

# Word\_1

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## *Distinct*

When something is distinct, it is easily identifiable or set apart from others of its kind. An eighth-grader who is six feet tall has a distinct advantage over the other kids on the basketball court.

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## *Blast*

A blast is an explosion, or a sudden sharp noise. When you blast someone, you either shoot them, or hit them with a verbal explosion—a tirade of criticism.

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## *Fumigate*

To fumigate is to spray something with fumes, usually to eliminate pests of some kind.

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# *Libertine*

If you drink a lot, eat a lot, and live a wild and unrestrained life, you might be called a libertine.

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# *Tussle*

A tussle is a rowdy fight. If the rambunctious kids you're babysitting get into a tussle, you may have to separate them for a while and calm them down.

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# *Callus*

A callus is a spot where your skin becomes rough and thick. After wearing flip flops every day, all summer long, you'll probably have a callus between your toes.

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# *Barbecue*

A barbecue is an outdoor party where food is cooked on a grill or over a fire. Your family might host a barbecue every summer to celebrate the end of the school year.

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## *Stentorian*

The adjective stentorian describes a booming voice. If you're teaching a group of unruly kids, you'll need to practice a stentorian voice to be heard above the din.

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## *Gardenia*

a large white or yellowish flower that has a pleasant smell

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## *Envision*

The verb envision means to imagine or picture. Kids often envision themselves doing exciting

things when they grow up, like being movie stars, professional athletes, or astronauts.

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## *Unbecoming*

Use the adjective *unbecoming* when a person does something that's awkward or inappropriate, like

using foul language at your grandmother's tea party.

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## *Daze*

A *daze* is a type of confusion, when you have a lack of clarity.

When you first wake up, you might be in a bit of a *daze*, shuffling about the house before your brain really starts working.

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## *Icicle*

An *icicle* is a long thin piece of ice formed when dripping water freezes, like the icicles you see hanging from houses after a winter storm.

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## *Vendetta*

A vendetta is blood feud, a quest for revenge. A vendetta might separate families for generations, with members of one family murdering those of the other, all to satisfy an ancient grudge.

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## *Overreach*

to try to do something that is beyond your ability to do  
She overreaches in her latest book, and her argument is not convincing.  
The company overreached itself and ran out of money after one year.

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## *Clandestine*

Use the adjective clandestine to describe something that is done in secret, like your clandestine attempts to steal your brother's Halloween candy.

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# *Funereal*

Funereal describes the mood in a locker room after an overtime loss in a championship game — sad, serious and gloomy, as if you were at a funeral.

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# *Irritate*

To irritate is to cause an unsettling reaction, whether it's of the body or the nerves. You can irritate someone by talking too loudly on your cellphone in public. You can also irritate your skin, causing a rash or redness.

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# *Despicable*

Stealing the last piece of food from a starving child goes way beyond mean. It's despicable — a vile and harmful act.

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# *Abandon*

To abandon something is to give it up completely. If you're in a cabin and a forest fire approaches, you'd better get in your car and abandon your cabin, or else be prepared to abandon your life.

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## *Unpretentious*

The adjective unpretentious is perfect for describing someone you know who's modest and natural and never tries to impress other people.

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## *Fragrant*

Something that is fragrant has a nice smell. What makes a smell nice is subjective, or course. You might find a bowl of dried lavender to be fragrant, but your dog might prefer a pile of horse poop.

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## *Gripping*

very interesting and exciting

a gripping story about a slave's escape to freedom

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## *Sprint*

When you run really fast, you sprint. You and your sister might sprint to the bus stop, racing to see who can get there first.

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## *Mold*

That green fungus growing on your bread is called mold — use it as a science experiment if you want to, but you definitely shouldn't plan on eating it. Mold grows where there is damp, decaying organic matter.

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## *Fetching*

To be fetching is to be attractive and beautiful. A fetching woman catches people's interest.

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## *Remonstrance*

A remonstrance is an objection or protest, the expression of earnest opposition.

