

Bespoke English Dictionary  
for the  
Cormoran Strike Tetralogy



## A

**abashed** • Make (someone) feel embarrassed, disconcerted, or ashamed.

**abated** • (of something unpleasant or severe) become less intense or widespread.

**abscond** • Leave hurriedly and secretly, typically to escape from custody or avoid arrest.

**accede** • Agree to a demand, request, or treaty.

**accost** • approach and address (someone) boldly or aggressively.

**acme** • The point at which something is at its best or most highly developed.

**acolyte** • A person assisting a priest in a religious service or procession.

**acrimony** • Bitterness or ill feeling.

**acrotomophilia** • is a paraphilia in which an individual expresses strong sexual interest in amputees.

**addled** • Unable to think clearly; confused.

**admonitory** • Giving or conveying a warning or reprimand.

**adornment** • A thing which adorns or decorates; an ornament.

**adulation** • Excessive admiration or praise.

**affable** • Friendly, good-natured, or easy to talk to.

**affray** • An instance of group fighting in a public place that disturbs the peace.

**affront** • An action or remark that causes outrage or offence.

**alacrity** • Brisk and cheerful

readiness.

**albion** • A literary term for Britain or England, often used when referring to ancient or historical times.

**amanuensis** • A literary or artistic assistant, in particular one who takes dictation or copies manuscripts.

**amity** • Friendly relations.

**amply** • Enough or more than enough; plentifully.

**and** • Used to connect words of the same part of speech, clauses, or sentences, that are to be taken jointly.

**anodyne** • Not likely to cause offence or disagreement and somewhat dull.

**aping** • Imitate (someone or something), especially in an absurd or unthinking way.

**aplomb** • Self-confidence or assurance, especially when in a demanding situation.

**apotheosis** • The highest point in the development of something; a culmination or climax.

**aquiline** • Like an eagle.

**arbutus** • An evergreen tree or shrub of a genus that includes the strawberry tree.

**ardent** • Very enthusiastic or passionate.

**arpeggio** • The notes of a chord played in rapid succession, either ascending or descending.

**askance** • With an attitude or look of suspicion or disapproval.

**asperity** • Harshness of tone or manner.

**assuage** • Make (an unpleasant feeling) less intense.

**athame** • A black-handled, double-edged ritual knife used in modern witchcraft.

**aubusson** • A fine tapestry or carpet made at Aubusson, a town in central France, especially one

from the late 18th century.

**avens** • A plant of the rose family, typically having serrated, divided leaves and seeds bearing small hooks.

**avuncular** • Kind and friendly towards a younger or less experienced person.

## B

**bailiwick** • One's sphere of operations or area of interest.

**bairn** • A child.

**baize** • A coarse, typically green woollen material resembling felt, used for covering billiard and card tables.

**ballsache** • An annoying or tedious person or thing.

**balmy** • Characterized by pleasantly warm weather.

**banter** • The playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks.

**baronet** • A member of the lowest hereditary titled British order, with the status of a commoner but able to use the prefix 'Sir'.

**barrow** • A two-wheeled handcart used especially by street vendors.

**basked** • Lie exposed to warmth and light, typically from the sun, for relaxation and pleasure.

**basking** • Lie exposed to warmth and light, typically from the sun, for relaxation and pleasure.

**bawbag** • a disparaging way to describe an ignorant, obnoxious, or otherwise detestable person, es-

pecially a man (Scottish)

**bawled** • Shout or call out noisily and unrestrainedly.

**baying** • (of a dog, especially a large one) bark or howl loudly.

**beck** • A stream.

**bedeviled** • (of something bad) cause great and continual trouble to.

**bedraggled** • Dishevelled.

**bedsit** • A one-roomed unit of accommodation typically consisting of combined bedroom and sitting room with cooking facilities.

**bedstead** • The framework of a bed on which the mattress and bedclothes are placed.

**befuddled** • Cause to become unable to think clearly.

**beguile** • Charm or enchant (someone), often in a deceptive way.

**belfries** • The part of a bell tower or steeple in which bells are housed.

**bender** • An object or person that bends something.

**bender** • a wild drinking spree.

**benison** • A blessing.

**besotted** • Strongly infatuated.

**bespoke** • made for a particular customer or user.

**blag** • Manage to obtain (something) by using persuasion or guile.

**bleated** • (of a sheep, goat, or calf) make a characteristic weak, wavering cry.

**blithely** • In a way that shows a casual and cheerful indifference considered to be callous or improper.

**bluster** • Talk in a loud, aggressive, or indignant way with little effect.

**bollard** • A short post used to prevent traffic from entering an area.

**bolshy** • (of a person or attitude) deliberately combative or uncooperative.

**borstal** • A custodial institution for young offenders.

**bougie** • A thin, flexible surgical instrument for exploring or dilating a passage of the body.

**bouts** • A short period of intense activity of a specified kind.

**bowdlerized** • (of a text or account) having had material considered improper or offensive removed.

**boyo** • A boy or man (used chiefly as a form of address).

**brazenly** • In a bold and shameless way.

**breeches** • The part of a cannon behind the bore.

**bristling** • (especially of hair) short, stiff, and spiky.

**broderie** • embroidery, embroideries

**brusque** • abrupt or offhand in speech or manner.

**buckling** • Fasten or decorate with a buckle.

**budgerigar** • A small gregarious Australian parakeet which is green with a yellow head in the wild. It is popular as a cage bird and has been bred in a variety of colours.

