAPHAZARD approach to his golf game, Mark decided that lessons were definitely in order.*

### NOUNS

**enigma** (*ih-NIG-ma*). Someone or something that is not easily explained; that which is puzzling, perplexing, inexplicable, or ambiguous.

*The Mona Lisa's smile is probably the most popular ENIGMA in the world.*

**imbroglio** (*im-BROAL-yo*). 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.*

**tumult** (*tuh-MULT*). A violent, chaotic, or noisy commotion; an uproar. A psychological or emotional upheaval or agitation.

*The TUMULT of having twenty two-year-olds in the house for a birthday party was too much for Lisa's mother to handle.*

## VERBS

**abash** (*uh-BASH*). To make someone, including yourself, feel ashamed, embarrassed, or uncomfortable; to cause someone to lose composure.

*Traditionally, high school athletes ABASH new team members; some call it freshman hazing.*

**befuddle** (*bih-FUH-dil*). To confuse, mystify, or confound; to make someone inebriated and/or unable to think clearly.

*The absent-minded professor's lectures so BEFUDDLED the students that they were quickly as confused as he was.*

**mire** (*MYRE*). To get stuck in mud; to make muddy or dirty; to involve or entangle in difficulty.

*In the early going, the administration found itself MIREN in issues far from its stated goal of improving the economy.*

## ANTONYMS

**acute** (*uh-KEWT*). Extremely serious, painful, or severe; sharp, shrewd; keenly perceptive, intellectual, and sensitive to details. Also refers to a disease that is severe and quick to crisis.

*Most teenage girls have ACUTE skills when it comes to identifying a cute boy.*

**cogent** (KOE-junt). Forceful, convincing, compelling; appealing effectively to the intellect or reason.

*Although it took a while, he eventually convinced the rest of the student council with his COGENT arguments.*

**judicious** (joo-DISH-us). Showing wisdom, good sense, or discretion, often with the intention of avoiding trouble or waste.

*Since his earlier troubles, Johan has been very JUDICIOUS whenever he parties with friends.*

**lucid** (LOO-sid). Clear and easily understood; intelligible; rational and mentally clear. Also, filled with light.

*After the accident, Alex was LUCID for a while, but he soon lost consciousness.*

## 60. Dishonest

(diss-AWN-ist), adjective

Not honest; having 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 the 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.*

**knavish** (NAYV-ish). Untrustworthy, dishonest, and mischievous.

*Despite, or perhaps because of, his KNAVISH 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 they were by far the best audience he'd ever performed for.*

**unconscionable** (un-KON-shu-nuh-bull). 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** (*roh-g*). 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; to thwart or elude.

*The swindler denied that he had ever BILKED any person of money or property.*

**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-ger*). 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** (*PUR-loyn*). 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-bull*). 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-bull*). Respectable; honorable.

*When a natural disaster occurs, an unfortunate result is the appearance of charitable organizations that are not completely REPUTABLE.*

## 61. Dull

(DUHL), adjective

Lacking sensitivity or spirit; causing boredom; tedious.

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### ADJECTIVES

**aseptic** (uh-SEP-tik). 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-NAL). 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** (boor-ZHWA). Characteristic of the middle class; having material concerns, an interest in respectability, and a tendency toward mediocrity.

*"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*

**bromidic** (bro-MIHD-ik). Trite and commonplace.

*The marketing executive groaned as one BROMIDIC ad campaign after another crossed her desk.*

**insipid** (in-SIP-id). Lacking in vigor; unexciting.

*In Frank's opinion, the novel's plot was INSIPID and left much to be desired.*

**jaded** (JAY-did). 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-ter). Flat; 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-DAYN). 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** (TRYT). 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** (VAP-id). Void of intellectual curiosity or intelligence; lacking spirit and enthusiasm; routine, unchallenging.

*What irked him most about his sister-in-law was her VAPID stare 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-VAWK-uh-tiv). Tending to provoke; inciting; stimulating.

*Andrew’s visits to the art museum filled him with PROVOCATIVE images and gave him new energy.*

# E

## 62. Eat

(*EET*), verb

To consume for nourishment; take in food.

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### 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*). Pertaining to eating and drinking too much, or the consequences of eating and drinking too much.

*Jim spent the day after the party in a CRAPULOUS state.*

**dipsomaniacal** (*dip-suh-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 only grass and plants, not meat.



*Even HERBIVOROUS dinosaurs would have been intimidating by virtue of their size, though not necessarily their eating habits.*

**macrobiotic** (*mack-row-by-OT-ik*). Of 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-MOH-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** (*vuh-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-FAY-jee-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** (VEE-guhn). 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 entrees she could eat.*

**viand** (VY-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.*

## VERBS

**gormandize** (GORE-mun-dyz). 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-BYB). To drink something, especially alcoholic or alcoholic beverages; to take in or absorb something into the mind, like an idea.

*Although it sounds much better to say “IMBIBE” and “inebriated,” you might as well say “booze it up” and “drunk.”*

**masticate** (MASS-tih-kayt). 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** (KWOFF). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**emaciated** (ih-MAY-see-ay-tihd). 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](#)

## 63. Élan

(a-LON), noun

Enthusiasm, energy, flair, zest.

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## ADJECTIVES

**ebullient** (eh-BULL-yuhnt). 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-VESS-ent). Bubbly; upbeat; cheerful; possessing a positive attitude and joyful personality.

*After getting the acceptance letter from Cornell, Sabrina was EFFERVESCENT and celebrated with a trip to Neiman Marcus.*

**effulgent** (ih-FULL-jent). Shining brightly; glowing; radiant.

*The lightning storm made the evening sky positively EFFULGENT.*

**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.*

**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.*

## NOUNS

**alacrity** (uh-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.*

**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*

**zeal** (ZEEL). Great enthusiasm and energy for a cause or activity.

*"The living, vital truth of social and economic well-being will become a reality only through the ZEAL, courage, the non-compromising determination of intelligent minorities, and not through the mass." —Emma Goldman, anarchist*

**zest** (ZEHST). Extreme enjoyment; a lust for life.

*“Such epithets, like pepper, / Give ZEST to what you write; / And, if you strew them sparsely, / They whet the appetite: / But if you lay them on too thick, / You spoil the matter quite!” —Lewis Carroll, English author and logician*

## ANTONYMS

**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.*

**lassitude** (LASS-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*

**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*

**pallid** (PAL-id). Pale; faint; lacking in color; lacking vitality.

*Nancy’s PALLID complexion was the result of poor health rather than a desire to avoid UV rays.*

**tepid** (TEHP-id). Characterized by a lack of enthusiasm.

*We greeted the new opera, with its mawkish plot and poor acting, with TEPID applause.*

## 64. 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-nayt*). 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-STRAYNJ*). To alienate or remove from a position or relationship.

*Michelle’s refusal to give up her self-destructive habits ESTRANGED her brother.*

**excise** (*EK-syz*). 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-PUHNJ*). 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** (*EK-spur-gayt*). 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.*

**ostracize** (OSS-truh-syz). To exclude or banish someone from a group, formally or informally.

*It's harsh when teens OSTRACIZE someone who was once a friend.*

**redact** (ree-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-SIND). Take away, revoke, cancel, withdraw, remove.

*The town RESCINDED all their restrictions on water use after we received two weeks of heavy rain.*

**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.*

## **ANTONYMS**

**adjoin** (uh-joyn). 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*

## 65. Elucidate

*(ih-LOO-si-dayt)*, verb

To explain, clarify, or provide key information; to throw light on and clarify a subject.

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### ADJECTIVES

**learned** (*LUR-nid*). Well-educated and very knowledgeable. Describes behavior or knowledge that is acquired through training.

*The LEARNED scholar was greatly respected among those who studied anthropology.*

**lucid** (*LOO-sid*). Clear and easily understood; intelligible; rational and mentally clear. Also, filled with light.

*After the accident, Alex was LUCID for a while, but he soon lost consciousness.*

**perspicacious** (*pur-spih-KAY-shuss*). Characterized by acute mental perception and understanding.

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

**sagacious** (*suh-GAY-shuss*). Possessing excellent judgment and powers of discernment; able to make wise decisions; keen and farsighted in perception.

*Professor Blake’s SAGACIOUS reputation made him one of the university’s most popular lecturers and advisers.*

### VERBS



**deduce** (*dee-DOOCE*). To infer or derive from evidence or assumption; to reach a logical conclusion using what information is available, even if incomplete.

*It is the job of detectives to DEDUCE the circumstances of crimes, for they rarely have all the facts.*

**denote** (*dih-NOTE*). To designate or refer to a person or thing in particular; to define something literally, as in a dictionary definition; to announce or make known.

*Before the camping trip, each student received specific instructions regarding what would DENOTE a rules infraction for which they would be punished by being sent home.*

**educe** (*ih-DOOS*). To elicit, derive, or draw something out, often as a logical conclusion; to reason or conclude from given facts.

*Myres's attempts to EDUCE his sister's whereabouts were futile.*

**ruminate** (*ROO-muh-nayt*). To think carefully and at length about something; to ponder or review mentally, over and over.

*Once they were admitted, the guidance counselor wanted the students to RUMINATE on which college admissions offer to accept.*

**scintillate** (*SIN-tuhl-ayt*). To give off or reflect light as sparks or sudden flashes; to dazzle in a lively, clever, or witty way.

*News about the new film has been hard to come by, but a few SCINTILLATING details have leaked out.*

## ANTONYMS

**abstruse** (*ab-STROOCE*). Arcane, complex, difficult to understand and learn.  
*After the first few classes, Jack thought that calculus was an ABSTRUSE collection of ideas.*

**inscrutable** (*in-SKROO-tuh-bul*). Mysterious and not easy to understand.

*The Mona Lisa's INSCRUTABLE smile has inspired eclectic emotions and thoughts in those privileged to view the painting.*

**mendacity** (*men-DA-suh-tee*). Deliberate untruthfulness; a lie or falsehood.  
*Even after he was caught red-handed, Brian still thought his MENDACITIES would be believed.*

## 66. Empty

(*EMP-tee*), adjective

Containing or having nothing; vacant; unoccupied.

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### ADJECTIVES

**arid** (*AIR-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 or deprived of a certain characteristic, possession, or trait; bereaved.

*"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** (*DESS-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-VOYD*). 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). Devoid of emotion, intelligence, or any normal human thought processes; 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.*

## 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** (diss-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** (PER-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.*

## 67. End

(END), verb

To conclude

## ADJECTIVES

**climactic** (kly-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 grace** (koo-deh-GRAHS). Deathblow; a decisive act or event that brings a situation to a close; the finishing blow.

*The COUP DE GRACE came when Paul threw his bowl of oatmeal at Mona’s feet, leading her to re-evaluate their relationship.*

**denouement** (day-noo-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.*

**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-EE-tuhs). 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*

## VERBS

**abrogate** (AB-ro-gayt). To formally (and with authority) repeal or cancel something, such as an agreement or a contract; to take official action leading to such an end.

*The two business partners agreed to ABROGATE their contract after they discovered their venture was no longer profitable.*

**consummate** (KON-suh-mayt). To bring something such as a business deal to a conclusion or desired end; to achieve, fulfill, complete, or finalize. Also, for a couple to make a marriage legally valid by having sexual relations.

*By CONSUMMATING an agreement, and then signing the letter of intent, the high school All-American football player committed to attending Notre Dame.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**ad infinitum** (*ad in-fi-NY-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-pih-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.*

## 68. Epiphany

(*ih-PIH-fuh-nee*), noun

A sudden intuitive leap of understanding, often with credit given to divine inspiration; a sudden manifestation of the essence or meaning of something; a revelation. When capitalized, refers to the Christian festival celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

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## ADJECTIVES

**sagacious** (*suh-GAY-shuss*). Possessing excellent judgment and powers of discernment; able to make wise decisions; keen and farsighted in perception.

*Professor Blake's SAGACIOUS reputation made him one of the university's most popular lecturers and advisers.*

**serene** (suh-REEN). Clear and calm; without worry, disturbance, or stress; bright without clouds.

*Visiting the lake house always made her feel SERENE, so she went there before her wedding.*

## NOUNS

**clairvoyance** (klare-VOY-enss). The ability to see things beyond normal vision, events from the future, or those who have died.

*Clare's claims of seeing into the future and her amazing talent for predicting outcomes still didn't prove her CLAIRVOYANCE.*

**prescience** (PREH-shehns). Knowledge of actions or events before they take place; foreknowledge.

*Parents hope to have enough PRESCIENCE to protect their children from future harm.*

**savant** (SUH-vont). A wise or scholarly person, especially one with great knowledge in a very specialized field or area.

*In an irony of nature, some autistic persons who cannot communicate normally possess intellectual powers that can only be described as those of a SAVANT.*

**tabula rasa** (TAB-yuh-luh RAW-suh). Something that is pristine and new without any preconceptions or existing features. Literally, a clean slate; in psychological terms, the mind before it takes on any impressions from society or experience.

*Teaching kindergarten is rewarding, for each child's mind is in many ways a TABULA RASA.*

## VERBS

**proselytize** (PRAH-suh-luh-tyz). To try to convert someone to a religious faith or political doctrine.

*Many are suspicious that born-again Christians all seek to PROSELYTIZE others.*

## ANTONYMS

**befuddle** (bih-FUH-dil). To confuse, mystify, or confound; to make someone inebriated and/or unable to think clearly.

*The absent-minded professor's lectures so BEFUDDLED the students that they were quickly as confused as he was.*

**bemused** (bih-MYOOZD). Bewildered, perplexed, or lost in reflection.

*College students often appear BEMUSED right before an exam, since they are focusing intently on their studies.*

**discombobulate** (DISS-kum-BOB-yoo-layt). To throw someone into a state of confusion; to utterly take aback.

*The attempt to see everything at Disneyland in one day can DISCOMBOBULATE even the calmest parents.*

**immutable** (ih-MYOO-tuh-bull). Not changing; not able to be changed.

*"I don't know what IMMUTABLE differences exist between men and women apart from differences in their genitals." —Naomi Weisstein, American feminist*

## 69. Essence

(ESS-ehns), 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-tul). 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-YEW). 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-jee). 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-ehns). The pure, concentrated embodiment of something. In medieval philosophy, the fifth element after earth, air, fire, and water.

*The announcer commented that those who competed in the triathlon were the QUINTESSENCE of speed, strength, and endurance.*

## ANTONYMS

**nihility** (ny-HILL-uh-tee). The condition of nothingness.

*Benjamin wondered if anything existed after this life or if death brought about NIHILITY.*

**nonexistence** (*non-ig-ZIS-tehns*). 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*

## 70. Ethos

(*EE-thoss*), noun

The core principles or beliefs of a religion, culture, or community.

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## ADJECTIVES

**dogmatic** (*DAWG-matt-ik*). A person who adheres rigidly to principles, rules, and beliefs, even when there is ample evidence that doing so may not be the best course of action.

*Leroy is DOGMATIC in his assertion that the Maserati Gran Turismo is superior to the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren.*

**egalitarian** (*ih-gal-uh-TAIR-ee-uhn*). Fair and balanced in the extreme; of the belief that all people 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*

**holistic** (*ho-LISS-tik*). Concerning the whole person and not just a specific organ, condition, or disease.

*Marsha’s HOLISTIC approach to healing involves channeling energy through crystals.*

## NOUNS

## 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 marketing DEMIURGE.*

**gestalt** (geh-SHTALT). A unified whole.  
*“Feminism is an entire world view or GESTALT, not just a laundry list of women’s issues.” —Charlotte Bunch, American feminist*

**humanism** (HEW-muh-niz-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*

**ideologue** (EYE-dee-uh-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*

**monotheism** (mawn-uh-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.*

**nationalism** (NASH-eh-nul-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.”*

**nominalism** (NOM-ih-nuh-liz-um). A philosophy that denies the existence of universal truths.

*Some scientists suspect that, rather than being universal, the laws of physics may vary in different regions of the universe—a strong supporting argument for NOMINALISM.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**abjure** (*ab-JOOR*). To renounce, repudiate, or give up one's previously held beliefs; to solemnly swear off or recant.

*When taking the U.S. oath of citizenship, one must ABJURE allegiance to any other nation.*

**apostasy** (*uh-POSS-tuh-see*). The act of abandoning, ignoring, or openly flouting 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*

**sacrilegious** (*sak-reh-LIJ-uss*). 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.*

## 71. Evil

(*EE-vuhl*), adjective

Wrong or bad morally; wicked

## 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-uss*). Uncivilized or primitive; characterized by brutality or savagery; uncivilized; cruel.

*Their captivity was marked by BARBAROUS living conditions, psychological abuse, and little or no news of outside events.*

**diabolical** (*dy-uh-BAWL-ih-kul*). Devilish, evil; wicked or cruel.

*The terrorists, the papers claimed, had a DIABOLICAL agenda.*

**draconian** (*dray-KO-nee-ihn*). 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** (*EK-si-kruh-bull*). 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 that the paparazzi hang 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-FAIR-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.*

**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-uh-muh). Someone or something that is greatly disliked, detested, or shunned; one that is cursed, denounced, or excommunicated by a religious authority.

*The events of the Holocaust are ANATHEMA to all moral and civilized human beings.*

**iniquity** (ih-NIK-wih-tee). Injustice or immoral action.

*The many INIQUITIES suffered by American Indians at the hands of government authorities are 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** (bih-NYN). 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.*

## 72. Exaggerate

(ig-ZAJ-uh-rayt), verb

To think, write, or speak of something as greater than it is; magnify beyond the truth; overstate.

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### 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.*

### NOUNS

**hyperbole** (hy-PUR-buh-lee). Extravagant overstatement.

*“The final key to the way I promote is bravado. I play to people’s fantasies. People may not always think big themselves, but they can still get very excited by those who do. That’s why a little HYPERBOLE never hurts.” —Donald Trump, American entrepreneur*

**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.*

### VERBS

**aggrandize** (uh-GRAN-dyz). To increase the size, scope, power, wealth, status, or influence of someone or something; 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.*



**embellish** (ihm-BELL-ish). To ornament and beautify; to improve in appearance by adornment; to exaggerate or add false details to facts.

*Jim EMBELLISHED his tale of almost catching an elusive catfish until it began to resemble Ahab's quest for the white whale.*

**embroider** (em-BROY-dur). To add fanciful details to; embellish.

*Matt has been known to EMBROIDER the history of his love life.*

## ANTONYMS

**deemphasize** (dee-EM-fuh-syz). 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-STAYT). 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.*

## 73. Excite

(ek-SYT), verb

To arouse or provoke sensations, feelings, or emotions; to awaken; to stir to action.

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## ADJECTIVES

**incendiary** (in-SEN-dee-ayr-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.*

## 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-SOHn). 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-rayt). 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** (fur-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 perticular 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-ayt). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**blasé** (blah-ZAY). Unimpressed; bored; sophisticated; 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-TUR-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-ik). Having a calm, unexcitable temperament.

*Allan’s PHLEGMATIC personality was certainly helpful during the deadline crunch in keeping us all from panicking.*

# F

## 74. False

(*FALCE*), adjective

Not correct or true; fake; deceptive; not genuine; erroneous.

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### ADJECTIVES

**ersatz** (*AIR-zotz*). Phony, fake, counterfeit; inferior as an imitation of an original.

*Before his sentencing and jail term, the artist made an impressive living selling ERSATZ Rembrandt paintings.*

**factitious** (*fak-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-shuss*). 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 secondhand dress and a FAUX pearl necklace made out of white beads.*

**sophistic** (*suh-FIS-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-shuss*). Something that appears correct on the surface but is in fact wrong.

*At first it was thought that archaeologists found the remains of Jesus' brother James, but later the evidence was proven SPECIOUS.*

**spurious** (*SPYOOOR-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 deliberate false report, rumor, or fabrication. Also, a small projection, like a wing near the nose of an airplane.

*Wally's story that Leon had assaulted him on the playground was clearly a CANARD, and the teacher punished him for telling lies.*

**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.*

**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** (*GAYN-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.*

**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](#)

## 75. Fight

(FYT), 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-kohss). Ready or inclined to quarrel, fight, or go to war; warlike or hostile in manner or temperament.  
*Doug is so touchy about his new car 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-NESS-een). Involving or relating to conflict within a group. Also, characterized by slaughter, deadly.

*The INTERNECINE conflict became so intense that it prevented the board from functioning.*

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

*Teenagers are PUGNACIOUS by nature: If I say “no,” he invariably asks “why?”*

**truculent** (TRUK-yu-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** (DAWN-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** (sy-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-tor-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 statesman and literary figure*

**harmony** (*HAR-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*

## 76. Flaws

(*FLAWS*), noun

Imperfections or defects that impair the quality of and detract from one’s character.

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## 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!*

**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** (*kuh-PRISH-uss*). Unpredictable, impulsive; prone to making sudden unplanned changes.

*“I do not understand the CAPRICIOUS lewdness of the sleeping mind.” —John Cheever, American novelist*

**captious** (*KAP-shuss*). Fond of finding faults in others; ill-natured and overly critical; carping; intending to confuse.

*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-kluh-SAY*). 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** (*DESS-ul-tor-ee*). Lacking guidance or progressing randomly; aimless; fitful.

*“Find time still to be learning somewhat good, and give up being DESULTORY.” —Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor*

**effete** (*eh-FEET*). Depleted and lacking in vigor due to decadence or self-indulgence.

*The Eddingtons belong to an American club of EFFETE snobs who claim to trace their lineage back to the British royal family.*

**farouche** (fuh-ROOSH). Unsociable; cranky; withdrawn; fierce.

*His FAROUCHE demeanor gave people the impression that he didn't like them, when in fact he was merely an introvert.*

**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** (HYD-bownd). 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-ik). 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** (pih-DAN-tik). Lacking in imagination; intellectually showy or overblown; making an ostentatious display of knowledge.

*Professor Anthony's PEDANTIC manner was thought entertaining by some students and condescending by others.*

**ungainly** (un-GAYN-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.*

## 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.*

**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-AWN-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** (hih-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-dn-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**impeccable** (im-PECK-uh-bull). Perfect, flawless; beyond criticism or sin.  
*While we may expect all priests to be morally IMPECCABLE, recent events prove that even they are human.*

**paragon** (PAIR-uh-gone). The very best example of something; a peerless model or pattern or perfection. Also, a perfect diamond or large pearl that is perfectly round.

*“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, *English dramatist*

## 77. Flippant

(FLIH-punt), adjective

Showing a lack of appropriate seriousness; having a disrespectful disregard for decorum, often expressed by tactless chatter and jabber.

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## ADJECTIVES

**amiable** (AY-me-uh-bull). Pleasant and friendly; cordial, with a happy disposition, and easy to get along with.

*My friend Amy is able to get along with everyone because she is AMIABLE.*

**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.*

**droll** (DROLE). Amusing in a wry, odd, or funny way.

*Norma’s peers considered her DROLL for she was always able to make them laugh with her offbeat comments.*

**facetious** (fuh-SEE-shuss). Playful; intended to be humorous but often silly or inappropriate.

*“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*

**irreverent** (ih-REV-er-unt). Lacking in respect; displaying behavior that is disrespectful.

*IRREVERENT comedians often use words that are considered expletives.*

**jocular** (JAH-kyoo-lur). Having a playful, joking disposition; intended to be funny; made in jest.

*Stan’s always JOCULAR behavior and attitude was out of place during serious times.*

**jovial** (JOE-vee-uhl). Cheerful in mood or disposition.

*Winning that much money on a lottery ticket would certainly put anyone in a JOVIAL mood.*

## NOUNS

**guffaw** (guh-FAWE). A loud and raucous laugh.

*Robert’s GUFFAW was embarrassing to his wife, so she grimaced whenever they went to a humorous play.*

**levity** (LEV-ih-tee). Remarks or behavior intended to be amusing, usually out of keeping with a serious situation; light-hearted comments or behavior.

*Sometimes LEVITY is a way of relieving the anxiety of a crisis situation.*

**parody** (PAR-oh-dee). A humorous or satirical takeoff on something well known, such as a person or song; a literary or musical style or type; a poor attempt or imitation that appears ridiculous.

*The Saturday Night Live PARODY of the evening news has been a popular segment since the show's inception.*

**whimsy** (WIMM-zee). The quality of being quaint, odd, and playfully humorous in an endearing way; a fanciful idea.

*The idea of winning the lottery is for many simple WHIMSY, yet they buy a ticket each week.*

## VERBS

**disport** (dih-SPORT). To show off, draw attention to oneself, or behave in a playful way.

*Those two teens are acting like little kids as they DISPORT at Disneyland.*

## ANTONYMS

**gravitas** (GRAH-vih-tas). A serious and solemn way of behaving.

*A funeral is an appropriate place for GRAVITAS.*

**haughty** (HAW-tee). Superior, condescending, or arrogant.

*I tried to apologize for bumping into the woman, but she only gave me a HAUGHTY glance and inspected her fur coat for damage.*

**mortification** (more-tih-fih-KAY-shun). To control or put an end to bodily desires by means of abstinence from pleasure and by self-inflicted pain; deep shame and humiliation caused by a blow to one's pride.