Just like

a protest, PETA members might hold a remonstrance outside a fashion show of a luxury fur and leather designer.

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## *Revealing*

Use the adjective revealing to describe disclosing something that was hidden, either literally or

figuratively. If you ask people if they've ever cheated on a test, you may get revealing answers that tell you whether the person is honest or not.

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## *Inequality*

When there's an inequality, something is out of balance and things are not equal.

An inequality occurs in math when the two quantities are not the same measure or amount.

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## *Veracity*

Veracity sounds like some kind of disease you don't want to catch, but in fact, it means truthfulness. If you question the veracity of a statement or story, you wonder whether it is truthful or accurate.

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## *Antidote*

An antidote is a remedy that relieves. So if you get headaches from long bus rides, it's best to travel equipped with the key pain alleviating antidotes: Tylenol, lots of water and soothing music.

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## *Absolute*

Use absolute as a noun or an adjective when you're so sure of something that you know it will never change. For example, a devout person's belief in life after death is an absolute; that person has absolute faith in the afterlife.

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## *Forbidding*

not friendly or appealing

having a frightening or threatening appearance

a harsh and forbidding landscape

a forbidding scowl

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## *Bilious*

If an unpleasant meal has left you feeling grumpy and looking green, you're bilious

in several senses of the word. This adjective can mean both "troubled by  
indigestion"

and "irritable," and it can also be used to suggest a sickly green shade.

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## *Premeditate*

When you premeditate, you are planning ahead. While most people associate this word with

crime, let's hope you can think of a better reason to premeditate — like buying groceries before a storm.

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## *Applaud*

To applaud is to show approval, encouragement, or appreciation. You can applaud by clapping

your hands at a performance, or you can applaud with just your mouth, as when you tell someone "I applaud your decision to start exercising."

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## *Discompose*

to destroy the composure of to destroy the composure of

to disturb the order of to disturb the order of

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## *Counterpart*

If you leap tall buildings in a single bound for the Des Moines branch of your corporation, then your Metropolis counterpart might be Superman. That means you and

Superman do similar jobs, but in different locations.

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## *Bungle*

Saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, dropping something, tripping and falling: these

are some classic bungles — and they're always embarrassing.

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## *Luxurious*

The adjective luxurious describes something that is of very high quality or expensive taste,

like your luxurious living room filled with the softest rugs and gorgeous furniture hand-crafted

in Italy.

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# *Vivid*

Vivid is an adjective that describes a bold and bright color, an intense feeling, or an image in your mind that is so clear you can almost touch it.

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# *Favorable*

The word favorable describes something positive or promising, such as a two-thumbs-up movie review or the perfect conditions for golf.

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# *Spectrum*

A spectrum is a broad range of similar things or qualities. Like the wide spectrum of political beliefs in this country, ranging anywhere from super conservative to uber-liberal and everything in between.

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# *Bewitching*

1 to use magic to make someone do, think, or say something

to put (someone) under a spell

People believed the girls had been bewitched.

2 to attract or delight (someone) in a way that seems magical

They were bewitched [=enchanted, fascinated] by her beauty.

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# *Felony*

A felony is a serious crime, like murder, arson, or burglary. Fashion critics may

think that wearing white shoes after Labor Day is a felony, but it isn't

really.

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# *Exotic*

Something so unusual that it must be from some unfamiliar place is exotic. An

exotic pet might be a panda, instead of a hamster. An exotic trip might

be a journey to the Galapagos Islands, instead of to Orlando's Sea World.

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## *Scathing*

Scathing means witheringly harsh. If you enter a singing contest and the judge says that your singing is like that of a toad with laryngitis, that is scathing criticism.

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## *Sawdust*

tiny particles of wood that are formed from sawing or sanding wood

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## *Droop*

To droop is to limply or loosely hang downward. Have you ever seen the long, floppy ears of a basset hound hanging down? Those ears are drooping.

