

GRE Vocabulary Workout

400 OF THE GRE'S FAVORITE WORDS WITH DEFINITIONS

A

ABDICATE to give up a position, right, or power
ABJURE to reject, abandon formally
ABLUTION act of cleansing
ABNEGATE to deny, renounce
ABROGATE to abolish or invalidate by authority
ABSTEMIOUS consuming moderately
ABSTRUSE difficult to comprehend
ABUT to touch, to be in contact with
ACERBIC bitter, sharp in taste or temper
ACME highest point, summit
ACQUIESCE to agree or comply in silence
ADROIT skillful, accomplished, highly competent
ADUMBRATE to sketch, outline in a shadowy way
AERIE nook or nest built high in the air
ALTRUISM unselfish concern for others' welfare
AMBULATORY itinerant; walking around
AMORTIZE to diminish by installment payments
ANCILLARY accessory, subordinate; helping
ANTEDILUVIAN prehistoric, ancient beyond measure; coming before the biblical flood
ANTHROPOMORPHIC attributing human qualities to nonhumans; having human qualities
APLOMB poise, confidence
APOSTATE one who renounces a religious faith
APOTHEGM a short, instructive saying
APOTHEOSIS deification; glorified ideal
ARBOREAL relating to trees; living in trees
ASSIDUOUS diligent, persistent, hardworking

B

BACCHANALIAN drunkenly festive
BALK to refuse, shirk; prevent
BEATIFIC saintly, angelic
BEHEMOTH huge creature
BELIE to misrepresent; expose as false
BENISON blessing
BIFURCATE divide into two parts
BILIOUS easily irritated, relating to bile
BONHOMIE good-natured geniality; atmosphere of good cheer
BULWARK defense wall; anything serving as defense

C

CAJOLE to flatter, coax, persuade
CALAMITOUS disastrous, catastrophic
CALUMNY false and malicious accusation, misrepresentation, slander
CANARD a lie
CAROM to strike and rebound
CAVALCADE a procession
CHAGRIN shame, embarrassment, humiliation
CHARLATAN quack, fake
CHATTEL piece of personal property
CHIMERICAL fanciful, imaginary, visionary; impossible

CHOLERIC easily angered, short-tempered
CHURLISH rude
CISTERN tank for rainwater
COALESCE to grow together; cause to unite as one
COFFER strongbox, large chest for money
COGNOMEN family name; any name, especially a nickname
COMELINESS physical grace and beauty
COMMODIOUS roomy, spacious
COMPUNCTIOUS feeling guilty or having misgivings
CONCILIATORY overcoming distrust or hostility
CONFLAGRATION big, destructive fire
CONGENIAL similar in tastes and habits
CONSANGUINEOUS of the same origin; related by blood
CONTENTIOUS quarrelsome, disagreeable, belligerent
CONTUMACIOUS rebellious
CORPULENCE obesity, fatness, bulkiness
CORRUGATE to mold in a shape with parallel grooves and ridges
COSSET to pamper, treat with great care
COTERIE small group of persons with a similar purpose
COVEN group of witches
CURMUDGEON cranky person

D

DECLIVITY downward slope
DELETERIOUS harmful, destructive, detrimental
DELUGE flood
DEMAGOGUE leader or rabble-rouser who usually uses appeals to emotion or prejudice
DENIGRATE to slur or blacken someone's reputation
DESCRY to discover or reveal
DIAPHANOUS allowing light to show through; delicate
DICTUM authoritative statement; popular saying
DIDACTIC excessively instructive
DILUVIAL relating to a flood
DIMINUTIVE small
DISCOMFIT to cause perplexity and embarrassment
DISTAFF the female branch of a family
DITHER to move or act confusedly or without clear purpose
DIURNAL daily
DOCTRINAIRE rigidly devoted to theories
DOLOR sadness
DOUGHTY courageous
DROLL amusing in a dry, subtle way
DYSPEPTIC suffering from indigestion; gloomy and irritable

E

EBULLIENT exhilarated, full of enthusiasm and high spirits
EFFLUVIA outpouring of gases or vapors
EFFULGENT brilliantly shining
EGREGIOUS conspicuously bad
EMEND to correct a text
EMOLLIENT having soothing qualities, esp. for skin
ENCOMIUM warm praise
ENDEMIC belonging to a particular area, inherent