*A deep sense of MORTIFICATION overcame the congregation when they learned how little had been pledged for the new rectory.*

## 78. Foods

(FOODS), noun

Substances consumed by eating or drinking for nourishment, to provide energy, to sustain life, or promote growth

to sustain life, or promote growth.

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## ADJECTIVES

**culinary** (KYOO-lih-nare-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).  
*Lisa knew JULIENNE vegetables would look more elegant on the plates of her dinner guests than those cut in the normal way.*

## 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-pote). 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 combining the diced heart, liver, and lungs of a sheep or cow with onions, suet, oatmeal, and seasonings, then 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-LY-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 FOR). A small decorated cake. Plural: petits fours (PET-ee FORS).  
*Aunt Marcia always served tea and PETITS FOURS at three o’clock.*



**quahog** (KO-hawg). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**abstain** (ub-STAYN). 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.*

## 79. Fun

(FUHN), noun

A source or cause of amusement or merriment; enjoyment.

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## ADJECTIVES

**facetious** (fuh-SEE-shuss). Playful; intended to be humorous but often silly or inappropriate.

*“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.

*“This species of ‘fame’ a WAGGISH acquaintance says can be manufactured to order, and sometimes is so manufactured.” —Herman Melville, American author*

## NOUNS

**disport** (dih-SPORT). A diversion or amusement.

*Felicia has turned the act of arguing with the proprietors of her favorite boutiques into a DISPORT.*

**revelry** (REV-uhl-ree). Boisterous festivity and merrymaking.

*“Midnight shout and REVELRY, / Topsy dance and jollity.” —John Milton, English poet*

## 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.*

**gambol** (*GAM-bull*). 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*

## ANTONYMS

**dishearten** (*diss-HAR-tun*). 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*

**somber** (*SAWM-ber*). Depressed or depressing; gloomy; dismal, melancholy; sad.

*Due to the seriousness of the situation, the television announcer spoke in SOMBER tones.*

## 80. Fussbudget

(*FUSS-buh-jet*), noun

Someone who typically worries about trivial things.

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## ADJECTIVES

**captious** (*KAP-shuss*). Fond of finding faults in others; ill-natured and overly critical; carping; intending to confuse.

*Ed's CAPTIOUS remarks were entirely inappropriate and showed his lack of self-esteem.*

**pedantic** (*pih-DAN-tik*). Lacking in imagination; intellectually showy or overblown; making an ostentatious display of knowledge.

*Professor Anthony's PEDANTIC manner was thought entertaining by some students and condescending by others.*

**querulous** (*KWAIR-eh-luss*). Habitually whining and griping.

*Their QUERULOUS manner with the waiter made them unpleasant and embarrassing dinner companions.*

## NOUNS

**nitty-gritty** (*NIH-tee GRIH-tee*). The basic and most important details of something; the thing or approach that is most practical, direct, and down to earth.  
*The coach believed wins were a result of paying attention to the NITTY-GRITTY, so he always began practice with rudimentary drills.*

**OCD** (*OH-see-dee*). Acronym for “obsessive-compulsive disorder”: a psychological condition characterized by uncontrolled repeated behaviors, such as hand-washing.

*Her friends thought she was exhibiting the telltale signs of OCD, but Elaine just thought it appropriate to check her makeup regularly.*

**perfectionist** (*PURR-fec-shuh-nist*). Someone who is unaccepting of any fault, especially in his or her own actions.

*Julie thought her teacher was a PERFECTIONIST, so she worked even harder on her essay.*

## VERBS

**cavil** (*KAV-uhl*). To find fault in trivial matters or raise petty objections.

*Town meetings take twice as long as they should because some citizens use the event as a forum to CAVIL.*

**micromanage** (MY-krow-man-ij). To manage a business or organization by paying extreme (and usually excessive) attention to small details; to retain personal responsibility for overseeing all details of an organization or project. *Some who MICROMANAGE contribute a great deal, yet others do more harm than good.*

## ANTONYMS

**blasé** (blah-ZAY). Unimpressed; bored; sophisticated; 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.*

**lethargic** (luh-THAR-jik). Sluggish; inactive to such a degree as to resemble sleep or unconsciousness.

*After many long hours of work, Pat and Corey were LETHARGIC but still unable to call it a night.*

**negligent** (NEG-luh-jent). Habitually careless or irresponsible; guilty of failing to provide a proper or reasonable level of care.

*Investigators deemed that the nursing home staff had not been NEGLIGENT and thus was not responsible for the accident.*

# G

## 81. Gamesmanship

(GAYMZ-muhn-ship), noun

Strategies used to gain an advantage in sports, life, business, or politics; unconventional but not strictly illegal tactics employed to gain an advantage.

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### ADJECTIVES

**covert** (KUV-ert). Concealed; disguised; secret.

*Many COVERT operations contributed to the success of D-Day, but it took decades for anyone involved in them to be honored.*

**subversive** (sub-VER-sihv). Intended to undermine a government or other institution, usually by secret actions performed from the inside; undermining.  
*Antiwar protesters of the 1960s were thought by many to be SUBVERSIVE and by others to be patriots defending freedom of speech.*

### NOUNS

**charlatan** (SHAR-luh-tun). Someone who lies, claiming a special talent, skill, or expertise; a fake or humbug.

*Ultimately the healer was proved to be a CHARLATAN, but not before several people had suffered and died.*

**contrivance** (kun-TRY-vunce). A cleverly made, unusual device or machine; a clever way to acquire something; a plot or scheme; a plan intended to deceive.

*The CONTRIVANCES of alchemists were machines that attempted—and failed—to turn base metals into gold.*

**guile** (*GILE*). Cunning, deceitful, and treacherous quality or type of behavior; skill and cleverness used to trick, deceive, or mislead people.

*No matter how smart you think you are, you are no match for the GUILF of an experienced con artist.*

**mendacity** (*men-DASS-uh-tee*). Deliberate untruthfulness; a lie or falsehood.

*Even after he was caught red-handed, Brian still thought his MENDACITIES would be believed.*

**nepotism** (*NEH-puh-tih-zum*). 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.*

**pretense** (*PREE-tence*). Behaving in a way that is not genuine but meant to deceive others; a claim that has few facts to support it; something imagined or fake.

*Many of Shakespeare's plays are crafted around ironic PRETENSE, when men played the parts of women who were pretending to be men.*

## VERBS

**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.*

**gerrymander** (*JAIR-ee-MAN-dur*). To divide an electoral district or geographic area so as to give a political advantage to a particular party.

*The state legislature's attempt to GERRYMANDER was deemed illegal and voided by the state supreme court.*

**impeach** (im-PEECH). To charge a government official with serious misconduct while in office; to remove an official, including a president, from public office for having committed high crimes and misdemeanors; to make an accusation against, challenge the validity of, or discredit a person or a document.

*It is the responsibility of a good attorney to IMPEACH the credibility of witnesses, although it often appears to be an aggressive and mean-spirited strategy.*

**impugn** (im-PYOON). To challenge someone's honesty or motives.

*The defense attorney sought to IMPUGN the prosecutor's witness.*

## ANTONYMS

**amenable** (uh-MEE-nuh-bul). Agreeable to suggestions; likely to cooperate; accountable for actions.

*Students were AMENABLE to a new dress code if they were asked to give input when it was being decided.*

**indolent** (IN-duh-lent). Lazy, lethargic; habitually inactive and disinclined to exert oneself. Also used to describe a disease or condition that is slow to develop or heal, yet causes no pain.

*INDOLENT youths don't participate in athletics or in anything else.*

**laissez-faire** (leh-zay FAIR). The principle that the best economy is one that does not regulate private industry and leaves markets free; noninterference in the affairs of others; letting others do as they wish.

*Ironically, many who believe in economic LAISSEZ-FAIRE often support government interference in the affairs of other nations.*

## 82. Gauche



(GOHSH), adjective

Sorely lacking in the social graces and good manners; crude behavior.

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## ADJECTIVES

**benighted** (bih-NY-tid). To be lost, ignorant, or unenlightened.

*The Medieval period was a BENIGHTED era of superstition.*

**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.*

**odious** (OH-dee-us). Offensive or disgusting; causing 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*

**ribald** (RIB-uld). Lewd; off-color; somewhat dirty and inappropriate.

*“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*

## NOUNS

**philistine** (FILL-ih-steen). A crude and ignorant person who is disinterested in and does not appreciate culture and the arts.

*“A PHILISTINE is a full-grown person whose interests are of a material and commonplace nature, and whose mentality is formed of the stock ideas and conventional ideals of his or her group and time.” —Vladimir Nabokov, Russian-American novelist*

**troglodyte** (TRAWG-luh-dyt). A person considered to be primitive, out of date, coarse, uncouth, ill-mannered, or brutish.

*Sick and tired of going out with TROGLODYTES, Janet told her friends she was through with blind dates.*

**yahoo** (YAH-hoo). A boorish, uncultivated, common person.

*“Factory windows are always broken. / Somebody’s always throwing bricks, / Somebody’s always heaving cinders, / Playing ugly YAHOO tricks.” —Vachel Lindsay, American poet*

**yob** (YAWB). A cruel and loutish young man; a bully.

*“Mick Jagger, alternately slurring YOB and lisping lordling, is classlessness apotheosised.” —Philip Norman, British author*

## VERBS

**yawp** (YAWP). To make a raucous, clamorous noise.

*“I sound my barbaric YAWP over the roofs of the world.” —Walt Whitman, American poet and humanist*

## ANTONYMS

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

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

**savoir faire** (SAV-wahr FAYR). 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.*

## 83. Gift

(*GIFT*), noun

Something given or bestowed; a present.

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## ADJECTIVES

**eleemosynary** (*ell-uh-MOSS-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 ELEMOSYNARY organization.*

## 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; generosity in general.

*"A LARGESSE universal, like the sun, / His liberal eye doth give to everyone, / Thawing cold fear." —William Shakespeare*

**oblation** (*uh-BLAY-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-tor-ee*). An element used during a Christian communion service.

*The OFFERTORY is preceded and followed by a prayer.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**forfeit** (*FOR-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** (*rih-LING-kwish*). To give up; to surrender or forswear something.

*"Time does not RELINQUISH its rights, either over human beings or over mountains." —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German playwright and novelist*

## 84. Gravitas

(*GRAH-vih-tas*), noun

A serious and solemn way of behaving.

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## ADJECTIVES

**funereal** (fyoo-NEER-ee-uhl). Reminiscent of a funeral; dark, brooding, and mournful.

*The FUNEREAL tone of the meeting was not at all what we had in mind to raise morale.*

**judicious** (joo-DISH-us). Showing wisdom, good sense, or discretion, often with the intention of avoiding trouble or waste.

*Since his earlier troubles, Johan has been very JUDICIOUS whenever he parties with friends.*

## NOUNS

**edification** (eh-dih-fuh-KAY-shun). Instruction or enlightenment, often involving moral or spiritual teachings.

*The evangelical preacher's EDIFICATION of church members and others in the community was known to all.*

## ANTONYMS

**derision** (dih-RIH-zhun). Ridicule, contempt, or mockery.

*Whenever these two schools compete in a sporting event, all you hear is DERISION chanted from one side to the other.*

**feckless** (FEK-less). Ineffective; careless; lacking definitiveness of purpose.

*It is frustrating when the most vocal person in a group of volunteers also proves to be the most FECKLESS.*

**flippant** (FLIH-punt). Showing a lack of appropriate seriousness; having a disrespectful disregard for decorum, often expressed by tactless chatter and jabber.

*His FLIPPANT actions and words earned a few laughs from his peers, but they also got him several days of detention and a bad reputation.*

**irreverent** (ih-REV-er-unt). Lacking in respect. Displaying behavior that is disrespectful.

*IRREVERENT comedians often use words that are considered expletives.*

**jejune** (jih-JOON). Uninteresting; dull or lackluster; lacking in sophistication; lacking proper nourishment.

*Many of those taking their first music lessons have JEJUNE dreams of fame, fortune, and standing-room-only gigs.*

**superficial** (soo-pur-FIH-shul). Having to do only with the surface; concerned with or stating only the obvious, with little significance or substance; not thorough.

*The wound was SUPERFICIAL, requiring only cleaning and bandaging and no sutures.*

## 85. Greed

(GREED), noun

Excessive desire to acquire possessions, wealth, etc.; craving more than is necessary or appropriate.

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### 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-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.*

**voracious** (*vuh-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** (*noh-BLESS oh-BLEEZH*). The idea that people born to nobility or upper classes must behave generously toward those less privileged.

*Many of the most famous foundations named for the wealthiest families, like Carnegie or Rockefeller, were founded on the principle 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.*

## 86. Group

(*GROOP*), noun

A collection or assembly of persons or things; a meeting.

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## ADJECTIVES

**sectarian** (*sek-TAIR-ee-un*). Relating to the practices, nature, or activities of a sect; also, narrow-minded and limited in outlook.

*“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*

## NOUNS

**cabal** (kuh-BAL). 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-TUR-nih-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** (kun-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** (KAW-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**anchorite** (ANG-kuh-ryt). 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** (AIR-uh-myt). A hermit; religious recluse.

*John chose the life of an EREMITE as the way to spiritual salvation and moral redemption.*

**ochlophobia** (ock-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.*

## 87. Grouse

(GROUSS), verb

To complain or grumble about one's situation.

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## ADJECTIVES

**acrimonious** (ak-rih-MOAN-ee-us). Angry; bitter; 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*

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

*“Sex is metaphysical for men, as it is not for women. Women have no problem to solve through sex. Physically and psychologically, they are serenely self-contained. They may choose to achieve, but they do not need it. They are not thrust into the beyond by their own FRACTIOUS bodies.” —Camille Paglia, American author, feminist, and social critic*

**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.*

**querulous** (KWAIR-eh-luss). Habitually whining and griping.  
*Their QUERULOUS manner with the waiter made them unpleasant and embarrassing dinner companions.*

## 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.*

**bête noire** (bett-NWAR). A thing for which one has an intense dislike or great fear; a dreaded enemy or foe.  
*Sunlight was Dracula's greatest BÊTE NOIRE.*

**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.*

**jeremiad** (jare-uh-MY-uhd). A document or speech in which the author bitterly rails against the injustices of society or warns of impending death, destruction, or doom.  
*The Unabomber's Manifesto was an intelligently written JEREMIAD.*

**misanthrope** (MISS-un-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 attend the regatta with him.*

## VERBS

**abominate** (uh-BOM-in-ayt). To loathe; hate; detest.

*“For my part, I ABOMINATE all honorable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind whatsoever.” —Herman Melville, American author*

**castigate** (KAS-tuh-gayt). 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.*

**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*

**harry** (HAIR-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*

## ANTONYMS

**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.*

**levity** (LEV-ih-tee). Remarks or behavior intended to be amusing, usually out of keeping with a serious situation; light-hearted comments or behavior.

*Sometimes LEVITY is a way of relieving the anxiety of a crisis situation.*

**waggish** (WAG-ish). Joking, witty, and mischievous.

*“This species of ‘fame’ a WAGGISH acquaintance says can be manufactured to order, and sometimes is so manufactured.” —Herman Melville, American author*

## 88. 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** (DYE-layt). 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-rayt). 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** (PROP-uh-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** (RY-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** (sub-SYD). 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

## 89. Harass

(huh-RASS), verb

To bother persistently; disturb continually; pester; persecute.

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### VERBS

**badger** (BAJ-er). To torment as if baiting a badger; to urge persistently; nag.  
*Martha was convinced that she had to BADGER her daughter to do her homework.*

**beleaguer** (beh-LEE-gur). To persistently surround, harry, or bother 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.  
*Everywhere he went, the movie idol was BESIEGED by crazed fans looking for autographs and even pieces of his hair or clothing.*

**harry** (HAIR-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; dominate.

*The coach HECTORED the boys so often that they quit the team in disgust.*

## ANTONYMS

**facilitate** (fuh-SIL-ih-tayt). 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*

## 90. Harm

(HARM), verb

To hurt, damage, or impair; injure.

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## 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-ful). Venomous; deadly; ruinous; destructive.

*The BANEFUL influence of gangs on their young members can ruin lives forever.*



**deleterious** (*deh-luh-TEE-ree-us*). With harmful or damaging effect on something or someone. As a legal term, communicates the assessment of harm, injury, or loss.

*It is now accepted as fact that smoking is DELETERIOUS to one's health as well as highly addictive, but year after year more teenagers take it up.*

**internecine** (*in-ter-NESS-eeen*). Characterized by slaughter; deadly. Also, involving or relating to conflict within a group.

*The INTERNECINE conflict was particularly unfortunate in its thoroughness.*

**noisome** (*NOY-sum*). Harmful or injurious to the health; offensive.

*The NOISOME chemicals were placed in a locked room.*

**noxious** (*NOK-shuss*). Physically or 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*). Causing great harm, destruction, injury, or death; having a debilitating effect.

*Though the initial symptoms were relatively mild, it was a PERNICIOUS and unstoppable disease.*

## NOUNS

**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.*

**scourge** (*SKURJ*). A cause of widespread or great affliction.

*Famine is one of humanity's most horrific SCOURGES.*

## VERBS

**debilitate** (*dih-BILL-uh-tayt*). To make weak or feeble.

*ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, DEBILITATES those who suffer from it, and it is ultimately fatal.*

**decimate** (DESS-ih-mayt). To reduce something greatly, to the point of wiping it out. Originally, the killing of every tenth person in a population.

*"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-FYL). 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-krayt). 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** (ig-ZASS-er-bayt). To worsen or aggravate an already bad situation; to make something even more unpleasant or severe.

*Lying almost always EXACERBATES a bad situation; that's one reason that honesty is the best policy.*

**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-ayt). 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*

## ANTONYMS

**innocuous** (ih-NAWK-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*

## 91. Haughty

(HAW-tee), adjective

Superior, condescending, or arrogant.

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## ADJECTIVES

**austere** (aw-STEER). Stern; grim and lacking humor or warmth; clean and unornamented; severe or strict in manner.

*In the movie Dead Poets Society, Robin Williams clashes with an AUSTERE headmaster at a private boys' school.*

**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.*

**vainglorious** (vayn-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

**affectation** (ah-fek-TAY-shun). Behaviors or mannerisms that are exaggerated, extreme, eccentric, and deliberately showy, often an effort to attract attention.

*"AFFECTATION is awkward and forces imitation of what should be genuine and easy." —John Locke, British philosopher*

**doyen/doyenne** (doy-EN). A man or woman who is the senior member of a group, based on rank, age, experience, etc.

*Though she is the youngest member of our group, Brittany is our DOYENNE, based on her extensive family connections.*

**haute couture** (OAT ko-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 MOND). 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*

## ANTONYMS

**déclassé** (day-kluh-SAY). 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.*

**egalitarian** (ih-gal-uh-TAIR-ee-uhn). Fair and balanced in the extreme; of the belief that all people 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*

**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.*

**hoi polloi** (HOY puh-LOY). A pejorative term used to describe the masses or the common people.

*“My practice is to ignore the pathetic wishes and desires of the HOI POLLOI,” the governor said haughtily.*

## 92. Hearsay

(HEER-say), noun

Information relayed by someone other than the person or persons who originally took the action or made the statement being discussed.

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## ADJECTIVES

**apocryphal** (uh-POCK-rih-fuhl). Probably not true but widely believed to be so; a story that is fabricated long after the fact.

*The tale of George Washington chopping down a cherry tree when he was a boy, though widely taught in the nineteenth century, is now considered APOCRYPHAL by scholars.*

**incredulous** (in-KREDJ-uh-luss). Unable or unwilling to believe something; unconvinced or demonstrating disbelief.

*The teenager was INCREDULOUS when accused of cheating, for he was a good student.*

**litigious** (lih-TIDJ-uss). Overly inclined to quarrel and argue; tending to engage in lawsuits; related to litigation.

*It's difficult to say how much attorneys have promoted the LITIGIOUS trend apparent today and how much it is the responsibility of society in general.*

**purported** (purr-POR-tid). Supposed or claimed to be true but without evidence or proof; represented as the real thing.

*The PURPORTED fourth cousin of Queen Elizabeth was the star of the cruise, though no one could prove her relationship to the royal.*

**specious** (SPEE-shuss). Attractive on the surface, but actually of no real interest or value; deceptive; appearing to be true, but really false.

*At first it was thought that archaeologists found the remains of Jesus' brother James, but later the evidence was proven SPECIOUS.*

## NOUNS

**aspersion** (uh-SPUR-zhun). False accusation; slander; a statement that attacks someone's character or reputation.

*Angry individuals are likely to cast ASPERSIONS on the targets of their hostility.*

**credence** (KREE-denss). A belief in something as factual, based on the degree to which something is plausible; faith in something's legitimacy.

*The defendant's claims of innocence lost CREDENCE as more evidence was uncovered.*

**gossipmonger** (GOSS-ip-MONG-uhr). Someone who conducts a conversation about personal or intimate rumors or facts, especially those that are malicious to and about others.

*Stacie was a notorious GOSSIPMONGER, yet she still had the ears of many in the twelfth grade.*

**kangaroo court** (*kan-guh-ROO KORT*). An unofficial court set up on the spot to deliver judgment that has already been decided in advance; a situation in which someone is prejudged and unable to receive a fair trial.

*Recently a defense attorney was placed in jail for referring to the proceedings as a KANGAROO COURT.*

**tort** (*TORT*). In legal terms, a wrongful act for which damages can be sought by an injured party.

*Law students find classes on TORTS to be the most interesting and ultimately, when they practice law, the most practical.*

## VERBS

**corroborate** (*kuh-RAW-buh-rayt*). To give evidence of the truth; confirm or increase in certainty; to provide testimony that supports previous theories or opinions.

*Jim said his brother would CORROBORATE his story, proving he was nowhere near the scene of the crime.*

**implicate** (*IM-pluh-kayt*). To show that someone or something played a part in or is connected to an activity, such as a crime; to imply or involve something as a consequence.

*Being at the scene of the vandalism wouldn't necessarily IMPLICATE anyone, but it would cast suspicion on them.*

**impugn** (*im-PYOON*). To suggest that someone or something cannot be trusted; to challenge someone's honesty or motives.

*The defense attorney sought to IMPUGN the prosecutor's witness.*

**traduce** (*truh-DOOCE*). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**inarguable** (*in-AR-gyoo-uh-bull*). Impossible to deny or take an opposing view from.

*Alex's assertions regarding who manufactured a particular car model were INARGUABLE.*

**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*

## 93. Help

(*HELP*), verb

To give assistance and make it possible or easier to accomplish a task; to 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** (*uh-JOO-dih-kayt*). To preside over or listen to opposing arguments and help two parties settle their differences and come to an agreement.

*As my daughters pummeled each other while screaming at top volume, I tried desperately to ADJUDICATE their quarrel.*

**assuage** (*uh-SWAYJ*). To ease; to make less severe; to mitigate.

*“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; 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*

**minister** (*MIN-uh-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** (*MIH-tuh-gayt*). To make or become milder, less severe, or less painful.

*By turning state’s evidence and testifying against the suspected embezzlers, Mark hoped to MITIGATE his own guilty contributions to the shady business deal.*

## ANTONYMS

**sabotage** (*SAB-uh-tawzh*). 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** (*THWART*). 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*

## 94. Hide

(HYD), verb

To place or keep out of sight; conceal; secrete; to keep from the knowledge of others; keep secret.

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### ADJECTIVES

**covert** (KUV-ert). Concealed; disguised; secret.

*Many COVERT operations contributed to the success of D-Day, but it took decades for anyone involved in them to be honored.*

**ulterior** (ul-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** (aw-kuhl-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.*

### VERBS

**camouflage** (KAM-uh-flazh). To hide or make something less visible by changing its appearance.

*Dave became one of the company’s best salespeople because he was able to CAMOUFLAGE his real feelings.*

**dissimulate** (*dih-SIM-yuh-layt*). 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.*

## 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.*

## 95. Hoary

(*HOAR-ee*), adjective

Impressively old; ancient.

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## ADJECTIVES

**hidebound** (*HYD-bownd*). 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.*

**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.*

**venerable** (VEN-err-uh-bull). An individual or institution that is respected and revered, sometimes because of achievement, intelligence, or character; but just as often as a result of being around a long time.

*“Is the babe young? When I behold it, it seems more VENERABLE than the oldest man.” —Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist*

## NOUNS

**anachronism** (uh-NAK-ruh-niz-em). Something out of place because it is from a different period of time; a person, idea, or action that belongs to a different time in history.

*Shakespeare was famous for surprising readers and audiences with ANACHRONISMS, such as clock chimes during the days of Julius Caesar.*

**xerosis** (zih-ROH-sis). The typical hardening of aging skin and tissue.  
*Ophelia constantly visits European spas to slow the onset of XEROSIS.*

## VERBS

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**élan** (a-LON). Enthusiasm, energy, flair, zest.  
*Bryanna reacted with ÉLAN when she was tapped to be part of a feature for Elite Travel Magazine.*

**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.*

**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 the NASCENT period of their adjustment to luxury.*

## 96. Homonym

(HOM-uh-nim), noun

A word that is pronounced the same as another word of different meaning.