**bunting** • An Old World seed-eating songbird related to the finches, typically having brown streaked plumage and a boldly marked head.

**burnish** • Polish (something, especially metal) by rubbing.

**burr** • A whirring sound, such as a telephone ringing tone or the sound of cogs turning.

**butterface** • A woman regarded as having a desirable body but an unattractive face.

## C

**calumnies** • The making of false and defamatory statements about someone in order to damage their reputation; slander.

**camp** • (of a man or his manner) ostentatiously and extravagantly effeminate.

**capacious** • Having a lot of space inside; roomy.

**captious** • Tending to find fault or raise petty objections.

**carapace** • The hard upper shell of a tortoise, crustacean, or arachnid.

**carked** • Die.

**carrion** • The decaying flesh of dead animals.

**castigate** • Reprimand (someone) severely.

**cawed** • Utter a caw.

**cede** • Give up (power or territory).

**cellarium** • storehouse, cellar

**cerulean** • Deep blue in colour like a clear sky.

**chaff** • Light-hearted joking; banter.

**chaff** • Light-hearted joking; banter. worthless things; rubbish.

**chagrin** • Annoyance or distress at having failed or been humiliated.

**chancer** • A person who exploits any opportunity to further their own ends.

**chasm** • A deep fissure in the earth's surface.

**chicanery** • The use of deception or subterfuge to achieve one's purpose.

**chignon** • A knot or coil of hair arranged on the back of a woman's head.

**chinking** • Make or cause to make a light, high-pitched ringing sound, as of glasses or coins striking together.

**chinoiserie** • A decorative style in Western art, furniture, and architecture, especially in the 18th century, characterized by the use of Chinese motifs and techniques.

**chirrup** • (of a small bird) make repeated short, high-pitched sounds.

**chortled** • Laugh in a noisy, gleeful way.

**chrysoberyl** • A greenish or

yellowish-green oxide of beryllium and aluminium which occurs as tabular crystals, sometimes of gem quality.

**chunder** • Vomit.

**chuntered** • Talk or grumble monotonously.

**churlish** • Rude in a mean-spirited and surly way.

**cinch** • An extremely easy task.

**clamber** • Climb or move in an awkward and laborious way, typically using both hands and feet.

**clincher** • A fact, argument, or event that settles a matter conclusively.

**clodhopping** • Foolish, awkward, or clumsy.

**cloying** • Disgust or sicken (someone) with an excess of sweetness, richness, or sentiment.

**cocker** • A small spaniel of a breed with a silky coat.

**coltish** • Energetic but awkward in one's movements or behaviour.

**comeuppance** • A punishment or fate that someone deserves.

**compunction** • A feeling of guilt or moral scruple that prevents or follows the doing of something bad.

**conduit** • A channel for conveying water or other fluid.

**consignment** • A batch of goods destined for or delivered to someone.

**consternation** • A feeling of anxiety or dismay, typically at something unexpected.

**contrite** • Feeling or expressing remorse at the recognition that one has done wrong.

**convivial** • (of an atmosphere or event) friendly, lively, and enjoyable.

**copse** • A small group of trees.

**coronet** • A small or relatively simple crown, especially as worn by lesser royalty and peers or peeresses.

**crabbed** • (of handwriting) very small and difficult to decipher.

**crampons** • A metal plate with spikes fixed to a boot for walking on ice or rock climbing.

**craven** • Contemptibly lacking in courage; cowardly.

**credence** • Belief in or acceptance of something as true.

**crenellated** • Provide (a wall of a building) with battlements.

**creosote** • A dark brown oil containing various phenols and

other organic compounds, distilled from coal tar and used as a wood preservative.

**creosoted** • Treat (wood) with creosote.

**crestfallen** • Sad and disappointed.

**cribbage** • A card game, usually for two players, in which the objective is to play so that the pip value of one's cards played reaches exactly 15 or 31.

