1. imbibe
   1. **verb:** to drink or absorb as if drinking
   2. *Ex: Plato****imbibed****Socrates’ teachings to such an extent that he was able to write volumes of work that he directly attributed, sometimes word for word, to Socrates.*
2. fractious
   1. **adjective:** irritable and is likely to cause disruption
   2. *Ex: We rarely invite my****fractious****Uncle over for dinner; he always complains about the food, and usually launches into a tirade on some touchy subject.*
3. malfeasance
   1. **noun:** misconduct or wrongdoing (especially by a public official)
   2. *Ex: Not even the mayor’s trademark pearly-toothed grin could save him from charges of****malfeasance****: while in power, he’d been running an illegal gambling rink in the room behind his office.*
4. byzantine
   1. **adjective:** intricate and complex
   2. *Ex: Getting a driver’s license is not simply a matter of taking a test; the regulations and procedures are so****byzantine****that many have found themselves at the mercy of the Department of Motor Vehicles.*
5. artless
   1. **adjective:** without cunning or deceit
   2. *Ex: Despite the president's seemingly****artless****speeches, he was a skilled and ruthless negotiator.*
6. insufferable
   1. **adjective:** intolerable, difficult to endure
   2. *Ex: Chester always tried to find some area in which he excelled above others; unsurprisingly, his co-workers found him****insufferable****and chose to exclude him from daily luncheons out.*
7. jingoist
   1. **noun:** a person who thinks their country is always right and who is in favor of aggressive acts against other countries
   2. *Ex: In the days leading up to war, a nation typically breaks up into the two opposing camps: doves, who do their best to avoid war, and****jingoists****, who are only too eager to wave national flags from their vehicles and vehemently denounce those who do not do the same.*
8. sedulous
   1. **adjective:** done diligently and carefully
   2. *Ex: An avid numismatist, Harold****sedulously****amassed a collection of coins from over 100 countries—an endeavor that took over fifteen years across five continents.*
9. hector  
   **verb:** to bully or intimidate  
   *The boss’s****hectoring****manner put off many employees, some of whom quit as soon as they found new jobs.*
10. ponderous
    1. **adjective:** weighed-down; moving slowly
    2. *Ex: Laden with 20 kilograms of college text books, the freshman moved****ponderously****across the campus.*
11. saturnine
    1. **adjective:** morose or gloomy
    2. *Ex: Deprived of sunlight, humans become****saturnine****; that’s why in very northerly territories people are encouraged to sit under an extremely powerful lamp, lest they become morose.*
12. supercilious
    1. **adjective:** haughty and disdainful; looking down on others
    2. *Ex: Nelly felt the Quiz Bowl director acted****superciliously****towards the underclassmen; really, she fumed, must he act so preternaturally omniscient each time he intones some obscure fact—as though everybody knows that Mt. Aconcagua is the highest peak in South America.*
13. churlish
    1. **adjective:** lacking manners or refinement
    2. *Ex: The manager was unnecessarily****churlish****to his subordinates, rarely deigning to say hello, but always quick with a sartorial jab if someone happened to be wearing anything even slightly mismatching.*
14. defray
    1. **verb:** to help pay the cost of, either in part or full
    2. *Ex: In order for Sean to attend the prestigious college, his generous uncle helped****defray****the excessive tuition with a monthly donation.*
15. turpitude
    1. **noun:** depravity; a depraved act
    2. *Ex: During his reign, Caligula indulged in unspeakable sexual practices, so it is not surprising that he will forever be remembered for his****turpitude****.*
16. precipitate
    1. **adjective:** hasty or rash
    2. *Ex: Instead of conducting a thorough investigation after the city hall break-in, the governor acted****precipitately****, accusing his staff of aiding and abetting the criminals.*
    3. **verb:** to cause to happen
    4. *Ex: The government's mishandling of the hurricane's aftermath****precipitated****a widespread outbreak of looting and other criminal activity.*
    5. This word has other definitions, but these are the most important ones to study
17. feckless
    1. **adjective:** lazy and irresponsible
    2. *Ex: Two years after graduation, Charlie still lived with his parents and had no job, becoming more****feckless****with each passing day.*
18. beg
    1. **verb:** assume something is true (usu. followed by "the question", meaning that you ask a question in which you assume something that hasn't been proven true)
    2. Ex: *By assuming that Charlie was headed to college—which he was not—Maggie****begged****the question when she asked him to which school he was headed in the Fall.*
19. lascivious  
    **adjective:** lecherous; sexually perverted  
    *Ex: Lolita is a challenging novel for many, not necessarily because of the elevated prose style but because of the depravity of the main character, Humbert Humbert, who, as an old,****lascivious****man, lusts after a girl.*
20. cow  
    **verb:** to intimidate  
    *Ex: Do not be****cowed****by a 3,000-word vocabulary list: turn that list into a deck of flashcards!*This word has other definitions but this is the most important one to study
21. untoward

**adjective:** unfavorable; inconvenient

*Ex: Some professors find teaching****untoward****as having to prepare for lectures and conduct office hours prevents them from focusing on their research.*

1. zeitgeist

**noun:** spirit of the times

*Ex: Each decade has its own****zeitgeist****—the 1990’s was a prosperous time in which the promise of the American Dream never seemed more palpable.*

1. anathema

**noun:** a detested person; the source of somebody's hate

*Ex: Hundreds of years ago, Galileo was****anathema****to the church; today the church is****anathema****to some on the left side of the political spectrum.*

1. apogee

**noun:** the highest point

*Ex: The****apogee****of the Viennese style of music, Mozart’s music continues to mesmerize audiences well into the 21st century.*