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### ADJECTIVES

**idiomatic** (ih-dee-uh-MAT-ik). Characteristic of a phrase whose usage is peculiar to a particular language, in terms of grammar or meaning.

*For the recent immigrant from Brazil, the IDIOMATIC character of many American expressions was very confusing.*

**orthographic** (ore-tho-GRAH-fik). Written according to the standard usage of a given language, using appropriate letters and symbols.

*The ORTHOGRAPHIC character of Spanish is determined by its descent from Latin, along with French and Italian.*

### NOUNS

**acronym** (AK-roh-nihm). A word that is formed from the initials or other parts of several words, such as NATO (for “North Atlantic Treaty Organization”).

*GIGO is an ACRONYM computer programmers created to stand for “garbage in, garbage out.”*

**context** (KON-tekst). The words, phrases, or passages before and after a particular word or passage that helps to explain its complete meaning; the circumstances or events related to an incident or action.

*The CONTEXT of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech is important for understanding the full impact his oration had on his audience.*

**etymology** (*eh-ti-MAH-luh-jee*). The study of word origins and how words have evolved into their current forms or meanings; the lineage of a word; description of its origin and how the word came into its current use.

*Those who have studied Greek or Latin can make educated and often correct guesses regarding a word's ETYMOLOGY.*

**lexicon** (*LEK-sih-kawn*). A dictionary composed for a specific, narrowly defined or professional audience; the vocabulary associated with a specific discipline or group.

*The LEXICON of rap music seems a different language to many parents, but it is an adaptation of street English.*

**malapropism** (*MAL-uh-prop-ism*). Misuse of a word or mangling of the English language, often done for comic effect.

*John said, "The physical year," when he meant to say, "The fiscal year," thereby committing a MALAPROPISM.*

**onomatopoeia** (*on-uh-mot-uh-PEE-uh*). The naming of a thing by creating a vocal imitation of its sound.

*The word "buzz," which sounds like the noise a bee makes, is an example of ONOMATOPOEIA.*

**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.*

**semantics** (*suh-MAN-tiks*). The study of how language conveys meaning; an excessive focus on the way something is phrased rather than what it says.

*The coach's urging to "play aggressive" rather than "hurt the opponents" was a matter of SEMANTICS, and its interpretation depended on which team you wanted to win.*

**tautology** (taw-TALL-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."*

## VERBS

**denote** (dih-NOTE). To designate or refer to a person or thing in particular; to define something literally, as in a dictionary definition; to announce or make known.

*Before the camping trip, each student received specific instructions regarding what would DENOTE a rules infraction for which they would be punished by being sent home.*

## ANTONYMS

**antonym** (AN-tuh-nim). A word having an opposite meaning to that of another word.

*"Rapid" and "slow" are ANTONYMS.*

## 97. 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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## ADJECTIVES

**emeritus** (ih-MAIR-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.*

**honorific** (on-uh-RIFF-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.*

**meritorious** (mair-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.*

## NOUNS

**accolade** (AK-uh-layd). 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-tee). 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). Show of reverence, honor, and respect; a formal public acknowledgment, reverence, allegiance, or honor.

*By visiting the lacrosse hall of fame, the team paid HOMAGE to the sport they played.*



**laureate** (LORE-ee-it). 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-BAY-since). 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-ik). Formal, elaborate praise.

*After Coach Henry retired, her former athletes filled the local paper with PANEGYRICS concerning her character and accomplishments.*

**perquisite** (PUR-kwih-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' regular-season home games.*

## 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-fih-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** (rih-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

## 98. Illness

(IL-niss), 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-VY-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-muh-FEEL-ee-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** (*hy-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** (*hy-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** (*hy-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 membranes, fever, prostration, aches, and pains.

*David was still weak from his bout with INFLUENZA.*

**kyphosis** (ky-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** (MY-grayn). 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 felt one coming on.*

**mononucleosis** (mawn-oh-noo-klee-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-kuh-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-RY-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** (*skit-suh-FREE-nee-uh*). A mental condition that can cause sufferers to hallucinate, to be disoriented, and to withdraw from society.

*It is a common misconception that SCHIZOPHRENIA is the condition of having multiple personalities.*

## ANTONYMS

**eupepsia** (*yoo-PEP-see-uh*). Good digestion.

*John enjoyed EUPEPSIA and could eat almost anything, including very spicy foods, without gastric distress or physical regret.*

**euphoria** (*yoo-FOR-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*

## 99. 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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## ADJECTIVES

**factitious** (*fak-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.*

## NOUNS

**chimera** (ky-MEER-uh). 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*

**epiphany** (ih-PIH-fuh-nee). A sudden intuitive leap of understanding, often with credit given to divine inspiration; a sudden manifestation of the essence or meaning of something; a revelation. When capitalized, refers to the Christian festival celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

*Seemingly miraculous circumstances, such as an unexplained recuperation from serious illness, often lead to an EPIPHANY regarding the blessings of life.*

**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.*

## 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-kayt). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**discerning** (dih-SURN-ing). 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.*

## 100. 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-PETCH-oo-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-tiv). Impatient and stubborn; contrary.

*Audrey was RESTIVE about her upcoming vacation abroad and thus found it difficult to concentrate on her schoolwork*

**unceremonious** (un-sair-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-BYD). 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-SOFF-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.*

## 101. Impeach

(im-PEECH), verb

To charge a government official with serious misconduct while in office; to remove an official, including a president, from public office for having committed high crimes and misdemeanors; to make an accusation against, challenge the validity of, or discredit a person or a document.

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## ADJECTIVES

**pejorative** (*pih-JOR-uh-tiv*). Critical or disapproving; disparaging.

*It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a sarcastic and a PEJORATIVE remark, but both can hurt one's feelings.*

## NOUNS

**antipathy** (*an-TIH-puh-thee*). Anger, hostility, and aversion directed toward a particular person or thing. The object of someone's anger, hostility, or disgust.  
*His ANTIPATHY toward animals originated from an attack he experienced as a youth.*

**aspersion** (*uh-SPUR-zhun*). False accusation; slander; a statement that attacks someone's character or reputation.

*Angry individuals are likely to cast ASPERSIONS on the targets of their hostility.*

**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.*

**filibuster** (*FILL-ih-buss-ter*). A prolonged speech or other tactics to delay legislative actions or other important decisions.

*The room breathed a collective sigh when the senator finally ended his eight-hour FILIBUSTER.*

**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.*

## VERBS

**abdicate** (AB-dih-kayt). To formally give up a position or responsibility; to step down from a high government office or other powerful position.

*King Edward VIII of England ABDICATED the throne rather than give up the woman he loved.*

**contravene** (kawn-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.*

**flout** (FLOUT). To show contempt by openly breaking a law, rule, or tradition. *Leaving one's hat on during the playing of the national anthem FLOUTS a tradition and is considered highly disrespectful.*

**impinge** (im-PINJ). To strike or run into something with force; to have an effect on something. To encroach upon the limits of something, especially a right or law; to cause some kind of restriction.

*Censorship most definitely IMPINGES on the right of free speech, which is why we hold the First Amendment sacred.*

**lobby** (LA-bee). To attempt to persuade a political representative or influential person to support a fight, particular cause, or specific vote.

*Firearms manufacturers in the United States LOBBY Congress to oppose most gun control legislation.*

**rescind** (ree-SIND). Take away, revoke, cancel, withdraw, remove.

*The town RESCINDED all their restrictions on water use after we received two weeks of heavy rain.*

**transgress** (tranz-GRESS). To cross a line and do something wrong, often disobeying a command, guideline, moral code, or law; to go beyond a limit, usually in a bad way.

*David TRANSGRESSED by crossing into Mr. Peterson's yard to play ball.*

## ANTONYMS

**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.*

**covenant** (*KUHV-ih-nent*). A binding agreement or contract between two or more parties. In biblical terms, the promise binding the ancient Israelites to God. *Some teenagers believe promises made by parents, particularly regarding cars and curfews, should be thought of as COVENANTS.*

**obsequious** (*uhb-SEE-kwee-uss*). Excessively eager to please or to obey all instructions; compliant and servile to superiors in order to curry favor.

*“[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

**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

## 102. Improve

(*im-PROOV*), verb

To make better; to raise to a better quality or condition; increase the worth of.

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## ADJECTIVES

**didactic** (*dy-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

## 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.*

## VERBS

**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** (*BODE-ler-ize*). To remove parts of a work of literature considered objectionable, indecent, or offensive.  
*The editor BOWDLERIZED the author's first draft to make the book marketable to a wider audience.*

**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-fy*). To take something rundown, such as a neighborhood, and improve it.  
*Attempts to GENTRIFY the historic neighborhood failed because of community apathy.*

## ANTONYMS

**deteriorate** (*dih-TEER-ee-uh-rayt*). 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** (ig-ZASS-er-bayt). To worsen or aggravate an already bad situation; to make something even more unpleasant or severe.

*Lying almost always EXACERBATES a bad situation; that’s one reason that honesty is the best policy.*

## 103. Indicate

(IN-dih-kayt), verb

To show, point out, or direct attention to; to give a sign of; signify.

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### NOUNS

**bellwether** (BELL-weh-thur). 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.*

### VERBS

**augur** (AW-gur). To predict or foretell the future.

*The three witches of Shakespeare’s Macbeth AUGUR the cataclysmic fate of the play’s titular character.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**veil** (*VAYL*). 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*

## 104. Indolent

(*IN-duh-lent*), adjective

Lazy, lethargic; habitually inactive and disinclined to exert oneself. Also used to describe a disease or condition that is slow to develop or heal, yet causes no pain.

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## ADJECTIVES

**docile** (*DAW-sul*). Quiet, easy to control or teach; unlikely to cause trouble.

*It is unusual to find a truly DOCILE wolf, for these animals are wild by nature.*

**insipid** (in-SIP-id). Lacking in vigor; unexciting.

*In Frank's opinion, the novel's plot was INSIPID and left much to be desired.*

**jejune** (jih-JOON). Uninteresting; dull or lackluster; lacking in sophistication; lacking proper nourishment.

*Many of those taking their first music lessons have JEJUNE dreams of fame, fortune, and standing-room-only gigs.*

**languid** (LANG-gwid). Lacking vigor and energy; listless, indifferent, sluggish, or slow.

*Those who are frequently LANGUID may be suffering from some malady or disability.*

**lethargic** (luh-THAR-jik). Sluggish; inactive to such a degree as to resemble sleep or unconsciousness.

*After many long hours of work, Pat and Corey were LETHARGIC but still unable to call it a night.*

**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.*

## NOUNS

**laggard** (LAG-urd). A person who loiters; one who is sluggish and reacts slowly.

*It was insensitive and unprofessional of the teacher to refer to those who were falling behind in difficult mathematics as LAGGARDS.*

## VERBS

**amble** (AM-bul). To walk in an easy or leisurely manner; to saunter or stroll.



*Some tourists AMBLE up and down the boardwalk in Atlantic City, while others sit playing blackjack.*

**languish** (LANG-gwish). To undergo deprivation of, e.g., independence, attention, or freedom; to decline steadily, becoming less vital, strong, or successful; to long for something denied.

*Famous musicians often LANGUISH for years in obscurity before being discovered and catapulted to stardom.*

## ANTONYMS

**acute** (uh-KEWT). Extremely serious, painful, or severe; sharp, shrewd; keenly perceptive, intellectual, and sensitive to details. Also refers to a disease that is severe and quick to crisis.

*Most teenage girls have ACUTE skills when it comes to identifying a cute boy.*

**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.*

**galvanize** (GAL-vuh-nyz). To stimulate someone or something into action, especially muscle fibers by means of electric current. In a technical sense, to coat a metal with zinc to prevent corrosion.

*The hardships of winter GALVANIZE the isolated residents of Maine to help one another whenever needed.*

**herculean** (her-kyuh-LEE-uhn). Of extraordinary power or difficulty.

Capitalized: pertaining to or resembling Hercules.

*The HERCULEAN efforts of the 2004 Red Sox to win the World Series will go down in baseball history.*

**lax** (LAKS). Not strict, tight, or tense; not easily controlled; lacking attention to detail.

*After the investigation it was concluded that Bob had been LAX when inspecting the bridge for structural faults.*

**uproarious** (*up-ROR-ee-uss*). Defined by noisy confusion; loud and boisterous. Extremely funny and causing people to laugh out loud.  
*I hear the new headliner at the comedy club has an UPROARIOUS routine.*

## 105. 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-eh-LUCK-tuh-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-eh-SKAY-puh-bull*). 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-EK-sur-uh-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-tor-ee*). Having the nature of an obligation; binding; required; mandatory.  
*By making taxes OBLIGATORY, we’ve made them inevitable.*

## ANTONYMS

**adventitious** (*add-ven-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** (*A-lee-uh-tore-ee*). Unplanned, spontaneous, or spur of the moment; depending 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.*

## 106. 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** (non KAHM-puhs 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-uh-LOJ-ih-kuhl). 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.*

**unhinged** (uhn-HINJD). Confused; disordered; distraught; unbalanced.

*Rose became UNHINGED at the news of the death of her college roommate.*

## NOUNS

**dementia** (dih-MEN-shuh). 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 Keeping Up with the Kardashians.*

**megalomania** (*meg-uh-lo-MAY-nee-uh*). A psychopathological condition in which a person is obsessed with fantasies of riches, grandeur, or authority; a condition that causes people's ambitions and sense of self-importance to become 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** (*KWIRK*). 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*). Clear and easily understood; intelligible; rational and mentally clear. Also, filled with light.

*After the accident, Alex was LUCID for a while, but he soon lost consciousness.*

**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*

## 107. Insensitive

(*in-SEN-sih-tiv*), adjective

Lacking in human sensibility; not capable of being impressed or influenced.

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## ADJECTIVES

## 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** (blythe). 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-uh-DER-mah-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** (STALL-id). Unemotional and impassive.

*Thomas's STOLID demeanor hides the heart of a jet-setting playboy.*

## ANTONYMS

**impressionable** (im-PRESH-uh-nuh-bull). 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-bull). 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*

## 108. Insult

(in-SULT), verb

To attack the feelings of another; to treat with scorn and indignity.

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## ADJECTIVES

**derogatory** (dih-ROG-uh-tor-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-luhnt). Rude and arrogant; insulting and contemptuous.

*Her INSOLENT retorts to Joan’s well-intentioned queries stunned the dinner party.*

**pejorative** (pih-JOR-uh-tiv). Critical or disapproving; disparaging.

*It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a sarcastic and a PEJORATIVE remark, but both can hurt one’s feelings.*

## 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-brij). Resentment, offense, or annoyance in response to a comment or action seen as a slight or insult.

*Principal Michaels took UMBRAGE at the suggestion that he was only concerned with test scores and not with students.*

## 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-DOOCE). 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** (VILL-ih-fy). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**felicitate** (fih-LISS-ih-tayt). 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*

## 109. Introduce

(in-truh-DOOCE), verb

To put into place; insert.

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### VERBS

**infuse** (in-FYOOZ). To introduce; cause to penetrate; instill.

*The dynamic commissioner INFUSED a new sense of pride into the beleaguered department.*

**insinuate** (in-SIN-yew-ayt). 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-puh-layt). To insert something, often unnecessary, between two elements; to add comments or extra words to a written text or conversation,

altering or falsifying its meaning; to estimate the value of a mathematical function that lies between known values, usually done by projecting graph points.

*Actuaries use statistics to INTERPOLATE customers' potential life expectancy, and that's how they figure out how much to charge for insurance policies.*

**interpose** (in-ter-POZE). 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-ter-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-truh-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** (ub-TROOD). To impose oneself or one's ideas on others.

*Paul saw no problem with OBTRUDING his opinions on complete strangers.*

## ANTONYMS

**rescind** (ree-SIND). Take away, revoke, cancel, withdraw, remove.

*The town RESCINDED all their restrictions on water use after we received two weeks of heavy rain.*

**revoke** (rih-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*

# J

## 110. Jaunt

(JAWNT), noun

A short journey taken for pleasure.

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### ADJECTIVES

**peripatetic** (*per-uh-puh-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.*

### NOUNS

**pied-à-terre** (*pyay-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.

*We were amazed that Alison and her family could survive in a PIED-À-TERRE containing just 2,500 square feet.*

**wanderlust** (*WAWN-der-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*

## VERBS

**gallivant** (GAL-ih-vant). To wander about seeking amusement or pleasure; to dally indiscreetly.

*Some accuse us of GALLIVANTING around the world, but cultural knowledge is de rigueur for cocktail conversation.*

**gambol** (GAM-bull). 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*

**meander** (me-AN-duhr). To wander aimlessly.

*We fired that particular servant because he MEANDERED far too slowly from task to task.*

**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*

## ANTONYMS

**laggard** (LAG-urd). A person who loiters; one who is sluggish and reacts slowly.

*It was insensitive and unprofessional of the teacher to refer to those who were falling behind in difficult mathematics as LAGGARDS.*

## 111. Judicious

(joo-DISH-us), adjective

Showing wisdom, good sense, or discretion, often with the intention of avoiding

showing wisdom, good sense, or discretion, often with the intention of avoiding trouble or waste.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**autonomous** (aw-TAWN-uh-muss). Politically independent; self-governing with ability to make decisions. Free from restraint, control, or regulation.

*It is thought that AUTONOMOUS leaders have the potential to become dictators, so checks and balances were written into the Constitution.*

**pro bono** (pro BOH-noh). Done or undertaken for the public good without any payment or compensation, most often in reference to legal services.

*Jay received the greatest financial reward from his corporate legal clients, but he got the most personal satisfaction from his PRO BONO work.*

**sagacious** (suh-GAY-shuss). Possessing excellent judgment and powers of discernment; able to make wise decisions; keen and farsighted in perception.

*Professor Blake's SAGACIOUS reputation made him one of the university's most popular lecturers and advisers.*

**venerable** (VEN-err-uh-bull). An individual or institution that is respected and revered, sometimes because of achievement, intelligence, or character; but just as often as a result of being around a long time.

*"Is the babe young? When I behold it, it seems more VENERABLE than the oldest man." —Henry David Thoreau, American author and transcendentalist*

## NOUNS

**clemency** (KLEH-muhn-see). A show of mercy or leniency toward a wrongdoer or opponent.

*Jack's parents showed CLEMENCY by allowing him to keep his car even after his speeding conviction.*

**gravitas** (GRAH-vih-tas). A serious and solemn way of behaving.

*A funeral is an appropriate place for GRAVITAS.*

**jurist** (JOOR-ihst). An expert in the science or philosophy of law, especially a judge or legal scholar.

*All Supreme Court justices are JURISTS and legal scholars beyond question.*

## VERBS

**adjudicate** (uh-JOO-dih-kayt). To preside over or listen to opposing arguments and help two parties settle their differences and come to an agreement.

*As my daughters pummeled each other while screaming at top volume, I tried desperately to ADJUDICATE their quarrel.*

**exculpate** (EK-skul-payt). To free from blame or accusation of guilt.

*DNA evidence has been used to EXCULPATE those accused and convicted of many serious crimes.*

**exonerate** (ig-ZON-uh-rayt). To clear or free from blame or guilt; to relieve from obligation.

*After the charges were thrown out and Brian was completely EXONERATED, he was free to continue his work in the securities industry.*

**impeach** (im-PEECH). To charge a government official with serious misconduct while in office; to remove an official, including a president, from public office for having committed high crimes and misdemeanors; to make an accusation against, challenge the validity of, or discredit a person or a document.

*It is the responsibility of a good attorney to IMPEACH the credibility of witnesses, although it often appears to be an aggressive and mean-spirited strategy.*

**inculpate** (in-KUL-payt). To incriminate someone or put the blame for something on someone. Blame for a wrongdoing.

*Motive and opportunity are two of the critical factors determined to INCULPATE suspects for murder.*

**mitigate** (MIH-tuh-gayt). To make or become milder, less severe, or less painful.

*By turning state's evidence and testifying against the suspected embezzlers, Mark hoped to MITIGATE his own guilty contributions to the shady business deal.*

**ruminate** (ROO-muh-nayt). To think carefully and at length about something; to ponder or review mentally, over and over.

*Once they were admitted, the guidance counselor wanted every student to RUMINATE on which college admissions offer to accept.*

## ANTONYMS

**bellicose** (BELL-ih-kohss). Ready or inclined to quarrel, fight, or go to war; warlike or hostile in manner or temperament.

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

**capricious** (kuh-PRISH-uss). Unpredictable, impulsive; prone to making sudden unplanned changes.

*"I do not understand the CAPRICIOUS lewdness of the sleeping mind." —John Cheever, American novelist*

**chicanery** (shih-KANE-er-ee). Deception or trickery, especially that achieved by clever argument or manipulation of facts or language.

*The actions of Bernard Madoff in perpetuating his Ponzi scheme are an example of financial CHICANERY.*

**graft** (GRAFT). The use of dishonest or illegal means to gain money or property, often by someone in a position of power or elected office. Personal profit made



in an illicit way because of official standing.

*The game had been sold out for months, and the mayor's easy acquisition of tickets led to whisperings of GRAFT in the administration.*

**precipitous** (*preh-SIH-pih-tus*). Done too quickly, without enough thought. On the verge of a dangerous course of action.

*Being an entrepreneur is a lofty goal, yet it can be a PRECIPITOUS position, requiring many risky decisions and much stress.*

**zealous** (*ZEHL-uss*). Actively and unreservedly enthusiastic; fervent or fanatical. *At first those students named to the hall patrol seemed overly ZEALOUS in giving summonses to almost everyone.*

## 112. Juxtapose

(*juk-stuh-POZE*), verb

To place (or pose) two or more things together, side by side for comparison and contrast, or to suggest a link between them.

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## ADJECTIVES

**akin** (*uh-KIN*). Related by blood; similar or closely related to someone or something; related by common features or qualities.

*Jodi's constant exaggerations were AKIN to lies, but she believed they were just embellishments.*

**ambidextrous** (*am-bih-DEX-truss*). Able to use the left or right hand with equal skill.

*While it appeared she was naturally AMBIDEXTROUS, her ability to shoot jump shots with either hand came only after years of practice.*

**analogous** (*a-NA-luh-gus*). Similar to another person, idea, or thing; ideas, concepts, or other things possessed of similarities that would allow an analogy to be made among them. Also used to describe body parts or organs with equivalent functions.

*For athletes in sports such as water polo or gymnastics, winning an Olympic gold medal is ANALOGOUS to winning the Super Bowl or World Series.*

**commensurate** (*kuh-MENTS-uh-rit*). Properly or appropriately proportionate; of the same size, with an equal measure or equivalent duration.

*Stewart's grades were, unfortunately, COMMENSURATE with the small amount of time and energy he invested in his academics.*

**symmetrical** (*sih-MET-rih-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.*

## NOUNS

**affinity** (*uh-FIH-nih-tee*). A natural attraction or inherent similarity between people or things; a similarity in structure or a close connection, as with ideas or concepts.

*Dr. Seuss's AFFINITY for rhyming words resulted in much happiness for generations of children.*

**liaison** (*lee-A-zawn*). A meeting or exchange of information among groups or individuals; a person responsible for maintaining communication between one group and another; an intimate, romantic relationship; an adulterous relationship. *Nurse Sheffield was appointed to be the pediatric department's LIAISON with the transplant unit.*

**orientation** (*OH-ree-yun-TAY-shun*). The positioning of something, or the direction in which it is heading; the direction in which someone's interests or

tendencies lie; the process of becoming accustomed to a new situation or surroundings, or a meeting to do so.

*It was the goal of almost everyone to be named as an adviser at the freshmen ORIENTATION, for it was an honor and a lot of fun.*

**schism** (SKIZ-um). A division; a break or rupture of relations, especially one due to ideological or political differences.

*Presidential elections recently have created SCHISMS and anger among voters.*

**synchronicity** (sin-kru-NIH-suh-tee). Coincidental events, especially involving thoughts or dreams, that seem related, even though they are not obviously caused by each other.

*You have experienced SYNCHRONICITY if you have ever been thinking of an old friend only to turn the corner and run right into her.*

## VERBS

**reciprocate** (rih-SIP-ruh-kayt). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**amalgamate** (uh-MAL-guh-mayt). To blend into a coherent single unit; to combine a number of elements into a whole. In technical terms, to alloy or unite a metal with mercury.

*Anticipating that the two departments would soon AMALGAMATE, the members held several strategic planning meetings.*

**disconcerting** (diss-con-SERT-ing). Causing unease, confusion, or dismay. Upsetting harmony or balance.

*Many actions that are typical of teens are DISCONCERTING to their parents or teachers.*

**enmesh** (*en-MESH*). To involve, entangle, or implicate someone in a way that makes it hard for him to extricate himself. Literally, to catch with a mesh net.  
*When Julie got home, she was immediately ENMESHED in the raging argument between her brother and sister.*

**haphazard** (*hap-HAZ-urd*). Happening or done in a way not planned; irregular; governed by chance. Something not guided by a regular or predetermined method.