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# *Humor*

Humor is a word for the quality of being funny — or for appreciating comedy, as in "sense of humor."

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# *Disburse*

If someone wants to disburse funds to you, stick around — it means they're going to give you money!

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# *Complicate*

To complicate things is to make them more complex, confusing, or difficult. So if you've already accepted two party invitations for Saturday night, don't complicate the situation by accepting a third.

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# *Empiricism*

Empiricism means a method of study relying on empirical evidence, which includes things you've

experienced: stuff you can see and touch.

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## *Crafty*

If people call you crafty, they probably mean you are sly and a little deceptive. Then again, they could be saying that you are really good at knitting, beading, and turning old t-shirts into funky pillowcases.

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## *Obliging*

If you're obliging, you're easy to get along with and eager to help. An obliging neighbor, for example, might volunteer to shovel your sidewalk after it snows.

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## *Irate*

On the anger scale, first comes annoyed, then vexed, then irate. When cartoon characters

are irate, they're so mad that smoke comes out of their ears.

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## *Dereliction*

Dereliction is a word for neglecting responsibilities. Failing to care for your family or

do your job are examples of dereliction.

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## *Willow*

a tree that has long, narrow leaves and strong, thin branches that are used to make baskets

—see also pussy willow

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## *Sport*

Sport has many definitions, the most familiar of which is a game involving physical exertion — think tennis or hockey. Randomly, sport can also mean to wear, as in, "he looked sharp sporting a yellow sport coat."

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## *Nihilism*

If you're one of those people who believe there's nothing worth believing in, your doctrine is nihilism. In philosophy, nihilism is the complete rejection of moral values and religious beliefs.

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## *Trickery*

When tricks of any kind are used to fool or deceive someone, especially for financial gain, that's trickery.

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## *Hermetic*

If you want to keep cookies crisp for a long time, store them in a jar with a hermetic, or airtight, seal. Hermetic means sealed so that no air can get in.

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# *Chip*

If a small flake of your purple nail polish breaks off, you might describe it as a chip, or a tiny piece. You might also say, "Shoot, I always seem to chip my nails."

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# *Spatial*

Spatial describes how objects fit together in space, either among the planets or down here on earth. There's a spatial relationship between Mars and Venus, as well as between the rose bushes in the backyard.

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# *Principle*

A principle is a kind of rule, belief, or idea that guides you. You can also say a good, ethical person has a lot of principles.

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# *Renounce*

To renounce is to officially give up or turn away from. People on a diet usually renounce pizza and chocolate cake, for example.

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# *Subsistence*

Subsistence means the minimal resources that are necessary for survival. If you work for

subsistence, you'll probably receive food, water, and lodging (internet access not included).

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# *Confront*

Confront means either to face a situation that makes you uncomfortable, or to say something to someone about something they've done that bothers you. Rather than letting things

go, when people are rude to you you should confront them.

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# *Fondle*

1 to touch or handle (something) in a gentle way

fondle a coin

She fondled [=caressed] the dog's ear.

2 to touch (someone) in a sexual way

She claims that her boss tried to fondle her at the office Christmas party.

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# *Hold*

If you grasp something in your hands, you hold it. Be careful when you

hold the puppy — he's so wriggly, and you wouldn't want to drop him!

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# *Parable*

A parable is a short and simple story that teaches a religious or moral

lesson. The parable of the Good Samaritan and the parable of the Prodigal Son

are just two examples of the many parables attributed to Jesus, as recorded in the four gospels.

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## *Constituent*

Constituent means part of a whole, as in "we'll break this down into its constituent parts." The word comes up often in political contexts: constituents are the people politicians have been elected to represent.

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## *Perch*

A perch is a temporary resting place. In the middle of climbing a tree, you might find a good perch on a high branch. Bet some birds will be perching there too.

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## *Bibliophile*

You can call a book lover a bibliophile. If you find it impossible to

leave a book store without buying at least one book, you might be a bibliophile.