1. equivocate

**verb:** to speak vaguely, usually with the intention to mislead or deceive

*Ex: After Sharon brought the car home an hour after her curfew, she****equivocated****when her parents pointedly asked her where she had been.*

1. kowtow

**verb:** to bow or act in a subservient manner

*Ex: Paul****kowtowed****to his boss so often the boss herself became nauseated by his sycophancy.*

1. nadir

**noun:** the lowest point

*Ex: For many pop music fans, the rap– and alternative-rock–dominated 90s were the****nadir****of musical expression.*

1. alacrity

**noun:** an eager willingness to do something

*Ex: The first three weeks at his new job, Mark worked with such****alacrity****that upper management knew it would be giving him a promotion.*

1. exegesis

**noun:** critical explanation or analysis, especially of a text

*Ex: The Bible is fertile ground for****exegesis****—over the past five centuries there have been as many interpretations as there are pages in the Old Testament.*

1. prosaic  
   **adjective:** dull and lacking imagination  
   *Ex: Unlike the talented artists in his workshop, Paul had no such bent for the visual medium, so when it was time for him to make a stained glass painting, he ended up with a****prosaic****mosaic.*
2. vicissitude
   1. **noun:** change in one’s circumstances, usually for the worse
   2. *Ex: Even great rulers have their****vicissitudes****—massive kingdoms have diminished overnight, and once beloved kings have faced the scorn of angry masses.*
3. choleric
   1. **adjective:** prone to outbursts of temper; easily angered
   2. *Ex: While a brilliant lecturer, Mr. Dawson came across as****choleric****and unapproachable—very rarely did students come to his office hours.*
4. expansive
   1. **adjective:** communicative, and prone to talking in a sociable manner
   2. *Ex: After a few sips of cognac, the octogenarian shed his irascible demeanor and became****expansive****, speaking fondly of the “good old days”.*
   3. This word has other definitions but this is the most important one to study
5. penurious
   1. **adjective:** lacking money; poor
   2. *Ex: Truly****penurious****, Mary had nothing more than a jar full of pennies.*
   3. **adjective:** miserly
   4. *Ex: Warren Buffett, famous multi-billionaire, still drives a cheap sedan, not because he is****penurious****, but because luxury cars are gaudy and impractical.*
6. conciliate
   1. **verb:** to make peace with
   2. *Ex: His opponents believed his gesture to be****conciliatory****, yet as soon as they put down their weapons, he unsheathed a hidden sword.*
7. factious
   1. **adjective:** produced by, or characterized by internal dissension
   2. *Ex: The controversial bill proved****factious****, as dissension even within parties resulted*
8. perfunctory
   1. **adjective:** done routinely and with little interest or care
   2. *Ex: The short film examines modern****perfunctory****cleaning rituals such as washing dishes, doing laundry and tooth-brushing.*
9. attenuate
   1. **verb:** to weaken (in terms of intensity); to taper off/become thinner.
   2. *Ex: Her animosity towards Bob****attenuated****over the years, and she even went so far as to invite him to her party.*
10. indigent
    1. **adjective:** poor; having very little
    2. *Ex: In the so-called Third World, many are****indigent****and only a privileged few have the resources to enjoy material luxuries.*
    3. **noun:** a poor or needy person
    4. *Ex: The****indigents****, huddled under the overpass, tried to start a small bonfire in the hope of staying warm.*
11. apostate
    1. **noun:** a person who has abandoned a religious faith or cause
    2. *Ex: An****apostate****of the Republican Party, Sheldon has yet to become affiliated with any party and dubs himself an independent.*
12. truculent
    1. **adjective:** having a fierce, savage nature
    2. *Ex: Standing in line for six hours, she became progressively****truculent****, yelling at DMV employees and elbowing other people waiting in line.*
13. arrant
    1. **adjective:** complete and wholly (usually modifying a noun with negative connotation)
    2. *Ex: An****arrant****fool, Lawrence surprised nobody when he lost all his money in a pyramid scheme that was every bit as transparent as it was corrupt.*
14. overweening
    1. **adjective:** arrogant; presumptuous
    2. *Ex: Mark was so convinced of his basketball skills that in his****overweening****pride he could not fathom that his name was not on the varsity list; he walked up to the basketball coach and told her she had forgotten to add his name.*
15. expunge
    1. **verb:** to eliminate completely
    2. *Ex: When I turned 18, all of the shoplifting and jaywalking charges were****expunged****from my criminal record.*
16. base
    1. **adjective:** the lowest, without any moral principles
    2. *Ex: She was not so****base****as to begrudge the beggar the unwanted crumbs from her dinner plate.*
17. contentious
    1. **adjective:** likely to argue
    2. *Ex: Since old grandpa Harry became very****contentious****during the summer when only reruns were on T.V., the grandkids learned to hide from him at every opportunity.*
18. pariah
    1. **noun:** an outcast
    2. *Ex: The once eminent scientist, upon being found guilty of faking his data, has become a****pariah****in the research community.*
19. chary
    1. **adjective:** cautious, suspiciously reluctant to do something
    2. *Ex: Having received three speeding tickets in the last two months, Jack was****chary****of driving at all above the speed limit, even on a straight stretch of highway that looked empty for miles ahead.*
20. Diatribe  
    **noun:** a strong verbal attack against a person or institution

*Ex: Steve’s mom launched into a****diatribe****during the PTA meeting, contending that the school was little more than a daycare in which students stare at the wall and teachers stare at the chalkboard.*