*After several rounds using a HAPHAZARD approach to his golf game, Mark decided that lessons were definitely in order.*

# K

## 113. Kafkaesque

(KAHF-kah-esk), adjective

Related to, typical of, or similar to the work of Franz Kafka, a writer whose novels and plays were complicated and disturbing; overly complex, seemingly pointless, and impersonal.

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### ADJECTIVES

**arbitrary** (AR-bih-trayr-ee). Based solely on personal wishes, feelings, or perceptions, not on objective facts, reasons, or principles; chosen or determined at random; decided on discretion of an individual judge or court, rather than any pre-existing rule of law.

*Lynne thought her parents' rules about dating were ARBITRARY, for they were not like any her friends had to follow.*

**clandestine** (klan-DESS-tin). Pertaining 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*

**esoteric** (eh-suh-TARE-ik). Intended to be understood by a select and initiated few; secret or highly confidential.

*ESOTERIC historians are not overly popular among college freshmen, but senior history majors tend to like them.*

**inane** (in-ANE). Pointless or lacking in substance; empty; vacuous.

*Among other INANE suggestions, Jeff proposed painting the lunchroom in a polka-dot pattern.*

**opaque** (oh-PAYK). Impenetrable to light; hard to understand; obscure.

*“The bottom of being is left logically OPAQUE to us, as something which we simply come upon and find, and about which (if we wish to act) we should pause and wonder as little as possible.” —William James, American psychologist and philosopher*

## NOUNS

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

*The student government turned into an inefficient BUREAUCRACY, not a group representing the interests of its constituents.*

**catch-22** (KATCH twen-tee-TOO). A problem whose only solution is eliminated by some aspect of the problem itself; a situation that is illogical and self-contradictory.

*The absent-minded professor created a CATCH-22 for the teaching assistant by requiring him to be certified before taking on any students while at the same time refusing to grant certification until he had experience teaching students.*

**circumlocution** (sir-kum-low-KYOO-shun). Evasiveness in speech or writing; the use of excess language to avoid saying something directly or truthfully; overblown and tedious writing or speech.

*The use of CIRCUMLOCUTION can lengthen term papers and help students meet a predetermined word count or page requirement, but it can also often lead to lower grades.*

**enigma** (ih-NIG-ma). Someone or something that is not easily explained; that which is puzzling, perplexing, inexplicable, or ambiguous.

*The Mona Lisa's smile is probably the most popular ENIGMA in the world.*

**hierarchy** (HIGH-uh-rah-ree). 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.*

**labyrinth** (LAB-uh-rinth). A maze or maze-like structure. In Greek mythology, the maze designed by Daedalus for King Minos of Crete to confine the Minotaur.

*The hallways of the new high school seemed like a LABYRINTH to the new freshmen.*

## VERBS

**befuddle** (bih-FUH-dil). To confuse, mystify, or confound; to make someone inebriated and/or unable to think clearly.

*The absent-minded professor's lectures so BEFUDDLED the students that they were quickly as confused as he was.*

**enmesh** (en-MESH). To involve, entangle, or implicate someone in a way that makes it hard for him to extricate himself. Literally, to catch with a mesh net.

*When Julie got home, she was immediately ENMESHED in the raging argument between her brother and sister.*

## ANTONYMS

**elucidate** (ih-LOO-si-dayt). To explain, clarify, or provide key information; to throw light on and clarify a subject.

*“It [was] the mission of the twentieth century to ELUCIDATE the irrational.”*  
— Maurice Merleau-Ponty, French philosopher

**judicious** (joo-DISH-us). Showing wisdom, good sense, or discretion, often with the intention of avoiding trouble or waste.

*Since his earlier troubles, Johan has been very JUDICIOUS whenever he parties with friends.*

## 114. Kind

(KYND), adjective

Possessing sympathetic or generous qualities; of a benevolent nature.

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### ADJECTIVES

**avuncular** (A-VUNG-kyew-ler). Tolerant; genial; like an uncle.

*Myron’s AVUNCULAR personality makes women think of him as a friend, not as a lover.*

**beneficent** (beh-NEF-ih-sent). Magnanimous in action, purpose, or speech.

*In a BENEFCENT gesture, the neighborhood raised \$10,000 to help pay for the young boy’s leukemia treatments.*

**benevolent** (beh-NEV-uh-lent). Characterized by feelings of charity and good will.

*The BENEVOLENT behavior of the wealthy sometimes appears insincere when it is widely publicized.*

**benign** (bih-NYN). Kindly, gentle, generous of spirit, not harmful.

*“The universe seems neither BENIGN nor hostile, merely indifferent.”* —Carl Sagan, American astronomer and writer

**magnanimous** (mag-NAN-ih-muss). Forgiving; unselfish; noble.



*“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.*

## 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*

## 115. Kinetic

(*kih-NEH-tik*), adjective

Pertaining to, caused by, or producing motion.

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## ADJECTIVES

**incendiary** (in-SEN-dee-ayr-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.*

## NOUNS

**catalyst** (KAT-uhl-ist). Something that increases the rate of a chemical reaction; a person or thing that makes a change happen or initiates a process of events.  
*Together, alcohol and automobiles serve as CATALYSTS for trouble among teenagers.*

**exigency** (EK-sih-jen-see). An urgent situation requiring immediate action or attention; an unexpected development that puts pressure on those involved.  
*"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*

**gizmo** (GIZZ-moe). An overly complicated device, usually mechanical.  
*Justin's father is always designing and building GIZMOS that cost more than things he could get from the store.*

**libido** (lih-BEE-doh). Sexual drive; the psychic and emotional energy associated with basic human instincts, including the sex drive.  
*The LIBIDO of adolescents is sometimes difficult to understand and control.*

**periodic table** (peer-ee-AW-dick TAY-bull). The table that shows all known elements arranged according to their atomic numbers.  
*Many chemistry students are asked to memorize the PERIODIC TABLE.*

**quark** (KWORK). An elementary particle; the smallest known quantity of matter.

*It's amazing how something as small as a QUARK can generate so much interest among physicists.*

## VERBS

**galvanize** (GAL-vuh-nyz). To stimulate someone or something into action, especially muscle fibers by means of electric current. In a technical sense, to coat a metal with zinc to prevent corrosion.

*The hardships of winter GALVANIZE the isolated residents of Maine to help one another whenever needed.*

## ANTONYMS

**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.*

**lax** (LAKS). Not strict, tight, or tense; not easily controlled; lacking attention to detail.

*After the investigation it was concluded that Bob had been LAX when inspecting the bridge for structural faults.*

**lethargic** (luh-THAR-jik). Sluggish; inactive to such a degree as to resemble sleep or unconsciousness.

*After many long hours of work, Pat and Corey were LETHARGIC but still unable to call it a night.*

## 116. Kismet

(KIZ-met), noun

Fate or destiny.

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## ADJECTIVES

**ineffable** (*in-EFF-uh-bull*). Something 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.”*

## NOUNS

**afflatus** (*uh-FLAY-tuss*). Inspiration that seems to come from divine origin.

*The Nobel Prize-winning novelist attributed her abilities to AFFLATUS, rather than to her own abilities.*

**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*

**predestination** (*pre-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**haphazard** (*hap-HA-zurd*). Happening or done in a way not planned; irregular; governed by chance. Something not guided by a regular or predetermined method.

*After several rounds using a HAPHAZARD approach to his golf game, Mark decided that lessons were definitely in order.*

## 117. Kowtow

(kao-TAO), verb

To give in to someone's every wish; to grovel and behave in a subservient manner.

---

## ADJECTIVES

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

*Eleanor is far too COMPLAISANT with common strangers.*

**conciliatory** (kon-SILL-ee-ah-tor-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 statesman and literary figure*

**malleable** (MAL-yuh-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

## NOUNS

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

*Charlene realized too late that her policy of APPEASEMENT might please Warren, but it would not cause him to treat her with more respect.*

**capitulation** (kuh-pitch-uh-LAY-shun). The act of surrendering or giving up.  
*Ross offered James no CAPITULATION during the confrontational lacrosse game.*

**homage** (HOM-ij). Show of reverence, honor, and respect; a formal public acknowledgment, reverence, allegiance, or honor.

*By visiting the lacrosse hall of fame, the team paid HOMAGE to the sport they played.*

**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*

## VERBS

**abjure** (ab-JOOR). To renounce, repudiate, or give up one’s previously held beliefs; to solemnly swear off or recant.

*When taking the U.S. oath of citizenship, one must ABJURE allegiance to any other nation.*

**assuage** (uh-SWAYJ). To ease; to make less severe; to mitigate.

*“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*

**propitiate** (pro-PISH-ee-ayt). To win over; to gain the approval and admiration of.

*“The life that went on in [many of the street’s houses] seemed to me made up of evasions and negations; shifts to save cooking, to save washing and cleaning, devices to PROPITIATE the tongue of gossip.” —Willa Cather, American author*

## ANTONYMS

**anathema** (uh-NATH-uh-muh). Someone or something that is greatly disliked, detested, or shunned; one that is cursed, denounced, or excommunicated by a religious authority.

*The events of the Holocaust are ANATHEMA to all moral and civilized human beings.*

**intransigent** (*in-TRAN-zih-jent*). 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*

# L

## 118. 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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### ADJECTIVES

**colloquial** (kuh-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-kwip-ih-DAIL-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-tihd*). 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.*

## 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** (*AR-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-KEW-shun*). Evasiveness in speech or writing; the use of excess language to avoid saying something directly or truthfully; overblown and tedious writing or speech.

*The use of CIRCUMLOCUTION can lengthen term papers and help students meet a predetermined word count or page requirement, but it can also often lead to lower grades.*

**etymology** (*eh-ti-MAH-luh-jee*). The study of word origins and how words have evolved into their current forms or meanings. The lineage of a word; description of its origin and how the word came into its current use.

*Those who have studied Greek or Latin can make educated and often correct guesses regarding a word's ETYMOLOGY.*

**euphemism** (YU-feh-miz-im). A synonym that is less offensive than the word it replaces.

*You say these are going to be times of challenge for this company; isn't that just a EUPHEMISM for times of decreased profitability?*

**euphuism** (YEW-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 that is pronounced the same as another word of different meaning.

*The relationship between the words "accept" and "except" is a good example of a HOMONYM.*

**lexicon** (LEK-sih-kawn). A dictionary composed for a specific, narrowly defined or professional audience; the vocabulary associated with a specific discipline or group.

*The LEXICON of rap music seems a different language to many parents, but it is an adaptation of street English.*

**neologism** (nee-AHL-uh-jiz-uhm). A new word, or an "old" word used in a new way.

*William Shakespeare coined such NEOLOGISMS as "gossip," "swagger," and "domineering."*

**nomenclature** (NOH-mun-klay-chur). A labeling or naming system used in a specialized field or industry.

*Even an activity as seemingly simple as gardening has a NOMENCLATURE all its own, indecipherable to the layperson or newbie.*

**onomatopoeia** (on-uh-mot-uh-PEE-uh). The naming of a thing by creating a vocal imitation of its sound.

*The word “buzz,” which sounds like the noise a bee makes, is an example of ONOMATOPOEIA.*

**oxymoron** (*awk-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-droh*m). 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-jee*). 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** (*PIJ-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** (*PAW-lee-glot*). A writing or other communication in more than one language; someone fluent in multiple languages.

*Jordan left for overseas study an enthusiastic student of languages, and she returned a POLYGLOT, able to speak Spanish, English, and French.*

**rhetoric** (*RET-er-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-tix*). The study of how language conveys meaning; an excessive focus on the way something is phrased rather than what it says.  
*The coach's urging to "play aggressive" rather than "hurt the opponents" was a matter of SEMANTICS, and its interpretation depended on which team you wanted to win.*

**solecism** (*SOLL-ih-siz-um*). A violation of rules of grammar and usage.  
*We all waited eagerly for the president's next SOLECISM.*

**synecdoche** (*sih-NEK-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 she met the royal family, saying repeatedly that she had met and socialized with "the crown."*

**vernacular** (*ver-NAK-yu-ler*). The everyday language of people as spoken in a particular country or region, in contrast to the official or formal language.  
*Communicating with stockbrokers is difficult for many investors because they do not speak the VERNACULAR of the financial world.*

## 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](#)

## 119. Lax

(LAKS), adjective

Not strict, tight, or tense; not easily controlled; lacking attention to detail.

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## ADJECTIVES

**amorphous** (uh-MOR-fuss). 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.*

**blasé** (blah-ZAY). Unimpressed; bored; sophisticated; 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.*

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

*Eleanor is far too COMPLAISANT with common strangers.*

**languid** (LANG-gwid). Lacking vigor and energy; listless, indifferent, sluggish, or slow.

*Those who are frequently LANGUID may be suffering from some malady or disability.*

## NOUNS

**leniency** (LEE-nee-uhnt-see). Punishment, judgment, or action that is not too severe. Personal quality of being lenient and forgiving; mercy.

*The suspect admitted his guilt, hoping it would lead to LENIENCY at sentencing.*

## VERBS

**relinquish** (rih-LING-kwish). To give up; to surrender or forswear something.

*“Time does not RELINQUISH its rights, either over human beings or over mountains.” —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German playwright and novelist*

## ANTONYMS

**adamant** (A-duh-munt). Very determined and not influenced by appeals to reconsider or change her mind; stubborn and unyielding.

*Despite the concerns of his parents, Steve was ADAMANT about not attending college after graduating from high school.*

**ardent** (AR-dent). Passionate, or full of great enthusiasm or eagerness; emotionally intense and devoted; hot, or glowing brightly.

*Ryan was an ARDENT supporter of his school’s lacrosse team; he went to every game.*

**exhort** (ig-ZORT). To urge; 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*

## 120. 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-ruh). 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-JEN-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-kawn*). A dictionary composed for a specific, narrowly defined or professional audience; the vocabulary associated with a specific discipline or group.

*The LEXICON of rap music seems a different language to many parents, but it is an adaptation of street English.*

**magnum opus** (MAG-num OH-pess). 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** (neh-KRAWL-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-ruh-fee). The study of ancient writings and inscriptions.

*In order to understand their discoveries, archaeologists 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.*

## 121. Livid

(LIHV-id), adjective

Enraged or extremely angry.

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## ADJECTIVES

**acrimonious** (ak-rih-MOAN-ee-us). Angry; bitter; 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-uh-PLECK-tick). An extremely agitated state of rage.

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

**bellicose** (BELL-ih-kohss). Ready or inclined to quarrel, fight, or go to war; warlike or hostile in manner or temperament.

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

**intemperate** (in-TEM-per-ih). Indulging one’s own whims and fancies without regard to other people’s feelings or inconvenience; immoderate, particularly in drinking alcoholic beverages.

*“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*

**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*

## NOUNS

**anathema** (uh-NATH-uh-muh). Someone or something that is greatly disliked, detested, or shunned; one that is cursed, denounced, or excommunicated by a religious authority.

*The events of the Holocaust are ANATHEMA to all moral and civilized human beings.*

**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.*

**rancor** (RANG-ker). 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*

**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.*

## VERBS

**abominate** (uh-BOM-in-ayt). To loathe; hate; detest.

*“For my part, I ABOMINATE all honorable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind whatsoever.” —Herman Melville, American author*

**execrate** (EK-sih-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**effervescent** (ef-ur-VESS-ent). Bubbly; upbeat; cheerful; possessing a positive attitude and joyful personality.

*After getting the acceptance letter from Cornell, Sabrina was EFFERVESCENT and celebrated with a trip to Neiman Marcus.*

**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*

**gambol** (GAM-bull). 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*

**jocose** (joe-KOHSS). Humorous, playful, and characterized by good humor.

*The pony’s JOCOSE antics marked it for a career in polo, rather than on the racetrack.*

**vivacious** (vih-VAY-shuss). Joyful; happy, spirited; possessing a positive attitude about and enthusiasm for life.

*Even after her family maintained some steep revenue losses, Sandra retained her VIVACIOUS character.*

## 122. Love

(LUHV), noun

A strong and passionate affection or attachment to another person or persons.

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### 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 to or doting toward one's wife.  
*"The same things change their names at such a rate; / For instance—passion in a lover's glorious, / But in a husband is pronounced UXORIOUS." —Lord Byron, British Romantic poet*

## 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-a-DOO). A love letter. Plural: billets-doux (bill-a-dooz).  
*The young couple exchanged BILLETS-DOUX almost every day the summer they were apart.*

**Casanova** (kass-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** (PAIR-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.

*Having grown up with seven sisters, Zack's PHILOGYNY came naturally to him.*

**polyandry** (PAWL-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.

*POLYGyny 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.*

## 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-NISS-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](#)

## 123. Ludicrous

(LOO-dih-kruss), adjective

Absurd to the point of being laughable; obviously implausible or impractical.

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## ADJECTIVES

**contemptuous** (kun-TEMP-choo-wus). Feeling, expressing, or demonstrating strong dislike, disdain, or scorn.

*The CONTEMPTUOUS behavior of gang members is perhaps the most difficult issue faced in many urban areas today.*

**credulous** (KREH-juh-luss). Too easily convinced that something is true; accepting of even outlandish assertions easily.



*CREDULOUS consumers are likely to spend thousands of dollars on diets and exercise equipment that don't really work.*

**droll** (*DROLE*). Amusing in a wry, odd, or funny way.

*Norma's peers considered her DROLL for she was always able to make them laugh with her offbeat comments.*

**fatuous** (*FACH-oo-uss*). Revealing a lack of intelligence as well as a lack of awareness; stupid, foolish, or idiotic; without personal responsibility.

*Comedians who are FATUOUS rather than thoughtfully sarcastic or clever are not funny.*

**uproarious** (*up-ROR-ee-uss*). Defined by noisy confusion; loud and boisterous. Extremely funny and causing people to laugh out loud.

*I hear the new headliner at the comedy club has an UPROARIOUS routine.*

## NOUNS

**balderdash** (*BALL-der-dash*). Senseless or nonsense talking or writing; a ridiculous, senseless, or worthless idea or suggestions.

*How embarrassing to have your favorite English teacher call your essay BALDERDASH.*

**consternation** (*kon-ster-NAY-shun*). Bewilderment, amazement, alarm, or dismay caused by something unexpected.

*Much to the CONSTERNATION of her parents, Stephanie, who was only eighteen, announced her engagement to a man twice her age.*

**ignoramus** (*ig-nuh-RAY-muss*). An idiot, dolt, or someone who is ignorant.

*Someone who ignores his studying may not be smart, but he should not be called an IGNORAMUS.*

**inane** (*in-ANE*). Pointless or lacking in substance; empty; vacuous.

*Among other INANE suggestions, Jeff proposed painting the lunchroom in a polka-dot pattern.*

## VERBS

**blather** (BLA-thur). To talk nonsense in an inane manner and at great length; to gabble or talk ridiculously.

*Overindulging in alcohol can cause one to BLATHER, leading to embarrassment and the need for later apologies.*

**discombobulate** (DISS-kum-BOB-yoo-layt). To throw someone into a state of confusion; to utterly take aback.

*The attempt to see everything at Disneyland in one day can DISCOMBOBULATE even the calmest parents.*

## ANTONYMS

**decorum** (dih-KOR-um). Social propriety; dignified conduct.

*The teacher insisted that students observe strict DECORUM both in her class and outside of it.*

**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*

**judicious** (joo-DISH-us). Showing wisdom, good sense, or discretion, often with the intention of avoiding trouble or waste.

*Since his earlier troubles, Johan has been very JUDICIOUS whenever he parties with friends.*

**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.*

# M

## 124. Magnanimous

(mag-NAH-nuh-muss), adjective

Forgiving; unselfish; noble.

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### ADJECTIVES

**benevolent** (beh-NEV-uh-lent). Characterized by feelings of charity and good will.

*The BENEVOLENT behavior of the wealthy sometimes appears insincere when it is widely publicized.*

**egalitarian** (ih-gal-uh-TAIR-ee-uhn). Fair and balanced in the extreme; of the belief that all people 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*

### NOUNS

**noblesse oblige** (noh-BLESS oh-BLEEZH). The idea that people born to nobility or upper classes must behave generously toward those less privileged.

*Many of the most famous foundations named for the wealthiest families, like Carnegie or Rockefeller, were founded on the principle of NOBLESSE OBLIGE.*

**paragon** (PAIR-uh-gone). The very best example of something; a peerless model or pattern of perfection. Also, a perfect diamond or large pearl that is perfectly round.

*“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, English dramatist*

**patrimony** (PAT-rih-mo-nee). An inheritance from a father or male ancestor; the things that one generation inherits from its ancestors; an estate or endowment belonging to the church.

*Much to the surprise of the children, who had never met their father, their PATRIMONY came to more than a million dollars.*

## VERBS

**bequeath** (bih-KWEETH). To leave personal property to someone after death by means of a will; to hand down something from one generation to another.

*Steve had always hoped that his grandfather would BEQUEATH him his classic 1965 Mustang convertible.*

**recompense** (REH-kom-pents). To pay someone for work or services; to give compensation for suffering, loss, or injury.

*To RECOMPENSE Mrs. Williams for all her suffering would be impossible.*

## ANTONYMS

**antipathy** (an-TIH-puh-thee). Anger, hostility, and aversion directed toward a particular person or thing; the object of someone’s anger, hostility, or disgust.  
*His ANTIPATHY toward animals originated from an attack he experienced as a youth.*

**avarice** (A-vuh-riss). Unreasonably strong desire for money and riches; extreme greed.

*Some believe that AVARICE drove the recent corporate wrongdoings, which resulted in several CEOs being tried and convicted of crimes.*

**cupidity** (*kyoo-PID-uh-tee*). Greed; extreme desire for money and possessions.  
*Unrealistic CUPIDITY of youth, often expressed by spoiled children, should with time be replaced by the work ethic of an adult.*

**hubris** (*HYOO-briss*). Excessive pride or arrogance; the excessive pride and ambition that often leads to the downfall of a hero in a classical tragedy.  
*It was clear that the immaturity and HUBRIS displayed by many corporate executives contributed to the recession.*

**parsimony** (*PAR-suh-moh-nee*). Great frugality, stinginess, or unwillingness to spend money; the state of being exceptionally frugal or thrifty.  
*Mr. Bench was the personification of PARSIMONY and frugality.*

## 125. Matriculate

(*muh-TRICK-yoo-layt*), verb

To enroll as a member of a specific group or body, especially a college or university.

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### ADJECTIVES

**erudite** (*AIR-yoo-dyt*). Sophisticated; well educated; deeply learned; knowledgeable; scholarly.  
*Once you complete college, one should at least be able to describe you as ERUDITE.*

**literate** (*LIT-ehr-it*). Having the ability to read and write; well educated; skilled and cultured, particularly in regard to literature and writing; having a good understanding of a particular subject.  
*LITERATE students are a teacher's delight.*

### NOUNS

**baccalaureate** (*BACK-uh-LOR-ee-it*). The degree bestowed upon completion of a course of undergraduate college study (bachelor's degree). Also, a farewell address to a graduating class.

*I received my BACCALAUREATE in 1975 from the University of Pennsylvania, but my education truly began after commencement.*

**consortium** (*kun-SOR-tee-um*). A union, partnership, or alliance, especially one among financial or business entities.

*Mr. Sparks represented a CONSORTIUM of firms.*

**edification** (*eh-dih-fih-KAY-shun*). Instruction or enlightenment, often involving moral or spiritual teachings.

*The evangelical preacher's EDIFICATION of church members and others in the community was known to all.*

**neophyte** (*NEE-uh-fyt*). A beginner or novice; a recent convert.

*"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*

**newbie** (*NUE-bee*). A new user of the Internet; someone new to any circumstance, organization, or institution.

*Those planning the orientation session thought the term "NEWBIE" was appropriate as a theme for the program.*

## VERBS

**amalgamate** (*uh-MAL-guh-mayt*). To blend into a coherent single unit; to combine a number of elements into a whole. In technical terms, to alloy or unite a metal with mercury.

*Anticipating that the two departments would soon AMALGAMATE, the members held several strategic planning meetings.*

ANTONYMS

## ANTONYMS

**abrogate** (AB-ro-gayt). To formally (and with authority) repeal or cancel something, such as an agreement or a contract; to take official action leading to such an end.

*The two business partners agreed to ABROGATE their contract after they discovered their venture was no longer profitable.*

**autonomous** (aw-TAWN-uh-muss). Politically independent; self-governing with ability to make decisions; free from restraint, control, or regulation.

*It is thought that AUTONOMOUS leaders have the potential to become dictators, so checks and balances were written into the Constitution.*

## 126. Meeting

(MEET-ing), noun

The process by which people come together; an assembly of or encounter between people.

