

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.

abash

v. to lose self-confidence; to confuse; to put to shame; to disconcert; to embarrass

There was no bewilderment or imbecility about the face that looked at him; rather there was a highness, almost an arrogance, in it which abashed him.

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.

abet

v. to encourage; to support

The law of complicity enables the conviction of people who aid and abet others to commit offenses, and spreads a fairly wide net in doing so.

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.

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.

academic

adj. describing school and university activities; educated; scholastic

It's hard to strike a balance when it comes to measuring your child's academic ability and achievement.

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.

accelerate

v. to quicken; to speed up; to cause to move faster

Nature is a precarious system, likely to accelerate to catastrophe if tampered with, is one extreme view.

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.

accord

n. agreement; harmony; settlement

Now, faced with the Anglo-Irish accord, the three unionist leaders were again united and Paisley and Molyneaux were working the main street of Bangor to boost Kilfedder's support.

acrimonious

adj. sharp or harsh in language or temper; rancorous; bitter; caustic

The dispute between Abbey and Lloyds appeared increasingly acrimonious yesterday. Mr Kinnock also sprang a surprise by restoring Ms Clare Short to the front bench less than a year after she resigned as spokeswoman on Employment in an acrimonious row with Mr Kinnock over the party's stance on the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

acumen

n. keenness of mind; insight; astuteness; shrewdness

She had no workshop, nobody to help her and no business acumen. A striking feature of the campaign is the firm grasp voters seem to have of the main issues, and the shrewdness and acumen they show in arguing not only for one side or the other but for all sides at once.

admonish

v. to warn; to find fault; to reprove; to scold

In those days, clergy were still quite powerful figures in the community and would not hesitate to admonish those breaking either the Sabbath or Good Friday.

admonition

n. reproof; warning; reproof

A good parent does not let his or her child do anything; there have to be proper guidelines, firm but loving admonition at times and clear but gentle encouragement.

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.

adversity

n. hardship; suffering; misfortune; crisis

Practice, then, is not the mindless repetition of difficult movements, although repetition and the overcoming of adversity may be present in any well-planned practice schedule.

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.

affluent

adj. prosperous; flourishing; copious; rich; abundant; wealthy

Here this very affluent neighborhood spreads out southwards and westwards from the Mont Royale, after which the city is named. They were good chairs, upholstered and cared for, not the uncomfortable dining seats with hard backs a less affluent hostess would be obliged to offer latecomers.

aggression

n. offensive and hostile attitude; attack; forceful behavior

When she meets other animals, walk on and ignore her — as she is timid of strange people, I think this will overrule her aggression towards a strange dog, and she will catch up very quickly.

aggressive

adj. attacking; offensive; hostile; forceful; bold

However, the approaches to its main executives only came out under aggressive press questioning of Mr Gatward after yesterday's meeting which a handful of shareholders attended.

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.

alienate

v. to estrange; to isolate; to requisition; to confiscate

Widespread surveillance threatens to alienate the public. Following his ejection from Kidderminster, the Bishop, the deans and many of the curates had preached long and bitter sermons against Richard Baxter to alienate the people from him.

allay

v. to calm; to lessen in severity; to mollify; to relieve

Parliamentary intervention was necessary, partly to allay friction between the established church and Nonconformists, and partly to ensure that cemetery space was allotted at minimum cost to the poor.

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.

ambiguous

adj. not clear; uncertain; vague

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

amenable

adj. obedient; willing to submit; accountable; agreeable; responsible

Many Germans express skepticism about how amenable to reform the hardline regime can be. This time the District Council was less amenable: the March meeting rejected the new fees, while promising to meet the higher remittances required by the District.

amiable

adj. friendly; genial; pleasant

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

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.

analogous

adj. similar; parallel; comparable

We were able to find the age of the toads in a way analogous to that used for aging trees; by taking thin sections of bone from a toe of the victims of road casualties.

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.

anarchy

n. state of confusion or lawlessness

Bad films emerge from creative anarchy which brings out the weaknesses of those involved. Luther took fright at the anarchy he had loosed but could do little to prevent it, even when he threw his weight behind the German princes in their crushing of revolutionary movements.

animus

n. feeling of hatred; resentment; animosity; hostility

Because the nation is seen as only partially liberated, and particularly by the membership of the largest party Fianna Fail, the animus of the national-popular consciousness is focused on this issue, to the detriment of class-based politics. From a different position, independently arrived at and much less troubling, the animus was to be shared lifelong by Robert Graves.

annals

n. historical records; archives; chronicles

The dualistic ambiance in literature has long been influential, but has remained controversial, and it is both influential and controversial in these annals of the House of Roth. Fact, in this instance, is far stranger and more profoundly disquieting than anything in the annals of fiction.

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.

anthology

n. collection of choice literary works; compilation

Their anthology, like Grigson's, is valuable in that it steps outside the ordinary canon of eighteenth century verse to recover poets whose works bear consideration.

antithesis

n. contrast; direct opposite

I do not mean being reactionary, simply going back to a past state of affairs, I mean reaction as the antithesis of action. It was the community in its purest form, the antithesis to the divisive individualism of capitalism.

antithetical

adj. opposed; contrary

Force is indeed antithetical to its nature at least until its non-coercive authority has been generally accepted in a community.

apathetic

adj. indifferent; lethargic

An individual who is passive, utterly apathetic and withdrawn from community life is no true citizen. Aids is now on the downward trajectory of fashionable worries, barely able to keep its head above the surface of apathetic extinction.

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.

apprehend

v. to catch; to anticipate; to arrest; to understand; to conceive

Roses and orchids are too obviously beautiful, and so they lack this remnant of grace: maybe, if there is any harmony left for us to discover, maybe we shall as soon apprehend it in dog shit or an old man's spittle, sizzling on the grate.

apprehensive

adj. fearful; aware; conscious; worried; concerned

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

apprise

v. to inform; to brief; to notify

For I have no doubt that, had this been the case, the great American artist, given the purity of his motivation, would have had the courtesy to apprise the Italian artist of his project.

approbation

n. approval; praise; sanction; assent; consent

Certainly, Jacques passed on Green's approbation of Barker's attitude to Hampden Jackson and Douglas-Smith a few days after the late February meeting. Fortunately for the Government, this short debate in the House of Lords seems to have attracted little attention from the press, and it continued to receive general approbation for the exhibition, with the relevance of the competition remaining largely unquestioned.

apt

adj. likely; inclined or disposed; fit; suitable; skillful

One research scientist, a friend of mine said that the setting up of a particularly apt experiment has lead him to a sense of the beautiful. She was apt to confuse the past with the present, talking of events that had happened forty or fifty years ago as though they had happened only the day before.

aptitude

n. skill; talent; ability

In view of the importance of language in education, the authors also suggest that the BPVT might be used to assess scholastic aptitude, although it seems unwise to rely solely on one test for this purpose.

aptness

n. suitability; ability

Unlikely as it may seem now, it was Evelyn Waugh who came to Wilson's defense and acknowledged the brilliance and aptness of the book's main conceit, which — given the turn of events in Eastern and Central Europe — is apropos once more.

arbiter

n. person who is authorized to judge or decide

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

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.

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.

aristocracy

n. government by the best people; privileged class

Horse-racing, a sport that had largely remained in the hands of the aristocracy and which was the object of criticism from bourgeois ideologues and socialists alike, grew rapidly in popularity.

armistice

n. temporary suspension of hostilities; truce; cease fire

During the Second World War the island was invaded by the Axis powers and, after Marshal Badoglio's armistice with the Allies in September 1943, thousands of Italians were killed and captured by the Germans.

artful

adj. sly; crafty; skillful; clever; shrewd

This is an artful way of congratulating Charles, while at the same time unveiling changes in Business's presentation. He may be an artful dodger but he's never a bore.

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.

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.

asseverate

v. to declare positively; to confirm; to affirm

Mr. Vidal asseverates that McVeigh is 'very, very bright.' He writes with 'perfect' spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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.

asylum

n. place offering shelter and retreat; refuge

Other cases are known to Amnesty International, where asylum seekers traveling without valid travel documents have been prevented by airline personnel, sometimes with the knowledge of Immigration Officers, from applying for political asylum in this country. It was not until 1960 that the gargantuan task of demolishing the attached asylum was undertaken and Forston Manor returned to its original self as though nothing had happened.

atheist

n. person who denies that God exists

On top of all this was the constant need to defend his religion against a clever elder brother who was an atheist. But, although a professed and conforming Anglican, he was often reviled as an atheist. Yeats was a complete atheist — he didn't believe in anything.

attribute

n. inherent quality; characteristic

This is defined as a condition in which the responsibility for housework is felt as a feminine, and therefore a personal attribute, normally as a result of a childhood identification with the mother as role model.

attribute

v. to assign; to credit with; to ascribe to

I could only attribute my captors' sudden change of attitude to the fact that they were pleased to be getting rid of me.

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.

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.

authentic

adj. real; genuine; trustworthy; reliable

An authentic diamond will cut glass.

autocratic

adj. despotic; dictatorial

The old fears of Russia's autocratic, ultra-centralized state were surely right. More specific economic policies, which have been widely discussed in recent years, fit within this tendency towards an autocratic state.

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.

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.

