

Magoosh

presents



GRE VOCAB FLASHCARDS

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flashcards

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WHAT IS MAGOOSSH?

We help you study for the GRE online.

The screenshot shows the Magoosh Dashboard. On the left, there's a sidebar with a 'Help' link. The main area has a 'Dashboard' title. Under 'Suggested Lessons', there are sections for Math (Intro to Decimals, Multiples of 10, Intro to Fractions, Conversions with Fractions and Decimals, Fraction Properties - I), Verbal (Intro to Reading Comprehension, Elimination Method, Deconstructing Passages - I, Understanding the Sentence, Deconstructing Passages - II), and AWA (Intro to AWA, Essay Organization). Below these is a note: 'Suggestions are based on your unviewed lessons and our recommended study plan'. To the right, there's a 'Quick Practice' section with 'Practice Math' (458 questions left) and 'Practice Verbal' (262 questions left). Below that is a 'Results Summary' section for Math and Verbal. For Math, it says 'Estimated Score: Not enough data' and shows a pie chart where 20% is 'Correct' and 80% is 'Incorrect'. For Verbal, it also says 'Estimated Score: Not enough data' and shows a pie chart where 60% is 'Correct' and 40% is 'Incorrect'. At the bottom, it shows 'Questions Answered: 15', 'Your Average Pace: 0m 30s', 'Others' Average Pace: 2m 18s', 'Questions Answered: 5', 'Your Average Pace: 0m 30s', and 'Others' Average Pace: 0m 55s'. There are also links to 'See detailed results' and 'Reset stats'.



We offer **200** math, verbal, and AWA lesson videos



20 hours of videos to learn from



Over **1000** math and verbal practice questions

Video explanations after every question. **Email support** from our expert tutors. **Customizable** practice sessions and mock tests. **Personalized** statistics based on performance. **Access** anytime, anywhere from any internet-connected device.

WHAT'S ON THE CARDS?

The front of the Magoosh flashcard looks very similar to any other flashcard (except for the killer purple). Once you turn over the flashcard, we offer a whole lot more than just a definition.

CATEGORY DESCRIPTION

Each word is assigned a category to help you remember the word. 'Kowtow' falls in 'around the world', which makes perfect sense when you read the backstory.

BACKSTORY

Words come with great stories. And what better way to lodge a word deep into long term memory than learning that 'protean' comes from the Greek god Proteus, who was able to change shape at will.

kowtow (verb)

AROUND THE WORLD

Nope, **kowtow** is not a giant truck for pulling bovines, but a word that comes from the imperial courts of China. When a person kowtowed to the emperor, or any eminent mandarin for that matter, he or she knelt and touched the ground with his or her forehead. Such a gesture was intended to show respect and submission.

Today, **kowtow** has a negative connotation and implies that a person is acting in a subservient or sycophantic manner.

He kowtowed to his boss so often on even the most trivial matters that the boss herself soon became nauseated by his sycophancy.

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EXAMPLE SENTENCE

Context is critical on the GRE. Oftentimes, a pure definition is not enough to truly understand words. Each card will have an example sentence so you can see how the word functions in context.

LINK TO OUR WEBSITE

Every card is labeled with the link to our website so you can find the rest of our study materials, GRE blog, and popular online test-prep program to further your studying needs!

Have feedback or questions?

<http://magoosh.com/gre/2013/gre-vocabulary-flashcards>

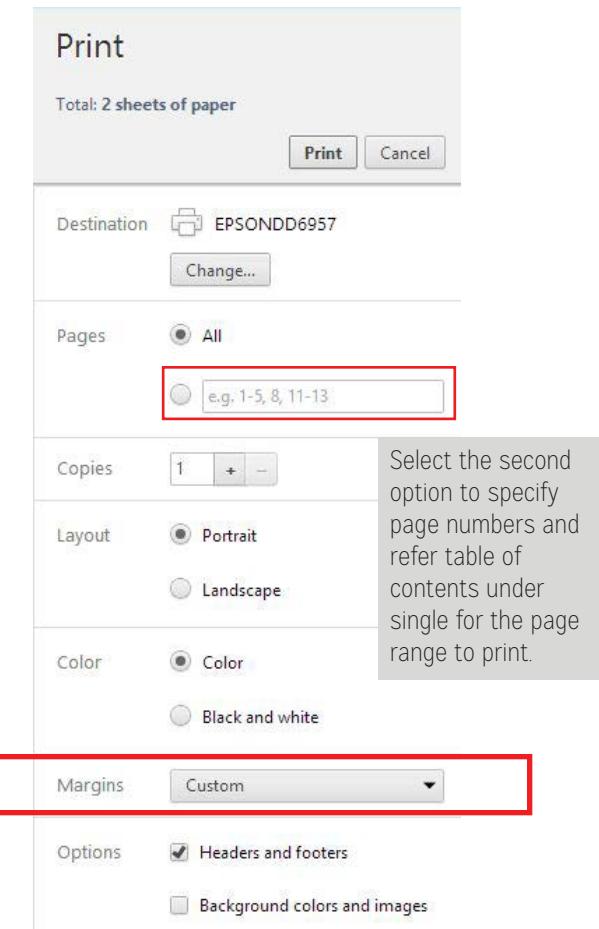
Magoosh
<http://gre.magoosh.com>

PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

one-sided flashcards



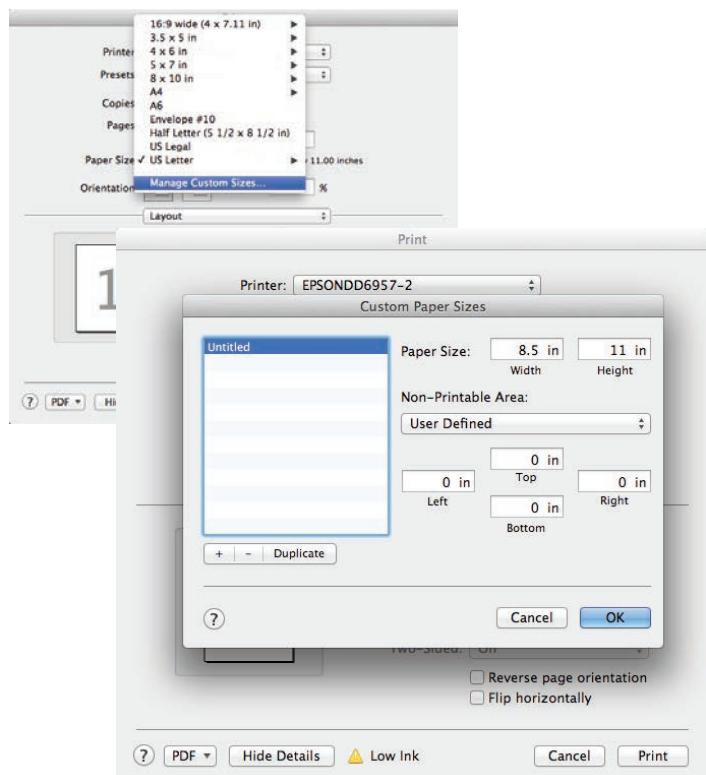
WINDOWS



Keep default print options. If your printer allows for printing without margins, change them to **0**. Otherwise, change margins to **0.5 inches** for top and bottom and **0.25 inches** for left and right.



MACINTOSH



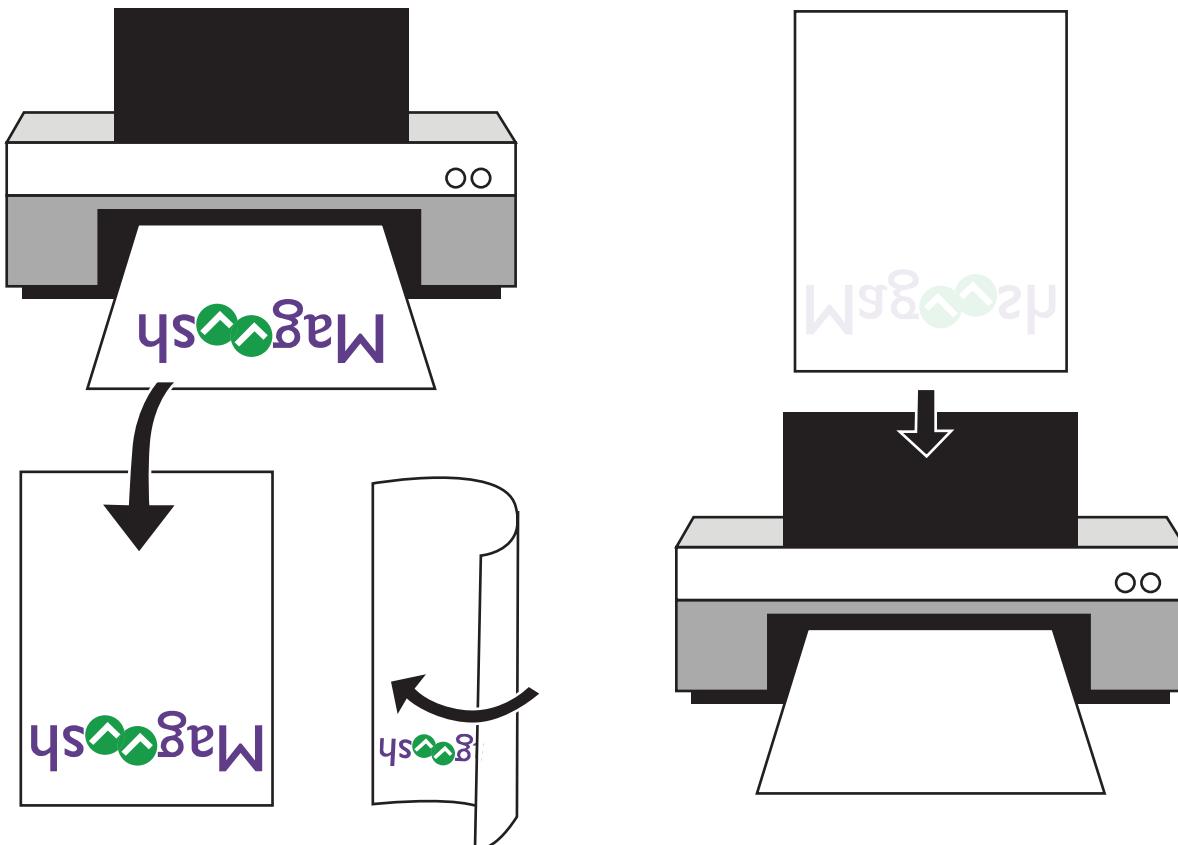
Under the print dialog, keep the default settings but click on the dropdown next to paper size. Select "manage custom sizes". In the new dialog, click the plus button on the left side and enter the above numbers in the blanks. If your printer does not allow 0 margins, put **0.5 in** for top and bottom and **0.25 in** for left and right.

PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS

two-sided flashcards

If your printer allows for two-sided printing, then select that option in the print dialogue. However, if you don't, you can do double sided printing manually by following these instructions:

- 1 After following the instructions on the previous page, refer to the table of contents for the page range of the flashcard set you wish to print. Look under "double" and enter the first number in the range to the "pages" setting of the print dialogue.
- 2 When the printer prints out the page, pick up the printed page exactly as it came out from the printer, then flip it around by its long side. Place the page back in the paper slot/tray for the printer with the blank side up.
- 3 In the print dialogue, change the page number to be of the next page in the flashcard set. After the second page is printed, print the third page on a new piece of paper and repeat.



HOW TO USE

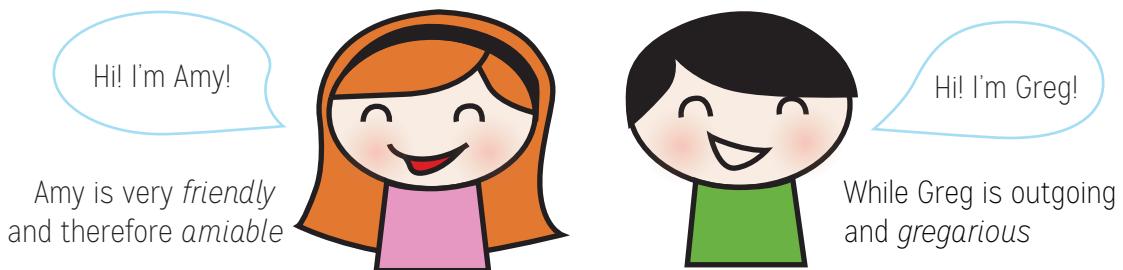
general tips

- 1 DO NOT BITE OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW.** Learning hundreds of words while only having a tenuous grasp of them is not efficacious. Instead, learn words at a rate in which they are not falling out of your head.
- 2 USE THESE WORDS.** Whether you are walking down the street, or even watching a television show, see if you can apply the words you learnt that day.
- 3 READ, READ, READ.** Reading is an excellent way to supplement vocab lists and flashcards. Be a word detective, and significantly augment your vocabulary.

tricks & strategies

1 COME UP WITH CLEVER AND WACKY ASSOCIATIONS. Another way of saying this: use mnemonics. A mnemonic is a creative way of remembering a word. Even if you don't happen to have a friend named Amy or Greg, you can get creative and wacky with your associations! The beauty of mnemonics is that they only have to make sense to you.

example: *gregarious* and *amiable*



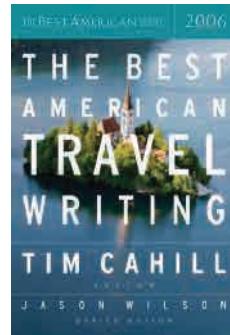
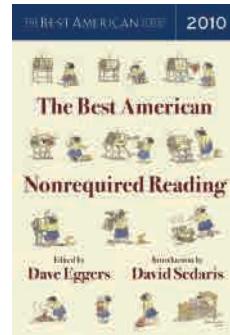
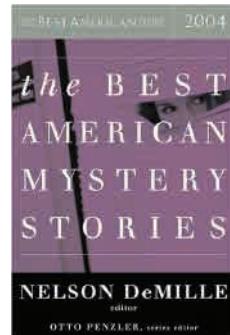
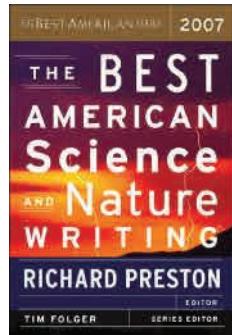
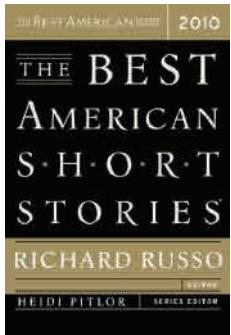
- 2 ODD MAN IN.** Take 100 flashcards and quiz yourself on each one. The ones you do not answer correctly put in one pile. At the very end look at this pile and study the words. Then take those words and once again go through each one. If you do not remember the words a second time, put them in a pile. *This last pile represents your problem words.* Take this deck of flashcards and carry it with you to use and remember!



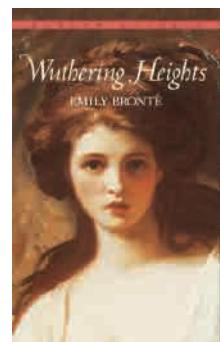
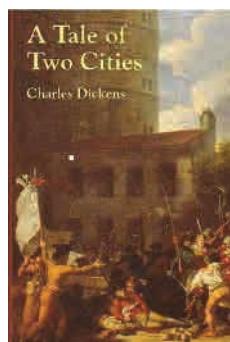
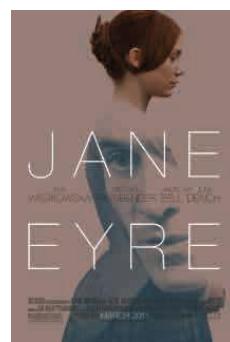
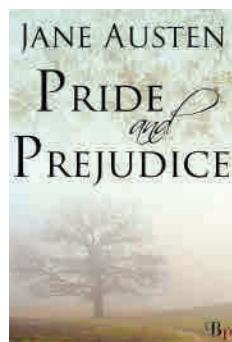
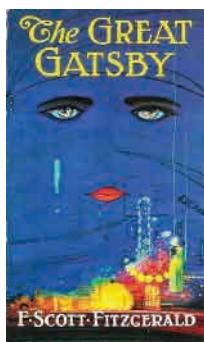
RECOMMENDED READING

Reading is an excellent way to supplement vocab lists and flashcards. Be a word detective, and significantly augment your vocabulary.

the best american series



the classics



magazines and newspapers



OTHER RESOURCES

The Internet is a great resource for vocabulary. So, check out these links, and they should help you develop a stronger vocabulary that will definitely come in handy on the day of your exam.



<http://magoosh.com/gre>

This helpful word-of-the-day does more than just define a word. It cites the word as used in context from The New York Times galaxy of articles. These articles generally tend to be a trove of other useful words.



learning.blogs.nytimes.com

We have Vocabulary Wednesday videos and word lists every week, so be sure to check in for blog posts about everything on the GRE—not just vocab, but Math and Writing and the rest of the Verbal section as well.



<http://www.wordnik.com>

Their word-of-the-day feature is great—a dictionary.com definition right below the word, along with popular uses of the word in media (this last part is great for getting the sense of context).



<http://www.dictionary.com>

Have feedback or questions?
<http://magoosh.com/gre-vocabulary-flashcards>

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

sentence equivalence

Select exactly two words that best complete the sentence and produce sentences that are alike in meaning.