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## *Empower*

Empower means "give power or authority to." When you educate children and believe in

them, you empower those kids to go after their dreams.

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## *Idolize*

To idolize is to admire someone too much. A twelve year-old might idolize a pop star, for example, wallpapering her bedroom with photos of him and screaming loudly throughout his concerts.

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## *Inalienable*

Something that is yours forever, that can't be taken away and given to your

little brother instead? That something would be called inalienable. The word refers to

a natural right that cannot be revoked by an outside force.

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## *Conventional*

Conventional is an adjective for things that are normal, ordinary, and following the accepted

way. Ho-hum.

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## *Ironic*

If something is ironic it's unexpected, often in an amusing way. If you're the world chess champion, it would be pretty ironic if you lost a match to someone who just learned to play yesterday.

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## *Subvert*

When you subvert something, your words or actions criticize or undermine the usual way

of doing something or common values. The girl who wears a tuxedo to the prom might subvert traditional ideas about beauty.

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## *Superannuated*

If a friend describes your dot matrix printer as superannuated, then you should probably

plan a shopping trip for electronics. Your friend has just pointed out that your printer is obsolete.

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## *Deride*

The verb deride means to show a low opinion of someone or something. The jerk would deride the other kids on the bus by calling them names or pulling their hair until the driver decided to de-ride him by kicking him off the bus.

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## *Imitation*

Imitation means copying the words, facial expressions, or actions of another person.

Sometimes imitation

is flattering, but often it's just annoying — like when your little brother does

it to drive you crazy.

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## *Bump*

A bump is an area that bulges out, like a pregnant woman's stomach. To

bump someone is to knock into them.

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## *Stygian*

of or relating to the river Styx of or relating to the river Styx

extremely dark, gloomy, or forbidding extremely dark, gloomy, or forbidding

the stygian blackness of the cave the stygian blackness of the cave

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## *Tolerance*

When you practice tolerance, you accept another's ideas and beliefs. If you respect someone's opinions — even if you disagree or find them nonsensical — you display tolerance.

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## *Scuttle*

When you scuttle, you move with quick anxious steps, like a bug running for cover when a light is turned on.

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## *Podiatrist*

A podiatrist is a foot doctor. Got a bunion? A hammer toe? Call the podiatrist.

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## *Hatchet*

A hatchet is a little ax used for chopping wood or for hewing a round log into a squared-off shape. If you go camping, you might take a hatchet with you.

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## *Insolent*

Someone who's insolent is either really doing her own thing, even if it goes against what everyone else is doing, or she's mildly disrespectful.

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## *Succor*

Succor is relief or help. If you've just woken up in the midst of a lion's den, wearing nothing but raw meat pajamas — sounds like you could use some succor!

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## *Bystander*

Someone who observes an event without taking part in it is a bystander. The police may want to interview any bystanders who witnessed a robbery, to get a description of the robber.

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# *Dejected*

If you're ejected from an important game, you're going to feel dejected. If you're rejected by the love of your life, you'll feel dejected again.

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# *Guilty*

Someone guilty has done something wrong or illegal. And when you do something wrong, you feel guilty — bad or sorry — about it.

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# *Tonsorial*

Use the adjective tonsorial when you need a fancy way to talk about barbers. Want to cut hair when you grow up? Tell your parents you're going into the tonsorial field.

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# *Consummate*

Consummate means complete, finished, or masterful. If you refer to someone as a consummate

chef, then you are saying he is the ultimate chef. If you say someone is a consummate jerk, then you are saying he is the ultimate jerk.

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## *Deflect*

The verb deflect describes blocking something or changing its course. Hockey goalies deflect the

flying puck with their sticks or blockers, making it travel in a different direction, preferably to a teammate's stick.

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## *Opine*

The verb opine is used when someone speaks up and expresses an opinion. You might opine that dogs are highly preferable to cats.