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.

bane

n. destruction; poison; misfortune

The till was now 20 deep with impatient customers clutching their coffee pots and blenders — and then I discovered the real bane of the shop assistant's life: The Hagglers.

baneful

adj. deadly; causing distress or death; destructive

Not wearing a seat belt could be baneful.

banter

n. conversation which is amusing and not serious; tease; joke

Throughout, his banter came as thick and fast as softshelled crab, only halting as he paused to take a slurp from his Dixie Beer or to wipe the steam off the camera lens.

baton

n. stick; staff; wand

Radio transmitters in the baton and a surrounding set of receivers track the position and speed of the baton. After this a section of the crowd marched to the Guildhall, from where they were driven back up Shipquay Street towards the Diamond, where two baton charges were needed to disperse them.

belie

v. to give a false idea of; to camouflage; to hide

The eight-story office is being sold to the Japanese group, Kumagai, for a price which appears to belie the downturn in London's commercial property market.

bellicose

adj. quarrelsome; warlike

The bellicose guest would not be invited back again.

belligerent

adj. engaged in war; hostile; aggressive

The Ancient Britons surged forward and began forming themselves into lines, Elinor in front as Boudicca in a pretend chariot and Otley as Venutius, the belligerent Brit, consort of our Brigantian Queen Cartimandua.

benevolent

adj. kind; generous

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

bereave

v. to deprive or leave desolate by loss; to suffer loss

From 1689 a new form of service was established for that day, thanking God for discovering 'the snares of death that were laid for us' in 1605, and likewise upon this day 'for bringing King William' safely into this Kingdom, to preserve us from the late attempts of our enemies to bereave us of our religion and laws'.

besmirch

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

The soot from the chimney will besmirch clean curtains.

biased

adj. prejudiced; influenced; not neutral

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

bibliophile

n. lover of books; book collector

In Washington, the trend-setting Crown bookstores, sited in numerous malls, all offer deep discounts, although for sheer pleasure Bridge Street Books in Georgetown is the ultimate spot for a bibliophile.

bizarre

adj. queer; unusual in appearance; strange; outlandish

Even then, they can lose the post for the most bizarre reasons; Downing Street myth has it that Richard Cobb failed on his first attempt to get the Oxford Chair of Modern History because he wore bicycle clips throughout his interview.

bland

adj. gentle; polite; agreeable; pleasant; kind; boring; apathetic

This cool response almost certainly reflects legal caution, but also a bland faith in the regulatory system.

blandishment

n. flattering speech or act; persuasion

Edward came to Corfe from a hunt, and while his attendants were seeing to the dogs she allured him to her with female blandishment and made him lean forward.

blemish

n. disfigurement; defect; flaw; fault

It is rare for an instrument to prove objectionable to the Houses on any of these grounds and the vast majority of those to which the committee draws attention are innocent of serious blemish. He was a handsome man, with neat geometrical features, but it was this mysterious blemish which, I couldn't help thinking, was the secret of his success with women.

blemish

v. to scar; to spoil; to stain; to flaw; to impair; to deface

But two German occupations last century didn't blemish Brussels, with its splendid medieval ramparts and its incomparable Art Nouveau treasures.

blight

v. to ruin; to decay; to destroy

Look, I don't want to blight the whole thing before we start, but suppose we fail?

blithe

adj. happy; cheery; merry; carefree

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

bog

n. swamp; marshland; wet spongy ground

According to the society, water voles, otters, redshank, snipe and lapwing and wetland plants such as marsh orchid and bog pimpernel had declined as a result of over-abstraction and drainage over many years.

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.

boorish

adj. unrefined in speech or manners; loutish; ill-bred; uncivilized; coarse

With the exception of the boorish bleachers at Yankee Stadium, baseball crowds retain an innocence reminiscent of county cricket before the beer-tent raucousness of the one-day game became fashionable.

bucolic

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

The bucolic setting inspired the artist.

buffoon

n. clown; joker; fool; ludicrous figure

He regarded the chaplain as a buffoon though a dedicated buffoon. Hitchcock sets an innocent woman against Charles Laughton's squire, a criminal buffoon, and a gang of smugglers, but there is never any real conflict, and the ending is almost comic.

bulwark

n. embankment used as a fortification; an idea; object serving as a protection

She wanted him to have contact with other Irish kids and families, as a sort of bulwark against the swamp of English culture.

bumptious

adj. arrogant; pushy; self-assertive

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

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.

cacophonous

adj. sounding jarring; discordant

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

cadaverous

adj. corpse-like; hence; haggard; pale; ghastly

Again the track trails off into languishing shivers and cadaverous moans. He himself had acquired a cadaverous appearance; a shrinking manikin within his leather and steel-scale carapace.

callous

adj. unfeeling; insensitive; hard

The ideal pecuniary man is like the ideal delinquent in his unscrupulous conversion of goods and persons to his own ends, and in a callous disregard for the feelings and wishes of others and of the remoter effects of his actions. A radical criminology which appears to deny this will be seen as callous and rightly rejected.

calumniate

v. to accuse falsely or maliciously in order to injure another's reputation; to slander

This led us to agitate the question, whether legal redress could be obtained, even when a man's deceased relation was calumniated in a publication.

candid

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

People trust her because she's so candid.

candor

n. sincerity; honesty; openness

I imagine his candor (a candor that effectively deflects prurient interest) will be a tremendous help to a lot of young people in India and elsewhere.

cantankerous

adj. ill-natured; quarrelsome; contentious; irritable

It is hard not to sympathize with his desire to knock off managing director Duncan, a hammy, cantankerous old fool in Kevin Stoney's playing.

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.

caricature

n. drawing that exaggerates certain physical characteristics

This picture is, however, a caricature of Roman Catholic teaching on the subject, although unfortunately not always a caricature of Catholic practice.

castigate

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

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

celestial

adj. pertaining to the sky; heavenly

On the way back to Corso Venezia along the Via Senato the visitor passes San Pietro Celestino, a fourteenth-century church, once attached to a convent of the Benedictines of the Celestial Congregation.

chauvinist

n. extreme patriot; person who is excessively devoted

Jews complain that the Times betrays Israel, feminists that it is chauvinist, southerners that it is pro-Yankee, priests that it is anti-Catholic.

chicanery

n. trickery; deception; scheming

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

chronic

adj. continuing a long time; habitual; lingering; constant; lasting

Contracts overseas are one way that Japanese firms can fight back against a chronic shortage of trained programmers. If the glands in the urethra are involved, and chronic infection sets in, there may be fibrous tissue deposited at the sites of the chronic infection, and stricture formation may occur.

circumspect

adj. careful; cautious; prudent; watchful; guarded

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

circumvent

v. to avoid; to outwit; to get around

A better understanding of the toxin's mode of action at the molecular level could lead to other strategies to circumvent resistance, for instance by redesigning the target-selecting region of the toxins. New ramps that trucks could mount or circumvent at low speeds are one solution.

civil

adj. of or having to do with citizens or the state; polite; courteous

Some privacy and minority advocates are now seeing credit as a civil rights issue as minorities start to fight employers and insurers who base decisions on credit histories.

clamorous

adj. loud and noisy; demanding

And so the months passed quickly, filled with the sights, sounds, smells and tastes — all of them clamorous and variegated and, not least, the girls with which he filled his mind and his hours. On first viewing, the movement is too enjoyably dense to take in fully — in old Page-style the head, torso and arms work in radical counterpoints to the legs, but their opposition is much less clamorous and willful than before.

clandestine

adj. secret; hidden; covert; stealthy; underhand

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

clement

adj. merciful; gentle; lenient; tender; mild

To me he was just one of the patients enjoying the very clement weather of my home town.

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.

coalition

n. alliance; merging of various units into one unit; union

The Alliance campaign, with the differing emphasis posed by Liberals' David Steel, who was of the center-left, and the Social Democrat, David Owen, who contemplated a possible coalition with the Tories, was a disaster. The result was that we were dangerously isolated with a strong coalition arrayed against us, but fortunately our opponents overplayed their hand.

coercion

n. use of force; compulsion; pressure

An essential precondition for order is economic justice and welfare, without which moral socialization cannot take root as other than fragile coercion. Physical expressions of affection following an obedience which needed a little coercion to achieve, can be most effective.

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.

collusion

n. secret agreement for an illegal purpose; conspiracy

The authority discovered a collusion between the director and treasurer.

commodious

adj. spacious and convenient; roomy; ample; comfortable

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

compatible

adj. in agreement with; harmonious

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

compendious

adj. shortened; summarized

The origins of modern local government in the many single-purpose authorities created in the nineteenth century continued to be reflected in the strength of departmental organization in the newly created compendious authorities.

compendium

n. brief summary of the main ideas of a larger work; list of contents; inventory

As a professional carver I thought it only natural to get my hands on one of those new Arbortech Woodcarvers to add to my compendium of tools last year. We have not heard it all before, unless we have read, as few of us have, Harriet Zinnes's compendium Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts , which all these essayists draw on very heavily.

compensation

n. payment for services; repayment

A park keeper was ordered to pay USD800 compensation to the owner of a 1,000 model yacht he sank. Compensation of USD8,500 for structural damage, and further sums for damage to personal property, were paid by the Metropolitan Police.

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.

compunction

n. regret for wrongdoing; remorse; uneasiness of conscience

North listened to this impassively; when it was over his eyes filled with tears, but these were not necessarily tears of compunction. Without compunction, Fox kicked him awake. So she had no compunction, I think, in allowing your father to be lured into danger, so that the demoiselle would leave the City to follow him.

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.

condign

adj. well-deserved (applied chiefly to punishment); proper; fitting

Outright condemnation was as rare as condign punishment where the criminal was a man of high social standing; for if the delinquent vassal chose to submit himself to his lord, he had performed an act of self-abasement which, in itself, merited courteous handling.

condole

v. to express sympathy with another in sorrow, pain or misfortune

Where I cannot advise I can condole and communicate, which doubles joy, halves sorrow. The priest came to condole with Madeleine.

condolence

n. consolation; commiseration

Saddened sympathizers offer condolence: that we are the victim of our own success --; that it was Labour's postwar achievements that gave rise to today's affluent but now electorally ungrateful majority. At about this time the wife of one of Leslie's men, anticipating the ultimate verdict, sent me a highly elaborate printed card intended as an acknowledgment of condolence on the loss of her husband.

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.

confederate

n. partner; ally; colleague

Unlike Mr Kinnock, her confederate in unpopularity, she may face a challenge. Abraham Lincoln, advised by a Pastor who used to take care of St Enoch's Church in Glasgow, sent out a call for volunteers two days after Confederate guns fired on Fort Sumter, the Union Garrison in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina.

congenial

adj. suited; pleasant; agreeable; affable

He found the bank's routine congenial, keeping greater worries at bay. Some politicians freely confess that they have packed supposedly independent inquiries, in the hope they will produce a congenial result.

conjecture

v. to guess; to speculate; to surmise; to hypothesize; to infer

I conjecture that co-adapted meme-complexes evolve in the same kind of way as co-adapted gene-complexes. They conjecture that Poseidon was a central figure between two fountains and that Hercules and Atlas held the wire grid before the bright disk which simulated the motion of the heavens.