A knack for _____, it can be argued, allows one access to a whole range of careers, many of which require one to forsake direct, honest speech.

- eloquence
- prevarication
- equivocation
- abbreviation
- discernment
- openness

The answers are “prevarication” and “equivocation”.

Try the question online and watch the video explanation: <http://gre.magoosh.com/questions/2369>

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

text completion

For each blank select one word from each column that best completes each sentence.

The movie is comprised of several vignettes, each presenting a character along with his or her foil: a staid accountant shares an apartment with a _____ musician; a tight-lipped divorcee on a cross-country roadtrip picks up a _____ hitchhiker; and finally, and perhaps most unconvincingly, an introverted mathematician falls in love with a _____ arriviste.

Blank (i)

colorful
insatiable
eminent

Blank (ii)

garrulous
untrustworthy
forlorn

Blank (iii)

unpredictable
gregarious
bumbling

The answers are “colorful”, “garrulous”, and “gregarious”.

Try the question online and watch the video explanation: <http://gre.magoosh.com/questions/2574>

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

reading comprehension

Choose the option that best answers the question.

What little scholarship has existed on Ernest Hemingway--considering his stature--has focused on trying to unmask the man behind the bravura. Ultimately, most of these works have done little more than to show that Hemingway the myth and Hemingway the man were not too dissimilar (Hemingway lived to hunt big game so should we be surprised at his virility, not to mention that of many of the author's--chiefly male--protagonists?). In the last few years, several biographies have reversed this trend, focusing on Hemingway near the end of his life: isolated and paranoid, the author imagined the government was chasing him (he was not completely wrong on this account). Ironically, the hunter had become the hunted, and in that sense, these latest biographers have provided--perhaps unwittingly--the most human portrait of the writer yet.

It can be inferred from the passage that the author considers the latest Hemingway biographies a departure from traditional biographies in that these latest biographies

- focus on a much overlooked aspect of the writer's body of work
- depict Hemingway in a manner that is at odds with the myth of Hemingway
- claim that Hemingway was similar to several of his chief protagonists in his books
- suggest that Hemingway lacked the virility many associated with him
- do not attempt to explore the link between Hemingway the man and Hemingway the myth

The answer is B.

Try the question online and watch the video explanation: <http://gre.magoosh.com/questions/2662>

VOCAB FLASHCARDS

MOST COMMON GRE WORDS

VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TOP 10 WORDS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

prosaic



alacrity



paucity



veracity



contrite



maintain



top 10 words

(noun)

The GRE has a predilection for words that don't really sound like what they mean. _____ is no exception. Many think the word has a negative connotation. _____, 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 _____, of course.

An interesting correlation: the more _____ (adjective form) you are when you're learning GRE vocabulary, the better you will do.

The first three weeks at his new job, Mark worked with such _____ that upper management knew they would be giving him a promotion.

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top 10 words

(noun)

_____ sounds a lot like voracity. Whereas many know voracity means full of hunger, whether for food or knowledge (the adjective form voracious is more common), few know _____. Unfortunately, many confuse the two on the test.

_____ means truthful. _____, the adjective form of _____, sounds a lot like voracious. So be careful.

After years of political scandals, the congressman was hardly known for his _____; yet despite this distrust, he was voted into yet another term.

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top 10 words

(verb)

The second definition of this word—and one the new GRE favors—is to assert. One can _____ their innocence. A scientist can _____ that a recent finding supports her theory. The latter context is the one you'll encounter on the GRE.

The scientist _____ that the extinction of dinosaurs was most likely brought about by a drastic change in climate.

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top 10 words

(adj.)

_____ conjures up a beautiful mosaic for some. So if somebody or something is _____, it must surely be good.

Once again the GRE confounds expectations. _____ 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.

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 _____ mosaic.

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top 10 words

(noun)

_____ is a lack of something. In honor of _____, this entry will have a _____ of words.

There is a _____ of jobs hiring today that require menial skills, since most jobs have either been automated or outsourced.

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top 10 words

(adj.)

Word roots are often misleading. This word does not mean with triteness (con- meaning with). To be _____ is to be remorseful.

Though he stole his little sister's licorice stick with malevolent glee, Chucky soon became _____ when his sister wouldn't stop crying.

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pugnacious

 TOP 10 WORDS

laconic

 TOP 10 WORDS

egregious

 TOP 10 WORDS

disparate

 TOP 10 WORDS

top 10 words

(adj.)

Another word that sounds different from what it means. A person is described as _____ 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 at a time. As this allusion betrays my age more than anything else, think of Christian Bale in Batman—the _____ caped crusader.

While Martha always swooned over the hunky, _____ types in romantic comedies, her boyfriends inevitably were very talkative—and not very hunky.

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top 10 words

(adj.)

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

With the advent of machines capable of looking inside the brain, fields as _____ as religion and biology have been brought together, as scientists try to understand what happens in the brain when people have a religious experience.

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top 10 words

(adj.)

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

The comedian told one flat joke after another, and when the audience started booing, he _____ spat back at them, "Hey, you think this is easy—why don't you buffoons give it a shot?"

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top 10 words

(adj.)

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

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

The dictator's abuse of human rights was so _____ that many world leaders asked that he be tried in an international court for genocide.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TOP 10 WORDS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

alacrity (noun)

TOP 10 WORDS

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 when you're learning GRE vocabulary, the better you will do.

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

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veracity (noun)

TOP 10 WORDS

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

Veracity means truthful. Veracious, the adjective form of veracity, sounds a lot like voracious. So be careful.

After years of political scandals, the congressman was hardly known for his veracity; yet despite this distrust, he was voted into yet another term.

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maintain (verb)

TOP 10 WORDS

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 supports her theory. The latter context is the one you'll encounter on the GRE.

The scientist maintained that the extinction of dinosaurs was most likely brought about by a drastic change in climate.

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prosaic (adj.)

TOP 10 WORDS

Prosaic conjures up a beautiful mosaic for some. 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.

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.

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paucity (noun)

TOP 10 WORDS

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

There is a paucity of jobs hiring today that require menial skills, since most jobs have either been automated or outsourced.

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contrite (adj.)

TOP 10 WORDS

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

Though he stole his little sister's licorice stick with malevolent glee, Chucky soon became contrite when his sister wouldn't stop crying.

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laconic (adj.)

TOP 10 WORDS

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 at a time. As this allusion **betrays my age more than anything else**, think of Christian Bale in Batman—the laconic caped crusader.

While Martha always swooned over the hunky, laconic types in romantic comedies, her boyfriends inevitably were very talkative—and not very hunky.

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disparate (adj.)

TOP 10 WORDS

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.

With the advent of machines capable of looking inside the brain, fields as disparate as religion and biology have been brought together, as scientists try to understand what happens in the brain when people have a religious experience.

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pugnacious (adj.)

TOP 10 WORDS

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

The comedian told one flat joke after another, and when the audience started booing, he pugnaciously spat back at them, "Hey, you think this is easy – why don't you buffoons give it a shot?"

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egregious (adj.)

TOP 10 WORDS

'Greg' is the Latin root for flock. At one point, **egregious** meant standing out of the flock in 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).

The dictator's abuse of human rights was so egregious that many world leaders asked that he be tried in an international court for genocide.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TOP 5 BASIC DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

candid



innocuous



bleak



erratic



profuse



top 5 basic

(adj.)

Something _____ is harmless and doesn't produce any ill effects. Many germs are _____. As are most bug bites. Even television, in small doses, is typically _____. _____ can also mean inoffensive. An _____ question is unlikely to upset anyone.

Everyone found Nancy's banter _____—except for Mike, who felt like she was intentionally picking on him.

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top 5 basic

(adj.)

Unpredictable, often wildly so, _____ is reserved for pretty extreme cases. An athlete who scores the winning point one game, and then botches numerous opportunities is known for his or her _____ play. The stock market is notoriously _____, as is sleep, especially if your stocks aren't doing well.

_____ can also mean strange and unconventional. Someone may be known for their _____ behavior. Regardless of which meaning you are employing, you should not be _____ in your GRE prep.

It came as no surprise to pundits that the President's attempt at re-election floundered; even during his term, support for his policies was _____, with an approval rating jumping anywhere from 30 to 60 percent.

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top 5 basic

(adj.)

A straightforward and honest look at something is a _____ one. Many great photographers have created enduring work because they turned their respective lens on what is real. Whether these photos are from the Dust Bowl, the Vietnam War, or the Arab Winter, they move us because they reveal how people felt at a certain moment.

A person can also be _____ if they are being honest and straightforward with you.

Even with a perfect stranger, Charles was always _____ and would rarely hold anything back.

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top 5 basic

(adj.)

If one has a very depressing take on life, we say that person has a _____ outlook. Landscapes can be _____ (*Siberia in April*, the *Texas of No Country for Old Men*), and writers, too (*Dostoevsky, Orwell*).

Unremitting overcast skies tend to lead people to create _____ literature and lugubrious music—compare England's band Radiohead to any band from Southern California.

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top 5 basic

(adj.)

If something literally pours out in abundance we say it is _____. This pouring out is usually figurative. A person who apologizes ceaselessly does so _____. Perhaps a little more vividly, certain men who fail to button up their shirts completely let the world—perhaps not unwittingly—know of their _____ chest hairs (which, on their part, should necessitate a _____ apology).

During mile 20 of the Hawaii Marathon, Dwayne was sweating so _____ that he stopped to take off his shirt, and ran the remaining six miles clad in nothing more than skimpy shorts.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TOP 5 BASIC ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

innocuous (adj.)

TOP 5 BASIC

Something **innocuous** is harmless and doesn't produce any ill effects. Many germs are innocuous. As are most bug bites. Even television, in small doses, is typically innocuous. Innocuous can also mean inoffensive. An innocuous question is unlikely to upset anyone.

Everyone found Nancy's banter innocuous—except for Mike, who felt like she was intentionally picking on him.

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erratic (adj.)

TOP 5 BASIC

Unpredictable, often wildly so, **erratic** is reserved for pretty extreme cases. An athlete who scores the winning point one game, and then botches numerous opportunities is known for his or her erratic play. The stock market is notoriously erratic, as is sleep, especially if your stocks aren't doing well.

Erratic can also mean strange and unconventional. Someone may be known for their erratic behavior. Regardless of which meaning you are employing, you should not be erratic in your GRE prep.

It came as no surprise to pundits that the President's attempt at re-election floundered; even during his term, support for his policies was erratic, with an approval rating jumping anywhere from 30 to 60 percent.

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profuse (adj.)

TOP 5 BASIC

If something literally pours out in abundance we say it is **profuse**. This pouring out is usually figurative. A person who apologizes ceaselessly does so profusely. Perhaps a little more vividly, certain men who fail to button up their shirts completely let the world – perhaps not unwittingly – know of their profuse chest hairs (which, on their part, should necessitate a profuse apology).

During mile 20 of the Hawaii Marathon, Dwayne was sweating so profusely that he stopped to take off his shirt, and ran the remaining six miles clad in nothing more than skimpy shorts.

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candid (adj.)

TOP 5 BASIC

A straightforward and honest look at something is a **candid** one. Many great photographers have created enduring work because they turned their respective lens on what is real. Whether these photos are from the Dust Bowl, the Vietnam War, or the Arab Winter, they move us because they reveal how people felt at a certain moment.

A person can also be candid if they are being honest and straightforward with you.

Even with a perfect stranger, Charles was always candid and would rarely hold anything back.

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bleak (adj.)

TOP 5 BASIC

If one has a very depressing take on life, we say that person has a **bleak** outlook. Landscapes can be bleak (Siberia in April, the Texas of *No Country for Old Men*), and writers, too (Dostoevsky, Orwell).

Unremitting overcast skies tend to lead people to create bleak literature and lugubrious music—compare England's band Radiohead to any band from Southern California.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

COMMONLY MISTAKEN DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

contentious

  COMMONLY MISTAKEN

extant

  COMMONLY MISTAKEN

enervate

  COMMONLY MISTAKEN

auspicious

  COMMONLY MISTAKEN

ambivalent

  COMMONLY MISTAKEN

equivocate

  COMMONLY MISTAKEN

commonly mistaken

(adj.)

Many think this word means extinct. _____ is actually the opposite of extinct.

A great mnemonic is to put the word 'is' between the 'x' and the 't' in extant. This gives you existant (don't mind the misspelling).

Despite many bookstores closing, experts predict that some form of book dealing will still be _____ generations from now.

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commonly mistaken

(adj.)

This word sounds very sinister, but actually means the opposite of sinister. If an occasion is _____, it is favorable.

The opposite, _____, is also common on the GRE. It means unfavorable.

Despite an _____ beginning, Mike's road trip became a series of mishaps, and he was soon stranded and penniless, leaning against his wrecked automobile.

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commonly mistaken

(verb)

People tend to think that _____ has to do with equal. It actually means to speak vaguely, usually with the intention to mislead or deceive. More generally, _____ can mean ambiguous. The related word _____ can also be confusing. To state something _____ is to state it in such a way that there is no room for doubt.

The findings of the study were _____—the two researchers had divergent opinions on what the results signified.

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Magoosh

commonly mistaken

(adj.)

This GRE word does not mean content, as in feeling happy. It comes from the word contend, which means to argue. If you are _____, you like to argue.

_____ is a very common GRE word, so unless you want me to become _____, memorize it now!

Since old grandpa Harry became very _____ during the summer when only reruns were on T.V., the grandkids learned to hide from him at every opportunity.

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Magoosh

commonly mistaken

(verb)

Most people think _____ means to energize. It actually means to sap the energy from.

John preferred to avoid equatorial countries; the intense sun would always leave him _____ after he'd spent the day sightseeing.

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Magoosh

commonly mistaken

(adj.)

Students often believe that to be _____ towards something is to be indifferent. The truth is almost the opposite. See, when you are _____ you have mixed or conflicting emotions about something.

Imagine somebody asked you what it was like studying for the GRE.

Sam was _____ about studying for the GRE because it ate up a lot of her time, yet he learned many words and improved at reading comprehension.

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Magoosh

sedulous

 COMMONLY MISTAKEN

commonly mistaken

(adj.)

I am not quite sure why students can never seem to remember the definition of this word. Perhaps the sed- reminds them of sitting and being idle (like in sedentary). To be _____, however, is to be anything but idle. If you are _____ studying for the GRE, you are studying diligently and carefully—making flashcards, writing down important words and formulas, and, of course, checking out the Magoosh blog every day.

An avid numismatist, Harold _____ amassed a collection of coins from over 100 countries—an endeavor that took over fifteen years, and took Harold to five continents.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

COMMONLY MISTAKEN ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

extant (adj.)

COMMONLY MISTAKEN

Many think this word means extinct. Extant is actually the opposite of extinct.

A great mnemonic is to put the word 'is' between the 'x' and the 't' in **extant**. This gives you existant (don't mind the misspelling).

Despite many bookstores closing, experts predict that some form of book dealing will still be extant generations from now.

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auspicious (adj.)

COMMONLY MISTAKEN

This word sounds very sinister, but actually means the opposite of sinister. If an occasion is **auspicious**, it is favorable.

The opposite, **inauspicious**, is also common on the GRE. It means unfavorable.

Despite an auspicious beginning, Mike's road trip became a series of mishaps, and he was soon stranded and penniless, leaning against his wrecked automobile.

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equivocate (verb)

COMMONLY MISTAKEN

People tend to think that **equivocate** has to do with equal. It actually means to speak vaguely, usually with the intention to mislead or deceive. More generally, equivocal can mean ambiguous. The related word unequivocal can also be confusing. To state something unequivocally is to state it in such a way that there is no room for doubt.

The findings of the study were equivocal—the two researchers had divergent opinions on what the results signified.

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Magoosh

contentious (adj.)

COMMONLY MISTAKEN

This GRE word does not mean content, as in feeling happy. It comes from the word contend, which means to argue. If you are contentious, you like to argue.

Contentious is a very common GRE word, so unless you want me to become contentious, memorize it now!

Since old grandpa Harry became very contentious during the summer when only reruns were on TV, the grandkids learned to hide from him at every opportunity.

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enervate (verb)

COMMONLY MISTAKEN

Most people think **enervate** means to energize. It actually means to sap the energy from.

John preferred to avoid equatorial countries; the intense sun would always leave him enervated after he'd spent the day sightseeing.

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ambivalent (adj.)

COMMONLY MISTAKEN

Students often believe that to be ambivalent towards something is to be indifferent. The truth is almost the opposite. See, when you are **ambivalent** you have mixed or conflicting emotions about something.

Imagine somebody asked you what it was like studying for the GRE.

Sam was ambivalent about studying for the GRE because it ate up a lot of her time, yet he learned many words and improved at reading comprehension.

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sedulous (*adj.*)

COMMONLY MISTAKEN

I am not quite sure why students can never seem to remember the definition of this word. Perhaps the sed- reminds them of sitting and being idle (like in *sedentary*). To be **sedulous**, however, is to be anything but idle. If you are sedulously studying for the GRE, you are studying diligently and carefully—making flashcards, writing down important words and formulas, and, of course, checking out the Magoosh blog every day.

An avid numismatist, Harold sedulously amassed a collection of coins from over 100 countries—an endeavor that took over fifteen years, and took Harold to five continents.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TRICKY “EASY” DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

blinkered

 TRICKY "EASY"

stem

 TRICKY "EASY"

checkered

 TRICKY "EASY"

check

 TRICKY "EASY"

involved

 TRICKY "EASY"

raft

 TRICKY "EASY"

tricky “easy”

(verb)

To _____ means to hold back or limit the flow or growth of something. You can _____ bleeding, and you can _____ the tide—or at least attempt to do so. However, do not _____ the flow of vocabulary coursing through your brains. Make sure to use GRE words whenever you can.