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ENNUI boredom, lack of interest and energy
EPICURE person with refined taste in food and wine
EPITOME representative of an entire group; summary
ERSATZ fake
ESCHEW to abstain from, avoid
EVINCE to show clearly, display, signify
EXORCISE to expel evil spirits
EXPATiate to wander; to discuss or describe at length
EXPIATE to atone for, make amends for
EXPUNGE to erase, eliminate completely
EXPURGATE to censor
EXTEMPORANEOUS unrehearsed, on the spur of the moment
EXTOL to praise
EXTRAPOLATE to estimate

F

FACETIOUS witty in an inappropriate way
FATUOUS stupid; smugly foolish; unconsciously foolish
FEALTY intense loyalty
FECUND fertile, fruitful, productive
FETID foul-smelling, putrid
FEY doomed
FILCH to steal
FILIAL appropriate for a child
FLACCID limp, flabby, weak
FOLIATE to grow, sprout leaves
FORSWEAR to repudiate, renounce, disclaim, reject
FRACAS noisy dispute
FRACTIOUS unruly, rebellious
FRENETIC wildly frantic, frenzied, hectic
FULMINATE to explode with anger
FULSOME excessive, overdone, sickeningly abundant
FURTIVE secret, stealthy

G

GAINSAY to deny
GAMBOL to dance or skip around playfully
GAUCHE crude, socially awkward
GERMINATE to begin to grow (as in a seed or idea)
GIBE to make heckling, taunting remarks
GLIB fluent in an insincere manner; offhand, casual
GNOSTIC having to do with knowledge
GRANDILOQUENCE pompous talk, fancy but meaningless language
GRATUITOUS free, voluntary; unnecessary and unjustified
GUSTATORY relating to sense of taste

H

HACKNEYED worn out by over-use
HARANGUE a pompous speech
HEGEMONY leadership, domination, usually by a country
HERETICAL opposed to an established religious orthodoxy
HERMETIC tightly sealed
HOARY very old; whitish or gray from age
HUSBAND to farm; manage carefully and thriftily

I

IDIOSYNCRASY peculiarity of temperament, eccentricity
IGNOMINIOUS disgraceful and dishonorable
ILK type or kind

ILLUSORY unreal, deceptive
IMBUE to infuse; dye; wet, moisten
IMPECUNIOUS poor, having no money
IMPERIOUS arrogantly self-assured, domineering, overbearing
IMPOLITIC unwise
IMPROMPTU spontaneous, without rehearsal
IMPUGN to call into question, attack verbally
INCARNATE having bodily form
INCENDIARY combustible, flammable, burning easily
INCULCATE to teach; impress in the mind
INCULPATE to blame; charge with a crime
INDEFATIGABLE never tired
INDIGENT very poor
INDOLENT habitually lazy, idle
INDUBITABLE unquestionable
INERT unable to move, tending to inactivity
INFALLIBLE incapable of making a mistake
INGENIOUS original, clever, inventive
INGRATiate to bring oneself purposely into another's good graces
INGRESS entrance
INNUENDO indirect and subtle criticism, insinuation
INSIDIOUS sly, treacherous, devious
INSUPERABLE insurmountable, unconquerable
INTERDICT to forbid, prohibit
INTERLOCUTOR someone taking part in a dialogue
INTERLOPER trespasser; meddler in others' affairs
INTERNECINE deadly to both sides
INTERPOLATE to insert; change by adding new words or material
INTERSTICE a space between things
INTIMATION clue, suggestion
INTREPID fearless
INTRINSIC inherent, internal
INURE to harden; accustom; become used to
INVETERATE confirmed, long-standing, deeply rooted
INVIDIOUS likely to provoke ill will, offensive
ITINERANT wandering from place to place, unsettled

J

JIBE to shift suddenly from one side to the other
JINGOISM belligerent support of one's country
JOCULAR jovial, playful, humorous
JUGGERNAUT huge force destroying everything in its path
JURISPRUDENCE philosophy of law

K

KISMET fate
KNELL sound of a funeral bell; omen of death or failure

L

LACHRYMOSE tearful
LAMBASTE disapprove angrily
LAPIDARY relating to precious stones
LARGESS generosity; gift
LASSITUDE lethargy, sluggishness
LEGERDEMAIN trickery
LEVITY humor, frivolity, gaiety
LEXICON dictionary, list of words
LIBIDINOUS lustful
LICENTIOUS immoral; unrestrained by society