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.

consensus

n. general agreement; majority

The police will not escape criticism, but this will tend to be softened by the unacknowledged consensus that the RUC is essential to the security approach of both governments. This serpentine-shaped animal has been studied carefully by experts, and the general consensus is that the picture reveals a row of playful otters.

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.

construction

n. act of erecting (a building); meaning

The village will be a huddle of 100 American-style houses designed by Wigfall Group Practice, a firm already well known for its addiction to timber-frame construction. The construction of villages where beds could be had by tourists for more than just the two months of July and August was advocated in suitably selected places.

construe

n. to interpret; to explain the sense of; to analyze; to understand

His refusal to construe a trust appears to rest solely on the fact that he deprecates interference of this kind in the rights of another.

consummate

v. to complete; to bring to perfection; to fulfill; to perfect

They fall in love, but before they can consummate it Elena has a vision of the Virgin Mary, which throws the local authorities into a tailspin. Sometimes such advisers may act for companies to handle the securities issues needed to consummate another transaction, such as an acquisition.

consummate

adj. perfect or highly accomplished; excellent; skilled; complete

Sole at the heart of Scotland for many years to come Robert Armstrong on the consummate skills of the new national captain. Alas! his only response to the friendly gesture was to urinate accidentally on him, which was of consummate embarrassment to his mother, and not quite in the spirit of musar!

contemptuous

adj. disdainful; scornful

Hashmat Ara Begum, a community worker in the Borough of Camden told me that she too had come across the most contemptuous attitudes among Health Visitors.

convivial

adj. festive; gay; friendly; sociable; merry

At the end of the day, there are experiences to be shared, new friends to be introduced and tans to be compared over a convivial drink. The convivial bohemian made a round of all the bars and cafes in Nice, looking for Modigliani.

copious

adj. abundant; in great quantities; plentiful; bountiful

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

corpulent

adj. fat; obese; fleshy

In a few short months he had changed, his hair was grayer, his face more drawn and the gold Albert hung loosely around his once corpulent stomach.

cosmopolitan

n. person who is at home in all countries; citizen of the world

Ultimately, many cosmopolitans had to accommodate what seems like a psychological imperative: that we have duties first and foremost to our intimates, for what use is a moral system that is wholly out of touch with the people it purports to guide?

cosmopolitan

adj. free from local prejudices; worldly

Now he would debate the subject in depth before a cosmopolitan audience of European and international politicians, bureaucrats, academic advisers and international managers.

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.

countenance

v. to approve; to support; to tolerate; to permit

She criticized Mr Major's election soap-box as 'naff'; during the recent campaign, but the Prime Minister was prepared to overlook that and countenance her rehabilitation.

countenance

n. face; appearance; features; encouragement; support

A slight flush had crept over Albert's unlovely countenance, but still his eyes remained lowered. The walk that defeated me on the way up seemed to take about five minutes coming down, and despite the forced cheery countenance of my friends, I knew I had ruined the day.

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

adj. cowardly; fearful

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

craven

n. coward; abject person

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

credence

n. trust; belief; confidence; faith

Foreign relief organizations and subsequent students of their work have tended to exaggerate this dichotomy with regard to the Famine, but internal Soviet sources lend credence to the view that the sudden withdrawal of many kinds of domestic relief was premature.

credible

adj. worthy of belief; trustworthy; reliable; dependable

For the visitor, it is scarcely credible that staff can work day after day with such clearly difficult patients.

creditable

adj. deserving or reflecting credit or honor; praiseworthy; believable

This standpoint is gathered up with others in a book which is free with descriptions of creditable and discreditable dealings on the part of those of that persuasion.

credulous

adj. inclined to believe anything; easily imposed upon; naive; gullible; deceivable

On the other hand, unless there is some evidence of the existence of God then positive arguments about the need to trust a Deity become negative arguments about credulous and uncritical behavior.

cringe

v. to shrink in fear; to flinch; to grovel; to recoil

It made Patrick cringe of course, but the inevitable comparison with his brother was high on the agenda when, clutching his share of the USD45,000 winners' check and USD15,000 for finishing eighth in the Nabisco points table, he walked into the interview room.

crucial

adj. very important; decisive; essential; difficult; essential

Government in not allowing them passports until 2007 might have protected the children at a crucial time in their development.

cryptic

adj. containing hidden meaning; obscure; secret; concealing

Sorry to be so cryptic, and it's nothing to worry about — in fact, quite the reverse.

culpable

adj. deserving blame; guilty

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

cumbrous

adj. burdensome and clumsy; bulky; unwieldy

The machinery of the ancient Forest courts was found at this time to be cumbrous and ineffective.

curb

n. restraint; framework; raised edge of a sidewalk

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

cursory

adj. hasty; slight; brief; perfunctory; superficial

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

curt

adj. rudely abrupt; blunt; brief; gruff

The truth is that it is an exceedingly complex concept; and nothing but confusion can arise from attempts to reduce it to curt labels and pat slogans.

cynical

adj. sarcastic; doubting the sincerity of others; pessimistic

The conversation which follows is the last in the book, and the weakest, too, a stagey means of imparting some crucial news for Bellow to fulminate against all that is rotten and cynical in American youth.

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.

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.

deity

n. god; divine or supreme being

In a booming voice infused with all the wrath of the Old Testament deity the pastor gave the answer: So that such terrible things never happen again!

delectable

adj. very pleasing; adorable; delightful; delicious

An assistant master at Eton reported a message from the dean's wife, a delectable woman: We have a new canon here at Durham. The distinctive aroma of chocolate and liqueurs will entice you to view the delectable selection of hand made quality chocolates and fudge made daily at the village confectionery.

delete

v. to erase; to cancel; to take out; to remove totally

The Backspace key will not delete text if Overtyping (F5) is switched on. When the new Clause was debated in the House of Commons on 5th December, Joan Ruddock was the only MP to attempt an amendment to delete it in its entirety.

delineate

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

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

delinquent

adj. failing to fulfill an obligation; guilty of an offense

Smacked children are more likely to become delinquent. Treatment of the delinquent claims today the place which treatment of the lunatic but lately occupied, as a gross example of society's inadequacy to cope with its members.

delinquent

n. offender; person who is guilty of an offense

God forbid!, said Dionne, just that I'm living with a delinquent at the moment and it makes me feel mature.

deluge

n. great flood; downpour; inundation; drenching rain

He went on to prove that earthquakes were the result of electrical disturbances of the air of which the movement of the Earth was a secondary effect, that sponges were not living creatures and that the deluge took place in the Autumn.

demagogue

n. one who manipulates public emotions to gain power or popularity

The greatest demagogue in history no longer had an audience. For any would-be telegenic demagogue, Mr Bruce offers a lot of practical advice, most of it garnered when he was the Tories' director of communications.

demeanor

n. behavior; bearing; conduct; appearance

DalGLISH wore the demeanor of a man who had just discovered the cat had been sick in his slippers.

demure

adj. affectedly or falsely modest or prim; serious; calm; shy

She was not the whore who lurks under the demure exterior of even the most respectable wife and mother.

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.

denunciation

n. denouncement; condemnation

The internal politics of Surrealism were complicated by rivalries and ideological disputes; in the case of Andre Breton's association with Dali, his earlier support gave way to a denunciation of the artist, who was expelled from the group.

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.

deplorable

adj. lamentable; wretched

It is deplorable that the Americans took a lot of land cheap from Cubans and Spaniards.

depraved

adj. corrupt; degenerate; debauched

The depraved state of women in monogamy, associated as it is with private property and capitalism, will according to him, be replaced when capitalism is overthrown.

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.

depreciate

v. to belittle; to speak slightly of; to reduce the value or cost; to disparage

Now fitted with the superior 2.9-liter engine, the latest cars will depreciate heavily in the first year — 48 per cent falls are the norm. This gives judicial support to the view that financial statements have a limited useful life (of less than 15 months) and depreciate in usefulness over a period of time.

devastation

n. widespread ruin; destruction

This was clearly a response to the devastation of war but in general the public commissions that have provided work for our artist craftsmen and women since then have tended to be bland and factual.

devious

adj. deceptive; crooked; twisting; circuitous; indirect

Some researchers had become so daunted by the devious nature of the virus, which can hide within the cells of the body, that they felt a vaccine would be impossible.

devoid

adj. lacking; empty

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

devout

adj. reverent; sincere; pious; earnest; religious

The leading layman of the York diocese was the politician whose judgment was likely to weigh with the Crown: Lord Halifax, the former Foreign Secretary, and a devout Anglo-Catholic.

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.

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.

dilemma

n. difficult situation; difficult decision

The observational data show that Easton's neighborhood police have two recipes for resolving this dilemma and its associated conundrum.

dilettante

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

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

disconcert

v. to confuse; to embarrass; to fluster; to worry

As if deliberately to disconcert the semi-finalists, the world champion, Garry Kasparov, has registered one of his most impressive performances.

disconsolate

adj. without hope; sad; dejected; depressed

There was no more conversation until they reached Mr Zamoyski's shop, where the cobbler was sitting on his front step, looking disconsolate.

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.

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.

discursive

adj. moving from topic to topic; rambling

Yet there are those of us who, although firmly based inside such an institution, have undertaken anthropological training and have subsequently developed the academic wish to be discursive.

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.

dispatch

v. to do speedily; to send off; to eliminate; to dismiss

Perhaps it was this that prompted Mr Milosevic to dispatch an emissary to the Bosnian Serbs, asking them to sign the plan.

dispatch

n. sending off; shipment; message; communication; promptness

On the last day of 1921 the Party Central Committee appointed Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the head of the Cheka and Commissar for Transport, to the commission for the dispatch of food supplies and grain seed from Siberia and the Ukraine.

dispel

v. to drive away; to scatter; to lessen

The Masters Committee itself does nothing to dispel the feeling that the event is something special.

dissension

n. conflict; disagreement; disparity

The China Inland Mission's early years inland were hazardous with riots, some internal dissension, and opposition from established missionaries who especially objected to the use of Chinese dress.

