GRE VOCABULARY FLASH REVIEW

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EMT Flash Review

GRE VOCABULARY

FLASH REVIEW



NEW YORK

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INTRODUCTION

The GRE general test is designed to test applicants who are applying to graduate school. *GRE Vocabulary Flash Review* includes pronunciation guides, definitions, sample sentences, and synonyms for 600 of the words that most commonly appear on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test. Studying and learning these words will help you succeed on the Verbal Reasoning sections of the exam.

About the GRE General Test

Beginning in August 2011, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) is offering a revised version of the GRE general test. The following information reflects the format of the revised general test; changes from the previous version of the test are also noted.

Beginning in August 2011, the GRE will include six sections. (The previous version included fewer but longer sections.)

It includes:

- An Analytic Writing section, for which you will write two short essays.
- Two **Verbal Reasoning** sections, which test reading comprehension.
- Two **Quantitative Reasoning** sections, which test mathematical concepts and skills.
- An unidentified **experimental section**.

Altogether, the test takes about three and a half hours to complete. The Analytic Writing section is always administered first; the other sections may follow in any order. In addition, a research section may conclude the test. As with the experimental section, your answers on this section will not count toward your final score.

Go to the ETS website for detailed information about each of these exam sections:

www.ets.org/gre

The Experimental Section

The experimental section may be a third Verbal Reasoning section, or it may be a third Quantitative Reasoning section. Because this section is experimental, and only designed to test questions for use on future exams, your answers on it will not count toward your final score. However, you will not know which section is the experimental

section, so be sure to do your best on all parts of the exam.

Computer-Based Testing

All GRE general tests within the United States are administered by computer. (Only if you take the exam outside the United States, in an area where computer-based testing is unavailable, will you take a paper-based exam; these are administered a limited number of times each year.) Beginning in August 2011, the format of the computer-based exam will allow you to change answers within a section or skip questions and go back to them later—actions that were not permitted on the previous version of the computer-based exam. Although scratch paper is permitted, the exam is administered entirely by computer.

Vocabulary on the GRE General Test

Unlike the previous version of the GRE general test, the revised version does not include antonyms or analogies—question types that test the understanding of vocabulary out of context. This is good news for you! The context provided by a sentence or passage on which each question is based will help you determine the meaning of the words you study in this book and elsewhere.

Beginning in August 2011, the Verbal Reasoning sections of the GRE general test include the following three question types.

Reading Comprehension questions test your understanding of a text. The GRE general test includes about 10 Reading Comprehension passages, ranging in length from one paragraph to several; as few as one and as many as six questions may be asked about a given passage. These will comprise about half of the questions you will see on the Verbal Reasoning sections.

There are three kinds of Reading Comprehension questions:

- Some questions are traditional multiplechoice questions, in which you select one correct answer from among five choices.
- Some questions require you to select one, two, or three correct answers from among three choices. You cannot receive partial credit for your responses to these questions; you receive credit for your response only if you select all of the correct answers and nothing else.
- Some questions, require you to click on the sentence within the passage that meets a particular description.

Some Reading Comprehension questions will ask directly about the meaning of words within

a passage. However, because the strength of your vocabulary is a crucial factor in your ability to understand what you read, vocabulary study should help you prepare for Reading Comprehension questions.

For **Text Completion** questions, you are presented with a brief passage, from which some words have been omitted. Your task is to select the words and/or phrases that complete the passage in a way that makes sense. If the passage includes just one blank, you will be offered five choices, only one of which fills in the blank correctly. If the passage includes two or three blanks, you will be offered three choices for each blank.

For **Sentence Equivalence** questions, you are presented with a single sentence that includes a blank. Your task is to select two words from among the choices provided, either of which could complete the sentence in a way that makes sense. The two completed sentences will be equivalent in meaning. You cannot receive partial credit for your responses to these questions; you receive credit for your response only if you select *both* correct answers.

Because of their more focused format, success with Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions depends greatly on the strength of your vocabulary.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The 600 words in this book are presented in alphabetical order. Each page includes three words: On one side, the words are provided along with a guide to their pronunciation. On the reverse side, definitions, sample sentences, and synonyms are provided for each word. The pages are designed in this way so that you can quiz yourself on the meaning of each word.

The pronunciation of each word is given. Capital letters indicate stressed syllables, and the following spellings are used to represent some common sounds.

g	girl
j	jelly
k	<u>k</u> ite, cat
S	<u>s</u> un, celery
Z	<u>z</u> est, cheese
zh	mea <u>s</u> ure

а	h <u>a</u> t
е	b <u>e</u> d
i	w <u>i</u> sh
0	m <u>o</u> p
u	c <u>u</u> p
еу	c <u>a</u> ke
ee	<u>ea</u> t
ahy	b <u>i</u> ke
oh	c <u>oa</u> t
yoo	m <u>u</u> sic
uh	<u>a</u> larm [schwa]
aw	r <u>aw</u>
ou	m <u>ou</u> se
00	r <u>oo</u> m

The definitions provided for the words are not comprehensive, but rather focus your attention on the meanings that are the most common—and the most commonly tested. Synonyms are provided to further clarify the meaning of each word. Because the best way to learn vocabulary is to learn it in context, a sample sentence is provided for each word, to illustrate its use.

A word about spelling: yes, it does count! Take care to note and learn the distinction between such commonly confused words as *complacent* and *complaisant* and *discreet* and *discrete*. Also note the spelling of such words as *complement* (as opposed to *compliment*) and *imminent* (as opposed to *eminent*).

Using This Book for Vocabulary Study

In truth, vocabulary acquisition is the work of a lifetime. Don't try to learn all 600 words in this book at once. The best approach is to study the words in sets of about 12 or 15 words (4 or 5 pages) each day. The following is a suggested program of study:

- Review a set of words in the morning.
 Say each word aloud. Try to think of your own sentences using the words.
- Write the words down on a sheet of paper, and keep the sheet with you, checking it throughout the day to familiarize yourself with the list.
- In the evening, quiz yourself on the meaning of the words. Use a pencil to write a check next to the words you define correctly; review the words you are unable to define, along with the words you will study the next day.
- Periodically quiz yourself on the words you have already studied, to check that you have learned them.

A Last Word on Vocabulary Study: Read, Read, Read

Vocabulary is learned best when it is learned in context—that's why we've provided a sample

sentence for each word in this book. The more frequently you encounter words in a variety of contexts, the better you will be able to remember them, and even discern the nuances of their meaning. So, the best way to learn GRE vocabulary is to read, read!

If you are currently an undergraduate, you're probably scrambling to keep up with your weekly reading assignments. As you read, pay attention to the vocabulary in each assignment. Take the time to note and look up the meaning of words you don't know. If you come across one of the words in this book, note the context in which it is used. You might even want to jot down the sentence on the page with the word in this book.

If you are not currently in school, the type of reading that will best prepare you for the GRE general test is nonfiction. Read the newspaper. Read serious magazines, such as *New Yorker*, *The Economist*, or *The Nation*. Read biographies. Choose a subject that matters to you, and read everything you can find on the topic. As you read, pay attention to the vocabulary you encounter; learn the words that are new to you, and note the use of words you have learned from this book.

GRE VOCABULARY FLASH REVIEW



ABATE (ah-BEYT)				
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ABDICA (AB-di-key				
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ABERRANT

(ah-BER-uhnt)



to make or become less in degree, intensity, value, or amount

We waited for the storm to **abate** before we headed out.

Synonyms: decrease, diminish, reduce, subside

to give up a right or responsibility, especially formally

Elizabeth II of England would probably not have become queen if her uncle, King Edward VIII, had not **abdicated**.

Synonyms: relinquish, renounce, resign

going off the usual, normal, or right way; deviating from the usual or normal type

The **aberrant** weather during that rainy summer left many feeling as though there had not been any summer at all.

Synonyms: abnormal, atypical, deviant, unusual

ABEYANCE (uh-BEY-uhns)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
ABJECT (AB-jekt)
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ABJURE

(ab-JOOR)



a temporary state of inactivity

We kept our travel plans in **abeyance** and did not go until we were certain that we had enough money for the trip.

Synonyms: inactivity, recess, suspension

completely hopeless

They lost everything when their house burned down and have since lived in **abject** conditions, often homeless.

Synonyms: downtrodden, miserable, wretched

to formally reject, often under oath

Though she had completely changed her ways, she could not **abjure** her former friends.

Synonyms: forswear, renounce

ABSCOND (ab-SKOND)
•••••••••••
ABSTEMIOUS (ab-STEE-mee-uhs)
••••••••••••
ABYSMAL

(uh-BIZ-muhl)



to leave secretly and suddenly

One minute the children were underfoot; the next minute, they **absconded** with all the cookies.

Synonyms: disappear, escape, vanish

restrained, especially with food and alcohol

Since she began to do yoga, she has also been **abstemious** with both alcohol and junk food.

Synonyms: frugal, moderate, restrained, temperate

like an abyss: immeasurably great or low; hopelessly bad

He wrote the term paper all in one night, and the results were **abysmal**.

Synonyms: bottomless, vast, wretched

ACCOLADE (A-kuh-LEYD)	
	•
ACERBIC (uh-SUHR-bik)	
	•

ACCRUE (uh-KROO)



an award or other expression of honor or praise

Given the number of **accolades** she has received for her work on stage and in film, it is surprising just how humble she is.

Synonyms: award, honor

sour or harsh in taste, mood, or temperament He tried to hide his bad mood, but his **acerbic** reply gave his anger away.

Synonyms: acidic, caustic, harsh, sharp

to grow through additions

As the years **accrue**, so does wisdom.

Synonyms: accumulate, collect, increase

ACUMEN (A-kyuh-muhn)			
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ADAMANT (A-duh-muhnt)			
•••••		, 	• • • •
ADMONISH (ad-MO-nish)			



insight or shrewdness, especially in practical matters

Due to the combination of her personal warmth and business **acumen**, her new company was an instant success.

Synonyms: discernment, insight, judgment, perception

insistent, immovable

Though the child protested, his parents were **adamant**: he had to be in bed by eight o'clock.

Synonyms: determined, inflexible, resolute, stubborn, unyielding

to advise against something; to gently scold or warn

The teacher **admonished** the children for tracking mud down the hallways of the school.

Synonyms: advise, reprimand, warn

ADULATION (a-juh-LEY-shun)	
••••••••••••	•
ADULTERATE (uh-DUHL-tuh-REYT)	
••••••••••••	•

AESTHETIC (es-THE-tik)



excessive admiration, praise, or devotion; flattery

The football star enjoyed the **adulation** of thousands of fans until it was revealed that he had cheated.

Synonyms: devotion, fawning, flattery, worship

to make impure by adding foreign or inferior elements, materials, or ingredients

Do not **adulterate** this cake batter by using flour of such poor quality!

Synonyms: cheapen, corrupt, dilute, weaken

having to do with beauty or the arts

Though the morality of the movie is questionable, its **aesthetic** qualities are admirable: it was beautifully filmed.

Synonym: artistic

AFFINITY (uh-FI-ni-tee)	
•••••	,
AGGRANDIZE (uh-GRAN-dahyz)	
••••••••••	

AGGREGATE

(A-gre-guht or A-gre-GEYT)



an attraction, especially one based on a similarity in interests

Countless young women have read and reread Jane Eyre, feeling an **affinity** for its fierce heroine.

Synonyms: affection, fondness, sympathy

to make greater in size, power, or honor; to enhance the appearance of greatness

The dictator **aggrandized** his power by taking control of the press and all other media.

Synonyms: glorify, hype, inflate, strengthen

(adj.) formed by grouping elements into one larger body

The **aggregate** power of the teammates was far greater than you might imagine based on their individual talents.

Synonyms: accumulated, collective

(v.) to group elements into one larger body

We need to **aggregate** the survey results in order to have a clear picture of the overall data.

Synonyms: assemble, collect, combine

(n.) a body of associated elements

In the **aggregate**, her small daily efforts resulted in a gorgeous book of poems.

Synonyms: combination, mass, whole

ALACRITY (uh-LA-kruh-tee)
••••••••••
ALCHEMY (AL-kuh-mee)
ALLAY (uh-LEY)



cheerful readiness

He replied to the invitation with **alacrity**; he was eager for the opportunity to travel to Puerto Rico.

Synonyms: liveliness, promptness, willingness

the power or process that can change something ordinary into something valuable; a medieval pseudoscience with the purpose of changing lead into gold

The **alchemy** that transformed him into a dashingly handsome man in her eyes was love.

Synonyms: enchantment, magic, sorcery

to put to rest; to decrease in strength or difficulty

After they heard the coyotes howling, nothing but the dawn could **allay** their fears.

Synonyms: alleviate, calm, ease, lessen, relieve

ALLEVIATE (uh-LEE-vee-eyt)			
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ALLOY (A-loi)			
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ALLURE (uh-LOOR)



to lessen the burden, make easier

Her calm support did much to **alleviate** his difficulties with the task.

Synonyms: allay, ease, lighten, relieve

a mixture of two or more different things; literally, a mixture of two or more metals or of a metal and nonmetal

Even sterling silver is actually an **alloy** of silver with another metal, usually copper.

Synonyms: blend, combination, composite, compound

(v.) to attract

Only the possibility that his favorite singer might perform could **allure** him to attend the concert.

Synonyms: charm, entice, tempt

(n.) that which attracts

Easily nauseated, she could not see the **allure** of a roller coaster.

Synonyms: appeal, charm

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AMALGAMATE (uh-MAL-guh-MEYT)
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AMBIGUOUS (am-Bl-gyoo-wuhs)
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AMBIVALENCE

(am-BI-vuh-luhns)



to mix or combine into one body

The plan to **amalgamate** the two high schools was not well thought out, and the students did not easily unite into one school.

Synonyms: blend, incorporate, integrate, merge

ill-defined or uncertain; possible to be understood in different ways

Her habitual sarcasm rendered her statement **ambiguous**; no one could tell if she really meant what she said.

Synonyms: cryptic, enigmatic, indefinite, indeterminate

uncertainty; the state of having two or more contradictory feelings about something at the same time

His **ambivalence** about playing the piano went on for years, and he thought about quitting every day until he enrolled at the conservatory.

Synonyms: doubt, indecision, uncertainty

AMELIORATE (uh-MEEL-yuh-reyt)
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AMENABLE (uh-ME-nuh-buhl)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
AMENITY (uh-ME-nuh-tee)



to get or make better

Her illness was **ameliorated** by the fact that it permitted her finally to rest and get enough sleep.

Synonyms: alleviate, improve, relieve

agreeable, willing, or submissive; answerable or legally responsible; able to be examined or tested

Even though it would require him to redo much of the work he had done so far, he was **amenable** to the change in plans.

Synonyms: cooperative, manageable; accountable

the quality of being agreeable; a feature that increases value or comfort

He had become so used to the general **amenity** of the community that the rudeness of the grocery store clerk shocked him.

Synonyms: charm, pleasantness; advantage, convenience

ANACHRONISM (uh-NA-kruh-ni-zuhm)
•••••••••••
ANALOGOUS (uh-NA-luh-guhs)
•••••••••••
ANARCHY (A-nuhr-kee)



a person or thing that is out of place in time Her floor-length skirts and elaborately done up hair were **anachronisms** that she nevertheless pulled off with grace.

Synonym: misplacement

comparable in such a way that an analogy can be drawn

Freud viewed the mind as **analogous** to a steam engine, whereas today we are more likely to compare it to a computer.

Synonyms: alike, corresponding

lack of government; complete disorder

When the teacher was called out of the classroom, the children erupted into gleeful **anarchy**.

Synonyms: chaos, confusion, turmoil

ANATHEMA (uh-NA-thuh-muh)
••••••••••••
ANODYNE (A-nuh-dahyn)
••••••••••••

ANOMALY

(uh-NO-muh-lee)



someone or something that is cursed or disliked intensely; a curse

Except for carrots, vegetables were **anathema** to the toddler.

Synonyms: abomination, pariah

something that comforts; a medicine that relieves pain

The music of Bach was an **anodyne** to her through the months of mourning.

Synonyms: balm; painkiller

something different, irregular

His late submission was an **anomaly**; he was known for meeting his deadlines.

Synonyms: aberration, exception, irregularity, oddity

ANTIPATHY (an-TI-puh-thee)
APOSTATE (uh-PO-steyt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
APOGEE

(A-puh-jee)



dislike, feeling against

He could not overcome his **antipathy** for dogs, even to date a woman who had a poodle as a pet.

Synonyms: aversion, disgust, loathing

one who renounces a previous loyalty, such as to a religion, nation, or party

Though she had many disagreements with the party, she had no plans to become an **apostate.**

Synonyms: defector, dissenter, heretic, nonconformist

the highest point; literally, the point at which an orbiting body is farthest from Earth

Finalizing the deal that spring was the **apogee** of her career thus far.

Synonyms: apex, climax, summit, zenith

APPEASE (uh-PEEZ)					
•••••	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• ••
APPRISE (uh-PRAYHZ)					
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APPROBATION

(a-pruh-BEY-shuhn)



to bring to a state of peace

Only singing her favorite song could **appease** the distressed child.