**croaked** • (of a frog or crow) make a characteristic deep hoarse sound.

**cuckold** • A man whose wife is sexually unfaithful, often regarded as an object of derision.

**curmudgeon** • A bad-tempered person, especially an old one.

**curt** • rudely brief.

## D

**dangerous** • Able or likely to cause harm or injury.

**dank** • Unpleasantly damp and cold.

**dapper** • (of a man) neat and trim in dress and appearance.

**dapple** • Mark with spots or rounded patches.

**dawdled** • Waste time; be slow.

**dearth** • A scarcity or lack of something.

**debouched** • Emerge from a confined space into a wide, open area.

**deferential** • Showing deference; respectful.

**defray** • Provide money to pay (a cost or expense).

**dejection** • A sad and depressed state; low spirits.

**demob** • Demobilize (troops).

**denuded** • Strip (something) of its covering, possessions, or assets.

**derision** • Contemptuous ridicule or mockery.

**despoliation** • The action of despoiling or the condition of being despoiled; plunder.

**desultory** • Lacking a plan, purpose, or enthusiasm.

**detritus** • Waste or debris of any kind.

**diddling** • Cheat or swindle (someone) so as to deprive them of something.

**diffident** • modest or shy because of a lack of self-confidence.

**dilating** • Make or become wider, larger, or more open.

**dint** • A dent or hollow in a surface.

**dirge** • A lament for the dead, especially one forming part of a funeral rite.

**discomposed** • Disturb or agitate (someone).

**disoblige** • Offend (someone) by not acting in accordance with their wishes.

**dissimulating** • Conceal or disguise (one's thoughts, feelings, or character).

**dithered** • Be indecisive.

**dithering** • Be indecisive.

**doddery** • Slow and unsteady in movement because of weakness in old age.

**doleful** • Expressing sorrow; mournful.

**doolally** • Temporarily deranged or feeble-minded.

**dosh** • Money.

**dossing** • Sleep in rough accommodation or on an improvised bed.

**dost** • Archaic second person singular present of do<sup>>1</sup>.</sup>

**dour** • Relentlessly severe, stern, or gloomy in manner or appearance.

**dredge** • Clear the bed of (a harbour, river, or other area of water) by scooping out mud, weeds, and rubbish with a dredge.

**dredged** • Clear the bed of (a harbour, river, or other area of water) by scooping out mud, weeds, and rubbish with a dredge.

**dregs** • The remnants of a liquid left in a container, together with any sediment.

**dross** • Something regarded as worthless; rubbish.

**dullards** • A slow or stupid person.

**duplicitous** • Deceitful.

## E

**ebbing** • (of tidewater) move away from the land; recede.

**ebullience** • The quality of being cheerful and full of energy; exuberance.

**eddy** • A circular movement of water causing a small whirlpool.

**edifice** • A large, imposing building.

**effusions** • An instance of giving off something such as a liquid or gas.

**egged** • Encourage someone to do something foolish or risky.

**eked** • Make an amount or supply of something last longer by using or consuming it frugally.

**elide** • Omit (a sound or syllable) when speaking.

**elms** • A tall deciduous tree that typically has rough serrated leaves and propagates from root suckers.

**emaciated** • Abnormally thin or weak, especially because of illness or a lack of food.

**embers** • A small piece of burning or glowing coal or wood in a



dying fire.

**embroil** • Involve (someone) deeply in an argument, conflict, or difficult situation.

**emery** • A greyish-black form of corundum containing iron oxide or other impurities, used in powdered form as an abrasive.

**enmity** • A state or feeling of active opposition or hostility.

**ensconced** • Establish or settle (someone) in a comfortable, safe place.

**equable** • Not easily disturbed or angered; calm and even-tempered.

**equanimity** • Calmness and composure, especially in a difficult situation.

**errant** • Erring or straying from the accepted course or standards.

**erudition** • The quality of having or showing great knowledge or learning; scholarship.

**etiolated** • (of a plant) pale and drawn out due to a lack of light.

**evincing** • Reveal the presence of (a quality or feeling); indicate.

**excoriated** • Damage or remove part of the surface of (the skin).

**excrescence** • A distinct outgrowth on a body or plant, resulting from disease or abnormality.

**exculpation** • the act of freeing from guilt or blame. pardon, forgiveness - the act of excusing a mistake or offense.

