

**abaft**

adv. on; toward the rear of a ship

The passengers moved abaft of the ship so as to escape the fire in the front of the ship.

**abandon**

v. to leave behind; to give something up

After trying in vain for several years, Julie abandoned her dream of setting up an online bookstore.

**abandon**

n. freedom; impetuosity; enthusiasm

Lucy embarked on her new adventure with abandon.

**abase**

v. to degrade; to humiliate; to disgrace

The mother abased the girl by her public reprimand. Because of his inability to achieve his own life-long goals, the father abased his children whenever they failed.

**abbreviate**

v. to shorten; to reduce in length compress; to diminish; to make brief

His business trip was abbreviated when he suddenly became ill.

**abdicate**

v. to reject; to renounce; to abandon; to give up

Due to their poor payment record, it may be necessary to abdicate our business relationship with the Durmount corporation.

**aberrant**

adj. abnormal; straying from the normal or usual path; irregular

The air traffic controllers were alarmed by the aberrant flight pattern of the aircraft. Her aberrant behavior led her friends to worry the divorce had taken its toll.

**abeyance**

n. state of temporary suspension; inactivity

Since the power failure, the town has been in abeyance.

**abhor**

v. to hate; to dislike; to detest

By the way her jaw tensed when he walked in, it is easy to see that she abhors him. The dog abhorred cats, chasing and growling at them whenever he had the opportunity.

**abject**

adj. of the worst or lowest degree

The Haldemans lived in abject poverty, with barely a roof over their heads.

**abjure**

v. to give up

The losing team may abjure to the team that is winning.

**abnegation**

n. denial

The woman's abnegation of her loss was apparent when she began to laugh.

**abominate**

v. to loathe; to hate; to detest

Randall abominated all the traffic he encountered on every morning commute. Please do not abominate the guilty person until you hear the complete explanation.

**abridge**

v. to shorten; to limit; to condense

The editor abridged the story to make the book easier to digest.

**abrogate**

v. to cancel by authority; to terminate; to abolish

The judge would not abrogate the law.

**abrupt**

adj. happening or ending unexpectedly

The abrupt end to their marriage was a shock to everyone.

**abscond**

v. to go away hastily or secretly; to hide; to avoid; to evade

The newly wed couple will abscond from the reception to leave on the honeymoon.

**absolve**

v. to forgive; to acquit; to release

The judge will absolve the person of all charges. After feuding for many years, the brothers absolved each other for the many arguments they had.

**abstemious**

adj. sparing in use of food or drinks; satisfied with little; moderate

If we become stranded in the snow storm, we will have to be abstemious with our food supply. In many abstemious cultures the people are so thin due to the belief that too much taken into the body leads to contamination of the soul.

**abstinence**

n. self-restraint; forbearance; avoidance

In preparation for the Olympic games, the athletes practiced abstinence from red meat and junk food, adhering instead to a menu of pasta and produce.

**abstruse**

adj. hard to understand; deep; recondite; ambiguous; obscure

The topic was so abstruse the student was forced to stop reading. The concept was too abstruse for the average student to grasp.

**abysmal**

adj. very deep; terrible

The abysmal waters contained little plant life.

**accede**

v. to comply with; to consent to; to agree with; to concur

With defeat imminent, the rebel army acceded to hash out a peace treaty.

**acclaim**

n. loud approval; applause; praise

Edward Albee's brilliantly written Broadway revival of *A Delicate Balance* received wide acclaim.

**accolade**

n. approving or praising mention; award; honor

Rich accolades were bestowed on the returning hero. Accolades flowed into her dressing room following the opening-night triumph.

**accomplice**

n. co-conspirator; partner; partner-in-crime

The bank robber's accomplice drove the get-away car.

**accretion**

n. growth by addition; growing together by parts; expansion

With the accretion of the new members, the club doubled its original size. The addition of the new departments accounts for the accretion of the company.

**accrue**

v. to accumulate; to grow; to compile; to collect; to amass

Over the course of her college career, she managed to accrue a great deal of knowledge. The savings were able to accrue a sizable amount of interest each year. During his many years of collecting stamps, he was able to accrue a large collection of valuable items.

**acerbic**

adj. tasting sour; harsh in language or temper; bitter

Too much Bay Leaf will make the eggplant acerbic. The baby's mouth puckered when she was given the acerbic medicine. The columnist's acerbic comments about the First Lady drew a strong denunciation from the President.

**acquiesce**

v. to agree without protest; to accept without question

The group acquiesced to the new regulations even though they were opposed to them. After a hard-fought battle, the retailers finally acquiesced to the draft regulations.

**acid**

adj. sharp; bitter; foul smelling; irritating

Although the soup is a healthy food choice, it is so acid not many people choose to eat it. The fire at the plastics factory caused an acid odor to be emitted throughout the surrounding neighborhood.

**acrimony**

n. sharpness or bitterness in language or manner; rancor

The acrimony of her response was shocking.

**adage**

n. old saying now accepted as being truthful; proverb

The adage "do unto others as you wish them to do unto you" is still widely practiced.

**adamant**

adj. not yielding; firm; steadfast

After taking an adamant stand to sell the house, the man called the real estate agency. The girl's parents were adamant about not allowing her to go on a dangerous backpacking trip.

**addled**

adj. rotten; spoiled; confused

The egg will become addled if it is left unrefrigerated. His teachers said that Mike had an addled mind but after leaving school he managed to open his own business.

**adept**

adj. skilled; practiced; proficient

The skilled craftsman was quite adept at creating beautiful vases and candleholders.

**adjure**

v. to appeal; to order solemnly

The jurors were adjured by the judge to make a fair decision.

**adroit**

adj. expert; skillful

The repair was not difficult for the adroit craftsman. The driver's adroit driving avoided a serious accident.

**adulation**

n. praise in excess

The adulation was in response to the heroic feat. The adulation given to the movie star was sickening.

**adulterate**

v. to corrupt; to debase; to make impure

The dumping of chemicals will adulterate the pureness of the lake.

**adversary**

n. enemy; foe; opponent; rival

The peace treaty united two countries that were historically great adversaries.

**adverse**

adj. negative; hostile; antagonistic; inimical

Contrary to the expectations of the ski resort manager, warm weather generated adverse conditions for a profitable weekend.

**advocate**

v. to plead in favor of

Amnesty International advocates the cause for human rights.

**advocate**

n. supporter; defender

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a great advocate of civil rights.

**aesthetic**

adj. of beauty; pertaining to taste in art and beauty

She found that her aesthetic sense and that of the artist were at odds. His review made one wonder what kind of aesthetic taste the critic had.

**affable**

adj. friendly; good-natured; easy to talk to

Her affable puppy loved to play with children.

**affiliate**

v. to connect; to associate with; to accept as a member

The hiking club affiliated with the bird-watching club.

**affinity**

n. connection; similarity of structure

There is a strong emotional affinity between the two siblings. It turns out that the elements bear a strong affinity to each other.

**aggrandize**

v. to make more powerful

The king wanted to aggrandize himself and his kingdom.

**aghast**

adj. astonished; amazed; horrified; terrified; appalled

Stockholders were aghast at the company's revelation.  
The landlord was aghast at his water bill.

**agrarian**

adj. of the land; agricultural

Many agrarian people are poor.

**alacrity**

n. eager readiness; speed

The manager was so impressed by the worker's alacrity; he suggested a promotion. On the first day of her new job, the recent college graduate was able to leave early after completing all of her tasks with alacrity.

**alchemist**

n. person who studies chemistry

The alchemist's laboratory was full of bottles and tubes of strange looking liquids.

**alchemy**

n. any mysterious change of substance or nature

The magician used alchemy to change the powder into a liquid.

**allegory**

n. symbolic description; metaphor

The book contained many allegories on French history.

**alleviate**

v. to lessen; to make easier; to allay; to soothe; to relieve

The airport's monorail alleviates vehicular traffic.

**allocate**

v. to set aside; to designate; to assign

There have been front row seats allocated to the performer's family. The farmer allocated three acres of his fields to corn.

**allude**

v. to refer indirectly to something; to hint

The story alludes to part of the author's life. Without stating that the defendant was an ex-convict, the prosecutor alluded to the fact by mentioning his length of unemployment.

**allure**

v. to attract; to tempt; to charm

The romantic young man allured the beautiful woman by preparing a wonderful dinner.

**allure**

n. entice; attraction; temptation; glamor

Singapore's allure is its bustling economy.

**allusion**

n. indirect reference (often literary); hint

The mention of the pet snake was an allusion to the man's sneaky ways. In modern plays allusions are often made to ancient drama.

**aloof**

adj. distant in interest; reserved; cool

Even though the new coworker was aloof, we attempted to be friendly. The calm defendant remained aloof when he was wrongly accused of fabricating his story.

**altercation**

n. controversy; dispute

A serious altercation caused the marriage to end in a bitter divorce.

**altruism**

n. unselfish devotion to the welfare of others; philanthropy

After the organization aided the catastrophe victims, it was given an award for altruism. She displayed such altruism by giving up all of her belongings and joining a peace corps in Africa.

**altruistic**

adj. unselfish; generous

The altruistic volunteer donated much time and energy in an effort to raise funds for the children's hospital.

**amalgam**

n. mixture or combination (often of metals); alloy

The art display was an amalgam of modern and traditional pieces. That ring is made from an amalgam of minerals; if it were pure gold it would never hold its shape.

**amalgamate**

v. to mix; to merge; to combine; to unite

If the economy does not grow, the business may need to amalgamate with a rival company. The three presidents decided to amalgamate their businesses to build one strong company.

**amass**

v. to collect together; to accumulate; to gather

Over the years the sailor has amassed many replicas of boats. The women amassed a huge collection of priceless diamonds and pearls.

**ambiguous**

adj. not clear; uncertain; vague

The ambiguous law did not make a clear distinction between the new and old land boundary.

**ambivalent**

adj. undecided

The ambivalent jury could not reach a unanimous verdict.

**ameliorate**

v. to improve; to make better

A consistent routine of exercise has shown to ameliorate health. We can ameliorate the flooding problem by changing the grading.

**amendment**

n. positive change

The amendment in his ways showed there was still reason for hope.

**amiable**

adj. friendly; genial; pleasant

The newcomer picked the most amiable person to sit next to during the meeting.

**amiss**

adj. wrong; awry; wrongly; mistaken; erroneous

Seeing that his anorak was gone, he knew something was amiss.

**amiss**

adv. in a defective manner

Its new muffler aside, the car was behaving amiss.

**amity**

n. friendly relations; friendship

The amity between the two bordering nations put the populations at ease.

**amorphous**

adj. with no shape; unorganized; having no determinate form

The amorphous gel seeped through the cracks. The amorphous group quickly got lost. The scientist could not determine the sex of the amorphous organism.

**amortize**

v. to put money into a fund at fixed intervals

The couple was able to amortize their mortgage sooner than they thought.

**anachronism**

n. something out of place in time (e.g. an airplane in 1492); something that is obsolete or out of date

The editor recognized an anachronism in the manuscript where the character from the 1500s boarded an airplane. He realized that the film about cavemen contained an anachronism when he saw a jet cut across the horizon during a hunting scene.

**analogy**

n. similarity; correlation; parallelism; comparability

The teacher used an analogy to describe the similarities between the two books. Comparing the newly discovered virus with one found long ago, the scientist made an analogy between the two organisms.

**anaphylaxis**

n. allergic reaction; vulnerability

The boy's severe anaphylaxis to a series of medications made writing prescriptions a tricky proposition.

**anarchist**

n. person who believes that a formal government is unnecessary

The yell from the crowd came from the anarchist protesting the government. The anarchist attempted to overthrow the established democratic government of the new nation and reinstate chaos and disarray.

**anchorage**

n. something that can be relied on

Knowing the neighbors were right next door was an anchorage for the elderly woman.

**anecdote**

n. short and amusing account of happenings

The speaker told an anecdote about how he lost his shoes when he was young.

**animosity**

n. feeling of hatred or ill will; resentment

Animosity grew between the two feuding families.

**anoint**

v. to crown; to ordain

A member of the monarchy was anointed by the king.

**anomaly**

n. oddity; inconsistency; deviation from the norm; exception; deviation

An anomaly existed when the report listed one statistic, and the spokeswoman reported another. In a parking lot full of Buicks, Chevys, and Plymouths, the Jaguar was an anomaly.

**anonymous**

adj. nameless; unidentified

Not wishing to be identified by the police, he remained anonymous by returning the money he had stolen by sending it through the mail.

**antagonism**

n. hostility; opposition; conflict

The antagonism was created by a misunderstanding. The rebellious clan captured a hostage to display antagonism to the new peace treaty.

**antipathy**

n. strong dislike or repugnance; aversion

Her antipathy for large crowds convinced her to decline the invitation to the city. The vegetarian had an antipathy toward meat.

**apathy**

n. lack of emotion or interest; indifference; disinterest

He showed apathy when his relative was injured. The disheartened peasants expressed apathy toward the new law which promised new hope and prosperity for all.

**apocalyptic**

adj. prophetic of devastation or ultimate doom

Science-fiction movies seem to relish apocalyptic visions.

**apocryphal**

adj. counterfeit; of doubtful authorship or authenticity

The man who said he was a doctor was truly apocryphal.

**appease**

v. to satisfy; to calm; to sooth

A milk bottle usually appeases a crying baby.

**apposite**

adj. suitable; apt; relevant; becoming

Discussion of poverty was apposite to the curriculum, so the professor allowed it. Without reenacting the entire scenario, the situation can be understood if apposite information is given.

**apprehensive**

adj. fearful; aware; conscious; worried; concerned

The nervous child was apprehensive about beginning a new school year.

**approbatory**

adj. approving; sanctioning; praising; commending

The judge showed his acceptance in his approbatory remark.

**arable**

adj. suitable (as land) for plowing; cultivatable

When the land was deemed arable the farmer decided to plow.

**arbiter**

n. person who is authorized to judge or decide

The decision of who would represent the people was made by the arbiter.

**arbitrary**

adj. based on one's preference or judgment; unrestricted

Rick admitted his decision had been arbitrary, as he claimed no expertise on the matter.

**arcane**

adj. obscure; secret; mysterious

With an arcane expression, the young boy left the family wondering what sort of mischief he had committed. The wizard's description of his magic was purposefully arcane so that others would be unable to copy it.

**archetype**

n. original pattern or model

This man was the archetype for scores of fictional characters. The scientist was careful with the archetype of her invention so that once manufacturing began, it would be easy to reproduce it.

**ardent**

adj. with passionate or intense feelings; fervent; zealous; enthusiastic

The fans' ardent love of the game kept them returning to watch the terrible team.

**arduous**

adj. laborious; difficult; strenuous; hard

Completing the plans for the new building proved to be an arduous affair. Building a house is arduous work, but the result is well worth the labor.

**arid**

adj. extremely dry; parched; barren; unimaginative

The terrain was so arid that not one species of plant could survive. Their thirst became worse due to the arid condition of the desert.

**aromatic**

adj. having a smell which is sweet or spicy; fragrant

The aromatic smell coming from the oven made the man's mouth water.

**arrogant**

adj. acting superior to others; conceited; proud

After purchasing his new, expensive sports car, the arrogant doctor refused to allow anyone to ride with him to the country club.

**arrogate**

v. to claim or demand without right

The teenager arrogated that he should be able to use his parent's car whenever he desired.

**articulate**

v. to utter or speak clearly and distinctly

It's even more important to articulate your words when you're on the phone.

**articulate**

adj. clear; distinct; expressed with clarity; skillful with words

You didn't have to vote for him to agree that Bill Clinton was articulate. A salesperson must be articulate when speaking to a customer.

**artifice**

n. skill in a craft; expertise

The artifice of glass-making takes many years of practice.

**ascetic**

adj. rigorously abstinent; severe; self-denying; celibate

The nuns lead an ascetic life devoted to the Lord.

**ascetic**

n. person who leads a simple life of self-denial; recluse; hermit

The monastery is filled with ascetics who have devoted their lives to religion.

**aseptic**

adj. germ free; uninfected

It is necessary for an operating room to be aseptic.

**askance**

adv. a sideways glance of disapproval

The look askance proved the guard suspected some wrongdoing.

**asperity**

n. harshness; vulgarity

The man used asperity to frighten the girl out of going. The asperity of the winter had most everybody yearning for spring.

**aspersion**

n. slanderous statement; damaging or derogatory criticism; false rumor

The aspersion damaged the credibility of the organization. He blamed the loss of his job on an aspersion stated by his co-worker to his superior.

**aspirant**

n. person who goes after high goals; ambitious person

The aspirant would not settle for assistant director — only the top job was good enough.

**assay**

n. testing the quality of a substance; test; examine; try; attempt

Have the soil assayed.

**assess**

v. to estimate the value of; to appraise; to measure

She assessed the possible rewards to see if the project was worth her time and effort.

**assiduous**

adj. carefully attentive; diligent; persistent; hard-working

It is necessary to be assiduous if a person wishes to make the most of his time at work. He enjoys having assiduous employees because he can explain a procedure once and have it performed correctly every time.

**assuage**

v. to relieve; to ease; to make less severe; to calm; to appease

Medication should assuage the pain. The medication helped assuage the pain of the wound.

**astrigent**

n. substance that contracts bodily tissues

After the operation an astrigent was used on his skin so that the stretched area would return to normal.

**astrigent**

adj. tightening; stern; severe; harsh; constrictive

The downturn in sales caused the CEO to impose astrigent measures. Her astrigent remarks at the podium would not soon be forgotten.

**astute**

adj. cunning; sly; crafty; clever; keen

The astute lawyer's questioning convinced the jury of the defendant's guilt.

**atrophy**

v. to waste away; as from lack of use; to wither

A few months after he lost his ability to walk, his legs began to atrophy.

**atrophy**

n. failure to grow

The atrophy of the muscles was due to the injury.

**attenuate**

v. to thin out; to weaken in intensity; to decrease

Water is commonly used to attenuate strong chemicals. The chemist attenuated the solution by adding water.

**atypical**

adj. abnormal; unusual; irregular

The atypical behavior of the wild animal alarmed the hunters.

**audacious**

adj. fearless; bold; impudent

The audacious soldier went into battle without a shield.

**augment**

v. to increase; add to; to make larger; to enhance; to multiply

They needed more soup so they augmented the recipe. They were able to augment their savings over a period of time.

**august**

adj. imposing; magnificent; grand

The palace was august in gold and crystal.

**auspicious**

adj. being of a good omen; successful; favorable; beneficent

It was auspicious that the sun shone on the first day of the trip. The campaign had an auspicious start, foreshadowing the future.

**austere**

adj. having a stern look; having strict self-discipline; rigid; ascetic; modest

The old woman always has an austere look about her. The austere teacher assigned five pages of homework each day.

**authentic**

adj. real; genuine; trustworthy; reliable

An authentic diamond will cut glass.

**authoritarian**

n. dictator; tyrant; despot

The authoritarian made all of the rules but did none of the work.

**authoritarian**

adj. acting as a dictator; demanding obedience

Fidel Castro is reluctant to give up his authoritarian rule.

**autocracy**

n. absolute monarchy; government where one person holds power; dictatorship; despotism; totalitarianism

The autocracy was headed by a demanding man. She was extremely power-hungry and therefore wanted her government to be an autocracy.

**autocrat**

n. absolute ruler

The autocrat in charge of the government was a man of power and prestige. The autocrat made every decision and divided the tasks among his subordinates.

**avarice**

n. inordinate desire for gaining and possessing wealth; greed

The man's avarice for money kept him at work through the evenings and weekends. The avarice of the president led to his downfall.

**aver**

v. to affirm as true; to declare

The witness was able to aver the identity of the defendant.

**awry**

adj. crooked; uneven; unsound; twisted

From that day he abode at the court, wearing, with a face awry at the fineness of them, such clothes as were provided for him, and eating delicate foods.

**awry**

adv. wrong; askew

Things first started to look awry when the musicians, or should I say actors (the instruments seemed prerecorded, as far as I can tell), appeared on the stage.

**azure**

adj. the clear blue color of the sky

The azure sky made the picnic day perfect.

**baleful**

adj. harmful; malign; sinister; malicious

After she was fired, she realized it was a baleful move to point the blame at her superior. The strange liquid could be baleful if ingested.

**banal**

adj. trite; without freshness or originality; commonplace; stale; usual

It was a banal suggestion to have the annual picnic in the park, since that was where it had been for the past five years.

**baneful**

adj. deadly; causing distress or death; destructive

Not wearing a seat belt could be baneful.

**baroque**

adj. extravagant; ornate; embellished

The baroque artwork was made up of intricate details which kept the museum-goers enthralled. The baroque furnishings did not fit in the plain, modest home.

**bastion**

n. fortress; stronghold; castle

The strength of the bastion saved the soldiers inside of it.

**batten**

v. to gain

The team could only batten by drafting the top player.

**bauble**

n. showy yet useless thing

The woman had many baubles on her bookshelf.

**beget**

v. to bring into being

The king wished to beget a new heir.

**beholden**

adj. indebted to; obligated

The children were beholden to their parents for the car loan.

**behoove**

v. to be advantageous; to be necessary

It will behoove the students to buy their textbooks early.

**belittle**

v. to disparage; to depreciate; to scorn; to criticize

The unsympathetic friend belittled her friend's problems and spoke of her own as the most important.

**bellicose**

adj. quarrelsome; warlike

The bellicose guest would not be invited back again.

**bemuse**

v. to preoccupy in thought; to confuse; to baffle

The girl was bemused by her troubles.

**benefactor**

n. person who helps others; donor; patron; sponsor

An anonymous benefactor donated USD 10,000 to the children's hospital.

**beneficent**

adj. conferring benefits; kind; doing good

He is a beneficent person, always taking in stray animals and talking to people who need someone to listen. A beneficent donation helped the organization meet its goal.

**benevolent**

adj. kind; generous

The professor proved a tough questioner, but a benevolent grader. The benevolent gentleman volunteered his services.

**benign**

adj. mild; harmless; favorable; gentle; compassionate

A lamb is a benign animal, especially when compared with a lion.

**berate**

v. to scold; to reprove; to reproach; to criticize; to rebuke

The child was berated by her parents for breaking the china.

**bereft**

adj. deprived of; in a sad manner; hurt by someone's death

The loss of his job will leave the man bereft of many luxuries. The widower was bereft for many years after his wife's death.

**beseech**

v. to ask earnestly; to entreat; to plead; to beg

The soldiers beseached the civilians for help.

**besmirch**

v. to dirty; to stain; to sully; to soil

The soot from the chimney will besmirch clean curtains.

**bestial**

adj. having the qualities of a beast; brutal; barbaric

The bestial employer made his employees work in an unheated room.

**betroth**

v. to promise or pledge in marriage

The man betrothed his daughter to the prince.

**biased**

adj. prejudiced; influenced; not neutral

The vegetarian had a biased opinion regarding what should be ordered for dinner.

**biennial**

adj. happening every two years

The biennial journal's influence seemed only magnified by its infrequent publication.

**biennial**

n. plant which blooms every two years; event which occurs every two years

She has lived here for four years and has seen the biennials bloom twice.

**bilateral**

adj. pertaining to or affecting both sides or two sides; having two sides; reciprocal

A bilateral decision was made so that both partners reaped equal benefits from the same amount of work. The brain is a bilateral organ, consisting of a left and right hemisphere.

**blasphemous**

adj. irreligious; away from acceptable standards; speaking ill of using profane language; irreverent

The upper-class parents thought that it was blasphemous for their son to marry a waitress. His blasphemous outburst was heard throughout the room.

**blatant**

adj. crude; vulgar; obtrusive; conspicuous; blunt

The blatant foul was reason for ejection. The defendant was blatant in his testimony.

**blighted**

adj. causing frustration or destruction

The blighted tornado left only one building standing in its wake.

**blithe**

adj. happy; cheery; merry; carefree

The wedding was a blithe celebration. The blithe child was a pleasant surprise.

**bode**

v. to foretell something; to portend

The storm bode that we would not reach our destination.

**bombast**

n. pompous speech; pretentious words; trite cliches

After he delivered his bombast at the podium, he arrogantly left the meeting. The presenter ended his bombast with a prediction of his future success.

**bombastic**

adj. pompous; wordy; turgid; inflated; exaggerated

The bombastic woman talks a lot about herself.