Synonyms: calm, pacify, soothe

to inform

He kept the radio on at all times, to be sure he was kept **apprised** of the latest weather report.

Synonyms: advise, enlighten, notify

formal approval

Make art to express yourself, not to win the **approbation** of others.

Synonyms: approval, commendation, endorsement, recognition

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APPROPRIATE (uh-PRO-pree-eyt)
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ARCHAIC (ahr-KEY-ik)
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ARDUOUS (AHR-juh-wuhs)



to set apart for a specific use; to take for oneself

The army **appropriated** all vehicles in the region for military use.

Synonyms: confiscate, seize, steal, usurp

of the past; extremely old or out of date

Students think that the language of Shakespeare is **archaic** until they encounter the work of Chaucer, who lived about two centuries earlier.

Synonyms: ancient, obsolete, old-fashioned

extremely difficult; requiring much energy or effort

Running a marathon is **arduous** enough in itself; I can't imagine doing it as the last leg of a triathlon.

Synonyms: exhausting, grueling, strenuous

ARTLESS (AHRT-luhs)				
ASCETIC (uh-SE-tik)	•••••	••••	••••	· • • • • • •
•••••		• • • • •	• • • •	• • • • • •

ASPERITY (a-SPER-uh-tee)



natural, simple, and without artificiality; without knowledge or skill

The child **artlessly** won over even the crankiest adults simply by smiling at them.

Synonyms: genuine, straightforward, unaffected, uncultured

strictly self-denying, often for spiritual purposes The **ascetic** practices of a monk are certainly not for everyone.

Synonyms: austere, disciplined, strict

severity of tone, manner, or temper; roughness

The **asperity** with which she spoke revealed her anger about the situation.

Synonyms: harshness, sharpness

ASPERSION (uh-SPER-zhuhn)
•••••••••••
ASSIDUOUS (uh-SI-juh-wuhs)
••••••••••
ASSUAGE (uh-SWEYJ)



a false accusation intended to do harm

He cast **aspersions** on his rival, but everyone could see that his wild claims were not true.

Synonyms: defamation, slander

characterized by persistent and careful attention or effort

An **assiduous** student, she earned the highest grades despite her learning disability.

Synonyms: attentive, constant, persevering

to decrease the intensity or severity of

Nothing but time could **assuage** their grief after they lost their home.

Synonyms: calm, ease, relieve

ASTRINGENT (uh-STRIN-juhnt)
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ASYLUM (uh-SAHY-luhm)
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ATTENUATE (uh-TEN-yuh-WEYT)



harsh, caustic, strict

He was the only employee unafraid of the boss's **astringent** tongue. **Synonyms:** biting, bitter, cutting, sharp

a place or state of shelter and protection; a place for the care of the ill or insane

The refugees found **asylum** at the monastery.

Synonyms: refuge, retreat, sanctuary

to make thin or weak

Her enthusiasm was **attenuated** by the length of the event; she did not like to be kept awake so late.

Synonyms: debilitate, lessen, weaken

AUDACIOUS (aw-DEY-shuhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
AUSTERE (aw-STEER)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
ALITONIONOLIS

(aw-TO-nuh-muhs)



daring, recklessly brave; inventive, unconventional

I am hardly **audacious** enough to go scuba diving, let alone sky diving!

Synonyms: adventurous, bold, rash

somber, strict, or stern in manner or appearance

The house was plain and blended into the **austere** winter landscape.

Synonyms: ascetic, rigorous, serious, solemn

independent

There are many who wish that the city government were more **autonomous** and did not have to abide by the decisions made at the distant state capital.

Synonyms: self-governing, self-ruling, sovereign

AVARICE
(A-vuh-ruhs)
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
AVER
(uh-VUHR)
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

AVOCATION (a-vuh-KEY-shun)



a greed for wealth that cannot be satisfied
His avarice was a source of great discontent; he could not be happy with what he already had.
Synonyms: covetousness, greed, rapacity
to declare or prove to be true
I can aver that her story is true, because I was there and saw it happen myself.
Synonyms: affirm, assert, claim, verify
an occupation pursued for enjoyment
She pursued her avocation of designing jewelry in the evenings after returning home from her day job.
Synonyms: diversion, hobby, pastime

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AXIOMATIC

(AK-see-uh-MA-tik)



taken as an axiom, or self-evident truth

Until Copernicus showed otherwise, it was taken as **axiomatic** that the Earth was the center of the universe.

Synonyms: accepted, fundamental, given, obvious



BANAL (buh-NAL)	
•••••••••••	•
BAWDY (BAW-dee)	
•••••••••••	
ВЕНЕМОТН	

(bi-HEE-muhth)



unoriginal, trite

The musical was unbelievably **banal**; the characters, plot, and music completely lacked originality.

Synonyms: bland, conventional, hackneyed

obscene, often in a boisterous or humorous way

Shakespeare's language can be as **bawdy** as it is beautiful.

Synonyms: coarse, indecent, lewd, vulgar

something enormous in size or power

The company was a **behemoth**, associated with about 1,000 brands, some of them even competing with each other.

Synonyms: beast, giant, leviathan, mammoth

BELIE (bi-LAYH)
•••••••••••
BELLICOSE (BEH-li-kohs)
••••••
DENIELICENT

(buh-NE-fuh-suhnt)



to reveal the falsehood of, contradict His blushing face **belied** his claim that he did not care. Synonyms: disprove, negate, repudiate inclined or eager to fight The **bellicose** young man picked fights on the playground nearly every day. Synonyms: belligerent, combative, hostile, warlike doing good Every fall, they celebrated the beneficent

Earth for its rich harvest.

Synonyms: benevolent, generous, kind

BLANDISHMENT (BLAN-dish-muhnt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
BOLSTER (BOHL-stuhr)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••

BOMBASTIC (bom-BAS-tik)



flattery intended to persuade

The **blandishments** of the salesperson got the better of her judgment, and she purchased the stereo, only to return it the next day.

Synonyms: coaxing, fawning, wheedling

to give support

The coach **bolstered** their spirits after they played a poor first half, and ultimately they won the game.

Synonyms: brace, sustain, uphold

obnoxiously pretentious in speech or writing

After an evening of listening to **bombastic** speeches, I left the award ceremony with a headache.

Synonyms: pompous

BOORISH (BOOR-ish)	
	•
BRAZEN (BREY-zuhn)	
	•
PPOACH	

(brohch)



rude in a way that reveals insensitivity to others
He lost several friends because of his boorish behavior at the party that night.
Synonyms: bad mannered, coarse, crude
••••••••••
shamelessly bold
He was so brazen as to interrupt the guest speaker in the middle of her remarks.
Synonyms: audacious, cocky, impudent

to mention for the first time

Though he loved her dearly, he was too timid to **broach** the topic of marriage.

Synonyms: introduce, propose, suggest

BUCOLIC (byoo-KO-lik)			
• • • • • • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • •
BURGEON (BUHR-juhn)			
••••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •
BURNISH (BUHR-nish)			



having to do with shepherds or rural life He enjoyed their vacation in bucolic northern New England; she longed to return to the city. Synonyms: pastoral, rural, rustic
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
to sprout, bloom, and grow
She burgeoned into an eager reader shortly after beginning first grade.
Synonyms: blossom, flourish
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
to polish, especially by rubbing
The carpenter burnished the surface of the table until it was smooth and glossy.
Synonyms: brighten, rub, shine

BUT	TRE	ES:	5								
(BUH-	-truh	ıs)									
		•									



to support, prop up

She listened to the anthem again and again, to **buttress** her courage.

Synonyms: bolster, brace, strengthen



CACOPHONY (kuh-KO-fuh-nee)				
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • • •	• ••
CALUMNY (kuh-LUM-nee)				
•••••	• • • •	• • • • •	• • • • •	• ••

CANON

(KA-nuhn)



harsh, discordant sound

To her, it was powerfully stirring music; to her parents, it was unbearable **cacophony**.

Synonyms: discord, noise

false charges made with the intention of harming the reputation of another

Despite the falseness of the charges, the **calumny** ended her career in politics.

Synonyms: defamation, slander

a body of fundamental rules or standards; a set of sacred texts or other comprehensive list of texts

Many of the books we take as part of the **canon** today may be forgotten in the next century.

Synonyms: dogma, law, principle

CANT (kant)		
••••••	• • • • • • • •	• • • • •
CAPRICIOUS (kuhp-REE-shuhs)		
•••••	• • • • • • • • •	• • • • •
CAPTIOUS		

(KAP-shuhs)



the use of trite or stock language, especially for insincere expressions of enthusiasm or piety

We were disgusted with the empty **cant** of the politicians, who had done nothing to prevent the disaster.

Synonyms: hypocrisy, sanctimoniousness

impulsive, tending to act according to whim

He was so **capricious** that he rarely kept a job longer than a few months.

Synonyms: arbitrary, erratic, unpredictable

tending to find fault; designed to confuse

The teacher's feedback was more **captious** than instructive.

Synonyms: cantankerous, faultfinding, finicky, nit-picking

CASTIGATION (kas-ti-GEY-shuhn)
•••••••••••
CATALYST (KA-tuh-luhst)
CAUSAL (KAW-zuhl)



severe criticism or punishment

The children did not expect such **castigation** from their gentle teacher, who later apologized for reprimanding them so harshly.

Synonyms: chastisement, discipline, invective

an agent that causes or speeds up a change or activity; literally, a substance that causes or speeds up a chemical reaction

They had talked about moving for years; her pregnancy was the **catalyst** that finally spurred them to take action.

Synonyms: impetus, stimulus

relating to a cause

She understood the **causal** relationship between the care she took with her studies and her grades.

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CAUSTIC (KAWS-tik)			
•••••	••••	• • • • •	• • • • • • •
CAVIL (KA-vil)			
•••••	••••	• • • • •	• • • • • • •
CENSURE (SEN-sher)			



able to burn or corrode; sarcastic

Her **caustic** tone and sarcastic words said everything we needed to know about her thoughts about getting fired.

Synonyms: acerbic, biting, harsh

to raise minor objections

His tendency to **cavil** at new ideas made him a poor manager, and he was soon fired.

Synonyms: criticize, quibble

blame, formal condemnation

The **censure** of her colleagues did nothing to curb her illicit behavior.

Synonyms: criticism, disapproval, reprimand

CHARY (CHER-ee)			
••••••	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • ••
CHASTEN (CHEY-suhn)			
••••••	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • ••
CHICANERY (shi-KEYN-uh-ree)			



cautious

She was **chary** of auditioning for another play after the last production ended in a debacle.

Synonyms: careful, restrained, wary

to correct through punishment

The children were thoroughly **chastened** after they spent their weekend cleaning the playground they had damaged.

Synonyms: discipline, humiliate, subdue

deception through trickery

He won the competition through **chicanery**, not talent.

Synonyms: artifice, cheating, subterfuge

CHIMERA (kahy-MIR-uh)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
CIRCUITOUS (suhr-KYOO-uh-tuhs)
••••••••••••
COAGULATE (koh-A-gyuh-leyt)



a terrible illusion, an imagined monster
The chimera that haunts him at night is his idea of himself in the future.
Synonyms: delusion, mirage
going in a winding, indirect way
Though it may have been quicker to go by the highway, we enjoyed the circuitous drive to the lake.
Synonyms: rambling, roundabout
to thicken; to gather in a mass
The milk became sour and began to coagulate .

Synonyms: congeal, clot, curdle, solidify

CODA		
(KOH-duh)		
• • • • • • • • •	 	
COGENT		
(KOH-juhnt)		
• • • • • • • • •	 	

COMMENSURATE (kuh-MEN-se-ruht)



the conclusion of a work of music, literature, drama, or film, often formally different from the rest of the work

We knew how the story was going to turn out long before the play reached its **coda**.

Synonyms: conclusion, ending, finale

very convincing and appealing to reason; relevant

The senator was not able to give a **cogent** argument in favor of his re-election.

Synonyms: apt, compelling, persuasive, telling

equal or corresponding in measure, degree, intensity, or duration

If your effort is **commensurate** with your desire, you are likely to succeed.

Synonyms: comparable, equivalent, proportionate

COMPENDIUM (kuhm-PEN-dee-uhm)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
COMPLACENT (kuhm-PLEY-suhnt)
•••••••••••
COMPLAISANT (kuhm-PLEY-suhnt)



a summary of a larger work or body of knowledge; a complete list of items

The thin volume included a **compendium** of all the different kinds of birds he had seen visiting the woods in his backyard.

Synonyms: abstract, digest, overview, survey

satisfied with one's own condition

It is easy to be **complacent** with one's own good fortune rather than to use it to better the lives of others.

Synonyms: self-satisfied, smug, unconcerned

inclined to please

The girl was shy but **complaisant**, and soon warmed up to the company.

Synonyms: agreeable, gracious, obliging

COMPLEMENT (KOM-pluh-ment)
•••••••••••
COMPLIANT (kuhm-PLAHY-uhnt)
•••••••••••
CONCILIATORY (kuhn-SI-lee-uh-taw-ree)



something that completes or perfects For her, coffee is a necessary complement to breakfast. Synonyms: counterpart, enhancement, supplement conforming, submissive Stand firmly on your ground—don't be so compliant! Synonyms: docile, obedient, obliging, yielding tending to gain goodwill, overcome distrust Upon hearing her **conciliatory** words, no one was in the mood to argue anymore.

Synonyms: appeasing, civil, placating

CONFOUND (kuhn-FOUND)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
CONNOISSEUR (ko-nuh-SUHR)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
CONTENTION

(kuhn-TEN-shuhn)



to confuse thoroughly

The directions **confounded** her so completely that she ended up on the wrong side of town.

Synonyms: baffle, bewilder, frustrate, perplex

one who understands, appreciates, and can make judgments of an art or matter of taste

Though he claimed to be a **connoisseur** of twentieth century art, he could not even tell a Picasso from a Pollock.

Synonyms: aficionado, expert, specialist

opposition, strife; an idea proposed and held in debate or argument

The constant mishaps of her lackadaisical brother became a source of **contention** with her husband.

Synonyms: conflict, discord, quarrel

CONTIGUOUS (kuhn-Tl-gyoo-wuhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
CONTRITE (kuhn-TRAHYT)
CONTUMACIOUS (kon-too-MEY-shuhs)



in contact, adjoining

The state of Alaska is **contiguous** with Canada but not with the United States.

Synonyms: adjacent, bordering, neighboring, touching

feeling or showing sorrow for wrongdoing

Though he was **contrite** after their argument, she was not easily willing to forgive.

Synonyms: apologetic, penitent, remorseful, sorry

stubbornly rebellious

The **contumacious** little girl refused to listen to reason and to wear a jacket or shoes.

Synonyms: headstrong, obstinate

CONUNDRUM (kuh-NUHN-druhm)
•••••••••••
CONVENTION (kuhn-VEN-shuhn)
CONVIVIAL (kuhn-VI-vee-uhl)



a complicated problem; literally, a riddle with a pun or wordplay in its answer

The disorder in his bedroom every morning was a **conundrum**, until they realized that he was sleepwalking at night.

Synonyms: puzzle, riddle, trick

a meeting; an agreement; the standard or usual way of doing things

As e-mail has become the main form of written correspondence, many people are forgetting the **conventions** of letter writing.

Synonyms: custom, habit

enjoying company, food, and drink

A **convivial** person, she looks forward to the holidays even though they mark the beginning of winter.

Synonyms: agreeable, friendly, jovial

CONVOLUTED (KON-vuh-loo-tuhd)
•••••••••••
COPIOUS (KOH-pee-uhs)
••••••••••••
CRAVEN (KREY-vuhn)



full of twists and turns, complicated

His **convoluted** directions were unnecessary; all that he needed to say was, "Turn left at the corner."

Synonyms: complex, intricate, puzzling

numerous, plentiful

She took **copious** notes and filled several notebooks every term.

Synonyms: abundant, extensive, generous

completely lacking in courage

Please tell me you are not so **craven** as to forfeit the game rather than face your fiercest opponent.

Synonyms: cowardly, fearful, timid

CREDULOUS (KRE-juh-luhs)	
CULPABLE (KUHL-puh-buhl)	•
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••	•

CYNICISM (SI-nuh-si-zuhm)



willing to believe; originating in credulity

As a teacher, he was far too **credulous**, and his students could get away with almost anything, so long as they could tell a story to explain it.

Synonyms: believing, gullible, unsuspecting

deserving blame

Though she was clearly **culpable**, she was never even charged for the crime.

Synonyms: blameworthy, guilty, liable

a complete lack of faith, especially in the values and motives of humans

Despite his **cynicism**, he was also charming, and soon everyone was seduced by his gloomy outlook.

Synonyms: bitterness, negativism, pessimism, sarcasm

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CYNOSURE

(SI-no-shor)



center of attraction

The movie star is an unapologetic **cynosure**; she always expects all eyes to be on her.