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.

dissolute

adj. living loosely; unrestrained in conduct or morals; depraved; licentious; corrupt

This makes it less likely that investors would encourage a dissolute borrower to mend its ways by withholding finance.

distraught

adj. mentally distressed; distracted; crazed; bewildered; hysterical

Then, at random almost, she picked up one of the other cuttings, which showed Harriet Shakespeare's plain, squashed face looking white and distraught and pitiful as she leaned against a friend's arm.

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

Seen commercially, the advantages of operating through a subsidiary include the ability to diversify activities whilst not exposing the other parts of the business to financial risk.

diverting

adj. entertaining; distracting; deflecting; amusing

In the short run this new body is seen by the Commission as a useful means of delaying or diverting the application of countries such as Austria which want to belong to the inner core of the 27 European Community states.

divisibility

n. ability to be separated or divided

As can be seen, these are all fairly small, and in practice the lack of asset divisibility is not a major problem, although it does mean that a completely riskless arbitrage transaction may be impossible.

divulge

v. to make public; to reveal; to tell; to disclose

Our manager replied that it was not company policy to divulge personal details of employees and that if she wanted to take it further, she should write in.

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.

dolorous

adj. sorrowful; mournful; painful

My very writing became a different adventure, no longer the dolorous itinerary of a convalescent, no longer a begging for compassion and friendly faces, but a lucid building, which now was no longer solitary; the work of a chemist who weighs and divides, measures and judges on the basis of assured proofs, and strives to answer questions.

dynamic

adj. forceful; vigorous; energetic

Under his dynamic tutelage she started reading --; not the literature of her childhood, but hard politics, sociology, philosophy, ideas, and experimental fiction.

ecclesiastic

adj. pertaining or relating to a church

Ecclesiastic obligations include attending mass.

edict

n. decree; command; order

It was a firm edict of company policy that all new recruits with management potential should undergo the experience of working temporarily in as many company departments as possible.

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.

effete

adj. no longer productive; worn out; degenerate; exhausted

London papers in fact ate up the scandal, writing that the New York socialists would nevermore import a professional agitator from the effete monarchies of Europe.

egotistic

adj. conceited; selfish; self-centered

Sadism is not an inherently egoistic drive, rather it is the assertive phase of a drive which may also be submissive even in the same person.

egregious

adj. often of mistakes; extremely and noticeably bad; flagrant; rude

Indeed, under the egregious President Reagan and the so-called 'supply-siders', enormous and successful efforts were taken to ensure that the poor got even poorer. This egregious non sequitur requires further clarification, if only for your myriad younger readers.

ejaculate

v. to exclaim or utter suddenly; to blurt out

These are some of the uncanny facts that have caused us to consider Messrs Hill and Jackson and ejaculate, 'Whooo, spooky!'.

elicit

v. to draw out; to extract from

How can a sufficient number of specific stimuli arise during development to elicit different activities from cells?

elucidate

v. to make clear; to explain; to clarify

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

emissary

n. person sent on an errand or mission; envoy; representative; messenger; delegate

He turned to arms dealing in Africa and claimed, with some plausibility, to be an unofficial emissary of the French secret service.

engender

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

The group attempted to engender changes to the law.

ennui

n. boredom; apathy; lethargy; tedium

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

ensue

v. to follow; to result

He might have foreseen the problems that would ensue after their marriage, seen that there was a gulf between Charles and Diana that would be difficult to bridge and advised against it.

entreat

n. attempt to persuade someone to do something

My usually brief notes expanded to quite an entreat. Dean Corso (Johnny Depp) tracks down the 9th authentic engraving of the ninth gate and is granted an entreat with the Prince of Darkness.

entreat

v. to beg earnestly; to implore; to plead

For a just example of vengeance, I entreat that the thieving tribe of Glencoe may be rooted out in earnest.

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.

epicurean

adj. pleasure-loving; hedonistic

Epicurean philosophers were thrown out of Rome either in 173 or in 154 B.C. The fare laid before Botha last night was hardly epicurean.

epicurean

n. person devoted to luxurious living and pleasure

He was a sybarite or an epicurean, Adam thought; relishing words, but epicurean sounded better, less pejorative.

epigram

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

The poet wrote an epigram about the upcoming election.

epitaph

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

The epitaph described the actions of a brave man.

epithet

n. name; nickname; title; designation

She sometimes appeared on earth as a hippopotamus, too, and her epithet was The Golden. The usual epithet applied to his bearing is patrician, and his batting, as a matter of course, is liberally endowed with arrogance.

equable

adj. regular; uniform; even

Internally, a hardwood floor surface helped to maintain an equable temperature, permitted work to be done in bare feet and simplified the recovery of waste cotton. Bristol's equable climate probably favors the survival of this warmth-loving species; though present in certain northern cities, such as Sheffield where five are known, the wild fig elsewhere remains small and vulnerable.

equanimity

n. poise; composure; dignity; aplomb

Great leaders are able to face turbulent times with equanimity and remain strong under stress. Equanimity can be reached when stress is removed from life.

err

v. to make a mistake; to do something wrong; to misjudge

To err, it's only human. Voltaire's work is, arguably, offensive but one should err on the side of allowing it to be available.

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.

erratum

n. misprint; typo; printing error

An erratum or corrigendum (plurals: errata, corrigenda) is a correction of a manual, handbook or other nonfictional text that contained mistakes.

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.

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.

exceptionable

adj. objectionable; may be protested

It is true that the establishment Whigs found it increasingly necessary to downplay the original contract and the right of resistance, and came to argue that resistance was only allowable in exceptionable circumstances, such as those of 1688.

exculpate

v. to free from guilt; to declare innocent

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

exemplar

n. copy; model; pattern; sample

The Great Exemplar was the first life of Christ in the English language. It was this process which provided the exemplar for the inquisitorial legal process of modern civil-law jurisdictions.

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.

exodus

n. mass departure; emigration

Following the Exodus from Egypt and the Settlement in Canaan in the latter part of the second millennium BC, the Jews found themselves in a region which was on the main line of communication between Egypt and Babylonia.

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.

expatiate

v. to speak or write at great length; to describe in full

There was, undeniably, an issue: whether the nonspecialist had any right to expatiate on scientific matters.

expatriate

v. to banish; to exile; to withdraw from one's country; to expel

Winters in California perhaps thought himself securely distant from the seat of the infection; he never visited Europe, still less was he tempted to expatriate himself.

expatriate

n. person who lives in a foreign country

The very pages of his own magazine express the discernibly patronizing indulgence that it seems the American expatriate community extended to him.

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.

exploit

v. to use for one's selfish purpose

There is a superficial choice between abandoning many DRAs or in making new investments to exploit their potentials.

exploit

n. brilliant deed; heroic act; feat

What unorthodox alternative routes into the future could such a rebel replicator exploit?

exposition

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

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

expound

v. to set forth in detail; to explain; to comment; to describe in detail

His vocation is to guard the faith, to present it, expound it.

expurgate

v. to purify of offensive material; to censor

Let us expurgate from the immaturity of our environmental thought, that essence of crepuscular darkness which our sciolism leads us to extrapolate into quotidian existence.

extemporaneous

adj. spontaneous; impromptu; improvised

One member of the audience made notes of his extemporaneous address, in which he admitted that he was unprepared for this specific situation or any situation in general.

extinct

adj. dead; vanished; gone

The blue-rinsed dame and the bottle-nosed blimp are extinct species here.

extirpate

v. to root out; to destroy totally; to eradicate

To enforce conformity to the new orthodoxy, the Spaniards instituted ecclesiastical visitas, or inspections intended to extirpate the idolatry that persisted long after the conquest.

extraneous

adj. irrelevant; not related; not essential

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

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.

facade

n. front or face, especially of a building; illusion; deceptive appearance

This even applies to listed buildings: there is still a worryingly widespread general belief that listing only covers the facade, or perhaps just the exterior, whereas it is of course expressly designed to protect the whole building.

facetious

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

His facetious sarcasm was inappropriate during his first staff meeting.

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.

fallacy

n. illusion; misconception; untruth; falsehood

The fatal fallacy is to try to turn the world inside-out and make economic progress the criterion of the pursuit of knowledge. It would constitute a typically academic fallacy to believe that analysis on its own — the sheer power of thought — could change or reverse such a situation, but it could well affect it.

fallible

adj. erroneous; not foolproof

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

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.

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

She was not quite successful at her feint.

felicitous

adj. appropriate; fitting

Botanists suggested that by some felicitous intuition the Italian planter had chosen specimens with properties that facilitated each other's growth.

felicity

n. state of happiness; high ability; talent; joy

He wrote just at the time when English was becoming an established literary language and with a felicity which later caused most of his translation — perhaps 75 per cent — to be retained in the King James Bible, the authorized version for 300 years.

fervid

adj. intensely hot; impassioned; passionate

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

festoon

n. garland of flowers or leaves hung between two points

Susie Smallwood peered out under the festoon blind.

festoon

v. to decorate with chains of flowers or leaves, etc.

You're an architect, someone who's supposed to improve this planet, not festoon it with ill-placed coils of lurid metal.

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.

fiasco

n. ludicrous and complete failure; disaster

In effect, Mr Mulroney is asking the man he supplanted as Conservative prime minister to complete the job which, after last year's fiasco about the Meech Lake constitutional reform package, he himself has no longer the credibility to perform.

fictitious

adj. unreal; made-up; false

The unitary monarchy, though itself (as I have argued) fictitious, on which the Statute of Westminster had insisted in 1931, had now vanished.

flaccid

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

The old dog's flaccid tail refused to wag.

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.

flaunt

v. to display or wave boastfully

If you can afford to pay USD34,450, then flaunt it and enjoy it, because it's got what the others haven't — image and class. The women had nothing to do but flaunt their prosperity.

fleeting

adj. brief; passing swiftly; temporary; transient

The Impressionist painters caught the contagion, and the new race of photographers tried to seize the fleeting moment and make it stay.

fluctuate

v. to waver from one course to another; to vary irregularly; to vacillate

The mortgage rates may fluctuate, but the administration and the repayments remain the same until the time comes to adjust.

forbear

v. to exercise self control; to keep from; to refrain from

He may have been reluctant to give up a conquest of his illustrious forbear, Julius Caesar.