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## NOUNS

**assignation** (ass-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-A-zawn). A meeting or exchange of information among groups or individuals; a person responsible for maintaining communication between one group and another; an intimate, romantic relationship; an adulterous relationship. *Nurse Sheffield was appointed to be the pediatric department’s LIAISON with the transplant unit.*

**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-POZE-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 with 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*

## 127. 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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## ADJECTIVES

**eidetic** (*EYE-det-ik*). 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.*

## 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.

*Since Richard Nixon, virtually all American presidents have felt compelled to publish MEMOIRS, focusing on their time in office.*

**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-NISS-ehns*). 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.*

## 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-BLIH-vee-yun*). The state of being utterly forgotten; complete forgetfulness; utter lack of awareness of one’s surroundings.

*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.*

## 128. Mistake

(*mih-STAYK*), noun

An error in understanding or perception; a blunder; fault.

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## NOUNS

**aberration** (*ab-uh-RAY-shun*). A departure from what is normal, desirable, or expected; divergence from a moral standard. Also, a defect in a lens or mirror that causes a distorted image.

*“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-treh-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'd suspected.*

**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** (*SOLL-ih-siz-um*). 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.*

## 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](#)

## 129. Moderation

(*mod-uh-RAY-shun*), noun

An absence of excess or extremes; calmness; the practice of restraint.

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## ADJECTIVES

**abstemious** (*ab-STEE-me-us*). Not overindulgent in food or drink; moderate in terms of consumption.

*In these days of conspicuous consumption, it is harder to find individuals following an ABSTEMIOUS lifestyle.*

**monastic** (*muh-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** (*SPAR-tin*). Self-disciplined, frugal, and stoic. Originally used in reference to people who lived in the ancient Greek city of Sparta.

*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.*

## NOUNS

**abstinence** (*AB-steh-nence*). The voluntarily forgoing of 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** (*uh-SET-ik*). 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-ence). 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.”*

## 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-shuss). 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-git). 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-A). 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.*

## 130. 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). Very cautious or wary; stingy.

*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*

**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 or unsure 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-sent). Reluctant 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*

**unassuming** (un-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** (BRAY-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-PRAYVD). 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](#)

## 131. Mourn

(MAWRN), verb

To feel or express sorrow; lament; grieve; to show the conventional signs of grief.

---

## 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-NEER-ee-uhl). Reminiscent of a funeral; dark, brooding, and mournful.

*The FUNEREAL 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.*

## 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-jee). 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** (*SOHL-uss*). To comfort someone at a time of sadness, disappointment or grief; 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.*

## 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-ZULT*). 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** (*FAYT*). 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](#)

## 132. Mysterious

(*mih-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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## ADJECTIVES

**arcane** (ar-KAYN). Strange and mysterious; understood only by the initiated.  
*Bill's ARCANE 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.  
*The Mona Lisa's INSCRUTABLE smile has inspired eclectic emotions and thoughts in those privileged to view the painting.*

**metaphysical** (met-uh-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 sleight-of-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-puh-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-bull). 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

## 133. Nanosecond

(NAN-uh-sek-uhnd), noun

One billionth of a second; an extremely short period of time.

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### ADJECTIVES

**capricious** (kuh-PRISH-uss). Unpredictable, impulsive; prone to making sudden unplanned changes.

*“I do not understand the CAPRICIOUS lewdness of the sleeping mind.” —John Cheever, American novelist*

**ephemeral** (ih-FEM-er-uhl). Short-lived; temporary; fleeting.

*“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*

**temporal** (TEM-por-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*

**yare** (YAIR). Quick and agile; lively.

*Thanks to the gymnastics she performed at finishing school, Amanda has a YARE and limber body.*

### NOUNS

**alacrity** (*uh-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.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**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*

**languid** (*LANG-gwid*). Lacking vigor and energy; listless, indifferent, sluggish, or slow.

*Those who are frequently LANGUID may be suffering from some malady or disability.*

**uniformitarianism** (*yu-ni-for-mih-TAIR-ee-uh-niz-uhm*). The belief that change on Earth takes place slowly, gradually, and at a uniform rate rather than through short, sudden, catastrophic events.

*The fact that the families of our servants have been with us for many, many generations would seem to be proof of UNIFORMITARIANISM.*

## 134. Narcissism

(NAHR-suh-SIH-zum), adjective

Excessive self-admiration and self-centeredness; being possessed by self-love.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**egocentric** (ee-go-SEN-trik). Selfish; interested only in oneself and not in the needs or feelings of others; narrow-mindedly focused on self rather than other people.

*Not surprisingly, the EGOCENTRIC author's greatest achievement was an autobiography.*

## NOUNS

**braggadocio** (bra-guh-DOA-see-oh). Someone who makes overexaggerated claims or empty boasts. Also, empty boasts and swaggering self-aggrandizement.

*Fighters who can back up their boasts are not simply full of BRAGGADOCIO but they are still often controversial.*

**machismo** (mah-CHEEZ-moh). Exaggerated sense or display of masculinity; an emphasis on qualities typically considered male, such as strength, courage, aggressiveness, and lack of emotion.

*Driving a motorcycle is for some men a demonstration of MACHISMO.*

**solipsism** (SAHL-ip-sihz-uhm). The notion that one's own experiences and thoughts are the only source of true knowledge; the theory that only the self exists; a complete absorption in oneself.

*The professor's egotistical and self-centered philosophy promoted the advantages of SOLIPSISM, as opposed to interest in the concerns of other people.*



**vanity** (VA-nuh-tee). Excessive pride, especially in one's appearance; something considered futile, worthless, or empty of significance.

*Her VANITY was legendary, as she could not pass a mirror without gazing into it to admire her reflection.*

## VERBS

**pontificate** (pon-TIFF-ih-kayt). To speak in a dogmatic or pompous manner; to officiate when celebrating Mass, or making a church decree.

*Can I assume the senator now intends to PONTIFICATE on the many virtues of our current trade policy?*

## ANTONYMS

**abstemious** (ab-STEE-me-us). Not overindulgent in food or drink; moderate in terms of consumption.

*In these days of conspicuous consumption, it is harder to find individuals following an ABSTEMIOUS lifestyle.*

**candor** (KAN-duhr). Honesty, directness, and openness; freedom from prejudice or bias; a lack of equivocation or doubletalk.

*Politicians who speak with CANDOR are an endangered species.*

**incognito** (in-kog-NEE-toh). Hidden or unknown; with an intentional change in appearance to make one's real identity unknown.

*Rock stars, actors, and other famous people wear sunglasses and hats, attempting to be INCOGNITO when in public.*

## 135. Narrow-minded

(NAIR-oh-MYN-did), adjective

Limited in outlook; bigoted; not receptive to new ideas.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**bourgeois** (boor-ZHWAH). Characteristic of the middle class; having material concerns, an interest in respectability, and a tendency toward mediocrity.

*“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** (HYD-bownd). 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-ik). 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-TAIR-ee-un). Relating to the practices, nature, or activities of a sect; also, 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

## 136. Necessary

(NESS-uh-sare-ee), adjective

Essential; indispensable.

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## ADJECTIVES

**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.*

**inherent** (*in-HAIR-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

**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 firefighter.*

**sine qua non** (*sin-uh kwah 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-tayt*). 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** (*eks-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.

*“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*

**obviate** (OB-vee-ayt). 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. *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 more than a hint of fine jewelry is SUPERFLUOUS.*

## 137. Nomenclature

(NOH-mun-klay-chur), noun

Name or designation; the act of naming; a system of names for purposes of organization or to describe a new scientific or artistic discipline.

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## ADJECTIVES

**learned** (LUR-nid). Well-educated and very knowledgeable. Describes behavior or knowledge that is acquired through training.

*The LEARNED scholar was greatly respected among those who studied anthropology.*

**left-brain** (*LEFT-brayn*). Relating to or involving skills or knowledge that is analytical or linguistic, functions believed to be associated with the left half of the cerebrum.

*LEFT-BRAIN thought was required for mathematical exams, while right-brain effort was required for the music appreciation tests.*

## NOUNS

**acronym** (*AK-roh-nihm*). A word that is formed from the initials or other parts of several words, such as NATO (for “North Atlantic Treaty Organization”).

*GIGO is an ACRONYM computer programmers created to stand for “garbage in, garbage out.”*

**connotation** (*KAH-noh-TAY-shun*). The implied, figurative, or suggested additional meaning of a word or phrase, apart from the literal dictionary meaning.

*As society changes, the CONNOTATIONS of particular words also change, and what was once an appropriate word sometimes becomes politically incorrect.*

**context** (*KON-tekst*). The words, phrases, or passages before and after a particular word or passage that helps to explain its complete meaning; the circumstances or events related to an incident or action.

*The CONTEXT of Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech is important for understanding the full impact his oration had on his audience.*

**lexicon** (*LEK-sih-kawn*). A dictionary composed for a specific, narrowly defined or professional audience; the vocabulary associated with a specific discipline or group.

*The LEXICON of rap music seems a different language to many parents, but it is an adaptation of street English.*

**pictograph** (*PIK-toh-graff*). A graphic symbol or picture representing a word or idea. A chart or diagram that uses symbols or pictures to represent values.

*Thank goodness the PICTOGRAPH for the women's bathroom is universally understood.*

## VERBS

**delineate** (*dih-LIH-nee-ayt*). To describe or explain something in detail. To outline, sketch, graph, chart, or draw something. To describe the principal parts of something.

*The proctor clearly DELINEATED the instructions for the essay exam in writing and orally.*

**denote** (*dih-NOTE*). To designate or refer to a person or thing in particular; to define something literally, as in a dictionary definition; to announce or make known.

*Before the camping trip, each student received specific instructions regarding what would DENOTE a rules infraction for which they would be punished by being sent home.*

## ANTONYMS

**dyslexia** (*dis-LEK-see-uh*). A learning disorder marked by difficulty in spelling or reading.

*Her learning disabilities, including DYSLEXIA, frequently caused her to transpose letters in words.*

**verbose** (*vur-BOHSS*). Using language that is long-winded, unnecessary, or complicated; wordy.

*I really wanted to vote for him, because he appears to be intelligent, but I find that his speeches are almost always VERBOSE.*

## 138. Novice

(*NOV-iss*), noun

One who is new to a profession, trade, or sport; a beginner.

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## 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*

## NOUNS

**abecedarian** (a-bee-see-DAIR-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-noo). 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-fyt). A beginner or novice; a recent convert.

*“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-veh-noo). 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** (VUN-der-kint). Someone who is extremely successful at a young age; prodigy. Literally, German for “wonder child.”

*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.*

## **ANTONYMS**

**doyen/doyenne** (doy-EN). A man or woman who is the senior member of a group, based on rank, age, experience, etc.

*Though she is the youngest member of our group, Brittany is our DOYENNE, based on her extensive family connections.*

# O

## 139. Obstruct

(uhb-STRUKT), verb

To block or stop up with obstacles or impediments; bar; hinder.

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### VERBS

**encumber** (en-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** (MYRE). To get stuck in mud; to make muddy or dirty; to involve or entangle in difficulty.

*In the early going, the administration found itself MIREN in issues far from its stated goal of improving the economy.*

**occlude** (uh-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** (STY-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-dyt). 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-tayt). 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

## 140. Odyssey

(AH-duh-see), noun

A long journey; a series of travels, adventures, or dangerous travails.

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## ADJECTIVES

**herculean** (her-kyuh-LEE-uhn). Of extraordinary power or difficulty.  
Capitalized: pertaining to or resembling Hercules.

*The HERCULEAN efforts of the 2004 Red Sox to win the World Series will go down in baseball history.*

**laborious** (*lah-BORE-ee-us*). Requiring a great deal of effort. Showing signs of effort or difficulty, rather than ease, naturalness, or fluency.

*Most high school boys find any work, no matter how short or easy, to be LABORIOUS.*

**migratory** (*MY-gruh-toar-ee*). Moving as part of a bird, fish, or animal population from one region to another every year. Relating to movement of people or animals from one place to another. Tending to wander from one region to another without settling down for any length of time.

*MIGRATORY birds are good indicators of seasonal changes.*

**navigable** (*NA-vih-guh-bull*). Passage by ship or boat; having waters deep and wide enough to allow vessels to pass. Able to be steered or controlled.

*Prior to backing out of the cramped parking lot, Dennis first determined that it was NAVIGABLE.*

**peripatetic** (*per-uh-puh-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.*

## NOUNS

**antiquity** (*an-TICK-wih-tee*). Ancient history, especially of the ancient Greek or Roman civilizations.

*Museums display the treasures of ANTIQUITY for all to enjoy.*

**catharsis** (*kuh-THAR-siss*). The purging of the senses through tragic drama or through music; or, in general, a discharge of negative emotions.

*Characters in many novels undergo a CATHARSIS after dramatic or traumatic experiences, thereby revealing much to readers.*

**grandeur** (GRAN-jur). The quality of being great, grand, or very impressive; extravagance in scale or appearance.

*The GRANDEUR of Buckingham Palace impresses all who have the honor to visit it.*

**immigrant** (ih-mih-GREHNT). Someone who comes to a country to settle there. *Almost every American IMMIGRANT dreams of success, wealth, and happiness.*

## VERBS

**amble** (AM-bul). To walk in an easy or leisurely manner; to saunter or stroll. *Some tourists AMBLE up and down the boardwalk in Atlantic City, while others sit playing blackjack.*

## ANTONYMS

**immutable** (ih-MYOO-tuh-bull). Not changing; not able to be changed. *“I don’t know what IMMUTABLE differences exist between men and women apart from differences in their genitals.” —Naomi Weisstein, American feminist*

**impasse** (IM-pass). A situation that seems to offer no solution or escape; a point of stalemate. Literally, a dead-end street or passage. *The research team’s efforts had come to an IMPASSE, so they brought in new members to inspire innovative approaches.*

## 141. Ogle

(OH-guhl), verb

To look at in an amorous or impertinent way.

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## ADJECTIVES

## 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.*

**besotted** (bih-SAW-ted). 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.*

**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.*

## NOUNS

**concupiscence** (kon-KYOO-pih-sehns). Unbridled lust in the extreme—horniness.

*"You're talking to a young vampire, a fountain of CONCUPISCENCE." — Mario Acevedo, American fantasy author*

**coquette** (ko-KET). A woman who dresses promiscuously or flirts excessively to make men think she is sexually available when in fact she has no intention of sleeping with them.

*Marla doesn't intend to play the COQUETTE at society balls, but her alluring looks attract other debutantes' dates constantly.*

**dalliance** (DAL-ee-ance). 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.*

**roué** (roo-A). 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.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**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*

**uxorious** (uk-SORE-ee-us). Submissive to or doting toward one's wife.

*"The same things change their names at such a rate; / For instance—passion in a lover's glorious, / But in a husband is pronounced UXORIOUS." —Lord Byron, British Romantic poet*

## 142. Opinion

(uh-PIN-yuhn), 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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## ADJECTIVES

**heterodox** (HET-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.*

## 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** (*OH-bih-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 conservative political PUNDITS had all decreed that Obama would be defeated in a head-to-head contest with Mitt Romney, but the voters had other ideas.*

**vox populi** (*VOKS POP-yew-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."*

## 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.*

## 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-go-SEN-trik). Selfish; interested only in oneself and not in the needs or feelings of others; narrow-mindedly focused on self rather than other people.

*Not surprisingly, the EGOCENTRIC author’s greatest achievement was an autobiography.*

# P

## 143. Pallid

(PAL-id), adjective

Pale; faint; lacking in color; lacking vitality.

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### ADJECTIVES

**ethereal** (eh-THEER-ee-uhl). Light and airy; possessing a heavenly or celestial quality.

*“ETHEREAL, their mauve / almost a transparent gray, / their dark veins bruise-blue.” —Denise Levertov, British-born American poet*

**languid** (LANG-gwid). Lacking vigor and energy; listless, indifferent, sluggish, or slow.

*Those who are frequently LANGUID may be suffering from some malady or disability.*

**wan** (WAWN). 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*

### NOUNS

**melanin** (MEL-uh-nin). The pigment that determines the color of one’s hair, eyes, and skin.

*Tamara is unwilling to accept that, no matter how much time she spends on the sunny beaches of the Mediterranean, she will not achieve her desired tan due to*

*her lack of MELANIN.*

**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*

## VERBS

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

**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*

**refulgent** (rih-FULL-jent). Radiant, gleaming; shining brightly.

*When Anastasia moved her bejeweled hand while lounging in the midday sunshine, her sparkling diamonds were REFULGENT.*

**stygian** (STIDJ-ee-uhn). So dark as to be almost pitch black.

*“STAND close around, ye STYGIAN set, / With Dirce in one boat convey’d! / Or Charon, seeing, may forget / That he is old and she a shade.” —Walter Savage Landor, British writer and poet*

**tenebrous** (TEN-uh-bruss). Dark and gloomy.

*Eloise and Marcus spent the day exploring the TENEBROUS forest that surrounded their family’s Maine compound.*

## 144. Paragon

(PAIR-uh-gone), noun

The very best example of something; a peerless model or pattern of perfection. Also, a perfect diamond or large pearl that is perfectly round.

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### ADJECTIVES

**optimal** (OP-tih-mul). Most desirable, best, favored, or best possible.

*OPTIMAL game-time conditions would be sunny but not hot, with little or no wind.*

**pristine** (prih-STEEN). So clean as to look new, unspoiled, not altered by human encroachment. In an original state; uncorrupted by later influence.

*For many teenage boys, the PRISTINE look and smell of a new car is intoxicating.*

### NOUNS

**aspiration** (ass-puh-RAY-shun). A strong desire to achieve something; a motivating goal or ambition.

*Most Little Leaguers have ASPIRATIONS to become famous major league baseball stars.*

**homage** (HOM-ij). Show of reverence, honor, and respect; a formal public acknowledgment, reverence, allegiance, or honor.

*By visiting the lacrosse hall of fame, the team paid HOMAGE to the sport they played.*

**inspiration** (in-spuh-RAY-shun). Something that stimulates creative thoughts and actions.

*Some idiosyncratic artists think procrastination precedes INSPIRATION.*

**paradigm** (*PARE-uh-dime*). A clear example that illustrates how something should work; an ideal instance or a pattern worthy of study. In science, a generally accepted model of how ideas relate to one another, forming a framework with which research is conducted.

*Kennedy's handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis is a PARADIGM for presidents who have to address challenges with courage, intelligence, and conviction.*

**quintessence** (*kwin-TESS-ehns*). The pure, concentrated embodiment of something. In medieval philosophy, the fifth element after earth, air, fire, and water.

*The announcer commented that those who competed in the triathlon were the QUINTESSENCE of speed, strength, and endurance.*

## VERBS

**emulate** (*EM-yoo-layt*). To attempt to match or surpass someone or something by imitation. To act using another as a model.

*Young children EMULATE older brothers or sisters, so siblings must pay attention to who is watching them.*

**enshrine** (*en-SHRINE*). To protect and preserve from change; to cherish as though sacred.

*The most significant honor an athlete can receive is to be ENSHRINED in a sport's hall of fame.*

## ANTONYMS

**anathema** (*uh-NATH-uh-muh*). Someone or something that is greatly disliked, detested, or shunned; one that is cursed, denounced, or excommunicated by a religious authority.

*The events of the Holocaust are ANATHEMA to all moral and civilized human beings.*

**irreverent** (ih-REV-er-unt). Lacking in respect. Displaying behavior that is disrespectful.

*IRREVERENT comedians often use words that are considered expletives.*

## 145. 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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### ADJECTIVES

**tendentious** (ten-DEN-shuss). Promoting one's beliefs or point of view.

*Laura is TENDENTIOUS in extolling her belief in the efficacy of prayer in healing all illnesses.*

### NOUNS

**leverage** (LEHV-er-ij). 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.*

### VERBS

**adumbrate** (ADD-um-brayt). 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** (*PAWZ-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**dissuade** (*dih-SWADE*). To convince to take alternate action; to advise against.

*Marge DISSUADED her brother from joining the army.*

## 146. 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 irrational fear of high places, characterized by feelings of dread, danger, and helplessness.

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

**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** (*ock-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-nuh-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-PAV-id*). 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, English dramatist*

## 147. Picayune

(pick-ee-YOON), adjective

Of very little importance; trivial; not worth much.

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### ADJECTIVES

**blasé** (blah-ZAY). Unimpressed; bored; sophisticated; 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.*

**inauspicious** (in-aw-SPISH-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?*

**innocuous** (ih-NAWK-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*

**jejune** (jih-JOON). Uninteresting; dull or lackluster; lacking in sophistication; lacking proper nourishment.

*Many of those taking their first music lessons have JEJUNE dreams of fame, fortune, and standing-room-only gigs.*

**wearisome** (WE-ree-sum). Physically or mentally tiring or tedious.

*Of course I found preparing my tax return WEARISOME. Wouldn't you?*

## NOUNS

**modicum** (MAWD-ih-kuhm). A small amount, especially of something abstract such as quality or character.

*"To be human is to have one's little MODICUM of romance secreted away in one's composition." —Mark Twain*

**oblivion** (uh-BLIH-vee-yun). The state of being utterly forgotten; complete forgetfulness; utter lack of awareness of one's surroundings.

*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.*

**fussbudget** (FUSS-buh-jet). Someone who typically worries about trivial things. *Most FUSSBUDGETS seem to have an unlimited supply of fuss and bother.*

## VERBS

**cavil** (KAV-uhl). To find fault in trivial matters or raise petty objections.

*Town meetings take twice as long as they should because some citizens use the event as a forum to CAVIL.*

## ANTONYMS

**aggrandize** (uh-GRAN-dyz). To increase the size, scope, power, wealth, status, or influence of someone or something; 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.*

**grandeur** (*GRAN-jur*). The quality of being great, grand, or very impressive; extravagance in scale or appearance.

*The GRANDEUR of Buckingham Palace impresses all who have the honor to visit it.*

## 148. 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 ranting 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-TAIR-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** (OP-yoo-luhnt). Reflecting wealth and affluence.

*Donald Trump showcases his OPULENT lifestyle by wearing designer suits, drinking Cristal champagne, and traveling in private airplanes.*

## 149. Powerful

(POW-ur-full), adjective

Having or showing great power or force; mighty; influential; strong.

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## ADJECTIVES

**authoritarian** (aw-thor-uh-TAIR-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). Of extraordinary power or difficulty.

Capitalized: pertaining to or resembling Hercules.

*The HERCULEAN efforts of the 2004 Red Sox to win the World Series will go down in baseball history.*

**omnipotent** (om-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-uh-muhnt). Acting with great force and energy; intensely emotional; passionate.

*Milly, a chronic worrywart, 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** (for-TAY). 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-yu-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.*

## 150. Predict

(pri-DIKT), verb

To state in advance; make known beforehand; foretell.

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## ADJECTIVES

**delphic** (DELL-fik). 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 PROPHETIC gift when it came to predicting my future.*

## NOUNS

**bellwether** (BELL-weh-thur). A leading indicator or important factor in determining a course of action or outcome.

*The fact that Robert got thrown out of Groton and Exeter was a BELLWETHER for his lackadaisical years at Dartmouth.*

**bibliomancy** (BIB-lee-uh-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-RAWL-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** (PY-ruh-man-see). Divining of the future by means of fire or flames.

*Brian skillfully parlayed a love of sitting around camp fires into a profitable business of PYROMANCY.*

## 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-kayt). 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.*

## 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.*

## 151. Pride

(PRYD), 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-ose). 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** (HAW-tee). Superior, condescending, or arrogant.

*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** (vayn-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 or arrogance; the excessive pride and ambition that often leads to the downfall of a hero in a classical tragedy.

*It was clear that the immaturity and HUBRIS displayed by many corporate executives contributed to the recession.*

## 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-TRYT*). 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.*

## 152. 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; a difficult problem or situation that is not easily resolved.

*"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** (EK-sih-jen-see). An urgent situation requiring immediate action or attention; an unexpected development that puts pressure on those involved.

*“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). 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.*

**predicament** (prih-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-myr). 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 Afghan 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*

## 153. Punishment

*(PUHN-ish-muhnt)*, noun

The act or fact of punishing; a penalty imposed on an offender for a wrongdoing.

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### 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.*

### NOUNS

**ferule** (*FARE-uhl*). A stick used to punish children; punishment.

*Spare the FERULE and spoil the child.*

**forfeiture** (*FOR-fih-cher*). A forfeiting; payment of a penalty or fine.

*The vandal's FORFEITURE was thirty days of public service and six months probation.*

**mortification** (*mor-tih-fih-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-uhn-ce*). 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-shuns*). 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*). Deserved punishment for evil done.  
*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.*

## 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** (*diss-puhn-SAY-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.*

# Q

## 154. Quintessence

(*kwin-TESS-ehns*), noun.

The pure, concentrated embodiment of something. In medieval philosophy, the fifth element after earth, air, fire, and water.

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### ADJECTIVES

**ineffable** (*in-EFF-uh-bull*). Something 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.”*

**intrinsic** (*in-TRIN-zik*). Belonging to something as a basic and essential element. By itself, rather than because of an association or consequences. Essential in nature; fundamental in character.