Synonyms: hotshot



DEARTH (duhrth)				
DEBACLE (duh-BAH-kuhl)	• • • •	• • • •	••••	• • • •
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DEBAUCHERY

(di-BAW-chuh-ree)



a shortage, an inadequate supply

The **dearth** of clean water was due to the drought.

Synonyms: deficiency, lack, scarcity

a disaster or complete failure

The play was supposed to be a tragedy, but the production was such a **debacle** that the audience laughed through the third act.

Synonyms: breakdown, defeat, fiasco, wreck

indulgence in physical pleasures

His life of **debauchery** took a toll on his body, and he looked far older than his years.

Synonyms: depravity, intemperance, revelry

DECORUM (di-KOHR-uhm)				
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • ••
DEFAULT (di-FAWLT)				
••••••	• • • • •	•••••	• • • •	• • • ••

DEFERENCE (DEH-fuh-ruhns)



propriety and good taste

Please conduct yourselves with **decorum** during our visit to the mayor's office.

Synonyms: civility, convention, dignity

(n.) a failure to act or fulfill an obligation

We hired him by **default**; none of the other applicants showed up for the interview.

Synonyms: disregard, neglect

(v.) to fail to act or fulfill an obligation

She **defaulted** on her mortgage payments after she lost her job.

Synonyms: evade, neglect

respect for and submission to the judgment or will of another, especially an elder or superior

The children treated their grandparents with **deference**.

Synonyms: compliance, courtesy, esteem, regard

DEFUNCT (di-FUHNGKT)			
•••••	•••••	•••••	••
DELINEATE (di-Ll-nee-eyt)			
•••••	• • • • • • • •	•••••	••

DEMUR (di-MUHR)



no longer working or in use; no longer existing

The organization had been **defunct** for nearly a decade when she decided to revive it.

Synonyms: obsolete; extinct

to describe or portray in detail

The CEO took the time to **delineate** her plans for the company, so that everyone would understand the direction they would be taking in the next year.

Synonyms: characterize, depict, draw, represent

to express disagreement, object

Everyone else was enthusiastic about the project, but she **demurred**, saying it would never succeed.

Synonyms: oppose, refuse

DENIGRATE (de-ni-GREYT)		
•••••	•••••	• • • • • • • • • •
DENOUEMEN (DEY-noo-mawn)	Т	
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • • • • • •

DERISION

(di-RI-zhuhn)



to attack the reputation or achievements of another

He did nothing but **denigrate** his classmates' artwork, but could hardly tolerate the most neutral comment about his own.

Synonyms: belittle, criticize, disparage

the outcome of a story or series of events

The **denouement** was unsatisfying: the hero woke up, and it turned out that the entire story had been his dream.

Synonyms: conclusion, culmination, resolution

ridicule, contempt

The poorly plotted film was the object of much **derision** from critics, but audiences loved it.

Synonyms: disdain, mockery, scorn

DERIVATIVE (di-RI-vuh-tiv)
•••••••••••
DESICCATE (DEH-si-keyt)
•••••••••••
DESUETUDE (DEH-swi-tood)



derived from something else, lacking in originality

His first album was **derivative** R & B, but his second album was completely original and propelled him to fame.

Synonyms: banal, copied, imitative

to dry up

The **desiccated** landscape had not seen rain in months.

Synonyms: dehydrate, deplete, wither

the state of no longer being in use

After the original members of the sorority graduated, many of their rituals were forgotten and soon fell into **desuetude**.

Synonyms: disuse, inactivity

DESULTORY (DE-suhl-tohr-ee)
•••••••••••
DETERRENT (di-TUHR-uhnt)
•••••
DETRACTION (di-TRAK-shuhn)



lacking a plan or sense of purpose, disconnected His desultory ways were maddening to her; she preferred to get right to the point.

Synonyms: aimless, chance, erratic, rambling that which prevents

The new methods of policing the neighborhood turned out to be an effective deterrent to crime.

Synonyms: curb, hindrance, obstacle, restraint

a lessening of reputation, especially due to criticism; the act of taking away

As a result of the critics' many **detractions** of the novel, it sold only a few dozen copies.

Synonyms: misrepresentation, slander

DIAPHANOUS (dahy-A-fuh-nuhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
DIATRIBE (DAHY-uh-trahyb)
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DICHOTOMY (dahy-KO-tuh-mee)



extremely fine or delicate to the point of transparency; insubstantial

The starlet's **diaphanous** gown was both gorgeous and scandalous.

Synonyms: gossamer, flimsy, sheer

a critical or abusive speech or piece of writing

After taking in her boss's long **diatribe** about her work, she simply quit.

Synonyms: harangue, invective, tirade

a division into two opposite or mutually exclusive groups

The **dichotomy** between her words and actions was startling; to hear her talk, you'd think she could do nothing right, whereas I had never seen her do anything wrong.

Synonyms: bifurcation, difference, separation

DIDACTIC (dahy-DAK-tik)			
DIFFIDENCE (DI-fi-duhns)	• • • •	• • • • •	•••••
DIFFUSE	• • • • •	• • • • •	

(di-FYOOS)



tending or intended to inform or teach

Because our values are so different today, the **didactic** novels of the past are now more humorous than instructive.

Synonyms: academic, instructive, pendantic

shyness, lack of confidence

He overcame his **diffidence** and gave a stirring speech at the rally.

Synonyms: hesitancy, insecurity, reluctance, reservation

wordy and disorganized; not concentrated, spread around

The lecturer was so **diffuse** that although she shared a wealth of information, we hardly learned anything.

Synonyms: rambling; diluted, scattered, widespread

DIGRESSION (dahy-GRE-shuhn)
DILETTANTE (DI-luh-tahnt)
DIRGE (duhrj)



a turning away from the main course or subject

This paragraph is a **digression** from the main topic of the essay, but it is more interesting to me than anything else.

Synonyms: departure, diversion, wandering

a lover of or dabbler in the arts

He called himself a **dilettante**, but he was actually an accomplished pianist.

Synonyms: amateur, connoisseur, rookie

a slow, mournful piece of music, especially one intended for a funeral or similar occasion

The orchestra played the piece so slowly that it sounded like a **dirge**.

Synonyms: lament, requiem

DISABUSE (DIS-uh-byooz)				
DISCERNING (di-SUHR-ning)	3			
•••••	• • • • •	••••	• • • • •	• ••

DISCORDANT (dis-KOR-duhnt)



to clear up an error or confusion

The nutritionist worked hard to **disabuse** the public of the notion that vegetarians cannot get enough protein.

Synonyms: correct, debunk, enlighten

having good judgment or understanding

Only the most **discerning** customers can tell the difference between this fabric and real silk.

Synonyms: discriminating, insightful, knowledgeable, perceptive

not in harmony, quarrelsome

She was a brilliant leader who could listen to the **discordant** voices of the Senate and somehow find a way to compromise.

Synonyms: cacophonous, contradictory, inconsistent

DISCREDIT (dis-KRE-duht)				
••••••	• • • •	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • ••
DISCREET (dis-KREET)				
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DISCREPANCY

(dis-KRE-puhn-see)



to refuse to believe or cause others to disbelieve

He had to **discredit** the ridiculous idea that with a better diet, one could get by with only five hours of sleep each night.

Synonyms: doubt, question, reject

maintaining or respecting privacy, especially about something of a delicate nature

They were so **discreet** about the affair that it was never discovered.

Synonyms: cautious, modest, prudent, restrained

disagreement, inconsistency

The investigation of a small **discrepancy** in an account revealed widespread fraud at that bank.

Synonyms: conflict, difference, dissimilarity, variation

DISCRETE (dis-KREET)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
DISINGENUOUS (dis-in-JEN-yoo-uhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
DISINTERESTED (dis-IN-truhs-tuhd)



separate, distinct

The course was given in three **discrete** sessions; you could attend just one or two and still follow the material.

Synonyms: apart, detached, isolated

lacking in truth, often while giving the appearance of truthfulness

Their advertising was **disingenuous**, featuring photographs that made their dumpy hotel look like a paradise.

Synonyms: deceitful, dishonest, insincere, hypocritical

not personally engaged, without emotional interest

He could not participate on the jury; the victim was his cousin, and so he could not be **disinterested** in the outcome of the trial.

Synonyms: dispassionate, indifferent, unbiased, unconcerned

DISJOINTED (dis-JOIN-tuhd)
••••••••••••
DISMISS (dis-MIS)
•••••••••••
DISPARAGE (di-SPER-ij)



disorderly, out of sequence

She told the story in such a **disjointed** way that we asked her to repeat it so that we could understand.

Synonyms: confused, disconnected, incoherent, rambling

to allow or cause to leave; to reject

She **dismissed** the proposal, saying that it would be too expensive to carry out.

Synonyms: discharge, release, send away; disregard

to speak of slightingly; to lessen the reputation of

Do not **disparage** your elders; they worked hard to build this community.

Synonyms: belittle, depreciate

DISPARATE (DIS-puhr-uht)			
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • • •	,
DISSEMBLE (di-SEM-buhl)			
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DISSEMINATE

(di-SE-muh-neyt)



essentially different

The four musicians brought together their **disparate** talents and ideas to make a wild and beautiful collection of songs.

Synonyms: dissimilar, diverse, various

to put on a false appearance

The children tried to **dissemble** innocence, but the crumbs on their face gave them away.

Synonyms: conceal, feign, simulate

to scatter, spread around

Please **disseminate** the news; I want everyone to know about my candidacy.

Synonyms: advertise, broadcast, disperse, publish

DISSIDENT (DI-suh-duhnt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
DISSOLUTION (DI-suh-loo-shuhn)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
DISSONANCE (DI-suh-nuhns)



disagreeing with an established belief or organization

Under the rule of the dictator, people kept their **dissident** ideas to themselves.

Synonyms: heretical, nonconforming, unorthodox

the act or process of falling apart

The **dissolution** of their marriage was unexpected; they had seemed so happy.

Synonyms: disintegration, rupture, separation

the clashing of ideas or sounds

The music included much **dissonance**, and I left the concert hall with a headache.

Synonyms: conflict, disagreement, discord

DISTEND (dis-TEND)	
•••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • •
DISTILL (dis-TIL)	
•••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
DIVEST (dahy-VEST)	



to expand, swell

Ironically, their **distended** bellies are a sign of their great hunger.

Synonyms: bloat, bulge, enlarge

to extract the essence of

The professor could **distill** complex ideas into a simple diagram or statement.

Synonyms: concentrate, purify, refine

to strip, deprive, or free from

He **divested** himself of most of his wealth and went off to live in the woods.

Synonyms: dismantle, dispossess, seize

DIVULGE (dahy-VUHLJ)	
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••	
DOCTRINAIRE (dok-truh-NAIR)	
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••	
DOGMATIC	

(dawg-MA-tik)



to make a secret known

She refused to **divulge** what her sister had told her that evening.

Synonyms: admit, disclose, tell

fanatic about a doctrine or theory

A **doctrinaire** libertarian, she refused to pay any taxes.

Synonyms: dogmatic, fanatical, impractical, inflexible

taken to expressing opinions as though they were facts

She was turned off by his **dogmatic** assertions that reading his book would completely transform her life.

Synonyms: fanatical, opinionated

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DORMANT (DAWR-muhnt)				
•••••	• • • •	• • • • •	••••	• • • • •
DROSS (dros)				
••••••	• • • •	• • • • •	••••	• • • • •

DUPE (doop)



inactive, asleep
It is hard to believe that the tulip bulbs lie dormant in the earth under the winter snow.
Synonyms: inert, latent, potential
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
waste, something that is inferior
The art show was so full of dross that his beautiful piece stood out.
Synonyms: refuse, scum, trash
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
one who is easily deceived or fooled
He was a dune to helieve all of her lies

Synonyms: chump, fool



EBULLIEN (i-BOOL-yuh		
• • • • • • • •	• • • • • • • •	 • • • • • •
ECCENTR (ek-SEN-trik)	_	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		 • • • • • •

ECLECTIC (e-KLEK-tik)



lively, enthusiastic	
We soon were all carried away by her ebullier mood.	ηt
Synonyms: buoyant, high-spirited, vivacious	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	••
unconventional, irregular	
Her staid outfits contrasted with her eccentric ideas.	:
Synonyms: odd, unusual, whimsical	
•••••	••
choosing from a variety of sources; composed of a variety of styles, methods, or ideas	ł
His taste in music was eclectic , including everything from opera to free jazz.	

Synonyms: assorted, diverse, varied

EFFERVESCENCE (e-fuhr-VE-sens)
•••••••••••
EFFETE (e-FEET)
•••••••••••••••••
EFFICACY (EH-fi-kuh-see)



liveliness

Her **effervescence** was not appropriate for the solemn occasion.

Synonyms: enthusiasm, excitement

without strength or character

The young men longed for war so that they could prove they had not grown **effete**.

Synonyms: decadent, degenerate, sterile

the ability to produce the desired effect

Her **efficacy** was astonishing; within three days she got the project back on track.

Synonyms: capability, competence, effectiveness

EFFRONTERY (i-FRUHN-tuh-ree)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
ELEGY (E-luh-jee)
••••••••••
ELICIT (i-Ll-suht)



shameless boldness

He had the **effrontery** to demand a full refund, simply because he had not liked one of the performers.

Synonyms: arrogance, disrespect, insolence

a poem or song expressing sorrow at the loss of one who has died

After the poet read the **elegy** for her mother, not an eye was dry of tears.

Synonyms: lament, requiem

to draw or bring out

Her pointed questions **elicited** thoughtful replies.

Synonyms: evoke, obtain

ELIXIR (i-LIK-suhr)			
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •
ELOQUENT (EH-luh-kwuhnt)			
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • • •

EMACIATED (i-MEY-shee-ey-tuhd)



a sweetened mixture of alcohol and water having medicinal qualities

He made a fortune selling an **elixir** that he claimed could preserve youth.

Synonyms: medicine, solution

beautifully and fluently expressive

She wrote an **eloquent** letter to thank her aunt for the gift.

Synonyms: articulate, expressive

made thin and week

The cat was **emaciated** when we found her, but now she is healthy though a bit plump.

Synonyms: haggard, skinny, starved, wasted

EMBELLISH (im-BE-lish)
•••••••••••
EMOLLIENT (i-MOL-yuhnt)
EMPIRICAL (im-PIR-i-kuhl)



to add ornamentation

He **embellished** the story with little exaggerations to make it more interesting.

Synonyms: adorn, decorate, enhance

having the power to soothe or make soft and supple

The midwife's **emollient** words encouraged the woman in labor.

Synonyms: healing, soothing; lotion, salve

based on observation or experience without resorting to theory

Your arguments are too theoretical; only **empirical** evidence will persuade me.

Synonyms: experimental, observed, practical

EMULATE (EM-yuh-leyt)	
•••••••••••	•
ENCOMIUM (en-KOH-mee-uhm)	
••••••	•
ENDEMIC	

(en-DEM-ik)



to try to equal or excel; to imitate

He had no desire to **emulate** his novelist father and instead became an accountant.

Synonyms: compete, follow, rival

praise, an expression of praise

The **encomium** from all the critics in the world did not matter so much to her as the praise her teacher heaped on her little book.

Synonyms: accolade, tribute

characteristic of or prevalent in a group of people or region

The Joshua tree is **endemic** to the Mojave Desert; it grows nowhere else.

Synonyms: aboriginal, local, regional

ENERVATE (E-nuhr-veyt)	
ENGENDER	•
(en-JEN-duhr)	
ENHANCE	•

(en-HANS)



to reduce the strength of

The heat and humidity **enervated** her so much that she did not even try to accomplish anything on that day.

Synonyms: debilitate, enfeeble, weaken

to bring into existence

His unclear directions **engendered** confusion.

Synonyms: beget, generate, originate, produce

to improve in quality, desirability, or value

Her new hairstyle did much to **enhance** her appearance.

Synonyms: augment, embellish, improve, intensify

ENIGMATIC (e-nig-MA-tik)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
ENNUI (ahn-WEE)
••••••••••
ENUNCIATE (ee-NUHN-see-eyt)



puzzling, mysterious

He lay in bed that night trying to sort out the meaning of her **enigmatic** good-bye.

Synonyms: ambiguous, perplexing

a feeling of weariness

Despite the wealth of opportunities available to me, I could not shake the feeling of **ennui** at the very thought of starting another job.

Synonyms: boredom, dullness, languor

to pronounce clearly; to announce

I will **enunciate** my intentions only after my plans are settled.