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.

fortuitous

adj. happening accidentally; by chance

Finding the money under the bush was fortuitous.

fracas

n. disorderly quarrel; tumult; riot; skirmish

And there was no way he could be prevailed upon to release it without an embarrassing fracas in front of the judge!

frustrate

v. to foil; to thwart; to disappoint; to defeat; to baffle

They were prepared to ferry the ball from blue shirt to blue shirt and in the process frustrate Nottingham Forest.

fulsome

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

The man became obese when he indulged in fulsome eating.

garnish

v. to trim; to decorate; to embellish; to adorn

Capers are often used to garnish cocktail savories and canapes.

genealogy

n. record of a person's or a family's ancestors or relatives

Here I focus on the genealogy of two aspects of discrimination already addressed by this study, namely displacement between the political and the sexual, and the idea of perversion as an inimical absence.

genesis

n. origin; beginning; creation

In Port Elizabeth, within the fold of the South African Air Force Museum, a small group of volunteers have taken on not only the genesis of a regional museum, but the task of bringing an Airspeed Oxford back to life.

gesticulate

v. to indicate feelings by motions; move the hands in an animated manner

He broke off to gesticulate hopelessly with his hands, expressing final despair.

ghastly

adj. horrible; deathlike; shocking; frightening

Fritz gave her an earnest look which was, if anything, even more ghastly and idiotic than his grin.

gibe

v. to laugh at; to utter with scorn; to jeer; to taunt mock

Chatellerault was gibing, when my silence had endured some moments.

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.

glut

n. abundance; full amount; excessive supply

Since 1979, a number of factors have combined to create a situation in the oil business which is the opposite of that in 1973 — a glut of oil on the world market and falling crude prices.

glutton

n. person who eats and drinks to excess; overeater

The glutton ate 12 hot dogs.

gluttonous

adj. inclined to eat and drink excessively; greedy; voracious

The Wedding Present violently oppose most rock 'n' roll ethos, but perhaps one of the few areas where they have shown loyalty to tradition has been their gluttonous appetite for live work.

gossamer

n. very thin gauzelike fabric or structure; cobweb

Saliva glistened on her chin like brown gossamer.

gossamer

adj. thin and light

British Commonwealth links, though gossamer thin for most of the time, can become emotional ties of steel in times of crisis, drawing us into unexpected military commitments, as occurred in the Falklands Campaign.

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.

grimace

n. distortion of the face to express an attitude or feeling; anger; disapproval

Little did he know that it wasn't a smile, but a grimace of pain.

hail

v. to call from a distance; to greet; to welcome

But which of us, locked behind a desk or in a queue at the supermarket check-out, has not had an overwhelming desire to drop everything, run into the street, hail a passing cab and make for the nearest airport to catch a plane to anywhere?

harangue

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

Please stop haranguing me so I can breathe freely again.

harangue

n. lengthy, heartfelt speech; scolding; lecture

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

harbinger

n. omen; signal

We must hope it was a harbinger that the one riotously funny scene occurred at the end of the first episode, with Europe through.

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.

heedless

adj. taking little care; oblivious; rash; unmindful

Young people abroad can be quite heedless nowadays.

heinous

adj. villainous; wicked; hateful

It is even difficult to say that a very rich person could be compensated in money terms; thus, however heinous the libel, such a person should get not more than a nominal sum and his costs.

heresy

n. opinion contrary to popular belief

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

hiatus

n. interval; break; period of rest; 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.

histrionic

adj. pertaining to the theater; designed for show; dramatic

The usual reality is that it applies histrionic measures to tackle topical crime.

hoax

n. trick or deception; a practical joke

Mention of the press's glee at the humiliation of the investigators behind this summer's high-profile surveillance project Operation Blackbird, who were fooled by an obvious hoax, brings out Tarr's own nascent conspiracy theory.

hoax

v. to dupe; to play a trick on; to deceive

They hoaxed the BBC on the anniversary of the Bhopal disaster — and were condemned around the world.

homonym

n. two words having the same sound but different meanings

Words having exactly the same sound, but different spellings and meanings: To be completely accurate, these are homophones: but homonym is the term in more general use.

hovel

n. dirty or wretched dwelling; hut; shack

Watching Ranald drop a rafter on his head, Marion sneered at herself that these children, this filthy hovel were all that was left to her.

hyperbole

n. exaggeration; overstatement

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

hypothesis

n. assumption made for the sake of argument; supposition

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.

idiosyncrasy

n. personal peculiarity; mannerism; eccentricity

Her tendency to bite her lip is an idiosyncrasy.

ignominious

adj. contemptible; degrading; humiliating; ignoble; contempt; 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.

ignominy

n. disgrace; humiliation; dishonor

Arsenal's poor performances in January 1933 sparked off a minor panic among supporters, and Chapman was even called upon to deny the widespread rumor that the new West Stand was to be dismantled and re-erected at Tottenham, the ultimate ignominy.

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?

immunize

v. to make insusceptible to a disease

There is still no vaccine to immunize people against the HIV virus. The modern veterinary surgeon does not see nearly as many cases of distemper as we used to, simply because most people immunize their puppies at the earliest possible moment.

impale

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

The knight was impaled by the sharp lance.

impeach

v. to accuse of wrongdoing; to cast discredit upon; to remove from office

He tried to impeach Mr Premadasa, accusing the president of corruption. Within hours of the meeting, Mr Sharif addressed a special session of parliament which he had called in order to try to impeach the president.

impeccable

adj. pure; perfect; faultless

Why would he find it in his interest to ratchet up a challenge to a foreign power that has, after all, an impeccable legal position in Panama and a considerable military position?

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.

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.

implicit

adj. understood but not plainly stated; without doubt; indirectly suggested; implied; unconditional; contained within

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

import

n. meaning; significance; bringing in of goods from another country

To attempt to understand human nature requires that we grasp the import of what we say. The Authority's proposals had involved the imposition of import controls and production quotas.

impostor

n. person who pretends to be someone else in order to deceive others; pretender; impersonator

The nurse was an impostor who drugged the baby but was exposed after two days and sacked.

imposture

n. fraud; deception; deceit; forgery

In a day and a night of violence and imposture William Bentley, working for his uncle, the captain of the frigate Welfare, also succeeds in capturing Jesse Broad, a smuggler returning with a cargo from a French ship.

imprecation

n. curse

However, 80 per cent of the revenue generated is spent on civil service salaries, and yet the government by imprecation if not implication blames this peasantry for sheet and gully erosion.

impregnable

adj. unconquerable; unbeatable; invulnerable; indisputable

After another successful campaign, apart from some setbacks in Wales and near-disaster in Scotland, the Thatcher regime seemed as impregnable as before.

impropriety

n. incorrectness; unsuitableness

The medieval church was divided on the issue of whether there was impropriety in the mimetic representation of holy personages on stage.

improvident

adj. wasteful; careless; not saving up for future needs

An improvident person may end up destitute in later life.

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.

incarcerate

v. to imprison; to detain; to jail

The house is built on the site of a Saxon prison, which was still used in the twelfth century to incarcerate cattle rustlers.

incisive

adj. getting to the heart of things; to the point

His incisive questioning helped settle the matter quickly.

incognito

adj. unidentified; disguised; concealed; anonymous; unknown

The federal Witness Protection Program makes its charges permanently incognito.

incontrovertible

adj. unquestionable; impossible to debate

The government had never been prepared to take any action without incontrovertible proof of a direct relationship between an industrial process and a particular pattern of death, disease or environmental damage.

increment

n. increase; profit; growth; addition

The teaching profession has recently made a beginning in this direction, allowing one salary increment for each three years of child rearing.

incumbent

adj. obligatory; compulsory; presently holding an office or position

The in-fighting on the United board has reached an intense pitch, with several incumbent directors jockeying for position as the Knighton deal looks increasingly likely to fail.

incumbent

n. person who currently holds an office or position

Nicholas Ridley, the latest incumbent, is retaining his silken skills to advise on industrial and financial affairs and the Airbus program.

indefatigable

adj. untiring; persistent; industrious; inexhaustible

Late afternoon and after a brief nap at home in Edinburgh, Frank McBride, the indefatigable chauffeur who will have driven Mr Smith more than 10,000 miles by the end of the campaign, brought his master to Stirling.

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.

indomitable

adj. not easily discouraged or defeated; unconquerable

The underdog candidate had an indomitable spirit.

inference

n. conclusion reached by reasoning from data or premises; speculation

Trusts arise not only by a direct expression of intention but also by an inference or implication which may or may not correspond to any actual intention.

ingenious

adj. clever; resourceful; talented; inventive

His ingenious idea made it possible to double production at no extra cost.

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.

inhibit

v. to check; to hinder; to hold back; to prevent

We need a system of assessment that will encourage, not inhibit, the development of the imagination, and the new emphasis on practical skills as of equal importance with scholarship and learning.

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.

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.

inordinate

adj. excessive; immoderate

Many people still felt that Diana spent an inordinate amount on clothes. The negotiations with the American company that will run the facility after the Games have taken an inordinate amount of time by British standards, though not by American, and the completion date is now May 10, 1991, barely two months before the opening ceremony.

insatiable

adj. unable to be satisfied; extremely greedy

Man is endowed with an insatiable curiosity about himself and about the world around him, in his perception of which his own nature finds its reflection.

inscrutable

adj. incapable of interpretation or understanding; impenetrable; mysterious

You can get a list from the Japanese Tourist Board in London, which for some inscrutable reason gives only half of them. Magnificent Karnak, with its corridors of stone rams, sky-embracing pillars and gigantic inscrutable statues, stretching apparently as far as the eye can see, is breathtaking.

insidious

adj. working secretly or slyly; cunning; crafty; deceitful

Piecemeal change to pub exteriors and interiors, while more insidious than wholesale rebuilding, can be equally destructive.

instigate

v. to start; to provoke; to inflame; to incite

It was uncertain to the police as to which party instigated the riot.

integrity

n. honesty; moral soundness; uprightness

Many observers were disturbed by the way in which the high standards of service and integrity associated with the BBC as a public corporation were being compromised.

invective

n. insult; curse; affront; offense

Take one opposition spokesman, simmer for an hour in a heavy sauce of sarcasm, season with scornful adjectives, throw in liberal amounts of contempt, add several pinches of disdain, and spice with invective.

inveigh

v. to speak angrily or bitterly; to protest forcefully; to rant

He is the sort of Sixties dominie who used to inveigh in class against the system. No good to sit under beautiful Italian trees amongst beautiful Italian peasants and inveigh petulantly against miners and respectable women.