LIMPID clear and simple in style
LINIMENT medicinal liquid used externally to ease pain
LIONIZE to treat as a celebrity
LISSOME easily flexed, limber, agile
LUGUBRIOUS sorrowful, mournful

M

MACABRE gruesome, producing horror
MACHINATION plot or scheme
MALAPROPISM humorous misuse of a word
MALEVOLENT ill-willed; causing evil or harm to others
MANIFOLD diverse, varied; comprised of many parts
MARTINET strict disciplinarian; one who rigidly follows rules
MAUDLIN overly sentimental
MAWKISH sickeningly sentimental
MEGALOMANIA mental state with delusions of wealth and power
MENDACIOUS dishonest
MENDICANT beggar
MERCURIAL quick, shrewd, and unpredictable
MERITORIOUS deserving reward or praise
MINATORY menacing, threatening
MNEMONIC relating to memory; designed to assist memory
MOLT to shed hair, skin, or an outer layer periodically
MORDACIOUS caustic, biting
MOTE small particle, speck
MULTIFARIOUS diverse
MUNIFICENT generous

N

NADIR lowest point
NASCENT starting to develop, coming into existence
NEBULOUS vague, cloudy
NECROMANCY black magic
NEFARIOUS vicious, evil
NEOLOGISM new word or expression
NEOPHYTE novice, beginner
NIHILISM belief that existence and all traditional values are meaningless
NOISOME stinking, putrid
NOXIOUS harmful, unwholesome
NUMISMATICS coin collecting

O

OBFUSCATE to confuse, obscure
OBSTREPEROUS troublesome, boisterous, unruly
OMNIPOTENT having unlimited power
OMNISCIENT having infinite knowledge
OSCILLATE to move back and forth
OUSTER expulsion, ejection

P

PAEAN a song of praise or thanksgiving
PALLIATE to make less serious, ease
PANACEA cure-all
PANEGYRIC elaborate praise; formal hymn of praise
PANOPLY impressive array
PARLEY discussion, usually between enemies
PAROCHIAL of limited scope or outlook, provincial
PARSIMONY stinginess
PASTICHE piece of literature or music imitating other works

PAUCITY scarcity, lack
PECCADILLO minor sin or offense
PECULATION theft of money or goods
PENCHANT inclination
PENULTIMATE next to last
PENUMBRA partial shadow
PERAMBULATE walk about
PERIPHRASTIC using circumlocution
PERNICIOUS very harmful
PERSPICACIOUS shrewd, astute, keen-witted
PERTINACIOUS persistent, stubborn
PHALANX massed group of soldiers, people, or things
PHILISTINE narrow-minded person, someone lacking appreciation for art or culture
PLAIT to braid
PLANGENT resounding; plaintive
PLAUDIT applause
PNEUMATIC relating to air; worked by compressed air
POLEMIC controversy, argument; verbal attack
POLYGLOT speaker of many languages
POSIT to put in position; to suggest an idea
PRECEPT principle; law
PRECURSOR forerunner, predecessor
PREDILECTION preference, liking
PRESCIENT having foresight
PRIVATION lack of usual necessities or comforts
PROBITY honesty, high-mindedness
PROGENITOR originator, forefather, ancestor in a direct line
PROGNOSTICATE to predict
PROLIFIC productive, fertile
PROLIX tedious; wordy
PROMULGATE to make known publicly
PROPINQUITY nearness
PROPTITIOUS favorable, advantageous
PROSELYTIZE to induce someone to convert to a particular belief or religion
PROSTRATE lying face downward, lying flat on the ground
PROTAGONIST main character in a play or story, hero
PROVIDENT prudent, frugal
PROVINCIAL rustic, unsophisticated, limited in scope
PRURIENT lustful, exhibiting lewd desires
PUERILE childish, immature, silly
PULCHRITUDE beauty
PUNDIT an authority or critic
PUSILLANIMOUS cowardly