**existences** • The fact or state of living or having objective reality.

**exophthalmic** • Having or characterized by protruding eyes.

**expound** • Present and explain (a theory or idea) in detail.

**extolled** • Praise enthusiastically.

**extricated** • Free (someone or something) from a constraint or difficulty.

## F

**facetious** • treating serious issues with deliberately inappropriate humour; flippant.

**feckless** • Lacking initiative or strength of character; irresponsible.

**felled** • Cut down (a tree).

**ferried** • Convey in a ferry or other ship or boat, especially across a short stretch of water.

**feted** • Honour or entertain (someone) lavishly.

**fetid** • Smelling extremely unpleasant.

**fibbing** • Tell a fib.

**filched** • Pilfer or steal (something, especially an item of small value) in a casual way.

**firth** • A narrow inlet of the sea; an estuary.

**flanking** • Be on each or on one side of.

**flay** • Strip the skin off (a corpse or carcass).

**fledglings** • A young bird that has just fledged.

**flitted** • Move swiftly and lightly.

**flitting** • Move swiftly and lightly.

**flounced** • Go or move in an exaggeratedly impatient or angry manner.

**floundering** • Struggle or stagger clumsily in mud or water.

**fobbed** • Deceitfully attempt to satisfy someone by making excuses or giving them something inferior.

**foraging** • (of a person or animal) search widely for food or provisions.

**forays** • A sudden attack or incursion into enemy territory, especially to obtain something; a raid.

**forbearance** • Patient self-control; restraint and tolerance.

**fracas** • A noisy disturbance or quarrel.

**fretting** • Be constantly or visibly anxious.

**frith** • Archaic spelling of firth.

**froideur** • Coolness or reserve between people.

**frolics** • Play or move about in a cheerful and lively way.

**frontages** • The facade of a building.

**frumpiest** • (of a woman or her clothes) dowdy and old-fashioned.

**fug** • A warm, stuffy or smoky atmosphere in a room.

**furore** • An outbreak of public anger or excitement.

**furtive** • Attempting to avoid notice or attention, typically because of guilt or a belief that discovery would lead to trouble; secretive.

**furtively** • In a way that attempts to avoid notice or attention; secretly.

## G

**gab** • Talk at length.

**gabbled** • Talk rapidly and unintelligibly.

**gabbling** • Talk rapidly and unintelligibly.

**gaff** • A stick with a hook or barbed spear, for landing large fish.

**gaffe** • An unintentional act or remark causing embarrassment to its originator; a blunder.

**gaggle** • A flock of geese.

**galleon** • A sailing ship in use (especially by Spain) from the 15th to the 18th centuries, originally as a warship, later for trade. Galleons were typically square-rigged and had three or more

decks and masts.

**galore** • In abundance.

**gamboling** • Run or jump about playfully.

**gamine** • (of a girl) attractively boyish.

**gangling** • (of a person) tall, thin, and awkward in movements or bearing.

**garnering** • Gather or collect (something, especially information or approval).

**garrulity** • Excessive talkativeness, especially on trivial matters.

**garrulous** • Excessively talkative, especially on trivial matters.

**gaudy** • Extravagantly bright

or showy, typically so as to be tasteless.

**gaunt** • (of a person) lean and haggard, especially because of suffering, hunger, or age.

**gawping** • Stare openly in a stupid or rude manner.

**genteel** • Characterized by exaggerated or affected politeness, refinement, or respectability.

**ghoulish** • morbidly interested in death or disaster

**gimcrack** • Showy but cheap or badly made.

**gimlet** • A small T-shaped tool with a screw tip for boring holes.

**girder** • A large iron or steel beam or compound structure used for building bridges and the framework of large buildings.

**given** • Past participle of give.

**glib** • (of words or a speaker) fluent but insincere and shallow.

**gnat** • A small two-winged fly that resembles a mosquito. Gnats include both biting and non-biting forms, and they typically form large swarms.

**goad** • Provoke or annoy (someone) so as to stimulate an action or reaction.

**goring** • (of an animal such as a bull) pierce or stab (a person or other animal) with a horn or tusk.

**gorn** • horn, trumpet, corn

**gouged** • Make (a groove, hole, or indentation) with or as if with a

gouge.

**graft** • A shoot or twig inserted into a slit on the trunk or stem of a living plant, from which it receives sap.

**grating** • Reduce (food) to small shreds by rubbing it on a grater.

**greige** • A colour between beige and grey.

**grille** • A grating or screen of metal bars or wires, placed in front of something as protection or to allow ventilation or discreet observation.

**gripe** • Complain about something in a persistent, irritating way.

**gripped** • Take and keep a firm hold of; grasp tightly.

**grouse** • Complain about something trivial; grumble.

**gruff** • (of a voice) rough and low in pitch.

**gudgeon** • A small edible European freshwater fish, often used as bait by anglers.

**guff** • Foolish talk or ideas.

**guffawing** • Laugh loudly and heartily.

**gunnels** • An elongated laterally compressed fish with a dorsal fin that runs along most of the back and reduced or absent pelvic fins. It occurs in cool inshore waters of the northern hemisphere.

## H

**hackney** • A horse or pony of a light breed with a high-stepping trot, used in harness.

**haggard** • Looking exhausted and unwell, especially from fatigue, worry, or suffering.

**hapless** • (especially of a person) unfortunate.

**harangued** • Lecture (someone) at length in an aggressive and critical manner.

**harked** • Listen.

**harping** • Talk or write persistently and tediously on (a particular topic).

**harried** • Feeling strained as a result of having demands persistently made on one; harassed.

**haughty** • Arrogantly superior and disdainful.

**hears** • Perceive with the ear the sound made by (someone or something).

**hessian** • Relating to or characteristic of the German state of Hesse.

**heyday** • The period of a person's or thing's greatest success, popularity, activity, or vigour.

**hireling** • A person employed to do menial work.

**hither** • To or towards this place.

**hobbling** • Walk in an awkward way, typically because of pain from an injury.

**hock** • The joint in a quadruped's hind leg between the knee and the fetlock, the angle of which points backwards.

**hoi-polloi** • the masses; the common people.

**holdall** • A large rectangular bag with handles and a shoulder strap, used for carrying clothes and other personal belongings.