**boor**

n. rude person

The boor was not invited to the party, but he came anyway.

**breadth**

n. distance from one side to another; width

The table cloth was too small to cover the breadth of the table.

**brevity**

n. briefness; shortness; conciseness

On Top 40 AM radio, brevity was the coin of the realm.

**brindled**

adj. mixed with a darker color

In order to get matching paint we made a brindled mixture.

**broach**

v. to introduce into conversation; to open a subject for discussion

Broaching the touchy subject was difficult.

**brusque**

adj. abrupt in manner or speech; curt; rude; unpleasant

His brusque answer was neither acceptable nor polite.

**bucolic**

adj. having to do with shepherds or the country; rural

The bucolic setting inspired the artist.

**bumptious**

adj. arrogant; pushy; self-assertive

He was bumptious in manner as he approached the podium to accept his anticipated award.

**bungler**

n. clumsy person

The one who broke the crystal vase was a true bungler.

**burgeon**

v. to grow or develop quickly; to blossom; to expand

The tumor appeared to burgeon more quickly than normal. After the first punch was thrown, the dispute burgeoned into a brawl.

**burlesque**

v. to imitate in a non-serious manner; to mock

His stump speeches were so hackneyed, he seemed to be burlesquing of his role as a congressman.

**burlesque**

n. comical imitation; mockery; caricature

George Burns was considered one of the great practitioners of burlesque.

**burly**

adj. strong; bulky; stocky; sturdy

The lumberjack was a burly man.

**burnish**

v. to polish by rubbing; to make shiny

The vase needed to be burnished to restore its beauty.

**cabal**

n. group of people joined by a secret; group of conspirators

The very idea that there could be a cabal cast suspicion on the whole operation.

**cache**

n. stockpile; store; heap; hiding place for goods

The town kept a cache of salt on hand to melt winter's snow off the roads. Extra food is kept in the cache under the pantry. The cache for his jewelry was hidden under the bed.

**cacophonous**

adj. sounding jarring; discordant

The cacophonous sound from the bending metal sent shivers up our spines.

**cacophony**

n. harsh, inharmonious collection of sounds; dissonance

The beautiful harmony of the symphony was well enjoyed after the cacophony coming from the stage as the orchestra warmed up. The amateur band created more cacophony than beautiful sound.

**cajole**

v. to coax with insincere talk

To cajole the disgruntled employee, the manager coaxed him with lies and sweet talk. The salesman will cajole the couple into buying the stereo.

**calamity**

n. disaster

The fire in the apartment building was a great calamity.

**caliber**

n. quality; importance

The caliber of talent at the show was excellent.

**callow**

adj. young; immature; inexperienced

With the callow remark the young man demonstrated his age. Although the girl could be considered an adult, the action was very callow.

**calumny**

n. slander

I felt it necessary to speak against the calumny of the man's good reputation.

**canard**

n. false statement; rumor; hoax

The canard was reported in a scandalous tabloid.

**candid**

adj. honest; truthful; sincere; frank; straightforward; open

People trust her because she's so candid.

**cant**

n. insincere or hypocritical statements of high ideals; jargon of a particular group or occupations

The theater majors had difficulty understanding the cant of the computer scientists. The remarks by the doctor were cant and meant only for his associates.

**caprice**

n. sudden, unpredictable or whimsical change; impulse

The caprice with which the couple approached the change of plans was evidence to their young age. The king ruled by caprice as much as law.

**capricious**

adj. changeable; fickle

The capricious bride-to-be has a different church in mind for her wedding every few days.

**captious**

adj. disposed to find fault; picky; narrow-minded

A captious attitude often causes difficulties in a relationship.

**carte blanche**

n. unlimited authority; freedom of action

The designer was given carte blanche to create a new line for the fall.

**cascade**

n. waterfall; pour; waves

The hikers stopped along the path to take in the beauty of the rushing cascade. He took a photograph of the lovely cascade. The drapes formed a cascade down the window.

**cascade**

v. to rush; to fall; to flow

The water cascaded down the rocks into the pool.

**castigate**

v. to punish through public criticism; to scold; to reprimand

The mayor castigated the police chief for the rash of robberies.

**cataclysm**

n. extreme natural force; catastrophe

The earthquake has been the first cataclysm in five years.

**catalyst**

n. anything which creates a situation in which change can occur

The low pressure system was the catalyst for the nor'easter.

**catharsis**

n. purging or relieving of the body or soul

He experienced a total catharsis after the priest absolved his sins. Admitting his guilt served as a catharsis for the man.

**caustic**

adj. eating away at; sarcastic words; corrosive

The caustic chemicals are dangerous. The girl harmed her mother with her caustic remarks. His caustic sense of humor doesn't go over so well when people don't know what they're in for.

**cavil**

v. to bicker; to criticize; to complain

The children are constantly caviling.

**cancel**

v. to examine and delete objectionable material

The children were allowed to watch the adult movie only after it had been canceled.

**censure**

n. disapproval; expression of disapproval; criticism

His remarks drew the censure of his employers. A censure of the new show upset the directors.

**censure**

v. to criticize; disapprove of

Her parents censured her idea of dropping out of school.

**ceremonious**

adj. very formal; proper

The black-tie dinner was highly ceremonious.

**cessation**

n. ceasing; stopping

The cessation of a bad habit is often difficult to sustain.

**chafe**

v. to annoy; to irritate; to wear away; to make sore by rubbing

His constant teasing chafed her. He doesn't wear pure wool sweaters because they usually chafe his skin.

**chaffing**

n. banter; teasing

The king was used to his jesters good-natured chaffing.

**chagrin**

n. feeling of embarrassment due to failure or disappointment; humiliation

To the chagrin of the inventor, the machine did not work. She turned red-faced with chagrin when she learned that her son had been caught shoplifting.

**charisma**

n. appeal; magnetism; presence; leadership ability

She has such charisma that everyone likes her the first time they meet her.

**charlatan**

n. person who pretends to have knowledge; impostor; fake; quack; fraud

The charlatan deceived the townspeople. It was finally discovered that the charlatan sitting on the throne was not the real king.

**chary**

adj. cautious; being sparing in giving; careful; wary

Be chary when driving at night. The chary man had few friends.

**chaste**

adj. virtuous; free of obscenity; pure; unaffected; modest

Because the woman believed in being chaste, she would not let her date into the house.

**chastise**

v. to punish; to discipline; to admonish; to criticize harshly

The dean chastised the first-year student for cheating on the exam.

**cherish**

v. to feel love for; to care for; to treasure

The bride vowed to cherish the groom for life.

**chicanery**

n. trickery; deception; scheming

The swindler was trained in chicanery. A news broadcast is no place for chicanery.

**chimera**

n. impossible fancy; wild illusion

Perhaps he saw a flying saucer, but perhaps it was only a chimera.

**choleric**

adj. cranky; cantankerous; easily moved to feeling displeasure; irritable

The choleric man was continually upset by his neighbors. Rolly becomes choleric when his views are challenged.

**chortle**

v. to make a gleeful, chuckling sound; to laugh loudly

The chortles emanating from the audience indicated it wouldn't be as tough a crowd as the stand-up comic had expected.

**churlishness**

n. crude or surly behavior; behavior of a peasant; lack of education

The fraternity's churlishness ran afoul of the dean's office. The churlishness of the teenager caused his employer to lose faith in him.

**circumlocution**

n. roundabout or indirect way of speaking; verbosity

The man's speech contained so much circumlocution that I was unsure of the point he was trying to make. The child made a long speech using circumlocution to avoid stating that it was she who had knocked over the lamp.

**circumlocutory**

adj. roundabout and unnecessarily wordy

It was a circumlocutory documentary that could have been cut to half its running time to say twice as much.

**circumspect**

adj. careful; cautious; prudent; watchful; guarded

A circumspect decision must be made when so many people are involved.

**citadel**

n. fortress set up high to defend a city; stronghold

A citadel sat on the hill to protect the city below.

**clandestine**

adj. secret; hidden; covert; stealthy; underhand

The clandestine plan must be kept between the two of us!

**clemency**

n. mercy toward an offender; mildness; mercy; grace

The governor granted the prisoner clemency. The weather's clemency made for a perfect picnic.

**cloture**

n. parliamentary procedure to end debate and begin to vote; closure

Cloture was declared as the parliamentarians readied to register their votes.

**cloying**

adj. too sugary; too sentimental or flattering

After years of marriage the husband still gave cloying gifts to his wife. Complimenting her on her weight loss, clothing and hairstyle was a cloying way to begin asking for a raise.

**coagulate**

v. to become semisolid; to cause to thicken; to clot

The liquid will coagulate and close the tube if left standing.

**coalesce**

v. to grow together; to merge; to unite

The bride and groom coalesced their funds to increase their collateral. At the end of the conference the five groups coalesced in one room.

**coda**

n. concluding passage in music

By the end of the coda, I was ready to burst with excitement over the thrilling performance. The audience knew that the concerto was about to end when they heard the orchestra begin playing the coda.

**coddle**

v. to treat with tenderness; to pamper

A baby needs to be coddled.

**codify**

v. to organize laws or rules into a systematic collection; to arrange systematically

The laws were codified by those whom they affected. The intern codified all the city's laws into a computerized filing system.

**coffer**

n. chest where money or valuables are kept; treasury; strongbox

The coffer that contained the jewels was stolen.

**cogent**

adj. having the power to influence or convince; persuasive; influential

The lawyer makes compelling and cogent presentations, which evidently help him win 96 percent of his cases. He made a short, cogent speech which his audience easily understood.

**cogitate**

v. to think hard; to ponder; to meditate; to contemplate; to ruminate

It is necessary to cogitate on decisions which affect life goals. The room was quiet while every student cogitated during the calculus exam.

**cognate**

n. person related through ancestry; relative; kin

The woman was a cognate to the royal family.

**cognate**

adj. having the same family; from the same source; similar in nature or form

English and German are cognate languages.

**cognitive**

adj. possessing the power to think or meditate; meditative; capable of perception; aware; perceptive

Cognitive thought makes humans adaptable to a quickly changing environment. Once the toddler was able to solve puzzles, it was obvious that her cognitive abilities were developing.

**cognizant**

adj. aware of; perceptive

She became alarmed when she was cognizant of the man following her. It was critical to establish whether the defendant was cognizant of his rights.

**coherent**

adj. sticking together; connected; logical; consistent

The course was a success due to its coherent information. If he couldn't make a coherent speech, how could he run for office?

**cohesion**

n. act of holding together; union

The cohesion of the group increased as friendships were formed. The cohesion of different molecules forms different substances.

**cohort**

n. group; band; companion; friend

The cohort of teens gathered at the athletic field.

**collaborate**

v. to work together; to cooperate

The two builders collaborated to get the house finished.

**colloquial**

adj. having to do with conversation; informal speech

The colloquial reference indicated the free spirit of the group. When you listen to the difference between spoken colloquial conversation and written work, you realize how good an ear a novelist must have to write authentic dialogue.

**collusion**

n. secret agreement for an illegal purpose; conspiracy

The authority discovered a collusion between the director and treasurer.

**comeliness**

n. beauty; attractiveness in appearance or behavior

The comeliness of the woman attracted everyone's attention.

**commiserate**

v. to show sympathy for; to empathize; to feel sorrow for; to pity

The hurricane victims commiserated about the loss of their homes.

**commodious**

adj. spacious and convenient; roomy; ample; comfortable

The new home was so commodious that many new pieces of furniture needed to be purchased.

**communal**

adj. shared or common ownership; public

The communal nature of the project made everyone pitch in to help.

**compatible**

adj. in agreement with; harmonious

When repairing an automobile, it is necessary to use parts compatible with that make and model.

**complacent**

adj. indifferent; submissive; nonchalant; self-satisfied; at ease

Strong competition keeps companies from becoming too complacent. The CEO worries regularly that his firm's winning ways will make it complacent. The candidate was so complacent with his poll numbers that he virtually stopped campaigning.

**compliance**

n. quality of being agreeable or eager to please; acquiescence; graciousness

The compliance of the new assistant made it easy for the managers to give him a lot of work without worrying that he may complain.

**compliant**

adj. complying; obeying; yielding; acquiescent

Compliant actions should be reinforced. The slave was compliant with every order to avoid being whipped.

**comport**

v. to behave in a certain manner

It was easy to comport to the new group of employees.

**comprehensive**

adj. all-inclusive; complete; thorough; extensive; large in scope

It's the only health facility around to offer comprehensive care.

**compromise**

v. to settle by mutual adjustment

Labor leaders and the automakers compromised by agreeing to a starting wage of USD 16 an hour in exchange for concessions on health-care premiums.

**concede**

v. to surrender; to admit; to give up; to yield

After much wrangling, the conceded that the minister had a point. Satisfied with the recount, the mayor conceded graciously.

**conceit**

n. exaggerated personal opinion; arrogance; excessive pride

The man's belief that he was the best player on the team was pure conceit.

**conciliation**

n. attempt to make friendly or placate; appeasement; compromise

Information and data relating to the attempt at conciliation are confidential.

**conciliatory**

adj. making or willing to make concessions; appeasing; pacifying

The diplomat sought to take a conciliatory approach to keep the talks going.

**concise**

adj. in few words; brief; condensed; succinct; short yet comprehensive

The concise instructions were printed on two pages rather than the customary five.

**conclave**

n. any private meeting or closed assembly

The conclave was to meet in the executive suite.

**condescend**

v. to come down from one's position or dignity; to lower oneself; to patronize

The arrogant, rich man was usually condescending towards his servants.

**condone**

v. to overlook; to forgive; to pardon

The loving and forgiving mother condoned her son's life of crime. I will condone your actions of negligence.

**confluence**

n. thing which is joined together; assemblage

Great cities often lie at the confluence of great rivers.

**confound**

v. to lump together, causing confusion; to damn; to amaze; to stun; to confuse

The problem confounded our ability to solve it. Confound you, you scoundrel!

**conglomeration**

n. collection or mixture of various things; aggregate; cluster; mass; assortment

The conglomeration is made up of four different interest groups. The soup was a conglomeration of meats and vegetables.

**conjoin**

v. to combine; to join; to confederate; to merge; to unite

The classes will conjoin to do the play.

**conjure**

v. to call upon; appeal to; to summon; to implore; to invoke

The smell of the dinner conjured images of childhood. The magician conjured a rabbit out of a hat.

**connivance**

n. secret cooperation in wrongdoing

With the guard's connivance, the convict was able to make his escape.

**connoisseur**

n. expert; authority (usually refers to a wine or food expert)

They allowed her to choose the wine for dinner since she was the connoisseur.

**connotative**

adj. containing associated meanings in addition to the primary one; hinting; implicational; suggestive

Along with the primary meaning of the word, there were two connotative meanings. The connotative meaning of their music was spelled out in the video.

**consecrate**

v. to declare sacred; to dedicate; to bless

We will consecrate the pact during the ceremony. The park was consecrated to the memory of the missing soldier.

**consequential**

adj. following as an effect; important; resultant; subsequent

His long illness and consequential absence set him behind in his homework. The decision to move the company will be consequential to its success.

**consort**

n. companion; spouse; partner

An elderly woman was seeking a consort.

**consort**

v. to associate; to join; to be in agreement

They waited until dark to consort under the moonlight.

**conspicuous**

adj. easy to see; noticeable; obvious

The diligent and hardworking editor thought the obvious mistake was conspicuous.

**consternation**

n. amazement or terror that causes confusion; shock; dismay; alarm

The look of consternation on the child's face caused her father to panic.

**constrain**

v. to force; to compel; to restrain; to coerce; to oblige

It may be necessary to constrain the wild animal if it approaches the town. The student was constrained to remain in her seat until the teacher gave her permission to leave.

**consummation**

n. completion; finish; realization; perfection; culmination

Following the consummation of final exams, most of the students graduated.

**contemporary**

adj. living or happening at the same time; modern; current

Contemporary furniture will clash with your traditional sectional.

**contempt**

n. scorn; disrespect; disdain

The greedy, selfish banker was often discussed with great contempt.

**contentious**

adj. quarrelsome; controversial; argumentative

The contentious student was asked to leave the classroom. They hate his contentious behavior because every suggestion they give ends in a fight.

**contest**

v. to attempt to disprove or invalidate; to challenge; to appeal; to fight for

I will attempt to contest the criminal charges against me.

**contiguous**

adj. touching; adjacent; successive; bordering

There are many contiguous buildings in the city because there is no excess land to allow space between them.

**contravene**

v. to oppose; to contradict; to infringe; to violate; to transgress

The story of the accused contravened the story of the witness. The United Nations held that the Eastern European nation had contravened the treaty.

**contrite**

adj. regretful; sorrowful; having repentance; remorseful; pertinent

Regretting his decision not to attend college, the contrite man did not lead a very happy life. A contrite heart has fixed its wrongs.

**contumacious**

adj. resisting authority; rebellious; headstrong

The man was put in jail for contumacious actions.

**contusion**

n. bruise; injury where the skin is not broken; swelling

The man was fortunate to receive only contusions from the crash.

**conundrum**

n. puzzle; riddle; problem

I spent two hours trying to figure out the conundrum. The legend says that to enter the secret passageway, one must answer the ancient conundrum.

**conventional**

adj. traditional; common; routine; customary; formal

The bride wanted a conventional wedding ceremony, complete with white dresses, many flowers, and a grand reception party. Conventional telephones are giving way to videophones.

**converge**

v. to move toward one point (opposite: diverge); to come together; to meet; to assemble

It was obvious that an accident was going to occur as the onlookers watched the two cars converge. The two roads converge at the corner.

**conviviality**

n. fondness for festiveness or joviality; festivity; friendliness

His conviviality makes him a welcome guest at any social gathering.

**convoke**

v. to call to assemble; to summon

The teacher convoked her students in the auditorium to help prepare them for the play.

**copious**

adj. abundant; in great quantities; plentiful; bountiful

Her copious notes touched on every subject presented in the lecture.

**corpulence**

n. obesity; fleshiness; fatness

The corpulence of the man kept him from fitting into the seat.

**correlate**

v. to bring into mutual relation; to connect

The service man was asked to correlate the two computer demonstration pamphlets.

**corroborate**

v. to confirm the validity; to certify; to reinforce

The witness must corroborate the prisoner's story if she is to be set free.

**coterie**

n. clique; group who meet frequently, usually socially

A special aspect of campus life is joining a coterie. Every day after school she joins her coterie on the playground and they go out for a soda.

**covenant**

n. binding and solemn agreement; contract; treaty

With the exchange of vows, the covenant was complete.

**covetous**

adj. greedy; very desirous; envious; grasping

Lonnie, covetous of education, went to almost every lecture at the university. Covetous of her neighbor's pool, she did everything she could to make things unpleasant..

**cower**

v. to huddle and tremble; to grovel; to shrink; to cringe

The lost dog cowered near the tree. The tellers cowered in the corner as the bandit ransacked the bank.

**coy**

adj. modest; bashful; pretending shyness to attract; flirtatious; coquettish

Her coy manners attracted the man. He's not really that shy, he's just being coy.

**crass**

adj. insensitive; materialistic; rude; ill-mannered

To make light of someone's weakness is crass. They made their money the old-fashioned way, but still they were accused of being crass. My respect for the man was lowered when he made the crass remark.

**craven**

n. coward; abject person

While many fought for their rights, the craven sat shaking, off in a corner somewhere.

**craven**

adj. cowardly; fearful

Craven men will not stand up for what they believe in.

**culpable**

adj. deserving blame; guilty

The convicted criminal still denies that he is culpable for the robbery.

**curb**

n. restraint; framework; raised edge of a sidewalk

A curb was put up along the street to help drainage.

**curmudgeon**

n. ill-tempered person; stingy unpleasant person

The curmudgeon asked the children not to play near the house.

 **cursory**

adj. hasty; slight; brief; perfunctory; superficial

The detective's cursory examination of the crime scene caused him to overlook the lesser clues.

**cynic**

n. person who believes that others are motivated entirely by selfishness; pessimist

The cynic felt that the hero saved the man to become famous.

**dais**

n. raised platform at one end of a room; stage

The dais was lowered to make the speaker look taller.

**dally**

v. to loiter; to waste time; to trifle; to flirt

Please do not dally or we will miss our appointment.

**dank**

adj. damp and chilly; clammy and wet; moist

The cellar became very dank during the winter time.

**dauntless**

adj. fearless; not discouraged; impossible to frighten; bold; daring

The dauntless ranger scaled the mountain to complete the rescue.

**dearth**

n. scarcity; shortage; lack

A series of coincidental resignations left the firm with a dearth of talent. The dearth of the coverage forced him to look for a new insurance agent.

**debacle**

n. disaster; collapse; havoc; defeat; devastation

The Securities and Exchange Commission and the stock exchanges implemented numerous safeguards to head off another debacle on Wall Street.

**debase**

v. to make lower in quality; to degrade; to humiliate; to reduce the value of

The French are concerned that "Franglais," a blending of English and French, will debase their language.

**debauchery**

n. indulgence in one's appetites

The preacher decried debauchery and urged charity.

**debilitate**

v. to enfeeble; to wear out; to weaken; to incapacitate

The phlebitis debilitated him to the point where he was unable even to walk. The illness will debilitate the muscles in his legs.

**debonair**

adj. carefree; genial; stylish; charming; dashing

Opening the door for another is a debonair action.

**decadence**

n. decline in morals or art; decay; deterioration; falling into corruption

Some believe the decadence of Nero's rule led to the fall of the empire.

**deciduous**

adj. shedding; temporary; of passing interest

When the leaves began to fall from the tree we learned that it was deciduous.

**decisiveness**

n. resoluteness; act of being firm or determined; firmness

Decisiveness is one of the key qualities of a successful executive.

**decorous**

adj. showing decorum, propriety or good taste; correct; tasteful

This movie provides decorous refuge from the violence and mayhem that permeates the latest crop of Hollywood films. The decorous suit was made of fine material.

**decry**

v. to denounce or condemn openly

The pastor decryed all forms of discrimination against any minority group.

**defamation**

n. libel; slander; calumny

The carpenter felt that the notoriousness of his former partner brought defamation to his construction business.

**deference**

n. courteous respect for; honor; esteem; reverence

To avoid a confrontation, the man showed deference to his friend. The deference shown to the elderly woman's opinion was heartwarming.

**deferential**

adj. yielding to the opinion of another; showing honor; respectful

After debating students living in the Sixth Ward for months, the mayor's deferential statements indicated that he had come to some understanding with them.

**defunct**

adj. no longer living or existing; extinct; dead

The man lost a large sum of money when the company went defunct.

**deign**

v. to condescend; to stoop; to lower oneself

He said he wouldn't deign to dignify her statement with a response. Fired from his job as a programmer analyst, Joe vowed he would never deign to mop floors-even if he were down to his last penny.

**deleterious**

adj. harmful; hurtful; noxious

Deleterious fumes escaped from the overturned truck.

**deliberate**

v. to consider; to ponder; to discuss

The jury deliberated for three days before reaching a verdict.

**deliberate**

adj. intentional; planned; premeditated

The brother's deliberate attempt to get his sibling blamed for his mistake was obvious to all.

**delineate**

v. to outline; to describe; to sketch; to draw

She delineated her plan so that everyone would have a basic understanding of it.

**deliquesce**

v. to dissolve; to become liquid; to melt

The snow deliquesced when the temperature rose.

**delusion**

n. false belief or opinion; illusion

The historian suffered from the delusion that he was Napoleon.

**demise**

n. death; decease; coming to an end

The demise of Gimbels followed years of decline.

**demur**

v. to protest; to object; to hesitate

She hated animals, so when the subject of buying a cat came up, she demurred. She was nominated to sit on the committee, but she demurred.

**demur**

n. objection; misgiving; hesitation

She said yes, but he detected a demur in her voice. The council president called for a vote, and hearing no demur, asked for a count by the clerk.

**denigrate**

v. to defame; to blacken; to sully; to belittle; to criticize

After finding out her evil secret, he announced it to the council and denigrated her in public. Her attempt to denigrate the man's name was not successful.

**denounce**

v. to speak out against; to condemn; to accuse; to censure

A student rally was called to denounce the use of drugs on campus.

**depict**

v. to portray; describe; to characterize; to draw

The mural depicts the life of a typical urban dweller.