To _____ the tide of applications, the prestigious Ivy requires that each applicant score at least 330 on the Revised GRE.

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tricky “easy”

(noun/verb)

To _____ something is to stop its growth (similar to stem but with more of a focus on growth than flow). If something is left _____, then it grows freely.

Deserted for six months, the property began to look more like a jungle and less like a residence—weeds grew _____ in the front yard.

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tricky “easy”

(noun)

A _____ is an inflatable boat. It can also mean a large number of something. I know—it doesn’t really make much sense. But here’s a good mnemonic: imagine a large number of rafts and you have a _____ of rafts.

Despite a _____ of city ordinances passed by an overzealous council, noise pollution continued unabated in the megalopolis.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

If you blink a lot you are likely to miss something. Indeed, your view would be very limited. Extending this meaning, we get the definition of _____ means to have a limited outlook or understanding. The true etymology of the word actually comes from the blinkers that are put on racing horses to prevent them from becoming distracted.

In gambling, the addict is easily _____ by past successes and/or past failures, forgetting that the outcome of any one game is independent of the games that preceded it.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

The meaning of _____ is completely unrelated to the meaning of check, so be sure to know the difference between the two. A _____ past is one that is marked by disreputable happenings.

One by one, the presidential candidates dropped out of the race, their respective _____ pasts—from embezzlement to infidelity—sabotaging their campaigns.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

We are _____ in many things, from studying to socializing. For something to be _____, as far as the GRE is concerned, means it is complicated, and difficult to comprehend.

The physics lecture became so _____ that the undergraduate's eyes glazed over.

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Magoosh

expansive



retiring



base



moment



inundate



imbibe



tricky “easy”

(adj.)

Sure, many dream of the day when they can retire (preferably to some palatial estate with a beachfront view). The second definition does not necessarily apply to most. To be _____ is to be shy, and to be inclined to retract from company.

Nelson was always the first to leave soirees—rather than mill about with “fashionable” folk, he was _____, and preferred the solitude of his garret.

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tricky “easy”

(noun)

A _____ is a point in time. We all know that definition. If something is of _____ it is significant and important (think of the word momentous).

Despite the initial hullabaloo, the play was of no great _____ in Hampton’s writing career, and, within a few years, the public quickly forgot his foray into theater arts.

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tricky “easy”

(verb)

Literally, to _____ is to drink, usually copiously. Figuratively, _____ can refer to an intake of knowledge or information.

Plato _____ 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.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

The common definition of _____ is extensive, wide-ranging. The lesser known definition is communicative, and prone to talking in a sociable manner.

After a few sips of cognac, the octogenarian shed his irascible demeanor and became _____, speaking fondly of the “good old days”.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

When the definition of this word came into existence, there were some obvious biases against the lower classes (assuming that lexicographers were not lower class). It was assumed that those from the _____, or the lowest, class were without any moral principles. They were contemptible and ignoble. Hence, we have this second definition of _____ (the word has since dropped any connotations of lower class).

She was not so _____ as to begrudge the beggar the unwanted crumbs from her dinner plate.

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tricky “easy”

(verb)

To _____ is a synonym for to deluge, which means to flood. Figuratively, to be _____ means to be overwhelmed by too many people or things.

The newsroom was _____ with false reports that only made it more difficult for the newscasters to provide an objective account of the bank robbery.

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benighted



TRICKY "EASY"

scintillating



TRICKY "EASY"

hedge



TRICKY "EASY"

galvanize



TRICKY "EASY"

fell



TRICKY "EASY"

flush



TRICKY "EASY"

tricky “easy”

(adj.)

If something gives off sparks, such as when photons collide, it is said to _____. Figuratively, _____ describes someone who is brilliant and lively (imagine Einstein's brain giving off sparks).

Richard Feynman was renowned for his _____ lectures—the arcana of quantum physics was made lucid as he wrote animatedly on the chalkboard.

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tricky “easy”

(verb)

Need to strengthen steel by giving it a final coat? Or, perhaps you need to motivate somebody? Well, in both cases, you would literally be _____. Figuratively, to _____ is to excite to action or spur on.

At mile 23 of his first marathon, Kyle had all but given up, until he noticed his friends and family holding a banner that read, "Go Kyle"; _____, he broke into a gallop, finishing the last three miles in less than 20 minutes.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

What word means to turn red (especially in the face), to send down the toilet, to be in abundance, and to drive out of hiding? Yep, it's _____, which has all four of these totally unrelated definitions.

The GRE Reading Comprehension passage is _____ with difficult words, words that you may have learned only yesterday.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

If the sky darkens, and becomes night, it is, unsurprisingly, _____. However, if a people are _____ (this word is usually reserved for the collective), that group falls in a state of ignorance. This latter definition is more common.

Far from being a period of utter _____, The Medieval Ages produced some inestimable works of theological speculation.

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tricky “easy”

(noun/verb)

If you are really into horticulture—which is a fancy word for gardening—you'll know _____ are shrubs, or small bushes that have been neatly trimmed. If you know your finance, then you've probably heard of _____ funds (where brokers make their money betting against the market). _____ can also be used in a verb sense. If you _____ your bets, you play safely. If you _____ a statement, you limit or qualify that statement. Finally, _____ can also mean to avoid making a direct statement, as in equivocating.

When asked why he had decided to buy millions of shares at the very moment the tech companies stock soared, the CEO _____, mentioning something vague about gut instinct.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

Imagine an evil person who cuts down trees, and then falls himself. Well, that image is capturing three different definitions of _____. To cut down a tree, the past tense of fall (we all know that) and evil. Yes, I know, _____ can't possibly mean evil...but the English language is a wacky one. _____ indeed means terribly evil. Now watch out for that tree!

For fans of the Harry Potter series, the _____ Lord Voldemort, who terrorized poor Harry for seven lengthy installments, has finally been vanquished by the forces of good—unless, that is, JK Rowling decides to come out of retirement.

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beg



arch



intimate



tender



becoming



wanting



tricky “easy”

(adj.)

You have _____ in architecture, or at a well-known fast-food restaurant. You can _____ your back, or a bow. _____ are even a part of your foot. But, did you know that to be _____ is to be deliberately teasing, as in, “he shrugged off her insults because he knew she was only being _____”? Finally, _____ - as a root means chief or principal, as in archbishop.

The baroness was _____, making playful asides to the townspeople; yet because they couldn’t pick up on her dry humor, they thought her supercilious.

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tricky “easy”

(verb)

_____ is a verb, and it does not mean to behave _____. When you _____ something, you offer it up. For instance, when you _____ your resignation, you hand in a piece of paper saying that you are resigning.

The government was loath to _____ more money in the fear that it might set off inflation.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

_____ means lacking. So, if your knowledge of secondary meanings is _____, this eBook is a perfect place to start learning.

She did not find her vocabulary _____ yet there were so many GRE vocabulary words that inevitably she did not know a few.

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tricky “easy”

(verb)

Commonly, when we think of _____, we think of money, or a favor. But, one can also _____ a question, and that’s where things start to get complicated. To _____ a question can mean to evade a question, invite an obvious question, or, and this is where it starts to get really tricky, to ask a question that in itself makes unwarranted assumptions.

For instance, let’s say you are not really sure if you are going to take the GRE. If somebody asks you when you are going to take the GRE, then that person is assuming you are going to take the GRE. That is, they are _____ the question. If you avoid giving a direct answer, then you are also _____ the question (albeit in a different sense). Which finally _____ the question, how did this whole question _____ business get so complicated in the first place?

By assuming that Charlie was headed to college—which he was not—Maggie _____ the question when she asked him to which school he was headed in the Fall.

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tricky “easy”

(adj./verb)

Just as tender doesn’t relate to two people in love, neither does _____, at least in the GRE sense. The secondary meaning for _____ is to suggest something subtly.

At first Manfred’s teachers _____ to his parents that he was not suited to skip a grade; when his parents protested, teachers explicitly told them that, notwithstanding the boy’s precocity, he was simply too immature to jump to the 6th grade.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

Another secondary meaning that changes parts of speech, _____ an adjective. If something is _____, it is appropriate, and matches nicely.

Her dress was _____ and made her look even more beautiful.

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fleece



TRICKY "EASY"

start



wax



TRICKY "EASY"

telling



qualify



TRICKY "EASY"

check



tricky “easy”

(verb)

The secondary meaning for _____ is somewhat similar to the common meaning. To _____ is to suddenly move or dart in a particular direction. Just think of the word startle.

All alone in the mansion, Henrietta _____ when she heard a sound.

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tricky “easy”

(adj.)

If something is _____, it is significant and revealing of another factor. If a person’s alibi has a _____ detail, often that one little detail can support—or unravel!—the person’s alibi.

Her unbecoming dress was very _____ when it came to her sense of fashion.

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tricky “easy”

(noun/verb)

To _____ is to limit, and it is a word usually used to modify the growth of something.

When government abuses are not kept in _____, that government is likely to become autocratic.

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tricky “easy”

(verb)

If you are thinking Mary Had a Little Lamb (... _____ as white as snow), you have been fleeced _____ by a secondary meaning. To _____ is to deceive.

Many have been _____ by Internet scams and have never received their money back.

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tricky “easy”

(noun/verb)

Melting _____ will only lead you astray. The secondary meaning for _____ is to increase. The opposite of _____ is to wane. Both words are used to describe the moon: a _____ moon becomes larger and larger each night until it becomes a full moon, at which point it becomes small and smaller each night and becomes a waning moon.

Her enthusiasm for the diva’s new album only _____ with each song; by the end of the album, it was her favorite CD yet.

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tricky “easy”

(verb)

This is perhaps the most commonly confused secondary meaning, and one that is very important to know for the GRE. To _____ is to limit, and is usually used in the context of a statement or an opinion.

I love San Francisco.

I love San Francisco, but it is always windy.

The first statement shows my _____ love for San Francisco. In the second statement I _____, or limit, my love for San Francisco.

In the context of the GRE, the concept of _____ is usually found in the Reading Comprehension passage. For example, an author usually expresses _____ approval or some _____ opinion in the passage. As you may have noticed, the authors of reading comprehension passages never feel 100% about something. They always think in a nuanced fashion. Therefore, they are unlikely to be gung-ho or downright contemptuous. That is, they _____, or limit, their praise/approval/disapproval.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TRICKY “EASY” ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

stem (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

To **stem** means to hold back or limit the flow or growth of something. You can stem bleeding, and you can stem the tide—or at least attempt to do so. However, do not stem the flow of vocabulary coursing through your brains. Make sure to use GRE words whenever you can.

To stem the tide of applications, the prestigious Ivy requires that each applicant score at least 330 on the Revised GRE.

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check (noun/verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

To **check** something is to stop its growth (similar to stem but with more of a focus on growth than flow). If something is left unchecked, then it grows freely.

Deserted for six months, the property began to look more like a jungle and less like a residence—weeds grew unchecked in the front yard.

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raft (noun)

TRICKY "EASY"

A **raft** is an inflatable boat. It can also mean a large number of something. I know—it doesn't really make much sense. But here's a good mnemonic: imagine a large number of rafts and you have a raft of rafts.

Despite a raft of city ordinances passed by an overzealous council, noise pollution continued unabated in the megalopolis.

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Magoosh

blinkered (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

If you blink a lot you are likely to miss something. Indeed, your view would be very limited. Extending this meaning, we get the definition of **blinkered**: means to have a limited outlook or understanding. The true etymology of the word actually comes from the blinkers that are put on racing horses to prevent them from becoming distracted.

In gambling, the addict is easily blinkered by past successes and/or past failures, forgetting that the outcome of any one game is independent of the games that preceded it.

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checkered (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

The meaning of **checkered** is completely unrelated to the meaning of check, so be sure to know the difference between the two. A checkered past is one that is marked by disreputable happenings.

One by one, the presidential candidates dropped out of the race, their respective checkered pasts—from embezzlement to infidelity—sabotaging their campaigns.

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involved (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

We are **involved** in many things, from studying to socializing. For something to be involved, as far as the GRE is concerned, means it is complicated, and difficult to comprehend.

The physics lecture became so involved that the undergraduate's eyes glazed over.

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retiring (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

Sure, many dream of the day when they can retire (preferably to some palatial estate with a beachfront view). The second definition does not necessarily apply to most. To be **retiring** is to be shy, and to be inclined to retract from company.

Nelson was always the first to leave soirees—rather than mill about with “fashionable” folk, he was retiring, and preferred the solitude of his garret.

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moment (noun)

TRICKY "EASY"

A **moment** is a point in time. We all know that definition. If something is of moment, it is significant and important (think of the word *momentous*).

Despite the initial hullabaloo, the play was of no great moment in Hampton's writing career, and, within a few years, the public quickly forgot his foray into theater arts.

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imbibe (verb)

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Literally, to **imbibe** is to drink, usually copiously. Figuratively, imbibe can refer to an intake of knowledge or information.

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.

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expansive (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

The common definition of **expansive** is extensive, wide-ranging. The lesser known definition is communicative, and prone to talking in a sociable manner.

After a few sips of cognac, the octogenarian shed his irascible demeanor and became expansive, speaking fondly of the “good old days”.

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base (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

When the definition of this word came into existence, there were some obvious biases against the lower classes (assuming that lexicographers were not lower class). It was assumed that those from the **base**, or the lowest, class were without any moral principles. They were contemptible and ignoble. Hence, we have this second definition of base (the word has since dropped any connotations of lower class).

She was not so base as to begrudge the beggar the unwanted crumbs from her dinner plate.

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inundate (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

To **inundate** is a synonym for to deluge, which means to flood. Figuratively, to be inundated means to be overwhelmed by too many people or things.

The newsroom was inundated with false reports that only made it more difficult for the newscasters to provide an objective account of the bank robbery.

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scintillating (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

If something gives off sparks, such as when photons collide, it is said to scintillate. Figuratively, **scintillating** describes someone who is brilliant and lively (imagine Einstein's brain giving off sparks).

Richard Feynman was renowned for his scintillating lectures—the arcana of quantum physics was made lucid as he wrote animatedly on the chalkboard.

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galvanize (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

Need to strengthen steel by giving it a final coat? Or, perhaps you need to motivate somebody? Well, in both cases, you would literally be galvanizing. Figuratively, to **galvanize** is to excite to action or spur on.

At mile 23 of his first marathon, Kyle had all but given up, until he noticed his friends and family holding a banner that read, "Go Kyle"; galvanized, he broke into a gallop, finishing the last three miles in less than 20 minutes.

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flush (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

What word means to turn red (especially in the face), to send down the toilet, to be in abundance, and to drive out of hiding? Yep, it's **flush**, which has all four of these totally unrelated definitions.

The GRE Reading Comprehension passage is flush with difficult words, words that you may have learned only yesterday.

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benighted (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

If the sky darkens, and becomes night, it is, unsurprisingly, **benighted**. However, if a people are benighted (this word is usually reserved for the collective), that group falls in a state of ignorance. This latter definition is more common.

Far from being a period of utter benightedness, The Medieval Ages produced some inestimable works of theological speculation.

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hedge (noun/verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

If you are really into horticulture—which is a fancy word for gardening—you'll know hedges are shrubs, or small bushes that have been neatly trimmed. If you know your finance, then you've probably heard of hedge funds (where brokers make their money betting against the market). **Hedge** can also be used in a verb sense. If you hedge your bets, you play safely. If you hedge a statement, you limit or qualify that statement. Finally, hedge can also mean to avoid making a direct statement, as in equivocating.

When asked why he had decided to buy millions of shares at the very moment the tech companies stock soared, the CEO hedged, mentioning something vague about gut instinct.

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fell (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

Imagine an evil person who cuts down trees, and then falls himself. Well, that image is capturing three different definitions of **fell**—to cut down a tree, the past tense of fall (we all know that) and evil. Yes, I know, fell can't possibly mean evil...but the English language is a wacky one. Fell indeed means terribly evil. Now watch out for that tree!

For fans of the Harry Potter series, the fell Lord Voldemort, who terrorized poor Harry for seven lengthy installments, has finally been vanquished by the forces of good—unless, that is, JK Rowling decides to come out of retirement.

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arch (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

You have arches in architecture, or at a well-known fast-food restaurant. You can arch your back, or a bow. Arches are even a part of your foot. But, did you know that to be arch is to be deliberately teasing, as in, “he shrugged off her insults because he knew she was only being arch”? Finally, **arch-** as a root means chief or principal, as in archbishop.

The baroness was arch, making playful asides to the townspeople; yet because they couldn’t pick up on her dry humor, they thought her supercilious.

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tender (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

Tender is a verb, and it does not mean to behave tenderly. When you tender something, you offer it up. For instance, when you tender your resignation, you hand in a piece of paper saying that you are resigning.

The government was loath to tender more money in the fear that it might set off inflation.

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wanting (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

Wanting means lacking. So, if your knowledge of secondary meanings is wanting, this eBook is a perfect place to start learning.

She did not find her vocabulary wanting, yet there were so many GRE vocabulary words that inevitably she did not know a few.

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beg (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

Commonly, when we think of begging, we think of money, or a favor. But, one can also beg a question, and that’s where things start to get complicated. To **beg** a question can mean to evade a question, invite an obvious question, or, and this is where it starts to get really tricky, to ask a question that in itself makes unwarranted assumptions.