Synonyms: articulate; declare, proclaim

EPHEMERAL (i-FEM-uh-ruhl)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
EQUANIMITY (e-kwuh-NI-muh-tee)
••••••••••••

EQUIVOCATE

(i-KWI-vuh-keyt)



lasting a short time
Pleasure may be ephemeral , but so is pain.
Synonyms: brief, fleeting, momentary, passing
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
mental stability under stress
The secret to her equanimity was that no matter how much she had to do, she always got enough sleep.
<i>Synonyms:</i> calmness, composure, equilibrium, serenity
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
to speak without committing oneself
When I ask this next question, don't equivocate ; just say directly what is on your mind.
Synonyms: dodge, evade, prevaricate

ERRANT (EH-ruhnt)	• • • • • •		
ERUDITE (ER-yuh-dahyt)			
	• • • • • •	• • • • •	• • • • • • • •
(e-SHOO)			



given to wandering; tending to err
The errant child soon lost her way.
Synonyms: meandering, rambling, straying; fallible
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
learned
The professor was erudite , not only in her own field of scholarship but also in twentieth-century poetry.
Synonyms: educated, knowledgeable, studious
to avoid, especially for ethical or practical

reasons

A strict vegetarian, she **eschews** eggs and dairy products in addition to meat and fish.

Synonyms: abstain, renounce, shun

ESSAY (e-SEY)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	•••••	• • • • •
ESOTERIC (e-suh-TEH-rik)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	•••••	• • • • •

ESTIMABLE (ES-tuh-muh-buhl)



to attempt, to try

I have essayed neither rock climbing nor sky diving, and probably never will try either activity.

Synonyms: test, undertake

known only by the initiated

The symbolism of the Tarot is hardly as esoteric as you might think.

Synonyms: arcane, hidden, occult

capable of being estimated; worthy of respect We practiced hard that week to prepare to face an **estimable** opponent.

Synonyms: admirable, reputable, respectable

EULOGY (YOO-luh-jee)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
EUPHEMISM (YOO-fuh-mi-zuhm)
••••••••••••
EVANESCENT (e-vuh-NEH-suhnt)



a speech or piece of writing given in honor of someone who has died

Each of his five sons gave a brief and moving **eulogy** at his funeral.

Synonyms: tribute

the use of a neutral or vague word or phrase to replace a word or phrase that might offend or seem harsh or unpleasant

"To pass away" is a common **euphemism** for "to die."

Synonyms: circumlocution, delicacy, pretense

like vapor, tending to fade or vanish

Young people do not know just how **evanescent** youth is.

Synonyms: fleeting, passing, temporary, transient

EVINCE (i-VINS)				
•••••	•••••	• • • •	• • • • •	• • • •
EVOCATIVE (i-VO-kuh-tiv)				
• • • • • • • • •	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • • •	• • • ••

EXACERBATE

(ig-ZA-suhr-beyt)



to give evidence of, reveal

That he was able to read when he was only three years old **evinced** his intelligence and eagerness to learn.

Synonyms: demonstrate, display, indicate, manifest, show

tending to call forth or suggest emotion or ideas

Though the paintings were abstract, they were **evocative** of desert landscapes.

Synonyms: expressive, suggestive

to make worse

The couple was deep in debt, and so the loss of her job only **exacerbated** their problems.

Synonyms: aggravate, infuriate, intensify

EXACT (ig-ZAKT)
••••••••••
EXECRABLE (EK-si-kruh-buhl)
EXCULPATE (EK-skuhl-peyt)



to call for and obtain, demand

The coach was so successful because she **exacted** the best effort from her teams.

Synonyms: compel, require

detestable, very bad

He was sentenced to a life in prison for his **execrable** crimes.

Synonyms: abominable, disgusting, horrible, loathsome

to clear from guilt or blame

Not only was she **exculpated** of the charge that she had cheated on the test, but her teacher apologized profusely.

Synonyms: absolve, exonerate, vindicate

EXHORT (ig-ZORT)		
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
EXISTENTIAL (eg-zi-STEN-shuhl)		
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • • • • •

EXIGENCY

(EK-suh-juhn-see)



to advise or urge strongly

Though he **exhorted** his students to attend his evening study sessions, they were poorly attended.

Synonyms: admonish, beseech, encourage, recommend

having to do with being and existence

The philosopher's concerns were **existential**; she questioned how and why human life came to be.

that which is necessary in a given situation; an urgent situation

He was ill prepared for the **exigencies** of life abroad.

Synonyms: necessity, requirement; crisis, emergency

EXONERATE (ig-ZO-nuh-reyt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
EXPIATE (EK-spee-eyt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
EXPLICATE (EKS-pli-kevt)



to clear from blame; to relieve of a responsibility

We were relieved to be **exonerated** of our cleaning duties that weekend.

Synonyms: absolve, exonerate, vindicate; discharge, liberate

to make amends

To **expiate** for their vandalism, they painted a beautiful mural over the graffiti.

Synonyms: atone, compensate, rectify

to explain in detail

In her term paper, she **explicated** the meaning of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Synonyms: analyze, clarify, interpret

EXPOSITORY (ik-SPO-zuh-taw-ree)
••••••••••••
EXTEMPORANEOUS (ek-stem-puh-REY-nee-uhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
EXTIRPATE (EK stuhr pout)



conveying information or explanations

She enjoyed **expository** writing so much that she decided to pursue a career as a journalist.

Synonyms: explanatory, informative

made, done, or said at the spur of the moment

His **extemporaneous** speech was both funnier and more moving than his colleague's carefully planned one.

Synonyms: impromptu, improvised, unrehearsed

to destroy at the roots

The new police chief was determined to **extirpate** crime from the city.

Synonyms: annihilate, demolish, eradicate, exterminate, extinguish

EXTRANEOUS (ek-STREY-nee-uhs)
••••••••••••
EXTRAPOLATE (ik-STRA-puh-leyt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
EXTRINSIC (ek-STRIN-zik)



coming from without, extra

Address the main topic only; leave out any **extraneous** details, however entertaining they might be.

Synonyms: additional, external, foreign, superfluous, unessential

to infer, predict, or project based on given information

Be careful not to **extrapolate** too wildly from the survey results; stick close to the data.

Synonyms: conclude, envision

originating from without

The movie reminded the critic of his child-hood, but he recognized that these memories were **extrinsic** to the quality of the film itself.

Synonyms: external, extraneous, unessential



FACETIOUS (fuh-SEE-shuhs)	
•••••	• • • • •
FACILITATE (fuh-SI-luh-teyt)	
•••••	• • • • •
FALLACY	

(FA-luh-see)



not serious, inappropriately jokey

The **facetious** tone of the guide regarding first aid was at odds with the serious of its purpose.

Synonyms: amusing, frivolous, humorous

to make easier

To **facilitate** the discussion, please raise your hand if you wish to speak.

Synonyms: aid, assist, expedite, promote

a deceptive or mistaken idea or belief

It is a **fallacy** to believe that humans evolved from chimpanzees; we do share a common ancestor, however.

Synonyms: delusion, error, misconception

FALLOW (FA-loh)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •
FATUOUS (FA-choo-uhs)			
• • • • • • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • •
FAWNING (FAW-ning)			



left uncultivated, inactive

The farmer let that field lie **fallow** this year so that it would not be depleted.

Synonyms: dormant, idle, resting

foolish

His **fatuous** comments during the interview made him seem untrustworthy, and so he was not hired.

Synonyms: idiotic, mindless, ridiculous, silly

showing affection or seeking favor through flattery

Unable to trust the **fawning** attitudes of those around her, the celebrity relied on her family and oldest friends.

Synonyms: flattering, ingratiating, pandering

FELICITOUS (fi-LI-suh-tuhs)
FERVENT (FUHR-vuhnt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••

FILIBUSTER (FI-luh-buh-stuhr)



well expressed or well suited

Her **felicitous** remarks put the students at ease before the test.

Synonyms: apt, appropriate

intense

His **fervent** admiration of her went unreturned; she found him uninteresting.

Synonyms: ardent, heartfelt, passionate

the use of obstruction to prevent action, especially the passage of a law

Due to the **filibuster** by just one senator, there was no vote on the bill.

Synonyms: delay, hindrance, interference, opposition

FLAG (flag)	
•••••••	
FLEDGLING (FLEJ-ling)	
••••••	
FLOUT (flout)	



to lose interest or spirit

Seeing that their enthusiasm for the hike was **flagging**, the guide decided that it was time to take a break.

Synonyms: dwindle, slump, wane

a beginner

I am learning Chinese, but I'm just a **fledgling** speaker, having studied the language for only six months.

Synonyms: novice, rookie

to neglect or treat with scorn

She showed her disrespect for her teachers by **flouting** their rules.

Synonyms: distain, disregard, insult

FOMENT (foh-MENT)			
FORESTALL (fohr-STAWL)	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • •
•••••	 • • • • •	• • • •	• • • ••

FORTUITOUS (fawr-TOO-uh-tuhs)



to promote the growth of

The newspaper editor was accused of **fomenting** rebellion by publishing stories that were highly critical of the government.

Synonyms: agitate, cultivate, encourage, foster

to hinder or delay

The actions that the police took to **forestall** a riot might actually have caused it to occur.

Synonyms: prevent, thwart

lucky, happening by a lucky chance

The weather on the day of the marathon could not have been more **fortuitous**: partly cloudy and cool but not humid.

Synonyms: accidental, fortunate

FRACTIOUS (FRAK-shuhs)
••••••••••••
FRUGALITY (froo-GA-luh-tee)
•••••••••••
FULMINATE (fubl mub NEVT)



tending to be quarrelsome or troublesome

The boys had a reputation for being **fractious**, but I never saw them be anything other than polite and well behaved.

Synonyms: unruly, rebellious, wayward, wild

the tendency to be sparing with money and other resources, not wasteful

Her tendency to indulge in expensive shoes contrasted with her **frugality** in all other matters.

Synonyms: conservation, economy, prudence

to denounce strongly

The preacher **fulminated** against gambling and other forms of idleness and waste.

Synonyms: attack, condemn, criticize

FULSOME (FUHL-sum)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
FURTIVE (FUHR-tiv)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
FUTILE (FYOO-tahyl)



characterized by excess

The **fulsome** celebration disgusted her; she would have preferred to enjoy her birthday quietly with family.

Synonyms: excessive, extravagant, grandiloquent

done secretly or in an underhanded way

They stole many **furtive** glances into the guarded room but saw nothing.

Synonyms: cunning, sly, stealthy

useless

Their efforts to build a dam were **futile**, and their home was completely flooded.

Synonyms: hopeless, ineffective, pointless



GAINSAY
(GEYN-sey)
•••••••••••
GARRULOUS
(GAR-uh-luhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
GAUCHE
(aohsh)



to declare to be untrue

You cannot **gainsay** the fact that though he has much more to learn, he has improved a great deal.

Synonyms: contradict, deny, dispute, oppose

talkative, generally in a rambling or annoying way

I was hoping to rest during the flight, but unfortunately I was seated next to a **garrulous** young man.

Synonyms: diffuse, verbose, wordy

lacking good manners or tact, especially due to a lack of experience

I am embarrassed to think how **gauche** it was for me to have brought up that sensitive topic in the middle of the dinner party.

Synonyms: awkward, crude, insensitive, maladroit

GENIAL (JEE-nyuhl)	
••••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
GERMANE (juhr-MEYN)	
••••••	• • • • • • • • • • • •

GLIB

(glib)



friendly, sympathetic

His **genial** manners were the result of great effort, as he actually tended to be rather grouchy.

Synonyms: cheerful, cordial, easygoing, gracious, kind

relevant, appropriate

Because your concerns are **germane** to the topic of the meeting, I would like to ask you to speak first.

Synonyms: applicable, connected, fitting, related

informal, without thought or sincerity

His **glib** comment might have been insulting, except that everyone knew that he generally did not mean what he said.

Synonyms: flip, offhand, slick

GOAD (gohd)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
GRANDILOQUENCE (gran-DI-luh-kwuhns)
•••••••••••••
GREGARIOUS

(gri-GAR-ee-uhs)



to urge

He might have quit years ago if his brother had not **goaded** him on.

Synonyms: encourage, incite, stimulate

lofty or extravagant manner, especially in speech

The children giggled at the **grandiloquence** of the principal's speech on the first day of school; it would have been better for him to speak more simply.

Synonyms: bombast, grandiosity, pomposity

tending to be social

A **gregarious** young woman, she held dinner parties at her home every Friday.

Synonyms: convivial, friendly, outgoing

GUILELESS (GAHYL-uhs)			
GUISE (gahyz)	•••••	••••	• • • • • •
GULLIBLE	•••••	••••	• • • • • •

(GUH-luh-buhl)



innocent, without deceit

His phone call to his ex-girlfriend was truly

guileless; he simply wanted to know whether or not she was well.

Synonyms: honest, frank, sincere, straightforward appearance; style of dress

The spy gained entry to the office in the guise of a job applicant.

Synonyms: facade, posture, pretense

easily duped

I hope that you are not so **gullible** as to believe a single word of his tall tales.

Synonyms: naive, trusting



HACKNEYED (HAK-need)
HALCYON (HAL-see-uhn)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
HALLOWED (HA-lohd)



lacking originality

The critics panned the film because of its **hackneyed** boy-meets-girl plot.

Synonyms: banal, cliche, stale, trite

calm, peaceful

I love the **halcyon** days of mid-August, while we are still on vacation and before the mad rush of preparations for school begins.

Synonyms: soothing, tranquil

holy, sacred

The cemetery grounds are **hallowed** by those who are buried there.

Synonyms: blessed, venerated

HARANGUE (huh-RANG)	
••••••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
HARROWING (HAR-oh-ing)	
•••••	• • • • • • • • • •

HEDONISM (HEE-duh-ni-zuhm)



a rant

We were taken aback by his bitter **harangue** against youth.

Synonyms: diatribe, jeremiad, tirade

extremely distressing or difficult

Watching the horror movie was **harrowing** to her; she had no idea how her boyfriend could have enjoyed it.

Synonyms: distressing, excruciating, grievous, terrifying

devotion to pleasure, the doctrine that pleasure is the greatest good

The **hedonism** of fraternity life enticed him.

Synonyms: debauchery, indulgence

HEGEMONY (hi-JE-muh-nee)
•••••••••••
HERETICAL (huh-RE-ti-kuhl)
••••••••••••
HETERODOX

(HE-tuh-ruh-doks)



pervasive influence or authority

The cultural **hegemony** of the United States reaches every corner of the world.

Synonyms: command, domination, power

departing from accepted beliefs, characterized by heresy

In the Middle Ages, it was dangerous to profess **heretical** beliefs.

Synonyms: dissident, unorthodox

contrary to an accepted standard, tradition, or belief, especially in religion

She holds the **heterodox** view that the capacity for empathy evolved in humans before language did.

Synonyms: dissident, unconventional, unorthodox

HOMOGENEOUS (hoh-muh-JEE-nee-uhs or hoh-muh-JEE-nyuhs) HUBRIS (HYOO-bris)

HYPERBOLE

(hahy-PUHR-buh-lee)



It took some time for him to get used to the homogeneous population of his new home; he was accustomed to the diversity of the city.
Synonyms: alike, consistent, uniform
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
arrogance, pride
It takes a certain amount of hubris to run for the office of the president of the United States.
Synonyms: audacity, presumption, vanity

composed of parts that are all alike; extravagant and intentional exaggeration

His claim that it took him years to read the book was **hyperbole**; it actually took him only two weeks to finish.

Synonyms: embellishment, hype, overstatement



(im-BROHL-yoh)



one who attacks accepted beliefs or institutions

Charles Darwin delayed publication of the work introducing his theory of evolution for years, perhaps anticipating that he would be seen as an **iconoclast**.

Synonyms: dissident, heretic, radical, rebel

excessive or blind devotion

Her devotion to the pop star bordered on **idolatry**; her bedroom was covered with images of him cut from magazines.

Synonyms: adoration, adulation, fervor

a complicated situation or painful misunderstanding, scandal

The election devolved into an **imbroglio**, in which each side accused the other of fraud.

Synonyms: brouhaha, dispute, quandary

IMMINENT (I-muh-nuhnt)
••••••••••••
IMMUTABLE (i-MYOO-tuh-buhl)
•••••••••••
IMPAIR (im-PAIR)



ready or about to occur
Her departure is imminent —ask her now!
Synonyms: approaching, forthcoming, impending
••••••••••
not subject to change
They proclaimed their immutable devotion to each other in their wedding vows.
Synonyms: constant, enduring, permanent, perpetual, unchangeable
to damage

Better to wear the ugly safety goggles than to suffer an injury that could **impair** your vision.

Synonyms: diminish, harm, hurt, injure

IMPASSIVE (im-PA-siv)
••••••••••••
IMPECUNIOUS (im-pi-KYU-nee-uhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
IMPEDE (im-PEED)



not subject to pain, without feeling or emotion

Though he seemed **impassive** at the collapse of his company, his wife could see that he was in despair.

Synonyms: apathetic, dispassionate, stoic, unmoved

having little or no money

The **impecunious** poet believed he was far happier than the wealthiest businessperson.

Synonyms: destitute, impoverished, penniless, poor

to hinder, get in the way of

An unexpected visit from friends from out of town **impeded** on her plan to paint the living room.

Synonyms: hamper, interfere, obstruct

IMPERMEABLE (im-PUHR-mee-uh-buhl)
•••••••••••
IMPERTURBABLE (im-puhr-TUHR-buh-buhl)
••••••••••••
IMPERVIOUS

(im-PUHR-vee-uhs)



incapable of being penetrated or passed through

The jacket is coated with a substance that renders it **impermeable** by water.