**deplete**

v. to reduce; to empty; to exhaust; to consume; to use up

Having to pay the entire bill will deplete the family's savings.

**deposition**

n. removal from office or power; testimony; dismissal

Failing to act lawfully could result in his deposition. She met with her lawyer this morning to review her deposition.

**depravity**

n. moral corruption; badness; degeneracy; perversion; immorality

Drugs and money caused depravity throughout the once decorous community. The depravity of the old man was bound to land him in jail one day.

**deprecate**

v. to express disapproval of; to protest against; to disparage; belittle

The environmentalists deprecated the paper companies for cutting down ancient forests. The organization will deprecate the opening of the sewage plant.

**depredation**

n. plundering or laying waste; pillaging; ravishing; plundering

The pharaoh's once rich tomb was empty after centuries of depredation from grave robbers.

**deride**

v. to laugh at with contempt; to mock; to sneer; to ridicule

No matter what he said, he was derided. It is impolite to deride someone even if you dislike him.

**derision**

n. act of mocking; ridicule; mockery; scorn

A day of derision from the boss left the employee feeling depressed. Constant derision from classmates made him quit school.

**derisive**

adj. showing disrespect or scorn for; contemptible; ridiculous; contemptuous

The derisive comment was aimed at the man's life long enemy.

**derogatory**

adj. belittling; uncomplimentary; scornful; disparaging

He was upset because his annual review was full of derogatory comments.

**descant**

v. to sing; to harmonize; to comment broadly

The man will descant on the subject if you give him too much speaking time.

**desecrate**

v. to profane; to violate the sanctity of; to pollute; to defile

The teenagers' attempt to desecrate the church disturbed the community.

**desist**

v. to stop; to cease

The judge ordered the man to desist from calling his ex-wife in the middle of the night.

**desolate**

adj. to be left alone or made lonely; miserable; to neglected; abandoned

Driving down the desolate road had Kelvin worried that he wouldn't reach a gas station in time.

**despoil**

v. to take everything; to plunder; to loot; to pillage; to rob

The Huns despoiled village after village.

**despotism**

n. tyranny; absolute power or influence; rule of a despot; dictatorship

The ruler's despotism went uncontested for 30 years.

**destitute**

adj. poor; poverty-stricken; needy; impoverished

One Bangladeshi bank makes loans to destitute citizens so that they may overcome their poverty. Many of the city's sections are destitute.

**desultory**

adj. moving in a random, directionless manner; aimless

The thefts were occurring in a desultory manner making them difficult to track.

**detached**

adj. separated; not interested; standing alone; impartial; aloof

Detached from modern conveniences, the islanders live a simple, unhurried life.

**deter**

v. to prevent; to discourage; to hinder

He deterred the rabbits by putting down garlic around the garden.

**determinate**

adj. definite; fixed; established

The new laws were very determinate as far as what was allowed and what was not allowed.

**devoid**

adj. lacking; empty

The interplanetary probe indicated that the planet was devoid of any atmosphere.

**dexterous**

adj. skillful; quick; deft; adroit; agile

The dexterous gymnast was the epitome of grace on the balance beam.

**diatribe**

n. bitter or abusive speech; tirade

During the divorce hearings she delivered a diatribe full of the emotion pushing her away from her husband. The diatribe was directed towards a disrespectful supervisor.

**dichotomy**

n. division into two parts or kinds

The dichotomy within the party threatens to split it. The dichotomy between church and state renders school prayer unconstitutional.

**dictum**

n. formal statement of either fact or opinion; maxim; pronouncement; saying

Computer programmers have a dictum: garbage in, garbage out.

**didactic**

adj. instructive; preachy; educational; tending to lecture others excessively

Our teacher's didactic technique boosted our scores. The didactic activist was not one to be swayed.

**diffidence**

n. hesitation in asserting oneself; lack of confidence; timidity; shyness

A shy person may have great diffidence when forced with a problem.

**diffident**

adj. timid; lacking self-confidence; shy

The director is looking for a self-assured actor, not a diffident one. Her diffident sister couldn't work up the courage to ask for the sale.

**diffuse**

adj. spread out; verbose; wordy and disorganized; dispersed; rambling

The toys were discovered in a diffuse manner after the birthday party. His monologue was so diffuse that all his points were lost.

**digress**

v. to stray from the subject; to wander from topic; to deviate from the main point

It is important to not digress from the plan of action.

**dilettante**

n. admirer of the fine arts; dabbler; amateur; nonprofessional

Though she played the piano occasionally, she was more of a dilettante.

**diligence**

n. industriousness; hard work; perseverance

Anything can be accomplished with diligence and commitment.

**diminutive**

adj. smaller than average; minute; tiny

They lived in a diminutive house. The diminutive woman could not see over the counter.

**diminutive**

n. small person; word, expressing smallness formed when a suffix is added

Until schooling, they are the parents who will use the diminutive.

**din**

n. noise which is loud and continuous; ruckus; loud racket

The din of the jackhammers reverberated throughout the concrete canyon.

**dint**

n. strength; power; depression; dent

The dint of the bridge could hold trucks weighing many tons.

**dirge**

n. hymn for a funeral; song or poem expressing lament

The mourners sang a traditional Irish dirge.

**disapprobation**

n. disapproval; condemnation

Her disapprobation of her daughter's fiance divided the family.

**disarray**

n. state of disorder; mess; lack of order

The thief left the house in disarray.

**disavow**

v. to deny; to refuse to acknowledge; to disclaim; to reject; to repudiate

The actor has disavowed the rumor.

**discerning**

adj. having good judgment; wise; discriminating; perceptive; shrewd

He has a discerning eye for knowing the original from the copy. Being discerning about a customer's character is a key qualification for a loan officer.

**discomfit**

v. to frustrate the expectations of; to perplex; to confuse

The close game discomfited the number one player.

**discord**

n. disagreement; lack of harmony

There was discord amidst the jury, and therefore a decision could not be made.

**discourse**

v. to communicate in an orderly fashion; to talk

The scientists discoursed on a conference call for just five minutes but were able to solve three major problems. The interviewee discoursed so fluently, she was hired on the spot.

**discreet**

adj. showing good judgment in conduct; prudent; modest; circumspect; unobtrusive

We confided our secret in Mary because we knew she'd be discreet.

**discrete**

adj. separate; individual

There were four discrete aspects to the architecture of the home. The citizens committee maintained that road widening and drainage were hardly discrete issues.

**discriminate**

v. to distinguish; to demonstrate bias; to treat differently

Being a chef, he discriminated carefully among ingredients.

**disdain**

n. intense dislike; scorn; contempt

She showed great disdain toward anyone who did not agree with her.

**disdain**

v. to look down upon; to scorn; to contempt

She disdains the very ground you walk upon.

**disentangle**

v. to free from confusion; to extricate; to unknot; to release; to undo

We need to disentangle ourselves from the dizzying variety of choices.

**disheartened**

adj. discouraged; dispirited; depressed

After failing the exam, the student became disheartened and wondered if he would ever graduate.

**disingenuous**

adj. not frank or candid; deceptively simple; hypercritical; false; truthful

The director used a disingenuous remark to make his point to the student. He always gives a quick, disingenuous response; you never get a straight answer.

**disinterested**

adj. neutral; unbiased; impartial; indifferent

A disinterested person was needed to serve as arbitrator of the argument. He never takes sides; he's always disinterested.

**disparage**

v. to belittle; undervalue; to discredit; to depreciate

After she fired him she realized that she had disparaged the value of his assistance. The lawyer will attempt to disparage the testimony of the witness.

**disparate**

adj. unequal; different; unlike; contrasting

They came from disparate backgrounds, one a real estate magnate, the other a custodian. The disparate numbers of players made the game a sure blowout.

**disparity**

n. difference in form, character or degree; inequality

There is a great disparity between a light snack and a great feast.

**dispassionate**

adj. lack of feeling; impartial; calm; unbiased

She was a very emotional person and could not work with such a dispassionate employer.

**disperse**

v. to scatter; to separate; to send out

The pilots dispersed the food drops over a wide area of devastation. Tear gas was used to disperse the crowd.

**disputatious**

adj. argumentative; inclined to disputes; fond of debate

His disputatious streak eventually wore down his fellow parliament members. The child was so disputatious he needed to be removed from the room.

**dissemble**

v. to pretend; to feign; to conceal by pretense

The man dissembled his assets shamelessly to avoid paying alimony. Agent 007 has a marvelous ability to dissemble his real intentions.

**disseminate**

v. to circulate; to scatter; to disperse; to spread; to distribute

He was hired to disseminate newspapers to everyone in the town. The preacher traveled across the country to disseminate his message.

**dissent**

v. differ in opinion; to dispute; to differ; to oppose

They agreed that something had to be done, but dissented on how to do it.

**dissonance**

n. musical discord; disagreement; lack of harmony; inconsistency

Much twentieth-century music is not liked by classical music lovers because of the dissonance it holds and the harmonies it lacks. The dissonance of his composition makes for some rough listening.

**dissonant**

adj. not in harmony; in disagreement; inconsistent

Despite several intense rehearsals, the voices of the choir members continued to be dissonant. The dissonant nature of the man's temperament made the woman fearful to approach him with the new idea.

**distant**

adj. having separations; far off; reserved; unfriendly; remote; aloof

Rolonda's friends have become more distant in recent years.

**distention**

n. inflation; extension; swelling; expanding

The bulge in the carpet was caused by the distention of the wood underneath.

**dither**

v. to act indecisively; to tremble; to vacillate

She dithered every time she had to make a decision.

**dither**

n. confused condition; hesitation; vacillation

Having to take two tests in one day left the student in a dither.

**diverge**

v. to separate; to split; to branch off from a common point

The path diverges at the old barn, one fork leading to the house, and the other leading to the pond. The wide, long river diverged into two distinct separate rivers, never again to join.

**diverse**

adj. different; varied

The course offerings were so diverse I had a tough time choosing.

**diversify**

v. to variegate; to make different; to increase the product range of a company; to offer new products

In order to increase our market share we have to diversify our product range.

**divestiture**

n. being stripped; act of unclothing; deprivation of a right or privilege

When it was found the team cheated, there was a divestiture of their crown.

**docile**

adj. manageable; obedient; gentle; compliant; submissive

We needed to choose a docile pet because we hadn't the patience for a lot of training.

**document**

v. to support; to substantiate; to verify; to record for evidence

Facing an audit, she had to document all her client contacts.

**document**

n. official paper containing information; deed; certificate

They needed a written document to prove that the transaction occurred.

**doggerel**

n. verse characterized by forced rhyme and meter; poorly written poetry

Contrary to its appearance, doggerel can contain some weighty messages.

**dogma**

n. collection of beliefs; system of religious laws

The dogma of the village was based on superstition.

**dogmatic**

adj. opinionated; rigid; authoritative; intolerant

Their dogmatic declaration clarified their position. The dogmatic statement had not yet been proven by science. The student's dogmatic presentation annoyed his classmates as well as his instructor.

**dormant**

adj. as if asleep; inert; sluggish; inactive

The animals lay dormant until the spring thaw.

**doting**

adj. excessively fond of; adoring

With great joy, the doting father held the toddler.

**doughty**

adj. brave and strong; courageous; fearless

The doughty fireman saved the woman's life.

**dowdy**

adj. shabby in appearance; untidy; sloppy

The dowdy girl had no buttons on her coat and the threads were falling apart.

**dubious**

adj. doubtful; uncertain; skeptical; suspicious

Many people are dubious about the possibility of intelligent life on other planets. The new information was dubious enough to re-open the case.

**duplicity**

n. deception

She forgave his duplicity but divorced him anyway.

**duress**

n. imprisonment; the use of threats; pressure; coercion; intimidation

His duress was supposed to last 10-15 years. The policewoman put the man under duress in order to get a confession. The Labor Department inspector needed to establish whether the plant workers had been held under duress.

**earthy**

adj. unrefined; made of earth

The earthy-looking table was bare.

**ebullience**

n. overflowing of high spirits; effervescence; exuberance; excitement

She emanated ebullience as she skipped and sang down the hallway after learning of her promotion.

**eccentric**

adj. odd; peculiar; strange; unusual

People like to talk with the eccentric artist since he has such different views on everyday subjects. Wearing polka dot pants and a necklace made of recycled bottle tops is considered eccentric.

**ecclesiastic**

adj. pertaining or relating to a church

Ecclesiastic obligations include attending mass.

**eclectic**

adj. picking from various possibilities; made up of material from various sources; diverse; heterogeneous

You have eclectic taste. The eclectic collection of furniture did not match.

**economical**

adj. not wasteful; thrifty; frugal; saving

With her economical sense she was able to save the company thousands of dollars.

**edifice**

n. large building

The edifice rose 20 stories and spanned two blocks.

**edify**

v. to establish; to educate morally or spiritually; to improve; to strengthen

According to their schedule, the construction company will edify the foundation of the building in one week. The teachers worked to edify their students through lessons and discussion.

**educe**

v. to draw out; to infer from information; to elicit

Because she is so dour, I was forced to educe a response. I educe from the report that the experiment was a success.

**efface**

v. to erase; to make inconspicuous; to destroy; to wipe out

Hiding in the woods, the soldier was effaced by his camouflage uniform.

**effeminate**

adj. having qualities attributed to a woman; delicate; overly feminine

A high-pitched laugh made the man seem effeminate.

**effervescence**

n. liveliness; spirit; enthusiasm; bubblyness; gaiety

Her effervescence was contagious; she made everyone around her happy. The effervescence of champagne is what makes it different from wine.

**effigy**

n. image or likeness of a person; sculpted likeness

Demonstrators carried effigies of the dictator they wanted overthrown.

**effluvium**

n. outflow of vapor of invisible particles; noxious odor; exhalation

The effluvium from the exhaust had a bad smell. It was difficult to determine from where the effluvium issued.

**effrontery**

n. audacious (even arrogant) behavior that you have no right to; impudence; insolence; audacity; nerve

The effrontery of the young man was offensive.

**effusive**

adj. pouring out or forth; overflowing; unrestrained; exuberant

The effusive currents rush through the broken dam.

**egocentric**

adj. self-centered; viewing everything in relation to oneself; egoistic; selfish

The egocentric professor could not accept the students' opinions as valid.

**egress**

n. way out; exit; going out

The doorway provided an egress from the chamber.

**elaboration**

n. act of clarifying; adding details; act of improving; careful planning

The mayor called for an elaboration on the ordinance's first draft.

**elegy**

n. poem of lament and praise for the dead; dirge

Upon conclusion of the elegy, the casket was closed.

**ellipsis**

n. omission of words that would make the meaning clear

The accidental ellipsis confused all those who heard the speech.

**eloquence**

n. ability to speak well

The speaker's eloquence was attributed to his articulate manner of speaking.

**elucidate**

v. to make clear; to explain; to clarify

In the paper's conclusion, its purpose was elucidated in one sentence.

**elusive**

adj. hard to catch; difficult to understand or grasp; evasive; tending to escape

Even the experienced, old fisherman admitted that the trout in the river were quite elusive.

**emanate**

v. to emit; to flow out from; to emerge; to issue

Happiness emanates from the loving home.

**embarkation**

v. act of investing into an enterprise; act of boarding a boat

The embarkation into self-employment was a new start for the woman.

**embellish**

v. to improve by adding details; to adorn; to decorate; to beautify

Adding beads to a garment will embellish it.

**eminence**

n. lofty place; superiority; height; elevated rank

After toiling in the shadows for years, at last she achieved eminence. The eminence of the institution can be seen in the impact of its research.

**emollient**

adj. softening or soothing to the skin; having power to soften or relax living tissues

When hands become dry, it may be necessary to soothe them with an emollient lotion.

**emulate**

v. to try to equal or excel; to take after; to imitate; to copy

The neophyte teacher was hoping to emulate her mentor.

**enamored**

adj. filled with love and desire; charmed; delighted

The young couple are enamored with each other.

**encomium**

n. formal expression of high praise; commendation; eulogy

The sitcom actress gave her co-stars a long encomium as she accepted her Emmy.

**encroach**

v. to trespass; to intrude; to invade; to infringe

It is unlawful to encroach on another's private property.

**encumber**

v. to hold back; to hinder; to burden; load down; to impede

The review of the ethic's committee encumbered the deal from being finalized. A brace will encumber the girl's movement.

**endemic**

adj. native to a particular area; indigenous; local

The endemic fauna was of great interest to the anthropologist. A fast-paced style is endemic to those who live in New York City.

**endorse**

v. to support; to approve of; to recommend; to approve; to sanction

The entire community endorsed the politician who promised lower taxes and a better school system.

**enervate**

v. to weaken; to deprive of nerve or strength

The sickness enervates its victims until they can no longer get out of bed.

**enfeeble**

v. to make weak; to weaken

The illness will enfeeble anyone who catches it.

**enfranchise**

v. to free from obligation; to admit to citizenship; to emancipate; to liberate; to free

The player was enfranchised when the deal was called off. The recent immigrants were enfranchised when they took their oath to their new country.

**engender**

v. to bring about; to bring forth; to cause; to produce; to generate

The group attempted to engender changes to the law.

**enhance**

v. to improve; to compliment; to intensify; to increase; to raise the value of

The new fuel enhanced the performance of the rocket's engines.

**enigma**

n. mystery; secret; perplexity; puzzle; riddle

To all of the searchers, the missing child's location remained a great enigma.

**enigmatic**

adj. baffling; puzzling; mysterious; ambiguous; unclear

The enigmatic murder plagued the detective.

**ennui**

n. boredom; apathy; lethargy; tedium

Ennui set in when the children realized they had already played with all the toys.

**eon**

n. indefinitely long period of time; age

The star may have existed for eons.

**ephemeral**

adj. very short-lived; lasting only a short time; transitory

Living alone gave him an ephemeral happiness, soon to be replaced with utter loneliness.

**epicure**

n. person who has good taste in food and drink; gourmet

As an epicure, Lance is choosy about the restaurants he visits.

**epigram**

n. witty or satirical poem or statement; letter; ingenious saying; proverb; phrase

The poet wrote an epigram about the upcoming election.

**epilogue**

n. closing section of a play or novel providing further comment; speech delivered to the audience after the end of a play

The epilogue told us the destiny of the characters.

**epiphany**

n. appearance of a supernatural being; sudden idea or thought

The man bowed to the epiphany.

**epitaph**

n. inscription on a monument; in honor or memory of a dead person; commemoration

The epitaph described the actions of a brave man.

**epitome**

n. model; typification; embodiment; archetype; exemplar

The woman chosen to lead the dancers was the epitome of true grace.

**equanimity**

n. quality of remaining calm and undisturbed; composure; emotional stability

Equanimity can be reached when stress is removed from life.

**equinox**

n. either of two points on the celestial sphere at which the ecliptic intersects the celestial equator

On the equinox we had twelve hours of night and day.

**equivocal**

adj. doubtful; uncertain; questionable; undecided

Scientific evidence was needed before the equivocal hypothesis was accepted by the doubting researchers.

**equivocation**

n. purposely misleading statement; prevarication

The equivocations by the man sent the search team looking in the wrong direction.

**eradication**

n. act of annihilating, destroying, or erasing; destruction; extermination

Some have theorized that the eradication of the dinosaurs was due to a radical change in climate.

**errant**

adj. roving in search of adventure; roving; straying; erring; wandering

The young man set out across country on an errant expedition.

**erratic**

adj. unpredictable; irregular; unsettled

His erratic behavior was attributed to the shocking news he had received. The kitten's erratic behavior was attributed to the owner's cruel method of disciplining his pet.

**erroneous**

adj. untrue; inaccurate; not correct; wrong; mistaken

The reporter's erroneous story was corrected by a new article that stated the truth.

**erudite**

adj. having a wide knowledge acquired through reading; learned; knowledgeable; educated

The woman was so erudite, she could recite points on most any subject.

**eschew**

v. to shun; to avoid; to keep away from

Eschew the traffic and you may arrive on time.

**esoteric**

adj. understood by only a chosen few; confidential; private

The esoteric language was only known by a select group. We have had a number of esoteric conversations.

**estimable**

adj. deserving respect; determinable; calculable

The estimable hero was given a parade.

**ethereal**

adj. very light; airy; heavenly; not earthly; delicate

The ethereal quality of the music had a hypnotic effect. The dancer wore an ethereal outfit which made her look like an angel.

**ethnic**

adj. pertaining to races or peoples and their origin classification, or characteristics

Ethnic foods from five continents were set up on the table.

**eulogy**

n. words of praise, especially for the dead

The eulogy was a remembrance of the good things the man accomplished in his lifetime.

**euphemism**

n. substitution of a milder or socially acceptable word or phrase

The announcer used a euphemism when he wanted to complain.

**euphony**

n. pleasant combination of sounds

The gently singing birds created a beautiful euphony. The euphony created by the orchestra was due to years of practice.

**evanescent**

adj. vanishing quickly; dissipating like a vapor; fading; disappearing

The evanescent mirage could only be seen at a certain angle.

**evasion**

n. avoiding of a duty; avoidance; dodging

The company was charged with tax evasion, as they did not pay all that they owed.

**evoke**

v. to call forth; to provoke; to arouse; to summon; to bring out

Seeing her only daughter get married evoked tears of happiness from the mother. Announcement of the results evoked a cheer from the crowd.

**exculpate**

v. to free from guilt; to declare innocent

The therapy session will exculpate the man from his guilty feelings.

**execute**

v. to put to death; to kill; to carry out; to fulfill

The evil, murderous man was executed for killing several innocent children. I expected him to execute my orders immediately.

**exemplary**

adj. outstanding; praiseworthy; serving as a model

The honor student's exemplary behavior made him a role model to the younger children. Employees of the month are chosen for their exemplary service to the firm.

**exhaustive**

adj. thorough; complete; comprehensive

It took an exhaustive effort, using many construction workers, to complete the new home by the deadline.

**exhume**

v. to unearth; to reveal

The scientists exhumed the body from the grave to test the body's DNA. The next episode will exhume the real betrayer.

**exigent**

adj. situation calling for immediate attention; needing more than is reasonable; pressing; urgent

The exigent request for more assistance was answered quickly. The bank seemed to feel that another extension on their loan payment was too exigent a request to honor.

**exonerate**

v. to declare or prove blameless; to absolve; to acquit

Hopefully, the judge will exonerate you of any wrongdoing.

**exorbitant**

adj. going beyond what is reasonable; excessive; expensive; disproportionate

Paying hundreds of dollars for the dress is an exorbitant amount.

**exotic**

adj. unusual; striking; foreign; out of the ordinary

Many people asked the name of her exotic perfume. The menu of authentic Turkish cuisine seemed exotic to them, considering they were only accustomed to American food.

**expedient**

adj. convenient in obtaining a result; guided by self-interest; advantageous; beneficial; worthwhile

The mayor chose the more expedient path rather than the more correct one. There is no expedient method a teenager will not resort to in order to get the keys to a car of their own.

**expedite**

v. to hasten the action of; to speed up; to accelerate; to facilitate; to dispatch

We can expedite the bank transaction if we tell them it is an emergency.

**explicit**

adj. specific; definite; clear

The explicit recipe gave directions for making a very complicated dessert.

**exposition**

n. setting forth facts; public exhibition; show; clarification

The exposition by the witness substantiated the story given by the prisoner.

**expunge**

v. to blot out; to delete; to obliterate; to erase; to strike out

Bleach may be used to expunge the stain.

**extant**

adj. existing; refers especially to books or documents

Some of my ancestor's letters remain extant.

**extemporize**

v. to improvise; to make it up as you go along

It was necessary for the musician to extemporize when his music fell off the stand.

**extol**

v. to give great praise; to exalt; to laud; to glorify

The father will extol the success of his son to everyone he meets.

**extraneous**

adj. irrelevant; not related; not essential

During the long, boring lecture, most people agreed that much of the information was extraneous.

**extricable**

adj. capable of being disentangled

The knots were complicated, but extricable.

**exultation**

n. act of rejoicing; joy; gaiety; glee

Unpleasant and smelly as the operation was, she felt a surge of exultation when she cut the thread of the last suture and surveyed her unconscious patient.

**facetious**

adj. joking in an awkward or improper manner;  
entertaining amusing

His facetious sarcasm was inappropriate during his first staff meeting.

**facilitate**

v. to make easier; to simplify; to expedite; to assist forward; to promote

The new ramp by the door's entrance facilitated access to the building for those in wheelchairs.