*The INTRINSIC conflict between good and evil is a constant theme in literature.*

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

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

**seminal** (*SEM-ih-nul*). Highly original and influential, as in ideas that inspire later developments; relating to, containing, or carrying semen or seeds.

*For many, the Ten Commandments are the SEMINAL expression of laws, values, and societal norms.*

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## NOUNS

**affinity** (*uh-FIH-nih-tee*). A natural attraction or inherent similarity between people or things; a similarity in structure or a close connection, as with ideas or concepts.

*Dr. Seuss's AFFINITY for rhyming words resulted in much happiness for generations of children.*

**epiphany** (*ih-PIH-fuh-nee*). A sudden intuitive leap of understanding, often with credit given to divine inspiration; a sudden manifestation of the essence or meaning of something; a revelation. When capitalized, refers to the Christian festival celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

*Seemingly miraculous circumstances, such as an unexplained recuperation from serious illness, often lead to an EPIPHANY regarding the blessings of life.*

**nexus** (*NEK-suss*). A connection or link; also, a group or series of connected people or things. The center or focus.

*For many, a shared love of sports is the NEXUS of their friendship and the inspiration for many conversations.*

**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

## ANTONYMS

**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.*



**ersatz** (*AIR-zotz*). Phony, fake, counterfeit; inferior as an imitation of an original.

*Before his sentencing and jail term, the artist made an impressive living selling ERSATZ Rembrandt paintings.*

**pretense** (*PREE-tence*). Behaving in a way that is not genuine but meant to deceive others; a claim that has few facts to support it; something imagined or fake.

*Many of Shakespeare's plays are crafted around ironic PRETENSE, when men played the parts of women who were pretending to be men.*

## 155. Quixotic

(*kwik-SOT-ik*), adjective

Tending to take a romanticized view of life; motivated by idealism to the neglect of the practical; hopelessly and impractically idealistic.

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## ADJECTIVES

**benevolent** (*beh-NEV-uh-lent*). Characterized by feelings of charity and good will.

*The BENEVOLENT behavior of the wealthy sometimes appears insincere when it is widely publicized.*

**genteel** (*jen-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*

**poignant** (*POYN-yunt*). Causing a sharp sense of sadness, pity, or regret. Appealing to the emotions. Acutely painful or affecting.

*The film's final scene is meant to be POIGNANT, but I found it overly sentimental.*

**undaunted** (*un-DAH-nud*). Not put off or deterred by the prospect or even the likelihood of failure, loss, or defeat.

*UNDAUNTED, the underdog football team faced the state champions and almost won.*

**utopian** (*you-TOH-pee-yun*). Typical of an ideal world, a safe place or state. Related to admirable but impractical ideas or ideals.

*The UTOPIAN dreams described in literature of the early twentieth century did not translate into realities.*

## NOUNS

**altruism** (*AL-troo-iz-um*). Behavior or attitude that is unselfish and intended for the welfare of others. The belief that acting for the benefit of others is good.  
*It is very gratifying to see that wealthy individuals can display ALTRUISM as well as business acumen.*

**anachronism** (*uh-NAK-ruh-niz-em*). Something out of place because it is from a different period of time; a person, idea, or action that belongs to a different time in history.

*Shakespeare was famous for surprising readers and audiences with ANACHRONISMS, such as clock chimes during the days of Julius Caesar.*

**bravado** (*bru-h-VAW-doe*). Real or pretended display or courage; an open display of boldness.

*The mayor's swaggering attitude of BRAVADO was of little help when the town was finally attacked.*

**gallantry** (*GAL-luhn-tree*). Courtesy, thoughtfulness, and bravery; nobility or chivalry, especially in men's actions toward women. Grand, majestic, or showy

dress, style, or action.

*Some say that chivalry and GALLANTRY are dead, but if you look hard you can see that they are still alive and well in many modern attitudes and actions.*

**paragon** (PARE-uh-gone). The very best example of something; a peerless model or pattern or perfection. Also, a perfect diamond or large pearl that is perfectly round.

*“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, English dramatist*

## ANTONYMS

**bilk** (BILK). To swindle or cheat; to thwart or elude.

*The swindler denied that he had ever BILKED any person of money or property.*

**effrontery** (ih-FRON-tuh-ree). An attitude or action notable for being bold, impudent, shameless, or arrogant.

*Sean had the EFFRONTERY to ask his parents for a new car immediately after he had an accident that was the result of drinking and driving.*

**pragmatic** (prag-MAT-ik). Concerned with practical results rather than theories and thoughts; practical, useful, or apt.

*When confronted by the consequences of the flood, politicians who were usually prone to empty oratory became quite PRAGMATIC.*

## 156. Quotidian

(kwo-TID-ee-an), adjective

Familiar; commonplace; occurring every day.

## ADJECTIVES

**colloquial** (kuh-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*

**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.*

**pro forma** (pro-FOR-muh). Standard; following a commonly accepted format or process.

*“Don’t worry about reading the fine print,” the manager told the young singer as he shoved the contract in front of him and put a pen in his hand. “It’s just PRO FORMA.”*

**utilitarian** (you-till-ih-TAIR-ee-an). Showing preference for things and ideas that are practical and utterly pragmatic while eschewing the fanciful and useless.

*Paul’s UTILITARIAN mindset makes him an ideal trader on Wall Street.*

## 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*

**homeostasis** (ho-me-oh-STAY-sis). A dynamic system in which balance between input and output has been achieved, so no net changes take place.

*When HOMEOSTASIS is achieved in a sealed biosphere, the animals and plants can live without outside air, food, or water.*

**trumpery** (TRUHM-puh-ree). Something without value; a trifle.

*The TRUMPERY that the Smythingtons collect and call “art” is, clearly, distasteful dreck.*

## ANTONYMS

**arcane** (ar-KAYN). Strange and mysterious; understood by only a few.  
*Bill’s ARCANÉ knowledge of all Lexus models and their accessories is just a waste of gray matter.*

**clandestine** (klan-DESS-tin). Pertaining 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*

**maverick** (MAH-ver-ik). 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*

**ruritanian** (roor-ih-TAYNE-ee-in). Anything related to a romantic adventure or its environment.

*The two lovers found Barbados to be a RURITANIAN paradise.*

# R

## 157. Raze

(RAYZ), verb

To tear down or demolish.

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## ADJECTIVES

**deleterious** (*deh-luh-TEE-ree-us*). With harmful or damaging effect on something or someone. As a legal term, communicates the assessment of harm, injury, or loss.

*It is now accepted as fact that smoking is DELETERIOUS to one's health as well as highly addictive, but year after year more teenagers take it up.*

**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*

## NOUNS

**cannonade** (*kan-uh-NAYD*). A continuous, relentless bombardment or effort. *A CANNONADE of questioning greeted Eva's statement that she was quitting the club's tennis team.*

**maelstrom** (*MAYL-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.*

**tabula rasa** (TAB-yuh-luh RAW-suh). Something that is pristine and new without any preconceptions or existing features. Literally, a clean slate; in psychological terms, the mind before it takes on any impressions from society or experience.

*Teaching kindergarten is rewarding, for each child's mind is in many ways a TABULA RASA.*

## VERBS

**decimate** (DESS-ih-mayt). To reduce something greatly, to the point of wiping it out. Originally, the killing of every tenth person in a population.

*"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*

**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*

**expunge** (eks-PUHNJ). 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*

**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 one's own or another's 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*

## ANTONYMS

**ameliorate** (uh-MEEL-yuh-rayt). To improve or upgrade; to make better or put right.

*The ambassador's midnight visit was the first step taken to AMELIORATE the poor relations between the two countries, and may actually have averted war.*

**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*

**immutable** (ih-MYOO-tuh-bull). Unchanging; not able to be changed.

*“I don't know what IMMUTABLE differences exist between men and women apart from differences in their genitals.” —Naomi Weisstein, American feminist*

## 158. Recapitulate

(re-kuh-PIT-choo-layt), verb

To summarize in concise form; to briefly retell the essential points of a story. In terms of biology, describes what a fetus does as it repeats the stages of the evolution of the species during its development.

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## ADJECTIVES



**compendious** (kum-PEN-dee-us). Containing a wide range of information in a concise form; usually a piece of writing. Composed of all necessary or essential components, yet concise and succinct.

*Roget's Thesaurus of Words for Students is both COMPENDIOUS and helpful or you wouldn't be reading it.*

**laborious** (lah-BORE-ee-us). Requiring a great deal of effort. Showing signs of effort or difficulty, rather than ease, naturalness, or fluency.

*Most high school boys find any work, no matter how short or easy, to be LABORIOUS.*

## NOUNS

**iteration** (ih-tuh-RAY-shun). An instance or the act of repeating something; a series of steps that is repeated to get closer to a desired outcome; a different version, as in a new version of a video game.

*After several ITERATIONS, the chefs found the best recipe for chocolate cheesecake.*

**redundancy** (rih-DUN-dunt-see). A duplication, as in computer backup systems created to reduce the risk of error or failure; use of a word or phrase whose meaning is already covered elsewhere in a document or passage. Fulfilling the role of something already in place and functional; superfluous, no longer needed or wanted.

*Many functions of the spacecraft were designed as REDUNDANCIES in case the primary systems failed.*

**synopsis** (sih-NOP-sis). A condensed version of a text; an outline or summary of principal points.

*The small paperback books that contain a SYNOPSIS of books high school students are supposed to read should never take the place of reading the assigned book.*

## VERBS

**cram** (KRAM). To study a subject intensively for an imminent exam; to eat food hastily; to force persons or objects into a space or container too small to comfortably fit them all.

*To CRAM for exams means attempting to quickly force large quantities of facts into your memory.*

**inculcate** (IN-kuhl-kayt). To fix something firmly in someone's mind, using frequent and forceful repetition; to impress an idea upon someone with urging or earnest example.

*Police use "scared straight" strategies with at-risk youth, INCULCATING them with lessons about the negative consequences of their actions.*

**regurgitate** (ree-GUR-jih-tayt). To bring undigested or partially digested food from stomach to mouth; to repeat or reproduce what has been heard, read, or taught in a purely mechanical way without evidence of thought or understanding.

*For some courses, all that is necessary to receive good grades is to memorize and then REGURGITATE facts, figures, or definitions.*

**reiterate** (ree-IH-tuh-rayt). To say or do something repeatedly, often in a boring way.

*The candidate REITERATED her views at each campaign stop and in every interview.*

**reminisce** (REH-muh-NISS). To talk, write, or think about events remembered from the past.

*It seems odd to parents to hear teens REMINISCING about their elementary school years.*

## ANTONYMS

**parenthetical** (*pair-un-THEH-tuh-kul*). An explanation added to text as a commentary, usually set off by punctuation such as parentheses. A remark that departs from the sense of a passage.

*Some PARENTHETICAL additions to writings are significant, and others are just afterthoughts.*

**verbose** (*vur-BOHSS*). Using language that is long-winded, unnecessary, or complicated; wordy.

*I really wanted to vote for him, because he appears to be intelligent, but I find that his speeches are almost always VERBOSE.*

## 159. Reduce

(*ri-DOOS*), verb

To lessen in any way, such as in size or number.

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## ADJECTIVES

**curtate** (*KUR-tayt*). 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.*

## VERBS

**abate** (*uh-BAYT*). 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-mayt*). To reduce something greatly, to the point of wiping it out. Originally, the killing of every tenth person in a population.

*"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-ayt*). 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.*

## 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-diz-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](#)

## 160. Refulgent

(rih-FULL-jent), adjective

Radiant, gleaming; shining brightly.

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### ADJECTIVES

**effulgent** (ih-FULL-jent). Shining brightly; glowing; radiant.

*The lightning storm made the evening sky positively EFFULGENT.*

**luciferous** (loo-SIH-fuh-ruhs). Providing insight or enlightenment; illuminating.

*Blake did not find the Ivy League LUCIFEROUS, so he decided to devote his life to world travel instead.*

**nitid** (NIHT-id). Bright and lustrous.

*Brock and Jenny flew through NITID moonbeams in Brock's new Gulfstream GIV personal jet.*

**resplendent** (reh-SPLEN-dent). Garbed or decorated in lush fabrics and rich, vibrant colors.

*The bride was RESPLENDENT in a beaded silk gown.*

### NOUNS

**élan** (a-LON). Enthusiasm, energy, flair, zest.

*Bryanna reacted with ÉLAN when she was tapped to be part of a feature for Elite Travel Magazine.*

**exemplar** (ig-ZEM-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 EXEMPLAR for other nations.” —Phyllis McGinley, American poet*

**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*

## VERBS

**zunk** (ZAWNK). To stun or stupefy.

*We were positively ZONKED by Marie’s choice of couture for the very important Sanderson gala.*

## ANTONYMS

**austere** (aw-STEER). Stern; grim and lacking humor or warmth; clean and unornamented; severe or strict in manner.

*In the movie Dead Poets Society, Robin Williams clashes with an AUSTERE headmaster at a private boys’ school.*

**innocuous** (ih-NAWK-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*

## 161. Regret

(ree-GRET), verb, noun

To feel sorrow over; mourn for; to feel remorse for.

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## 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-full*). 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.*

## NOUNS

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

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

**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.*

## VERBS

**bemoan** (*bih-MOWN*). 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-suhnt). 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](#)

## 162. Relationship

(ri-LAY-shun-ship), noun

A state of being related; a connection or association.

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## ADJECTIVES

**collegial** (kuh-LEE-juhl). Of a 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-TAWN-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.*

## NOUNS

**dalliance** (*DAL-ee-ehnss*). 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-TAWNT*). From the French, meaning “to slacken,” a loosening of strained relations.

*After Graham and Heather stopped yelling and started listening to each other, the DÉTENTE between them began.*

**liaison** (*lee-A-zawn*). An intimate, romantic relationship; an adulterous relationship.

*LIAISONS are much more common within our group than are stable marriages.*

**lineage** (*LIN-ee-ij*). Ancestry; family tree.

*We still consider Rachel nouveau riche because her family can only trace its American LINEAGE to the mid-eighteenth century.*

**nepotism** (*NEH-puh-tih-zum*). 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-prosh-MOHN). 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.

*Presidential elections recently have created SCHISMS and anger among voters.*

**scion** (SY-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*

## VERBS

**correlate** (KORE-uh-layt). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**estrangle** (ih-STRAYNJ). To alienate or remove from a position or relationship.

*Michelle's refusal to give up her self-destructive habits ESTRANGED her brother.*

**misanthrope** (*MISS-un-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 attend the regatta with him.*

## 163. Relieve

(*rhi-LEEV*), verb

To ease, lighten, reduce, or free from pain, anxiety, etc.

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### 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-gwent*). A locally applied ointment or salve.

*In treating poison ivy, calamine lotion or some similar UNGUENT is usually recommended.*

### VERBS

**alleviate** (*uh-LEEV-ee-ayt*). 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-SWAYJ*). To ease; to make less severe; to mitigate.

*“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*

**palliate** (PAL-ee-ayt). 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** (SAVV). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**aggravate** (AG-ruh-vayt). 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-MENT). To rouse or incite.

*“If perticular 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*

## 164. Repeat

(ree-PEET), verb

To say, utter, do, or make again; to reproduce.

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## 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.*

## NOUNS

**iteration** (*it-uh-RAY-shun*). An instance or the act of repeating something; a series of steps that is repeated to get closer to a desired outcome; a different version, as in a new version of a video game.

*After several ITERATIONS, the chefs found the best recipe for chocolate cheesecake.*

**tautology** (*taw-TALL-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."*

## 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** (*purrr-PETCH-oo-ayt*). 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-kuh-PITCH-uh-layt*). To summarize in concise form; to briefly retell the essential points of a story. In terms of biology, describes what a fetus does as it repeats the stages of the evolution of the species during its development.

*“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.*

## 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** (*un-am-BIV-uh-luhnt*). Not ambivalent; definite; certain.

*The score at the end of the game gave UNAMBIVALENT testimony of our team’s superiority.*

## 165. Reputation

(*rep-yuh-TAY-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-yew-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-rayt). To clear or free from blame or guilt; to relieve from obligation.  
*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-yew-ayt). 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** (no-tuh-RY-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*

## 166. Responsibility

(ri-spon-suh-BIL-uh-tee), noun

The condition or state of being responsible; obligation; duty.

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### ADJECTIVES

**onerous** (OWE-nur-uss). Difficult; imposing heavy responsibility.

*Caring for his son’s large aquarium quickly went from an interesting hobby to an ONEROUS burden.*

### 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.*

### VERBS

**ascribe** (uh-SKRYB). To attribute or assign causal responsibility to a person or thing.

*This work has been ASCRIBED to Rousseau, but his authorship now seems uncertain.*



## ANTONYMS

**abdicate** (AB-dih-kayt). To formally give up a position or responsibility; to step down from a high government office or other powerful position.

*King Edward VIII of England ABDICATED the throne rather than give up the woman he loved.*

**dereliction** (dair-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-payt). To free from blame or accusation of guilt.

*DNA evidence has been used to EXCULPATE those accused and convicted of many serious crimes.*

**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, English dramatist

**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.*

## 167. Revenge

(rih-VENJ), verb

To inflict punishment, damage, or injury in return for an insult or injury

to inflict punishment, damage, or injury in return for an insult or injury.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**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.*

## NOUNS

**nemesis** (NEM-ih-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** (rih-PRYZ-uhl). An instance or the act of retaliation.

*Peter was confident that he was correct, but was just as sure that 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-DETT-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-kayt). 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.*

**requite** (rih-KWYT). To return; 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*

## 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-dih-kayt). 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*

## 168. Reverence

(REV-er-ehns), 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-nyz). 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-rayt). To regard or treat with reverence.

*“The way the United States VENERATES celebrities can be quite annoying,” Sylvia said.*

## ANTONYMS

**desecrate** (DESS-ih-krayt). 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-PY-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, English dramatist*

## 169. Ridicule

(RID-ih-kyool), verb

To make fun of; to make the object of contempt; mock.

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### 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.*

### VERBS

**caricature** (KAR-ih-kuh-chur). 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-RYD). 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."*

## 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*

## 170. Ruminare

(*ROO-muh-nayt*), verb

To think carefully and at length about something; to ponder or review mentally, over and over.

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## ADJECTIVES

**cogent** (*KOE-junt*). Forceful, convincing, compelling; appealing effectively to the intellect or reason.

*Although it took a while, he eventually convinced the rest of the student council with his COGENT arguments.*

**erudite** (AIR-yoo-dyt). Sophisticated; well educated; deeply learned; knowledgeable; scholarly.

*Once you complete college, one should at least be able to describe you as ERUDITE.*

**judicious** (joo-DISH-us). Showing wisdom, good sense, or discretion, often with the intention of avoiding trouble or waste.

*Since his earlier troubles, Johan has been very JUDICIOUS whenever he parties with friends.*

**perceptive** (purr-SEP-tuhv). Quick to understand or discern things; showing an understanding of a person or situation. Related to perception or the capability of perceiving.

*As the older sister of three siblings, Stephanie was very PERCEPTIVE of the needs of younger children, and she made a great babysitter.*

**prudent** (PROO-dunt). Having good sense, using care in managing practical matters and resources, and likely to evaluate situations carefully so as to avoid risk.

*Purchasing automobile insurance is always a PRUDENT act and one required by the laws of most states.*

## NOUNS

**meditation** (meh-dih-TAY-shun). Prolonged consideration of an issue, question, or action; the act of extended thought. A process by which practitioners attempt to cleanse the mind of difficult or disturbing thoughts.

*Sally, after a prolonged MEDITATION, gave as her opinion that the curry was too hot for the dish.*

## VERBS

**contemplate** (KAHN-tem-playt). To look at or examine closely; to consider as a possible future action.

*Mark and Sylvia are CONTEMPLATING the purchase of a new home, but first they need to sell the one they're living in.*

**deduce** (dee-DOOCE). To infer or derive from evidence or assumption; to reach a logical conclusion using what information is available, even if incomplete.

*It is the job of detectives to DEDUCE the circumstances of crimes, for they rarely have all the facts.*

**elucidate** (ih-LOO-si-dayt). To explain, clarify, or provide key information; to throw light on and clarify a subject.

*"It [was] the mission of the twentieth century to ELUCIDATE the irrational."*

*— Maurice Merleau-Ponty, French philosopher*

## ANTONYMS

**bluster** (BLUSS-ter). To speak loudly, arrogantly, and boisterously; to behave in a bullying way; to blow in loud gusts, as in the wind.

*Senators filibuster while bullies BLUSTER, and both verbal strategies yield little action.*

**precipitous** (preh-SIH-pih-tus). Done too quickly, without enough thought. On the verge of a dangerous course of action.

*Being an entrepreneur is a lofty goal, yet it can be a PRECIPITOUS position, requiring many risky decisions and much stress.*



# S

## 171. Sad

(SAD), adjective

Having or expressing sorrow, grief, or low spirits; melancholy; mournful.

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### ADJECTIVES

**disconsolate** (*diss-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*). Inclined to cry easily.

*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-full). 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.*

## NOUNS

**pathos** (PAY-thoss). 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-LAY-shun). Great misery or distress, as from oppression.

*"Rivers of wings surround us and vast TRIBULATION." —John Ashbery, American poet and critic*

**weltschmerz** (VELT-shmertz). 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.*

## VERBS

**bewail** (bih-WAYL). 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-rayt). To express sympathy or sorrow; to share in another's sorrow or disappointment.

*After the game, the first thing the team did was COMMISERATE with the parents of the player who was seriously injured*

## ANTONYMS

**ebullient** (eh-BULL-yuhnt). 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](#)

## 172. Scapegoat

(SKAPE-goat), noun

Someone who is made to take the blame for others; someone who is unjustly blamed for causing upset or distress.

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### ADJECTIVES

**onerous** (OWE-nur-uss). Difficult; imposing heavy responsibility.

*Caring for his son's large aquarium quickly went from an interesting hobby to an ONEROUS burden.*

**vicarious** (vy-KARE-ee-uss). Experienced through another person, via sympathy or imagination. To gain pleasure from actions not one's own.

*Parents often live VICARIOUS lives through their children.*

### NOUNS

**anathema** (uh-NATH-uh-muh). Someone or something that is greatly disliked, detested, or shunned; one that is cursed, denounced, or excommunicated by a religious authority.

*The events of the Holocaust are ANATHEMA to all moral and civilized human beings.*

**canard** (*kuh-NARD*). A deliberate false report, rumor, or fabrication. Also, a small projection, like a wing near the nose of an airplane.

*Wally's story that Leon had assaulted him on the playground was clearly a CANARD, and the teacher punished him for telling lies.*

**penitence** (*PEH-nuh-tents*). Regret or sorrow for having committed sins, misdeeds, or wrongdoing.

*The time he spent working with youth groups reflected his PENITENCE for the indiscretions of his youth.*

**treachery** (*TREH-chur-ee*). An act of betrayal or deceit; treason. A severe violation of trust.

*Benedict Arnold's name has become synonymous with the words TREACHERY and traitor.*

## VERBS

**abnegate** (*AB-neh-gayt*). To renounce something or deny it to yourself, in particular something considered vital or important such as food; to give up, as in rights or claims.

*Stephen ABNEGATED fried foods and soda before the prom, hoping to fit into his rented tux.*

**ascribe** (*uh-SKRYB*). To attribute or assign causal responsibility to a person or thing.

*This work has been ASCRIBED to Rousseau, but his authorship now seems uncertain.*

**foist** (*FOYST*). To unload something undesirable, false, or inferior on the pretense that it is genuine, valuable, or desirable; to pawn off something undesirable.

*This project was FOISTED off on us because everyone believed it was impossible and because we were considered the worst department in the*

organization.

**inculcate** (in-KUL-payt). To incriminate or put the blame for wrongdoing on someone.

*Motive and opportunity are two of the critical factors determined to INCULPATE suspects for murder.*

**obfuscate** (OB-fuss-kayt). To make something unclear or obscure, especially unnecessarily complicated; to muddy or confuse an issue; to make something dark or hard to see.

*When caught doing something wrong, some teens OBFUSCATE their explanation of events, hoping parents won't quite understand.*

## ANTONYMS

**exculpate** (EK-skul-payt). To free from blame or accusation of guilt.

*DNA evidence has been used to EXCULPATE those accused and convicted of many serious crimes.*

**exonerate** (ig-ZON-uh-rayt). To clear or free from blame or guilt; to relieve from obligation.

*After the charges were thrown out and Brian was completely EXONERATED, he was free to continue his work in the securities industry.*

**impeccable** (im-PECK-uh-bull). Perfect, flawless; beyond criticism or sin.

*While we may expect all priests to be morally IMPECCABLE, recent events prove that even they are human.*

## 173. Science

(SY-ehnss), noun

A body of knowledge concerned with establishing facts, principles, and methods through experimentation and study.