Synonyms: impassable, impervious

incapable of being disturbed

By maintaining an **imperturbable** air throughout the crisis, she emerged as a steady and trustworthy leader.

Synonyms: calm, composed, immovable, unexcited

not allowing entrance, incapable of being harmed or disturbed

He was **impervious** to criticism, which enabled him to experiment freely in his artwork.

Synonyms: immune, resistant, unaffected

IMPETUOUS (im-PE-chuh-wuhs)
IMPLACABLE (im-PLA-kuh-buhl)
•••••••••••
IMPLAUSIBLE (im-PLAW-zi-buhl)



passionately impulsive

Her **impetuous** decision to go to Brazil took a moment to make, and transformed her life forever.

Synonyms: impassionate, spontaneous, unexpected

impossible to appease

Although the team had been eliminated from contention in the playoffs, it proved to be an **implacable** opponent.

Synonyms: inflexible, merciless, relentless, uncompromising, unyielding

unbelievable

He might have gotten away with the prank if his cover story had not been so **implausible**.

Synonyms: improbable, inconceivable, incredible, unreasonable

IMPLICIT (im-PLI-suht)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
IMPLODE (im-PLOHD)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
IMPUNITY (im-PYOO-nuh-tee)



implied, existing as a potential within

Implicit in the many warnings that preceded their trip was the fact that their destination was a dangerous place.

Synonyms: understood, latent

to violently collapse inward

The building suddenly **imploded** under the weight of the snow.

Synonyms: cave in, fold

freedom from punishment or harm

Because his father was the headmaster, he thought he could break the rules with **impunity**.

Synonyms: freedom, license, privilege

INADVERTENT (in-uhd-VUHR-tuhnt)
INCHOATE (in-KOH-uht)
•••••••••••
INCIPIENT (in-SI-pee-uhnt)



The error was both inadvertent and catastrophic.

Synonyms: careless, negligent, thoughtless

not yet developed, incompletely formed

The first draft of her novel was an **inchoate** mess; with two years of revision she transformed it into a masterpiece.

Synonyms: amorphous, formless, incoherent, rudimentary

coming into being

At this time, our travel plans are only **incipient**; check with us again next week and we will be able to tell you exactly where we are going and when.

Synonyms: developing, inchoate, nascent

INCONGRUOUS (in-KON-gruh-wuhs)
•••••••••••
INCONSEQUENTIAL (in-kon-suh-KWEN-shuhl)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
INCORPORATE (in-KOR-puh-reyt)



out of place, lacking harmony, inconsistent

Her genius was such that she could compose a work for such **incongruous** instruments as a banjo and saxophone and have it sound not just beautiful, but inspired.

Synonyms: conflicting, discordant, incompatible

unimportant

The paper was so brilliant that the few lapses in spelling and punctuation were **inconsequential**.

Synonyms: insignificant, irrelevant, negligible, trivial

to include, to unite in one body; to embody I will **incorporate** your ideas into the next draft of the plan.

Synonyms: assimilate, combine, integrate

INDETERMINATE (in-di-TUHR-muh-nuht)
•••••
INDIFFERENT (in-DI-fruhnt)
INDIGENCE

(IN-di-juhnts)



not fixed or defined, vague

The CEO was of an **indeterminate** age: she had gray hair and a lined face but spoke and moved with the energy of a teenager.

Synonyms: indefinite, uncertain, undetermined, unsettled

unbiased; not interested or concerned

Indifferent to the results of the election, many voters stayed home.

Synonyms: detached, disinterested, unconcerned; apathetic

complete poverty

After losing what little they had in the earthquake, the villagers were left in a state of **indigence**.

Synonyms: destitution, need, privation, want

INDOLENT (IN-duh-luhnt)				
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INERT (i-NUHRT)				
INFELICITO	US	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • •

(in-fi-Ll-suh-tuhs)



lazy

He was accused of being **indolent** when in truth he lacked energy because of illness.

Synonyms: idle, inactive, slothful, sluggish

having no power to act or move

Inert and silent as rocks, the children sat and watched TV.

Synonyms: dormant, inactive, motionless

not appropriate, awkward

Your joke about divorce was especially **infelicitous**, considering that our hostess and her husband have just separated.

Synonyms: inapt, inappropriate, unfortunate, unsuitable

INGENUOUS (in-JEN-yuh-wuhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
INHERENT (in-HEHR-uhnt)
••••••••••••
INIMICAL (i-NI-mi-kuhl)



characterized by childlike innocence or sincerity When she brought a bouquet of wildflowers to thank him, the **ingenuous** gesture won her his devotion.

Synonyms: artless, candid, naive

essential to the character or nature of

Human babies have **inherent** needs to suckle and be held.

Synonyms: characteristic, fundamental, intrinsic, innate

hostile, like an enemy

Poor hygiene is **inimical** to good health.

Synonyms: adverse, opposed, unfriendly, unwelcoming

INNOCUOUS (i-NO-kyuh-wuhs)
•••••••••••
INSENSIBLE (in-SEN-suh-buhl)
•••••••••••
INSINUATE

(in-SIN-yuh-weyt)



harmless, unlikely to offend

The dog looked fierce, but she was as **innocuous** as a gerbil.

Synonyms: innocent, inoffensive, unobjectionable

not able to feel or perceive; unaware

Insensible to the boredom of his students, the professor droned on and on.

Synonyms: indifferent, oblivious, unconscious, unfeeling

to introduce in a subtle or gradual way; to imply

Do you mean to **insinuate** that it was I who took the cookies from the kitchen?

Synonyms: allude, intimate, mention

INSIPID (in-SI-puhd)
•••••••••••••
INSULARITY (in-syuh-LA-ruh-tee)
•••••••••••

INTANGIBLE (in-TAN-juh-buhl)



lacking taste, dull

He may have been a charming performer, but the music he played was **insipid** and full of clichés.

Synonyms: banal, inane, vapid

isolation; narrow-mindedness

The **insularity** of her views was understandable—if you considered just how little of the world she had seen.

Synonyms: bigotry, parochialism, provinciality

not tangible, incapable of being touched

The things she loved best were **intangible**: sunny mornings and moonlit nights.

Synonyms: immaterial, impalpable, incorporeal

INTERPOLATE (in-TUHR-puh-leyt)
INTIMATE (IN-tuh-meyt)
••••••••••

INTRACTABLE (in-TRAK-tuh-buhl)



to add words into a conversation or text

While listening to them discuss the movie, he couldn't help but **interpolate** with his enthusiasm for the acting.

Synonyms: inject, insert, interject

to communicate indirectly

Did you mean to **intimate** that I do not deserve the job?

Synonyms: hint, imply, suggest

not easily managed, manipulated, or cured

The child's difficulties in school had grown to seem **intractable**, but all it took to help her was a new teacher who encouraged her to read about topics that interested her.

Synonyms: obstinate, stubborn

INTRANSIGENT (in-TRAN-si-juhnt)
INITROCRECTION
INTROSPECTION (in-truh-SPEK-shuhn)
INITEERIN
INTREPID (in-TRE-puhd)



refusing to compromise

The congressman made a big show of being **intransigent** on the issue of budget cuts, but quickly changed his position after seeing the results of the poll.

Synonyms: inflexible, obstinate, resolute, stubborn, tenacious

looking inward at one's own thoughts and feelings

Arlo generally spent the last hour of each day in quiet **introspection**, sometimes listening to music and sometimes writing in his journal.

Synonyms: contemplation, reflection

courageous

The men who attempted to be the first to the South Pole were all **intrepid** explorers, but not all of them were fortunate, and some died in the attempt.

Synonyms: bold, brave, fearless

INUNDATE (I-nuhn-deyt)	
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INURED (i-NYOORD)	
•••••••••	• • • • •

INVECTIVE (in-VEK-tiv)



to flood or overwhelm

After her controversial speech, the mayor's office was **inundated** with letters, both pro and con.

Synonyms: bury, drown, engulf, immerse, overflow, submerge

accustomed to difficulty or pain

By the middle of January, we were **inured** to the darkness and cold of the northern winter.

Synonyms: hardened, toughened

abusive language

The **invective** she heaped on her colleague was completely out of proportion with the small error she had made.

Synonyms: berating, diatribe, tirade

INVEIGH (in-VEY)
••••••••••••
INVEIGLE (in-VEY-guhl)
•••••••••••
INVETERATE (in-VEH-tuh-ruht)



to protest or complain

Several teachers wrote letters to the editor to **inveigh** against the proposed school budget cuts.

Synonyms: admonish, denounce

to win over or obtain

The twins tried every trick in the book to **inveigle** permission from their parents to go to bed later.

Synonyms: beguile, entice, manipulate, wheedle

firmly established as a habit, practice, or feeling

An **inveterate** gambler, he gradually lost everything he owned over the course of a decade.

Synonyms: chronic, confirmed, entrenched, habitual

IRASCIBLE (i-RA-suh-buhl)	
••••••••••	•
IRRESOLUTE (i-RE-zuh-loot)	
•••••••••••	•

ITINERANT

(ahy-TI-nuh-ruhnt)



having a hot temper, easily angered

To our surprise, our **irascible** neighbor lightened up after he adopted a stray dog.

Synonyms: cranky, fractious, grouchy, irritable, touchy

not sure how to act

Herman was **irresolute** in all things, from deciding what to eat for breakfast to choosing which college to attend.

Synonyms: doubtful, hesitant, indecisive, tentative, uncertain, vacillating

going from place to place

The **itinerant** preacher usually passed through our town in August.

Synonyms: nomadic, unsettled, vagrant, wandering



JAUNDICED (JAWN-duhsd)	
	•
JOCOSE (juh-KOHS)	
	•

JUGGERNAUT

(juh-guhr-NAWT)



showing or feeling resentment or hostility

She walked around the gallery with a **jaun-diced** air, bitter that her paintings were not among the work selected to be shown.

Synonyms: bitter, envious

tending to joke, characterized by joking

Your **jocose** spirits have certainly brightened my day!

Synonyms: humorous, jesting, merry, playful, witty

a large and powerful movement or object that destroys anything in its path

The radio personality became a political **juggernaut** that those in office had to reckon with.

JUNTA (HOON-tuh)	
•••••••••••	•
JUXTAPOSE (juhk-stuh-POHZ)	



a group ruling a country after having seized power, a council

He was the only member of the **junta** who had not participated directly in the coup.

Synonyms: assembly, faction

to place together, side by side

She liked to **juxtapose** contrasting images in her poems.

Synonym: connect



KUE	os
-----	----

(KOO-dohs)



fame earned or praise given for an accomplishment

Her colleagues gave her **kudos** for the well-deserved promotion.

Synonyms: credit, esteem



(luh-KO-nik)
•••••••••••
LAMBASTE (lam-BAST)
••••••••••••
LASCIVIOUS

(luh-SI-vee-uhs)



using few words

His **laconic** replies of a sentence or two unfairly earned him a reputation for being rude.

Synonyms: brusque, concise, succinct

to attack violently or verbally

In the days leading up to the game, she **lambasted** her opponent with a series of insults and threats.

Synonyms: berate, censure

given to lust; arousing desire

Though they show nudes, these paintings are not intended to be **lascivious**.

Synonyms: lewd, lustful, wanton

LASSI (LA-suh				• • •	• • • •			• ••
LAUD (lawd))							
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LETHARGIC (luh-THAHR-jik)



a lack of energy, weariness

Her **lassitude** during the winter contrasted greatly with her energy and high spirits during the spring and summer.

Synonyms: fatigue, languor, lethargy, listlessness

to praise

At the award ceremony, the philanthropist was **lauded** for her generosity.

Synonyms: acclaim, celebrate, extol

drowsy, sluggish

We could not help but feel **lethargic** on that hot, humid, August afternoon.

Synonyms: indolent, lazy, listless

LEVEE (LEH-vee)				
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • •	••••	• • • •
LEVITY (LEH-vi-tee)				
LIBERAL	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • •
(LI-buh-ruhl)				



an embankment designed to prevent flooding
The **levee** held back the river, even through
the record-breaking rainfall.

Synonyms: bank, dam

a lightness of character, attitude, or behavior

The professor's jokes brought some **levity** to his discussion of the otherwise dull topic.

Synonyms: buoyancy, frivolity

characterized by generosity; not strict; tending to support political liberalism

As a philanthropist, he was **liberal**, often giving large gifts to his favorite causes.

Synonyms: altruistic, benevolent; progressive

LIBERTINE (LI-buhr-teen)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
LIBIDO (luh-BEE-doh)
•••••••••••••••••
LITANY (LI-tuh-nee)



a free thinker, one who is unbound by convention or morality

Though she was a serious student, she was a **libertine** when it came to food and wine.

Synonym: debauchee

sexual drive

He claimed that he had an uncontrollable **libido**, and could not therefore be expected to be faithful to just one girlfriend.

Synonyms: lust, passion

a lengthy account or recitation

To visit Mrs. Earnshaw was to subject oneself to a **litany** of complaints about everything—from her long-dead husband to the neighbor's dog.

Synonyms: catalogue, petition

LOG (lawg)
••••••
LOQUACIOUS (loh-KWEY-shuhs)
LUCID (LOO-suhd)



the record of a voyage or of other events or activities

They studied the captain's **log** in the hopes of discovering when and how the ship went astray.

Synonyms: account, journal, register

tending to or characterized by excessive talk

Emily's **loquacious** roommate constantly distracted her from her studies.

Synonyms: talkative, verbose, wordy

full of light; clear to the understanding

We were confident in our ability to complete the task after her **lucid** explanation of what needed to be done.

Synonyms: bright, brilliant, radiant, shining; evident, intelligible, obvious

LUSTROUS (LUHS-truhs)	LUMINOUS (LOO-muh-nuhs)						
	•••••	• • • •	• • • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• ••



illuminated in or shining with light

The full moon cast a **luminous** path of light across the ocean to the horizon.

Synonyms: bright, brilliant, glowing, radiant, shining

radiantly glowing

We polished the floors until they took on a **lustrous** sheen.

Synonyms: luminous, polished, shining



MACHIAVELLIAN (ma-kee-uh-VEH-lee-uhn)
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
MACHINATION (ma-kuh-NEY-shun)
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
MAGNANIMITY (mag-nuh-NI-mi-tee)



characterized by cunning and duplicity

Her plan to win the election was truly **Machia-vellian**: she made many promises that she had no intention of keeping once she was in office.

Synonyms: deceitful, devious, unscrupulous

an artful or scheming act or design, which is aimed at an evil purpose

All his **machinations** were aimed at framing her for the crime that he himself had committed.

Synonyms: conspiracy, intrigue, strategem

the possession of a courageous spirit and noble mind

Her **magnanimity** was such that she never gossiped or even worried what others said about her.

Synonyms: chivalry, generosity, philanthropy

MALEVOLENT (muh-LE-vuh-luhnt)
••••••••••••
MALIGN (muh-LAHYN)
•••••••••••
MALINGER (muh-LING-quibr)



characterized by ill will or hatred

His angry glare gave away his malevolent intentions.

Synonyms: evil, hateful, vicious, vindictive

to speak ill of, often falsely

They maligned her academic record with false reports of her cheating.

Synonyms: defame, misrepresent, slander

to pretend illness in order to avoid an obligation or work

His **malingering** cost him the friendships of many whom he had let down.

Synonyms: dodge, evade, shirk

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MALLEABLE (MA-lee-uh-buhl)
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MARTIAL (MAHR-shuhl)
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MAVERICK (MAV-rik)



capable of being shaped or influenced
Her opinions were so **malleable** that she tended to agree with whomever she had spoken to most recently.

Synonyms: adaptable, pliable, supple, yielding

having to do with war or military life

His years in the Marines were apparent in his

martial bearing.

Synonyms: military, soldierly, warlike

an independent or dissenting individual

The senator's reputation for being a **maverick** was unearned; he tended to vote with his party.

Synonyms: dissenter, nonconformist

MENAGERIE (muh-NA-juh-ree)	
••••••	•
MENDACIOUS (men-DEY-shuhs)	
•••••	•

MERCURIAL (muhr-KYOOR-ee-uhl)



a collection of animals or the place where they are exhibited; a varied group of people

Over the past century, this zoo has grown from the **menagerie** of its original benefactor to a great research institution.

Synonyms: collection, exhibition

dishonest

Though the widely spread rumor of his affair was proven to be **mendacious**, it ruined his political career.

Synonyms: deceitful, false, insincere

characterized by quickly changing moods

The toddler's **mercurial** temperament improved when he began to nap more regularly.

Synonyms: changeable, erratic, fickle, flighty, unpredictable, volatile

MESMERIZE (MEZ-muh-rahyz)
•••••
METAMORPHOSIS (me-tuh-MAWR-fuh-suhs)
•••••••••••
METICUI OUS

(muh-TI-kyuh-luhs)



to hypnotize

The music **mesmerized** us with its repetitive, pulsing sounds.