**facsimile**

n. copy; reproduction; replica

The facsimile of the elaborate painting was indistinguishable from the original.

**faction**

n. number of people in an organization working for a common cause against the main body; splinter group

A faction of the student body supported the president's view.

**fallacious**

adj. misleading; mistaken; deceptive; disappointing  
unsound; false

A used car salesman provided fallacious information that caused the naive man to purchase the old, broken car.

**fallible**

adj. erroneous; not foolproof

By not differentiating themselves from the popular band, the group was especially fallible.

**fanatic**

n. enthusiast; extremist; zealot

The terrorist group was comprised of fanatics who wanted to destroy those who disagreed with them.

**fastidious**

adj. difficult to please; dainty; choosy; critical

The fastidious girl would not accept any offers as suitable. The woman was extremely fastidious, as evident in her occasional fainting spells.

**fathom**

v. to understand; to get to the bottom of; to measure the depth of

It was difficult to fathom the reason for closing the institution.

**fathom**

n. nautical unit of depth; unit of length equal to six feet

The submarine cruised at 17 fathoms below the surface.

**fatuous**

adj. lacking in seriousness; vain and silly; stupid; foolish;  
inane

The fatuous prank was meant to add comedy to the situation. His fatuous personality demands that he stop in front of every mirror.

**fealty**

n. faithfulness; loyalty

The baron was given land in exchange for his fealty to the king.

**feasible**

adj. reasonable; practical; achievable; likely; possible

Increased exercise is a feasible means of weight loss.

**fecund**

adj. productive; fruitful; fertile

The construction crew had a fecund day and were able to leave early.

**feign**

v. to pretend; to imitate; to fake; to fabricate; to make up

It is not uncommon for a child to feign illness in order to stay home from school.

**feint**

n. fake show intended to deceive; deception; pretense; diversionary tactic

At her feint she was not quite successful. The fighter feinted a left hook just before he went for the knockout.

**ferment**

v. to excite; to agitate; to inflame

The rally cry was meant to ferment and confuse the opponent.

**ferret**

v. to force out of hiding; to search for; to discover; to investigate; to worry

The police will ferret the fugitive out of his hiding place.

**ferret**

n. small, weasel-like mammal

I spent the morning ferreting for my keys. I have a pet ferret.

**fervent**

adj. passionate; intense; enthusiastic; ardent

They have a fervent relationship that keeps them together every minute of every day.

**fervid**

adj. intensely hot; impassioned; passionate

Her fervid skin alerted the doctor to her fever. The fervid sermon of the preacher swayed his congregation.

**fervor**

n. passion; intensity of feeling; ardor; eagerness

The crowd was full of fervor as the candidate entered the hall.

**fester**

v. to become more and more virulent and fixed; to decay

His anger festered until no one could change his mind.

**fetid**

adj. having a smell of decay; malodorous; smelly; stinky

The fetid smell led us to believe something was decaying in the basement.

**fetish**

n. anything to which one gives excessive devotion; idolized object

The clay figure of a fertility goddess was a fetish from an ancient civilization.

**fetter**

n. chain to bind the feet; shackle; hindrance

A fetter kept the dog chained to the fence.

**fickle**

adj. changeable; unpredictable; inconstant; inconsistent

He is quite fickle; just because he wants something today does not mean he will want it tomorrow. Because the man was fickle he could not be trusted to make a competent decision.

**fidelity**

n. faithfulness; honesty; precision; adherence to detail; loyalty

His fidelity was proven when he turned in the lost money.

**figment**

n. something made up in the mind; imaginary story; notion

The unicorn on the hill was a figment of his imagination.

**finesse**

n. ability to handle situations with skill and diplomacy; grace; delicacy

The executor with the most finesse was chosen to meet with the diplomats.

**finite**

adj. measurable; limited; not everlasting; having limitations or bounds

It was discovered decades ago that the universe is not finite; it has unknown limits which cannot be measured. The finite amount of stored food will soon run out.

**fissure**

n. cleft; crack

The earthquake caused a fissure which split the cliff face.

**flaccid**

adj. lacking firmness; loose; limp; drooping; soft

The old dog's flaccid tail refused to wag.

**flag**

v. to become weak; to send a message; to signal; to lose energy or momentum

The smaller animal flagged before the larger one.

**flagrant**

adj. glaringly wrong; shameless; notorious; offensive

The flagrant foul was apparent to everyone.

**flamboyant**

adj. being too showy or ornate; gaudy; flashy

The flamboyant nature of the couple was evident in their loud clothing.

**fledgling**

n. inexperienced person; young bird that cannot fly

The fledgling mountain climber needed assistance from the more experienced mountaineers.

**fledgling**

adj. beginner

The course was not recommended for fledgling skiers.

**flinch**

v. to wince; to drawback; to retreat; to recoil; to shrink

The older brother made his younger sister flinch when he jokingly tried to punch her arm.

**flippant**

adj. talkative; disrespectful; careless; disdainful

The youngsters were flippant in the restaurant. The teacher became upset with the flippant answer from the student.

**flout**

v. to mock; to jeer; to show disdain for

Do not flout an opponent if you believe in fair play.

**fluency**

n. ability to write easily and expressively; articulateness; eloquence

The child's fluency in Spanish and English was remarkable. The immigrant acquired a fluency in English after studying for only two months.

**flux**

n. flow; continual change; fluidity

With the flux of new students into the school, space was limited.

**foist**

v. to falsely; identify as real; to defraud

The smuggler tried to foist the cut glass as a priceless gem.

**foray**

v. to raid for spoils; to plunder; to invade; to attack

The soldiers were told not to foray the town.

**forbearance**

n. self-restraint; self-control; abstinence; moderation

He exhibited remarkable forbearance when confronted with the mischievous children.

**forensic**

adj. pertaining to or used in a court of law; rhetorical; argumentative

The forensic squad dealt with the legal investigation.

**formidable**

adj. something which causes dread or fear; difficult; intimidating; awesome; frightening

The formidable team caused weak knees in the opponents.

**fortitude**

n. firm courage; strength; bravery; courage; endurance

It is necessary to have fortitude to complete the hike.

**fortuitous**

adj. happening accidentally; by chance

Finding the money under the bush was fortuitous.

**foster**

v. to encourage; to nurture; to support; to care for; to raise

A good practice routine fosters success. After the severe storm the gardener fostered many of his plants back to health.

**fractious**

adj. rebellious; apt to quarrel; stubborn

Fractious siblings aggravate their parents.

**fraught**

adj. loaded; charged

The comment was fraught with sarcasm.

**frenetic**

adj. frenzied; wild; crazy

A frenetic call was made from the crime scene.

**fret**

v. to disturb; to irritate; to worry; to erode; to annoy

The pet will fret the floor if he continues to scratch.

**frivolity**

adj. giddiness; lack of seriousness; silliness; flippancy

The hard-working students deserved weekend gatherings filled with frivolity.

**froward**

adj. not willing to yield or comply with what is reasonable; stubborn; contrary

The executive had to deal with a froward peer who was becoming increasingly difficult.

**frugality**

n. thrift; economical use or expenditure; meanness; stinginess

His frugality limited him to purchasing the item for which he had a coupon. Preparing to save money to send their daughter to college, the parents practiced extreme frugality for several years.

**fulminate**

v. to blame; to denunciate; to attack strongly; to explode with a loud noise

It is impolite to fulminate someone for your mistakes. Senator Shay fulminated against her opponent's double-standard on campaign finance reform.

**fulsome**

adj. disgusting due to excess; crude; repulsive; offensive

The man became obese when he indulged in fulsome eating.

**fundamental**

adj. basic; necessary; essential; elemental

Shelter is one of the fundamental needs of human existence.

**furtive**

adj. secretive; sly; shifty; stealthy; surreptitious

The detective had much difficulty finding the furtive criminal.

**fustian**

n. pompous talk or writing; flowery speech coarse fabric;  
linen

The fustian by the professor made him appear arrogant.

**futile**

adj. worthless; unprofitable; unproductive; fruitless;  
unsuccessful

It was a futile decision to invest in that company since  
they never made any money.

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**gaffe**

n. blunder; mistake

Calling the woman by the wrong name was a huge gaffe.

**gainsay**

v. to speak against; to contradict; to deny; to dispute

With Senator Bowker the only one to gainsay it, the bill passed overwhelmingly.

**galvanize**

v. to stimulate as if by electric shock; to startle; to excite; to stimulate

The pep rally will galvanize the team.

**gamut**

n. complete range; any complete musical scale; entire extent of anything

The woman's wardrobe runs the gamut from jeans to suits. His first composition covered the entire gamut of the major scale.

**garbled**

adj. mixed up; distorted; confused; falsified

The interference on the phone line caused the data to become garbled on the computer screen.

**garish**

adj. gaudy; showy; loud; excessively ornamented; bright

The gold fixtures seemed garish.

**garner**

v. to gather up and store; to collect; to accumulate; to store

The squirrels garnered nuts for the winter.

**garrulous**

adj. extremely talkative or wordy; loquacious; chatty

No one wanted to speak with the garrulous man for fear of being stuck in a long, one-sided conversation.

**gauche**

adj. awkward; lacking social grace; crude; tactless; clumsy

Unfortunately, the girl was too gauche to fit into high society.

**gauntlet**

n. protective glove

The gauntlet saved the man's hand from being burned in the fire.

**generic**

adj. common; general; universal

While generic drugs are often a better value, it always a good idea to consult your doctor before purchasing them.

**genial**

adj. contributing to life; amiable; sociable; merry; friendly

Key West's genial climate is among its many attractive aspects. Her genial personality made her a favorite party guest.

**genre**

n. kind; type; category; style

The genre of the book is historical fiction.

**germane**

adj. having close kinship and appropriateness; related; pertinent; connected; relevant

Her essay contained germane information, relevant to the new Constitutional amendment.

**gerrymander**

v. to gain advantage by manipulating unfairly; to falsify; to pervert; to distort

To gerrymander during negotiations is considered unfair.

**gibber**

v. to rapidly speak unintelligibly; to mumble; to stutter; to chatter

They did not want him to represent their position in front of the committee since he was prone to gibbering when speaking in front of an audience.

**glib**

adj. smooth and slippery; speaking or spoken in a smooth manner; easily fluent; careless; insincere

The salesman was so glib that the customers failed to notice the defects in the stereo.

**gloat**

v. to brag; to glory over; to feel triumphant; to exult

She gloated over the fact that she received the highest score on the exam, annoying her classmates to no end.

**glutton**

n. person who eats and drinks to excess; overeater

The glutton ate 12 hot dogs.

**gnarled**

adj. full of knots; twisted

The raven perched in the gnarled branches of the ancient tree.

**goad**

n. driving impulse; something which urges or drives

His goad urged him to pursue the object of his affection.

**goad**

v. to push into action; to urge; to tease; to drive

Thinking about money will goad him into getting a job.

**gourmand**

n. person who eats eagerly; glutton; greedy person

A gourmand may eat several servings of an entree.

**grandiose**

adj. magnificent; flamboyant; impressive; grand

His grandiose idea was to rent a plane to fly to Las Vegas for the night.

**gravity**

n. seriousness; severity

The gravity of the incident was sufficient to involve the police and the FBI.

**gregarious**

adj. fond of the company of others; sociable

Gregarious people may find those jobs with human contact more enjoyable than jobs that isolate them from the public.

**guffaw**

n. boisterous laughter

A comedian's success is assured when the audience gives forth a guffaw following his jokes.

**guile**

n. slyness; deceit; fraud; cunning; trickery

By using his guile, the gambler almost always won at the card table.

**guise**

n. appearance; facade

The undercover detective, under the guise of friendship, offered to help the drug runner make a connection.

**gullible**

adj. easily fooled; naive; credulous

Gullible people are vulnerable to practical jokes.

**hackneyed**

adj. commonplace; trite; banal; unoriginal

Just when you thought neckties were becoming a hackneyed gift item, along comes the Grateful Dead collection. Have a nice day has become something of a hackneyed expression.

**haggard**

adj. untamed; having a worn look; tired; gaunt

The lawn in front of the abandoned house added to its haggard look. He looked as haggard as you would expect a new father of quadruplets to look. Just by looking at her haggard features, you can tell she has not slept for many hours.

**halcyon**

adj. tranquil; happy; calm; peaceful

The old man fondly remembered his halcyon days growing up on the farm.

**hamper**

v. to interfere with; to hinder; to delay; to impede

The roadblock hampered their progress, but they knew a shortcut.

**haphazard**

adj. disorganized; irregular; random

He constantly misplaced important documents because of his haphazard way of running his office.

**hapless**

adj. unlucky; unfortunate; ill-fated

The hapless team could not win a game.

**harangue**

n. lengthy, heartfelt speech; scolding; lecture

We sat patiently and listened to her harangue. When he finally stopped his haranguing, I responded calmly.

**harangue**

v. to talk or write excitedly; to scold; to lecture

Did you remember to harangue the freepers?

**harbor**

n. place of safety or shelter; port; refuge; haven

We stood at the dock as the ship sailed into the harbor. The peasants were executed for harboring known rebels. The rabbits used the shed as a harbor from the raging storm.

**harbor**

v. to give shelter; to protect; to hide; to take shelter; to conceal

Her decision to harbor a known criminal was an unwise one.

**harmonious**

adj. having proportionate and orderly parts; tuneful; compatible; marked by agreement

The challenge for the new conductor was to mold his musicians' talents into a harmonious orchestra.

**haughty**

adj. proud of oneself and scornful of others; snobbish; arrogant; disdainful

The haughty ways she displayed her work turned off her peers. The haughty girl displayed her work as if she were the most prized artist.

**hedonistic**

adj. living for pleasure

The group was known for its hedonistic rituals. Hot tubs, good food, and a plethora of leisure time were the hallmarks of this hedonistic society.

**heed**

v. to obey; yield to; to pay attention; to listen to

If the peasant heeds the king's commands, she will be able to keep her land.

**hefty**

adj. heavy; powerful; weighty; big

The unabridged dictionary makes for a hefty book.

**heresy**

n. opinion contrary to popular belief

In this town it is considered heresy to want parking with meters.

**heretic**

n. person who holds opinion contrary to that which is generally accepted

Because he believed the world was round, many people considered Columbus to be a heretic.

**hiatus**

n. interval; break; separation; interruption; opening

Summer vacation provided a much-needed hiatus for the students. Between graduation and the first day of his new job, Tim took a three-month hiatus in the Caribbean.

**hierarchy**

n. system of persons or things arranged according to rank

I was put at the bottom of the hierarchy while Jane was put at the top.

**hoary**

adj. whitened by age; old; ancient

The paint had a hoary appearance, as if it were applied decades ago.

**homage**

n. honor; respect; esteem; appreciation

The police officers paid homage to their fallen colleague with a ceremony that celebrated her life.

**homeostasis**

n. maintenance of stability

Knowing the seriousness of the operation, the surgeons were concerned about restoring the patient to homeostasis.

**homily**

n. solemn moral talk; sermon; exhortation; lesson

The preacher gave a moving homily to the gathered crowd.

**hone**

n. something used to sharpen; whetstone

He ran the knife over the hone for hours to get a razor-sharp edge.

**hone**

v. to sharpen; to long or yearn for

The apprenticeship will give her the opportunity to hone her skills. The traveler hones for his homeland.

**hubris**

n. overbearing pride or presumption; egotism; arrogance

Some think it was hubris that brought the president to the point of impeachment.

**humility**

n. lack of pride; modesty; humble state; meekness

Full of humility, she accepted the award but gave all the credit to her mentor.

**hybrid**

n. anything of mixed origin; crossbreed

The flower was a hybrid of three different flowers.

**hyperbole**

n. exaggeration; overstatement

The full moon was almost blinding in its brightness, he said with a measure of hyperbole.

**hypocritical**

adj. two-faced; deceptive; duplicitous; insincere

His constituents believed that the governor was hypocritical for calling for a moratorium on "negative" campaigning while continuing to air some of the most vicious ads ever produced against his opponent. Most of his constituents believed the governor was hypocritical for calling his opponent a "mud-slinging hack" when his own campaign had slung more than its share of dirt.

**hypothetical**

adj. assumed; uncertain; conjectural; supposed; theoretical

A hypothetical situation was set up so we could practice our responses. The professor was good at using hypothetical situations to illustrate complicated theories.

**iconoclast**

n. person who smashes revered images; attacker of cherished beliefs; radical

Nietzsche's attacks on government, religion, and custom made him an iconoclast of grand dimension. The iconoclast spoke against the traditions of the holiday.

**ideology**

n. speculation; representative way of thinking; philosophy; doctrine

His ideology proved to be faulty. The ideology of business can be found in the new book. He joined the religious group because he agreed with their ideology.

**idiosyncrasy**

n. personal peculiarity; mannerism; eccentricity

Her tendency to bite her lip is an idiosyncrasy.

**idyll**

n. written piece of work describing a peaceful rural scene

Reading the idyll made me think of the family farm.

**igneous**

adj. having the nature of fire; volcanic; fiery

When the sun shone upon it, the material took on an igneous quality.

**ignoble**

adj. ordinary; dishonorable; not noble

The king was adamant about keeping his son from wedding an ignoble serf. Consciously lying to someone is ignoble. It was ignoble to disgrace the family in front of all of the townspeople.

**ignominious**

adj. contemptible; degrading; humiliating; base; mean

The behavior was so ignominious he was ashamed to be associated with it. She left him because of his ignominious treatment of her.

**illuminate**

v. to make understandable; to adorn; to explain; to elucidate; to illustrate

I asked a classmate to illuminate the professor's far-ranging lecture for me.

**illusive**

adj. deceiving; misleading; unreal; false; deceptive

It was as illusive as a mirage.

**illusory**

adj. unreal; false; deceptive; illusive

He was proven guilty when his alibi was found to be illusory.

**imbue**

v. to soak; to stain; to permeate; to influence strongly; to inspire

The wound will imbue the shirt in blood. The new day imbued him with a sense of optimism.

**immaculate**

adj. perfectly clean; correct; pure

An immaculate house is free of dust or clutter.

**imminent**

adj. likely to happen without delay; forthcoming;  
impending

The storm clouds warned of the imminent downpour.

**immune**

adj. exempt from or protected against something;  
resistant; free; exempt; protected

Doesn't everybody wish to be immune from the common cold?

**immutable**

adj. unchangeable; permanent; changeless

The ties that bind alumni to their university are immutable. The man's immutable schedule soon became boring.

**impale**

v. to pierce through with; to stick on; to pin down; to stab

The knight was impaled by the sharp lance.

**impartial**

adj. unbiased; fair; objective

Exasperated by charges to the contrary, the judge reiterated that he had bent over backwards to be impartial in a case that crackled with emotion.

**impasse**

n. situation that has no solution or escape; standstill;  
hang-up; deadlock; dead-end street

The workers and administration were at an impasse in their negotiations.

**impassive**

adj. showing no emotion; stolid; apathetic; calm; relaxed

Even when his father died he gave an impassive response and walked out tearless. Her expected announcement was met by an impassive facial expression.

**impeccable**

adj. pure; perfect; faultless

If you really want to become a journalist, your English has to be simply impeccable.

**impecunious**

adj. poor; having no money

The Great Depression made family after family impecunious.

**impede**

v. to stop the progress of; to obstruct; to delay; to hinder;  
to prevent

The rain impeded the work on the building.

**impenitent**

adj. without regret, shame, or remorse; unrepentant;  
hard-hearted; unregretful

It was obvious after his impenitent remark to the press that the defendant felt no remorse for his crime.

**imperious**

adj. arrogant; urgent; absolutely necessary

Her imperious manner cost her her two best friends. It was imperious that the message reach the police chief.

**imperturbable**

adj. calm; not easily excited; composed

The imperturbable West Point graduate made a fine negotiator.

**impetuous**

adj. moving with great force; done with little thought; reckless; impulsive; hasty

The impetuous movement took the art community by storm. The impetuous teenager spent her money without considering what she needed the new purchase for. Dagmar came to regret his impetuous actions, once he realized what he'd done. The pirate's men boarded the ship with impetuous matter-of-factness.

**implacable**

adj. unwilling to be pacified or appeased; impossible to pacify; inexorable

The baby was so implacable a warm bottle would not settle her. The two year old was an implacable child; he cried no matter what his parents did to comfort him.

**implement**

n. something used in a given activity; piece of equipment

The rack is an implement of torture.

**implicit**

adj. describing knowledge which resides in people's heads and is not easily written down

The child's anger was implicit. Implicit trust must be earned.

**imprecate**

v. to pray for evil; to invoke a curse

A witch may imprecate an enemy with a curse of bad luck.

**impervious**

adj. not allowing anything to pass through; unaffected; susceptible to harm or injury; impossible to influence

The vest that the policeman wears is impervious to bullets. The child was impervious to the actions of the adult.

**impiety**

n. irreverence toward God; lack of respect

The bishop condemned the impiety of the celebrity's assertions. Impiety is evident in the way many people commit rude actions.

**implement**

v. to carry into effect; to execute; to perform; to equip with tools

In case of emergency implement the evacuation plan immediately.

**implication**

n. suggestion; inference; connotation; hint

An implication was made that there might be trickery involved.

**impolitic**

adj. unwise; imprudent; not expedient

If you are planning to invest your money, impolitic decisions may be costly.

**impromptu**

adj. without preparation; spontaneous

Her impromptu speech was well-received, giving her new confidence in her ability to speak off the cuff.

**improvident**

adj. wasteful; careless; not saving up for future needs

An improvident person may end up destitute in later life.

**impudent**

adj. disrespectful and shameless; insolent; cheeky

Impudent actions caused him to be unpopular.

**impugn**

v. to attack with words; to question the truthfulness or integrity; to challenge

The defense lawyer impugned the witness's testimony, which set back the prosecution's case. If I believe the man is a fraud I will impugn his comments.

**imputation**

n. charge; act of attributing a fault or misconduct to another

The imputation of guilt was made by the judge.

**inadvertent**

adj. not on purpose; unintentional; heedless; negligent; accidental

It was an inadvertent error, to be sure, but nonetheless a mistake that required correction.

**inanimate**

adj. spiritless; not animated; not endowed with life; inert; inactive

The boy nagged his father for a real puppy, not some inanimate stuffed animal.

**inarticulate**

adj. speechless; unable to speak clearly; indistinct; unclear

He was so inarticulate that he had trouble making himself understood.

**inaudible**

adj. not able to be heard

The signals were inaudible when the fans began to cheer.

**incessant**

adj. constant and unending; unceasing; continuous

The mother gave in to the child after her incessant crying. Incessant rain caused the river to flood over its banks.

**inchoate**

adj. not yet fully formed; rudimentary; unorganized; incomplete

The inchoate building appeared as if it would be a fast-food restaurant. The outline of the thesis was the inchoate form of a very complex theory.

**incidental**

adj. extraneous; unexpected; nonessential; minor; secondary

The defense lawyer argued that the whereabouts of the defendant's sneakers were only incidental to the commission of the crime.

**incisive**

adj. getting to the heart of things; to the point

His incisive questioning helped settle the matter quickly.

**inclined**

adj. apt to; likely; angled; sharp; cutting

The man's ear for music indicated he was inclined toward learning an instrument. The hillside was inclined just enough to make for a fairly serious climb.

**incognito**

adj. unidentified; disguised; concealed; anonymous; unknown

The federal Witness Protection Program makes its charges permanently incognito.

**incoherent**

adj. illogical; rambling; disjointed; inconsistent

Following the accident, the woman went into shock and became incoherent as medics struggled to understand her.

**incommodious**

adj. inconvenient; uncomfortable

The incommodious illness caused her to miss an important interview.

**incompatible**

adj. disagreeing; disharmonious; unsuitable; irreconcilable

Being incompatible with each other, children were assigned to sit on opposite sides of the room.

**incompetence**

n. failing to meet necessary requirements; lack of ability; inadequacy

The alleged incompetence of the construction crew would later become the subject of a class-action suit.

**inconclusive**

adj. not final or of a definite result; unconvincing

The results being inconclusive, the doctors continued to look for a cause of the illness.

**incorporeal**

adj. not consisting of matter; having no material existence; insubstantial

The apparition appeared to be incorporeal.