For instance, let’s say you are not really sure if you are going to take the GRE. If somebody asks you when you are going to take the GRE, then that person is assuming you are going to take the GRE. That is, they are begging the question. If you avoid giving a direct answer, then you are also begging the question (albeit in a different sense). Which finally begs the question, how did this whole question begging business get so complicated in the first place?

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.

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intimate (adj./verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

Just as tender doesn’t relate to two people in love, neither does intimate, at least in the GRE sense. The secondary meaning for **intimate** is to suggest something subtly.

At first Manfred’s teachers intimated to his parents that he was not suited to skip a grade; when his parents protested, teachers explicitly told them that, notwithstanding the boy’s precocity, he was simply too immature to jump to the 6th grade.

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becoming (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

Another secondary meaning that changes parts of speech, becoming an adjective. If something is **becoming**, it is appropriate, and matches nicely.

Her dress was becoming and made her look even more beautiful.

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start (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

The secondary meaning for start is somewhat similar to the common meaning. To **start** is to suddenly move or dart in a particular direction. Just think of the word *startle*.

All alone in the mansion, Henrietta started when she heard a sound.

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telling (adj.)

TRICKY "EASY"

If something is **telling**, it is significant and revealing of another factor. If a person's alibi has a telling detail, often that one little detail can support—or unravel!—the person's alibi.

Her unbecoming dress was very telling when it came to her sense of fashion.

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check (noun/verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

To **check** is to limit, and it is a word usually used to modify the growth of something.

When government abuses are not kept in check, that government is likely to become autocratic.

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fleece (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

If you are thinking *Mary Had a Little Lamb* (...fleece as white as snow), you have been fleeced by a secondary meaning. To **fleece** is to deceive.

Many have been fleeced by Internet scams and have never received their money back.

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wax (noun/verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

Melting wax will only lead you astray. The secondary meaning for **wax** is to increase. The opposite of wax is to wane. Both words are used to describe the moon: a waxing moon becomes larger and larger each night until it becomes a full moon, at which point it becomes small and smaller each night and becomes a waning moon.

Her enthusiasm for the diva's new album only waxed with each song; by the end of the album, it was her favorite CD yet.

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qualify (verb)

TRICKY "EASY"

This is perhaps the most commonly confused secondary meaning, and one that is very important to know for the GRE. To **qualify** is to limit, and is usually used in the context of a statement or an opinion.

I love San Francisco.

I love San Francisco, but it is always windy.

The first statement shows my unqualified love for San Francisco. In the second statement I qualify, or limit, my love for San Francisco.

In the context of the GRE, the concept of qualification is usually found in the Reading Comprehension passage. For example, an author usually expresses qualified approval or some qualified opinion in the passage. As you may have noticed, the authors of reading comprehension passages never feel 100% about something. They always think in a nuanced fashion. Therefore, they are unlikely to be gung-ho or downright contemptuous. That is, they qualify, or limit, their praise/approval/disapproval.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

INTERESTING (AND INTERNATIONAL) WORD ORIGINS

VOCAB FLASHCARDS

AROUND THE WORLD DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

powwow



kowtow



imbroglio



junta



schadenfreude



juggernaut



around the world

(verb)

Nope, _____ is not a giant truck for pulling bovines, but rather a word that comes from the imperial courts of China. When a person _____ to the emperor, or any eminent mandarin for that matter, he or she knelt and touched the ground with his or her forehead. Such a gesture was intended to show respect and submission.

Today, _____ has a negative connotation and implies that a person is acting in a subservient or sycophantic manner.

Paul _____ to his boss so often the boss herself soon became nauseated by his sycophancy.

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around the world

(noun)

_____ means to join and comes via Portugal and Spain. But this joining was in no way peaceful. Whenever military groups joined forces to usurp the existing regime, they would form a military junta. Today, _____ can refer to the aggressive takeover by a group.

As dangerous of a threat as North Korea is, some analysts believe that were a _____ suddenly to gain power, it could be even more unpredictable and bellicose than the current leadership.

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around the world

(noun)

To many, this word was forever immortalized in X-Men 2, when one of the main characters, _____, ran through walls, pulverizing them. This power to knock over and destroy anything in one's path can also be traced to the original _____, a word that comes to us via Hindi. A _____ was a large temple vehicle—and when I mean large, I mean humongous—under which followers of Krishna would supposedly throw themselves.

Today, the word _____ doesn't necessarily include any grisly sacrifices, but refers to any large force that cannot be stopped.

Napoleon was considered a _____, until he decided to invade Russia in winter; within weeks his once seemingly indomitable army was decimated by cold and famine.

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around the world

(noun/verb)

No, it's not kowtow's cousin. This word sprung from American soil, namely the Algonquin tribe of North America. A _____ was quite a hootenanny of a time and involved a big party of dancing and dining between tribes.

Strangely, today's meaning is a lot more subdued, and far less fun. Any informal discussion or colloquy is regarded as a _____. You and your co-worker can have a mid-afternoon _____ over coffee. A political leader can have a _____ with his cronies (I'm presuming they'd favor cigars over coffee).

Before the team takes the field, the coach always calls for a _____ so that he can make sure all the players are mentally in the right place.

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around the world

(noun)

It may sound like an exotic vegetable or a pungent pasta dish, but it's neither. _____ comes to us via mid-18th century Italian and has nothing to do with the kitchen. Instead it is related to the verb embroil and describes a confusing, and potentially embarrassing, situation.

The chef cook-off featured one gourmand who had the unfortunate distinction of mixing the wrong broths, creating an _____ that viewers will not soon forget.

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around the world

(noun)

_____ is one of those words that at first glance may seem gratuitous. After all, do we really need a word that literally translates from the German as harm-joy? Unfortunately, a twisted quirk of human nature is that we can sometimes take joy in the suffering of others. Luckily, German has provided us a word to use if we ever see someone cackling sardonically at the suffering of others.

From his warm apartment window, Stanley reveled in _____ as he laughed at the figures below, huddled together in the arctic chill.

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pariah



amuck



zeitgeist



nabob



around the world

(adv.)

To run _____ (also spelled amok) is to run about frenzied. While this word comes to us via Malay, you don't have to live on the Malaysian peninsula to witness people running _____.

Wherever the bowl-cut teen-idol went, his legions of screaming fans ran through the streets _____, hoping for a glance of his boyish face.

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around the world

(noun)

This word is fun to say. It definitely wouldn't be fun to see on the GRE, if you didn't know what it meant. So let's make sure that doesn't happen. A _____ is a wealthy, influential person. This word also comes from Hindi, and was originally used by Indians to describe a wealthy British person living in India. While it is not as common as pundit and pariah, _____ applies to many living here in the U.S., though I don't think it a good idea to call Donald Trump a _____ to his face.

The _____ can be seen, heads a bobbing, driving by in their Italian sports cars, listening to techno.

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around the world

(noun)

This word means an outcast. It comes from Hindi, one of the most prominent languages spoken in India. While India is on the other side of the world (at least from where I'm sitting), it should come as no surprise that we have acquired words from Hindi. After all, the British (remember, the people who "invented" English) colonized India and greatly influenced her for more than a century. The influence went both ways, as we now have words like pundit, meaning an expert in a particular area. And any pundit on geography and linguistics can tell you that another common language spoken in India is English.

The once eminent scientist, upon being inculpated for fudging his data, has become a _____ in the research community.

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around the world

(noun)

Okay, German is by no means a distant tongue, or for that matter, an exotic one. _____, however, doesn't look anything like your typical English word. Translated literally from German, _____ means "time-ghost". In terms of an actual definition, _____ means spirit of the times.

Each decade has its own _____—the 1990's was a prosperous time in which the promise of the American Dream never seemed more palpable. The zeitgeist of the 2000's was a curious admixture of fear and frivolity; when we were not anxious over the state of the economy and the world, we escaped into reality T.V. shows, either those on popular networks or the ones we would create ourselves on YouTube.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

AROUND THE WORLD ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

kowtow (verb)

AROUND THE WORLD

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powwow (noun/verb)

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imbroglio (noun)

AROUND THE WORLD

It may sound like an exotic vegetable or a pungent pasta dish, but it's neither. **Imbroglio** comes to us via mid-18th century Italian and has nothing to do with the kitchen. Instead it is related to the verb **embroil** and describes a confusing, and potentially embarrassing, situation.

*The chef cook-off featured one gourmand who had the unfortunate distinction of mixing the wrong broths, creating an **imbroglio** that viewers will not soon forget.*

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schadenfreude (noun)

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amuck (adv.)

AROUND THE WORLD

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Wherever the bowl-cut teen-idol went, his legions of screaming fans ran through the streets amuck, hoping for a glance of his boyish face.

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nabob (noun)

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The nabobs can be seen, heads a bobbing, driving by in their Italian sports cars, listening to techno.

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pariah (noun)

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zeitgeist (noun)

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

FRENCH WORDS

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

parvenu



FRENCH WORDS

sangfroid



FRENCH WORDS

arriviste



FRENCH WORDS

demur



FRENCH WORDS

lagniappe



FRENCH WORDS

melee



FRENCH WORDS

french words

(noun)

_____ literally means cold-blooded. It is defined as calmness and poise, especially in trying situations.

The hostage negotiator exhibited a _____ that oftentimes was more menacing than the sword at his throat or the gun at his head.

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french words

(verb)

_____ means to object or express reluctance to do something. _____ should not be confused with demure, which as an adjective that means coy. They both come from around the time of the Norman Conquest (though the Anglophones may have _____ to use either).

When asked if she wanted to visit the war torn region without a translator by his side, the journalist _____.

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french words

(noun)

I learned _____ early in my life, because I had the peculiar misfortune of having a surname that rhymes with it. While none of this schoolyard teasing resulted in any _____, _____ is an important word and means a wild, confusing fight or struggle. Oh, and it comes from French (rhyming similarities aside, my last name is not derived from French).

Let's see if I can weave all the French-related words into one coherent sentence:

Despite the scornful stares from entrenched aristocrats, the parvenu walked blithely about the palace grounds, maintaining his sangfroid and demurring to enter into the _____ that the snobbish were so fond of baiting arrivistes into.

Oui!

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french words

(noun)

This is a person who has recently acquired wealth, and has therefore risen in class. _____ has a derogatory connotation, meaning that if you win the lottery and someone calls you a _____ they are not trying to be flattering.

The theater was full of _____ who each thought that they were flanked by aristocrats.

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french words

(noun)

This word is similar to parvenu (though _____ connotes more ruthless ambition). It came into the language much more recently, circa 1900.

The city center was aflutter with _____ who each tried to outdo one another with their ostentatious sports cars and chic evening dress.

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french words

(noun)

This word looks like it got jumbled up while I was typing. Believe it or not, _____ is not the result of errant fingers on my part, but comes to us from Louisiana. In Cajun country, in the 19th Century, a _____ was any unexpected gift. By no means a common GRE word—indeed, I doubt you'll ever see it on the test—but if _____ happens to show up on the test, then consider it an unexpected gift.

The islanders thought that the seafarers had brought them a _____ when the latter presented them with gold coins; little did the islanders know that their days of bartering were numbered.

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picayune

 FRENCH WORDS

french words

(adj.)

_____ would make for a good 2,000-dollar jeopardy clue, one which would probably read something like this:

"Don't trifile with us—this word comes from Cajun country via France and refers to a 19th century coin of little value."

"What is _____?" would be the correct answer (thanks, Alex!).

Derived from Cajun via Provencal France, _____ refers not only to a coin but also to an amount that is trifling or meager. It can also refer to a person who is petty. Therefore, if I'm being _____, I'm fussing over some trivial point.

English teachers are notorious for being _____; however, the English language is so nuanced and sophisticated that often such teachers are not being contrary but are only adhering to the rules.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

FRENCH WORDS

ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

sangfroid (noun)

FRENCH WORDS

Sangfroid literally means cold-blooded. It is defined as calmness and poise, especially in trying situations.

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demur (verb)

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When asked if she wanted to visit the war torn region without a translator by his side, the journalist demurred.

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Oui!

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parvenu (noun)

FRENCH WORDS

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picayune (*adj.*)

FRENCH WORDS

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

EPOONYMS

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

gerrymander



EPOONYMS

mesmerize



EPOONYMS

pollyannaish



EPOONYMS

hector



EPOONYMS

pyrrhic



EPOONYMS

chauvinist



EPOONYMS

eponyms

(verb)

Franz Mesmer, an Austrian physician prominent the turn of the 19th century, was renowned for hypnotizing people. His method included kneeling near a patient, touching his/her knees and looking into the person's eyes (I'm curious if he ever proposed to one of his clients).

Today, we have the word _____, which doesn't necessarily mean to hypnotize (though it could), but is used figuratively and means to hold spellbound.

The plot and the characters were so well developed that many viewers were _____, unable to move their eyes from the screen for even a single second.

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eponyms

(verb)

If you remember reading Homer's Iliad, you may remember _____, a muscular, daunting force (some of you may more vividly recall Eric Bana from the movie Troy). As people were intimidated around _____, it makes sense that the word _____ means to bully or intimidate.

The boss's _____ manner put off many employees, some of whom quit as soon as they found new jobs.

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eponyms

(noun)

Many have heard this word, and some may even have a visceral reaction to it. However, this word is actually misused. A _____ is not a male who chugs beers, watches too much football, and demeans women. That would be a male _____. So what is a _____, unadorned by any adjective?

Well, Nicolas Chauvin, a one-time recruit in Napoleon's army, used to go about town, thumping his chest about how great France was. In its modern day incarnation, _____ can also mean anyone who thinks that their group is better than anybody else's group. You can have male _____, political party _____, and even female _____.

The _____ lives on both sides of the political spectrum, outright shunning anybody whose ideas are not consistent with his own.

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eponyms

(verb)

No, this word does not pertain to a large salamander named Gerry – though I suppose it could. _____ is actually far more interesting than that.

Elbridge Gerry was the vice president of James Madison, the 4th president of the United States. Elbridge had an interesting idea. To get elected a president had to win a certain number of districts. So Elbridge came up with the following plan: if he partitioned a city in a certain way he could ensure that the president would win the majority of the votes from that district.

The end result was a city that was split up into the oddest arrangement of districts. And can you guess what a map of the city, _____, looked like? Yep, a salamander.

Today the use of _____ hasn't changed too much, and refers to the manipulation of boundaries to favor a certain group.

Years ago, savvy politicians had _____ the city center to ensure their re-election.

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eponyms

(adj.)

Like Hector, _____ comes from fiction. However, in this case we are dealing with a relatively recent work, that of Eleanor Porter who came up with a character named Pollyanna. Pollyanna was extremely optimistic and so it is no surprise that _____ means extremely optimistic.

Even in the midst of a lousy sales quarter, Debbie remained _____, never losing her shrill voice and wide smile, despite prospective customers hanging up on her.

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quixotic



kafkaesque



panglossian



maudlin



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malapropism



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Just as those who were alive during the 70's are mortified that they once cavorted about in bell-bottoms, many who lived during the 80's are now aghast at the _____ pop songs they used to enjoy—really, just what exactly is a total eclipse of the heart?

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For every thousand startups with _____ plans to be the next big thing in e-commerce, only a handful ever become profitable.

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(adj.)

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Despite the fact that his country had been marred by a protracted civil war, Victor remained ever _____, claiming that his homeland was living through a Golden Age.

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This man was Viktor _____. For arrant perfidy, he has been awarded the eonym _____, which means traitor.

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galvanize



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Okay, I cheated a little on this one. Byzant was not a medieval philosopher (nor an industrious ant). The word _____ is not derived from a person's name, but from Byzantium, an ancient city that was part of the _____ Empire (the word can also refer to the empire itself). Specifically, Byzantium was known for the intricate patterns adorning its architecture. Bulbous domed turrets were emblazoned with ornate latticing (think of the towers on a Russia church).

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Today, _____ can mean to shock but in a different sense than through raw electricity. To _____ is to shock or urge somebody/something into action.

The colonel's speech _____ the troops, who had all but given up.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

EPOONYMS

ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

mesmerize (verb)

EPONYMS

Franz Mesmer, an Austrian physician prominent at the turn of the 19th century, was renowned for hypnotizing people. His method included kneeling near a patient, touching his/her knees and looking into the person's eyes (I'm curious if he ever proposed to one of his clients).

Today, we have the word **mesmerize**, which doesn't necessarily mean to hypnotize (though it could), but is used figuratively and means to hold spellbound.

The plot and the characters were so well developed that many viewers were mesmerized, unable to move their eyes from the screen for even a single second.

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hector (verb)

EPONYMS

If you remember reading Homer's Iliad, you may remember Hector, a muscular, daunting force (some of you may more vividly recall Eric Bana from the movie Troy). As people were intimidated around Hector, it makes sense that the word **hector** means to bully or intimidate.

The boss's hectoring manner put off many employees, some of whom quit as soon as they found new jobs.

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chauvinist (noun)

EPONYMS

Many have heard this word, and some may even have a visceral reaction to it. However, this word is actually misused. A **chauvinist** is not a male who chugs beers, watches too much football, and demeans women. That would be a male chauvinist. So what is a chauvinist, unadorned by any adjective?

Well, Nicolas Chauvin, a one-time recruit in Napoleon's army, used to go about town, thumping his chest about how great France was. In its modern day incarnation, chauvinism can also mean anyone who thinks that their group is better than anybody else's group. You can have male chauvinists, political party chauvinists, and even female chauvinists.