Synonym: spellbind

a change in physical form, substance, or character, often through supernatural means

The summertime seemed to work a **metamorphosis** on her, as all her anxiety about her schoolwork was lifted.

Synonyms: mutation, rebirth, transformation

taking care of details

Her **meticulous** approach to language served her well in her work as an editor.

Synonyms: exacting, finicky, fussy, painstaking, scrupulous, thorough

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METTLE (ME-tuhl)			
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MILITATE (MI-luh-teyt)			
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MINUSCULE (mi-nuh-SKYOOL)			



strength of spirit or temperament

She showed her mettle by completing the marathon.

Synonyms: courage, fortitude, stamina

to work against or fight

Though the issue was settled, they continued to militate against the mayor's choice for a deputy.

tiny

The type was so **miniscule** that she needed a magnifying glass to read it.

Synonyms: little, miniature, minute

MISANTHROPE (MI-suhn-throhp)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
MISCELLANY (mi-suh-LEY-nee)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
MISOGYNIST (mi-SO-juh-nist)



one who tends to dislike or distrust humanity
The hermit was a misanthrope who preferred the company of trees to that of humans.
Synonyms: cynic, skeptic
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
a collection of different writings; a varied group
The small volume was a miscellany of journal entries, haiku, and to-do lists.
Synonyms: assortment, hodgepodge

one who hates women

He was a **misogynist** who tried to pay female employees less than their male counterparts.

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MITIGATE (MI-tuh-geyt)
•••••••••••
MNEMONIC (ni-MO-nik)
•••••••••••
MOLLIFY

(MO-luh-fahy)



to make less hostile or severe

Though she knew that her phobia was irrational, little could be done to **mitigate** her fear of even the most harmless snakes.

Synonyms: allay, alleviate, assuage, ease, moderate, mollify

(adj.) helping the memory, related to memory

Acronyms like PEMDAS can be useful **mnemonic** devices.

(n.) something that aids the memory

I use the **mnemonic** PEMDAS to help me remember the order of operations: parentheses, exponents, multiplication and division, and addition and subtraction.

Synonyms: cue, hint, prompt, reminder

to soften the temper or feeling

The children's sincere apology **mollified** their offended neighbor.

Synonyms: appease, mellow, mitigate, pacify, placate

MONOLITHIC (mo-nuh-LI-thik)		
•••••	• • • • • • • •	
MOROSE (muh-ROHS)		
••••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	

MUNDANE (muhn-DEYN)



huge, forming one giant whole
The monolithic statues on Easter Island are haunting and mysterious.

Synonyms: colossal, enormous, massive

gloomy or sullen in mood or temperament
Hating the fact that he was only getting older, he was especially morose on his birthday.

Synonyms: dour, melancholy, pessimistic

earthly, practical, ordinary

The philosopher could speak brilliantly and at length about the most abstract ideas, but had trouble taking care of such **mundane** matters as washing the dishes and paying the bills.

Synonyms: banal, common, everyday, prosaic, unimaginative



NASCENT (NEY-suhnt)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	. 	• • • • •
NEBULOUS (NE-byuh-luhs)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • •
NEGATE			

(ni-GEYT)



just coming into existence

The crocuses were the first sign of the **nascent** spring.

Synonyms: burgeoning, fledgling, incipient

vague

He had only **nebulous** ideas of what type of profession he might like to pursue.

Synonyms: confused, hazy, indefinite, indistinct, unclear

to deny the truth or existence of; to make ineffective

The teacher's feedback is intended to help you improve your writing, and should not be seen as **negating** your effort or accomplishments.

Synonyms: annul, cancel, contradict, invalidate, nullify, refute

NEOLOGISM (nee-O-luh-ji-zuhm)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
NEOPHYTE (NEE-uh-fahyt)
NOSTALGIA (nuh-STAL-juh)



a new word

The rapid development of technology in recent years has required the creation of many **neologisms**.

Synonym: coinage

a beginner or new convert

Though he claimed to be an expert, he made the mistakes of a **neophyte**.

Synonyms: novice, recruit, rookie

a state of longing for the past

I always feel such **nostalgia** for my childhood home when I smell the scent of baking bread.

Synonyms: homesickness, longing, yearning

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NOXIOUS		
(NOK-shuhs)		



poisonous or corrupting
The burning garbage emitted **noxious** fumes. **Synonyms:** deadly, injurious, harmful, pernicious, toxic



OBDURATE

(OB-duh-ruht)

OBFUSCATE

(OB-fuh-skeyt)

OBSEQUIOUS

(uhb-SEE-kwee-uhs)



unyielding to persuasion or softening feelings; persistent in doing wrong

Though the evidence showed otherwise, he was **obdurate** in his belief that his employees were stealing from the till.

Synonyms: implacable, inflexible, obstinate, stubborn

to confuse or make obscure

The more information he gave us in an attempt to clarify what he was saying, the more he actually **obfuscated** his meaning.

Synonyms: baffle, bewilder, conceal, perplex

characterized by fawning or servile attentiveness

Your **obsequious** behavior is not going to earn you any favors from the teacher; it would be better simply to attend to your studies.

Synonyms: deferential, groveling, submissive, subservient



OBSTINATE (OB-stuh-nuht)
OBTUSE (ob-TOOS)
•••••
OBVIATE

(OB-vee-eyt)



persistent in a belief or behavior; not easily remedied, changed, or controlled

The **obstinate** toddler refused to wear shoes.

Synonyms: determined, dogged, stubborn, unyielding

lacking quickness or insight in perception or intelligence

I apologize for being so **obtuse**, but could you please explain the procedure one more time?

Synonyms: dense, dull, imperceptive, stupid

to prevent or make unnecessary through anticipation

Our careful preparations for the move **obviated** the expense of having the movers help us pack.

Synonyms: avert, hinder, preclude

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OCCLUDE (uh-KLOOD)				
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ODIOUS (OH-dee-uhs)				
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OFFICIOUS (uh-Fl-shuhs)



to block off or conceal

A lunar eclipse results when the Moon **occludes** the light from the Sun.

Synonyms: hinder, impede, obstruct

causing or deserving of hatred

After they were found guilty of vandalism, the teens were punished for their **odious** behavior.

Synonyms: detestable, disgusting, loathsome, offensive, repugnant

giving service where none was asked for

Her **officious** contributions to the project were more a hindrance than a help, and we ended up having to redo much of what she had done.

Synonyms: intrusive, meddlesome, pushy



ONEROUS (OH-nuhr-uhs)				
•••••		• • • • •	••••	• • • •
OPAQUE (oh-PEYK)				
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OPPROBRIUM (uh-PRO-bree-uhm)



burdensome

The homework proved to be far less **onerous** than we had expected, and we finished it all in less than an hour.

Synonyms: arduous, oppressive, troublesome

blocking light, dark; difficult to understand

The reading assignment was only eight pages long, but the text was so **opaque** that it took me two hours to read it.

Synonyms: cloudy, impenetrable, murky; concealed, incomprehensible, obscure, unclear

public disgrace or something that causes disgrace

Fearing the **opprobrium** that would result if his secrets were revealed, he quietly left town, never to return.

Synonyms: dishonor, disrepute, infamy



OSCILLATE (O-suh-leyt)
•••••••••••
OSTENTATIOUS (os-tuhn-TEY-shuhs)
•••••



to swing back and forth; to vary in opinions, beliefs, or conditions

After her busy week was over, she found herself **oscillating** between a fierce desire to go out dancing and a just as fierce desire to snuggle up in bed.

Synonyms: fluctuate, vacillate

characterized by showy or pretentious display

Her philanthropy always struck me as **ostentatious**: done to impress others rather than for the purpose of giving itself.

Synonyms: conspicuous, extravagant, flamboyant, flashy



PAEAN (PEE-uhn)						
•••••	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • ••
PALLID (PA-luhd)	• • • •					

PARAGON (PAR-uh-gon)



a song of praise, thanksgiving, or triumph
Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" is a paean to the
kinship of all humanity.

Synonyms: anthem, hymn, laud, ode

lacking color or energy

Brad claimed that he felt just fine, but his
pallid skin indicated otherwise.

Synonyms: dull, pale, wan

an example of excellence

As a student, Gina was thought to be a **paragon**, but her English teacher noticed that she excelled only because she refused to take any risks.

Synonyms: epitome, exemplar, nonpareil, standard

PARODY (PAR-roh-dee)
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PARTISAN
(PAHR-tuh-zuhn)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
PATHOLOGICAL (pa-thuh-LO-ji-kuhl)



a work of literature, music, theater, or film that imitates the style of another, for humorous or satirical effect

The seniors performed a **parody** of Hamlet that had us all in stiches.

Synonyms: caricature, spoof

committed to or biased toward a party, cause, or person

It seems that **partisan** politics are getting in the way of the ability of Congress to get anything done.

Synonyms: factional, partial, prejudiced

caused by or symptomatic of disease or mental disturbance

His dread of travel was so extreme as to seem **pathological**.

PAUCITY (PAW-suh-tee)	
•••••••	• • • • • • • • • •
PEDAGOGY (PEH-duh-goh-jee)	
••••••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

PEDANTIC (pi-DAN-tik)



scarcity

The **paucity** of information about the region has led many myths to take hold about it and those who live there.

Synonyms: dearth, deficiency, lack

the art or science of teaching

A successful teacher needs both a thorough grounding in his or her subject area and a solid understanding of **pedagogy**.

Synonyms: education, study

ostentatious and unimaginative in one's learning

You might excite more of your students if your approach to your subject were less **pedantic**.

Synonyms: academic, didactic, scholastic

PENCHANT (PEN-chuhnt)				
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • • •
PENURY (PEN-yuh-ree)				
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PEREMPTORY

(puh-REMP-tuh-ree)



a strong inclination

With her **penchant** for working with her hands, she is likely to enjoy her new job at the botanic garden.

Synonyms: fondness, liking, tendency

extreme poverty

He spent his childhood in a state of such **penury** that it affected his health for the rest of his life.

Synonyms: dearth, destitution, indigence, scarcity

allowing of no contradiction; characterized by arrogance

After his promotion, his **peremptory** attitude toward his former colleagues alienated them from him.

Synonyms: imperative, unconditional; dictatorial, imperious

PERENNIAL (puh-RE-nee-uhl)			
•••••	• • • • •	••••	• • • • •
PERFIDY (PUHR-fuh-dee)			
•••••	• • • • •	••••	• • • • •

PERFUNCTORY (puhr-FUHNGK-tuh-ree)



lasting a long time, persistent, constant

Their **perennial** complaint was that management did not budget sufficient resources for them to do their work properly.

Synonyms: continuing, everlasting, perpetual, recurrent

an act of disloyalty, treachery

His scoring a touchdown for the opposing team was not an act of **perfidy** so much as a stupid mistake.

Synonyms: betrayal, duplicity, infidelity

done in a routine, superficial, or indifferent way Maggie's **perfunctory** greeting indicated that we were not the visitors she was hoping to see.

Synonyms: automatic, mechanical, offhand, unthinking

PERMEABLE (PUHR-mee-uh-buhl)
•••••••••••
PERNICIOUS (puhr-NI-shuhs)
PERSPICACIOUS (puhr-spuh-KAY-shuhs)



able to be **permeated** or penetrated

We cannot use this fabric to make a tent
because it is permeable to water.

Synonyms: absorbent, penetrable, porous

destructive or deadly

These **pernicious** lies could ruin more than just
your career.

Synonyms: detrimental, harmful, injurious,
noxious, ruinous

extremely perceptive

The **perspicacious** child knew long before he was told that his mother was pregnant again.

Synonyms: discerning, intelligent, keen, shrewd

PERTURB (puhr-TUHRB)	••••	••••	••••	••••
PERUSE (puh-ROOZ)				
	• • • • •	••••	• • • •	••••
PERVADE				

(puhr-VEYD)



to disturb mentally

I was so **perturbed** by that movie that I had nightmares every night for more than a week afterward.

Synonyms: agitate, derange, trouble, unsettle, upset

to study with attention to detail; to look over casually

Please **peruse** the report carefully before the meeting.

Synonyms: analyze, examine, inspect; browse, scan, skim

to become spread throughout

The scent of his heavy cologne **pervaded** every corner of the office.

Synonyms: diffuse, infuse, permeate

PETULANT (PE-chuh-luhnt)	
	•
PHLEGMATIC (fleg-MA-tik)	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	•
PIOUS (PAHY-uhs)	



characterized by rudeness or ill humor

The **petulant** child just needed some rest; after her nap, she was perfectly cheerful. **Synonyms:** crabby, fractious, grouchy, irritable, moody

having an unexcitable or sluggish temperament

The brothers could not have been any more different: whereas Tom was loud and quick tempered, Tim was **phlegmatic**. **Synonyms:** apathetic, dispassionate, indifferent, lethargic, unemotional

characterized by religious devotion or by conspicuous and hypocritical virtue

Our **pious** neighbor goes to church every day.

Synonyms: devout, religious, reverent, righteous, sanctimonious, scrupulous

PINE (payhn)
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PIRATE (PAHY-ruht)
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PITHY (PI-thee)



to long painfully, often for something unattainable; to waste away from grief

The new father **pined** for his family through his first day back to work after the birth of his child.

Synonyms: grieve, yearn

to take or reproduce without the right to do so

We did not **pirate** the recordings; the band gave us permission to distribute their work.

Synonyms: copy, plagiarize, steal

brief and meaningful

Benjamin Franklin's proverbs are **pithy** statements about living well.

Synonyms: cogent, expressive, pointed, succinct, terse

PLACATE (PLEY-keyt)	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	••
PLAINTIVE (PLEYN-tiv)	
•••••	•
PLASTICITY (pla-STI-suh-tee)	



to calm or pacify, especially by giving concessions

To **placate** the disappointed children, the teacher promised that the outing would be rescheduled for a time after the rain cleared.

Synonyms: appease, assuage, conciliate, mollify, soothe

expressing sorrow

The **plaintive** call of the loon seemed to be telling of our own sadness on the morning we left the lake for good.

Synonyms: melancholy, mournful

the capacity to be changed or molded

The play dough lost much of its **plasticity** after just one day, and the following day it was as hard as a rock.

Synonyms: malleability, pliancy

PLATITUDE (PLA-tuh-tood)	
•••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
PLETHORA (PLE-thuh-ruh)	
•••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
PLUMMET (PLUH-muht)	



a banal or trite statement

The fortune teller studied my palm and then uttered a series of **platitudes** that could be true for just about anyone.

Synonym: commonplace

an excess or abundance of

The **plethora** of fruits and vegetables at the farmers' market overwhelmed us; we had no idea what to choose.

Synonyms: glut, surplus

to fall or drop sharply and suddenly

In her terror of heights, she kept imagining herself **plummeting** from the edge of the loft, even though a barrier made it nearly impossible to fall off.

Synonyms: collapse, plunge

POLEMICAL (puh-LEM-i-kuhl)
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POROUS (POHR-uhs)
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PRAGMATIC (prag-MA-tik)



controversial; tending toward disputes or controversy

Though the essay was not intended to be **polemical**, it inspired many angry letters to the editor of the publication.

Synonyms: argumentative, contentious

having pores, permeable to fluids

Some rocks, like pumice, are actually **porous** and can absorb water.

Synonyms: absorbent, penetrable

oriented toward the practical

Our **pragmatic** mother preferred to receive useful gifts for her birthday.

Synonyms: businesslike, efficient, utilitarian

PRATTLE (PRA-tuhl)
•••••••••••
PRECARIOUS (pri-KER-ee-uhs)
•••••••••••••
PRECIPITATE (pri-SI-puh-teyt)



chatter or babble

The **prattle** and laughter of her students filled Ms. Shapiro's classroom.

Synonym: idle talk

dependent on uncertain or chance circumstances

Her position at the company felt increasingly **precarious** as more and more of her colleagues were let go.

Synonyms: contingent, insecure, perilous, shaky, unreliable

to cause, to bring about in a rushed or sudden way; to come out of solution

His idle remark **precipitated** an argument between his parents

Synonyms: hasten, hurry, speed

PRECURSOR (pri-KUHR-suhr)
•••••••••••
PREDILECTION (pre-duh-LEK-shuhn)
•••••••••••
PREEN (preen)



that which precedes or anticipates another

Athenian democracy is regarded as a **precursor** to ours, although it functioned very differently than any democracy does today.

Synonyms: forerunner, predecessor

a preference for something

The boss's **predilection** for loud jazz music was barely tolerable to anyone he worked with.

Synonyms: bias, inclination, penchant, tendency

to groom, to dress smartly; to congratulate oneself for an accomplishment

You may **preen** yourself until you look as glamorous as can be, but if you behave rudely, you will not impress.

Synonym: primp

PREMONITION (pre-muh-NI-shuhn)			
•••••	• • • • • •	• • • • •	• • • ••
PRESCIENCE (PRE-shuhns)			
•••••	• • • • • •	• • • • •	• • • ••

PRESUMPTUOUS (pri-ZUHMP-choo-uhs)



Synonyms: audacious, bold, overconfident

PREVARICATE (pri-VAR-uh-keyt)
••••••••••••
PRISTINE (pris-TEEN)
••••••••••••
PROBITY (PROH-buh-tee)



to lie

Do not **prevaricate** about who did what or why; simply tell me how the vase got broken.