**incorrigible**

adj. unreformable; unchangeable; uncontrollable

The mischievous boy was an incorrigible practical joker.

**incredulous**

adj. skeptical; disbelieving; doubting

The incredulous look on his face led me to believe he was not convinced of its importance. The reporter was incredulous on hearing the computer executive's UFO account.

**inculcate**

v. to impress upon the mind, as by insistent urging; to influence

I will inculcate the directions if people are unsure of them.

**incursion**

n. attack; hostile invasion; raid; entering; infiltration

The incursion by enemy forces left the country shocked.

**indecipherable**

adj. illegible; incomprehensible

The scribbling on the paper is indecipherable.

**indelible**

adj. that which cannot be blotted out or erased; permanent

The photograph of Neil Armstrong setting foot on the moon made an indelible impression on all who saw it.

**indemnify**

v. to insure against; to pay for loss or damage; to reimburse; to compensate

It is important to indemnify your valuables with a reliable insurance company.

**indict**

v. to charge with a crime; to criticize; to accuse

The grand jury indicted her and her husband for embezzlement and six other lesser counts.

**indifferent**

adj. unconcerned; detached; apathetic

There he lay, indifferent to all the excitement around him.

**indigence**

n. poverty

The family's indigence was evident by the run-down house they lived in.

**indigenous**

adj. native to a region; innate; originating from a place

These plants are indigenous to all of the western states. Piranha are indigenous to the tropics.

**indignant**

adj. expressing anger to an injustice; irate; resentful

He was indignant over the way he was treated.

**indolent**

adj. lazy; inactive; sluggish; slow

If we find him goofing off one more time, we won't be able to escape the fact that he's indolent. An indolent student slept all day.

**indomitable**

adj. not easily discouraged or defeated; unconquerable

The underdog candidate had an indomitable spirit.

**indubitably**

adv. unquestionably; surely; obviously

The officer was best indubitably the candidate for captain.

**indulgent**

adj. lenient; patient; permissive; tolerant; forbearing

He has indulgent tendencies to eat chocolate when he is happy.

**ineluctable**

adj. something inevitable; inescapable

They were prepared for the ineluctable disaster.

**inept**

adj. incompetent; clumsy; unskilled; inappropriate

She would rather update the budget book herself, since her assistant is so inept.

**inert**

adj. not reacting chemically; inactive; sedentary; neutral; inanimate

Inert gases like krypton and argon can enhance window insulation.

**inevitable**

adj. sure to happen; unavoidable; certain; inescapable

A confrontation between the disagreeing neighbors seemed inevitable.

**infamous**

adj. having a bad reputation; notorious; deplorable; indecent; villainous

After producing machines that developed many problems, the production company became infamous for poor manufacturing. The infamous gang was known for robbery.

**infamy**

n. bad reputation

The town had only 98 residents, so all it took was one bad apple to bring infamy on the whole place.

**infer**

v. to form an opinion; to conclude; to surmise; to derive

From the broad outline he supplied it was easy to infer that the applicant knew a great deal about trains.

**ingenious**

adj. clever; resourceful; talented; inventive

His ingenious idea made it possible to double production at no extra cost.

**ingenue**

n. unworldly young woman; character of an innocent girl

As an ingenue, Corky had no experience outside of her small town.

**ingenuous**

adj. noble; honorable; candid; artless; honest; innocent

The ingenuous doctor had a great bedside manner, especially when it came to laying out the full implications of an illness.

**ingratiate**

v. to bring into one's good graces; to attempt to gain favor; act in a pleasant and agreeable manner

The man was hoping to ingratiate himself with his wife by buying a bouquet of flowers and candy.

**ingratitude**

n. ungratefulness; thanklessness

When she failed to send a thank-you card, her friend took it as a sign of ingratitude.

**inherent**

adj. part of the essential character; intrinsic; inborn; natural

A constant smile is inherent in pageant competitors. The inherent desire to do well is present throughout the family.

**inimical**

adj. harmful; hostile; unfriendly

The chess player directed an inimical stare at his opponent to knock him off his game.

**iniquitous**

adj. wicked; unjust

The verbal abuse towards the man was truly iniquitous.

**initiate**

v. to begin; to admit into a group; to start; to bring about; to commence

He initiated the dinner discussion by asking his father to borrow the car.

**initiate**

n. person who possesses special or secret knowledge

As an initiate to the Explorers, George was expected to have a taste for the outdoor life.

**innate**

adj. natural; inborn; inherent

Her talent is wondrous: it hardly matters whether it's innate or acquired. A lion's hunting skills are innate.

**innocuous**

adj. harmless; dull; insipid; uninteresting

The remark was rude but innocuous. He couldn't bear to sit through another innocuous lecture. The teens engaged in an innocuous game of touch football.

**innovate**

v. to introduce a change; to depart from the old; to bring in something new

She innovated a new product for the home construction market.

**innuendo**

n. indirect remark; insinuation; suggestion; intimation; hint

The student made an innuendo referring to the professor. The office was rife with innuendo that a takeover was in the works.

**inquisitive**

adj. eager to ask questions in order to learn; nosy; curious; prying

An inquisitive youngster is likely to become a wise adult.

**insinuate**

v. to work into gradually and indirectly; to allude to; to hint; to gain favor through indirect means

He will insinuate his need for a vacation by saying how tired he has been lately.

**insipid**

adj. uninteresting; boring flat; dull; bland; lifeless

Many people left the insipid movie before it was finished. Declaring the offerings insipid, the critic grudgingly awarded the restaurant one star.

**insolvent**

adj. unable to pay debts; bankrupt

The insolvent state of his bank account kept him from writing any checks.

**instigate**

v. to start; to provoke; to inflame; to incite

It was uncertain to the police as to which party instigated the riot.

**insubordinate**

adj. disobedient to authority; defiant

The boy's insubordinate behavior was a constant source of tension between the school and his parents.

**insular**

adj. having the characteristics of an island; narrow-minded; provincial

After walking along the entire perimeter and seeing that the spit of land was actually insular, we realized it was time to build a boat. His insular approach to education makes him a pariah among liberals.

**insularity**

n. having the characteristics of an island; narrowness of mind

The insularity of the country made it a great place to build a resort.

**intangible**

adj. incapable of being touched; immaterial; hard to grasp; insubstantial; difficult to perceive

Intangible though it may be, sometimes just knowing that the work you do helps others is reward enough.

**intercede**

v. to plead on behalf of another; to mediate; to arbitrate; to intervene

The superpowers were called on to intercede in the talks between the two warring nations.

**intermittent**

adj. periodic; occasional; sporadic

Luckily, the snow was only intermittent, so the accumulation was slight. The intermittent blinking light was distracting.

**intractable**

adj. stubborn; obstinate; not easily taught or disciplined; inflexible

Every teacher in the school became frustrated with the intractable student and sent him to the principal's office. An intractable pet can be very frustrating.

**intransigent**

adj. unyielding; uncompromising

With intransigent values, no amount of arguing could change her mind. The baseball owners and players remained intransigent, so a deal was never struck.

**intrepid**

adj. fearless; bold; courageous; brave

The intrepid photographer flew on some of the fiercest bombing raids of the war. Her intrepid actions deserved a medal.

**inundate**

v. to flood; to overwhelm with a large amount of

The broken water main inundated the business district with water. Surfing the Internet can inundate you with information: That's why a web browser comes in handy.

**inured**

adj. accustomed to pain

Beekeepers eventually become inured to bee stings.

**inveterate**

adj. deeply rooted; ingrained; firmly established

The inveterate induction ceremony bespoke one of the school's great traditions.

**invoke**

v. to ask for; to call upon; to request help

The parishioners invoked divine help for their troubles.

**iota**

n. very small piece; particle; tiny amount

There wasn't one iota of evidence to suggest a conspiracy.

**irascible**

adj. prone to anger; short-tempered

The irascible teenager was known to cause fights when upset. Knowing that the king was irascible, the servants decided not to tell him about the broken crystal.

**ironic**

adj. contradictory; inconsistent; sarcastic

Is it not ironic that Americans will toss out leftover French fries while people around the globe continue to starve?

**irrational**

adj. not logical; senseless; absurd

It would be irrational to climb Mt. Everest without some very warm clothing.

**irreparable**

adj. that which cannot be repaired or regained; uncorrectable; irreversible; irremediable

The damage to the house after the flood was irreparable. The head-on collision left the car irreparable.

**irreproachable**

adj. without blame or faults

The honesty of the priest made him irreproachable.

**itinerary**

n. travel plan; schedule; course; record of a journey

Their trip's itinerary was disrupted by an unexpected snow storm.

**jaded**

adj. worn-out; fatigued; tired

A person may become jaded if forced to work too many hours.

**jargon**

n. incoherent speech; specialized vocabulary in certain fields

The conversation was nothing but jargon, but then the speakers were nothing but cartoon characters who specialize in an oddly bracing form of gibberish. The engineers' jargon is indecipherable to a layperson.

**jeering**

adj. abusing vocally; expressing contempt or ridicule; professional vocabulary

The difference between trying to disperse a jeering group of tracksuited teenagers and a jeering group of hairy teenagers and twentysomethings isn't how tough it is to get them to break up.

**jeopardy**

n. danger; peril; hazard

The campers realized they were in potential jeopardy when the bears surrounded their camp.

**jester**

n. person employed to amuse; joker; prankster; entertainer

The jester tried all of his tricks to get the girl to laugh.

**jettison**

v. to throw goods overboard to lighten a vehicle; to discard; to get rid of

To raise the balloon above the storm clouds, they had to jettison the ballast.

**jocund**

adj. happy; cheerful; gay; jolly; mirthful

The puppy kept a smile on the jocund boy's face. The jocund atmosphere was due to the team's victory in the playoffs.

**jollity**

n. being fun; festivity; gaiety

The jollity of the crowd was seen in the cheering and laughing.

**jovial**

adj. cheery; playful; convivial; merry

She was a jovial person, always pleasant and fun to be with.

**judicious**

adj. wise; prudent; sensible; discreet

Because the elder was judicious, the tough decisions were left to him. Putting money away for a rainy day is a judicious decision.

**junction**

n. critical point; crisis; period; joint; connection

When the gas changed into a liquid, they sensed that they'd come to a critical junction in their experimentation.

**juxtapose**

v. to put side-by-side

The author decided to juxtapose the two sentences since they each strengthened the meaning of the other.

<b>ken</b> v. to recognize; to perceive; to grasp; to comprehend  It was difficult to ken exactly what she had in mind.	<b>ken</b> n. one's understanding; perception; consciousness; knowledge; awareness  My ken of the situation proved to be incorrect.
<b>kindle</b> v. to ignite; to arouse; to inspire; to excite  Being around children kindled her interest in educational psychology.	<b>kinship</b> n. family relationship; adoption; natural attraction; affinity  Living in close proximity increased the kinship of the family.
<b>kith</b> n. relatives and acquaintances; family members  Our kith will meet at the family reunion.	<b>knavery</b> n. dishonest act; deception; fraud; villainy  An act of knavery is cause for loss of trust. The teacher refused to have knavery in his classroom.
<b>knead</b> v. to mix; to massage; to shape; to squeeze  After mixing the ingredients, they kneaded the dough and set it aside to rise.	<b>knotty</b> adj. puzzling; hard to explain  The mystery was knotty.

**labyrinth**

n. maze; complicated network of passages; something confusing or bewildering

Be careful not to get lost in the labyrinth of vegetation.

**lacerate**

v. to tear; mangle; to wound; hurt; to rip

Sharp knives may lacerate the skin of an unsuspecting user. Her rejection will lacerate my self-esteem.

**laconic**

adj. sparing of words; terse; pithy; concise

After a laconic introduction the program began. The people enjoyed the public addresses of the laconic queen.

**laggard**

n. person who has fallen behind; person who moves slowly

The laggard child was lost in the crowd.

**laggard**

adj. moving slowly; lazy; sluggish

The train was laggard. Anything can happen in a swim meet: Last year's leader can become this year's laggard.

**lambaste**

v. to scold or beat harshly; to rebuke strongly

If the boy broke the lamp his father will surely lambaste him.

**lambent**

adj. traveling gently over surface; flickering; fluttering; playful

The lambent flame lit the dark room as the breeze wafted in.

**lament**

v. to mourn; to grieve; to regret

Pedro's only lament was that his wife didn't outlive him.

**lament**

n. expression of grief or sorrow; complaint; wailing; mourning

Pedro's only lament was that his wife didn't outlive him.

**languid**

adj. lacking vitality; indifferent; apathetic; sluggish

The languid student was always late to class. I have studied so much that I have grown languid to the subject. During her illness she was so languid she could not leave her bed.

**larceny**

n. theft; stealing; robbery

After robbing the liquor store, she was found guilty of larceny.

**lascivious**

adj. indecent; immoral; lecherous

He said it was a harmless pin-up poster, but his mother called it lascivious. Known as a skirt-chaser, his lascivious ways seemed to all but preclude a stable marriage.

**lassitude**

n. state of being tired or listless; exhaustion; laziness; weariness

Lassitude was evident in the nurses who had been working for 24 hours straight. Ten days of continual work caused a feeling of lassitude for the worker.

**latency**

n. period of inactivity

Its latency was small solace for the girl who feared that the cancer would re-emerge fiercer than ever.

**laud**

v. to commend; to praise

He lauded his daughter for winning the trophy.

**lax**

adj. careless; irresponsible; permissive; slack; lenient

She was lax in everything she did and therefore could not be trusted with important tasks.

**lecherous**

adj. impure in thought and act; lustful

The lecherous Humbert Humbert is Nabokov's protagonist in *Lolita*, a novel that sparked great controversy because of Humbert's romantic attachment to a young girl. The lecherous man lurked on the corner.

**lethargic**

adj. lazy; passive; listless

Feeling very lethargic, he watched television or slept the whole day.

**levee**

n. landing on the edge of a river or field

The swimmer came ashore on the levee.

**levity**

n. lack of seriousness; instability; frivolity

The levity with which he faced the destruction hampered the rescue effort. Levity characterized the first months of his administration. Levity is a necessary trait for a comedian.

**lewd**

adj. lustful; wicked; vulgar; obscene

The comment was so lewd it could not be repeated in front of children.

**liaison**

n. connection; link; contact; conspiracy

The student council served as a liaison between the faculty and the student body.

**liberalism**

n. believing in personal freedom (favoring reform or progress)

If you believe in liberalism, the First Amendment is sacrosanct.

**libertine**

n. person who indulges his desires without restraint; lecherous person

For the libertine, missing his child's birthday was not as significant as missing a football game.

**licentious**

adj. morally lacking in restraint; lascivious

The people of Sodom and Gomorra were known for their licentious lifestyle.

**ligneous**

adj. having the composition of wood; woody

The ligneous material appeared to be pure maple.

**limber**

adj. agile; flexible; pliant

The dancers must be limber to do their ballet steps.

**lithe**

adj. easily bent; pliable; supple; limber

It is best to use a lithe material when constructing a curved object. A gymnast needs to be lithe in order to do a split.

**litigate**

v. to involve a lawsuit; to dispute legally

A number of the state attorneys-general are litigating against the tobacco companies.

**livid**

adj. discolored, as if bruised; extremely angry; furious

After the fall, her arm was livid. She became livid when she heard the news. When she found out she had been robbed, the woman was livid.

**loiter**

v. to spend time aimlessly; to idle

Many teenagers loiter around the mall when there is nothing else to do.

**loquacious**

adj. very talkative; garrulous; wordy

She was having difficulty ending the conversation with her loquacious neighbor. The staff knew the meeting would be long because the administrator was in a loquacious mood.

**lucent**

adj. shining; gleaming

The flowing garment gave the woman a lucent quality when standing in the spotlight.

**lucid**

adj. shiny; clear minded

He chose a shimmering, lucid fabric for his curtains. When lucid, the man spoke of vivid memories.

**lucrative**

adj. profitable; gainful; comprehensible

She entered the pharmaceutical industry in the belief that it would be lucrative.

**lugubrious**

adj. full of sorrow; mournful; melancholic

The man's lugubrious heart kept him from enjoying the special occasion.

**luminous**

adj. emitting light; shining; enlightened; intelligent

The luminous quality of the precious stone made it look like a fallen star. They found their way through the darkness by heading toward the luminous object in the distance.

**lunge**

v. to move suddenly

The owl will lunge at its prey in order to take it off guard.

**lurid**

adj. glowing through haze; shocking; sensational; appalling; horrible

A lurid sun shone upon them as they watched the sun set on the beach. The tabloid specialized in lurid stories about celebrities' indiscretions.

**lustrous**

adj. bright; radiant; shining; splendid; shiny

Surrounded by rubies, the lustrous diamond looked magnificent.

**luxuriant**

adj. rich; magnificent; abundant; growing; richly ornamented

The luxuriant flowers grew in every available space.

**macerate**

v. to soften by steeping in liquid; to disintegrate

It was necessary to macerate the food before the elderly man could eat it. They placed her foot in the solvent to macerate the cement she had stepped in.

**maculate**

adj. spotted; blotched; defiled; impure

The maculate rug could not be cleaned.

**maculate**

v. to stain; spot; defile; to dirty

Grape juice maculated the carpet.

**magnanimity**

n. quality of nobleness of mind; disdain of meanness or revenge; generous and unselfish act

Being full of magnanimity he asked the thief only for an apology and set him free. The magnanimity of the professor overcame the rage of the student.

**magnanimous**

adj. forgiving; unselfish

The magnanimous store owner did not press charges once an apology was given.

**malediction**

n. putting a curse on someone; talking negatively about another; slander

With the threat of a malediction, the man left the fortuneteller's house. Never having a nice word to say about anyone, her conversations are full of malediction.

**malefactor**

n. evil person; criminal

The malefactor ordered everyone to work over the holidays. The prison contains malefactors of all ages.

**malevolent**

adj. wishing evil; malicious (opposite: benevolent)

The man threatened his opponent with threats and malevolent words. She had malevolent feelings toward her sister.

**malicious**

adj. spiteful; vindictive

The malicious employee slashed her tires for revenge.

**malign**

v. to speak evil of; to slander

In her statement to the judge she malignated her soon-to-be ex-husband.

**malign**

adj. having an evil disposition toward others; harmful; evil (opposite: benign)

She had such a malign personality that no one even tried to approach her, mostly out of fear.

**malingering**

v. to pretend to be ill in order to escape work

He will malingering on Friday so he can go to the movies. The soldier will malingering to avoid fighting.

**malleable**

adj. easy to shape or bend; pliable; flexible; adaptable

The malleable material was formed into a U shape. The sculptor uses malleable substances to create complex masterpieces.

**mandate**

n. order; charge; authorization; command

The new manager wrote a mandate declaring that smoking was now prohibited in the office.

**manifest**

v. to show clearly; to appear; to prove; to reveal

The image should manifest itself as the building when the fog lifts. When the missing document suddenly manifested, the search for the person that buried it began.

**manifest**

adj. obvious; clear; evident

America's manifest destiny was to acquire all of the land between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

**mar**

v. to damage; to spoil; to deface

The statue was marred by the ravages of time.

**marauder**

n. plunderer; raider; thief

The marauder had been traveling for two months searching for the large stash.

**materialism**

n. the theory or attitude that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value in life

Spiritualists will tell you that materialism is only half the story. Some said that the prince's profligacy gave materialism a bad name.

**maudlin**

adj. foolishly and tearfully sentimental; weepy; emotional

The maudlin affair consisted of three speeches in honor of the benefactor.

**maverick**

n. person who does not conform to the norm; independent thinker

The maverick drove a large truck as others were purchasing compact cars.

**meander**

v. to wind; to ramble; to roam; walk about aimlessly; carry on in a leisurely way

The stream meanders through the valley. They meandered through the woods for the afternoon.

**meander**

adj. winding; wandering aimlessly

Within this encircling road, lie a series of superb brown trout and sea-trout lochs: Scadavay, with shores that meander round the moor for a distance of more than fifty miles; full of fishy points and promontories, reputed to contain 365 islands. Because we took a long, meandering walk, we arrived home well after dark.

**melancholy**

n. depression; gloom; sadness

The funeral parlor was filled with the melancholy of mourning.

**mellifluous**

adj. having a sweet sound

The flute had a beautifully mellifluous sound.

**melodious**

adj. pleasing to hear

The melodious sounds of the band attracted many onlookers.

**menagerie**

n. place to keep or a collection of wild or strange animals; zoo

Little Ryan couldn't wait to visit the zoo to see the menagerie of wild boars.

**mendacious**

adj. not truthful; dishonest; lying; deceptive

The couple was swindled out of their life's savings by the mendacious con men.

**mentor**

n. teacher; wise and faithful advisor; spiritual instructor

Alan consulted his mentor when he needed critical advice.

**mercenary**

adj. working or done for payment only; hired for service

Lila was suspicious that Joe had jumped at the chance only for mercenary reasons.

**mercenary**

n. hired soldier; greedy person

A mercenary was hired for a hundred dollars a month, good money in those days even if you had to fight a war to get it.

**mercurial**

adj. quick; changeable; fickle; mercury

The mercurial youth changed outfits six times before deciding what to wear.

**meretricious**

adj. deceptive beauty; alluring by attractive appearance; lewd

A cubic zircon is a meretricious way of impressing others.

**mesmerize**

v. to hypnotize; to fascinate; to induce

The swaying motion of the swing mesmerized the baby into a deep sleep.

**metamorphosis**

n. change of form

A metamorphosis caused the caterpillar to become a beautiful butterfly.

**meticulous**

adj. exacting; precise; pedantic; cautious concerning minute details

The lab technicians must be meticulous in their measurements to obtain exact results.

**mettle**

n. spirit; courage; ardor

He proved he had the mettle to make it through basic training.

**mien**

n. appearance; being or manner; bearing

Her mien was typically one of distress, especially after the mishap.

**mimicry**

n. imitation

The comedian's mimicry of the president's gestures had the audience rolling in the aisles.

**minatory**

adj. threatening or foreshadowing evil or tragic developments; menacing

The minatory stance of the dog warned the thief of an attack.

**minute**

adj. extremely small; tiny; trivial; precise; petty

Being on a sodium-restricted diet, he uses only a minute amount of salt in his dishes.

**mire**

v. to cause to get stuck in wet, soggy ground; to muddy

The car became mired in the mud.

**misanthrope**

n. person who distrusts everything; hater of mankind

After the man swindled all of the woman's savings, she became a misanthrope. The misanthrope lived alone in the forest.

**miscreant**

adj. evil

Her miscreant actions shocked and surprised her family.

**miscreant**

n. evil person; villain; rascal

The miscreant thought nothing of taking others' money and belongings.

**miser**

n. penny pincher; stingy person; scrooge; cheapskate

The miser made no donations and loved counting his money every night.

**mite**

n. very small sum of money; very small creature

The mite they pay me is hardly worth the aggravation. The baseball team was made up of such small children they were nicknamed the "Mites".

**mitigate**

v. to alleviate; to lessen; to soothe; to soften; to appease

She tried to mitigate the loss of his pet by buying him a kitten. The lawyer will attempt to mitigate the sentence probation.

**modulate**

v. to regulate; to adjust; to vary the pitch; to control

He modulated the color knob on the television set until the picture was perfect. A trained singer knows how to modulate her voice to the desired pitches.

**mollify**

v. to soften; to make less intense; to pacify

We used our hands to mollify the sound of our giggling.

**molten**

adj. melted

Steel becomes molten after heating it to thousands of degrees.

**moot**

adj. subject to or open for discussion or debate

The discussion of extending the girl's curfew was a moot point.

**mordant**

adj. cutting; sarcastic; incisive; sharp

Her mordant remark made me feel unqualified and useless.

**morose**

adj. moody; despondent; bitter; irritable

He was very morose over the death of his pet. After the team lost the fans were morose.

**motif**

n. theme; main idea

Although the college students lived in Alaska, they decided on a tropical motif for their dorm room. The decorations include a rose motif.

**motility**

n. spontaneous motion; mobility

The motility of the car caused the driver to lunge for the brake.

**mundane**

adj. ordinary; commonplace; normal; routine; everyday

It is amazing that he was able to make millions marketing mundane products like paper clips and plastic bags. The small town was very mundane. Going food shopping soon became mundane, losing all of its excitement.

**munificent**

adj. giving generously; lavish

The civic group made a munificent donation to the homeless shelter.