The chauvinist lives on both sides of the political spectrum, outright shunning anybody whose ideas are not consistent with his own.

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gerrymander (verb)

EPONYMS

No, this word does not pertain to a large salamander named Gerry – though I suppose it could. Gerrymander is actually far more interesting than that.

Elbridge Gerry was the vice president of James Madison, the 4th president of the United States. Elbridge had an interesting idea. To get elected a president had to win a certain number of districts. So Elbridge came up with the following plan: if he partitioned a city in a certain way he could ensure that the president would win the majority of the votes from that district.

The end result was a city that was split up into the oddest arrangement of districts. And can you guess what a map of the city, gerrymandered, looked like? Yep, a salamander.

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pollyannaish (adj.)

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

STRANGE ORIGINS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

protean



STRANGE ORIGINS

supercilious



STRANGE ORIGINS

saturnine



STRANGE ORIGINS

sartorial



STRANGE ORIGINS

mercurial



STRANGE ORIGINS

strange origins

(adj.)

Cilia are small, thick hairs. One area on our bodies that contains cilia is our eyebrows. _____ is derived from the rising of these brows. Of course a word that means raising one's eyebrows would probably have limited use. It's what the raising of eyebrows connotes. Apparently, to be _____ is to be haughty and disdainful. That is, when we look down at someone in a demeaning way, we might be tempted to lift our brows.

Nelly felt the Quiz Bowl director acted _____ 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.

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Magoosh

strange origins

(adj.)

The sartorius muscle is found on your legs and crosses from the back, near the hamstring, all the way to the base of the quadriceps, at the front of the leg. The name sartorius was derived from the Latin for tailor. You may ask what a leg muscle has to do with a person who stitches clothes? Well, whenever a tailor was at work, he/she would cross his or her legs. In order to do so, a tailor must employ a special leg muscle, the sartorius. Today, _____ does not relate directly to the muscle or tailor, but rather to the way we dress (makes sense considering tailors work with clothes).

Monte was astute at navigating the world of finance; _____, however, he was found wanting—he typically would attempt to complement his beige tie with a gray suit and white pants.

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Magoosh

strange origins

(adj.)

Nope, I have not spelled protein incorrectly (don't worry—carbohydrates will not show up next on the list!). _____ is an eponym derived from the Greek god Proteus, who could change into shape or forms at will. To be _____, however, does not mean you wow party guests by shifting into various kinds of lawn furniture. The consummate adaptability implied by the word is used to describe a person's ability. So an actor, musician, or writer who is very versatile is _____.

Peter Sellers was truly a _____ actor—in Doctor Strangelove he played three very different roles: a jingoist general, a sedate President and a deranged scientist.

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Magoosh

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(adj.)

The etymology of this curious word can be traced to two sources: alchemy and astrology. For alchemists, Saturn was related to the chemical lead. When a person has severe lead poisoning, he or she takes on a very gloomy and morose disposition. Astrologists, on the other hand, believed that the planet Saturn was gloomy and morose. Usually, we would be loath to attribute human characteristics to large floating rocks, but remember—these were astrologists. Either way you look at it, to be _____ is to be morose.

Deprived of sunlight, humans become _____; that's why in very northerly territories people are encouraged to sit under an extremely powerful lamp, lest they become morose.

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Magoosh

strange origins

(adj.)

From the element mercury, which has no fixed form and constantly changes, we have the word _____. _____ refers to personality; anyone who unpredictably changes his or her mood is mercurial. This is a very common GRE word, so make sure you learn it.

Martha Argerich's _____ nature is perfectly matched with playing Chopin: she'll toss off, with aplomb, effervescent passages, before moments later plumbing the depths of her soul to give voice to bars of music steeped in the utmost melancholy.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

STRANGE ORIGINS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

THEMED LISTS

VOCAB FLASHCARDS

VOCAB FROM WITHIN DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

jejune

 VOCAB FROM WITHIN

jaundice

 VOCAB FROM WITHIN

choleric

 VOCAB FROM WITHIN

bilious

 VOCAB FROM WITHIN

sanguine

 VOCAB FROM WITHIN

vocab from within

(adj./noun)

_____ is a condition of the liver that has the side effect of turning the skin yellow. The second definition—and the one you have to know for the GRE—may seem completely unrelated: to be biased against as a result of envy or prejudice. In the 17th Century, being yellow, apparently, was associated with having prejudice. Hence, we have the second definition of the word _____. It is important to note that yellow now, at least colloquially, means to be cowardly. This definition does not relate to _____.

Shelly was _____ towards Olivia; though the two had once been best friends, Olivia had become class president, prom queen, and, to make matters worse, the girlfriend of the one boy Shelly liked.

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vocab from within

(adj.)

Speaking of nasty stuff in the body, _____ comes from bile—you know, that yellow stuff in your liver that every once in a while makes a very unwelcome gustatory appearance.

To be filled with bile, however, doesn't mean to have a bad taste in your mouth.

According to Hippocrates, he of the bodily humors, if we are filled with too much bile, we are angry. Therefore, to be _____ is to be constantly irritable and ready to bite somebody's head off.

Rex was _____ all morning, and his face would only take on a look of contentedness when he'd had his morning cup of coffee.

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Magoosh

vocab from within

(adj.)

Many people like this word for the simple reason that it's fun to say. After all, how often do we get to see the summery month of June in a word? All this niftiness aside, the definition of _____ (sadly) is a letdown. To be _____ is to be dull, insipid and lacking flavor. No, it can't be, you think. But yes, _____, our delightful word, means something that literally means lackluster.

But it gets even worse for poor _____: it is derived from the first part of the large intestine, the jejunum, where food is digested. Now _____ does not only mean boring, it also conjures up images we'd rather leave in the dark.

Finally, _____ has a second definition. _____, though, is yet again a victim of bad PR. To be _____ (secondary definition) means to be childish and immature.

Now that I'm done lamenting _____'s debased status, I'm going to have a _____ fit.

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vocab from within

(adj.)

Hippocrates, along with the Roman physician Galen, believed that the body was filled with humors, or fluids. The balance of these humors led to certain moods. If a person had too much black bile he (usually not she) would be said to be _____, or highly irascible (choleric was more Galen's nomenclature, as Hippocrates stuck to bilious, a synonym for _____).

While a brilliant lecturer, Mr. Dawson came across as _____ and unapproachable—very rarely did students come to his office hours.

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vocab from within

(adj.)

But not all is bad in the world of bodily humors. Meet _____, from the Latin sanguineus, which comes from blood. Not that most of us would consider blood a humor, but according to Galen, blood, along with bile/choler, was one of the four bodily humors. And while this bloody association doesn't bode well for the definition of _____, surprisingly, _____ means to be cheerful, optimistic.

How did this ever come to be? Well, when we are happy the blood rushes to our cheeks turning them red (yes, this seems to me about as valid as yellow meaning prejudice—not that green with envy makes any sense).

While _____ has a positive definition, the word sanguinary—note the sang- root—means a carnage or bloodbath. Yes, I know English can be a confusing language. But, if you learn these high-frequency GRE words, you will have something to be _____ about!

With the prospect of having to learn 3,000 words during the course of the summer, Paul was anything but _____.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

VOCAB FROM WITHIN ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

jaundice (adj./noun)

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jejune (adj.)

VOCAB FROM WITHIN

Many people like this word for the simple reason that it's fun to say. After all, how often do we get to see the summery month of June in a word? All this niftiness aside, the definition of jejune (sadly) is a letdown. To be **jejune** is to be dull, insipid and lacking flavor. No, it can't be, you think. But yes, jejune, our delightful word, means something that literally means lackluster.

But it gets even worse for poor jejune: it is derived from the first part of the large intestine, the jejunum, where food is digested. Now jejune does not only mean boring, it also conjures up images we'd rather leave in the dark.

Finally, jejune has a second definition. Jejune, though, is yet again a victim of bad PR. To be jejune (secondary definition) means to be childish and immature.

Now that I'm done lamenting jejune's debased status, I'm going to have a jejune fit.

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choleric (adj.)

VOCAB FROM WITHIN

Hippocrates, along with the Roman physician Galen, believed that the body was filled with humors, or fluids. The balance of these humors led to certain moods. If a person had too much black bile he (usually not she) would be said to be **choleric**, or highly irascible (choleric was more Galen's nomenclature, as Hippocrates stuck to bilious, a synonym for choleric).

While a brilliant lecturer, Mr. Dawson came across as choleric and unapproachable—very rarely did students come to his office hours.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

curmudgeon

 WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

martinet

 WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

reprobate

 WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

misanthrope

 WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

virago

 WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

wouldn't want to meet

(noun)

Not to be confused with a doll dangled on strings (that's a mariolette), a _____ is a person who is a strict disciplinarian. Think of a drill sergeant who barks an order and a platoon of cadets jump to attention—the slightest misstep and its toilet duty. If anything, the _____ is the one holding the strings.

This military example is no coincidence; _____ is an eponym, meaning a word derived from a person's name. The guilty party in this case is the 17th Century French drillmaster Jean _____.

The job seemed perfect to Rebecca, until she found out that her boss was a total _____; after each project the boss would come by to scrutinize—and inevitably criticize—every little detail of the work Rebecca had done.

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wouldn't want to meet

(noun)

You thought a curmudgeon was bad? A _____—or hater of mankind—walks down the street spewing vitriol at all those who walk by. College campuses are famous for _____, those disheveled types who haunt coffee shops, muttering balefully as students pass by. Some say they are homeless; others that they didn't get tenure. Regardless, steer clear of the _____.

Hamilton had been deceived so many times in his life that he hid behind the gruff exterior of a _____, lambasting perfect strangers for no apparent reason.

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wouldn't want to meet

(noun)

Probably one of my favorite GRE words—it's great for describing certain folk and it's fun to say. A _____ is a grouchy, surly person, one who is always sulking as they grumble about something or another.

Uncle Mike was the family _____ so on Thanksgiving he was plied with copious amounts of wine so that he would finely lose the grouchy demeanor and break into a faint smile.

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wouldn't want to meet

(noun)

This word comes from reprove, a popular GRE word, which means (nope, not to prove again) to express disapproval of. A _____ is a noun and is the recipient of the disapproval.

_____ is a mildly humorous word, meaning that you would use it to describe some no good soul, but one you have a fondness for.

Those old _____ drinking all day down by the river—they are not going to amount to much.

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wouldn't want to meet

(noun)

This word has a real cool origin – the vir- comes from the Latin man. _____, however, was coined during the medieval period to describe heroic female warriors. Today _____ does not have such a noble connotation – it describes an ill-tempered and sometimes violent woman. If you've ever had an old lady scream at you for no good reason, then you've had an encounter with a _____.

Poor Billy was the victim of the _____'s invective—she railed at him for a good 30-minutes about how he is the scum of the earth for speaking loudly on his cellphone in public.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

martinet (noun)

WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

Not to be confused with a doll dangled on strings (that's a marionette), a **martinet** is a person who is a strict disciplinarian. Think of a drill sergeant who barks an order and a platoon of cadets jump to attention—the slightest misstep and its toilet duty. If anything, the martinet is the one holding the strings.

This military example is no coincidence; martinet is an eponym, meaning a word derived from a person's name. The guilty party in this case is the 17th Century French drillmaster Jean Martinet.

The job seemed perfect to Rebecca, until she found out that her boss was a total martinet; after each project the boss would come by to scrutinize and inevitably criticize—every little detail of the work Rebecca had done.

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misanthrope (noun)

WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

You thought a curmudgeon was bad? A **misanthrope**—or hater of mankind—walks down the street spewing vitriol at all those who walk by. College campuses are famous for misanthropes, those disheveled types who haunt coffee shops, muttering balefully as students pass by. Some say they are homeless; others that they didn't get tenure. Regardless, steer clear of the misanthrope.

Hamilton had been deceived so many times in his life that he hid behind the gruff exterior of a misanthrope, lambasting perfect strangers for no apparent reason.

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virago (noun)

WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

This word has a real cool origin – the vir- comes from the Latin man. **Virago**, however, was coined during the medieval period to describe heroic female warriors. Today virago does not have such a noble connotation – it describes an ill-tempered and sometimes violent woman. If you've ever had an old lady scream at you for no good reason, then you've had an encounter with a virago.

Poor Billy was the victim of the virago's invective—she railed at him for a good 30-minutes about how he is the scum of the earth for speaking loudly on his cellphone in public.

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curmudgeon (noun)

WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

Probably one of my favorite GRE words—it's great for describing certain folk and it's fun to say. A **curmudgeon** is a grouchy, surly person, one who is always sulking as they grumble about something or another.

Uncle Mike was the family curmudgeon so on Thanksgiving he was plied with copious amounts of wine so that he would finely lose the grouchy demeanor and break into a faint smile.

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reprobate (noun)

WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET

This word comes from reprove, a popular GRE word, which means (nope, not to prove again) to express disapproval of. A **reprobate** is a noun and is the recipient of the disapproval.

Reprobate is a mildly humorous word, meaning that you would use it to describe some no good soul, but one you have a fondness for.

Those old reprobates drinking all day down by the river—they are not going to amount to much.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

RELIGIOUS WORDS

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

syncretic



catholic



desecrate



cardinal



parochial



anathema



religious words

(adj.)

When it comes time to elect the pope who gets together? The _____, of course. And when you're watching baseball in St. Louis, and the players all have red birds on their uniforms, which team are you seeing? The _____, of course. And when you are on the GRE and you see the word _____? Well it has nothing to do with birds, baseball or popes.

_____ means of primary importance, fundamental. That makes sense when you think of the _____ in the church—after all they do elect the pope. The bird happens to be the same color as the _____ robes. As for what St. Louis has to do with _____, I have no clue.

As if you needed any more associations – the expression, “_____ sin”, retains the GRE definition of the word, and means primary. It does not refer to naughty churchmen.

Most cultures consider gambling a _____ sin and thus have outlawed its practice.

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religious words

(adj.)

This word comes from parish, a small ecclesiastical district, usually located in the country. _____ still has this meaning, i.e. relating to a church parish, but we are far more concerned with the negative connotation that has emerged from the rather sedate original version.

To be _____ is to be narrow-minded in one's view. The idea is if you are hanging out in the country, you tend to be a little cut off from things. The pejorative form—at least to my knowledge—is not a knock at religion.

Jasmine was sad to admit it, but her fledgling relationship with Jacob did not work out because his culinary tastes were simply too _____. “After all,” she quipped on her blog, “he considered Chef Boyardee ethnic food.”

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religious words

(noun)

A few hundred years ago, many ran afoul of the church, and excommunications (and worse) were typical reprisals. If such was the case, the Pope actually uttered a formal curse against a person. This curse was called the _____.

Today this word, in addition to a broader scope, has taken a twist. If something is _____, he, she, or it is the source of somebody's hate.

The verb form of the word, _____, still carries the old meaning of to curse.

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

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religious words

(adj.)

This is a difficult word, and not one that would go on any top 1000 words you have to know for the GRE. But for those with a robust vocabulary, pay heed: if a I concoct a new religion and decide to take bits and pieces from other religions—I don a cardinal's robe, shave my head a la Buddha, and disseminate glossy pamphlets about the coming apocalypse—I have created a _____ religion, one that combines elements of different religions.

You can probably see where this is going with the GRE definition—which tends to offer a little more latitude. _____—more generally speaking—can refer to any amalgam of different schools of thought.

Jerry the shrink takes a _____ approach to psychotherapy: he mixes the Gestalt school with some Jung and a healthy (or unhealthy, depending on your view) dose of Freud.

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religious words

(adj.)

We have many associations with Catholicism: cardinals at mass, nuns wielding crucifixes at frothing demons. Thus, it is somewhat surprising that a second definition of _____—and the one that will be tested on the GRE—means universal.

Or perhaps not too surprising, considering that Catholicism has a universal reach and, more importantly, the _____ Church conducts mass in Latin. _____ comes from the Late Latin catholicus, which means, as you can probably guess, universal. _____ also implies wide-ranging or all-embracing.

Jonah's friends said that Jonah's taste in music was eclectic; Jonah was quick to point out that not only was his taste eclectic but it was also _____: he enjoyed music from countries as far-flung as Mali and Mongolia.

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religious words

(verb)

If a person willfully violates or destroys any sacred place, he (or she) is said to _____ it. Tombs, graves, churches, shrines and the like can all be victims of _____. One, however, cannot _____ a person, regardless of how holy that person may be.

The felon had _____ the holy site, and was on the church's Top 10 Anathema list.

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sanctimonious



apostasy



iconoclast



religious words

(noun)

Some believers turn against their faith and renounce it. We call this act _____, and those who commit it, _____. Today the word carries a slightly broader connotation in that it can apply to politics as well.

An _____ of the Republican Party, Sheldon has yet to become affiliated with any party but dubs himself a "literal independent."

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religious words

(adj.)

This is a tricky word, and thus you can bet it's one of GRE's favorites. _____ does not mean filled with sanctity or holiness. Instead it refers to that quality that can overcome someone who feels that they are holier (read: morally superior) to everybody else.

Colloquially, we hear the term holier-than-thou. That is a very apt way to describe the attitude of a _____ person.

Even during the quiet sanctity of evening prayer, she held her chin high, a _____ sneer forming on her face as she eyed those attending church for the first time.

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religious words

(noun)

This is an interesting word. The definition that relates to the church is clearly negative, i.e. an _____ is one who destroys religious images. Basically, this definition applies to the deranged drunk who goes around desecrating icons of the Virgin Mary.

