

High Frequency Words

Word	Definition
abate	v. to diminish in intensity v. to cause to diminish in intensity
aberrant	adj. diverging from the standard type
abjure	v. to reject or renounce
abscond	v. to leave secretly, evading detection
abstain	v. to voluntarily refrain from doing something
acumen	n. keen judgment and perception
admonish	v. scold or to advise firmly
adulterate	v. to contaminate or make impure by introducing inferior elements
advocate	v. to recommend, support, or advise n. one who advocates
aesthetic	adj. concerned with the nature of beauty and art
affectation	n. fake or artificial behavior, often meant to impress or conceal the truth
aggrandize	v. enlarge or increase, esp. wealth, power, reputation
alacrity	n. promptness and eagerness
alleviate	v. to relieve a problem or ease a burden
amalgamate	v. to combine to or mix together
ambiguous	adj. unclear adj. open to multiple interpretations
ambivalent	adj. having mixed or contradictory feelings about someone or something
ameliorate	v. to improve or mitigate a situation
amenable	adj. easily convinced or persuaded
anachronism	n. something old-fashioned n. something appearing in a time period where it does not belong
analogous	n. comparable n. appropriate for analogy
anoint	v. to choose for a particular office or position v. to use oil on a person in a religious ceremony
anomaly	n. an exception or unusual case
antipathy	n. strong dislike or hatred
antithetical	adj. contrary to the very nature of
apathy	n. state of total disinterest or unenthusiasm
appease	v. to placate v. to satisfy (an appetite, a need)
arbitrary	adj. seemingly chosen or designated without reason or purpose

arcane	adj. secret or known only to a select group
archaic	adj. old-fashioned adj. no longer in the common usage
arduous	adj. difficult, taxing, requiring considerable effort
articulate	adj. exhibiting considerable communication skills, well-spoken
artless	adj. without artifice adj. natural, untrained
ascetic	adj. austere or self-denying
assuage	v. to provide relief from an unpleasant feeling v. to satisfy a need or appetite
astonishment	n. total surprise, shock
audacious	adj. very bold or presumptuous
austere	adj. severe, unadorned
avarice	n. greed
aver	v. to assert or allege
banal	adj. boring, cliché
belie	v. give a false impression (intentional or unintentional) in word, appearance, or deed
benign	adj. gentle, harmless
biased	adj. prejudiced, displaying partiality
bolster	v. to shore up or support
bombastic	adj. overblown, theatrical
brazen	adj. bold or open to the point of shocking adj. shameless
bucolic	adj. pastoral, rustic, countryfied
burgeon	v. flourish, bloom, expand or increase quickly
cacophony	n. loud and chaotic noise
calumny	n. lie or slander
candid	adj. honest, open
canon	n. accepted rules and tenets of a discipline n. sacred works/scripture; in this sense it is also used to refer to notable literary and artistic works of a culture or discipline
capacity	n. the capability to perform a particular action or fulfill a given function n. the total amount a container can hold n. a particular position or role (i.e. "she served in an advisory capacity")
capricious	adj. mercurial, unpredictable, whimsical
castigate	v. to scold or berate strongly
catalyst	n. something that speeds up a process or causes action
caustic	adj. corrosive

	adj. bitterly sarcastic
censure	v. to express intense condemnation
chauvinist	n. someone who believes prejudicially that their own group is the superior one
chicanery	n. trickery or deception
chronological	adj. ordered by time
coalesce	v. to come together, esp. from disparate parts
cogent	adj. clearly laid out and persuasive
commensurate	adj. in accordance with, proportional
compelling	adj. captivating adj. very persuasive
comprehensive	adj. complete and thorough
condone	v. to approve or allow
confound	v. to confuse or astonish
connoisseur	n. an expert in a particular subject matter area, usually relating to the fine arts or cultural pursuits
consequential	adj. as a result of adj. significant or memorable
construe	v. to interpret
consumption	n. utilization (esp. of a resource)
contend	v. assert or claim v. grapple with
contentious	adj. controversial adj. involving conflict
contrite	adj. remorseful
convoluted	adj. roundabout, not straightforward
copious	adj. plentiful or abundant
cosmopolitan	adj. of or relating to a city or urban area adj. sophisticated
covet	v. to desire something that does not belong to you
craft	n. cunning n. skill
craven	adj. cowardly to the point of being shameful
credence	n. belief or trust
credulous	adj. gullible, naïve
decorum	n. appropriate behavior or good manners
deference	n. respect or polite submission
deflect	v. divert or cause to ricochet
deftness	adj. skill, acumen adj. manual dexterity