**muse**

v. to think or speak meditatively; to ponder; to meditate

I expect I'll have to muse on that question for a while.

**myriad**

n. large number; a lot; innumerable; endless; infinitive

Since the economic downturn, young college graduates no longer have the myriad job options that they would have had just three years ago. Gazing up on the clear, dark midnight sky, the astronomer saw a myriad of stars.

**narcissistic**

adj. egotistical; self-centered; excessive interest in ones appearance, comfort, abilities, etc.

The narcissistic actor was difficult to get along with.

**nascent**

adj. starting to grow or develop

The nascent rage of in-line skating began on the West Coast.

**nautical**

adj. of the sea; having to do with sailors, ships or navigation

The coastal New England town had a charming nautical influence.

**nebulous**

adj. unclear; hazy; vague

The ten page directions were a collection of nebulous words and figures.

**nefarious**

adj. morally bad; vile; wicked

The nefarious criminal was the scourge of the local police force.

**nefariousness**

n. being villainous or wicked; evil

The nefariousness of the ruler was apparent when he hoarded all of the food.

**negligence**

n. carelessness; neglect

Negligence contributed to the accident: She was traveling too fast for the icy conditions.

**nemesis**

n. person who inflicts just punishment; retribution; rival

The criminal was killed by his nemesis, the brother of the man he murdered. The football team plays its nemesis on Saturday.

**neologism**

n. giving a new meaning to an old word; new expression

Bad is a neologism for good.

**neophyte**

n. beginner; newcomer; novice

Critics applauded the neophyte's success and speculated how much better he would get with age and experience. The neophyte dancer was overcome by the fast tempo and exotic rhythms.

**nettle**

v. to annoy; to irritate

The younger brother nettled his older sister until she slapped him. The boy will nettle the father into agreeing.

**neutral**

adj. impartial; unbiased

The mother remained neutral regarding the argument between her two children.

**nexus**

n. connection; joint; link

The nexus between the shuttle and the space station was successful.

**noisome**

adj. harmful to health; having a foul odor; offensive

The noisome food was the cause of their illness. The family was forced from the home by a noisome odor.

**nostalgic**

adj. longing for the past; filled with bittersweet memories

She loved her new life, but became nostalgic when she met with her old friends.

**nostrum**

n. questionable remedy for difficulties; panacea

The doctor's prescription was so unusual that it could be seen as a nostrum. The nostrum of pine leaves and water did not seem to cure the illness.

**notorious**

adj. renowned; having an unfavorable connotation; known for disgrace

Discovering that her new neighbor was notorious for thievery, she decided to purchase an alarm system for her home. The criminal had a notorious reputation.

**novel**

adj. new; strange

It was a novel idea for the rock group to play classical music.

**noxious**

adj. harmful to one's health

The noxious fumes caused the person to become ill.

**nugatory**

adj. trifling; futile; insignificant; void; invalid

Because the problem was nugatory it was not addressed immediately.

**nullify**

v. to cancel; to invalidate; to annul

Drinking alcohol excessively will nullify the positive benefits of eating well and exercising daily.

<p><b>oaf</b> n. clumsy or dumb person; simpleton</p> <p>The waiter has been called an oaf ever since he dropped the tray.</p>	<p><b>obdurate</b> adj. stubbornly persistent in wrongdoing; stiff-necked</p> <p>The obdurate child refused to go to school. The obdurate youngster refused to eat the Brussels sprouts.</p>
<p><b>obeisance</b> n. gesture of respect or reverence; reverent behavior</p> <p>As an obeisance, the man took off his hat as the funeral procession drove past him.</p>	<p><b>obfuscate</b> v. to darken; to confuse; to bewilder; to obscure</p> <p>The lunar eclipse will obfuscate the light of the sun.</p>
<p><b>objective</b> adj. open-minded; unbiased; impartial</p> <p>It's hard to set aside your biases and be objective.</p>	<p><b>objective</b> n. goal; purpose; target; aim</p> <p>The law student decided that her primary objective after graduation was to pass the Bar examination.</p>
<p><b>objurgate</b> v. to chide vehemently; to reprimand</p> <p>The girls disliked those boys who objurgated the group.</p>	<p><b>obligatory</b> adj. mandatory; necessary; legally or morally binding</p> <p>In order to provide a reliable source of revenue for the government, it is obligatory for each citizen to pay taxes.</p>
<p><b>obliterate</b> v. to destroy completely; to erase</p> <p>Poaching nearly obliterated the world's whale population.</p>	<p><b>obloquy</b> n. widespread condemnation; disgrace or infamy resulting from this; public accusation; defamation</p> <p>The child suffered quite an obloquy at the hands of his classmates. Lawyers must face frequent obloquy with their reputation as "ambulance chasers."</p>
<p><b>obscure</b> adj. not easily understood; dark; vague</p> <p>The orchestra enjoys performing obscure American works, hoping to bring them to a wider audience.</p>	<p><b>obsequious</b> adj. servilely attentive; servile; fawning</p> <p>The man's attraction to the woman would be obvious if his obsequious behavior could be noted. The princess only seemed to encourage the obsequious behavior of her court to enhance her own feeling of superiority.</p>

**obsolete**

adj. out of date; outdated; archaic; extinct; antiquated

Computers have made many formerly manual tasks obsolete. Although much of today's communication and correspondence takes place online, the Post Office is not quite obsolete.

**obstinate**

adj. inflexible; stubborn

Her father would not allow her to stay out past midnight; she thought he was obstinate because he would not change his mind.

**obtrude**

v. to force oneself or one's ideas upon another; to thrust forward; to eject; to invade; to interrupt

The inquisitive coworker obtrudes into the conversation often.

**obtuse**

adj. dull; greater than 90 degrees but less than 180 degrees; slow to understand or perceive

The man was so obtuse, he even made the dog yawn. The textbook problem asks the reader to solve for the obtuse angle. He's obtuse when it comes to abstract art.

**obviate**

v. to make unnecessary; to prevent; to remove an obstacle in advance

The invention of cars has obviated the use of horse and carriage. A cure for the common cold would obviate the need for shelf after shelf of cold remedies.

**occult**

adj. hidden; beyond human understanding; mystical; supernatural; secret

The occult meaning of the message was one of dislike for the authorities. Some spend years pursuing the occult, only to find themselves no closer to the answer. Relating to the occult world means entering a new realm.

**odious**

adj. hateful; disgusting; detestable

Having to chaperone her brother was an odious chore for the girl.

**odium**

n. hate; disgrace from a hateful action; enmity

Odium could be felt for the man who destroyed the school.

**oligarchy**

n. form of government in which the supreme power is placed in the hands of a small, exclusive group

The oligarchy took control after the king was overthrown.

**ominous**

adj. threatening; foreboding

Seeing ominous clouds on the horizon, the street fair organizers decided to fold up their tent and go home.

**omniscient**

adj. having knowledge of all things

The future can be told by the omniscient woman.

**opalescent**

adj. iridescent

Her new nail polish was opalescent making her finger tips look like pearls.

**opaque**

adj. dull; cloudy; non-transparent; frosted (about glass)

Not having been washed for years, the once beautiful windows of the Victorian home became opaque. They chose an opaque shade of green for their bathroom walls.

**opprobrious**

adj. abusive; humiliating; insulting

Nobody liked working for him because he was so opprobrious.

**optimist**

n. person who hopes for the best; sees the good side

He's ever the optimist, always seeing the glass as half full.

**opulence**

n. wealth; fortune; abundance

A 40-room mansion on 65 wooded acres is only the most visible sign of her opulence.

**ornate**

adj. flamboyant; flowery; showy

The courthouse was framed by ornate friezes.

**orthodox**

adj. traditional; accepted; conservative

The gifted child's parents concluded that orthodox methods of education would not do their son any good, so they decided to teach him at home.

**oscillate**

v. to move back and forth; to have a wavering opinion; to vacillate

The couple often oscillates between going out and staying home.

**ossify**

v. to turn to bone; to harden

Over time, the plant matter has ossified. The tablet will ossify when left in the sun.

**ostensible**

adj. apparent; obvious; professed to be a certain way

The ostensible reason for choosing the girl was for her beauty.

**ostentatious**

adj. pretentious; showy; pompous

Sure he'd won the lottery, but coming to work in a stretch limo seemed a bit ostentatious.

**ostracize**

v. to banish; to exclude

The students tend to ostracize the children they dislike from their games.

**oust**

v. drive out; to eject; to evict

The dictator was ousted in a coup d'etat.

**paean**

n. song of praise or triumph

A paean was written in honor of the victorious warrior.

**pagan**

adj. polytheistic; hedonistic

Moses, distraught over some of his people's continuing pagan ways, smashed the stone tablets bearing the Ten Commandments.

**painstaking**

adj. thorough; careful; precise; meticulous; diligent

Helga's painstaking research paid off with a top grade on her essay.

**palatial**

adj. large and impressive; palace-like; magnificent

The new palatial home contained two pools and an indoor track for jogging.

**palindrome**

n. word or phrase which reads the same backwards and forwards

Bob, "Dad," and "Madam" are examples of palindromes.

**palliate**

v. to alleviate; to ease pain but not cure; to make appear less serious; to allay

The medication will help palliate the pain. The lawyer attempted to palliate the offense to the jury.

**pallid**

adj. pale in color; ashen

The visitor left the hospital room with a pallid face.

**pallor**

n. lack of facial color; wanness; paleness

The more vivid the testimony grew, the more the witness seemed to take on a ghostly pallor.

**palpable**

adj. touchable; clear; obvious; substantial; tangible

The palpable decision was to discontinue the use of drugs. On a flight that had included a sudden 5,000-foot drop, the passengers' relief upon landing was palpable.

**panegyric**

n. high praise; commendation

Upon his retirement, he received a great panegyric from many of his associates. His panegyric to his opponent stood in sharp contrast to the harsh tenor of the campaign.

**paradigm**

n. model; prototype; pattern; idea

The machine could no longer be produced after the paradigm was destroyed. The Massachusetts gubernatorial race was considered a paradigm of campaign civility.

**paradox**

n. tenet seemingly contradictory or false, but actually true

The paradox seemed so unlikely though it was true. At first blush, the company's results were a paradox: Sales were down, yet profits were up.

**parapet**

n. wall for protection; low wall or railing

The parapet protected the kingdom from the raging army.  
The parapet kept the child from falling into the river.

**paraphernalia**

n. equipment; accessories; tools

She looked guilty since the drug paraphernalia was found in her apartment.

**pariah**

n. outcast; person who is rejected

The pariah of the group sat by himself under the tree.

**parity**

n. state of being the same in power, value, or rank; equality

When the younger brother was promoted to co-president with the elder son, it established parity between the two.

**parley**

v. to speak with another; to discourse

I will parley the information to the appropriate person.

**parochial**

adj. religious; narrow-minded; provincial

Devout Christians, the Chesterfields enrolled their children in a parochial school. Governor Kean urged Republicans to rise above parochial interests and be the party of inclusion.

**parody**

n. piece of work imitating another in a satirical manner; poor imitation

The play was a parody of the Prince and Princess's marital difficulties. Ugh! This is a parody of a fashionable dress!

**parry**

v. to avoid; to ward off; to repulse; to turn away; to evade

I dislike talking to the woman so I will attempt to parry her by ducking around the corner.

**parse**

v. to separate (a sentence or word) into parts and describe the function of each

An English teacher may ask a student to parse a sentence.

**parsimonious**

adj. very frugal; unwilling to spend; economical

The owner was so parsimonious he refused to purchase new curtains when the old ones fell off the window. The parsimonious individual argued that twenty-five cents was much too expensive for a pack of gum.

**parsimony**

n. extreme frugality; miserliness; stinginess

The parsimony of the wealthy woman was uncalled for.

**partisan**

n. supporter; follower; guerrilla fighter

The union president is a partisan of minimum-wage legislation. A partisan for the incumbent mayor will not support the challenger.

**partisan**

adj. biased; one-sided

Where tempers flare and a partisan spirit provokes new hostility, raise up people who have patience and restraint.

**passive**

adj. submissive; unassertive; compliant; indifferent

He is so passive that others walk all over him.

**paucity**

n. scarcity; fewness

The described feast was actually a buffet with a paucity of food.

**pavilion**

n. large tent or covered area, usually used for entertainment; booth

The wedding pavilion was not only beautifully decorated, but also served as welcome protection from a sudden downpour.

**peccadillo**

n. slight fault or offense; minor sin

The child was embarrassed when he was caught committing the peccadillo of eating chocolate before dinner.

**pecuniary**

adj. pertaining to money; financial

The retiring employee was delighted when he received a pecuniary gift.

**pedagogue**

n. teacher; professor; educator

Seeing the way she worked with children there was no doubt she was a true pedagogue.

**pedantic**

adj. emphasizing minutiae or form in scholarship or teaching; strict; meticulous

Professor Jones's lectures were so pedantic that his students sometimes had a tough time understanding the big picture. It is important to understand pedantic terminology before beginning a lecture.

**pedestrian**

adj. mediocre; ordinary

We expected the meal to be exceptional, but it was just pedestrian.

**pejorative**

adj. making things worse; villifying; depreciatory

The pejorative comment deepened the dislike between the two families.

**pellucid**

adj. transparent; intelligible; lucid; clear; understandable

The pellucid material was not an adequate shield from the sun.

**penchant**

n. liking for; attraction; affinity

I have a penchant for all flavors of ice cream.

**penitent**

adj. feeling sorry for what one has done; ascetic; repentant

The burglar expressed his penitent feelings during his confession.

**pensive**

adj. thoughtful; contemplative; meditative; musing

She was in a pensive mood, just wanting to be alone to think. My hours alone are often more pensive than the time I spend with friends. The pensive mood was broken by a witty joke.

**penurious**

adj. stingy; miserly; indigent

The penurious man had millions of dollars, but lived in a cottage to save money. Charles Dickens' Scrooge is the most penurious character in any of his tales.

**perceptive**

adj. full of insight; aware; comprehending

The perceptive detective discovered that the murder weapon was hidden in a safe under the floor.

**percussion**

n. striking one object against another; rapping

The loud percussion of the hunter's gunshot startled the birds.

**perdition**

n. ruination; purgatory; destruction; hell

The perdition of the building was caused by the strong quake.

**peremptory**

adj. barring future action; that cannot be denied, changed, etc.; aggressive

The peremptory means of defense was satisfactory to keep out the intruders. The wildcat strike was a peremptory move on the part of the workers.

**perfidious**

adj. faithless; treacherous; deceitful; adulterous

The trust between the business associates was broken after the perfidious actions by one of the partners.

**perfunctory**

adj. done in a routine, mechanical way; without interest; superficial; careless

Change in career is a good cure for someone who has become bored with their occupation and is currently performing their duties in a perfunctory fashion. The girl will not improve unless she changes her perfunctory attitude.

**peripheral**

adj. marginal; outer; external

Those are peripheral problems; let's look at the central challenge. The peripheral shrubs were used to create a fence-like blockade. He thought he was my best friend, when in fact, he was a peripheral acquaintance.

**perjury**

n. practice of lying under oath

The already sensational trial of a star athlete turned all the more so when it turned out that a police detective had committed perjury. Lying while on the witness stand is perjury.

**permeable**

adj. porous; allowing to pass through; penetrable

Because the material was permeable, the water was able to drain.

**pernicious**

adj. dangerous; harmful; destructive; malignant

Standing oil combined with a fresh rain on the asphalt can have a pernicious impact on a driver's control of the road. The pernicious fire engulfed four blocks of homes.

**perpetual**

adj. never ceasing; continuous; eternal

Perpetual pain keeps the woman from walking.

**perquisite**

n. extra payment; tip; side income

After working overtime, I had enough money to make a perquisite on my loan.

**pertinent**

adj. related to the matter at hand; appropriate; relevant

During a trial everyone should concentrate on the same subject, stating only pertinent information.

**peruse**

v. to read carefully; to study

A vast majority of time was spent perusing the possible solution to the dilemma.

**pervade**

v. to occupy the whole of; to infiltrate; to spread out; to penetrate

Her perfume was so strong that it pervaded the whole room.

**pervasive**

adj. spreading throughout; extending; suffusing

The home was filled with the pervasive aroma of baking bread.

**pessimism**

n. seeing only the gloomy side; hopelessness; (opposite; optimism)

After endless years of drought, pessimism grew in the hearts of even the most dedicated farmer.

**petty**

adj. unimportant; of subordinate standing; small; insignificant

With all of the crime in the world, stealing bubble gum is considered petty theft.

**petulant**

adj. peevish; cranky; rude

The long illness put the boy in a petulant mood. The tone of his voice and the things that he says become quite petulant when he has not gotten enough sleep.

**phenomenon**

n. exceptional person; unusual occurrence

Not for nothing do they call Yankee Stadium "The House that Ruth Built"-the Babe was a phenomenon. The northern lights are a rare phenomenon for those not living near the Arctic Circle.

**philanthropy**

n. charity; unselfishness; goodwill toward mankind

After years of donating time and money to the children's hospital, Mrs. Elderwood was commended for her philanthropy.

**phlegmatic**

adj. without emotion or interest; sluggish and dull; indifferent; slow

The playwright had hoped his story would take theatergoers on an emotional roller coaster, but on opening night they just sat there, stonefaced and phlegmatic. The phlegmatic child rarely went outside to play.

**phobia**

n. morbid fear

Fear of heights is a not uncommon phobia.

**piebald**

adj. colored; blotched together; spotted

The extreme heat caused the colors to become piebald.

**pinioned**

adj. bound fast

The two rafts were pinioned by steel wire.

**pious**

adj. religious; devout; dedicated; orthodox

The religious couple believed that their pious method of worship would bring them eternal life. The statues of the saints have pious symbolism. Many people think of this land as pious territory.

**piqued**

n. resentment at being slighted; irritation; grudge

Being passed over for the promotion aroused his pique.

**piqued**

v. to provoke; to irritate; to offend

The more he piqued her, the redder she grew.

**pithy**

adj. terse and full of meaning; concise; succinct

Columnist William Safire, a former presidential speech writer, has a way with words that often yields pithy comments.

**pittance**

n. small amount

The reward money was only a pittance compared to the money lost. The little girl received a pittance every week for keeping her room clean.

**placate**

v. to appease; to pacify; to reconcile

The entire family attempted to placate the stubborn child. With a soothing voice and the promise of a juicy steak, the trainer placated the escaped lion so that he wouldn't hurt anyone.

**placid**

adj. undisturbed and calm; tranquil; quiet; serene

The placid lake's water was completely motionless.

**plaintive**

adj. mournful; sad; moving

His wife's death made Sam plaintive.

**platonic**

adj. idealistic; impractical; not amorous not sensual

The platonic advice of the doctor was to stay away from all odors. Our relationship is platonic now, but I hope it will someday be otherwise.

**plausible**

adj. probable; feasible; logical; conceivable

After weeks of trying to determine what or who was raiding the chicken coop, the farmer came up with a plausible explanation. After scrimping and saving for a decade, it was now plausible to send his daughter to college.

**plenary**

adj. full; entire; complete; whole

A plenary class of students staged the protest.

**plethora**

n. superabundance

There was a plethora of food at the royal feast.

**plumb**

adj. perfectly straight down; vertical

The two walls met plumb at the corner.

**plumb**

v. to solve

I was able to plumb the riddle in a few seconds.

**polemic**

adj. controversial; argumentative; contentious

The polemic decision caused a stir in the community.

**polemicist**

n. person skilled in argument; disputatious person

The polemicist could debate any case skillfully.

**pommel**

n. rounded, upward-projecting front of a saddle

The woman was so nervous about being on the horse she would not let go of the pommel.

**ponderous**

adj. unwieldy from weight; dull; labored; heavy; awkward

The ponderous piano posed a serious challenge to having it pulled up to the 16th floor. As if being grainy wasn't bad enough, the film's ponderous story made it tough to get through.

**portend**

v. to be an omen of; to signify; to foretell

The distant roll of thunder portends of an oncoming storm.

**potable**

adj. drinkable

The liquid was not potable, but rather poisonous.

**potable**

n. beverage that is drinkable

Sea water isn't potable.

**potent**

adj. having great power or physical strength; influential; virile

He took very potent medication and felt better immediately.

**pragmatic**

adj. matter-of-fact; practical

Since they were saving money to buy a new home, the pragmatic married couple decided not to go on an expensive vacation. A pragmatic solution to the car's continual repairs would be to purchase a new car.

**prate**

v. to talk foolishly; to chatter; to gab; to babble

It is not uncommon for people to prate when they become nervous about speaking to a superior.

**prattle**

n. childish babble; chatter

I've listened to his prattle for far too long.

**prattle**

v. to babble while speaking

The toddler does more prattling than talking.

**precarious**

adj. depending upon another; risky; uncertain; unstable; unsteady

The precarious plans fell through when the second couple changed their minds. My position in the negotiations was precarious at best.

**precept**

n. rule or direction of moral conduct; order; command; directive

The organization believed their members should abide by certain precepts.

**precipitate**

v. to cause to happen; to hasten; to urge

A rude comment may precipitate an argument.

**precipitate**

adj. happening quickly; rushed; headfirst

The precipitating flood caught the village off-guard.

**preclude**

v. to inhibit; to make impossible; to prevent; to eliminate; to remove

A healthy diet and lifestyle will not preclude you from getting ill, although it improves your immune system. Exercise may help to preclude heart disease.

**precocious**

adj. developed or matured earlier than usual

The precocious eight year-old wanted to read the romance novel.

**predecessor**

n. person who has occupied an office before another; ancestor

Although her predecessor did not accomplish any goals that would help the poor, the new mayor was confident that she could finally help those in need.

**prefatory**

adj. coming before; serving as an opening statement

The prefatory comments informed the audience of what was to come.

**premise**

n. basis for an argument; presumption; proposition

The prosecutor claimed that the defense lawyer's premise was shaky, and thus his whole argument was suspect.

**preponderate**

v. to outweigh; to be superior in amount, weight, etc.; to surpass; to predominate; to control

His positive qualities are the preponderate ones over his occasional rudeness.

**presage**

n. omen; foreshadowing characteristic; portent

They considered the rainbow at their wedding a presage for a happy life. Bright sun in the morning was a good presage that it was going to be a good day.

**prescience**

n. knowing about something before it happens; foresight

The morning of the big game I had a prescience that we would win.

**prescriptive**

adj. done by custom; unbending

At the heart of the Australian aborigines' prescriptive coming-of-age rite for men is a walkabout.

**prevalent**

adj. generally occurring; predominant; widespread

Rain is usually more prevalent than snow during April.

**prevaricate**

v. to speak equivocally or evasively; to lie; to deceive; to mislead; to embellish

The mayor's desperate attempt to prevaricate about the scandal was transparent to the voters. His mother knew no one else could have done it, but the child foolishly prevaricated about the stain on the rug.

**pristine**

adj. primitive; pure; uncorrupted; unpolluted

The pristine lake had not been marred by pollution. She had such a pristine look about her, you would have thought she was an angel.

**privy**

adj. private; confidential; clandestine; secret

He was one of a handful of people privy to the news of the pending merger. Only the woman's best friend was privy to her secret.

**probity**

n. honesty; decency; integrity; uprightness

The young man's probity was reassuring to the fearful parent.

**problematic**

adj. being hard to deal with; unsolved situation; troublesome

The constant squeak of the door was problematic. The tense political struggle remains problematic.

**prodigal**

adj. wasteful; lavish; generous; plentiful; abundant

The actor's prodigal lifestyle ultimately led to his undoing. Spending his rent money on your birthday present was more than generous, it was prodigal. The prodigal gift by the poor woman was truly a thoughtful gesture.

**prodigious**

adj. wonderful; enormous; huge; excellent; great; amazing

The prodigious festivities lasted until the wee hours of the morning. The Empire State Building required a prodigious amount of steel to erect.

**profound**

adj. deep; knowledgeable; thorough; intense; serious

It was with profound regret and sorrow that the family had to leave their homeland for a more prosperous country.

**profusion**

n. great wastefulness; large abundance of; excess; squandering; lavishness

The profusion of the food-fight was unforgivable considering the worldwide hunger problem. The profusion of uneaten food was sent to the shelter. The wet winter brought about a profusion of mosquitoes.

**progeny**

n. children; offspring; outcome

It is through his progeny that his name shall live on. The princes were the progeny of royalty.