The applicability of this definition to GRE is clearly suspect. The second definition, however, happens to be one of the GRE's top 100 words. An _____—more broadly speaking—is somebody who attacks cherished beliefs or institutions. This use of the word is not necessarily negative:

According to some scholars, art during the 19th century had stagnated into works aimed to please fusty art academies; it took the _____ of Vincent Van Gogh to inject fresh life into the effete world of painting.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

RELIGIOUS WORDS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

cardinal (adj.)

RELIGIOUS WORDS

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parochial (adj.)

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Jasmine was sad to admit it, but her fledgling relationship with Jacob did not work out because his culinary tastes were simply too parochial; “After all,” she quipped on her blog, “he considered Chef Boyardee ethnic food.”

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anathema (noun)

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syncretic (adj.)

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desecrate (verb)

RELIGIOUS WORDS

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An apostate of the Republican Party, Sheldon has yet to become affiliated with any party but dubs himself a “literal independent.”

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iconoclast (noun)

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sanctimonious (adj.)

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

POLITICAL SCANDALS

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

lascivious



malfeasance



venality



embroiled



turpitude



prevaricate



political scandals

(noun)

_____ is wrongdoing, usually by a public official. Oftentimes, you hear the term corporate _____—this type of wrongdoing occurs when somebody in the business world is up to no good. Typically, though, _____ is used in the context of politics. And, not to sound too cynical, but one usually doesn't have to look much further than one's local news to find example of _____—political or corporate.

Not even the mayor's trademark pearly-toothed grin could save him from charges of _____: while in power, he'd been running an illegal gambling rink in the room behind his office.

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political scandals

(adj.)

To become caught up in a scandal is to become _____ in it. In the last couple of months, a few well-known politicians (again, not naming any names) have become _____ in scandals. From the verb _____, we get the noun imbroglio, which is an embarrassing, confusing situation.

These days we are never short of a D.C. imbroglio—a welcome phenomenon for those who, having barely finished feasting on the sordid details of one scandal, can sink their teeth into a fresh one.

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political scandals

(verb)

If you've ever seen a politician caught in a lie (never!), and that person is trying to wiggle their way out of a pointed question, he (or she) is _____. Not that a U.S. president would ever _____ by talking about the household pet when confronted with charges of venality (I'm alluding to Richard Nixon and his dog Checkers).

Bobby learned not to _____ when his teacher asked him where his homework was; by giving a straightforward answer, he would avoid invoking the teacher's wrath.

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political scandals

(adj.)

_____, like lecherous, prurient, and libidinous, all refer to perversion. In terms of linking these words to the world of politics...well, given the sordid events that surface every few months, I don't think I need to elaborate.

Jerry's coworkers were confused as to why Jerry thought that the word mango carried _____ connotations; when he tried to explain, they only became more perplexed.

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political scandals

(noun)

If you've ever heard of a government taking bribes, well, that is an example of _____. To be venal is to be corrupt. Of late, charges of _____ tend to be few, though such charges simply don't make the same headlines as scandals of the lecherous kind.

If our legal system becomes plagued with _____, then the very notion of justice is imperiled.

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political scandals

(noun)

Sometimes lechery and its synonymous friends are just too soft when describing certain acts of malfeasance. At the far ends of the political spectrum, where outrage is felt most keenly, people feel the need to invoke far harsher vocabulary when condemning naughty behavior. One such word is _____, which gained prominence in the late 90's (Google will fill in the blanks). A synonym for depravity, _____ is only reserved for those acts deemed to be downright wicked and immoral.

During his reign, Caligula indulged in unspeakable sexual practices, so it is not surprising that he will forever be remembered for his _____.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

POLITICAL SCANDALS

ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

malfeasance (noun)

POLITICAL SCANDALS

Malfeasance is wrongdoing, usually by a public official. Often-times, you hear the term corporate malfeasance—this type of wrongdoing occurs when somebody in the business world is up to no good. Typically, though, malfeasance is used in the context of politics. And, not to sound too cynical, but one usually doesn't have to look much further than one's local news to find example of malfeasance—political or corporate.

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.

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embroiled (adj.)

POLITICAL SCANDALS

To become caught up in a scandal is to become **embroiled** in it. In the last couple of months, a few well-known politicians (again, not naming any names) have become embroiled in scandals. From the verb embroiled, we get the noun imbroglio, which is an embarrassing, confusing situation.

These days we are never short of a D.C. imbroglio—a welcome phenomenon for those who, having barely finished feasting on the sordid details of one scandal, can sink their teeth into a fresh one.

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prevaricate (verb)

POLITICAL SCANDALS

If you've ever seen a politician caught in a lie (never!), and that person is trying to wiggle their way out of a pointed question, he (or she) is prevaricating. Not that a U.S. president would ever **prevaricate** by talking about the household pet when confronted with charges of venality (I'm alluding to Richard Nixon and his dog Checkers).

Bobby learned not to prevaricate when his teacher asked him where his homework was; by giving a straightforward answer, he would avoid invoking the teacher's wrath.

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lascivious (adj.)

POLITICAL SCANDALS

Lascivious, like lecherous, prurient, and libidinous, all refer to perversion. In terms of linking these words to the world of politics...well, given the sordid events that surface every few months, I don't think I need to elaborate.

Jerry's coworkers were confused as to why Jerry thought that the word mango carried lascivious connotations; when he tried to explain, they only became more perplexed.

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venality (noun)

POLITICAL SCANDALS

If you've ever heard of a government taking bribes, well, that is an example of **venality**. To be venal is to be corrupt. Of late, charges of venality tend to be few, though such charges simply don't make the same headlines as scandals of the lecherous kind.

If our legal system becomes plagued with venality, then the very notion of justice is imperiled.

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turpitude (noun)

POLITICAL SCANDALS

Sometimes lechery and its synonymous friends are just too soft when describing certain acts of malfeasance. At the far ends of the political spectrum, where outrage is felt most keenly, people feel the need to invoke far harsher vocabulary when condemning naughty behavior. One such word is turpitude, which gained prominence in the late 90's (Google will fill in the blanks). A synonym for depravity, **turpitude** is only reserved for those acts deemed to be downright wicked and immoral.

During his reign, Caligula indulged in unspeakable sexual practices, so it is not surprising that he will forever be remembered for his turpitude.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND? DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

spendthrift

  HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

thrifty

  HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

sybarite

  HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

parsimonious

  HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

penurious

  HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

impecunious

  HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

how much can you spend?

(adj.)

If you are _____ you spend money wisely. Be careful not to confuse _____ with spendthrift, which is below.

He was economical, spending his money _____ and on items considered essential.

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how much can you spend?

(adj.)

A synonym with miserly and stingy. _____ is GRE-speak for extremely frugal. Like miserly, this word has a negative connotation.

Even with millions in his bank account, Fred was so _____ that he followed a diet consisting of nothing more than bread and canned soup.

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how much can you spend?

(adj.)

The word pecuniary means relating to money _____, on the other hand, means not having any money. _____, now mainly obsolete, means—as you can probably guess—wealthy.

In extremely trying times, even the moderately wealthy, after a few turns of ill-fortune, can become _____.

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how much can you spend?

(noun)

This word is the opposite of thrifty. If you are a _____, you buy as though consumerism were going out of style. This one is perhaps easy to remember; it does, after all, have the word 'spend' in it.

Weekly trips to Vegas and five-star restaurants on Tuesday evenings, Megan was a _____ whose prodigality would inevitably catch up with her.

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how much can you spend?

(noun)

This is a person who indulges in luxury. And though the word doesn't directly relate to wealth, most of the times a _____ has to be wealthy (though even the relatively penurious amongst us can live the life of a _____, if he or she isn't loath to run up several credit cards.)

Despite the fact that he'd maxed out fifteen credit cards, Max was still a _____ at heart: when the feds found him, he was at a \$1,000 an hour spa in Manhattan, getting a facial.

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how much can you spend?

(adj.)

This is a synonym for impecunious. _____ also can be a synonym for miserly, so this word can be a little tricky. Whenever you have a word with two meanings, even if those meanings are closely related, make sure to come up with example sentences for both, so you don't forget one of the definitions. (I've done so below).

Truly _____, Mary had nothing more than a jar full of pennies.

Sarah chose to be _____ and drive a beat-up VW, though with her wealth she could have easily afforded an Italian sports car.

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affluent



HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

insolvent



HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

how much can you spend?

(adj.)

If you are _____ you can't pay your bills. Oftentimes people use the term bankrupt. If you are _____, on the other hand, you have paid off all your debts.

With credit card bills skyrocketing, surprisingly few are truly _____.

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how much can you spend?

(adj.)

To be _____ is to be wealthy. This word usually describes countries, neighborhoods, or groups of people.

The center of the city had sadly become a pit of penury, while, only five miles away, multi-million dollar homes spoke of _____.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND? ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

thrifty (adj.)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

If you are **thrifty** you spend money wisely. Be careful not to confuse thrifty with spendthrift, which is below.

He was economical, spending his money thrifitly and on items considered essential.

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parsimonious (adj.)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

A synonym with miserly and stingy, **Parsimonious** is GRE-speak for extremely frugal. Like miserly, this word has a negative connotation.

Even with millions in his bank account, Fred was so parsimonious that he followed a diet consisting of nothing more than bread and canned soup.

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impecunious (adj.)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

The word pecuniary means relating to money. **Impecunious**, on the other hand, means not having any money. Pecuniary, now mainly obsolete, means—as you can probably guess—wealthy.

In extremely trying times, even the moderately wealthy, after a few turns of ill-fortune, can become impecunious.

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spendthrift (noun)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

This word is the opposite of thrifty. If you are a **spendthrift**, you buy as though consumerism were going out of style. This one is perhaps easy to remember; it does, after all, have the word ‘spend’ in it.

Weekly trips to Vegas and five-star restaurants on Tuesday evenings, Megan was a spendthrift whose prodigality would inevitably catch up with her.

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sybarite (noun)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

This is a person who indulges in luxury. And though the word doesn’t directly relate to wealth, most of the times a **sybarite** has to be wealthy (though even the relatively penurious amongst us can live the life of a sybarite, if he or she isn’t loath to run up several credit cards.)

Despite the fact that he’d maxed out fifteen credit cards, Max was still a sybarite at heart: when the feds found him, he was at a \$1,000 an hour spa in Manhattan, getting a facial.

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penurious (adj.)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

This is a synonym for impecunious. **Penurious** also can be a synonym for miserly, so this word can be a little tricky. Whenever you have a word with two meanings, even if those meanings are closely related, make sure to come up with example sentences for both, so you don’t forget one of the definitions. (I’ve done so below).

Truly penurious, Mary had nothing more than a jar full of pennies.

Sarah chose to be penurious and drive a beat-up VW, though with her wealth she could have easily afforded an Italian sports car.

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insolvent (*adj.*)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

If you are **insolvent** you can't pay your bills. Oftentimes people use the term bankrupt. If you are solvent, on the other hand, you have paid off all your debts.

With credit card bills skyrocketing, surprisingly few are truly solvent.

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affluent (*adj.*)

HOW MUCH CAN YOU SPEND?

To be **affluent** is to be wealthy. This word usually describes countries, neighborhoods, or groups of people.

The center of the city had sadly become a pit of penury, while, only five miles away, multi-million dollar homes spoke of affluence.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

**CAN'T SPEND IT
FAST ENOUGH
DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS**

prodigal

 CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

profligate

 CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

cupidity

 CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

avarice

 CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

can't spend it fast enough

(adj./noun)

This word means spending recklessly almost to the point of immorality. This word often pops up in politics, when some charge that government is spending wastefully. _____ is also a person known for his or her _____.

Most lottery winners go from being conservative, frugal types to outright _____ who blow millions on fast cars, lavish homes, and giant yachts.

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can't spend it fast enough

(noun)

One of the seven deadly sins, _____ means greed. Of note, this word doesn't necessarily mean greed for food but usually pertains to possessions or wealth.

The Spanish conquistadors were known for their _____, plundering Incan land and stealing Incan gold.

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can't spend it fast enough

(adj.)

The provenance of this word—like many GRE words—is the Bible. One of Jesus' most famous parables, the story is of a young man who squanders his father's wealth and returns home destitute. His father forgives him, but to posterity he will forever be remembered as the prodigal son. To be _____ is to squander or waste wealth (it doesn't necessarily have to be familial wealth). This word should not be confused with prodigious, which means vast or immense.

Successful professional athletes who do not fall prey to _____ seem to be the exception—most live decadent lives.

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can't spend it fast enough

(noun)

This word is similar to avarice in that it means greedy. But the word is even more relevant to this post in that it means greed for money. Surprising, right? We think of Cupid the flying cherub, firing his arrow away and making Romeos and Juliets out of us. To avoid any confusion, imagine Cupid flying around shooting arrows into people's wallets/purses and then swooping in and taking the loot. Oh what _____!

Some people that amassing as much wealth as possible is the meaning to life—yet they often realize that _____ brings anything but happiness.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

CAN'T SPEND IT
FAST ENOUGH
ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

profligate (adj./noun)

CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

This word means spending recklessly almost to the point of immorality. This word often pops up in politics, when some charge that government is spending wastefully. **Profligate** is also a person known for his or her profligacy.

Most lottery winners go from being conservative, frugal types to outright profligates who blow millions on fast cars, lavish homes, and giant yachts.

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avarice (noun)

CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

One of the seven deadly sins, **avarice** means greed. Of note, this word doesn't necessarily mean greed for food but usually pertains to possessions or wealth.

The Spanish conquistadors were known for their avarice, plundering Incan land and stealing Incan gold.

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prodigal (adj.)

CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

The provenance of this word—like many GRE words—is the Bible. One of Jesus' most famous parables, the story is of a young man who squanders his father's wealth and returns home destitute. His father forgives him, but to posterity he will forever be remembered as the prodigal son. To be **prodigal** is to squander or waste wealth (it doesn't necessarily have to be familial wealth). This word should not be confused with prodigious, which means vast or immense.

Successful professional athletes who do not fall prey to prodigality seem to be the exception—most live decadent lives.

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cupidity (noun)

CAN'T SPEND IT FAST ENOUGH

This word is similar to avarice in that it means greedy. But the word is even more relevant to this post in that it means greed for money. Surprising, right? We think of Cupid the flying cherub, firing his arrow away and making Romeos and Juliets out of us. To avoid any confusion, imagine Cupid flying around shooting arrows into people's wallets/purses and then swooping in and taking the loot. Oh what **cupidity**!

Some people that amassing as much wealth as possible is the meaning to life—yet they often realize that cupidity brings anything but happiness.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

A HELPING HAND DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

stipend



defray



dupe



pittance



fleece



mulct



a helping hand

(verb)

Is to help pay the cost of, either in part or full. Often times when students go off to college, they hope that tuition (which is always becoming steeper these days) will be _____ by any of a number of means: scholarships, parents, burgeoning stock portfolio, or even generous relatives.

In order for Sean to attend the prestigious college his magnanimous uncle helped _____ the excessive tuition with a monthly infusion of cash.

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a helping hand

(noun)

A small amount of money, _____ carries with it a negative connotation: a _____ is inadequate and will do little to take care of one's costs.

Vinny's uncle beamed smugly about how he'd offered his nephew fifty dollars for his Harvard tuition; even twice the amount would have been a mere _____.

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a helping hand

(verb)

This strange looking word also means to swindle or defraud someone. (Though the swindling doesn't always have to relate to money.) _____ can also mean to fine someone.

The so-called magical diet cure simply ended up _____ Maria out of hundreds of dollars, but not hundreds of pounds.

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a helping hand

(noun)

Is a regular allowance, usually for a student (yes, it seems that many of these money matters are related to students!). Of course _____ aren't just limited to students; governments provide _____ to a number of different people.

He was hoping for a monthly allowance loan from the government, but after no such _____ was forthcoming he realized he would have to seek other means of defraying his college tuition.

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a helping hand

(noun/verb)

This word means to trick or swindle. This word can function as a verb or as a noun. A _____ is a person who is easily swindled.

The charlatan mistook the crowd for a bunch of _____, but the crowd was quickly on to him and decried his bald-faced attempt to bilk them.

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a helping hand

(verb)

Don't feel sheepish if you thought this word only pertained to the coat of an ovine. As a verb _____ means to swindle or dupe.

The Internet is filled with get-rich-quick schemes that intend only to _____ the Pollyannaish and unsuspecting.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

A HELPING HAND ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

defray (verb)

A HELPING HAND

Is to help pay the cost of, either in part or full. Often times when students go off to college, they hope that tuition (which is always becoming steeper these days) will be **defrayed** by any of a number of means: scholarships, parents, burgeoning stock portfolio, or even generous relatives.

In order for Sean to attend the prestigious college his magnanimous uncle helped defray the excessive tuition with a monthly infusion of cash.

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pittance (noun)

A HELPING HAND

A small amount of money, pittance carries with it a negative connotation: a **pittance** is inadequate and will do little to take care of one's costs.

Vinny's uncle beamed smugly about how he'd offered his nephew fifty dollars for his Harvard tuition; even twice the amount would have been a mere pittance.

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mulct (verb)

A HELPING HAND

This strange looking word also means to swindle or defraud someone. (Though the swindling doesn't always have to relate to money.) **Mulct** can also mean to fine someone.

The so-called magical diet cure simply ended up mulcting Maria out of hundreds of dollars, but not hundreds of pounds.