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.

ire

n. anger; rage; fury

Lucy paced, rampaged, flung out scads of unrequited ire, impassioned as Jay had never seen her.

irksome

adj. tedious; monotonous; frustrating; annoying

An American agreement with Ireland was especially irksome to Churchill. Travelers might get used to jet-lag in the sense that they learn to live with it, or they might find it progressively more irksome as their initial excitement with travel begins to wear thin.

itinerant

adj. traveling about; wandering

Ian Franchi, of Britain's Open University, and his colleagues have just spent three weeks on crampons and skidoos, combing the ice sheet for these itinerant boulders. Evidently the general itinerant care exercised by Paul and his helpers is supplemented by permanent resident officeholders.

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 lay person.

jaunty

adj. having an air of easy carelessness or liveliness; stylish; merry

A pleasant surprise so early in the day: Lucy had style, from well-cut red-gold hair down through the subtly tailored suit, to the jaunty tap-tap of gray suede sub-stilettos.

jeopardy

n. danger; peril; hazard

The campers realized they were in potential jeopardy when the bears surrounded their camp.

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.

jibe

v. to mock; to gibe; to scorn; to jeer

Australians are renowned for their lazy talking, and my Dad always jibes me about how I talk with a 'plum in mouth'.

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.

kaleidoscopic

adj. constantly changing or varying in pattern or scenes

Those Victorian forces had apparently enrolled too many inadequate individuals, susceptible to the kaleidoscopic temptations of street life.

ken

n. one's understanding; perception; consciousness; knowledge; awareness

My ken of the situation proved to be incorrect.

ken

v. to recognize; to perceive; to grasp; to comprehend

It was difficult to ken exactly what she had in mind.

labyrinth

n. maze; complicated network of passages; something confusing or bewildering

Be careful not to get lost in the labyrinth of vegetation.

labyrinthine

adj. complicated; confusing; maze-like

She forced her mind through the labyrinthine sentences of Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida until her eyes were bloodshot and her head ached.

lachrymose

adj. causing or given to shedding tears; depressed; weepy; mournful

The delightful tunes are all there, but some of them are taken too slowly, and some of the settings are either lachrymose or slurred.

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.

larceny

n. theft; stealing; robbery

After robbing the liquor store, she was found guilty of larceny.

latent

adj. hidden; present but not fully developed; concealed; dormant

If something is constructed today with a latent fault, that fault will be there — uncorrected — indefinitely.

lavish

adj. profuse or generous; given to extravagance; wasteful; generous

Waiters in the silver national costume of Luctia bowed stiffly as they placed dish after lavish dish in front of the delegates.

lethal

adj. deadly; fatal

It was as though the river had suddenly died; as though a mysterious lethal pollution had struck and wiped out all life.

longevity

n. prolonged duration of life

Longevity was once a rarer phenomenon than it is in the late twentieth century.

low

v. to moo; to utter the sound made by cattle

It did not but the lowing herd wound its way to and from the milking sheds, and left the world to darkness and to us each night. Using samplers, slowed-down tapes, echo-box, fuzz, wah wah, bullhorns, saws, car doors (from which they got slowed-down squeaking sounds), and tapes of cattle lowing, they plumbed new depths of the bass-spectrum, new limits in the degradation and deterioration of sound.

lucid

adj. shiny; clear minded

He chose a shimmering, lucid fabric for his curtains.

When lucid, the man spoke of vivid memories.

ludicrous

adj. ridiculous; producing laughter; absurd

The over-extension of the idea is ludicrous, but not ludicrous enough: the connectedness of absolutely everything is the first principle of conspiracy theory anyway, so for want of exaggeration or originality the joke falls horribly flat.

luminary

n. eminent person; celestial body; light source

Helen Gardner, for many years an Oxford luminary, did not believe that the purpose of English was to turn out critics, any more than it was to produce poets and novelists.

machiavellian

adj. sacrificing moral principles in order to attain power; politically cunning; crafty

Although Javed Miandad is more popular with most of the Pakistani players than the aloof Imran, they have seldom played so effectively under his machiavellian leadership.

malice

n. hostility; malevolence

Express malice may defeat a plea of qualified privilege, and in this sense malice means, first, personal spite in the contents of the statement or, secondly, personal spite in the mode or extent of the publication.

malicious

adj. spiteful; vindictive

The malicious employee slashed her tires for revenge.

masquerade

v. to assume a deceptive appearance or character; to impersonate

Those who specialize in treating food intolerance regard hyperventilation as a somewhat less common problem, but one which can masquerade as food sensitivity.

masquerade

n. disguise; group of people in disguise or fancy costumes

She was, perhaps, an amalgam of the two, and her masquerade, begun, she now knew, almost as the game Dr Neil had called it, had, in turning into something more serious, changed her as well. Dressing up, role playing and masquerade form the conceptual basis of Kahlo's work.

maudlin

adj. foolishly and tearfully sentimental; weepy; emotional

The maudlin affair consisted of three speeches in honor of the benefactor.

meander

v. to wind; to ramble; to roam; walk about aimlessly; carry on in a leisurely way; wander

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.

mediocre

adj. average in quality; poor; ordinary; regular

The team's products easily outsell those of other American baseball clubs overseas, even though the Yankees have had a mediocre record on the field in recent years.

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.

meretricious

adj. deceptive beauty; alluring by attractive appearance; lewd

A cubic zircon is a meretricious way of impressing others.

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.

mettlesome

adj. courageous; brave; fearless

Such an attitude required fresh springs of energy, and the effect — I was delighted to sense it as I woke each day — was to make me more bouncy and mettlesome than I had been for weeks.

microcosm

n. little world or universe in miniature

The hazards are internal; as the pressure-cooker microcosm of the nation's Balkanisation, it is impossible to court, for instance, the Jewish vote without offending blacks, and vice-versa.

mimic

v. to make fun of or copy by imitating; to ape

Fell wants to simulate loss-of-coolant accident and then use about two-thirds the usual emergency cooling water to mimic what could occur at Sizewell.

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.

misanthropic

adj. hating or distrusting mankind; cynical

The pity is that the world we actually live in is so full of evidence for a misanthropic principle.

misnomer

n. name or term that describes wrongly

Parents' evenings are a bit of a misnomer, in some schools these traditional semi-formal meetings are staggered throughout the day to give shift workers opportunity to attend.

monologue

n. speech by one person

Like a best-man's speech, Edward Petherbridge's The Eight O'Clock News is an anecdotal monologue, often rambling, occasionally funny and inevitably far too long.

morose

adj. moody; despondent; bitter; irritable

He was very morose over the death of his pet. After the team lost the fans were morose.

motley

adj. of various colors; of mixed ingredients; of great variety

When he stalked out he left her with a motley crew mostly of accountants and lawyers. The party is not a motley collection of ageing hippies, but an arm of a wealthy and complex organisation.

mottled

adj. spotted or streaked with varied colors

Built of honey-colored Cotswold stone, some hundred or so years ago, it had a beautiful matching tiled roof, mottled with a patina of lichen and moss. You'll soon be able to walk down Bond Street without spotting a single varicose vein or mottled thigh.

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.

murky

adj. dark; cloudy; gloomy

The two main parties, defined by Ireland's civil-war allegiances in the 1920s, coexist in a murky world of unprincipled favor-mongering.

mutable

adj. given to frequent change in nature, mood or form; unstable; changeable

We are young and youth is said to be fickle, mutable, and we have both looked at the possibility of ourselves not being exceptions to that supposed rule.

myriad

n. large number; a lot; innumerable; endless; infinitive; multiple

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.

nautical

adj. of the sea; having to do with sailors, ships or navigation

The coastal New England town had a charming nautical influence.

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.

nocturnal

adj. pertaining to or occurring in the night

Many animals are diurnal — that is they are active in the daytime and inactive at night — whereas nocturnal creatures show the opposite orientation.

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.

nonchalant

adj. unmoved or indifferent; composed; casual; indifferent

I was in two minds about closing the door, but decided that it would be safer to do so; if anyone came through it unexpectedly I would have a split second to look lost and nonchalant. Paula perched herself against the cutting table trying to look nonchalant.

nostalgia

n. homesickness; sentimentality

By the time the studio came to make *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (1953), about a village's attempt to preserve their branch line against nasty entrepreneurs who have set up a bus service, gentle anarchy has given way to nostalgia for Olde England.

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.

novice

n. inexperienced person; beginner

The book is divided into seven chapters/days, which guide you on from novice to competent windsurfer, with the help of written explanations and step by step photos and diagrams.

obdurate

adj. stubbornly persistent in wrongdoing; stiff-necked

The obdurate child refused to go to school. The obdurate youngster refused to eat the Brussels sprouts.

oblivion

n. thoughtlessness; state of complete forgetfulness

There is little trace left of York's truly ancient coaching, posting and market inns, while nearly half the pubs which were standing in the 1950s, including some historic gems, have been closed down, converted, or redeveloped into oblivion.

oblivious

adj. forgetful; absent-minded; ignoring

Taff lay down on his back on the floor of the trench, oblivious to the mosquitoes and everything else and was soon snoring loudly.

obsession

n. compulsive thought; fixation; excessive preoccupation

Her obsession has taken the form of compulsive exercising: huge amounts of daily exercise, without which she feels panic-stricken and lost.

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.

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.

obtrusive

adj. thrusting oneself or itself into undue prominence; invasive

But the waitresses in Marshall and Snelgrove had new uniforms, dark purple instead of the old coffee-cream shade, and a different style of cap, more up to date and less obtrusive.