delineate	v. to describe very accurately v. to clearly demarcate a boundary v. to render an outline
demur	v. to object or raise concerns
denigrate	v. say negative things about, particularly in a defamatory way
deride	v. to mock or ridicule
derivative	adj. imitates another work in a way that is unoriginal or uninspiring
desiccate	v. to dry out completely v. to suck out the vitality and passion
desultory	adj. halfhearted adj. inconsistent or random
detachment	n. objectivity or aloofness
determinant	n. a strong factor in an outcome
diatribe	n. a rant or angry speech denouncing someone or something
didactic	adj. educational or with an instructive purpose; often includes an element of moralizing
diffident	adj. shy, timid, or reserved due to a lack of confidence
dilettante	n. someone with an amateur, nonserious interest in something
dirge	n. funeral or mourning lament n. any sad, slow song
disabuse	v. to dispel someone's illusions or false impressions about something
discern	v. to perceive
discrepancy	n. inconsistency
disinterested	adj. objective, unbiased adj. not invested in the outcome
disparage	v. to belittle
disparate	adj. dissimilar to such a degree that comparison is not possible
dispassionate	adj. impartial or cool
disregard	v. to ignore or pay no attention to
dissemble	v. to mislead or conceal the truth, esp. with respect to one's motives
disseminate	v. to spread widely (esp. information)
dissonance	n. a clash between two elements that don't blend well
diverge	v. to split apart, esp. a road or path
dogma	n. the official beliefs or tenets of particular sect or group
dupe	v. to deceive or fool
ebullient	adj. cheerful, enthusiastic, excited
eccentric	adj. quirky or unusual
eclectic	adj. composed of a variety of styles, themes, motifs, etc.
efficacy	n. effectiveness

elegy	n. sad poem or song, often in remembrance of someone deceased
elicit	v. to provoke a response
eloquence	adj. persuasive and articulate speech
eminent	adj. well-known, respected, distinguished
empirical	adj. based on evidence
emulate	v. to imitate or attempt to equal in accomplishment
enervate	v. to exhaust or drain of energy
engender	v. to cause or give rise to
enhance	v. intensify, increase, augment
entitlement	n. belief that one deserves things one has not earned n. the rights one is afforded under the law
ephemeral	adj. short-lived or transient
equable	adj. even-tempered adj. not given to much change or variation
equivocate	v. to use ambiguous language in order to mislead or deceive
erroneous	adj. incorrect
erudite	adj. learned
eschew	v. avoid or abstain from
esoteric	adj. obscure, arcane
estimable	adj. deserving respect, esteem, and admiration
eulogy	n. memorial speech for one who has passed, normally given at a funeral
exacerbate	v. to make worse
exacting	adj. challenging, demanding, grueling
exculpate	v. to exonerate or vindicate
exigent	adj. urgent or pressing
exonerate	v. to clear of charges of wrongdoing
expatiate	v. to elaborate on something in great detail
explicate	v. to explain in detail
exposition	n. a thorough explanation n. a public show or fair
extraneous	adj. irrelevant or superfluous
extrapolate	v. to estimate or conjecture about the future based on presently available information or facts
facetious	adj. glib or flippant
facilitate	v. to make something easier or simpler
fallacious	adj. relying on a fallacy and thus incorrect/misinformed
fastidious	adj. meticulous adj. invested in cleanliness

fluctuate	v. to shift without apparent pattern
foment	v. to foster unrest or discontent
forestall	v. to hold off or try to prevent
fortuitous	adj. fortunate and lucky
frugal	adj. economical, thrifty
gainsay	v. deny or oppose
galvanize	v. to prod someone into action
garrulous	adj. talkative
gauche	adj. socially inept, inappropriate, or awkward
germane	adj. relevant to the matter at hand
glib	adj. talking volubly, but carelessly or insincerely
gregarious	adj. sociable, genial
guile	n. craftiness and cunning
hackneyed	adj. cliché, trite, banal
harangue	n. diatribe or rant
hedonism	n. the pursuit of pleasure
hierarchical	adj. arranged in rank order or hierarchy
homogenous	adj. uniform, identical
hyperbole	n. obvious exaggeration for effect
iconoclast	n. a person who attacks traditional religious and cultural institutions
ideological	adj. relating to a particular belief system or theory
imminent	adj. about to happen
immutable	adj. unchangeable
impair	v. to hinder or weaken someone or something
impediment	n. barrier, hindrance, or obstruction
imperturbable	adj. remaining calm under any circumstance
implacable	adj. unforgiving adj. relentless
implicit	adj. implied or insinuated without being directly stated
imprudence	n. bad judgment
impudent	adj. disrespectful
inadvertent	adj. by accident or unintentional
Inchoate	adj. rudimentary, in the beginning stages
inconclusive	adj. indeterminate or unresolved
indebted	adj. owing money adj. owing gratitude to someone or something
indefatigable	adj. cannot be made tired
indolent	adj. lazy