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stipend (noun)

A HELPING HAND

Is a regular allowance, usually for a student (yes, it seems that many of these money matters are related to students!). Of course **stipends** aren't just limited to students; governments provide stipends to a number of different people.

He was hoping for a monthly allowance loan from the government, but after no such stipend was forthcoming he realized he would have to seek other means of defraying his college tuition.

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dupe (noun/verb)

A HELPING HAND

This word means to trick or swindle. This word can function as a verb or as a noun. A **dupe** is a person who is easily swindled.

The charlatan mistook the crowd for a bunch of dupes, but the crowd was quickly on to him and decried his bald-faced attempt to bilk them.

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fleece (verb)

A HELPING HAND

Don't feel sheepish if you thought this word only pertained to the coat of an ovine. As a verb **fleece** means to swindle or dupe.

The Internet is filled with get-rich-quick schemes that intend only to fleece the Pollyannaish and unsuspecting.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

upbraid

  PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

untoward

  PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

overweening

  PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

underwrite

  PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

preposterous prepositions

(adj.)

You may think that *untoward* has something to do with a direction. But _____ does not mean disinclined to walk eastwards. _____ is an adjective meaning not favorable, inconvenient. A popular GRE synonym for _____ is *inauspicious*.

Some professors find teaching _____ as having to prepare for lectures and conduct office hours prevents them from focusing on attaining tenure.

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preposterous prepositions

(verb)

If you are writing below the margins of a paper you are not _____—you are simply writing below the margins of a piece of paper. _____ means to support financially.

The latest symphony broadcast was made possible with the _____ from various Arts & Humanities associations.

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preposterous prepositions

(verb)

Upon seeing this word, you may imagine a hair stylist busily braiding patrons' hair. _____, however, relates neither to up nor braiding. It means to scold or berate, a meaning it shares with many other words: reprimand, reproach, chide, and castigate.

Bob took a risk walking into the "Students Barbershop"—in the end he had to _____ the apparently hung over barber for giving him an uneven bowl cut.

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preposterous prepositions

(adj.)

What exactly does it mean to 'ween'? To go out on Halloween, perhaps? Making an _____ person one who takes a little bit too zealously to candy collecting and wakes up the next morning with a sugar hangover?

The answer of course is none of the above. To be _____ is to be presumptuously arrogant. What exactly does that mean? Say the aforementioned trick-o-treater grabs three times as much candy as everyone else, because he assumes he is entitled to as much candy as he wants. He would be _____. Which would make him _____ while Halloweening (okay, I'll stop before my humor becomes _____!).

* _____ can also refer to ideas/opinions/appetites that are excessive or immoderate.

Mark was so convinced of his basketball skills that in his _____ 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.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

untoward (adj.)

PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

You may think that untoward has something to do with a direction. But **untoward** does not mean disinclined to walk eastwards. Untoward is an adjective meaning not favorable, inconvenient. A popular GRE synonym for untoward is inauspicious.

Some professors find teaching untoward as having to prepare for lectures and conduct office hours prevents them from focusing on attaining tenure.

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underwrite (verb)

PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

If you are writing below the margins of a paper you are not underwriting—you are simply writing below the margins of a piece of paper. **Underwrite** means to support financially.

The latest symphony broadcast was made possible with the underwriting from various Arts & Humanities associations.

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upbraid (verb)

PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

Upon seeing this word, you may imagine a hair stylist busily braiding patrons' hair. **Upbraid**, however, relates neither to up nor braiding. It means to scold or berate, a meaning it shares with many other words: reprimand, reproach, chide, and castigate.

Bob took a risk walking into the "Students Barbershop"—in the end he had to upbraid the apparently hung over barber for giving him and uneven bowl cut.

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overweening (adj.)

PREPOSTEROUS PREPOSITIONS

What exactly does it mean to 'ween'? To go out on Halloween, perhaps? Making an overweening person one who takes a little bit too zealously to candy collecting and wakes up the next morning with a sugar hangover?

The answer of course is none of the above. To be **overweening** is to be presumptuously arrogant. What exactly does that mean? Say the aforementioned trick-o-treater grabs three times as much candy as everyone else, because he assumes he is entitled to as much candy as he wants. He would be overweening. Which would make him overweening while Halloweening (okay, I'll stop before my humor becomes overweening!*)).

*Overweening can also refer to ideas/opinions/appetites that are excessive or immoderate.

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.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

THEM'S FIGHTING WORDS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

truculent



bellicose



contentious



pugnacious



jingoist



fighting words

(adj.)

From the Latin root bell-, which means war, we get _____. Someone who is _____ is warlike, and inclined to quarrel. The word is similar to belligerent, which also employs the bell- root.

Known for their _____ ways, the Spartans were once the most feared people from Peloponnesus to Persia.

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fighting words

(adj.)

_____ means having an inclination to fight and be combative. A useful mnemonic is a pug dog—you know, those really small dogs that always try to attack you while releasing a fusillade of yaps.

Nobody wanted to work with Dexter lest he or she become embroiled in some spat; even those who did their best to avoid Dexter eventually had to deal with his _____.

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fighting words

(adj.)

A person who is _____ has a fierce, savage nature. As I drive a smaller car, I often find trucks—from the 18-wheeler to the 4 4—to be quite truck-ulent when they drive. A silly mnemonic, but next time you are cut off by a truck, instead of giving the proverbial middle-finger, you can just mutter, what a _____ fellow.

Standing in line for six hours, she became progressively _____, yelling at DMV employees and elbowing other people waiting in line.

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fighting words

(adj.)

If you are _____, you like to fight with words. If you know somebody who is always trying to pick an argument about something, no matter how trivial, that person is _____.

She became increasingly _____, misconstruing even an innocuous statement as a hostile one.

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fighting words

(adj.)

_____ is what happens when bellicosity meets patriotism, and both drink too much whiskey. A person who thinks their country should always be at war is a _____. The word is similar to hawkish, a word that means favoring conflict over compromise.

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 _____, who are only too eager to wave national flags from their vehicles and vehemently denounce those who do not do the same.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

THEM'S FIGHTING WORDS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

bellicose (adj.)

FIGHTING WORDS

From the Latin root bell-, which means war, we get bellicose. Someone who is **bellicose** is warlike, and inclined to quarrel. The word is similar to belligerent, which also employs the bell- root.

Known for their bellicose ways, the Spartans were once the most feared people from Peloponnesus to Persia.

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pugnacious (adj.)

FIGHTING WORDS

Pugnacious means having an inclination to fight and be combative. A useful mnemonic is a pug dog—you know, those really small dogs that always try to attack you while releasing a fusillade of yaps.

Nobody wanted to work with Dexter lest he or she become embroiled in some spat; even those who did their best to avoid Dexter eventually had to deal with his pugnacity.

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jingoist (adj.)

FIGHTING WORDS

Jingoism is what happens when bellicosity meets patriotism, and both drink too much whiskey. A person who thinks their country should always be at war is a **jingoist**. The word is similar to hawkish, a word that means favoring conflict over compromise.

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.

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truculent (adj.)

FIGHTING WORDS

A person who is **truculent** has a fierce, savage nature. As I drive a smaller car, I often find trucks—from the 18-wheeler to the 4 4—to be quite truck-ulent when they drive. A silly mnemonic, but next time you are cut off by a truck, instead of giving the proverbial middle-finger, you can just mutter, what a truculent fellow.

Standing in line for six hours, she became progressively truculent, yelling at DMV employees and elbowing other people waiting in line.

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contentious (adj.)

FIGHTING WORDS

If you are **contentious**, you like to fight with words. If you know somebody who is always trying to pick an argument about something, no matter how trivial, that person is contentious.

She became increasingly contentious, misconstruing even an innocuous statement as a hostile one.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

ANIMAL MNEMONICS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

hound



badger



cow



dog



ferret



animal mnemonics

(verb)

For those who have not lived in the U.S., this animal may be as exotic as the lemur is for the rest of us. A _____ is basically a weasel on steroids—you wouldn't want to upset one. Curiously, the verb _____ doesn't carry any menacing connotation. To _____ simply means to pester repeatedly. Perhaps a buzzing fly comes to mind, however the verb 'fly' was already taken.

_____ by his parents to find a job, the 30-year-old loafer instead joined a gang of itinerant musicians.

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animal mnemonics

(verb)

Man's best friend, right? Well, as long as it's not in verb form. To _____ means to pursue relentlessly, and is thus a synonym of hound.

Throughout his life, he was _____ by insecurities that inhibited personal growth.

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animal mnemonics

(verb)

A _____ usually rears its head in movies in which the bad guy is on the lam. Or I take that back—the _____ usually drops its head to the ground, sniffing out the bad guy as he crosses treacherous terrain. Unsurprisingly, the verb form of _____ is to pursue relentlessly.

An implacable foe of corruption, Eliot Ness _____ out graft in all forms—he even helped nab Al Capone.

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animal mnemonics

(verb)

The verb form of _____ always tickles me, as I imagine the _____ to be one of the more placid creatures. Despite such bovine equanimity, to _____ means to use intimidation to make someone give in. In the 'cheesy' mnemonic department, imagine a _____ on steroids (as most tend to be these days) telling you to 'moo'-ve out of the way. Pretty intimidating, huh?

Do not be _____ by a 3,000-word vocabulary list: turn that list into a deck of flashcards!

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animal mnemonics

(verb)

A _____ is a tiny weasel, one that moves so quickly that it is used to catch rabbits. Apparently it has a knack for digging our long-eared friend out of their burrows. Unlike some of the verbs above, the verb form of _____ aptly fits the animal—to _____ means to search for something persistently. Usually the verb is coupled with a preposition as in, "_____ something out" or "_____ around".

Ever the resourceful lexicographer, Fenton was able to _____ out the word origin of highly obscure GRE words.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

ANIMAL MNEMONICS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

badger (verb)

ANIMAL MNEMONICS

For those who have not lived in the U.S., this animal may be as exotic as the lemur is for the rest of us. A badger is basically a weasel on steroids—you wouldn't want to upset one. Curiously, the verb badger doesn't carry any menacing connotation. To **badger** simply means to pester repeatedly. Perhaps a buzzing fly comes to mind, however the verb 'fly' was already taken.

Badgered by his parents to find a job, the 30-year-old loafer instead joined a gang of itinerant musicians.

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dog (verb)

ANIMAL MNEMONICS

Man's best friend, right? Well, as long as it's not in verb form. To **dog** means to pursue relentlessly, and is thus a synonym of hound.

Throughout his life, he was dogged by insecurities that inhibited personal growth.

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ferret (verb)

ANIMAL MNEMONICS

A ferret is a tiny weasel, one that moves so quickly that it is used to catch rabbits. Apparently it has a knack for digging our long-eared friend out of their burrows. Unlike some of the verbs above, the verb form of ferret aptly fits the animal—to **ferret** means to search for something persistently. Usually the verb is coupled with a preposition as in, "ferret something out" or "ferret around".

Ever the resourceful lexicographer, Fenton was able to ferret out the word origin of highly obscure GRE words.

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hound (verb)

ANIMAL MNEMONICS

A hound usually rears its head in movies in which the bad guy is on the lam. Or I take that back—the hound usually drops its head to the ground, sniffing out the bad guy as he crosses treacherous terrain. Unsurprisingly, the verb form of **hound** is to pursue relentlessly.

An implacable foe of corruption, Eliot Ness hounded out graft in all forms—he even helped nab Al Capone.

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cow (verb)

ANIMAL MNEMONICS

The verb form of cow always tickles me, as I imagine the cow to be one of the more placid creatures. Despite such bovine equanimity, to **cow** means to use intimidation to make someone give in. In the 'cheesy' mnemonic department, imagine a cow on steroids (as most tend to be these days) telling you to 'moo'-ve out of the way. Pretty intimidating, huh?

Do not be cowed by a 3,000-word vocabulary list: turn that list into a deck of flashcards!

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

palimpsest

 WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

mellifluous

 WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

defenestrate

 WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

serendipity

 WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

webster's favorites

(adj.)

If something sounds as sweet as honey, it is _____. The voices of Ella Fitzgerald, Billy Holiday, and even that of Bill Clinton are mellifluous (listen to the way our former President was able to, through turns of locution and his southern drawl, to imbue the mundane with a sense of pleading urgency). Of course, what sounds _____ is a matter of opinion. As long as it's not Justin Bieber.

Chelsea's grandmother thought Franz Schubert's music to be the most _____ ever written; Chelsea demurred, and to her grandmother's chagrin, would blast Rihanna on the home stereo speakers.

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webster's favorites

(noun)

This morning I wasn't looking for this article, but there it was—a pleasant find. That's an example of _____: finding something pleasant that you weren't even looking for. The Internet is full of _____, since something you weren't looking for in the first place often falls into your lap. Though if such compulsive buying becomes a habit, it may cease to be _____.

The invention of the 3M Post It Note was _____, because the scientist who had come up with the idea was looking for a strong adhesive; the weak adhesive he came up with was perfect for holding a piece of paper in place but making it very easy for someone to pull the paper free.

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webster's favorites

(noun)

A long time ago, even before the days when email was popular, people wrote on scrolls. Apparently papyrus wasn't affordable so scribes reused the same scroll over again, writing on top of what had gone before. By extension, any writing material that has been written on numerous times, so that the vague traces of previous writing can be seen, is a _____. A poorly erased chalkboard, the manically edited essays of my high school days.

More broadly speaking, a _____ can refer to anything that has been changed numerous times but on which traces of former iterations can still be seen.

The downtown was a _____ of the city's checkered past: a new Starbucks had opened up next to an abandoned, shuttered building, and a freshly asphalted road was inches away from a pothole large enough to swallow a house pet.

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webster's favorites

(verb)

Okay, fine...there is slim chance that this word will pop up on the GRE, but it is one of my favorite words. It's a comical way of saying to throw someone out of a window, which in a sense is comical, as there is nothing comical about getting thrown out of a window.

These days _____ is really nothing more than a linguistic curiosity, yet there was a time, long ago, when windows had neither panes nor glass. Think of a medieval castle. Apparently, _____ happened enough that someone thought up a word for it. (To see a _____, check out the movie *Braveheart*, which shows the tyrannical King Edward I _____ a hapless lad).

_____ is rare in these days of sealed windows.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

mellifluous (*adj.*)

WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

If something sounds as sweet as honey, it is **mellifluous**. The voices of Ella Fitzgerald, Billy Holiday, and even that of Bill Clinton are mellifluous (listen to the way our former President was able to, through turns of locution and his southern drawl, to imbue the mundane with a sense of pleading urgency). Of course, what sounds mellifluous is a matter of opinion. As long as it's not Justin Bieber.

Chelsea's grandmother thought Franz Schubert's music to be the most mellifluous ever written; Chelsea demurred, and to her grandmother's chagrin, would blast Rihanna on the home stereo speakers.

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serendipity (*noun*)

WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

This morning I wasn't looking for this article, but there it was—a pleasant find. That's an example of **serendipity**: finding something pleasant that you weren't even looking for. The Internet is full of serendipity, since something you weren't looking for in the first place often falls into your lap. Though if such compulsive buying becomes a habit, it may cease to be serendipitous.

The invention of the 3M Post It Note was serendipitous, because the scientist who had come up with the idea was looking for a strong adhesive; the weak adhesive he came up with was perfect for holding a piece of paper in place but making it very easy for someone to pull the paper free.

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palimpsest (*noun*)

WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

A long time ago, even before the days when email was popular, people wrote on scrolls. Apparently papyrus wasn't affordable so scribes reused the same scroll over again, writing on top of what had gone before. By extension, any writing material that has been written on numerous times, so that the vague traces of previous writing can be seen, is a palimpsest. A poorly erased chalkboard, the manically edited essays of my high school days.

More broadly speaking, a **palimpsest** can refer to anything that has been changed numerous times but on which traces of former iterations can still be seen.

The downtown was a palimpsest of the city's checkered past: a new Starbucks had opened up next to an abandoned, shuttered building, and a freshly asphalted road was inches away from a pothole large enough to swallow a house pet.

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defenestrate (*verb*)

WEBSTER'S FAVORITES

Okay, fine...there is slim chance that this word will pop up on the GRE, but it is one of my favorite words. It's a comical way of saying to throw someone out of a window, which in a sense is comical, as there is nothing comical about getting thrown out of a window.

These days **defenestrate** is really nothing more than a linguistic curiosity, yet there was a time, long ago, when windows had neither panes nor glass. Think of a medieval castle. Apparently, defenestration happened enough that someone thought up a word for it. (To see a defenestration, check out the movie *Braveheart*, which shows the tyrannical King Edward I defenestrating a hapless lad).

Defenestration is rare in these days of sealed windows.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

OCCUPY VOCABULARY DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

diatribe

  OCCUPY VOCAB

invective

  OCCUPY VOCAB

tirade

  OCCUPY VOCAB

screed

  OCCUPY VOCAB

vituperation

  OCCUPY VOCAB

harangue

  OCCUPY VOCAB

occupy vocab

(noun)

The verb form of _____, at least in a loose sense, is inveigh. This word popped up a lot on the old GRE, because it was easily confused with inveigle, which means to coax. Both words are still good to know for the New GRE. _____ is used to describe harsh, critical language.

The Internet has unleashed the _____ in many of us; many people post stinging criticism on the comments section underneath newspaper articles or YouTube videos.