**homely** • (of a place or surroundings) simple but cosy and comfortable, as in one's own home.

**hone** • Sharpen (a blade).

**hoodies** • A hooded crow.

**hophead** • A drug addict.

**hurtling** • Move or cause to move at high speed, typically in an uncontrolled manner.

**hussars** • A soldier in a light cavalry regiment which had adopted a dress uniform modelled on that of the Hungarian hussars (now only in titles).

## I

**imbrued** • Stain (something, especially one's hands or sword).

**impecunious** • Having little or no money.

**impertinent** • Not showing proper respect; rude.

**impervious** • Not allowing fluid to pass through.

**impinge** • Have an effect, especially a negative one.

**implacable** • Unable to be appeased or placated.

**importuning** • Persistent harassment of someone for or to do something.

**imprecations** • A spoken curse.

**impudent** • Not showing due respect for another person; impertinent.

**impudicus** • shameless

**impugned** • Dispute the truth, validity, or honesty of (a statement or motive); call into question.

**inauspicious** • not conducive to success; unpromising.

**incendiary** • (of a device or attack) designed to cause fires.

**inchoate** • Just begun and so not fully formed or developed; rudimentary.

**incongruous** • Not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings or other aspects of something.

**incredulously** • In a manner indicating disbelief.

**indelible** • (of ink or a pen) making marks that cannot be removed.

**ineffectual** • Not producing any significant or desired effect.

**inept** • Having or showing no skill; clumsy.

**insalubrious** • (of a place) seedy and run-down; unwholesome.

**insipid** • Lacking flavour; weak or tasteless.

**insouciance** • Casual lack of concern; indifference.

**insouciantly** • carefree

**intaglios** • A design incised or engraved into a material.

**intoned** • Say or recite with little rise and fall of the pitch of the voice.

**intrepid** • Fearless; adventurous (often used for rhetorical or humorous effect).

**inundated** • Overwhelm (someone) with things or people to be dealt with.

**inured** • Accustom (someone) to something, especially something unpleasant.

**inveigle** • Persuade (someone) to do something by means of deception or flattery.

**inveterate** • Having a particular habit, activity, or interest that is long-established and unlikely to change.

**irascible** • Having or showing a tendency to be easily angered.

**ire** • Anger.

**irked** • Irritate; annoy.

**irksome** • Irritating; annoying.

**itinerant** • Travelling from place to place.

## J

**jarred** • Send a painful or damaging shock through (something, especially a part of the body).

**jeered** • Make rude and mocking remarks, typically in a loud voice.

**jettisoned** • Throw or drop (something) from an aircraft or

ship.

**juddering** • (especially of something mechanical) shake and vibrate rapidly and with force.

**jutting** • Extend out, over, or beyond the main body or line of something.

## K

**kairos** • A propitious moment for decision or action.

**kerb** • A stone edging to a pavement or raised path.

**kilter** • Out of harmony or balance.

**kip** • A sleep or nap.

**knackered** • Extremely tired.

## L

**laburnum** • A small European tree which has hanging clusters of yellow flowers followed by slender pods containing poisonous seeds. The hard timber is sometimes used as an ebony substitute.

**lackadaisical** • Lacking enthusiasm and determination; carelessly lazy.

**lair** • A flashily dressed man who enjoys showing off.

**laminitis** • Inflammation of sensitive layers of tissue (laminae) inside the hoof in horses and other animals. It is particularly prevalent in ponies feeding on rich spring grass and can cause extreme lameness.

**languid** • (of a person, manner, or gesture) having or showing a disinclination for physical exertion or effort.

**larceny** • theft of personal property. In English law larceny was replaced as a statutory crime by theft in 1968.

**lascivious** • Feeling or revealing an overt sexual interest or desire.

**lassitude** • A state of physical or mental weariness; lack of energy.

**latterly** • Recently.

**lauding** • Praise (a person or their achievements) highly.

**leda** • lead, articulate, go, dis-

gust, boredom

**leer** • Look or gaze in a lascivious or unpleasant way.

**legatees** • A person who receives a legacy.

**leporine** • Of or resembling a hare or hares.

**lilt** • A characteristic rising and falling of the voice when speaking; a pleasant gentle accent.

**lintel** • A horizontal support of timber, stone, concrete, or steel across the top of a door or window.

**lithe** • (especially of a person's body) thin, supple, and graceful.

**lobe** • A roundish and flatish projecting or hanging part of something, typically one of two or more such parts divided by a fissure.