---

## NOUNS

**biogenesis** (by-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** (mor-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-uh-sek-uhnd). 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.*

**ornithology** (or-nih-THOLL-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 XENOGAMY.*

## ANTONYMS

**sorcery** (SOR-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.*

## 174. Secret

(SEE-krit), adjective, noun

To keep from public knowledge; something not revealed.

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## ADJECTIVES

**clandestine** (klan-DESS-tin). Pertaining 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-kog-NEE-toh*). Hidden or unknown; with an intentional change in appearance to make one's real identity unknown.

*Rock stars, actors, and other famous people wear sunglasses and hats, attempting to be INCOGNITO when in public.*

**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.

*Americans must insist that local, state, and federal government operations remain OVERT.*

## 175. 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-IS-tik). 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-us). 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-jent). Severe; harsh; austere.

*Her ASTRINGENT style was a perfect complement to the cold, chaste main character.*

**austere** (aw-STEER). Stern; grim and lacking humor or warmth; clean and unornamented; severe or strict in manner.

*In the movie Dead Poets Society, Robin Williams clashes with an AUSTERE headmaster at a private boys' school.*

See also: [Sex](#)

## 176. Sex

(SEKS), noun

The division by gender; the manifestation of the physical and emotional attraction between individuals.

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## 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-tuhn). Loose, lascivious, and lewd.

*Robert is so WANTON that women stay away from him in spite of his family’s connections.*

## NOUNS

**androgynous** (an-DRAWJ-eh-nus). 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-sehns). Unbridled lust in the extreme—horniness.

*“You’re talking to a young vampire, a fountain of CONCUPISCENCE.” — Mario Acevedo, American fantasy author*

**debauchery** (de-BAW-chuh-ree). 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-ee-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-GRAN-tee 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-oh). A man who seduces women.

*Ryan is friendly, I’ll admit, but he is certainly no LOTHARIO.*

**necrophilia** (nek-ruh-FILL-ee-uh). An erotic attraction to corpses.

*For the lover concerned about rejection, NECROPHILIA may be the answer.*

**panderer** (PAN-dur-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-A). 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** (SAFF-iz-im). Lesbianism.

*After several failed relationships with men, Martha was ready to try SAPPHISM.*

**saturnalia** (sat-uh-NAY-lee-uh). 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-syz). 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** (fih-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.*

## ANTONYMS

**celibacy** (*SELL-ih-buh-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** (*CHAYST*). Not indulging in sexual activity; virginal; celibate.

*“Too CHASTE a youth leads to a dissolute old age.” —Andre Gide, French writer*

See also: [Love](#)

## 177. Shape

(*SHAYP*), noun

The quality of a thing that defines its external surface and physical form; something seen in outline; contour.

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### 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-lar*). 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-form*). 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** (sfih-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** (sih-MET-rih-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.*

**tauriform** (TAWR-uh-form). 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*

## 178. Short-lived

(SHORT-LYVD), adjective

Living only a short time.

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## ADJECTIVES

**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** (ih-FEM-er-uhl). Short-lived; temporary; fleeting.

*“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-uh-NESS-ent). Having the qualities of a mist or vapor, capable of vanishing seemingly into thin air.

*Some stellar phenomena appear to astronomers, even those using the most sophisticated equipment, as EVANESCENT events, visible for only fractions of a second.*

**fugacious** (fyoo-GAY-shuss). Fleeting, transitory, short-lived.

*The FUGACIOUS midsummer cold snap was a welcome relief from the heat.*

**transitory** (TRAN-si-tor-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-DURE-uh-bull). 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*

## 179. Skilled

(SKILD), adjective

Having a particular ability from training or experience.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**adroit** (uh-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.

*In her ability to get people interested in her life, despite her lack of achievement, Kim Kardashian is a CONSUMMATE self promoter.*

**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** (vir-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-JOON*). Uninteresting; dull or lackluster; lacking in sophistication; lacking proper nourishment.

*Samantha snidely informed Blake that her JEJUNE entertaining efforts might someday grow to maturity.*

## 180. Sleepy

(*SLEE-pee*), adjective

Inclined to sleep; characterized by an absence of activity; drowsy; idle.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**hypnopompic** (*hip-nuh-PAHM-pik*). 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** (*LASS-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-THAR-jik*). Sluggish; inactive to such a degree as to resemble sleep or unconsciousness.

*After many long hours of work, Pat and Corey were LETHARGIC but still unable to call it a night.*

**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** (OSS-ih-tuhnt). Drowsy, inattentive; dull.

*Before 10:00 A.M., any lecture hall on any campus will be filled with OSCITANT students.*

**recumbent** (rih-KUM-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-ik). 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-pur). 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-mayt-id). 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.*

## 181. Small

(SMAWL), adjective

Little; of less than the usual quantity, size, amount, value, importance, etc.

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## ADJECTIVES

## ADJECTIVES

**diminutive** (dih-MIN-yuh-tiv). Small in stature.

*Marcia's forceful personality overcomes her DIMINUTIVE stature.*

**exiguous** (ex-IG-yu-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-uh-PEW-shen). 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** (NOM-ih-nuhl). 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** (GLOB-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-she-ee). 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** (MAWD-ih-kuhm). A small amount, especially of something abstract such as quality or character.

*“To be human is to have one’s little MODICUM of romance secreted away in one’s composition.” —Mark Twain*

**paucity** (PAW-sih-tee). 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-uh). 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-chur). 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-kayt). 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-us). 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 theater.*

## 182. Sojourn

(SO-jern), noun

A temporary visit or stay.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bucolic** (byoo-KALL-ik). Expressive of rural serenity and charm.

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

**desultory** (DESS-ul-tor-ee). Lacking guidance or progressing randomly; aimless; fitful.

*“Find time still to be learning somewhat good, and give up being DESULTORY.” —Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor*

**halcyon** (HAL-see-un). Calm, peaceful, carefree, prosperous.

*After a hard, stormy winter, townspeople were entranced by the HALCYON weather of our spring.*

## NOUNS

**convalescence** (con-vah-LESS-enss). The time spent recovering from an illness and getting back to full health, often while being taken care of by others.

*“CONVALESCENCE is the part that makes the illness worthwhile.” —George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright*

**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.*

**dilettante** (DILL-ih-tont). A person who studies a subject in a casual fashion, learning the topic for the fun of it rather than to apply it to solve real problems.

*Joseph Priestley could be considered a DILETTANTE, and yet his work led to the discovery of oxygen.*

**hedonism** (HEE-duh-niz-im). The nonstop pursuit of personal pleasure as one's primary goal.

*“[Bad] taste supervenes upon good taste as a daring and witty HEDONISM. It makes the man of good taste cheerful, where before he ran the risk of being chronically frustrated.” —Susan Sontag, American literary theorist, philosopher, and political activist*

**hiatus** (hi-A-tuss). An interruption or break in time or continuity.

*Lorelei’s coming-out party was a welcome HIATUS in our otherwise uneventful social calendar.*

**wanderlust** (WAWN-der-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*

## VERBS

**disport** (dih-SPORT). To show off, draw attention to oneself, or behave in a playful way.

*Those two teens are acting like little kids as they DISPORT at Disneyland.*

**meander** (me-AN-duhr). To wander aimlessly.

*We fired that particular servant because he MEANDERED far too slowly from task to task.*

## ANTONYMS

**histrionics** (hiss-tree-AWN-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.*

## 183. Solace

(SOHL-uss), verb

To comfort someone at a time of sadness, disappointment or grief; to sympathize

to comfort someone at a time of sadness, disappointment or grief, to sympathize with and console.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**palliative** (PAL-ee-a-tiv). Calming; capable of soothing anxieties or other intense emotions. Alleviating pain and symptoms without eliminating the cause. *The little girl found her mother's singing of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" PALLIATIVE even during times when she was most upset.*

## NOUNS

**benediction** (beh-nih-DIK-shun). A formal blessing or expression of good wishes; a prayer at the end of a service that asks for God's blessings. *After the BENEDICTION, the congregation would meet for lunch and then work on community service projects.*

**gallantry** (GAL-luhn-tree). Courtesy, thoughtfulness, and bravery; nobility or chivalry, especially in men's actions toward women. Grand, majestic, or showy dress, style, or action.

*Some say that chivalry and GALLANTRY are dead, but if you look hard you can see that they are still alive and well in many modern attitudes and actions.*

**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.*

**penitence** (PEH-nuh-tents). Regret or sorrow for having committed sins, misdeeds, or wrongdoing.

*The time he spent working with youth groups reflected his PENITENCE for the indiscretions of his youth.*

## VERBS

**abide** (uh-BYD). 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.*

**commiserate** (kuh-MIZ-uh-rayt). To express sympathy or sorrow; to share in another's sorrow or disappointment.

*After the game, the first thing the team did was COMMISERATE with the parents of the player who was seriously injured.*

## ANTONYMS

**abash** (uh-BASH). To make someone, including yourself, feel ashamed, embarrassed, or uncomfortable; to cause someone to lose composure.

*Traditionally, high school athletes ABASH new team members; some call it freshman hazing.*

**beleaguer** (beh-LEE-gur). To persistently surround, harry, or bother until you get what you want.

*To the embarrassment of her friends, Kristen BELEAGUERED the sommelier until he brought her a satisfactory Bordeaux.*

**inexorable** (in-EK-sur-uh-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*

**intransigence** (in-TRAN-sih-jents). A firm, unyielding, or unreasonable refusal to even consider changing a decision or attitude. Being uncompromising, beyond appeal or negotiation.

*The INTRANSIGENCE of the union negotiators meant the strike would continue.*

## 184. 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-dayt). To explain, clarify, or provide key information; to throw light on and clarify a subject.

*"It [was] the mission of the twentieth century to ELUCIDATE the irrational." — Maurice Merleau-Ponty, French philosopher*

**ratiocinate** (rash-ee-OSS-inn-ayt). 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.

*The research team's efforts had come to an IMPASSE, so they brought in new members to inspire innovative approaches.*

**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*

## 185. Speech

(*SPEECH*), noun

The act of speaking; communicating or expressing thoughts and ideas by spoken words, sounds, and gestures.

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## 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** (*diss-KER-siv*). A manner or style of lecturing in which the speaker rambles 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-RAYN-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-KAWN-ik*). 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-sent*). Reluctant 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.*

## NOUNS

**elocution** (*el-oh-KEW-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** (YU-fun-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-ih-buss-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 phrase or expression typically used by a group of people; style of speaking. Also, a particular word, expression, or phrase.

*Because Jacqueline was unfamiliar with this group's particular LOCUTIONS, much of what they said was odd to her.*

**malapropism** (MAL-uh-prop-ism). Misuse of a word or mangling of the English language, often done for comic effect.

*John said, "The physical year," when he meant to say, "The fiscal year," thereby committing a MALAPROPISM.*

**metaphor** (MET-uh-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** (MOW-zhoost). 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-ah-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** (RAK-on-tur). 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.*

## VERBS

**pontificate** (*pon-TIFF-ih-kayt*). To speak in a dogmatic or pompous manner; to officiate when celebrating Mass, or making a church decree.

*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-ar-TIK-yuh-lit*). The inability to express oneself; lacking clear and expressive speech.

*“The INARTICULATE speak longest.” —Japanese proverb*

See also: [Language](#)

## 186. Stupid

(*STOO-pid*), adjective

Lacking normal intelligence, understanding, or keenness of mind; slow-witted; dull; foolish.

---

## 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** (bih-NY-tid). To be lost, ignorant, or unenlightened.

*The Medieval period was a BENIGHTED era of superstition.*

**besotted** (bih-SAW-ted). 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** (ob-TOOCE). 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-uss). Devoid of emotion, intelligence, or any normal human thought processes; 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-ux). 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-ehns). Lack of knowledge; ignorance.

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

**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*

## 187. Style

(STYL), noun

A manner of expression or custom of behaving; manner of conduct.

---

## 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** (ur-BAYN). 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.*

## NOUNS

**couture** (ko-TOOR). 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** (diss-uh-BEEL). 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 ko-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 MOND). 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-wahr FAYR*). 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.*

## 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** (*pah-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](#)

## 188. Subservient

(*sub-SUR-vee-ehnt*), adjective

Acting or serving in a subordinate capacity; subordinate.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**ancillary** (*AN-sih-lair-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-kwee-us). Excessively eager to please or to obey all instructions; compliant and servile to superiors in order to curry favor.

*“[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-KWAY-shuss). Given to following other people, often without reason; unquestioning and unthinking.

*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.  
*A corporal is considered a SUBALTERN rank to a captain in the United States Army.*

**tractable** (TRACK-tuh-bull). Easygoing; compliant; easily managed.

*The occasional kind comment seems rather enough to keep our servants TRACTABLE.*

## 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.*

## VERBS



**genuflect** (JEN-yew-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-trayt). 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-gayt). 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** (TRUK-uhl). To submit obsequiously to a command.

*We have trained our servants to TRUCKLE to our every whim.*

## ANTONYMS

**eminent** (EM-ih-nent). 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** (su-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.*

## 189. Support

(suh-PORT), verb

To give comfort, courage, faith to; to approve; maintain; help; strengthen.

---

## NOUNS

**adherent** (ad-HEER-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** (beh-nih-DIK-shun). A formal blessing or expression of good wishes; a prayer at the end of a service that asks for God's blessings.

*After the BENEDICTION, the congregation would meet for lunch and then work on community service projects.*

**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.*

## 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.*

**advocate** (AD-voe-kayt). To plead in favor of another; recommend publicly.

*If you need a recommendation, I'd be happy to ADVOCATE for you.*

**buttress** (BUT-riss). 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-ryt). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**discommode** (diss-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; to forbid the use of something.

*The border patrol attempts to INTERDICT the flow of illegal or banned substances.*

See also: [Approval](#), [Help](#)

## 190. Sweet

(SWEET), adjective

Having the flavor or taste characteristic of sugar or honey; not sour, bitter, or salty.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**cloying** (KLOY-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.

*The MELLIFLUOUS tones of his voice brought Martin many high-paying gigs for voice-overs.*

**saccharine** (SAK-er-in). Very sweet to the taste; sickeningly sentimental.  
*There is a lucrative market for SACCHARINE books and television programs.*

## 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.*

## VERBS

**dulcify** (DULL-suh-fy). To sweeten; to make more agreeable.

*Adding enough sugar will DULCIFY almost anything.*

**edulcorate** (ih-DUHL-kuh-rayt). 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.*

## 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

## 191. Take

(TAYK), verb

To get possession of by skill or force; seize; capture.

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### 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** (yoo-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*

### VERBS

**arrogate** (AIR-uh-gayt). 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-ayt*). 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** (*GAHR-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-KYOOR*). 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 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.*

**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*

## ANTONYMS

**inalienable** (*in-AY-lee-un-a-bull*). 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.*

## 192. Tandem

(TAN-dum), adjective

Two-seated, as in a bicycle; an arrangement of two or more items in which one is placed behind the other; acting in conjunction.

---

## ADJECTIVES

**ambidextrous** (am-bih-DEX-truss). Able to use the left or right hand with equal skill.

*While it appeared she was naturally AMBIDEXTROUS, her ability to shoot jump shots with either hand came only after years of practice.*

**binary** (BY-nehr-ee). Composed of two parts or elements; of or pertaining to two. Describes a number system that only uses the two digits zero and one.

*It is amazing to think that all computer software programming has evolved from a BINARY number system, giving one and zero the power to change the world.*

**en masse** (on MASS). As a body or group; together.

*Teenage girls seem to move EN MASSE, almost always in a group.*

## NOUNS

**affinity** (uh-FIH-nih-tee). A natural attraction or inherent similarity between two people or things. To be similar in structure or closely connected, as with ideas or

concepts.

*Dr. Seuss's AFFINITY for rhyming words resulted in much happiness for generations of children.*

**nexus** (NEK-suss). A connection or link; also, a group or series of connected people or things. The center or focus.

*For many, a shared love of sports is the NEXUS of their friendship and the inspiration for many conversations.*

**symbiosis** (sim-bee-OH-sis). A mutually beneficial relationship among different species. A cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship between people, groups, or things.

*The two top students found that a SYMBIOSIS was much better than a competitive relationship.*

**synchronicity** (sin-kruh-NIH-suh-tee). Coincidental events, especially involving thoughts or dreams, that seem related, even though they are not obviously caused by each other.

*You have experienced SYNCHRONICITY if you have ever been thinking of an old friend only to turn the corner and run right into her.*

## VERBS

**amalgamate** (uh-MAL-guh-mayt). To blend into a coherent single unit; to combine a number of elements into a whole. In technical terms, to alloy or unite a metal with mercury.

*Anticipating that the two departments would soon AMALGAMATE, the members held several strategic planning meetings.*

## ANTONYMS

**severance** (SEV-er-unce). The act of cutting one thing off or free from another. In business, compensation to an employee who is fired or laid off.



*Unsure of whether they would receive any SEVERANCE, in the end they were happy to get three months' pay after the layoff.*

**watershed** (WAH-ter-shed). An important event, period, time, or factor that serves to distinguish two separate phases. Literally, a ridge that diverts water in a new direction.

*High school commencement is a WATERSHED event in a young person's life.*

## 193. Tasteful

(TAYST-fuhl), adjective

Having or showing a good sense of aesthetic discernment, judgment, or appreciation.

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## ADJECTIVES

**decorous** (DEK-er-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-nay-tiv). Discriminating; discerning; making distinctions.

*We appreciated Alan's DISCRIMINATIVE sensibilities and looked to him for guidance before any gastronomic outing.*

**genteel** (jen-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** (EH-pih-kyoor). Someone with a refined taste for food and drink; a connoisseur.

*To an EPICURE, a fast food restaurant is an affront and not worthy of discussion.*

**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.*

**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](#)

## 194. Teem

(TEEM), verb

To abound or swarm.

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## ADJECTIVES

## ADJECTIVES

**rife** (RYF). Prevalent, abundant, abounding.

*The hotel was RIFE with tourists, so we quickly went upstairs to the penthouse.*

## NOUNS

**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*

## VERBS

**disseminate** (diss-SEM-in-ayt). 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.*

**harry** (HAIR-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*

## ANTONYMS

**insular** (IN-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 enclave to a more INSULAR compound further up the coast.*

**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.*

**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*

## 195. Tempest

(*TEM-pust*), noun

A severe storm with high winds, rain, hail, or snow; a severe commotion or disturbance, especially with emotional upheaval.

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### ADJECTIVES

**bedraggled** (*bih-DRAG-uld*). Wet, dirty, unkempt, or in a general condition of disarray.

*When the campers returned from three days in the woods, they were BEDRAGGLED and tired but happy.*

**incendiary** (*in-SEN-dee-ayr-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.*

### NOUNS

**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.*

**onslaught** (AWN-slot). A powerful attack that overwhelms someone or something. A large quantity of people or things that is difficult to deal with.  
*The ONSLAUGHT of online concert-ticket requests caused the website to crash.*

**pandemonium** (pan-duh-MOAN-ee-um). Wild uproar, chaos, or tumult; a place or situation that is noisy, boisterous, and chaotic.  
*The celebration after the Giants won the Super Bowl could only be described as PANDEMONIUM.*

**tirade** (TIE-raid). A long, overblown, angry speech, most often a criticism or denunciation; an extended outburst of harsh talk.  
*Sadly, Frank had come to fear his wife's TIRADES so much that he avoided coming home.*

## ANTONYMS

**lethargic** (luh-THAR-jik). Sluggish; inactive to such a degree as to resemble sleep or unconsciousness.  
*After many long hours of work, Pat and Corey were LETHARGIC but still unable to call it a night.*

**serene** (suh-REEN). Clear and calm, without worry, disturbance, or stress. Bright without clouds.  
*Visiting the lake house always made her feel SERENE, so she went there before her wedding.*

## 196. Think

(THINK), verb

To exercise rational judgment; to produce ideas, decisions, memories, etc.; to reflect upon.

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## NOUNS

**metaphysics** (*met-uh-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*

## VERBS

**cogitate** (*KOJ-ih-tayt*). 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** (*ih-DOOS*). To elicit, derive, or draw something out, often as a logical conclusion; to reason or conclude from given facts.

*Myres’s attempts to EDUCE his sister’s whereabouts were futile.*

**excogitate** (*ex-KAWJ-ih-tayt*). 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-nayt*). To think carefully and at length about something; to ponder or review mentally, over and over.

*Once they were admitted, the guidance counselor wanted the students to RUMINATE on which college admissions offer to accept.*

**speculate** (*SPEK-yoo-layt*). To consider possible future events; to conjecture. To invest money in a stock market or business venture.

*“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-MYZ*). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**disregard** (*diss-rhi-GARD*). 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.*

## 197. Time

(*TYM*), 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** (*by-EN-ee-uhl*). 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** (dy-UR-nuhl). 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-FEM-er-uhl). Short-lived; temporary; fleeting.

*"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*

**mensal** (MEN-suhl). Monthly.

*The board established MENSAL meetings.*

**prevenient** (pruh-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-uhn). Familiar; commonplace; occurring every day.

*Despite closets full of the latest Parisian couture, Alison's QUOTIDIAN complaint is that she has "nothing to wear."*

**retrograde** (RET-ruh-grayd). 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** (sih-NESS-uhnt). Growing old; aging; characteristic of old age.  
*His SENESCENT viewpoint put him at a disadvantage when competing with younger candidates.*

**sesquicentennial** (ses-kwuh-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** (SING-kruh-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-por-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-zee-unt). 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** (hi-A-tuss). An interruption or break in time or continuity.

*Lorelei’s coming-out party was a welcome HIATUS in our otherwise uneventful social calendar.*

**moratorium** (mor-uh-TOR-ee-um). An authorized period of delay.

*The city council voted to place a six-month MORATORIUM on new commercial development.*

**nanosecond** (NAN-uh-sek-uhnd). 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.*

**solstice** (SOUL-stiss). 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-ryz*). 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.*

## 198. Travel

(*TRAV-uhl*), verb

To go from one place to another; take a trip; journey.

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## 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-uh-puh-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.*

## 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** (WAWN-der-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*

## VERBS

**amble** (AM-bul). To walk in an easy or leisurely manner; to saunter or stroll.

*Some tourists AMBLE up and down the boardwalk in Atlantic City, while others sit playing blackjack.*

**gallivant** (GAL-uh-vant). To wander about seeking amusement or pleasure; to dally indiscreetly.

*Some accuse us of GALLIVANTING around the world, but cultural knowledge is de rigueur for cocktail conversation.*

**gambol** (GAM-bull). 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*

**meander** (me-AN-duhr). To wander aimlessly.

*We fired that particular servant because he MEANDERED far too slowly from task to task.*

**perambulate** (puh-RAM-byuh-layt). 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*

## ANTONYMS

**bide** (BYD). 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*

## 199. 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-tee). 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; a statement that attacks someone's character or reputation.

*Angry individuals are likely to cast ASPERSIONS on the targets of their hostility.*

**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

## 200. Uncaring

(uhn-KAIR-ing), noun

The state of unconcern; lack of worry; inattentiveness; thoughtlessness; apathy.

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### 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** (DESS-ul-tor-ee). Lacking guidance or progressing randomly; aimless; fitful.  
*"Find time still to be learning somewhat good, and give up being DESULTORY." —Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor*

**feckless** (FEK-less). Ineffective; careless; lacking definitiveness of purpose.  
*It is frustrating when the most vocal person in a group of volunteers also proves to be the most FECKLESS.*

**incogitant** (in-KOJ-uh-tuhnt). Thoughtless, inconsiderate.  
*Bill never became accustomed to Ann's continual INCOGITANT acts.*



**indolent** (IN-duh-luhnt). Lazy, lethargic; habitually inactive and disinclined to exert oneself. Also used to describe a disease or condition that is slow to develop or heal, yet causes no pain.

*INDOLENT youths don't participate in athletics or in anything else.*

**insensate** (in-SENS-ayt). 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.*

**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-urd). A person who loiters; one who is sluggish and reacts slowly.

*It was insensitive and unprofessional of the teacher to refer to those who were falling behind in difficult mathematics as LAGGARDS.*

**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.

*Jon was REMISS in his relationships, never thanking anyone for the kindnesses he received.*

**supine** (SOO-pine). Apathetic; indolent; passive.

*Damon found the marketing department SUPINE when it came to implementing ideas.*

## NOUNS

**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-PRAW-vih-dence). 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-pur). 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*

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

## 201. Unctuous

(*UNG-chwus*), adjective

Slippery and greasy; oily. Smug and obsequious in an attempt to charm or convince.

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### ADJECTIVES

**noxious** (*NOK-shuss*). Physically or 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.*

**obsequious** (*ub-SEE-kwee-uss*). Excessively eager to please or to obey all instructions; compliant and servile to superiors in order to curry favor.  
*“[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*

**underhanded** (*un-dur-HAN-dud*). Secret and dishonest; with intention to deceive or cheat.  
*His attempts to discredit his opponent with rumors and lies were UNDERHANDED.*

### NOUNS

**depravity** (*dih-PRA-vih-tee*). State of moral corruption and reprehensibility. A morally corrupt or wicked act.

*The DEPRAVITY of those who committed the Holocaust will never be forgotten.*

**mendacity** (*men-DA-suh-tee*). Deliberate untruthfulness; a lie or falsehood.

*Even after he was caught red-handed, Brian still thought his MENDACITIES would be believed.*

**sycophant** (*SIK-uh-fahnt*). Someone who flatters a powerful person for personal gain; an ambitious flatterer who tries to improve his status by fawning over those in authority.

