**Alacrity**

The GRE has a predilection for words that don’t really sound like what they mean. Alacrity is no exception. Many think the word has a negative connotation. **Alacrity, however, means an eager willingness to do something.**

So imagine the first day at a job that you’ve worked really hard to get. How are you going to complete the tasks assigned to you? With alacrity of course.

An interesting correlation: the more alacritous (adjective form) you are to learn GRE vocabulary, the better you will do.

**Prosaic**

Prosaic conjures up a beautiful mosaic for some. For others, the pro- is clearly positive. So if somebody or something is prosaic, it must surely be good.

Once again the GRE confounds expectations. **Prosaic means dull and lacking imagination**. It can be used to describe plans, life, language, or just about anything inanimate that has become dull **(it is not used to describe people).**

A good mnemonic: prose is the opposite of poetry. And where poetry, ideally, bursts force with imagination, prose (think of text-book writing), lacks imagination. Hence, prose-aic.

**Veracity**

Veracity sounds a lot like voracity. Whereas many know voracity means full of hunger (the adjective form voracious is more common), few know veracity. Unfortunately, many confuse the two on the test.

**Veracity means truthful**. The adjective form, veracious, sounds a lot like veracious. So be careful.

**Paucity**

**Paucity is a lack of something**. In honor of paucity, this entry will have a paucity of words.

**Maintain**

The second definition of this word – and one the new GRE favors – **is to assert**. One can maintain their innocence. A scientist can maintain that a recent finding support her theory. The latter context is the one you’ll encounter on the GRE.

**Contrite**

Word roots are often misleading. This word does not mean with triteness (con- meaning with). **To be contrite is to feel remorse**.

**Laconic**

Another word that sounds different from what it means. **A person is described as laconic when he/she says very few words.**

I’m usually reminded of John Wayne, the quintessential cowboy, who, with a gravely intonation, muttered few words. As this allusion betrays may age more than anything else, think of Christian Bale in Batman.

**Pugnacious**

Much like the pug dog, which aggressively yaps at things near it, **a person who is pugnacious likes to aggressively argue about everything**. Verbally combative is another good way to describe pugnacious.

**Disparate**

**If two things are fundamentally different, they are disparate**. For instance, verbal skills and math skills are disparate, and as such are usually tested separately, the GRE being no exception.

**Egregious**

‘Greg’ is the Latin root for flock. At one point egregious meant standing out of the flock a positive way. This definition went out of vogue sometime in the 16th century, after which time egregious was used ironically.

Thus for the last five hundred years, ‘**egregious’ meant standing out in a bad way**. In sports, an egregious foul would be called on a player who slugged another player (not including hockey, of course).