**lofty** • Of imposing height.

**lop** • Cut off (a branch, limb, or twig) from the main body of a tree.

**loquacious** • Tending to talk a great deal; talkative.

**louche** • Disreputable or sordid in a rakish or appealing way.

**lubricious** • Offensively displaying or intended to arouse sexual desire.

**lucent** • Glowing with or giving off light.

**lugs** • Carry or drag (a heavy or bulky object) with great effort.

**lugubrious** • looking or sounding sad and dismal.

**lurid** • Unpleasantly bright in colour, especially so as to create a harsh or unnatural effect.

**lurk** • Be or remain hidden so as to wait in ambush for someone or something.

**lustre** • A gentle sheen or soft glow.

## M

**maelstrom** • A powerful whirlpool in the sea or a river.

**magnanimous** • Generous or forgiving, especially towards a rival or less powerful person.

**mancunian** • A native or inhabitant of Manchester.

**mandibles** • The jaw or a jawbone, especially the lower jawbone in mammals and fishes.

**manger** • A long trough from which horses or cattle feed.

**mangy** • Having mange.

**mantels** • A mantelpiece or mantelshelf.

**mawkish** • Sentimental in an exaggerated or false way.

**mellifluous** • (of a sound) pleasingly smooth and musical to hear.

**mesmeric** • Causing a person to become completely transfixed and unaware of their surroundings.

**mete** • Dispense or allot justice, a punishment, or harsh treatment.

**mewling** • (especially of a baby) cry feebly or querulously; whimper.

**miasma** • An unpleasant or unhealthy smell or vapour.

**midriff** • The region of the front of the body between the chest and the waist.

**mien** • A person's appearance

or manner, especially as an indication of their character or mood.

**miffed** • Somewhat annoyed; peeved.

**mire** • A stretch of swampy or boggy ground.

**miser** • A person who hoards wealth and spends as little money as possible.

**mishap** • An unlucky accident.

**missive** • A letter, especially a long or official one.

**mollified** • Appease the anger or anxiety of (someone).

**moniker** • A name.

**moorcock** • A male red grouse.

**moot** • Subject to debate, dispute, or uncertainty.

**mooted** • Raise (a question or topic) for discussion; suggest (an idea or possibility).

**morass** • An area of muddy or boggy ground.

**mordant** • (especially of humour) having or showing a sharp or critical quality; biting.

**mores** • The essential or characteristic customs and conventions of a society or community.

**moribund** • (of a person) at the point of death.

**morose** • Sullen and ill-tempered.

**motes** • A tiny piece of a substance; a speck.

**motley** • Incongruously varied in appearance or character; disparate.

**mouldering** • Slowly decay or disintegrate, especially because of neglect.

**mucking** • Remove manure and other dirt from a horse's sta-

ble or other animal's dwelling.

**musings** • A period of reflection or thought.

**muster** • Assemble (troops), especially for inspection or in preparation for battle.

**muzzy** • Unable to think clearly; confused.

## N

**nabbed** • Catch (someone) doing something wrong.

**niggling** • Causing slight but persistent annoyance, discomfort, or anxiety.

**ninepins** • The traditional form of the game of skittles, using nine pins and played in an alley.

**nisi** • (of a decree, order, or

rule) that takes effect or is valid only after certain conditions are met.

**nonce** • (of a word or expression) coined for one occasion.

**nondescript** • Lacking distinctive or interesting features or characteristics.

## O

**obfuscating** • Make obscure, unclear, or unintelligible.

**obsequious** • Obedient or attentive to an excessive or servile degree.

**obstreperous** • Noisy and difficult to control.

**obtuse** • annoyingly insensitive or slow to understand.

**occluded** • Stop, close up, or obstruct (an opening, orifice, or passage).

**och** • Used to express a range of emotions, typically surprise, re-

gret, or disbelief.

**officious** • Assertive of authority in a domineering way, especially with regard to trivial matters.

**omerta** • (among the Mafia) a code of silence about criminal activity and a refusal to give evidence to the police.

**onerous** • (of a task or responsibility) involving a great deal of effort, trouble, or difficulty.

**overwrought** • In a state of nervous excitement or anxiety.

## P



**pallor** • An unhealthy pale appearance.

**pang** • A sudden sharp pain or painful emotion.

**paramour** • A lover, especially the illicit partner of a married person.

**paraphilia** • a condition characterized by abnormal sexual desires, typically involving extreme or dangerous activities.

**paroxysm** • A sudden attack or outburst of a particular emotion or activity.

**paunchy** • Having a large or protruding belly.

**peccadillos** • A relatively minor fault or sin.

**pecuniary** • Relating to or consisting of money.

**pediments** • The triangular upper part of the front of a classical building, typically surmounting a portico.

**pellucid** • Translucently clear.

**pelted** • Hurl missiles repeatedly at.

**penury** • The state of being very poor; extreme poverty.

**peregrinations** • A journey, especially a long or meandering one.

**perfidy** • The state of being deceitful and untrustworthy.

**perfunctory** • (of an action) carried out without real interest, feeling, or effort.

**pertinacious** • Holding firmly to an opinion or a course of action.

**pettish** • (of a person or their behaviour) childishly bad-tempered and petulant.

**piebald** • (of a horse) having irregular patches of two colours, typically black and white.

**pilfering** • Steal (things of little value).

**pillion** • A seat for a passenger behind a motorcyclist.

**piquancy** • A pleasantly sharp and appetizing flavour; spiciness.

**placate** • Make (someone) less angry or hostile.

**plaintive** • Sounding sad and mournful.

**plangent** • (of a sound) loud and resonant, with a mournful tone.

**plaudits** • An expression of praise or approval.

**pollock** • An edible greenish-brown fish of the cod family, with a protruding lower jaw. Found in the north-eastern Atlantic, it is popular with anglers.