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## *Vinegared*

flavored or marinated with vinegar    flavored or marinated with vinegar

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## *Piazza*

an open public area in a town or city (especially in Italy) that is usually surrounded by buildings

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## *Penalty*

A penalty is a punishment or consequence for doing something wrong, such as having

to pay a fee for not bringing your library book back when it was due.

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## *Cuff*

A cuff is the very end of a long sleeve or the rolled bottom of your jeans. You might prefer to wear a cuff on the bottom of your pants in order to show off your striped socks.

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## *Jockey*

During a horse race, the riders are called jockeys. Being a jockey is an excellent career choice for someone small.

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## *Gaggle*

- 1 a group of geese
  - a flock of geese
  - 2 a group of people
  - a noisy gaggle of photographers/reporters/tourists
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## *Glucose*

Glucose is simple sugar. It's all kinds of sugar, and it's in your blood, and your body needs it for energy. Most Americans sadly consume far more glucose

than necessary, and have enlarged gluteus maximus muscles to show for it.

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## *Lank*

Lank can describe grass that is long, hair that is limp, and people who are tall and thin.

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## *Gorgeous*

Reach for the adjective gorgeous to describe jaw-droppingly beautiful, magnificent people or things.

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## *Ancestry*

Have a family tree hanging on the wall? Then you know a bit about your ancestry, or family history and lineage.

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## *Confer*

If you gab, chat, and talk it up with someone, you have conversation, but if you're looking for input from each other as you talk, you confer, or consult, together. They had a family meeting to confer about a schedule for sharing the new laptop.

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## *Onset*

When something is at its onset, it's at the beginning, just getting started, and it's often something that's not so pleasant. The onset of hurricane season is probably not the best time to visit the beach.

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## *Obtrude*

If you want to be rude, you'll obtrude, or thrust yourself to the front of a line without waiting.

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## *Bracket*

A bracket is a punctuation mark that's used to set a word or phrase aside from the rest of a sentence. Sometimes dates or other numbers in a sentence are enclosed by brackets.

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## *Gerrymander*

Some politicians change the boundaries of their voting districts in order to benefit themselves or their political party. To manipulate the boundaries like this — often viewed as unfair — is to gerrymander.

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## *Limbo*

No, this isn't the dance where you try to squeeze under a pole by leaning backwards, this limbo refers to an imaginary place for lost or forgotten things.

It's where your socks go when you lose them in the dryer.

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## *Shingle*

A shingle is a thin piece of wood used in making a roof or a signboard outside an office, especially a doctor's or lawyer's. If you're opening a business, hang your shingle outside so people can find you.

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## *Partition*

A partition is something that divides space. When your younger brother decides to stop bathing, setting up a partition between his side of the room and yours seems like a good idea...until you realize your partition is not air-tight.

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## *Treachery*

Treachery is trickery, cheating, and deceit, like the treachery of your former friend who only stuck around until he stole your girlfriend and turned the whole grade against you.

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## *Decomposition*

Decomposition is the process of decaying or rotting. If you've ever left a carved pumpkin on the porch into late November, you have seen and smelled decomposition.

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## *Girdle*

A girdle is a tight-fitting undergarment that supports the lower body. The purpose of a girdle is to make a person's waist and stomach look smaller and firmer.

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## *Solvent*

Solvent's meaning changes pretty drastically depending on its part of speech. As a noun,

solvent is either a certain kind of chemical or an idea that solves a problem. As an adjective, solvent describes someone who's got cash on hand.

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## *Declassify*

to allow the public to see or learn about (something that has been a secret)

The government has not yet declassified that information.

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## *Redistribution*

If your boss gives all your coworkers a hundred dollars, but only gives you a nickel, you might ask for a redistribution — another try at dividing things up, and hopefully with more cash for you this time.

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## *Timidity*

Do you suffer from timidity? If so, you probably feel uneasy in new places and situations. You might fear having to make decisions. But as you get more comfortable, your timidity will go away.