Synonyms: deceive, equivocate, misrepresent

fresh, unspoiled, clean

She gazed at the **pristine** canvas, enjoying the possibilities it offered while still untouched by her paints.

Synonyms: immaculate, pure

maintenance of virtue and honesty

In To Kill a Mockingbird, the **probity** of Atticus Finch is such that he is the same man in his living room as out on the street.

Synonyms: fidelity, integrity, sincerity, uprightness

PROBLEMATIC (prob-luh-MA-tik)	
•••••••••••	•
PROCLIVITY (proh-KLI-vuh-tee)	
•••••••••••	•
PRODIGAL	

(PRO-di-guhl)



posing a problem, unsettled

Your claim is **problematic**, insofar as it does not apply to those who earn below the median household income.

Synonyms: doubtful, questionable, uncertain

tendency

Her **proclivity** toward fussy tidiness was severely challenged when her baby became a spirited and messy toddler.

Synonyms: inclination, predilection, propensity

characterized by lavish, wasteful, or reckless expense; abundant

Nature is **prodigal** in its resources; unfortunately, humanity is prodigal in using those resources.

Synonyms: excessive, extravagant; bountiful

PRODIGIOUS (pruh-DI-juhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
PROFLIGATE (PRO-fli-guht)
PROFUSE (pruh-FYOOS)



inspiring wonder; extraordinary in size or degree

They celebrated the grand wedding with a **prodigious** feast.

Synonyms: exceptional, extraordinary, fabulous, marvelous; huge, enormous

given to dissipation or extravagance

After your **profligate** behavior all semester long, how could you expect anything but the poorest grades?

Synonyms: corrupt, immoral, licentious, shameless, wanton

abundant without restraint

Their **profuse** compliments were as unexpected as they were welcome.

Synonyms: excessive, generous, liberal, plentiful

PROLIFIC (pruh-LI-fik)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	, 	• ••
PROPENSITY (pruh-PEN-suh-tee	e)		
•••••	•••••	, 	• ••

PROPITIATE (proh-PI-shee-eyt)



abundantly productive, fertile
She is not only a talented writer, but prolific , completing one or two novels every year.
Synonyms: bountiful, fruitful, teeming
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
a natural tendency or preference
I have a propensity to eat too much when I am nervous.
Synonyms: inclination, predilection, proclivity
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••

to gain or regain the favor of

To **propitiate** her boss, she began to bring him snacks and coffee in the afternoon.

Synonyms: appease, conciliate

PROPRIETY (pruh-PRAHY-uh-tee)
PROSAIC (proh-ZEY-ik)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
PROSCRIBE (pro-SKRAHYB)



the state of being proper or appropriate

Propriety in speech was so important to him that even in his most heated moments he never used harsh language.

Synonyms: appropriateness, correctness, decorum, respectability

dull, factual

She once had romantic visions of life as the editor of a literary magazine; the reality was **prosaic**, involving demanding production schedules and temperamental writers.

Synonyms: commonplace, unimaginative

to forbid

After the accident, all alcoholic beverages were **proscribed** from the stadium.

Synonyms: banish, condemn, outlaw, prohibit

PUNGENT (PUHN-juhnt)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • • • •	• ••
PURPORT (puhr-POHRT)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • • • •	• ••
PUTREFY			

(PYOO-truh-fahy)



sharp, painful, to the point
The rejection was brief and pungent .
Synonyms: acrid, biting, caustic
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
to claim or pretend
This manuscript purports to be the original, but it looks like a copy to me.
Synonyms: allege, assert
•••••
to rot
The fruit that fell from the trees began to putrefy within a day or two.
Synonyms: decay, spoil, stink

QUAFF (kwof)	
	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
QUAGMIRE (KWAG-mahyr)	
•••••	• • • • • • • • • •

QUALIFIED (KWO-luh-feyd)



to drink deeply with great enjoyment
We shall raise our glasses high in a toast and then quaff our ale in celebration!
Synonyms: down, imbibe
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
soft land that gives underfoot; a difficult situation
The couple was sinking in a quagmire of debt.
Synonyms: bog; predicament, quandary

to be suitable for a particular purpose; modified or restricted in some way

Her acceptance of our invitation was **qualified**: she could come only if she could find a ride home.

Synonyms: capable, competent, proper, skillful; conditional, contingent

QUALM (kwom)
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QUERY (KWEER-ee)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
QUERULOUS (KWER-uh-luhs)



a feeling of apprehension or uneasiness, often for reasons of conscience or propriety

He had many qualms about living on the other side of the country from his aging parents.

Synonyms: apprehension, misgiving, uncertainty question

Your lengthy explanation certainly answered my query, and more!

Synonym: inquiry

given to complaining

Few of his classmates liked the **querulous** child, which only made him more irritable.

Synonyms: dissatisfied, fretful, whining

QUIBBLE (KWI-buhl)
QUIESCENT (kwayh-EH-suhnt)
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QUIXOTIC

(kwik-SAH-tik)



to evade a point through ambiguous or irrelevant arguments

They **quibbled** over the details so long that they went over budget and failed to meet their deadline.

Synonyms: bicker, equivocate

at rest, latent

My mind is hardly **quiescent** in sleep: my dreams are busy, sometimes even panicked.

Synonyms: dormant, inactive, motionless, quiet, still

extravagantly foolish or romantic in the pursuit of ideals

I am not so **quixotic** to think that my leadership can transform this school in just one year, but I do believe that I can make a difference.

Synonyms: chivalrous, impractical, visionary

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QUOTIDIAN

(kwoh-TI-dee-uhn)



ordinary

After our arduous journey, it was good to return to our **quotidian** concerns: getting the children to school and ourselves to work.

Synonyms: commonplace, daily, everyday, usual



RANCOROUS (RANG-kuh-ruhs)	
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RAREFIED (RER-uh-fahyd)	
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RATIONALE

(ra-shuh-NAL)



characterized by deep ill will

Over the course of a few days, their argument became so **rancorous** that reconciliation seemed impossible.

Synonyms: bitter, virulent

elevated; related to or appealing to a small, elite group

Vivian does not share her parents' **rarefied** taste for the work of minimalist composers; she prefers rock 'n' roll.

Synonyms: esoteric, lofty, select

the basis of an opinion or belief

Her **rationale** for stealing towels from hotels was that everyone else does it too.

Synonyms: explanation, justification, reason

RECALCITRANT (ri-KAL-suh-truhnt)
•••••••••••
RECANT (ri-KANT)
••••••••••••
RECLUSE

(REH-kloos)



stubbornly defiant, unmanageable, resistant

The class of third-grade students proved to be **recalcitrant** to all the demands of the inexperienced substitute teacher.

Synonyms: disobedient, intractable, uncontrollable

to openly and formally withdraw or disavow a statement or belief

Regrettable as they were, she refused to **recant** the rash statements she had made the night before.

Synonyms: nullify, retract, void

one who has withdrawn from society

We rarely see my brother, a **recluse** who lives in the woods with only his dog.

Synonym: hermit

RECONDITE (RE-kuhn-dahyt)
••••••
REDOUBTABLE (ri-DOU-tuh-buhl)
••••••••••••
REFRACTORY (ri-FRAK-tuh-ree)



hidden, difficult to understand

Her book dealt with such **recondite** matters as Kantian ethics.

Synonyms: esoteric, mysterious, obscure, profound

inspiring fear or respect

He is a **redoubtable** scholar whose works are as entertaining as they are impressive.

Synonyms: awesome, eminent, formidable, illustrious

resistant to authority; resistant to treatment

As **refractory** as a mule, he never earned his diploma because he refused to complete the necessary battery of tests.

Synonyms: disobedient, rebellious, uncontrollable, unvielding

REFULGENT (ri-FUHL-juhnt)
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REFUTE (ri-FYOOT)
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RELEGATE

(RE-luh-geyt)



shining brightly

Even from a distance, the **refulgent** city seemed to light up the sky.

Synonyms: brilliant, gleaming, radiant

to prove wrong, to deny

He could not **refute** the evidence against him, and in the end, he confessed to the crime.

Synonyms: disprove, invalidate, repudiate

to banish, to assign to an insignificant or inferior place or role

After the offices were renovated, we were **relegated** to a central room with no windows.

Synonyms: demote, displace

RENEGE (ri-NEG)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
REPARATION
_
(re-puh-REY-shuhn)
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REPROACH
(ri-PROHCH)



to go back on a commitment

Karen **reneged** on her promise to come out with us only because of illness.

Synonym: default

making amends for damages or a wrong

In **reparation** for years of neglect, the town finally invested an unprecedented amount in the schools, streets, and park in its poorest neighborhood.

Synonyms: atonement, compensation, satisfaction

(n.) an expression of disapproval or the act of expressing disapproval

The teacher's **reproaches** fell on deaf ears, and the students continued to chatter while working on their writing.

Synonyms: criticism, rebuke

(v.) to express disapproval

Trevor's mother **reproached** him for failing to write a thank-you note to his grandmother.

Synonyms: admonish, criticize, disparage a depraved person

REPROBATE (RE-pruh-beyt)			
••••••	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • ••
REPUDIATE (ri-PYOO-dee-eyt)			
••••••	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • ••

RESCIND

(ri-SIND)



He was a reprobate who occasionally even stole cash from his elderly mother's purse.
pariah, fiend, miscreant
to disown or reject
Consider your words carefully before you decide to publicly repudiate the claims made by your boss.
Synonyms: condemn, disown, renounce
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
to take away or cancel

to take away or cancel

She could not **rescind** the order she had mistakenly made for a bridesmaid dress in the wrong color.

Synonyms: annul, invalidate, retract, revoke

(RE-tuh-suhnt)			
•••••	•••••	• • • • • •	• • • ••
REVERENCE (REV-ruhnts)			
••••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • ••

RHETORIC

(RE-tuh-rik)



tending to be uncommunicative or silent

Thinking her parents would not approve, Hannah was **reticent** about her plans to move to Brazil.

Synonyms: reserved, restrained

feelings of honor or respect

Bruce treated the baseball with **reverence** after his favorite pitcher signed it.

Synonyms: awe, deference, veneration

the study or art of the use of language in speech or writing

The electorate did not care for his highfalutin **rhetoric** and voted him out of office after just one term.

RUE (roo)								
RUSE	• • • •	• • • •	• • •	• • •	• • • •	• • • •	••••	•
(rooz)		• • • •		• • • •	• • • •	• • • •		•



discourse

to feel regret or sorrow, to wish that something had never been

I **rue** the day that I first took up this game: I've found it to be completely addictive!

Synonyms: deplore, grieve, mourn, regret

a trick

What he could not get directly through hard work, he decided to acquire indirectly through a **ruse**.

Synonyms: artifice, deceit, stratagem, subterfuge



SAGE (seyj)	
••••••	•••••
SALUBRIOUS (suh-LOO-bree-uhs)	
••••••	••••••
SANCTION (SANGK-shuhn)	



one	who) IS	WISE

They treated me as a **sage** simply for having worked there longer than anyone else.

Synonyms: guru, master

healthful

This purportedly **salubrious** drink is actually hardly more than sugar water.

Synonyms: beneficial, wholesome

to approve, give permission

I cannot believe that your parents would **sanction** such rude behavior.

Synonyms: allow, authorize, endorse

SARDONIC (sahr-DON-ik)
SATIATE (SEY-shee-eyt)
•••••••••••
SATIRE (SA-tahyr)



disdainfully or skeptically humorous or mocking Joseph's **sardonic** attitude toward his parents' interests was somewhat insulting, but also expected from a teenager. **Synonyms:** cynical, scornful, sneering

to satisfy fully or supply to excess

This Thanksgiving dinner will surely **satiate** even the hungriest of us all!

Synonyms: fill, gratify, indulge

the use of irony or ridicule to expose human folly

The novel is meant to be a **satire**; the author is ridiculing the views of the characters, not endorsing them.

Synonyms: irony, mockery, parody

SATURATE (SA-chuh-reyt)
•••••••••••
SAVOR (SEY-vuhr)
•••••
SECRETE (si-KREET)



to fill completely or infuse with something until nothing more can be absorbed

The air in and around the garden was **saturated** with the scent of lilacs.

Synonyms: drench, soak

to taste or smell with pleasure, enjoy

I eat lobster once every year, while I'm on vacation, and I **savor** it each time.

Synonyms: appreciate, relish

to give off or release a substance or secretion such as sweat: to hide

The tree **secreted** a sticky sap from the area of the trunk that was injured.

Synonyms: discharge, emit; conceal

SEDULOUS (SE-juh-luhs)	
•••••	•
SENSUAL (SEN-shuh-wuhl)	
•••••••••••	•
SENSUOUS	

(SEN-shuh-wuhs)



characterized or produced by perseverance Through **sedulous** effort, Karen mastered conversational French in just six months. **Synonyms:** diligent, industrious, tireless

related to the senses, especially with the gratification of or indulgence in the senses or appetites

Their interest in each other was purely **sensual**, and so their relationship was passionate but brief.

Synonyms: carnal, materialistic

affecting the senses, aesthetically gratifying to the senses

The singer was beloved for her **sensuous** style.

Synonyms: luxurious, pleasurable

SENTIENT (SEN-shee-uhnt)
SERVILE (SUHR-vahyl)
••••••
SHARD (shahrd)



conscious, able to perceive

The forest seemed to be haunted, as though the trees were **sentient**.

Synonym: aware

submissive, like a slave

Though yours is the lowest position in the firm, there is no need to behave in such a **servile** way, especially if you hope to be promoted.

Synonyms: abject, obedient, subservient

a fragment of a hard or brittle substance

After he glued together the **shards** of the broken vase, the resulting vessel was off-kilter and oddly beautiful.

Synonym: scrap

SINGULAR (SING-gyuh-luhr)	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	••
SKEPTIC (SKEP-tik)	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	••

SOLICITOUS (suh-LI-suh-tuhs)



unique, unusual

Leonardo da Vinci's genius was **singular**; who else has been so talented in so many different disciplines?

Synonyms: exceptional, individual, odd, peculiar

a person who is given to skepticism, who tends to doubt or disbelieve

When it comes to matters of faith, I tend to be a **skeptic**; I prefer to believe only when there is evidence for belief.

Synonyms: disbeliever, doubter

showing concern or care; eager

I was irritated by their overly **solicitous** questions and fussing after my illness.

Synonyms: anxious, attentive, careful, worried

SOLVENT (SOL-vuhnt)
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SOPORIFIC (soh-puh-RI-fik)
•••••••••••
SORDID (SAWR-did)



(adj.) able to pay debts; having the power of dissolving

After two difficult years, business was good again and at last we were **solvent**.

stable

(n.) a substance, usually a liquid, in which other substances can be dissolved

Water is a **solvent** for a variety of substances, such as salt.

tending to cause sleep, related to sleep or sleepiness

While I am energized by the music of Bach, my husband finds it **soporific** and often actually falls asleep while listening to it.

Synonyms: calming, dull, hypnotic, soothing

characterized by baseness, filthy

The story of his ascent to power was a **sordid** one of greed, betrayal, and even murder.

Synonyms: degenerate, miserable, squalid, vile

SPARSE (spahrs)			
	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • •
SPECIOUS (SPEE-shuhs)			
	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • •
SPECTRUM (SPEK-truhm)			



thinly settled or grown, meager

After the long, dry summer, the grass was **sparse** underfoot.

Synonyms: inadequate, scanty, skimpy

having the appearance of goodness or truth, attractive in a deceptive way

Despite her **specious** arguments, the candidate attracted an enthusiastic following.

Synonyms: false, illusory, misleading, plausible

a series or range of related things or ideas

Roxanne has a wide **spectrum** of interests, including everything from martial arts to bird watching.

Synonyms: continuum, span

SPENDTHRIFT (SPEND-thrift)		
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
SPORADIC (spuh-RA-dik)		
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SPURIOUS		

(SPYOOR-ee-uhs)



a person who spends wastefully

One of my uncles is frugal and has accumulated a staggering fortune, and the other is a **spendthrift** who has accumulated a staggering debt.

Synonyms: spender, squanderer

happening occasionally or irregularly

The children were given to **sporadic** bursts of enthusiasm that their teacher was determined to cultivate.

Synonyms: isolated, occasionally, scattered

not genuine or true

Not wanting to hurt his feelings, she gave a **spurious** reason for rejecting his invitation to the movies.

Synonyms: contrived, counterfeit, deceitful, deceptive

SQUALID (SKWO-lid)			
•••••	• • • • • • • •	• • • • • • •	• • • •
SQUANDER (SKWON-duhr)			
•••••	• • • • • • •	• • • • • • •	• • • •

STATIC

(STA-tik)



filthy from neglect or poverty

Once anything makes its way into my little brother's **squalid** bedroom, it rarely makes its way out.