**program**

n. parts of entertainment; plan for dealing with a matter; coded instructions; schedule; agenda

The free-form music program on Sunday nights is virtually unique in commercial radio. The program for better health is to eat more vegetables and fruits. The store's computer program allows sale information to prompt at the register for certain items at certain hours.

**proliferate**

v. to prosper; to reproduce quickly; to multiply rapidly

Gerbils are known to proliferate quickly.

**prolific**

adj. fruitful; plentiful; abundant; productive

The merger resulted in a prolific business which became an asset to the community.

**promontory**

n. piece of land jutting into a body of water; bluff

The boat hit the rocky promontory, splitting the bow.

**propagate**

v. to reproduce; to multiply; to proliferate; to extend; to increase

Rabbits and gerbils are said to propagate quickly.

**propensity**

n. natural tendency towards; bias; aptitude; tendency; inclination

I have a propensity to talk too fast. She has a propensity to hire men over women.

**propinquity**

n. closeness in time or place; closeness of relationship; resemblance

The propinquity of the disasters put the community in chaos. The propinquity of the two stories was the basis of the teacher's lesson.

**propitiate**

v. to win the goodwill of; to appease

If I try my best I will hopefully propitiate my new supervisor.

**prosaic**

adj. tiresome; ordinary; common; tedious; regular; dull

He wanted to do something new; he was tired of the prosaic activities his parents suggested each day. The only entertainment would be a prosaic game of cards.

**proselytize**

v. to convert from one belief or religion to another

The preacher often attempts to proselytize wayward travelers.

**protocol**

n. original draft or record of a document; rules of behavior

The protocol was given to the president once it was completed.

**proverbial**

adj. well-known because it is commonly referred to; similar to an adage

King Solomon's proverbial wisdom has been admired through the ages.

**provident**

adj. prudent; economical; careful; frugal

It was provident, in his opinion, to wait and buy the new car when he was financially secure.

**provincial**

adj. regional; unsophisticated; narrow-minded

After living in the city for five years, he found that his family back home on the farm was too provincial for his cultured ways.

**proviso**

n. clause stating a condition or stipulation; restriction

The governor began the conference with a proviso stating the disastrous results of the flood.

**provocative**

adj. tempting; irritating; inciting; annoying

In the movie Roger Rabbit, the animated Jessica Rabbit demurs when she's told she's provocative, saying that she's only drawn that way. The U.S. considered the invasion of Kuwait a provocative action.

**provoke**

v. to stir action or feeling; to arouse; to induce; to instigate

By calling him names, he was provoking a fight.

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**quaff**

v. to drink quickly

A dog will quaff if he becomes overheated.

**quagmire**

n. marshy land; mud; difficult situation

The vehicle became stuck in the quagmire.

**quaint**

adj. old-fashioned; unusual; odd; strange

One of the best qualities of the bed-and-breakfast was its quaint setting in the charming English village.

**qualified**

adj. experienced; indefinite; competent

She was well qualified for the job after working the field for ten years.

**qualm**

n. sudden feeling of uneasiness or doubt; regret; sorrow

His qualms about flying disappeared once the plane landed softly.

**quandary**

n. dilemma; state of confusion

Joe and Elizabeth were caught in a quandary: Should they spend Thanksgiving with his parents or hers? Unable to make a firm decision, I've been in this quandary for weeks. When the car broke down the commuter was left in a quandary.

**quarantine**

n. isolation of a person or persons to prevent the spread of disease; confinement

To be sure they didn't bring any contagions back to Earth, the astronauts were put under quarantine when they returned.

**quiescence**

n. state of being at rest or without motion; restfulness; calmness

After a tough day on the shipping dock, one needs quiescence. A period of quiescence is useful to calm the nerves.

**quiescent**

adj. inactive; at rest; peaceful; motionless; quiet

Everyone deserves a day off and should remain quiescent on Sundays. The Bible says that the Lord created the Earth in six days and on the seventh He was quiescent.

**quintessence**

n. pure essence of anything; epitome

This story is the quintessence of American fiction.

**quirk**

n. peculiar behavior; startling twist; strange habit

Nobody's perfect-we all have our quirks. Our vacation went smoothly save for one quirk-a hurricane that came barreling into the coastline as we were preparing to head home. The plot of that movie had so many quirks that it became very hard to follow. Always needing to put the left shoe on first is a peculiar quirk.

**quixotic**

adj. foolishly idealistic; extravagantly chivalrous; impractical

He was popular with the ladies due to his quixotic charm. She had a quixotic view of the world, believing that humans need never suffer.

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**rabid**

adj. infected with rabies; extreme fanatical

The insult made him rabid. Discovering that the dog was rabid, the mail carrier knew he'd have to get a shot.

**rabid**

n. disease affecting animals

He's been a rabid sports fan for as long as I have known him.

**raconteur**

n. person skilled at telling stories

Our questions ranged far and wide and his courtesy and patience turned them into an intriguing trail of discovery which was endlessly fascinating and richly rewarding, for he is also a natural raconteur.

**ramification**

n. outcome of another event; consequence; branch; bough

One of the ramifications of driving fast is getting a speeding ticket.

**rampant**

adj. growing unchecked; widespread; prevailing

Social unrest was rampant because of the lack of food available to the people.

**rampart**

n. defense; shield; embankment

The ramparts were beginning to crumble.

**rampart**

v. to defend; to shield

My favorite towns have to be rampart and necropolis.

**rancid**

adj. having a bad odor; spoiled; decomposed; musty

Left out too long, the meat turned rancid.

**rancor**

n. strong ill will; enmity; bitterness; hatred; resentment

Her rancor for the man was evident in her hateful expression. Sure they had their disagreements, but there was no rancor between them.

**rant**

v. to speak in a loud, pompous manner; to rave

He disputed the bill with the shipper, ranting that he was dealing with thieves.

**rapacious**

adj. using force to take; selfish; greedy; predatory; covetous

Rapacious actions were needed to take the gun from the intruder.

**ratify**

v. to make valid; to confirm; to approve; to sanction; to authorize

The Senate ratified the new law that would prohibit companies from discriminating according to race in their hiring practices.

**rationalize**

v. to offer reasons for; to account for on rational grounds

His daughter attempted to rationalize why she had dropped out of college, but she could not give any good reasons.

**raucous**

adj. harsh; hoarse; gruff; noisy; rowdy

The raucous protesters stayed on the street corner all night, shouting their disdain for the whale killers.

**raze**

v. to scrape or shave off; to obliterate; to tear down completely; to demolish

The plow will raze the ice from the road surface. It must be time to give the cat a manicure; she razed my skin last night. They will raze the old Las Vegas hotel to make room for a USD 2.5 billion gambling palace.

**realm**

n. area; sphere of activity; domain; region

In the realm of health care, the issue of who pays and how is never far from the surface. The bounding islands were added to the realm of the kingdom.

**rebuff**

n. blunt refusal to offered help; rejection; refusal; snub

The rebuff of her aid plan came as a shock.

**rebuttal**

n. refutation; opposition; contradiction

The lawyer's rebuttal to the judge's sentencing was to present more evidence to the case.

**recalcitrant**

adj. stubbornly rebellious; disobedient

The boy became recalcitrant when the curfew was enforced. The recalcitrant youth dyed her hair purple, dropped out of school, and generally worked hard at doing whatever others did not want her to do.

**recession**

n. withdrawal; economic downturn; decline

Oscar's gum recession left him with sensitive teeth. Soaring unemployment in the nation's industrial belt triggered recession.

**recidivism**

n. habitual or chronic relapse of criminal or antisocial offenses

Even after intense therapy the parolee experienced several episodes of recidivism, and was eventually sent back to prison.

**reciprocal**

adj. mutual; having the same relationship to each other; common; joint

Hernando's membership in the Picture of Health Fitness Center gives him reciprocal privileges at 245 health clubs around the U.S. Although his first child was adopted, she had a reciprocal relationship with her father.

**recluse**

adj. solitary; alone

His recluse life seems to make him happy.

**recluse**

n. person who lives secluded; loner; hermit

Howard Hughes, among the most famous and enigmatic figures of the 20th century, ultimately retreated to a life as a recluse.

**recondite**

adj. hard to understand; concealed; deep; obscure; profound

The students were dumbfounded by the recondite topic. Many scientific theories are recondite, and therefore not known at all by the general public.

**rectify**

v. to correct; to adjust; to fix

The service manager rectified the shipping mistake by refunding the customer's money.

**recumbent**

adj. resting; reclining

Suppressing a smile, his wife stepped over the now recumbent form of the knitted dog and went into the kitchen to open a can. Some people thought that with the mitre on his white hair he looked like one of the effigies on the tombs of the prelates which they met recumbent in cathedrals, and fancied that here was a bishop out of the Middle Ages.

**recusant**

adj. disobedient of authority; noncompliant; unsubmitive

Recusant inmates may be denied privileges.

**redolent**

adj. fragrant; sweet-smelling; having the odor of a particular thing; reminiscent of

These mild, mellow coffees have a full flavor and fragrant bouquet. The redolent aroma of the pie tempted everyone. The restaurant was redolent with the smell of spices.

**redundant**

adj. wordy; repetitive; unnecessary; superfluous; plentiful

The redundant lecture of the professor repeated the lesson in the text. Her comments were both redundant and sarcastic. With millions of transactions at stake, the bank built a redundant processing center on a separate power grid.

**refurbish**

v. to make new; to renovate

The Newsomes are refurbishing their old colonial home with the help of an interior designer.

**refute**

v. to challenge; to disprove; to prove false

This bold hypothesis would still be accepted by many anthropologists and historians, and even those who have tried to refute it are still working within its framework. Now individuals and community groups had the facts at their fingertips to refute the placatory statements of the developers and corporate businessmen, and no longer had to rely on instinctive judgments to support their case.

**regal**

adj. royal; grand; majestic

The regal home was lavishly decorated and furnished with European antiques. The well-bred woman behaves in a regal manner.

**reiterate**

v. to say again

Indeed, few annual reports of Liberal organizations missed the opportunity to reiterate the need for free trade, peace, sound finance and a modicum of reform. I should like to reiterate those comments to you now as I believe they remain relevant: 1) Control the duration of play by an ice hockey-type clock to prevent time-wasting. 2) Players to have their names on the back of their shirts.

**relegate**

v. to banish; to put to a lower position; to demote

With Internal Affairs launching an investigation into charges that Officer Wicker had harassed a suspect, he was relegated to desk duty.

**relevant**

adj. of concern; significant; pertinent; related

Asking applicants about their general health is relevant since much of the job requires physical strength.

**relinquish**

v. to let go; to abandon; to surrender; to forsake

House Speaker Jim Wright had to relinquish his position after an ethics investigation undermined his authority.

**remonstrate**

v. to protest; to object to; to prove

The population will remonstrate against the new taxes.

**remorse**

n. guilt; sorrow; regret

The prosecutor argued that the defendant had shown no remorse for his actions.

**renascence**

n. new life; rebirth; revival

The renascence of the band resulted in a new recording contract.

**rend**

v. to rip or pull from; to split with violence; to disturb with a sharp noise; to tear

The kidnapper rent the newborn baby from the arms of its mother as she was leaving the hospital. A freakish water spout rent the fishing boat in half. Every morning, the 5:47 local out of New Brunswick rends the dawn's silence with its air horn.

**render**

v. to deliver; to provide; to give; to depict

The Yorkville First Aid Squad was first on the scene to render assistance.

**renegade**

n. person who abandons something, as a religion, cause or movement; traitor

An attempt by Mr Cristiani to put the Sandinistas in the dock at San Jose is likely to prompt Mr Ortega to raise the human-rights record of the Salvadorean Government, especially the murder on November 16 of six Jesuit priests, probably by a renegade army unit. Benedict Arnold remains one of the most notorious renegades in American history.

**repast**

n. food that is eaten; meal

The repast consisted of cheese, wine, and bread.

**replete**

adj. well supplied; full; brimming; crowded

The kitchen came replete with food and utensils.

**replica**

n. copy; representation; reproduction; duplicate

The equine sculpture was a replica of a Remington.

**reprehend**

v. to reprimand; to find fault with; to admonish; to reprove

Finding the need to reprehend the student's actions, she gave her detention.

**reproach**

v. to blame and thus make feel ashamed; to rebuke; to accuse

The major reproached his troops for not following orders.

**reprobate**

v. to condemn; to reject; to denounce

The teacher will reprobate the actions of the delinquent student. His assertions were reprobated as inappropriate.

**reproof**

n. rebuke; accusation

For all his hard work, all he got was a reproof of his efforts.

**repudiate**

v. to disown; to deny support for; to reject; to cancel; to refuse

The man will repudiate all claims that he was involved in the deal. Although his party supported the bill, this senator repudiated it. The offer was repudiated because of its cost.

**repugnant**

adj. inconsistent; resistant; contradictory; opposed; averse

The repugnant actions of the man made others lose trust in him. Despite their efforts to convince her, she remained repugnant.

**resignation**

n. quitting; submission; abdication

He submitted his resignation because he found a new job. You could see the resignation on his face: Things just weren't working out as he'd expected.

**resilient**

adj. flexible; capable of withstanding stress; buoyant; elastic

The elderly man attributed his resilient health to a good diet and frequent exercise.

**resolution**

n. proposal; promise; determination; decision

Former U.S. Senator George Mitchell journeyed to Ireland to help bring about a peaceful resolution to years of strife.

**resonant**

adj. resounding; re-echoing; reverberating

Beautiful resonant music escaped from the cathedral's windows.

**respite**

n. rest period; temporary delay

The workers talked and drank coffee during the respite. The team was given a respite from the long practice schedule.

**resplendent**

adj. dazzling and shining; gleaming; brilliant; dazzling

Her new diamond was resplendent in the sunshine.

**resurgent**

adj. rising or tending to rise again; experiencing revival

A resurgent wave of enthusiasm erupted from the once quiet crowd.

**reticent**

adj. silent; reserved; shy; self-restraint

The reticent girl played with her building blocks while the other children played tag. It was difficult to get the reticent boy to join the conversation.

**retract**

v. to draw; to take back; to cancel; to annul

Once you say something, it's hard to retract.

**retroaction**

n. reverse action; law which takes effect on a past date

The retroaction of the car sent those standing behind it fleeing. The bill's retroaction stood to save taxpayers an average of USD 500 a head.

**reverent**

adj. respectful; feeling or showing deep love, respect, or awe

The congregation was very reverent of its spiritual leader.

**reverie**

n. an abstracted state of absorption

As their anniversary neared, Lisa fell into a reverie as she recalled all the good times she and Roscoe had had. After spending the morning in reverie, I decided to work in the afternoon.

**revile**

v. to be abusive in speech; to disparage; to deride

It is not appropriate for a teacher to revile a student.

**rhapsodize**

v. to speak; to write in a very enthusiastic manner

Hearing the general rhapsodize about his time as a plebe sent a wave of recognition through the academy grads.

**rhetorical**

adj. having to do with verbal communication; artificial eloquence; bombastic

In posing a rhetorical question, he hoped to get people thinking. The perception that Gary Hart was spouting rhetorical flourishes enabled fellow Democrat Walter Mondale to score debate points by asking, "Where's the beef?"

**ribald**

adj. vulgar; joking; mocking; offensive; crude

Some people find the comedian's ribald act offensive. The ribald story proved an embarrassment to its audience.

**rigor**

n. severity; harshness; strict accuracy

She criticized the planning board's vote with rigor.

**rivet**

v. to secure; to hold firmly, as in eyes; to engross; to fascinate

We can rivet the boat to the dock. She could not look away from the morbid scene; she was riveted to it.

**roseate**

adj. rose-colored; rosy

The roseate sunset faded into the sky.

**rout**

n. noisy or disorderly crowd; retreat; terrible defeat

The rout kept the police busy all morning with crowd control. The Scarlet Knights beat the Fighting Irish in a rout, 56-14.

**rout**

v. to dig up; to force out; to defeat; to drive away

I need to rout the backyard in order to put in the pipes.

**rudimentary**

adj. immature; not fully developed; fundamental

Readers with even rudimentary medical knowledge will be aware that swollen joints, clenching hands and itching or scaling skin are among the baleful symptoms of advanced psoriatic arthropathy. The study tentatively identifies a number of factors which distinguished between teams in social work activities and in rudimentary measures of client outcome.

**ruffian**

n. tough person; hoodlum; hooligan; bully; thug

Contrary to popular opinion, ruffians are nothing new in the city.

**ruminare**

v. to consider carefully; to think through; to ponder; to chew cud

The doctor will ruminare on his diagnosis. Facing a tough decision, he decided to ruminare before making his thoughts known.

**rummage**

v. to search thoroughly; to look for diligently

Determined to find his college yearbook, he rummaged through every box in the garage.

**rustic**

adj. plain and unsophisticated; homely; of or living in the country; provincial

The president enjoyed spending weekends at Camp David, a rustic retreat in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland.

**saga**

n. legend; long story of adventure or heroic deed

The saga of King Arthur and his court has been told for generations.

**sagacious**

adj. wise; clever; shrewd

Many of her friends came to her with their problems because she gave sagacious advice. Whole communities were alienated and impoverished; a large part of the nation was left with a feeling halfway between guilt and unease; and Baldwin's reputation as a statesman of sagacious moderation was badly dented.

**salient**

adj. noticeable; prominent; remarkable

What's salient about the report is its documentation of utter despair in the heartland of the richest nation on Earth. His most salient feature is his nose. His salient bruise will alert his mother to the altercation.

**salubrious**

adj. promoting good health

Salubrious food helps maintain an ideal weight. Exercising frequently and eating healthy foods are salubrious habits.

**salutatory**

adj. of or containing greetings

Two messengers were sent to the new neighbors with a salutatory letter.

**salvage**

v. to rescue from loss; to save from destruction

The family tried to salvage their belongings after their home was destroyed by a tornado.

**sanction**

v. to give encouragement; to authorize; to endorse; to approve; to ratify

The government has sanctioned the meetings as a worthy cause. He did more than tolerate her actions, he sanctioned them.

**sanction**

n. act of giving authoritative permission; approve; blockade; penalty

Before committing troops to war, the president wanted to give the sanctions a chance to work.

**sanguine**

adj. optimistic; cheerful; red; confident

Even when victory seemed impossible, the general remained sanguine. The dress was sanguine with a bright green border stripe. For example, Balanchine in his Four Temperaments (with music by Hindemith) describes the moods of a melancholic, sanguine, phlegmatic and choleric man or woman.

**sapid**

adj. having a pleasant taste; flavorful

Yellow and blue icing covered the sapid pastry.

**sarcasm**

n. ironic; bitter humor designed to wound

The teacher did not appreciate the student's sarcasm and gave him detention.

**sardonic**

adj. having a sarcastic quality; scornful; cynical; derisive

H.L. Mencken was known for his sardonic writings on political figures.

**satire**

n. novel or play that uses humor or irony to expose folly

The new play was a satire that exposed the President's inability to lead the country.

**saturate**

v. to soak thoroughly; to drench

She saturated the sponge with soapy water before she began washing the car.

**saturnine**

adj. gloomy; sluggish

The never-ending rain put everyone in a saturnine mood.

**saunter**

v. to walk at a leisurely pace; to stroll; to meander

The loving couple sauntered down the wooded path.

**savant**

n. person who is intelligent; scholar

The savant accepted his award of excellence.

**savor**

v. to receive pleasure from; to enjoy with appreciation; to dwell on with delight

After several months without a day off, she savored every minute of her week-long vacation.

**scanty**

adj. inadequate; sparse; meager; deficient

The malnutrition was caused by the scanty amount of healthy food eaten each day.

**schism**

n. division in an organized group; separation into opposing parties

When the group could not decide on a plan of action, a schism occurred.

**scourge**

v. to whip severely; to flog; to lash; to chastise

Perhaps the worst scourge is the thought that you might have listened and might have understood if I had managed to tell you what had happened. Certainly it can be concluded that the circumstances of Sisson's early life fuelled his salutary hatreds and helped form the outsider's perspective which now makes him a scourge of the age's insidious orthodoxies.

**scrupulous**

adj. honorable; exact; moral; precise; meticulous

After finding a purse with valuable items inside, the scrupulous Mr. Prendergast returned everything to its owner. A scrupulous cleaning was conducted before the family moved.

**scrutinize**

v. to examine closely; to study; to investigate; to inspect

Even when there are specialist historians, producing approximations to truth which their colleagues test and scrutinize to professional standards, people make home brews from their own lives and knowledge and offer them to their successors. After allowing his son to borrow the family car, the father scrutinized every section for dents.

**scurrilous**

adj. vulgar; crude; obscene

The scurrilous language made the mother twinge.

**sectarian**

adj. to be narrow minded or limited

A sectarian precluded him from listening to the other side.

**sedentary**

adj. characterized by sitting; remaining in one locality; inactive

The sedentary child had not moved after two hours. The old woman who never left her home town has led a sedentary life.

**sedition**

n. revolt; provocation of dissent

The sedition by the guards ended with their being executed for treason.

**sedulous**

adj. working diligently; persistent; diligent; assiduous

The sedulous habits of the team will surely conclude in victory. Only the most sedulous salespeople will succeed.

**seethe**

v. to be violently disturbed; to soak; to rage; to steep

By the time I arrived, she was seething with anger. He seethed at the prospect of losing the business to his conniving uncle.

**sequester**

v. to separate; to segregate; to seclude; to set apart

The jury was sequestered at the local inn.

**serendipity**

n. apparent aptitude for making fortunate discoveries accidentally

Serendipity seemed to follow the lucky winner where ever he went.

**serrated**

adj. having a saw-toothed edge

While camping, the family used a serrated band saw to cut firewood.

**servile**

adj. slavish; groveling; subservient; submissive; subject

He knew they both possessed equal abilities, and yet he was always treated as a servile underling. His servile leadership forced her to take over. The servile nurse did everything the doctor told her to do.

**shady**

adj. disreputable; obscure; indistinct

A shady person would not be trusted with a sensitive secret.

**shoal**

n. large group or crowd

Shoals of grain were stored in the barn.

**shoddy**

adj. of inferior quality; cheap; fake; phony

The state's attorney said many homes, as they were built with shoddy materials, were bound to just blow apart even in winds of 60 or 70 miles per hour. The shoddy homes were blown over in the storm.

**sinuous**

adj. full of curves; twisting and turning

Sinuous mountain roads at night present extra danger at night when it's harder to see the road's edge.

**skeptic**

n. doubter

Even after seeing evidence that his competitor's new engine worked, the engineer remained a skeptic that it was marketable.

**skulk**

v. to move secretly; to sneak about

The thief skulked around the neighborhood hoping to find his next target. They found the boy skulking in the bushes. The woman attempted to skulk away from cleaning the house by hiring a cleaning service.

**slander**

v. to defame; to misrepresent maliciously; to vilify; to malign

Orville said he'd been slandered, and he asked the court who would-or could- give him his name back.

**sloth**

n. disinclination to action or labor; laziness

Employers want to guard against hiring sloths as new employees.

**slothful**

adj. lazy; sluggish; slow

The slothful actions of the player led to his benching.

**slovenly**

adv. sloppy; untidy; careless; unclean

His mother-in-law did not approve of his slovenly manner.

**sodden**

adj. soggy; dull in action as if from alcohol; wet; lumpy; doughy

The flowers were sodden after the rain. The sodden reaction of the man caused the accident.

**sojourn**

v. to stay temporarily

The family will sojourn at their summer home. The guest remained only for a sojourn; she was going to leave in the afternoon.

**solace**

n. hope; comfort during a time of grief; consolation; relief

When her father passed away, she found solace amongst her friends and family.

**solemnity**

n. gravity; sincerity

The church service was full of solemnity. The solemnity of the funeral procession stood in stark contrast to the young children splashing with delight in a nearby pool.

**solicit**

v. to ask; to seek; to try to influence another person to commit an illegal act

The jobless man solicited employment from many factories before he was able to find work.

**soliloquy**

n. talk one has with oneself (esp. on stage)

Imagine T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* performed on stage as a kind of soliloquy! The soliloquy by the man standing alone on the cliff sent a message of regret.

**solubility**

n. that can be solved; that can be dissolved

The solubility of sugar causes it to disappear when put in water.