**portcullis** • A strong, heavy grating that can be lowered down grooves on each side of a gateway to block it.

**portentous** • of or like a portent; of momentous significance.

**predilection** • A preference or special liking for something; a bias in favour of something.

**privations** • A state in which food and other essentials for well-being are lacking.

**profligacy** • Reckless extravagance or wastefulness in the use of resources.

**profligate** • Recklessly extravagant or wasteful in the use of resources.

**propitiation** • The action of propitiating or appeasing a god, spirit, or person.

**protuberant** • Protruding; bulging.

**prurient** • Having or encouraging

ing an excessive interest in sexual matters, especially the sexual activity of others.

**pugnacious** • Eager or quick to argue, quarrel, or fight.

**punctilious** • showing great attention to detail or correct be-

haviour.

**punt** • Kick (the ball) a long distance upfield.

**pusillanimous** • Showing a lack of courage or determination; timid.

## Q

**quaffing** • Drink (something, especially an alcoholic drink) heartily.

**querulous** • Complaining in a rather petulant or whining manner.

**quicklime** • A white caustic al-

kaline substance consisting of calcium oxide, which is obtained by heating limestone and which combines with water with the production of much heat; lime.

**quiescent** • In a state or period of inactivity or dormancy.

## R

**raggle-taggle** • untidy and scruffy.

**raiment** • Clothing.

**ramshackle** • (especially of a house or vehicle) in a state of severe disrepair.

**rancour** • Bitterness or resentfulness, especially when long standing.

**rapacious** • Aggressively greedy or grasping.

**rapprochement** • A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.

**raucous** • Making or constituting a disturbingly harsh and loud noise.

**recalcitrant** • Having an obstinately uncooperative attitude to-

wards authority or discipline.

**recce** • Another term for reconnaissance.

**recceing** • Another term for reconnoitre.

**recrudescence** • The recurrence of an undesirable condition.

**redolent** • Strongly reminiscent or suggestive of.

**remonstrance** • A forcefully reproachful protest.

**reposed** • Be situated or kept in a particular place.

**reproach** • Express to (someone) one's disapproval of or disappointment in their actions.

**reproving** • conveying or expressing blame or disapproval.

**respite** • A short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant.

**reverie** • A state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts; a day-dream.

**riffling** • Turn over something, especially the pages of a book, quickly and casually.

**riling** • Make (someone) annoyed or irritated.

**ripostes** • A quick, clever reply

to an insult or criticism.

**roper** • A person who uses a lasso to catch an animal, especially in a rodeo.

**ruefully** • In a way that expresses sorrow or regret, especially in a wry or humorous manner.

**rugger** • Rugby.

## S

**sallow** • A willow tree, especially one of a low-growing or shrubby kind.

**saltires** • A diagonal cross as a heraldic ordinary.

**salubrious** • Health-giving; healthy.

**salver** • A tray, typically one made of silver and used in formal circumstances.

**sangfroid** • Composure or coolness shown in danger or under trying circumstances.

**sardonic** • Grimly mocking or cynical.

**sashayed** • Walk in an ostentatious yet casual manner, typically with exaggerated movements of the hips and shoulders.

**scabrous** • Rough and covered with, or as if with, scabs.

**scanty** • Small or insufficient in quantity or amount.

**scapegrace** • A mischievous or wayward person, especially a young person or child; a rascal.

**scarpered** • Run away.

**scoffed** • Speak to someone or about something in a scornfully derisive or mocking way.

**scouse** • The dialect or accent

of people from Liverpool.

**scudded** • Move fast in a straight line because or as if driven by the wind.

**scunnered** • Feel disgust or strong dislike.

**scupper** • Sink (a ship or its crew) deliberately.

**scurried** • (of a person or small animal) move hurriedly with short quick steps.

**scurrilous** • Making or spreading scandalous claims about someone with the intention of damaging their reputation.

**scuttle** • Sink (one's own ship) deliberately by holing it or opening its seacocks to let water in.

**sententious** • given to moralizing in a pompous or affected manner.

**sheaf** • A bundle of grain stalks laid lengthways and tied together after reaping.

**shoddy** • Badly made or done.

**sib** • A brother or sister; a sibling.

**skint** • (of a person) having little or no money available.

**skivvy** • A female domestic servant who performs menial

tasks.