Synonyms: disgusting, miserable, sordid

to spend or use wastefully, to scatter

You worked hard to earn that money, so don't **squander** it on silly things like video games!

Synonyms: dissipate, misuse, waste

showing a lack of change or movement

In literature, a **static** character is one who is the same from the beginning to the end of the story.

Synonyms: fixed, inactive, unchanging

STIGMA (STIG-muh)
•••••••••••
STINT (stint)
•••••••••••
STIPULATE (STI-pyuh-levt)



a mark or sign of disgrace

Wendy bore the **stigma** of having been fired from three jobs, until she found a suitable career and thrived.

Synonyms: blemish, brand, scar, stain

a period of time spent doing a specific activity I had a brief **stint** in college but dropped out to start my own business.

Synonym: term

to set conditions of agreement, to make a specific demand

The printer **stipulated** that the files should be ready no later than the last day of June.

Synonyms: contract, designate, require, settle

STOIC (STOH-ik)				
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STOLID (STO-lid)				
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STRATIFIED				
(STRA-tuh-fahyd)				



not showing feeling

Our mother's **stoic** attitude toward her struggle to make a living for our family was an inspiration to us.

Synonyms: dispassionate, indifferent, philosophic, self-controlled

having or showing no feelings

Nobody understood what she saw in him, but she knew that his **stolid** exterior hid a sensitive soul.

Synonyms: impassive, indifferent, unemotional

arranged in layers or hierarchical classes

The **stratified** cliffs of the Grand Canyon display a record of geological time.

Synonym: ordered

STRIATED (STRAHY-ey-ted)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
STRIDENT (STRAHY-duhnt)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
STRUT (struht)



marked with grooves, scratches, or stripes

The **striated** rocks give evidence of the glaciers that once covered this region, scraping and scoring any exposed surfaces as they moved.

Synonyms: furrowed, streaked, striped

characterized by harsh and insistent sound, commanding attention

His **strident** voice could be heard throughout the entire building.

Synonym: loud

to walk in a proud or pompous way

Now that Henry is the boss of our division, he **struts** around as though he owns the place.

Synonyms: flaunt, parade, swagger

STUPEFY (STOO-puh-fahy)
•••••••••••
STYMIE (STAHY-mee)
•••••••••••
SUBPOENA

(suh-PEE-nuh)



to make stupid or numb; to astonish

This economics textbook is so dull that it **stupefies** more than it instructs.

Synonyms: benumb, daze, deaden; bewilder, confound, flabbergast

to get in the way of

Our ambitions were **stymied** by our lack of funds.

Synonyms: block, hinder, impede, obstruct, thwart

a written command to appear in court

Unless the judge issues a **subpoena**, there is no way I will appear in court.

Synonym: summons

SUBSIDE (suhb-SAHYD)
•••••••••••
SUBSTANTIATE (suhb-STAN-shee-eyt)
••••••••••
SUBTLE (SUH-tl)



to settle down or become quiet

Before long, the storm had **subsided** and the sun appeared.

Synonyms: abate, diminish

to give evidence for or prove; to give form to

It took six weeks of research for her to gather the evidence to **substantiate** her claims, and the resulting article won several awards.

Synonyms: demonstrate, establish; embody, materialize

delicate or elusive, difficult to perceive or understand; insightful, skillful

The argument was so **subtle** that I had to read the essay several times to appreciate its conclusions.

Synonyms: indistinct, suggestive; penetrating, perceptive

SUBVERSIVE (suhb-VUHR-siv)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
SUCCINCT (suhk-SINGKT)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
SUCCOR

(SUH-kuhr)



tending to undermine, intending to overthrow Because their aims were **subversive**, they distributed the pamphlets quietly, so as not to call the attention of the authorities.

Synonyms: destructive, rebellious

precise, using few words

His **succinct** explanation was far more helpful than anything in our 48-page manual.

Synonyms: blunt, concise, pithy

relief or help; that which gives relief or help

The missionaries vowed to give **succor** to the

Synonyms: aid, assistance

poor.

SUPERFLUOUS (soo-PUHR-floo-uhs)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
SUPERSEDE (soo-puhr-SEED)
•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
SUPPLANT (sub-PLANT)



more than what is needed, extra, unnecessary

Though I'm certainly grateful, your praise of my performance was **superfluous**; being able to make music is joy enough in itself.

Synonyms: excessive, expendable, gratuitous

to take the place or position of, displace

In the twentieth century, the physics that followed from Einstein's theories **superseded** Newtonian physics.

Synonyms: replace, succeed, supplant

to take the place of, especially by force, through treachery, or through superiority

The rebels overthrew the government, only to **supplant** one tyranny with another.

Synonyms: overthrow, succeed, supersede, undermine, uproot

SUPPOSITION (suh-puh-ZI-shuhn)
•••••
SURFEIT (suhr-feht)
SYNTHESIS

(SIN-thuh-suhs)



the act of supposing or something that is supposed

Your **supposition** that I am not up to the job seems to be based more on stereotypes than on familiarity with my work.

Synonyms: assumption, hyphothesis

an excessive amount or indulgence in something

December seems to be characterized by a **surfeit** in all things: food, drink, and gifts.

Synonyms: glut, overindulgence, satiety, surplus

the combination of different things or ideas to form one substance or whole

The show was a remarkable **synthesis** of different art forms: drama, music, and dance combined in one extravagant spectacle.

Synonyms: amalgamation, integration, unification



TACIT (TA-suht)	
••••••••	••••••
TANGENTIAL (tan-JENT-shuhl)	
•••••••	• • • • • • • • • •

TAUTOLOGICAL (taw-tuh-LO-ji-kuhl)



expressed or done without words, implied

No words on the matter were actually spoken between our neighbors and us; we simply came to a **tacit** agreement that any apples that fell onto our yard from their tree were ours.

Synonyms: implicit, silent, suggested, unspoken

touching or connected only slightly, as a tangent line

Her paper was marred by the inclusion of too much information that was only **tangential** to her main point.

Synonyms: digressive, divergent, incidental

characterized by unnecessary repetition

Always saying "a variety of different things" is **tautological** because the word variety already implies difference; you can simply say "a variety of things."

Synonym: redundant

TENACITY (tuh-NA-suh-tee)				
•••••	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	· • • • • •
TENET (TE-nuht)				
•••••	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	· • • • •

TENUOUS (TEN-yuh-wuhs)



persistence

Against all odds, with great **tenacity**, and not a little luck, she worked her way through college.

Synonyms: determination, resolve

a principle or belief, especially one held by a particular group of people

The main **tenet** of attachment theory is that the healthy development of a child requires the secure attachment to at least one caregiver.

Synonyms: doctrine, precept

thin in form or density; lacking substance, strength, clarity, or a sound basis in reasoning

We questioned her **tenuous** reasons for her three-day absence, but she refused to clarify her story.

Synonyms: flimsy, rare; questionable, unsubstantial, vague, weak

TERSE (tuhrs)	
••••••••••	• • •
TIRADE (TAHY-reyd)	
•••••••••	• • ••
TOME (tohm)	



concise, sometimes abruptly so

His **terse** reply hinted at darker reasons for his condition, and so I did not press him to say more.

Synonyms: brief, curt, pithy, succinct

a long and angry speech

Our neighbor subjects all visitors to a **tirade** on the perceived wrongdoings of his ex-wife.

Synonyms: diatribe, harangue, invective

a large, weighty, or scholarly book; one volume of a larger work

What she originally envisioned as a brief novella developed into a 600-page **tome**, dramatizing the lives and relationships of some half-dozen characters.

Synonym: opus

TORPOR (TAWR-puhr)			
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • • • •
TORQUE (tawrk)			
••••••	• • • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •
TORTUOUS (TAWRCH-wuhs)			



a state of mental and physical inactivity accompanied by a loss of feeling; a lack of energy

During my illness, the fever did not trouble me so much as the **torpor**—I hate to be slowed down!

Synonyms: apathy, dullness, lethargy

a force that causes twisting or rotation, or the measurement of this force

The carpenter's drill supplied enough **torque** to drive screws into the very dense wood.

Synonyms: force, rotation

having many twists or turns; characterized by indirect methods

We made our way back and forth up the **tortuous** path through the woods.

Synonyms: circuitous, crooked, winding; convoluted, devious

TOUT (tout)	
•••••	•
TRACTABLE (TRAK-tuh-buhl)	
•••••	•

TRANSGRESSION

(tranz-GREH-shuhn)



to solicit support for, to promote

Mr. Franklin takes every opportunity to **tout** the accomplishments of his three grandchildren.

Synonyms: acclaim, herald, praise

easily led, trained, or controlled; easily handled He has a **tractable** dog that learns tricks easily.

Synonyms: docile, submissive, yielding; malleable

an act of violating a command or law or of going beyond some limit

Although our **transgression** was unintentional, we still had to pay a fine for breaking the law.

Synonyms: breach, crime, sin, violation

TRANSIENT (TRAN-shuhnt)	
•••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
TRANSLUCENT (tranz-LOO-suhnt)	
••••••	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
TRENCHANT (TREN-chuhnt)	



passing swiftly in and out of existence, lasting or staying only a short time

Though they seem long, the days of summer are **transient**, and before you know it, winter has come again.

Synonyms: ephemeral, fleeting, temporary, transitory

allowing the passage of light but diffusing it so that objects on the other side are not clearly visible; clearly understandable; clear

Translucent panels were set into the wall, so that you could see blurry figures passing through the hallway on the other side.

Synonyms: semitransparent; lucid

keen, articulate, or perceptive (describing language or a person); energetic, effective; sharply defined

His **trenchant** criticism could be hard to take, but the students who listened were better writers for it.

Synonyms: caustic, cutting; vigorous; clear-cut, distinct

TRUCULENT (truh-kyuh-luhnt)	
••••••	•••••••
TRYST (trist)	
	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •



feeling or showing ferocity; deadly, harsh, or aggressive

The discipline of playing football transformed the **truculent** boy into a mild young man; he reserved his aggression for the field.

Synonyms: brutal, cruel, fierce, savage; belligerent, hostile

an appointment to meet, especially one made secretly between lovers

In the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, a **tryst** between the two lovers ends in tragedy when Pyramus believes that Thisbe has been devoured by a lioness.

Synonyms: date, engagement, rendezvous



UBIQUITOUS (yoo-BI-kwi-tuhs)
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UNCANNY (uhn-KA-nee)
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LINEELGNED

(uhn-FEYND)



existing everywhere at once

That hit song was **ubiquitous** all summer long: I heard it at the beach, at the grocery store, waiting on line at the deli, and on the radio just about every time I turned it on.

Synonyms: omnipresent, pervasive, widespread

seeming to be supernatural in nature, extraordinary

She had an **uncanny** way of knowing that someone was seriously ill, sometimes even before the person knew of the illness him or herself.

Synonyms: eerie, mysterious, spooky, weird

genuine, sincere

I love to be with children, because their delight is always **unfeigned** and spontaneous.

Synonyms: honest, real, true, unaffected

UNTENABLE (uhn-TEN-uh-buhl)	
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URBANE (uhr-BEYN)	
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incapable of being defended (describing an argument or belief); unsuitable for occupation

The more evidence we gathered, the more clearly we saw how **untenable** our original hypothesis was, and it took us several months to devise another one.

Synonyms: illogical, indefensible, unsound

polite, polished, or elegant in manner

When I was new to the city and unaccustomed to sophisticated conversation, I was thoroughly intimidated by his **urbane** wit.

Synonyms: civilized, cultured, elegant, refined, sophisticated



VACILLATE (VA-suh-leyt)			
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VACUOUS (VA-kyuh-wuhs)			
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VAPID (VA-puhd)



to sway or fluctuate; to waver in feeling or hesitate in making a decision

Roberta **vacillated** for so long that by the time she decided to go to the show, the tickets were all sold out.

Synonyms: oscillate, stagger, swing; alternate, hedge, pause

empty, lacking ideas or seriousness, idle

I've been known on occasion to indulge in those ridiculous paperback romances—the more **vacuous**, the better.

Synonyms: foolish, inane, purposeless, silly, stupid

lacking energy or flavor

The conversation at the dinner party that night was as **vapid** as the tasteless meal.

Synonyms: dull, flat, insipid, tedious

VARIEGATED (VER-ee-uh-gey-tuhd)
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VENERATE (VE-nuh-reyt)
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VERACITY (vuh-RA-suh-tee)



marked by a variety of colors; varied

I love the variegated landscape in autumn.

Synonyms: kaleidoscopic, motley, mottled; assorted, diverse, mixed

to regard with reverence, to honor

The basketball star was venerated by the citizens of the small town where he grew up.

Synonyms: revere, worship

truthfulness or accuracy

She was a scrupulous journalist, and when she could not check the **veracity** of the claim, she struck all mentions of it from her article.

Synonyms: authenticity, credibility, honesty

VERBOSE (vuhr-BOHS)
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VEXATION (vek-SEY-shuhn)
••••••••••••
VIABLE (VAHY-uh-buhl)



tending to use more words than necessary, wordy

Warren tends to write **verbose** e-mails that nobody in the company has the time to read.

Synonyms: garrulous, long-winded, loquacious

the act of troubling or agitating; the state of being troubled or agitated

To be alive is to experience **vexation**; you will be happier if you accept that you will encounter annoyances.

Synonyms: annoyance, irritation, nuisance

capable of living, growing, and developing; able to function properly

Though the idea was brilliant, it also involved a greater expense than was **viable**, given our budget at the time.

Synonyms: functioning; feasible, possible, practicable, reasonable, workable

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VIGILANT (VI-juh-luhnt)				
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VILIFY (VI-luh-fahy)				
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VIRTUOSO (vir-choo-OH-soh)



alert, watchful

Tourists must be **vigilant** when walking through that part of town, as the locals there tend to be especially hostile toward foreigners.

Synonyms: attentive, guarded, wary

to slander

How dare you **vilify** my name in the newspaper when you are the one who has been squandering city funds.

Synonyms: attack, censure, defame, denigrate, disparage

(n.) one who excels at an art

Picasso was a **virtuoso** who continuously explored different styles, materials, and themes.

Synonyms: genius, master, prodigy

(adj.) displaying excellence

The audience erupted in applause for the pianist's **virtuoso** performance of the Liszt étude.

Synonyms: masterful, skilled

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VIRULENT (VIR-uh-lunt)
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VISCOUS (VIS-kuhs)
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VITUPERATIVE

(vi-TOO-puh-ruh-tiv)



poisonous, highly infective, or deadly; malicious or harsh

The 1918 influenza virus was especially **virulent**, resulting in a pandemic that killed some 50 million people.

Synonyms: destructive, noxious; hostile, spiteful

adhesive, sticky, thick (describing a liquid)

This varnish is **viscous** when applied and dries to a hard gloss in just a few hours.

Synonyms: gelatinous, gummy

characterized by harsh or abusive language

The **vituperative** editorial put the mayor on the defensive.

Synonyms: abusive, derisive, scolding

VOGUE (vohg)	
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VOLATILE (VO-luh-tl)	
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VORACIOUS (vaw-REY-shuhs)	



something that is in fashion, currently popular, or favored

If there was ever a time when Mrs. Henderson's hairstyle was in **vogue**, it was long before any of us was born.

Synonyms: fashion, mode, popularity

evaporating easily; explosive, changeable

Fearing the substitute teacher's **volatile** temper, the children were quiet and obedient.

Synonyms: gaseous; capricious, unstable

having a large appetite, insatiable

The film festival briefly satisfied their **voracious** appetite for new movies.

Synonyms: avid, gluttonous, ravenous



WARRANTED (WAW-ruhn-tuhd)
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
WARY (WER-ee)
WAVER (WEY-vuhr)



justified

Your angry outburst at the child was simply not **warranted**; he is only two years old and simply does not know any better.

Synonyms: authorized, sanctioned

cautious, watchful, on guard

Our cat is **wary** of visitors, often hiding when they first arrive.

Synonyms: attentive, vigilant

to sway back and forth; to become unsteady, shake, or tremble; to vacillate in making a decision or in opinion

In the twenty-first mile of the marathon, she **wavered** in her determination to complete the race, but the spectators cheered her on.

Synonyms: flutter, wobble; alternate, fluctuate



WELTER (WEL-tuhr)			
•••••	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • • • •
WHIMSICAL (HWIM-zi-kuhl)			
ZEALOUS	• • • • •	• • • • •	• • • • • •

(ZE-luhs)



(v.) to roll or toss, as in waves; to wallow or become immersed or involved

The children **weltered** about in the piles of fallen leaves.

Synonyms: heave, tumble

(n.) a state of disorder, a jumble

The check was lost in the **welter** of books and papers that cluttered her desk.

Synonyms: confusion, tormoil

full of whims, characterized by sudden and eccentric ideas

She designs fabrics with **whimsical** patterns that are suitable for children's clothing.

Synonyms: fanciful, playful, wayward

characterized by passionate loyalty and zeal for a person or idea

A **zealous** fan of the handsome young rock star, she traveled from city to city to see him perform.

Synonyms: ardent, dedicated, devoted, impassioned