	adj. idle
infer	v. to conclude from implicit evidence (as opposed to explicit facts)
ingenuous	adj. naïve or innocent
inimical	adj. harmful or hostile
Innocuous	adj. harmless
inscrutable	adj. enigmatic, incomprehensible
insipid	adj. bland, uninspired, inane
insular	adj. tight-knit and isolated; uninterested in matters outside one's immediate sphere
intensive	adj. concentrated and in-depth
intermediary	n. a go-between
intimate	adj. close (as in a relationship) adj. particularly private v. to imply
intractable	adj. unmanageable adj. stubborn or obstinate
intransigent	adj. uncompromising, obstinate
intrepid	adj. bold and adventurous
inveterate	adj. ingrained, habitual
invulnerable	adj. indestructible, impervious to harm
irascible	adj. irritable, testy, touchy
irresolute	adj. wishy-washy, hesitant
laconic	adj. taciturn, reserved, succinct
laud	v. to praise
laudable	adj. praiseworthy
litigation	n. legal proceedings
loquacious	adj. talkative
lucid	adj. clear and coherent
luminous	adj. full of light
magnanimity	n. generosity and nobility of spirit
maladroit	adj. clumsy, awkward, inept
malign	adj. evil or harmful v. to speak negatively about someone or something
malleable	adj. pliant or pliable adj. easily influenced
maverick	n. an unorthodox person or rebel
mendacity	n. untruthfulness, dishonesty
mercurial	adj. easily changeable, fickle
meticulous	adj. paying close attention to detail

misanthrope	n. person who hates humanity
mitigate	v. to improve a painful, unpleasant, or negative situation
modest	adj. not boastful adj. not overly showy
mollify	v. placate
monotony	n. boredom and repetition
mundane	adj. everyday, boring
munificent	adj. very generous
naïve	adj. inexperienced or gullible
nascent	adj. just beginning or in the early stages
neglect	v. to abandon or leave uncared-for
nonplussed	adj. confused and baffled
notoriety	n. fame for doing something negative or criminal
nuance	n. subtle shades of difference
obdurate	adj. stubborn, obstinate
obscure	adj. mysterious or not well-known v. to cover something up or make it more difficult to perceive
obsequious	adj. overly fawning and helpful in a way that is disingenuous
obstinate	adj. stubborn, uncompromising
obviate	v. to forestall the need for something v. to prevent
occlude	v. to block or obstruct
occult	n. the mystical and supernatural
offset	v. to counterbalance or counteract
olfactory	adj. relating to smell or the sense of smell
omniscience	n. the quality or state of being all-knowing
onerous	adj. difficult or burdensome
opaque	adj. not see-through; blocking light
opportunism	n. the practice of taking advantage of opportunities as they arise without particular concern for morality or ethics
opprobrium	n. criticism or condemnation
oscillate	v. to swing back and forth between two points, poles, or positions
ostentatious	adj. overly showy in a way that is gaudy or vulgar
outstrip	v. to overtake or outrun
overshadow	v. to literally cast a shadow over v. to appear more notable than
painstaking	adj. attentive to detail, meticulous
partial	adj. incomplete
partisan	n. a devoted supporter of a group, cause, or person