*Presidents and world leaders should not surround themselves with SYCOPHANTS, for they need to hear critical and realistic views regarding critical issues.*

## VERBS

**bilk** (*BILK*). To swindle or cheat; to thwart or elude.

*The swindler denied that he had ever BILKED any person of money or property.*

**schmooze** (*SHMOOZ*). To chat socially and agreeably; to talk persuasively to somebody, often to gain personal advantage.

*Steve has been SCHMOOZING his parents nonstop, a sure sign he wants something big.*

## ANTONYMS

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

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

**stately** (*STAYT-lee*). Impressive, dignified, and graceful in manner. Grand and imposing in appearance.

*First-time visitors to the White House are always impressed by its STATELY interior and impressive grounds.*

## 202. Unreal

(uhn-REE-uhl), adjective

Not real or actual, imaginary; fantastic; illusory; false, artificial.

---

### ADJECTIVES

**incorporeal** (in-core-PORE-ee-al). Lacking form.

*The moanings and low rumblings in the old house suggested INCORPOREAL visitors to Kate.*

**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 otherworldly.

*"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*

### NOUNS

**chimera** (ky-MEER-uh). 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.*

**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.*

## 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.*

## 203. Utopia

(you-TOE-pee-uh), noun

A perfect or ideal society.

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## ADJECTIVES

**halcyon** (HAL-see-un). Calm, peaceful, carefree, prosperous.

*After a hard, stormy winter, townspeople were entranced by the HALCYON weather of our spring.*

**luciferous** (loo-SIH-fuh-ruhs). Providing insight or enlightenment; illuminating.  
*Blake did not find the Ivy League LUCIFEROUS, so he decided to devote his life to world travel instead.*

**salutary** (SAL-you-tare-ee). To have a soothing or healing effect; helping 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.*

**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.*

## NOUNS

**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*

**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



**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*

## ANTONYMS

**draconian** (dray-KO-nee-ihn). 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.*

# V

## 204. Verdant

(VUR-dant), adjective

Lush with trees, bushes, and other green foliage.

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### ADJECTIVES

**bucolic** (byoo-KALL-ik). Expressive of rural serenity and charm.

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

**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.*

**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*

**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.*

### NOUNS

**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.*

**renaissance** (REN-ah-sonce). A period of great learning, thinking, and creativity—in art, literature, science, economics, and philosophy.

*We were so pleased by the RENAISSANCE of wealth acquisition that arose during the closing years of the twentieth century.*

## ANTONYMS

**defoliate** (dee-FOH-lee-ayt). To strip bare of leaves.

*During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military DEFOLIATED large parts of the country.*

**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*

**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*

## 205. Vernacular

*(ver-NAK-you-lur)*, noun

The everyday language of people as spoken in a particular country or region, in contrast to the official or formal language.

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### ADJECTIVES

**idiomatic** (*ih-dee-uh-MAT-ik*). Characteristic of a phrase whose usage is peculiar to a particular language, in terms of grammar or meaning.

*For the recent immigrant from Brazil, the IDIOMATIC character of many American expressions was very confusing.*

### NOUNS

**connotation** (*KAH-noh-TAY-shun*). The implied, figurative, or suggested additional meaning of a word or phrase, apart from the literal dictionary meaning.

*As society changes, the CONNOTATIONS of particular words also change, and what was once an appropriate word sometimes becomes politically incorrect.*

**cultural literacy** (*KULCH-uh-ur-ul LIH-tuh-reh-see*). The information authors assume readers have at certain stages of education; the educational background necessary for effective communication of ideas.

*The debate regarding CULTURAL LITERACY and its part in our elementary and secondary school curricula continues to this day.*

**etymology** (*eh-tih-MAH-luh-jee*). The study of word origins and how words have evolved into their current forms or meanings. The lineage of a word;

description of origin and how the word came into its current use.

*Those who have studied Greek or Latin can make educated and often correct guesses regarding a word's ETYMOLOGY.*

**lexicon** (LEK-sih-kawn). A dictionary composed for a specific, narrowly defined or professional audience; the vocabulary associated with a specific discipline or group.

*The LEXICON of rap music seems a different language to many parents, but it is an adaptation of street English.*

**locution** (low-KEW-shin). A phrase or expression typically used by a group of people; style of speaking. Also, a particular word, expression, or phrase.

*Because Jacqueline was unfamiliar with this group's particular LOCUTIONS, much of what they said was odd to her.*

**polyglot** (PAW-lee-glot). A writing or other communication in more than one language; someone fluent in multiple languages.

*Jordan left for overseas study an enthusiastic student of languages, and she returned a POLYGLOT, able to speak Spanish, English, and French.*

**semantics** (suh-MAN-tiks). The study of how language conveys meaning; an excessive focus on the way something is phrased rather than what it says.

*The coach's urging to "play aggressive" rather than "hurt the opponents" was a matter of SEMANTICS, and its interpretation depended on which team you wanted to win.*

## VERBS

**confabulate** (kuhn-FAB-yuh-layt). To chat or discuss something informally; to indulge in engaging, extravagant storytelling. Also, to invent and believe stories to fill mental gaps due to memory loss or dementia.

*The two drivers stopped the flow of traffic east and west in order to CONFABULATE about who had caused the accident.*

## ANTONYMS

**abstruse** (ab-STROOCE). Arcane, complex, difficult to understand and learn.  
*After the first few classes, Jack thought that calculus was an ABSTRUSE collection of ideas.*

## 206. Visage

(VIZ-aj), noun

Face or overall appearance.

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## NOUNS

**countenance** (KOWN-teh-nenss). Appearance, particularly the expression on one's face.

*Cervantes's Don Quixote is sometimes referred to as the Knight of the Doleful COUNTENANCE.*

**face** (FAYSS). The front part of the head, including the forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and chin; one's facial expression.

*Your FACE reminds me of the expressions on Classical statues from Ancient Greece. Your expression is timeless.*

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

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

**physiognomy** (fizz-ee-AH-no-mee). One's face as an expression of one's character. The features of your face that show what kind of a person you are.

*"You're either sexy or you're not. I'm very self-conscious about my PHYSIOGNOMY." —Bobby Darin, American singer*

**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 with the allegedly guilty parties and had a TÊTE-À-TÊTE.*

## 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*

**overlook** (*OH-ver-LOOK*). Don’t notice, either unintentionally or, more often, intentionally.

*Robert was so devoted to his two-year-old son that he tended to OVERLOOK the boy’s exhibitions of spoiled brattiness.*

## ANTONYMS

**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*

## 207. Vociferate

(*voh-SIH-fur-rayt*), verb

To shout something out loudly; to make a noisy exclamation, demanding attention.

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## ADJECTIVES

**garrulous** (*GAR-uh-lus*). Excessively talkative; using many, many too many words.

*Drunks are often described as GARRULOUS, since they tend to latch onto the nearest person and start babbling incoherently.*

## NOUNS

**avowal** (uh-VOW-uhl). A frank and open admission or statement.

*The teachers' AVOWAL of support for the students accused of cheating shocked almost everyone in the school.*

**diatribe** (DYE-uh-trybe). 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.*

**oratory** (ORE-uh-tor-ee). The art of speaking in public with style, knowledge, grace, and eloquence. It can also mean a pompous, boring, or inappropriately long speech.

*Martin Luther King Jr.'s ORATORY lives well into the present day.*

**polemic** (puh-LEH-mik). 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*

**utterance** (UH-ter-runts). Something vocalized; a word or sound spoken aloud. A style of speaking.

*How proud they were that the baby's first UTTERANCE sounded like "Daddy."*

## VERBS



**bluster** (BLUSS-ter). To speak loudly, arrogantly, and boisterously; to behave in a bullying way; to blow in loud gusts, as in the wind.

*Senators filibuster while bullies BLUSTER, and both verbal strategies yield little action.*

**exhort** (ig-ZORT). To urge; 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*

**fulminate** (FUL-mih-nayt). To criticize or denounce loudly, dramatically, and forcefully. Also, to detonate an explosion.

*Edmond FULMINATED against the bill on the floor of the Senate, but he knew he did not have the votes to defeat it.*

## ANTONYMS

**ambivalent** (am-BIH-vuh-lent). Uncertain, with mixed or conflicted feelings; of two minds regarding a potential course of action.

*Although he was AMBIVALENT about both candidates, when the election day came, Gregory made his choice and cast his ballot.*

**taciturn** (TASS-ih-turn). Quiet, of few words; regularly uncommunicative or reserved in manner and speech; avoiding conversation.

*Kenny was concerned that Emily’s father’s TACITURN nature indicated he disapproved of their dating.*

# W

## 208. Waif

(WAFE), noun

A stray person or animal.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bereft** (beh-REFT). Lacking or deprived of a certain characteristic, possession, or trait; bereaved.

*“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*

**impecunious** (im-puh-KYOON-ee-us). To be poor or broke; to have little or no money.

*Alex has been ranting about his IMPECUNIOUS state ever since his trust fund was cut.*

**Lilliputian** (lil-uh-PEW-shen). Small in stature; tiny in comparison to one's peers.

*Jules Verne's LILLIPUTIAN appearance made people treat him like a child.*

**pusillanimous** (pyoo-suh-LAN-ih-muss). Being mild or timid by nature; seeking to avoid conflict, challenge, and danger.

*Frank L. Baum's most PUSILLANIMOUS fictional creation is the Cowardly Lion of Oz.*

**wan** (WAWN). 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*

## NOUNS

**gamine** (gah-MEEN). A girl with a boyish demeanor and mischievous nature who is somehow still appealing.

*Her GAMINE behavior and looks only made her that much more attractive to teenage boys her age.*

**paucity** (PAW-sih-tee). 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*

## VERBS

**debilitate** (dih-BILL-uh-tayt). To make weak or feeble.

*ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, DEBILITATES those who suffer from it, and it is ultimately fatal.*

**ostracize** (OSS-truh-syz). To exclude or banish someone from a group, formally or informally.

*It’s harsh when teens OSTRACIZE someone who was once a friend.*

**scarify** (SKAIR-ih-fy). To wound with harsh criticism

*We deemed it necessary to SCARIFY Eileen for having the nerve to criticize our fashion sense.*

## ANTONYMS

**hermetic** (her-MET-ik). Isolated, or unaffected by outside influences.

*“Reality, whether approached imaginatively or empirically, remains a surface, HERMETIC.” —Samuel Beckett, Irish writer, dramatist, and poet*

**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.*

**vivacious** (*vih-VAY-shuss*). Joyful; happy, spirited; possessing a positive attitude about and enthusiasm for life.

*Even after her family maintained some steep revenue losses, Sandra retained her VIVACIOUS character.*

## 209. Warn

(WAWRN), verb

To caution others about a danger, impending evil, misfortune, etc.; to urge or advise to exercise care; caution.

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## ADJECTIVES

**premonitory** (*preh-MAWN-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.*

## 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 sign that something 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.*

## 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 foreshadow; to indicate something is about to occur.  
*For Mary and Paul, the breakdown of their new Porsche 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.*

## 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.*

## 210. Whitewash

(WITE-wawsh), verb

To paint with whitewash. Also, to attempt to conceal unpleasant facts by covering them over as though they did not exist.

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### ADJECTIVES

**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.*

### NOUNS

**contrivance** (kun-TRY-vuns). A cleverly made, unusual device or machine; a clever way to acquire something; a plot or scheme; a plan intended to deceive.

*The CONTRIVANCES of alchemists were machines that attempted—and failed—to turn base metals into gold.*

**euphemism** (YU-feh-miz-im). A synonym that is less offensive than the word it replaces.

*You say these are going to be times of challenge for this company; isn't that just a EUPHEMISM for times of decreased profitability?*

**pretense** (PREE-tence). Behaving in a way that is not genuine but meant to deceive others; a claim that has few facts to support it; something imagined or fake.

*Many of Shakespeare's plays are crafted around ironic PRETENSE, when men played the parts of women who were pretending to be men.*

### VERBS

**ameliorate** (uh-MEEL-yoh-rayt). To improve or upgrade; to make better or put right.

*The ambassador's midnight visit was the first step taken to AMELIORATE the poor relations between the two countries, and may actually have averted war.*

**bowdlerize** (BODE-ler-ize). To remove parts of a work of literature considered objectionable, indecent, or offensive.

*The editor BOWDLERIZED the author's first draft to make the book marketable to a wider audience.*

**embellish** (ihm-BEH-lish). To ornament and beautify; to improve in appearance by adornment; to exaggerate or add false details to facts.

*Jim EMBELLISHED his tale of almost catching an elusive catfish until it began to resemble Ahab's quest for the white whale.*

**mitigate** (MIH-tuh-gayt). To make or become milder, less severe, or less painful.

*By turning state's evidence and testifying against the suspected embezzlers, Mark hoped to MITIGATE his own guilty contributions to the shady business deal.*

## ANTONYMS

**candor** (KAN-duhr). Honesty, directness, and openness; freedom from prejudice or bias; a lack of equivocation or doubletalk.

*Politicians who speak with CANDOR are an endangered species.*

**impeccable** (im-PECK-uh-bull). Perfect, flawless; beyond criticism or sin.

*While we may expect all priests to be morally IMPECCABLE, recent events prove that even they are human.*

## 211. Worthless

(WURTH-lis), adjective

Without value or worth; of no use or importance.

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## 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** (pick-ee-YOON). Of very little importance; trivial; not worth much.

*Mr. Franks apparently couldn't be bothered with such PICAYUNE concerns as what color shirt to wear.*

## NOUNS

**chaff** (CHAF). 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** (SYE-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 least 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-ehnts). 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-fy). 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.*

## 212. Wreak

(REEK), verb

To inflict something violent, especially punishment or revenge.

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## ADJECTIVES

**baneful** (BAYN-ful). Venomous; deadly; ruinous; destructive

*The BANEFUL influence of gangs on their young members can ruin lives forever.*

**pernicious** (purr-NISH-us). Causing great harm, destruction, injury, or death; having a debilitating effect.

*Though the initial symptoms were relatively mild, it was a PERNICIOUS and unstoppable disease.*

## NOUNS

**enmity** (EN-mih-tee). Extreme ill will, hatred, and mutual antagonism between enemies.

*The ENMITY between terrorists and those whom they consider enemies grows day by day.*

**recrimination** (ree-crih-muh-NAY-shun). An accusation made by someone who has been accused of a crime, usually against the original accuser.

*The press was shocked when the RECRIMINATION of one of his aides involved the president in the coverup.*

**umbrage** (UM-brij). Resentment, offense, or annoyance in response to a comment or action seen as a slight or insult.

*Principal Michaels took UMBRAGE at the suggestion that he was only concerned with test scores and not with students.*

## VERBS

**impinge** (im-PINJ). To strike or run into something with force; to have an effect on something. To encroach upon the limits of something, especially a right or law; to cause some kind of restriction.

*Censorship most definitely IMPINGES on the right of free speech, which is why we hold the First Amendment sacred.*

**lambaste** (lam-BAYST). To berate or criticize harshly.

*We LAMBASTED Marla for not visiting Comme des Garçons during her recent weekender to Beijing.*

**ostracize** (OSS-truh-syz). To exclude or banish someone from a group, formally or informally.

*It's harsh when teens OSTRACIZE someone who was once a friend.*

## ANTONYMS

**placate** (PLAY-kayt). 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.*

**serendipitous** (sare-uhn-DIH-pih-tuss). Accidental in a happy and fortuitous way. Often describes useful discoveries made by accident or important insights encountered as fortunate coincidences.

*It was SERENDIPITOUS that Phil won new gold clubs a week before the club championship.*

**tranquil** (TRAN-kwill). Calm, quiet, free of disturbance or commotion; unagitated, with no signs of anxiety or agitation.

*After years of looking for the best vacation location, the Burtons found their lake home to be the most TRANQUIL place.*

## 213. Writing

(RY-ting), noun

The act of a person who writes; something written, such as a book, letter, document, inscription, etc.

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### ADJECTIVES

**verbose** (vur-BOHSS). Using language that is long-winded, unnecessary, or complicated; wordy.

*I really wanted to vote for him, because he appears to be intelligent, but I find that his speeches are almost always VERBOSE.*

### NOUNS

**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.*

**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-brayt). 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.*

**euphuism** (YEW-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.*

**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** (PAIR-uh-frayz). 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**legible** (LEJ-uh-bull). Capable of being read.

*John's handwriting was LEGIBLE but his prose 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](#)

## 214. Wunderkind

(VUN-der-kint), noun

Someone who is extremely successful at a young age; prodigy. Literally, German for “wonder child.”

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### ADJECTIVES

**erudite** (AIR-yoo-dyt). Sophisticated; well educated; deeply learned; knowledgeable; scholarly.

*Once you complete college, one should at least be able to describe you as ERUDITE.*

**learned** (LUR-nid). Well-educated and very knowledgeable. Describes behavior or knowledge that is acquired through training.

*The LEARNED scholar was greatly respected among those who studied anthropology.*

**left-brain** (LEFT-brayn). Relating to or involving skills or knowledge that is analytical or linguistic, functions believed to be associated with the left half of the cerebrum.

*LEFT-BRAIN thought was required for mathematical exams, while right-brain effort was required for the music appreciation tests.*

**Olympian** (oh-LIHM-pee-un). Extraordinarily great or demanding, befitting an Olympic athlete; superior or grand above everyday events, concerns, or abilities. Related to ancient Olympia or Mount Olympus.

*Many thought Betsy’s getting to medical school an OLYMPIAN feat, but her friends knew she would do it easily.*

**precocious** (prih-KOH-shuss). More developed than usual or expected at a particular age; advanced, especially with regard to mental ability, as in a child’s

display of adult social or mental ability.

*Rene was a PRECOCIOUS nine-year-old who had already performed at Carnegie Hall.*

**prodigy** (PRAW-dih-jee). Someone who shows an exceptional natural talent for something at an early age; something very impressive or amazing; a wonder, a marvelous example.

*Anyone who can play in a symphony as a violin soloist at the age of nine is a remarkable musical PRODIGY.*

## NOUNS

**acumen** (a-KYOO-men). Quick insight; the ability to make fast, accurate evaluations or judgments about people, situations, or things.

*Laurie was said to have great business ACUMEN because every venture in which she became involved was successful.*

**cognition** (kog-NIH-shun). Mental ability; the process of acquiring knowledge through reason, intuition, or perception.

*The young parents were excited to see the process of COGNITION developing in their daughter as she began to take tiny steps with her feet and giant steps with her mind.*

**fledgling** (FLEJ-ling). A young bird whose flight feathers have just grown in; a young or inexperienced person.

*The FLEDGLING golfing with us became frustrated after most shots but was quite excited when her ball landed close to the hole.*

**hubris** (HYOO-briss). Excessive pride or arrogance; the excessive pride and ambition that often leads to the downfall of a hero in a classical tragedy.

*It was clear that the immaturity and HUBRIS displayed by many corporate executives contributed to the recession.*

ANTONYMS



## ANTONYMS

**ignoramus** (*ig-nuh-RAY-muss*). An idiot, dolt, or someone who is ignorant.

*Someone who ignores his studying may not be smart, but he should not be called an IGNORAMUS.*

**jejune** (*jih-JOON*). Uninteresting; dull or lackluster; lacking in sophistication; lacking proper nourishment.

*Many of those taking their first music lessons have JEJUNE dreams of fame, fortune, and standing-room-only gigs.*

# X

## 215. Xenophile

(ZEN-uh-file), noun

Someone who is attracted to foreign styles, customs, manners, etc.

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### ADJECTIVES

**geopolitical** (jee-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.*

**geostationary** (JEE-oh-STAY-shin-air-ee). Of an object orbiting a larger body that synchronizes its movement with that of the body so it always remains in the same position relative to it.

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

### NOUNS

**acculturation** (ah-kul-chuh-RAY-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.*

**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.*

**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*

**humanism** (HEW-muh-niz-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*

**jaunt** (JAWNT). A short journey taken for pleasure.

*Nicole plans to take a JAUNT across the southern tip of Africa next year.*

## VERBS

**gallivant** (GAL-uh-vant). To wander about seeking amusement or pleasure; to dally indiscreetly.

*Some accuse us of GALLIVANTING around the world, but cultural knowledge is de rigueur for cocktail conversation.*

## ANTONYMS

**apartheid** (uh-PART-hyt). South Africa’s former government-sanctioned policy of segregation and racial discrimination.

*Since APARTHEID ended in 1994, South Africa has elected three native African presidents.*

**insular** (IN-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 enclave to a more INSULAR compound further up the coast.*

**jingoism** (JIN-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.*

**xenophobic** (zee-nuh-FOE-bik). Having an irrational fear 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.*

**yokel** (YOH-kuhl). A gullible inhabitant of a rural area.

*"[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*

# Y

## 216. Yeoman

(YOE-mun), noun

An attendant, servant, or lesser official in a royal or noble household; a petty officer performing chiefly clerical duties in the U.S. Navy; an assistant or other subordinate; a loyal, dependable worker.

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### ADJECTIVES

**en masse** (on MASS). As a body or group; together.

*Teenage girls seem to move EN MASSE, almost always in a group.*

**gregarious** (grih-GAIR-ee-uss). Very friendly, sociable, outgoing, or cordial; happy in the company of others.

*GREGARIOUS individuals are often suspected of having hidden agendas when they are really just being friendly.*

### NOUNS

**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.*

**patronage** (PAY-truh-nij). The support, often financial, given by a patron to an artist, organization, or cause; political power to grant privileges or appointments

to positions; the regular purchasing of goods from a business or store; support or kindness offered in a condescending way.

*To encourage the PATRONAGE of young shoppers, Abercrombie & Fitch was known to hire very attractive salespeople.*

**servitude** (SIR-vuh-tood). State of slavery, of being ruled or dominated; work imposed as punishment.

*Being forced to paint the house in order to earn his allowance felt like SERVITUDE to Bart.*

**sycophant** (SIK-uh-fahnt). Someone who flatters a powerful person for personal gain; an ambitious flatterer who tries to improve his status by fawning over those in authority.

*Presidents and world leaders should not surround themselves with SYCOPHANTS, for they need to hear critical and realistic views regarding critical issues.*

**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.*

## ANTONYMS

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

*The student government turned into an inefficient BUREAUCRACY, not a group representing the interests of its constituents.*

**emancipate** (ih-MAN-sih-payt). To free or liberate from slavery, restraint, oppression, or bondage.

*Many young people feel that an eighteenth birthday has the power to EMANCIPATE them from their parents' rules.*

**pariah** (*puh-RYE-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.*

# Z

## 217. Zenith

(ZEE-nith), noun

The highest point or climax of a thing or event; the point or apex.

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### ADJECTIVES

**acute** (uh-KEWT). Extremely serious, painful, or severe; sharp, shrewd; keenly perceptive, intellectual, and sensitive to details. Also refers to a disease that is severe and quick to crisis.

*Most teenage girls have ACUTE skills when it comes to identifying a cute boy.*

**evanescent** (ev-uh-NESS-ent). Having the qualities of a mist or vapor, capable of vanishing seemingly into thin air.

*Some stellar phenomena appear to astronomers, even those using the most sophisticated equipment, as EVANESCENT events, visible for only fractions of a second.*

**zealous** (ZEHL-uss). Actively and unreservedly enthusiastic; fervent or fanatical.

*At first those students named to the hall patrol seemed overly ZEALOUS in giving summonses to almost everyone.*

### NOUNS

**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.*



**goliath** (guh-LIE-uth). Someone or something large in stature; giant.

*The GOLIATH sundae, made with four flavors of ice cream and five toppings, was too large for one person to finish.*

**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.*

**orientation** (OH-ree-yun-TAY-shun). The positioning of something, or the direction in which it is heading; the direction in which someone's interests or tendencies lie; the process of becoming accustomed to a new situation or surroundings, or a meeting to do so.

*It was the goal of almost everyone to be named as an adviser at the freshman ORIENTATION, for it was an honor and a lot of fun.*

## ANTONYMS

**abate** (uh-BAYT). 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.*

**nadir** (NAY-dur). The lowest possible point; the bottom; a state of despair.

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

## 218. Zephyr

(ZEFF-uhr), noun

A gentle breeze.

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## ADJECTIVES

**bucolic** (byoo-KALL-ik). Expressive of rural serenity and charm.

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

**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*

**gossamer** (GOSS-uh-muhr). Something delicate, light, and flimsy that will flutter in the slightest breeze.

*Fairies flitted among the flowers on GOSSAMER wings.*

## 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.*

## ANTONYMS

**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*

**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.*

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