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## *Bonnet*

A bonnet is an old-fashioned hat that ties under the chin. Sometimes people dress

babies up in frilly clothes and bonnets.

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## *Discretion*

If you have the freedom to decide something on your own, the decision is left to your discretion. You're in charge.

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## *Gag*

A gag is a piece of cloth that's tied around a person's face to keep them from speaking or being heard. Cartoon bad guys often tie up their victims and put gags over their mouths.

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## *Supersede*

If you click on the link after this description, a new screen will supersede, or replace, this one. A longer description will supplant, or supersede, by replacing this brief one.

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## *Idolatrize*

to worship idols pay idolatrous worship to worship idols pay idolatrous worship

to make an idol of idolize to make an idol of idolize

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## *Initiate*

If you press the red button, you'll activate weapons of mass destruction and initiate

a global war. As a verb, initiate means to start. As a noun, initiate

(short "a") means to be part of a group.

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## *Futile*

When something fails to deliver a useful result, you can call it futile. Hopefully

all the time you're spending studying vocabulary won't turn out to be futile!

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# *Fair-minded*

having or showing an honest and fair way of thinking

a fair-minded man

fair-minded reporting

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# *Chaos*

Chaos is a state of extreme confusion and disorder. Putting a dozen dogs and a dozen cats in the same room would probably lead to utter chaos.

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# *Imponderable*

Imponderable describes a situation that isn't able to be completely explained. "What is the

meaning of life?" is one of those imponderable questions that defies humans' ability for understanding

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## *Untoward*

The adjective untoward describes something offensive or inappropriate, like the rumors of untoward behavior that can shatter a Hollywood icon's reputation.

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## *Mallet*

A mallet is a tool with a large, barrel-shaped, head — used to pound on something. You might use a mallet to strike an instrument or in playing croquet. Yeah, right.

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## *Connotation*

When you're talking about the implied subtext of words rather than their literal meaning, reach for the noun connotation. A political boss might not want to be called "boss" because of the negative connotations.

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# *Yokel*

Yokel is a disparaging name for someone from a small town or the countryside.

To call someone a yokel is to imply that they are unsophisticated, uneducated, and probably dim-witted.

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# *Forthright*

When a person is being forthright, they're being direct, clear, or even straight-up.

The

opposite of forthright might be evasive, shifty, indirect, or circuitous. But we're not here

to talk about those. We're here to talk about forthright.

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# *Daubster*

a bungler in painting dauber a bungler in painting dauber

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# *Bizarre*

Someone or something bizarre is odd or unusual in appearance, style, or character.

If

your teacher walks into class wearing a purple boa, lime-green cowboy boots, and

a

scuba mask, you might comment, "How bizarre!"

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# *Seemly*

You don't want to seem anything less than seemly, especially in the presence of

the Queen. Only seemly behavior is allowed when she's around.

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# *Adverse*

Steer clear of anything adverse. If it's adverse, it's working against you — like

adverse weather conditions or the adverse effects of eating too much sugar.

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# *Inaugural*

An inaugural is a ceremony inducting someone into a new position, especially the President.

We also call the President's first speech an inaugural address.

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# *Shattered*

1 very shocked and upset

The end of his marriage left him emotionally shattered.

2 British, informal

very tired

I was shattered when I got home from work.

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# *Prerogative*

A prerogative is someone's special right or privilege. As Bobby Brown once sang, "I don't need permission / Make my own decisions / That's my prerogative."

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## *Arbiter*

An arbiter is someone selected to judge and settle a dispute. When Doc and Grumpy disagreed over whose turn it was to stay late at the mine, they chose Snow White as an arbiter.

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## *Ornithologist*

An ornithologist is a type of zoologist who focuses on birds. If you want to know anything about our fine feathered friends, consult an ornithologist.

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## *Engrave*

To engrave is to carve into something, especially stone. Sometimes people have messages engraved inside their wedding rings, their iPods, or any other rock-hard surface that can handle it.

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