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.

omnipotent

adj. all-powerful; almighty

Claire Sterling sets out to prove that the Sicilian Mafia is an omnipotent organization rapidly infiltrating the above-ground economy.

onus

n. burden; duty; obligation; responsibility

The onus is on the company to ensure that staff are making intelligent decisions on the information that the computer system provides and this comes from in-house training.

ostensible

adj. apparent; obvious; professed to be a certain way

The ostensible reason for choosing the girl was for her beauty.

ostracize

v. to banish; to exclude

The students tend to ostracize the children they dislike from their games.

panacea

n. remedy for all ills

Celibacy is, at best, the lesser evil; by no means is it regarded as a panacea.

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.

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.

paraphrase

v. to restate the meaning of a passage in other words

He kills himself, as innumerable commentators have paraphrased and elaborated, in order to kill God.

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!

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.

pedant

n. meticulous person; fastidious person; strict person; fussy person

One final note from a pedant: a lethal misprint on page 50 has ensured that a generation of students will be informing their tutors that the Socinians were nationalists, rather than rationalists.

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.

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.

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.

pertinacious

adj. clinging doggedly to an opinion or purpose; stubborn

Another incident which raised sovereignty as a public and formal issue was more complex: the formal cause was not indignation but the pertinacious enthusiasm of an Ajdabiyah municipal policeman.

peruse

v. to read carefully; to study

A vast majority of time was spent perusing the possible solution to the dilemma.

perverse

adj. willfully bent on doing the wrong thing; distorted; deviant

He finds nothing perverse about a man of the arts fighting sport's corner. As a result, those at the bottom of the social heap were abandoned in a perverse kind of educational apartheid.

petrify

v. to paralyze with horror, fear or surprise

When Amy Moyle, the wife of Josias Clarke, died in 1631 her husband decided to petrify his last memory of her by having cut a supine effigy, which showed his wife in her shroud.

plagiarism

n. adopting and reproducing, without acknowledgment; the writings or ideas of another

The copying of descriptions of famous men from other chronicles is typical of the style of the period, and need not be taken to imply lack of information or plagiarism, for wherever necessary personal details are added.

platitude

n. dull and commonplace remark; banality; superficiality; commonplace

Not since Harold Wilson prattled on about the white heat of the technological revolution — or some similar meaningless platitude — and launched Concorde, has there been so much talk about innovation and our intellectual heritage.

plebeian

adj. pertaining to the common people, hence common or vulgar; rude

The civil rights marches created an opportunity for Ian Paisley to put himself at the head of plebeian Protestant resistance to the civil rights movement.

plebiscite

n. expression of a people's will or wishes through a direct ballot of all voters

A proposal for constitutional reform to allow a national plebiscite on the reintroduction of the death penalty in Brazil, for kidnappings, burglaries and rapes resulting in the victim's death, was approved by a Congressional Commission of the House of Deputies in December 1990.

poignant

adj. gripping and moving the feelings powerfully; piercing; biting

Thefts of art works are also an international problem, especially poignant in the case of objects with cultural and religious significance.

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.

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.

precipitous

adj. very steep; descending rapidly; vertical; sheer

In the post-war period, these districts had undergone precipitous decline from their pre-war position as thriving communities servicing the world's largest port.

precocious

adj. developed or matured earlier than usual

The precocious eight year-old wanted to read the romance novel.

predatory

adj. inclined to plunder or rob; preying on others; pillaging

Tammuz had the feeling he must be appearing like a predatory beast at that moment, and wished Zambia was there to put the kid at his ease.

predilection

n. favorable opinion arrived at beforehand; affinity; liking; fondness

The judges clearly had a predilection for this style, the Second Empire mode as Hitchcock calls it, as out of the total of fourteen prizes for the offices, seven were awarded to designs in this style, including the first and second in each class.

prelude

n. introduction; forerunner

Medical supplies are scarce, but as a prelude to this week's talks PNG allowed some to come in from Australia. Could this be a prelude to a trade war even more destructive of world prosperity than a military war?

prerogative

n. privilege or power attaching to a position; right

It is the prerogative of retired people like myself, who no longer carry responsibility, to speak of ideal and hypothetical solutions.

prestige

n. esteem or influence accorded for recognized achievements or reputation

Sir John Dobson's Newcastle Central, begun in 1846, was the first major station to apply the form, after which rival companies in their unending struggle for supremacy and prestige strove to achieve ever larger roof-spans.

presumption

n. something taken for granted; going beyond proper bounds; impudent boldness; arrogance

Speaking broadly, we may say that in the Roman church it is regarded as presumption, in the Protestant churches it is a privilege or a duty, but in the New Testament it is simply a fact.

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.

procrastinate

v. to postpone; to put off to another time; to delay; to hold back

Don't procrastinate — make a start on each project as soon as possible. The longer we can procrastinate, the better for all concerned, wrote an FO official in 1946.

prognosis

n. assessment; evaluation of prospects

Classically, when a person has a prognosis of terminal illness the next of kin will be given the information by a member of the hospital team who has been involved in the treatment of the ill person.

prognosticate

v. to forecast; to foretell; to diagnose

Patients, their families, and the medical system want doctors to prognosticate life expectancies for a variety of reasons.

proletariat

n. working class; social class comprised of manual laborers

The transformation of the peasantry into a rural proletariat weakened hamula (patrilineal extended family) ties, and strengthened class ones.

promontory

n. piece of land jutting into a body of water; bluff

The boat hit the rocky promontory, splitting the bow.

promulgate

v. to publish; to spread abroad; to declare; to advertise widely

Accordingly the research agencies within these ministries were brought together in 1981 to attempt an interdisciplinary research program and to promulgate the results.

protuberant

adj. bulging; swelling out; jutting out

Only her eyes, distinctive dark bluish-brown, with somewhat protuberant, bluish whites, betrayed her.

provisional

adj. temporary; for the time being; contingent; interim

You should apply for a provisional license for the categories of vehicles you want to drive (if you have not already passed a driving test for these categories).

proximity

n. nearness; vicinity; adjacency; closeness

The close proximity of the issue to the announcement of cost overruns at Eurotunnel has led many analysts to highlight the similarities between the schemes.

pseudonym

n. fictitious name; pen name

I wrote three books under this pseudonym before I ran out of steam and out of publishers.

punitive

adj. serving as a penalty; penalizing

The pattern of childrearing that produces the most hostile children is one where the parents use punitive methods persistently against a background of rejecting, hostile parental attitudes.

quash

v. to crush; to render void; to quell; to suppress; annul

Lord Justice Watkins and Mr Justice Garland, sitting in the High Court, dismissed Mr Green's application to quash the ruling, made in May by Mr Ronald Bartle, a Bow Street stipendiary magistrate.

querulous

adj. given to fault-finding and complaining; discontented

A querulous voice told him to go and jump in the Thames so he knocked again and eventually the door swung open to reveal a tall, gaunt figure, dressed in a long robe of dyed brown fur.

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.

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.

radical

n. person who advocates extreme basic changes

American liberalism is weak today not because there are too many radicals to our left, but too few.

radical

adj. thorough; extreme

For example, this free trade article has been wrongly used to draw up radical measures banning tobacco advertising, a matter which has nothing to do with free trade, and a pure case of Commission empire-building.

ramification

n. outcome of another event; consequence; branch; bough

One of the ramifications of driving fast is getting a speeding ticket.

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.

recapitulate

v. to restate in a brief; concise form; to sum up; conclude; to summarize

He first discoursed at length on the virtues and uses of the different articles, and then recapitulated the whole lecture; or else he recapitulated, equally as fully, at the end of the description of each article.

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.

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.

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.

redoubtable

adj. commanding fear or respect; horrible; dreadful; formidable

The Irish Wolfhound were war dogs then, not in the sense in which dogs were employed on the battlefields of France and Flanders in the recent European War, but as combatants, and as very redoubtable and greatly feared fighters at that.

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.

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.

remunerative

adj. profitable; lucrative

In Auckland there are many industries and manufacturers where Maltese laborers and mechanics may find immediate and very remunerative employment.

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.

reprisal

n. injury inflicted in turn for one received; retaliation; revenge

Informed sources in the Caribbean thought it likely that the political manoeuvrings behind all this were by way of a reprisal for a report by Lord Avebury criticizing Forbes Burnham's ruling party for election-rigging.

resentment

n. feeling of displeasure or indignation resulting from mistreatment or abuse

Being able to say these difficult, and intensely private things to her mother before the funeral was the trigger she wanted to be able to grieve genuinely and begin to feel the loss of her mother, rather than nurse the resentment she had had for so many years.

resilient

adj. flexible; capable of withstanding stress; buoyant; elastic

The elderly man attributed his resilient health to a good diet and frequent exercise.

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.

retribution

n. reward or punishment exacted for an injury, wickedness or other action; requital; revenge; vengeance

Britain itself had escaped retribution; Africa would assume its full role in the spread of Christian truth and the British example, awakening American emulation, would result in the two countries jointly shaming the rest of the world into ending bondage.

retrieve

v. to make good; to recover; to restore; to fetch; to bring back; to regain

Television and newspapers no longer praise model entrepreneurs but heroic laborers such as Zhang Fuxin, praised for throwing himself into a pit of polluted mud to retrieve a piece of equipment.

reverberate

v. to echo; to resonate; to resound

The drug age was in its infancy; there would be many dead and injured in its wake and as we all now know in the wiser Nineties, the knock-on effects would reverberate in much more sinister and sordid terms not just for the rest of the decade but the rest of the century.

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.

rue

v. to be sorry for; to feel remorse; to regret

East Londoner Williams is certainly not ruing his decision to move back to Selhurst Park, saying: It's familiar territory as far as I'm concerned, I had two good years here with Charlton and I'm hoping to spend a good few more here with Palace.

rueful

adj. regretful; mournful; pitiable

His head was bare and his smile was just a little rueful, as if he were uncertain of his welcome. She looked down at her new French muslin pajamas, the corners of her thin lips turning up in a rueful smile, wondering if the whiskey stains would come out — and deciding that they probably wouldn't.

sacrosanct

adj. very holy; inviolable

When the Republican leader in the Senate, Mr Robert Dole, suggested that 5% be taken from the five top recipients, he killed two birds with one shock-horror proposal: he sent a signal to the Israeli government, and he queried the sacrosanct nature of the earmarked programs.