**slagging** • An insulting and critical attack.

**slapdash** • Done too hurriedly and carelessly.

**slipshod** • Characterized by a lack of care, thought, or organization.

**slogged** • Work hard over a period of time.

**slunk** • Past and past participle of *slink*.

**smarmier** • Ingratiating and wheedling in a way that is regarded as insincere or excessive.

**snaffle** • (on a bridle) a simple bit, typically a jointed one, used with a single set of reins.

**snarling** • Entangle something.

**snide** • Derogatory or mocking in an indirect way.

**sodden** • Saturated with liquid, especially water; soaked through.

**sopping** • Saturated with liquid; wet through.

**sordid** • Involving immoral or dishonourable actions and motives; arousing moral distaste and contempt.

**spad** • A person whose job is to give political advice to government ministers.

**spandrels** • The almost triangular space between one side of the outer curve of an arch, a wall, and the ceiling or framework.

**spatulate** • Having a broad, rounded end.

**squidgy** • Soft, spongy, and moist.

**squiffy** • Slightly drunk.

**staid** • Sedate, respectable, and unadventurous.

**stalwart** • Loyal, reliable, and hard-working.

**stickleback** • A small fish with sharp spines along its back, able to live in both salt and fresh water and found in both Eurasia and North America.

**stinkhorn** • A widely distributed fungus which has a tall whitish stem with a rounded greenish-brown gelatinous head that turns into a foul-smelling slime containing the spores.

**strafing** • Attack repeatedly with bombs or machine-gun fire from low-flying aircraft.

**straggly** • Growing or spreading in an irregular, untidy way.

**stratocaster** • colloquially known as the Strat, is a model of electric guitar

**stupor** • A state of near-unconsciousness or insensibility.

**stymied** • Prevent or hinder the progress of.

**succour** • Assistance and support in times of hardship and distress.

**sullen** • Bad-tempered and sulky.

**sundries** • Various items not important enough to be mentioned individually.

**supercilious** • behaving or looking as though one thinks one is superior to others.

**suppurating** • Undergo the formation of pus; fester.

**surfeit** • An excessive amount of something.

## T

**tabards** • A sleeveless jerkin consisting only of front and back pieces with a hole for the head.

**taciturn** • (of a person) reserved or uncommunicative in speech; saying little.

**taunt** • a remark made in order to anger, wound, or provoke someone.

**tawny** • Of an orange-brown or yellowish-brown colour.

**tergo** • rear, wipe, clean

**tersre** • sparing in the use of words; abrupt.

**tetchy** • Irritable and bad-tempered.

**thither** • To or towards that place.

**threadbare** • (of cloth, clothing, or soft furnishings) becoming thin and tattered with age.

**thrum** • Make a continuous rhythmic humming sound.

**titter** • Give a short, half-suppressed laugh; giggle.

**toft** • A homestead.

**tomming** • Work as a prostitute.

**tottering** • Move in a feeble or unsteady way.

**traipsed** • Walk or move wearily or reluctantly.

**triquetra** • A symmetrical triangular ornament of three interlaced arcs used on metalwork and stone crosses.

**trompe** • deceived, trunk, horn

**truculent** • Eager or quick to argue or fight; aggressively defiant.

**trundling** • (with reference to a wheeled vehicle or its occupants) move or cause to move slowly and heavily.

**trussed** • Tie up the wings and legs of (a chicken or other bird) before cooking.

**tumescant** • swollen or becoming swollen, especially as a response to sexual arousal.

**tutting** • Make an exclamation expressing disapproval or annoyance.

## U

**unbidden** • Without having been commanded or invited.

**unctuous** • Excessively flattering or ingratiating; oily.

**unfeigned** • Genuine; sincere.

**ungainly** • (of a person or movement) awkward; clumsy.

**unperturbed** • Not perturbed or concerned.

**unpropitious** • (of a circumstance) not giving or indicating a good chance of success; unfavourable.

## V

**vainglorious** • Excessively proud of oneself or one's achievements; overly vain.

**varicocele** • A mass of varicose veins in the spermatic cord.

**verdant** • (of countryside) green with grass or other rich vegetation.

**verity** • A true principle or belief, especially one of fundamental importance.

**vertiginous** • Extremely high or steep.

**vexation** • The state of being annoyed, frustrated, or worried.

**vexatious** • Causing or tending to cause annoyance, frustration, or worry.

**vicissitudes** • A change of circumstances or fortune, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant.

**vim** • Energy; enthusiasm.

**vinous** • Resembling, associated with, or fond of wine.

**vituperative** • Bitter and abusive.

**volgo** • common people, hoi polloi

## W

**waylay** • Stop or interrupt (someone) and detain them in conversation or trouble them in some other way.

**wenk** • clue

**wiles** • Devious or cunning stratagems employed in manipulating or persuading someone to do what one wants.

**winkle** • A small herbivorous shore-dwelling mollusc with a spiral shell.

**winkled** • Extract or obtain something with difficulty.

**wodge** • A large piece or amount of something.

**wry** • Using or expressing dry, especially mocking, humour.

## Y

**yatter** • Talk incessantly; chatter.