patent	adj. blatant, obvious
paucity	n. scarcity, poverty
pedantic	adj. overly concerned with irrelevant detail, fussy
pedestrian	adj. boring, monotonous, run-of-the-mill
perfidy	n. treachery or deceit
perfunctory	adj. done without much effort, care, or thought
peripheral	adj. on the edge or periphery; not centrally important
permeate	v. to pervade or penetrate throughout
perseverance	n. persistence in the face of obstacles
peruse	v. to read something carefully and closely v. to read something informally or quickly (context is critical for this word!)
pervasive	adj. found everywhere, widespread; often has a negative connotation
phenomena	n. things that happen
phlegmatic	adj. cool and unruffled
pith	n. the essential substance of something
placate	v. to calm, esp. an angry or upset person
plastic	adj. easily shaped or molded adj. made of plastic
platitude	n. a trite or cliché statement
plausible	adj. believable, reasonable
plethora	n. a surplus or overabundance of something
plummet	v. to fall quickly and far
polarize	v. to cause a sharp division between two groups
polemical	adj. angry, hostile, harshly critical
pragmatic	adj. practical
precarious	adj. uncertain or unstable
preceded	adj. went before
precipitate	v. to cause adj. hastily and not well-considered n. particulate matter formed within a solution
precursor	n. a forerunner
prescient	adj. knowing things before they happen, prophetic
presumptuous	adj. overly familiar; invades social boundaries
prevail	v. to succeed, esp. with respect to vanquishing an opponent v. to convince or persuade
prevaricate	v. to evade or deceive without outright lying
pristine	adj. untouched, clean, pure
probity	n. integrity and honor

prodigal	n. a reckless spender
prodigious	adj. enormous, immense, gigantic
profligate	adj. extravagant and wasteful, esp. in an immoral way
proliferate	v. to multiply and spread rapidly
propitiate	v. to obtain special favor from someone, esp. a powerful person or deity, by performing a pleasing action v. to appease someone who is angry
propriety	n. appropriateness, manners, decorum
prospective	adj. potential or likely adj. applicable to the future
qualification	n. credential n. a modifying statement
quotidian	adj. relating to the everyday or mundane
rationalize	v. to attempt to justify with reasons that are only superficially valid
reconcile	v. to bring into harmony v. to repair a relationship
recondite	adj. arcane or obscure
refute	v. to rebut or disprove
relentless	adj. never stopping, constant
relevant	adj. relating to the topic or issue at hand
reproach	v. to scold or express criticism
repudiate	v. to renounce or disown
rescind	v. to take back or retract (an offer or statement)
respectively	adv. in the sequential order previously given
reticent	adj. hesitant to speak adj. introverted or silent
reverent	adj. solemn and respectful
rhetoric	n. the art of effective communication (written or verbal)
salubrious	adj. health-promoting
sanction	v. to give official permission v. to impose a penalty for a particular action n. punishments imposed for breaking a regulation
satiate	v. to completely satisfy (with respect to hunger or appetite)
secular	adj. of or relating to the world or worldly matters (as opposed to religious ones)
sediment	n. material that settles at the bottom of a body of water
sedulous	adj. dedicated and careful
simultaneous	adj. occurring at the same moment
solicitous	adj. considerate, attentive
soporific	adj. makes sleepy

sparse	adj. scattered or scarce adj. austere and unadorned
specious	adj. spurious; appearing true but actually false
sporadic	adj. occasional or scattered
spurious	adj. fake or false
stolid	adj. calm and dependable
subjective	adj. open to personal interpretation; not based in objective fact
substantiate	v. to corroborate or give evidence of something
subversive	adj. meant to undercut established institutions or norms
sufficient	adj. enough for a given purpose
superbly	adv. excellently
supine	adj. laying back with the face upward (opposite position to prone)
supplant	v. to overtake or replace
sycophant	n. a fawning, insincere admirer
synthesize	v. to combine disparate parts into a coherent whole
tacit	adj. unspoken; implicit
taciturn	adj. reticent or reserved; tending towards silence
temperance	n. moderation and restraint, sometimes used to specifically describe abstinence from alcohol
tenuous	adj. weak, flimsy, insubstantial
timorous	adj. meek or timid
tirade	n. an angry rant
torpor	n. tiredness, lethargy
tortuous	adj. winding or twisty adj. complicated
tractable	adj. can be easily influenced or managed
transient	adj. passes quickly; short-lived
ubiquitous	adj. ever-present or universal
unadorned	adj. plain; unembellished
undermine	v. to weaken or compromise
underscore	v. to line underneath for emphasis v. to emphasize
untenable	adj. weak or unsupportable, esp. with respect to an opinion or situation
vacillate	v. to shift between multiple options or opinions
venality	n. the state of being capable of being bribed
venerate	v. to give a high degree of respect; may border on worship
veracity	n. Truth and factual accuracy
verbose	adj. long-winded; loquacious

vexation	n. state of being frustrated, irritated, or concerned.
volatile	adj. easily changeable or extreme; unstable
whimsical	adj. fanciful or capricious
zeal	n. passion or fervor