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.

sagacity

n. shrewdness; cleverness; wisdom

Yet it seems inconceivable to be able to do so without investing every creature from worms and viruses, which follow very precise cycles of action, to the higher mammals, with the sagacity and foresight of seasoned desert nomads or intrepid Viking explorers.

sallow

adj. sick; having a sickly yellow coloring

In his mind that was guarded by grey, disinterested eyes and his sallow tight-drawn forehead, Holly could picture the process of how a match lit in innocence had tumbled upon an incendiary device.

sally

n. witty remark; assault; journey

Grunte then asked them whether they had heard the one about the Norwegian woman who had bought her son three shoes, having been told he had grown a foot; a sally which was met by universal groans.

sally

v. to rush forth suddenly; to burst forth

Learning of this affront to the Christmas Spirit from the Washington Post, the First Lady rallied her forces, put some bills into her handbag, summoned the Secret Service and sallied forth to Mazza Galleries, one of the few places in town which still allows the Sally Army to function.

sanctimonious

adj. pretending to be religious; self-righteous

Power and money with a bit of sanctimonious charity thrown in to square their consciences — that's what your Victorian gentry cared about.

sanguinary

adj. bloody; murderous

The Evangelicals usually honored Cranmer, but Macaulay did not, writing, somewhat unfairly, 'The sanguinary intolerance of a man who then wavered in his Creed excites a loathing to which it is difficult to give vent without calling foul names.'

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.

sartorial

adj. pertaining to a tailor or clothes

Not renowned for sartorial elegance, The Smiths had previously used their ill fitting and faded attire to maintain the connection with their low tech background.

satellite

n. body (natural or artificial) which revolves around a larger body; generally a planet

Satellite navigation equipment enables the boat's position to be established with great accuracy anywhere on the surface of the globe.

scintilla

n. trace; particle; spark; iota

She described the exquisite pains of love when one day she could not rise from her bed because of the anguish from a scintilla of pure love that had pierced her heart.

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.

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.

shibboleth

n. party slogan

Colonel Goreng was moving away from the details of the operation to talk about the Western concept of human rights, to mock it, to say what a ridiculous shibboleth it was when it stopped you defending the rights of those who weren't criminals, when Mrs Goreng knocked on the door.

simper

v. to smile in a silly or affected way; to smirk

When the Men came Woil would simper and whisper his pleasure and let them handle him as they liked as he said such things as: 'Nice Man, pleasant person'.

simper

n. affected or silly smile; smirk

More than 800 years of parliamentary tradition went out with a bang, not a simper, yesterday as the Earl of Burford staged a last-gasp protest against the abolition of hereditary peers' right to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

sinecure

n. profitable and easy job

One way of evading restrictions was to find sinecure posts for good players; one man was given the job of checking the advertising posters for the club, though the most common trick was for club directors, who were often substantial employers, to find part-time or simply bogus jobs for which payment was made.

sinister

adj. threatening or showing evil; dishonest; malicious

Some birds are sinister: the Carnero , a mean-spirited gray monster, is said to delight in picking out the eyeballs of shipwrecked sailors.

sleazy

adj. flimsy and cheap; shabby; cheap

The hallway was sleazy in the extreme, plaster falling from those portions of walls that did not have posters holding them together.

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.

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.

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.

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.

stringent

adj. severe; demanding; strict; binding; constraining

Everyone who deals in chemical purchasing knows that in many cases, one is forced by prepackaging and stringent sales requirements to purchase substantially more of a given compound than is required.

stupendous

adj. amazing by virtue of its immense size, force or any quality in exceptional degree

Whatever the motives behind the truly stupendous achievements in the field of religious building by people of all races and creeds throughout the centuries, there can be no doubt that those motives must be extremely powerful.

succulent

adj. juicy; delectable; luscious

The practical making of silage using cheap and simple equipment is well described by Watson and Smith, and, if properly made, it is every bit as nutritious and more succulent than good hay.

sultry

adj. hot and moist; sensuous; stifling

Keep in mind that the off-season for all of Florida, except the panhandle, is the summer, which is consistently hot and sultry.

supine

adj. lying flat on the back; inert; inactive; averse to taking action; indifferent; passive

He may start sitting like this in preparation for moving into the supine lying position (on his back) or, more rarely, into the prone lying position on his stomach.

tangible

adj. real; actual; substantial

So, while product development has been impressive, and confirms a certain level of re-investment, it does not usually lead to development of medium-sized businesses with tangible assets.

tantamount

adj. equivalent to; equal to

Social workers demonstrated a professional preference for children remaining with their natural families, and regarded admissions to care as tantamount to failure.

taunt

n. provocation; insulting, jeering or bitter remark; mockery

The newspaper reported that detectives believe it was just a vicious taunt to terrify the girl.

taunt

v. to reproach with contempt; to provoke; to sneer

Bavarian fans of Bayern Munich, for example, taunt their counterparts from Dortmund and Schalke in German's industrial north with chants about unemployment and poverty.

teeming

adj. in abundance; fertile; highly productive

If walking down streets teeming with non-residents induces mild panic, or if it strikes you as undignified to whizz around a museum in 10 minutes, because entry is part of the combination ticket you have bought from the tourist office, then forget Bruges.

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.

temporal

adj. worldly; as opposed to spiritual; existing for a time only

For a time the eastern empire was able to maintain itself in Italy, but thereafter the popes had to look to the new Frankish power in the north for their temporal defences.

temporize

v. to delay or refuse to commit oneself in order to gain time; to avoid an answer

The real point about the events of 1558 is that it was a missed opportunity for the Catholics, missed because Mary of Guise still temporized, still would not put the weight of the state behind that of the church.

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.

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.

tranquil

adj. calm; peaceful; quiet

They share a flat together on a tranquil waterside development near the City, drive a 2-liter Volvo, and take their summer holidays on the Continent.

transgress

v. to break a law or command; to violate a moral principle; to overstep a moral bound or limit

The vital role of the parents is to do all they can to ensure that the loss or diminution of love and friendship, will be the worst thing that can happen to their children if they transgress the legal and moral codes that control the society in which they will be living.

tremulous

adj. frightened; quivering

This scarcely perceptible but ubiquitous twitching, described by Ludens as like the slight tremulous movement of leaves on a tree or ripples on a pool, was one of the strangest, and in an odd way most convincing manifestations of the raising of Patrick.

trivial

adj. unimportant; small; worthless; minor

Although her mother felt otherwise, she considered her dish washing chore trivial.

truculence

n. cruelty; ferocity; harshness

There was a gulf between the truculence of his views and the introversion of his behavior.

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.

turgid

adj. swollen; inflated; using big or high-sounding words

Her mouth brushed the smooth velvet of his shoulders, and moved down to sweep lightly across his turgid male nipples.

ubiquitous

adj. omnipresent; present everywhere

A ubiquitous spirit followed the man wherever he went.

Water may seem ubiquitous, until a drought comes along.

untenable

adj. incapable of being defended or held; uninhabitable

One of the interesting facets of developments in France, which also applies to the situation in the former FRG, is that the legacy of mental hospitals is not seen as an intrinsically untenable one.

utilitarian

adj. materially or practically useful; applicable

Gandhi was sufficiently aware of the utilitarian formula of the greatest happiness of the greatest number to realize that he was completely at odds with it as an interpretation of the aim and purpose of life and as a principle of morality.

vanquish

v. to subdue; to conquer; to defeat; to win

Engels's argument is clear: the Germans were able to vanquish the Romans because their society was not so internally corrupted by class.

vaunt

v. to boast; to brag

Filled with hyperbole, their agenda was to vaunt Italian music not simply as such, but also as a metaphor for social liberty.

vener

n. superficial appearance or show designed to impress one with superiority

The erosion of values and moral standards, the relativism of life, the shocking things that happen, reveal that our civilization is but a veneer that hides a viciousness and rottenness that frighten us all.

venerable

adj. deserving respect or reverence because of age; worthy of honor and esteem

London's venerable red and cream double-deckers rumbled along the Thames embankment for the last time in 1952.

vernal

adj. pertaining to spring

Lescun is a valley to drive up into for your picnic lunch; in winter it is shut in, and a center for long-distance skiing; in spring, exquisitely vernal; in summer or early autumn drowsy and majestic, waiting for its famously late, September harvest.

versatile

adj. able to do many things skillfully

Rap is as old as the human voice and just as versatile, so what follows here is just a progress report: four different artists with four different attitudes to the word.

vicarious

adj. taking the place of another; felt, received or done in place of another; indirect

His fascination leads him to an agency which administers mental implants, so that he can have the vicarious experience of interplanetary travel injected into his memory.

vicissitude

n. change from one condition to another, often unexpected

There's a 'truth' of pop music to be found in the wet seats at Beatles or Stones concerts — as much as in the pantheon of Lennon's songwriting, or the vicissitudes of the counter culture.

virago

n. scolding or ill-tempered woman

It had been a fairly commonplace murder, a henpecked husband at the end of his tether who had taken a hatchet to his virago of a wife.

vituperate

v. to scold or blame loudly; to find fault with in abusive language; to condemn

During the last national election, Kabas swamped Vienna with an openly racist campaign in which he vituperated against foreigners and asylum-seekers.

vituperation

n. harsh rebuke; abusive condemnation; denunciation

The Old Testament has a nice line in vituperation of other cultures and their beliefs when its writers suggest that non-Israelites worship, not the true God, but satyrs or he-goats or demons.

vituperative

adj. with abusive condemnation; with harsh denunciation

Deeply committed to the pursuit of mathematics and the physical sciences, he stood up for the universities when they were attacked by vituperative radicals such as Cromwell's army chaplain, John Webster.

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.

whim

n. sudden notion or passing fancy; caprice; impulse

Minor misdemeanors can place her in a position of great vulnerability, subject to the whim of whoever happens to be on duty, and institutional life, by definition, is less flexible, less forgiving, than the 'normal family' home.

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.

writhe

v. to twist about (usually with pain)

Many animal killers like their prey to writhe and scream, not because they are sadistic but simply because that is the way they can ensure that they are about to eat fresh, healthy food.

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.

zealous

adj. full of enthusiasm or eagerness; passionate; excited

Last autumn, a zealous policeman from Marseilles wrote a best-selling expose of Socialist involvement in a huge embezzlement of public money in south-east France.

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.