**somber**

adj. dark and depressing; gloomy; glum; mournful; sad

The sad story had put everyone in a somber mood.

**soporific**

adj. causing sleep; causing drowsiness

The motion of the train, the clickety-click of the rail joints, had a somewhat soporific effect on Mr Wishart and he found himself nodding off. The soporific medication should not be taken when you need to drive.

**sordid**

adj. filthy; base; vile; foul; dirty

The sordid gutters needed to be cleaned after the long, rainy autumn. The criminals thought patterns were so sordid that he was not granted parole.

**sovereign**

adj. superior; independent; self-governing

The most that Europe can hope to achieve, or should aim for, is an expanded economic free trade area made up of sovereign states all contributing to a cultural diversity that is economically stable and ecologically sustainable. As with sovereign governments many of these state enterprises will not directly earn foreign exchange.

**specious**

adj. plausible, but deceptive; apparently, but not actually true; superficially attractive

The jury forewoman said the jury saw through the defense lawyer's specious argument and convicted his client on the weight of the evidence. I was unsure of the meaning of the specious statement.

**spelunker**

n. person who studies caves

The spelunker made a startling discovery in the old mine.

**spendthrift**

n. person who spends money extravagantly

The spendthrift bought two new necklaces and three pairs of shoes.

**splenetic**

adj. marked by hostility; spiteful; irritable; malicious

The splenetic warriors advanced with no thought of what they were destroying.

**sporadic**

adj. rarely occurring or appearing; intermittent; occasional; irregular; infrequent

In the desert there is usually only sporadic rainfall. Infection commonly occurs in children and infants, and the clinical progression of the disease is similar to syphilis when it is seen in the sporadic form; the late manifestations, however, tend to be seen at a much younger age.

**spurious**

adj. not genuine; false; bogus; phony; artificial

Spurious claims by the importer hid the fact that prison labor had been used in the garments' fabrication. The newspaper was notorious for spurious information.

**spurn**

v. to push away; to repel; to reject

It emphasizes the huge element of mystery and uncertainty in voters' behavior, which makes them spurn the most fluent campaigns and ignore the gaffes and trifles which dominate television news bulletins and front pages. The woman spurned the advances of her suitor, saying she wasn't ready for a commitment.

**spurn**

n. strong rejection; denigrating attitude

Unlucky enough to be the ninth telemarketer to call Jane that evening, he caught her spurn.

**squalid**

adj. filthy; wretched (from squalor); dirty; miserable

The lack of sanitation piping caused squalid conditions. He makes good money, but I would never want to work in those squalid crawl spaces.

**stagnant**

adj. motionless; uncirculating; still; inactive

The stagnant water in the puddle became infested with mosquitoes.

**staid**

adj. marked by self-control; settled; sober

The horse was staid as it entered the stable.

**stamina**

n. endurance

Anybody who can finish the New York Marathon has lots of stamina.

**stanch**

v. to stop; to check the flow of; to staunch

It is necessary to stanch the bleeding from the wound as soon as possible.

**stanza**

n. group of lines in a poem having a definite pattern

The poet uses an odd simile in the second stanza of the poem.

**static**

adj. inactive; changeless; stationary; motionless

The view while riding in the train across the endless, flat landscape remained static for days. The static water of the lake reflected the image of the trees.

**steadfast**

adj. loyal; consistent; persistent

The secret service agents are steadfast to their oath to protect the president.

**stigma**

n. mark of disgrace; stain

The "F" on his transcript is a stigma on his record.

**stigmatize**

v. to characterize; to make as disgraceful

The gross error will stigmatize the worker as careless.

**stipend**

n. payment for work done; allowance; salary

She receives a monthly stipend for her help with the project. The bank will pay the woman a stipend of a hundred dollars a week.

**stoic**

adj. detached; unruffled; calm; austere indifference to joy, grief, pleasure or pain

The soldier had been in week after week of fierce battle; nonetheless, he remained stoic. With stoic obedience the child sat quietly on the chair.

**stoke**

v. to feed fuel to, especially a fire

With the last embers dying, he stoked the fire one more time.

**stolid**

adj. showing little emotion; stupid; impassive

With a stolid expression, the man walked away from the confrontation.

**striated**

adj. having lines or grooves

The striated road was ready for traffic.

**stridency**

n. shrillness or harshness of sound

The stridency of the whistle hurt the dog's ears.

**strident**

adj. creaking; harsh; grating

Her strident voice hampered her chances of getting the announcer position.

**stupor**

n. stunned or bewildered condition; apathy; shock; daze

He was in a stupor after being hit on the head.

**stymie**

v. to hinder; to obstruct; to impede

Large amounts of snowfall will stymie the rescue effort.

**suave**

adj. effortlessly gracious; courteous; smooth; sophisticated

She was a suave negotiator, always getting what she wanted without anyone feeling they'd lost anything. The elegant woman entered the room with a suave walk.

**subjugate**

v. to dominate; to enslave; to conquer

The bully will attempt to subjugate the remainder of the class. The royal family subjugated the peasants, making them perform hard labor.

**subliminal**

adj. below the level of consciousness

Critics of advertising say that it's loaded with subliminal messages.

**subsidiary**

adj. giving a service; being in a subordinate position; supplementary; auxiliary

The function of the subsidiary was to oversee the bank's commercial loans. He acknowledged the importance of the issue, but called it subsidiary to a host of other concerns.

**substantive**

adj. existing independently of others; a large quantity

The only company not acquired in the merger retained its substantive existence. A substantive amount of money will be needed to fund the project.

**subsume**

v. to include within a larger group

The AFL was subsumed by the NFL in the 1960s.

**subtlety**

n. propensity of understatement; so slight as to be barely noticeable; elusiveness

There was no subtlety in the protest; each person carried a sign and yelled for civil rights. With great subtlety we slipped away from the boring party.

**succinct**

adj. clearly stated; characterized by conciseness; short and to the point

The speech was succinct yet emotional. Usually, the most succinct definition is the right one. Articles in USA Today are so succinct that some observers nicknamed the newspaper "McPaper."

**succor**

n. aid; assistance; help

Succor was given to the fire victim in the form of clothes and temporary shelter.

**succumb**

v. to give in; to yield; to collapse; to surrender

When dieting, it is difficult not to succumb to temptation.

**suffuse**

v. to overspread

The rain will suffuse the spilled sand around the patio.

**sumptuous**

adj. involving great expense; luxurious

A sumptuous spread of meats, vegetables, soups and breads was prepared for the guests.

**sunder**

v. to break; to split in two; to divide

The Civil War threatened to sunder the United States. Management seeks to sunder the workers' connections to the union.

**sundry**

adj. various; miscellaneous; separate; distinct

This store sells many sundry novelty items. Sundry items may be purchased as a single item.

**superficial**

adj. on the surface; narrow minded; lacking depth

The victim had two stab wounds, but luckily were only superficial.

**superfluous**

adj. unnecessary; extra; redundant

Although the designer considered the piece superfluous, the woman wanted the extra chair in her bedroom. Only the first sentence is necessary; all of these details are superfluous. After they finished their seven-course meal, a large dessert seemed superfluous.

**superlative**

adj. of the highest kind or degree

The Golden Gate Bridge is a superlative example of civil engineering.

**supplant**

v. to take the place of; to usurp

Can you supplant my position if I cannot play?

**suppliant**

adj. asking earnestly and submissively

Her suppliant request of wanting to know the name of the man was met with a laugh.

**suppress**

v. to bring to an end; to hold back; to stop by force; to crush

The illegal aliens were suppressed by the border patrol.

**surfeit**

v. to indulge excessively; to gorge

The teenagers were warned not to surfeit at the party.

**surfeit**

n. overindulgence

The result of her surfeit was a week of regret.

**surmise**

n. guess; assumption; supposition

Was my surmise correct?

**surmise**

v. to guess; to presume; to assume; to think; to suppose

I surmise that he discovered that not all people behave honorably. He surmised how the play would end before the second act began.

**surpass**

v. to go beyond; to excel; to exceed

After recovering from a serious illness, the boy surpassed the doctor's expectations by leaving the hospital two days early.

**surreptitious**

adj. done secretly; clandestine

The surreptitious maneuvers gave the advancing army an advantage.

**susceptible**

adj. easily imposed; inclined; prone; vulnerable

She gets an annual flu shot since she is susceptible to becoming ill.

**swathe**

v. to wrap around something; to envelop; to enclose

Soft blankets swathe the new born baby.

**sycophant**

n. flatterer

Rodolfo honed his skills as a sycophant, hoping it would get him into Sylvia's good graces. The sycophant is known for attending many parties.

**syllogism**

n. reasoning in order from general to particular

The syllogism went from fish to guppies.

**symmetry**

n. correspondence of parts; harmony

The roman columns give the building a symmetry.

**synthetic**

adj. not real; rather artificial

The synthetic skin was made of a thin rubber.

**table**

n. systematic list of details; chart

The train schedule was set up as a table.

**tacit**

adj. not voiced or expressed; communicated wordlessly

The National Security Agency aide argued, in effect, that he had received the president's tacit approval for the arms-for-hostages deal.

**taciturn**

adj. inclined to silence; speaking little; dour; stern

The man was so taciturn it was forgotten that he was there.

**tantalize**

v. to tempt; to torment

The desserts were tantalizing, but he was on a diet.

**tarry**

v. to go; to move slowly; to delay

She tarried too long, and therefore missed her train.

**taut**

adj. stretched tightly; organized; tense; nervous

They knew a fish was biting, because the line suddenly became taut.

**tawdry**

adj. tastelessly ornamented; cheap

The shop was full of tawdry jewelry.

**tedious**

adj. wearisome; tiresome; dreary

Cleaning the house is a tedious chore for some people. With so many new safety precautions instituted, flying has become a tedious affair.

**teem**

v. to be stocked to overflowing; to pour out; to empty

The new plant seemed to be teeming with insects. It is healthier to teem the grease from the broth before serving it.

**temerity**

n. foolhardiness; impetuosity; rashness; boldness

For the first few days we kept the family shut into the cow-shed, to protect them from the cats; but I really think that if any cat had had the temerity to put in an attack, the hen would have chased it half-way to Gloucester. Many, it is true, shouted enthusiastically that we were right and to be congratulated, but many others were up in arms at our intrepid temerity.

**temper**

v. to bring to the proper condition by treatment; to soften; to harden

She drew a hot bath, but then realized she'd have to temper it with a little cool water or end up scalded. The craftsman tempered the steel before being able to twist it to form a table leg.

**temperament**

n. one's customary frame of mind; disposition; nature; character

The girl's temperament is usually very calm.

**tenacious**

adj. holding; persistent; consistent

With a tenacious grip, the man was finally able to pull the nail from the wall. After his tenacious pleas, she finally conceded. His hold on his dreams is as tenacious as anyone I know.

**tenet**

n. principle accepted as authoritative; belief

The Conservative Government got into its stride that this tenet was raised from aspirational status to a specific directive that InterCity must operate as a self-financing business.

**tensile**

adj. undergoing or exerting tension

The pipeline was capable of flexing to withstand the tremendous tensile strain that might accompany an seismic movement.

**tentative**

adj. not confirmed; indefinite; temporary; experimental

Not knowing if he'd be able to get the days off, Al went ahead anyway and made tentative vacation plans with his pal.

**tenuous**

adj. thin; slim; delicate; weak; sparse

The hurricane force winds ripped the tenuous branches from the tree. The spectators panicked as they watched the cement block dangle from one tenuous piece of twine.

**tepid**

adj. lacking warmth or interest; lukewarm

The tepid bath water was perfect for relaxing after a long day.

**termagant**

n. constantly quarrelsome woman

Agreement with the termagant was an impossibility.

**terrestrial**

adj. pertaining to the earth

Deer are terrestrial animals; fish are aquatic.

**terse**

adj. concise; abrupt; succinct; curt

She believed in getting to the point, so she always gave terse answers. The terse speech contained only the essential comments.

**tether**

n. range or limit of one's abilities; rope or chain used to keep a boat from drifting or an animal from wandering

My tether of playing basketball is shooting air balls. The bulldog was tethered to his doghouse.

**thrall**

n. slave

The worker was treated like a thrall, having to work many hours of overtime.

**thrifty**

adj. frugal; careful with money; economizing

Being thrifty, the woman would not purchase the item without a coupon. The thrifty couple saved money by taking the bus to work.

**throe**

n. spasm; pang; agony; suffering

A particularly violent throe knocked her off her feet. The wounded soldier squirmed in throes of agony.

**thwart**

v. to prevent from accomplishing a purpose; to frustrate; to foil

Their attempt to take over the country was thwarted by the palace guard.

**timbre**

n. the quality of sound which distinguishes one from another

The timbre of guitar music is different from that of piano music.

**timorous**

adj. lacking courage; timid

The timorous child hid behind his parents. Hillary came to accept him as a timorous soul who needed succor.

**torpid**

adj. being dormant; slow; sluggish; inert; apathetic

When we came upon the hibernating bear, it was in a torpid state. A torpid animal does not act with energy. The old, torpid dog spent most of his time sleeping.

**tortuous**

adj. full of twists and turns; not straight forward; possibly deceitful

The suspect confessed after becoming confused by the tortuous questioning of the captain.

**toxic**

adj. poisonous; noxious

It's best to store cleansing solutions out of children's reach because of their toxic contents.

**tractable**

adj. easily managed; obedient

The boat was so lightweight it was tractable by one person. Having a tractable staff made her job a lot easier.

**traduce**

v. to defame; to slander

His actions traduced his reputation.

**tranquillity**

n. peace; stillness; harmony; calmness

The tranquillity of the tropical island was reflected in its calm blue waters and warm sunny climate.

**transmutation**

n. changed form; alternation; change of condition

Somewhere in the network's entertainment division, the show underwent a transmutation from a half-hour sitcom into an hour-long drama.

**transmute**

v. to transform

Decorators transmute ordinary homes into interesting showcases.

**transpire**

v. to take place; to come about; to occur

With all that's transpired today, I'm exhausted.

**traumatic**

adj. causing a violent injury

It was a traumatic accident, leaving the driver with a broken vertebra, a smashed wrist, and a concussion.

**travail**

n. very hard work; intense pain or agony; toil

The farmer was tired after the travail of plowing the fields.  
The analgesic finally ended her travail.

**trek**

v. to make a journey; to migrate

They had to trek through the dense forest to reach the nearest village.

**trenchant**

adj. cutting; keen or incisive words; incisive; forceful

Without a trenchant tool, they would have to break the branches rather than cut them. The trenchant words hurt the man deeply.

**trepidation**

n. apprehension; uneasiness

Her long absence caused more than a little trepidation.  
With great trepidation, the boy entered the water for the first time.

**tribunal**

n. place of judgement; court of justice

The tribunal heard the case of the burglary.

**tribute**

n. expression of admiration; gift; levy; compliment

Her performance was a tribute to her retiring teacher.

**trite**

adj. commonplace; overused; stale

The committee was looking for something new, not the same trite ideas. Eating tomato salads became trite after their excessive popularity.

**trivial**

adj. unimportant; small; worthless; minor

Although her mother felt otherwise, she considered her dish washing chore trivial.

**troth**

n. belief; faith; fidelity

The couple pledged troth to each other through their vows.

**truculent**

adj. fierce; savage; cruel; destructive; harsh; barbaric

Truculent fighting broke out in the war-torn country. The truculent beast approached the crowd with wild eyes and sharpened claws.

**truncate**

v. to shorten by cutting; to abridge

With the football game running over, the show scheduled to follow it had to be truncated.

**tumid**

adj. swollen; pompous; puffy

The tumid river washed away the homes built on the shore. After he earned his high-school diploma, he became insufferably tumid. The tumid balloon floated, but the empty one did not.

**tumult**

n. noisy commotion; disturbance; confusion; riot

The tumult was caused by two boys wanting the same toy. After the tumult, I found it difficult to resume my studies.

**turbid**

adj. thick and dense; cloudy; confused; muddy; murky

The turbid green waters of the lake prevented them from seeing the bottom.

**turbulence**

n. condition of being physically agitated; disturbance

Everyone on the plane had to fasten their seat belts as the plane entered an area of turbulence.

**turmoil**

n. unrest; agitation; commotion; tumult; uproar

Before the country recovered after the war, they experienced a time of great turmoil.

**turpitude**

n. vileness; wickedness

The turpitude of the action caused a rage among the people.

**tutelage**

n. condition of being under a guardian or a tutor; guardianship

Being under the tutelage of a master musician is a great honor.

**tycoon**

n. wealthy leader

The business tycoon prepared to buy his fifteenth company.

**tyranny**

n. absolute power; autocracy

The people were upset because they had no voice in the government that the king ran as a tyranny.

**ubiquitous**

adj. omnipresent; present everywhere

A ubiquitous spirit followed the man wherever he went.  
Water may seem ubiquitous, until a drought comes along.

**ulterior**

adj. buried; concealed; undisclosed; hidden

She was usually very selfish, so when she came bearing gifts he suspected that she had ulterior motives. My ulterior concerns are more important than my immediate ones. The man's ulterior motive was to spy on the lab, though he said he wanted a job.

**umbrage**

n. offense; resentment; shade

The candidate took umbrage at the remark of his opponent.

**unalloyed**

adj. pure; of high quality

An unalloyed chain is of greater value than a piece of costume jewelry.

**uncanny**

adj. of a strange nature; weird; mysterious

That two people could be so alike was uncanny.

**uncouth**

adj. uncultured; crude; clumsy

The social club would not accept an uncouth individual.

**undermine**

v. to weaken; to often through subtle means; to subvert; to sabotage

The attempts to undermine the merger were unsuccessful. The supervisor undermined the director's power and began controlling the staff.

**unequivocal**

adj. clear and unambiguous; conclusive

The 50-0 vote against the bill was an unequivocal statement against the measure. His response was unequivocal, which seemed unusual for a politician.

**unfeigned**

adj. genuine; real; sincere

Her unfeigned reaction of surprise meant she had not expected the party.

**ungainly**

adj. clumsy and unattractive; awkward

The ungainly man knocked over the plant stand.

**uniform**

adj. never changing; always with the same standard; alike; similar; even

The marching band moved in uniform across the field. Patrons of fast-food chains say they like the idea of a uniform menu wherever they go.

**unique**

adj. without equal; incomparable; matchless

The jeweler assured him that the doubloon was unique, as it was part of the long lost treasure of the Atocha.

**universal**

adj. concerning everyone; existing everywhere; comprehensive; worldwide

Pollution does not affect just one country or state- it's a universal problem.

**unobtrusive**

adj. out of the way; remaining quietly in the background; inconspicuous

The shy man found an unobtrusive seat in the far corner of the room. It was easy to miss the unobtrusive plaque above the fireplace.

**unprecedented**

adj. unheard of; exceptional; unparalleled

Weeks of intense heat created unprecedented power demands, which the utilities were hard pressed to meet.

**unpretentious**

adj. simple; plain; modest

He was an unpretentious farmer: An old John Deere and a beat-up Ford pick-up were all he needed to get the job done.

**unruly**

adj. not submitting to discipline; rebellious; disobedient; unmanageable

The unruly boys had to be removed from the concert hall.

**untoward**

adj. improper; unfortunate; unexpected

Asking guests to bring their own food would be an untoward request. All of their friends expressed sympathy about their untoward separation.

**unwonted**

adj. unusual; rare; uncommon

The unwonted raise would be the only one received for a few years. The changed migratory habits of the Canada geese, though unwonted, is unwanted because of the mess they make.

**upshot**

n. final act or result; effect; consequence

The upshot of the debate was that the bill would be released to the floor.

**urbane**

adj. cultured; suave; courteous; polite

The gala concert and dinner dance was attended by the most urbane individuals. The English businessman was described by his peers as witty and urbane.

**usurpation**

n. art of taking something for oneself; seizure

During the war, the usurpation of the country forced an entirely new culture on the natives.

**usury**

n. lending of money with an excessively high interest rate

An interest rate 30 points above the prime rate would be considered usury in the United States. Loan sharks frequently practice usury, but their debtors usually have little choice but to keep quiet and pay up.

**utopia**

n. imaginary land with perfect social and political systems

Voltaire wrote of a utopia where the streets were paved with gold.

**waft**

v. to move gently by wind; to breeze; to carry in the air

The smoke wafted out of the chimney.

**waive**

v. to give up; to put off until later

I will waive my rights to have a lawyer present because I don't think I need one. As hard as he tried, he could only waive his responsibility for so long.

**wan**

adj. lacking color; sickly pale; exhausted

Her face became wan at the sight of blood.

**wane**

v. to gradually become less; to grow dim; to decline; to subside; to diminish

After time, interest in the show will wane and it will no longer be as popular. The full moon waned until it was nothing but a sliver in the sky.

**wanton**

adj. unmanageable; unjustifiably malicious; immoral

My wanton hunger must be satiated. With wanton aggression, the army attacked the defenseless village. It is hard to lose weight when one has a wanton desire for sweets.

**warrant**

v. to justify; to authorize; to permit; to entitle; to empower; to sanction

The police official warranted the arrest of the suspect once enough proof had been found.

**welter**

n. confused mass; turmoil; chaos

When the emergency alarm sounded, a welter of shivering office workers formed in the street as people evacuated the site. The welter moved from street to street to escape the fire.

**wheedle**

v. to influence; to persuade; to coax

The crook may attempt to wheedle the money from the bank. He tried hard to wheedle his father into buying him a car.

**whet**

v. to sharpen by rubbing; to stimulate; to awaken

Before carving the turkey, you must whet the blade. The smell of cooking food has whet my appetite. The smell of dinner cooking whetted her appetite.

**whimsical**

adj. fanciful; amusing; capricious

Strolling down Disney World's Main Street is bound to put child and grown-up alike in a whimsical mood. After announcing a determination to play serve-and-volley, whatever the event, the ultimate professional then proceeded to work chiefly from the baseline for five sets to defeat that whimsical artist Miloslav Mecir in the final of the Stuttgart Classic exhibition tournament here on Saturday.

**wily**

adj. concealing; sly; cunning; deceptive; tricky

The wily explanation was meant to confuse the investigator.

**winsome**

adj. charming; sweetly attractive; handsome

His winsome words moved the crowd to love him even more.

**wither**

v. to wilt; to shrivel; to humiliate; to cut down; to degenerate; to fade

The plant withered slowly since it received little light and little water.

**wizened**

adj. shriveled; withered; shrunken

The wizened face of the old man was covered by his hat.

**wooden**

adj. expressionless; dull; inflexible; stiff; blunt

The wooden expression of the man made him look like a statue.

**workaday**

adj. commonplace; routine; regular; daily

The workaday meal was not exciting to the world class chef.

**wrath**

n. violent or unrestrained anger; fury; rage

Do not trespass on his property or you will have to deal with his wrath.

**wreak**

v. to give vent; to inflict; to perform

The dragon will wreak havoc upon the countryside.

**wrest**

v. to pull; to force away by a violent twisting; to kink

The warriors wrest the power from the king.

**wretched**

adj. miserable; unhappy; causing distress; pitiable; vile

Brought up in an orphanage, Annie led a wretched existence. The continual rain made for a wretched vacation.

**wry**

adj. mocking; cynical; crooked; askew

He has a wry sense of humor which sometimes hurts people's feelings.

**xenophobia**

n. fear of foreigners or strangers

Xenophobia kept the townspeople from encouraging any immigrants to move into the neighborhood.

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**yoke**

n. harness; collar; bond; connection

The jockey led her horse by the yoke around its neck and face.

**yore**

n. former period of time

When he sees his childhood friends, they speak about the days of yore.

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**zealot**

n. believer; enthusiast; fan; radical

Stockman was obviously a key figure; a supply-side zealot with an impressive grasp of the complexities of the budgetary process, he dazzled both colleagues and adversaries. To judge from what little evidence survives, there seems to have been a strong dynastic element involved in Zealot leadership.

**zenith**

n. point directly overhead in the sky; highest point; climax

The astronomer pointed her telescope straight up toward the zenith. The Broncos seemed to be at the zenith of their power just as their rivals on the turf were flagging. The sun will reach its zenith at noon. The zenith of her career occurred during her time as chairperson.

**zephyr**

n. gentle wind; breeze; lightweight fabric

It was a beautiful day, with a zephyr blowing in from the sea. The zephyr blew the boat slowly across the lake.