Q

QUERULOUS inclined to complain, irritable
QUOTIDIAN occurring daily; commonplace

R

RACONTEUR a witty, skillful storyteller
RAILLERY lighthearted jesting
RANCOR bitter hatred
RAPACIOUS greedy; predatory
RAPPROCHEMENT reestablishing a cordial relationship
RAZE to tear down, demolish
RECALCITRANT resisting authority or control
RECIDIVISM tendency to repeat previous behavior
RECONDITE relating to obscure learning; known to only a few
RECREANT disloyal; cowardly

REDRESS relief from wrong or injury
REJOINDER response
RENEGE to go back on one's word
RENITENT resisting pressure, obstinate
REPAST meal
REPROBATE morally unprincipled person
REQUITE to return or repay
RESPITE interval of relief
RESTIVE impatient, uneasy, restless
RETINUE group of attendants with an important person
REVELRY boisterous festivity
RIBALD humorous in a vulgar way
RIPOSTE a retort
ROCCO very highly ornamented
ROTUND round in shape; fat
RUMINATE to contemplate, reflect upon

S

SACROSANCT extremely sacred; beyond criticism
SAGACIOUS shrewd, wise
SALACIOUS lustful
SALUBRIOUS healthful
SANGUINE ruddy; cheerfully optimistic
SAPIENT wise
SCABBARD sheath for sword or dagger
SCINTILLA very small amount
SCINTILLATE to sparkle, flash
SCURRILOUS vulgar, low, indecent
SEDITION behavior promoting rebellion
SENESCENT aging, growing old
SENTIENT aware, conscious, able to perceive
SEPULCHRAL typical of a place of burial
SERAPHIC angelic, pure, sublime
SHIRK to avoid a task due to laziness or fear
SIMPER to smirk, smile foolishly
SINECURE well-paying job or office that requires little or no work
SINUOUS winding; intricate, complex
SLAKE to quench or moderate
SLOVENLY untidy, messy
SOJOURN visit, stay
SOLECISM grammatical mistake
SOLIPSISM belief that the self is the only reality
SOMNAMBULIST sleepwalker
SONOROUS producing a full, rich sound
SOPHIST person good at arguing deviously
SPORTIVE frolicsome, playful
SQUALID filthy; morally repulsive
STAD self-restrained, strait-laced
STENTORIAN extremely loud
STRIATE striped, grooved
STRINGENT imposing severe, rigorous standards
STYMIE to block or thwart
SUBTERFUGE trick or tactic used to avoid something
SULLY to soil, stain, tarnish; taint
SUPERCILIOUS arrogant, haughty, overbearing, condescending
SURLY rude and bad-tempered
SURREPTITIOUS characterized by secrecy
SYBARITE person devoted to pleasure and luxury
SYCOPHANT self-serving flatterer, yes-man
SYNCPATION temporary irregularity in musical rhythm

T

TABLEAU vivid description, striking incident or scene
TALISMAN something producing a magical effect
TANTAMOUNT equivalent in value or significance; amounting to
TEMERITY recklessness
TEMPORAL relating to time; chronological
TENABLE defensible, reasonable
TENET belief, doctrine
TENUOUS weak, insubstantial
THRENODY a sad poem or song
TRAMMEL to impede or hamper
TRENCHANT acute, sharp, incisive; forceful, effective
TRITE shallow, superficial
TRUCULENT savage and cruel; fierce; ready to fight
TURGID swollen, bloated
TURPITUDE inherent vileness, foulness, depravity
TYRO beginner, novice

U

UMBRAGE offense, resentment
UNCTUOUS greasy, oily; smug and falsely earnest
UNFETTERED free, unrestrained
UNSULLIED clean
UNTOWARD not favorable; unruly
URBANE courteous, refined, suave
USURY lending money at exorbitant rates

V

VACUOUS empty, void; lacking intelligence, purposeless
VARIEGATED varied; marked with different colors
VIRILE manly, having qualities of an adult male
VISCOUS thick, syrupy, and sticky
VITIATE reduce in value or effectiveness
VITRIOLIC burning, caustic; sharp, bitter
VITUPERATE to abuse verbally
VOCIFEROUS loud, vocal, and noisy
VOLUBLE speaking much and easily, talkative; glib

W

WASPISH easily irritated
WIZENED withered, shriveled, wrinkled
WRAITH a ghost

X

XENOPHOBIA fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers

Z

ZENITH highest point, summit



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