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occupy vocab

(noun)

_____ takes on a more negative connotation, and suggests an abusive rant that has since become tedious and hackneyed. Currently, the Occupy movements have hardly devolved into _____, and may even intensify, if protestors feel their various demands have not been met. However, if the protest fizzles out months from now, except for the lone dude in the park, gesticulating at a passel of pigeons ...well, he is very likely launching into a _____.

Joey had difficulty hanging out with his former best friend Perry, who, during his entire cup of coffee, would enumerate all of the government's deficiencies, only to break ranks and launch into some _____ against big business.

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occupy vocab

(noun/verb)

_____ can be either a noun or a verb. It is a synonym of _____ and diatribe. Lest someone _____ you for botched phonetics, the pronunciation of this word can be a bit tricky. _____ rhymes with twang, rang, and, for the dessert inclined, meringue.

Tired of his parents _____ him about his laziness and lack of initiative, Tyler finally moved out of home at the age of thirty-five.

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occupy vocab

(noun)

A _____ is a strong verbal attack against someone or something. The victim of a _____ is typically some organization, whether it be the FDA, the government, or, in this case, Wall Street. It is understood that the person unleashing the _____ is angry.

Steve's mom launched into a _____ 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.

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occupy vocab

(noun)

A _____ is an angry speech, one that suggests the person giving the tirade has become a little too angry, and should probably dismount the soapbox.

In terms of political change, a _____ oftentimes does little more than make the person speaking red in the face.

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occupy vocab

(noun)

This word is fun to say. _____ someone is neither fun for the '_____ nor the '_____. When you _____ somebody, or something, you violently launch into an invective or tirade. Spit shoots from your mouth, froth forming at your lips. Understandably, _____ is only used in extreme cases.

Jason had dealt with disciplinarians before, but nothing prepared him for the first week of boot camp, as drill sergeants would _____ him for forgetting to double knot the laces on his boots.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

OCCUPY VOCABULARY ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

invective (*noun*)

OCCUPY VOCAB

The verb form of invective, at least in a loose sense, is inveigh. This word popped up a lot on the old GRE, because it was easily confused with inveigle, which means to coax. Both words are still good to know for the New GRE. **Invective** is used to describe harsh, critical language.

The Internet has unleashed the invectives in many of us; many people post stinging criticism on the comments section underneath newspaper articles or YouTube videos.

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screed (*noun*)

OCCUPY VOCAB

Screed takes on a more negative connotation, and suggests an abusive rant that has since become tedious and hackneyed. Currently, the Occupy movements have hardly devolved into screeds, and may even intensify, if protestors feel their various demands have not been met. However, if the protest fizzles out months from now, except for the lone dude in the park, gesticulating at a passel of pigeons ...well, he is very likely launching into a screed.

Joey had difficulty hanging out with his former best friend Perry, who, during his entire cup of coffee, would enumerate all of the government's deficiencies, only to break ranks and launch into some screed against big business.

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harangue (*noun/verb*)

OCCUPY VOCAB

Harangue can be either a noun or a verb. It is a synonym of tirade and diatribe. Lest someone harangue you for botched phonetics, the pronunciation of this word can be a bit tricky. Harangue rhymes with twang, rang, and, for the dessert inclined, meringue.

Tired of his parents haranguing him about his laziness and lack of initiative, Tyler finally moved out of home at the age of thirty-five.

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diatribe (*noun*)

OCCUPY VOCAB

A **diatribe** is a strong verbal attack against someone or something. The victim of a diatribe is typically some organization, whether it be the FDA, the government, or, in this case, Wall Street. It is understood that the person unleashing the diatribe is angry.

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.

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tirade (*noun*)

OCCUPY VOCAB

A **tirade** is an angry speech, one that suggests the person giving the tirade has become a little too angry, and should probably dismount the soapbox.

In terms of political change, a tirade oftentimes does little more than make the person speaking red in the face.

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vituperation (*noun*)

OCCUPY VOCAB

This word is fun to say. **Vituperating** someone is neither fun for the 'vituperater' nor the 'vituperatee.' When you vituperate somebody, or something, you violently launch into an invective or tirade. Spit shoots from your mouth, froth forming at your lips. Understandably, vituperate is only used in extreme cases.

Jason had dealt with disciplinarians before, but nothing prepared him for the first week of boot camp, as drill sergeants would vituperate him for forgetting to double knot the laces on his boots.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

COMPOUND WORDS

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

heyday



COMPOUND WORDS

slapdash



COMPOUND WORDS

aboveboard



COMPOUND WORDS

hodgepodge



COMPOUND WORDS

telltale



COMPOUND WORDS

thoroughgoing



COMPOUND WORDS

compound words

(adj.)

One word conjures up a relatively violent action, the other what one typically does if they want to escape a dangerous situation. Put them together and you get, voila, a word meaning careless. That's right—_____ means hastily put together.

The office building had been constructed in a _____ manner, so it did not surprise officials when, during a small earthquake, a large crack emerged on the façade of the building.

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compound words

(noun)

Okay, I'm not really sure what a hodge is, or for that matter, a podge. But if you put them together, you get _____, a word that means a confusing mixture or jumble.

Long after his heyday as Germany's pre-eminent visionary philosopher, Nietzsche began to populate his writing with a _____ of aphorisms.

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compound words

(adj.)

If something is thorough it is complete. Therefore, thorough isn't too far from the meaning of _____, which means absolute.

As a _____ bibliophile, one who had turned his house into a veritable library, he shocked his friends when he bought a Kindle.

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compound words

(noun)

About two of the most ordinary words I can think of, and how someone who is generally apathetic might greet the morning. Put them together, and you get something far more exciting. _____ is the pinnacle, or top, of a person, time period or career.

During the _____ of Prohibition, bootlegging had become such a lucrative business that many who had been opposed to the 18th Amendment began to fear it would be repealed.

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compound words

(adj.)

I guess whatever is below the board is deceptive, because _____ means open an honest. It usually refers to government officials who are honest.

The mayor, despite his avuncular visage plastered about the city, was hardly _____ — some concluded that it was his ingratiating smile that allowed him to engage in corrupt behavior and get away with it.

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compound words

(adj.)

If I tell a tale, I am telling a story, one that is usually a fib. _____, however, simply means revealing.

The many _____ signs of chronic smoking include yellow teeth, and a persistent, hacking cough.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

COMPOUND WORDS

ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

slapdash (adj.)

COMPOUND WORDS

One word conjures up a relatively violent action, the other what one typically does if they want to escape a dangerous situation. Put them together and you get, voila, a word meaning careless. That's right—**slapdash** means hastily put together.

The office building had been constructed in a slapdash manner, so it did not surprise officials when, during a small earthquake, a large crack emerged on the façade of the building.

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hodgepodge (noun)

COMPOUND WORDS

Okay, I'm not really sure what a hodge is, or for that matter, a podge. But if you put them together, you get **hodgepodge**, a word that means a confusing mixture or jumble.

Long after his heyday as Germany's pre-eminent visionary philosopher, Nietzsche began to populate his writing with a hodgepodge of aphorisms.

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thoroughgoing (adj.)

COMPOUND WORDS

If something is thorough it is complete. Therefore, thorough isn't too far from the meaning of **thoroughgoing**, which means absolute.

As a thoroughgoing bibliophile, one who had turned his house into a veritable library, he shocked his friends when he bought a Kindle.

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heyday (noun)

COMPOUND WORDS

About two of the most ordinary words I can think of, and how someone who is generally apathetic might greet the morning. Put them together, and you get something far more exciting. **Heyday** is the pinnacle, or top, of a person, time period or career.

During the heyday of Prohibition, bootlegging had become such a lucrative business that many who had been opposed to the 18th Amendment began to fear it would be repealed.

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aboveboard (adj.)

COMPOUND WORDS

I guess whatever is below the board is deceptive, because **aboveboard** means open and honest. It usually refers to government officials who are honest.

The mayor, despite his avuncular visage plastered about the city, was hardly aboveboard — some concluded that it was his ingratiating smile that allowed him to engage in corrupt behavior and get away with it.

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telltale (adj.)

COMPOUND WORDS

If I tell a tale, I am telling a story, one that is usually a fib. **Telltale**, however, simply means revealing.

The many telltale signs of chronic smoking include yellow teeth, and a persistent, hacking cough.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

HALLOWEEN VOCAB DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

macabre



cadaverous



diabolical



goosebumps



phantasmagorical



halloween

(adj.)

If someone is so skinny or emaciated that they look like a dead person, then that person is _____. This word comes from cadaver, which is a corpse. Besides emaciated, a good synonym for _____ is gaunt.

Some actors take challenging roles in which they have to lose so much weight that they appear _____.

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halloween

(noun)

I would never have considered this a vocabulary word (let alone a GRE word), until, that is, the New GRE PowerPrep test included a Text Completion in which _____ was the answer.

_____ describe that sensation on our skin when we become frightened. You know, those sudden pimple-like bumps that suddenly appear when you are watching the first half of a horror movie (the last part of horror movies are typically cheesy, once they show the monster). Well, this is now a good word to remember for the GRE, lest you want to get _____ test day.

Some people believe that _____ result when a ghost brushes up against you.

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halloween

(adj.)

If a story, film, or, for that matter, any description is filled with gruesome details about death and horror, we say that it is _____.

Edgar Allan Poe was considered the master of the _____; his stories vividly describe the moment leading up to—and often those moments after—a grisly death.

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halloween

(adj.)

This word comes from the Latin and Greek for devil (for those who speak Spanish, you may notice that the word is very similar to diablo). To be _____ is to be extremely wicked like the devil.

The conspirators, willing to dispatch anyone who stood in their way, hatched a _____ plan to take over the city.

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halloween

(adj.)

This is a terrifying word, just from the standpoint of pronunciation: [fan-taz-muh-gawr-ik-al]. The definition is equally frightening: a series of images that seem as though they are out of a dream, whether those images are real or in one's head.

Those suffering from malaria fall into a feverish sleep, their world a whirligig of _____; if they recover, they are unsure of what actually took place and what was simply a product of their febrile imaginations.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

HALLOWEEN VOCAB ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

cadaverous (adj.)

HALLOWEEN

If someone is so skinny or emaciated that they look like a dead person, then that person is **cadaverous**. This word comes from cadaver, which is a corpse. Besides emaciated, a good synonym for cadaverous is gaunt.

Some actors take challenging roles in which they have to lose so much weight that they appear cadaverous.

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goosebumps (noun)

HALLOWEEN

I would never have considered this a vocabulary word (let alone a GRE word), until, that is, the New GRE PowerPrep test included a Text Completion in which goosebumps was the answer.

Goosebumps describe that sensation on our skin when we become frightened. You know, those sudden pimple-like bumps that suddenly appear when you are watching the first half of a horror movie (the last part of horror movies are typically cheesy, once they show the monster). Well, this is now a good word to remember for the GRE, lest you want to get goosebumps test day.

Some people believe that goosebumps result when a ghost brushes up against you.

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phantasmagorical (adj.)

HALLOWEEN

This is a terrifying word, just from the standpoint of pronunciation: [fan-taz-muh-gawr-ik-al]. The definition is equally frightening: a series of images that seem as though they are out of a dream, whether those images are real or in one's head.

Those suffering from malaria fall into a feverish sleep, their world a whirligig of phantasmagoria; if they recover, they are unsure of what actually took place and what was simply a product of their febrile imaginations.

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macabre (adj.)

HALLOWEEN

If a story, film, or, for that matter, any description is filled with gruesome details about death and horror, we say that it is **macabre**.

Edgar Allan Poe was considered the master of the macabre; his stories vividly describe the moment leading up to—and often those moments after—a grisly death.

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diabolical (adj.)

HALLOWEEN

This word comes from the Latin and Greek for devil (for those speak Spanish, you may notice that the word is very similar to diablo). To be **diabolical** is to be extremely wicked like the devil.

The conspirators, willing to dispatch anyone who stood in their way, hatched a diabolical plan to take over the city.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TALKATIVE WORDS

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

ingenuous



TALKATIVE WORDS

gregarious



TALKATIVE WORDS

disabuse



TALKATIVE WORDS

peruse



TALKATIVE WORDS

mettlesome



TALKATIVE WORDS

talkative words

(adj.)

If you are sociable, you are talkative, right? Well, not exactly. To be _____ is to be likely to socialize with others. A good synonym is flocking, like what birds do. But, just as birds do not talk to one another outside of a Pixar flick, people can hang out with each other and not necessarily have to chat. Therefore, do not confuse _____ with garrulous, which means talkative.

Often we think that great leaders are those who are _____, always in the middle of a large group of people; yet, as Mahatma Gandhi and many others have shown us, leaders can often be introverted.

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talkative words

(verb)

_____ means to read very carefully. Unfortunately, the colloquial usage not only ignores this definition, but goes so far as to flip this definition on its head. In light conversation, _____ means to read over quickly. The GRE constitutes anything but light conversation, so make sure to remember that _____ means to read over carefully (_____ the first part of this paragraph helps!).

Instead of _____ important documents, people all too often rush to the bottom of the page and plaster their signature at the bottom.

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talkative words

(adj.)

You may think you've heard someone exclaim, what an _____ plan! But, it's actually an _____ plan. To be _____ is to be naïve and innocent. So, if you are likely to go along with a devious plan, whether or not it is _____, you are _____.

Two-years in college in Manhattan had changed Jenna from an _____ girl from the suburbs to a jaded urbanite, unlikely to fall for any ruse, regardless of how elaborate.

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talkative words

(verb)

To _____ is not the opposite of abuse (which would be a strange word to have an opposite for in the first place). To _____ is to persuade somebody that his/her belief is not valid. Often, _____ goes together with the word notion:

As a child, I was quickly _____ of the notion that Santa Claus was a rotund benefactor of infinite largess—one night I saw my mother diligently wrapping presents and storing them under our Christmas tree.

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talkative words

(adj.)

When you poke your nose in somebody else's business, you are being meddlesome. If you are _____, on the other hand, you are filled with mettle (no, not the hard stuff). _____ means courage or valor. A soldier on the battlefield is _____ when he runs into enemy fire to save a comrade.

For its raid on the Bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Seal Team Six has become, for many Americans, the embodiment of _____.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

TALKATIVE WORDS

ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

gregarious (adj.)

TALKATIVE WORDS

If you are sociable, you are talkative, right? Well, not exactly. To be **gregarious** is to be likely to socialize with others. A good synonym is flocking, like what birds do. But, just as birds do not talk to one another outside of a Pixar flick, people can hang out with each other and not necessarily have to chat. Therefore, do not confuse gregarious with garrulous, which means talkative.

Often we think that great leaders are those who are gregarious, always in the middle of a large group of people; yet, as Mahatma Gandhi and many others have shown us, leaders can often be introverted.

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peruse (verb)

TALKATIVE WORDS

Peruse means to read very carefully. Unfortunately, the colloquial usage not only ignores this definition, but goes so far as to flip this definition on its head. In light conversation, peruse means to read over quickly. The GRE constitutes anything but light conversation, so make sure to remember that peruse means to read over carefully (perusing the first part of this paragraph helps!).

Instead of perusing important documents, people all too often rush to the bottom of the page and plaster their signature at the bottom.

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mettlesome (adj.)

TALKATIVE WORDS

When you poke your nose in somebody else's business, you are being meddlesome. If you are **mettlesome**, on the other hand, you are filled with mettle (no, not the hard stuff). Mettle means courage or valor. A soldier on the battlefield is mettlesome when he runs into enemy fire to save a comrade.

For its raid on the Bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Seal Team Six has become, for many Americans, the embodiment of mettle.

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ingenuous (adj.)

TALKATIVE WORDS

You may think you've heard someone exclaim, what an ingenuous plan! But, it's actually an ingenious plan. To be **ingenuous** is to be naïve and innocent. So, if you are likely to go along with a devious plan, whether or not it is ingenious, you are ingenuous.

Two-years in college in Manhattan had changed Jenna from an ingenuous girl from the suburbs to a jaded urbanite, unlikely to fall for any ruse, regardless of how elaborate.

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disabuse (verb)

TALKATIVE WORDS

To **disabuse** is not the opposite of abuse (which would be a strange word to have an opposite for in the first place). To disabuse is to persuade somebody that his/her belief is not valid. Often, disabuse goes together with the word notion:

As a child, I was quickly disabused of the notion that Santa Claus was a rotund benefactor of infinite largess—one night I saw my mother diligently wrapping presents and storing them under our Christmas tree.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

BY THE LETTER

VOCAB FLASHCARDS

A-WORDS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

affable



amiable



attenuate



amenable



anomalous



animosity



a-words

(adj.)

_____ means friendly. It is very similar to amicable, another common GRE word. Amicable, however, does not refer to a person the way that _____ does, but rather refers to relationships between people. You'll notice that amicable is, therefore, the opposite of acrimonious (see below).

Amy's name was very apt: she was so _____ that she was twice voted class president.

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a-words

(adj.)

_____ means easily persuaded. If someone is cooperative and goes along with the program, so to speak, that person is _____. _____ can also be used in the medical sense: if a disease is _____ to treatment, that disease can be treated.

Even though she did not like bad weather, Shirley was generally _____ and decided to accompany her brother to the picnic.

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a-words

(noun)

Meaning Intense hostility, animosity should be reserved for extreme cases. That is, if you really loathe someone, and that person feels the same way, then you can say _____ exists between the two of you.

A related word, and a synonym, is animus (though animus can also mean motivation, as in impetus).

The governor's _____ toward his rival was only inflamed when the latter spread false lies regarding the governor's first term.

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a-words

(adj.)

Likeable, easy to talk to: _____ is similar to amiable. The differences are subtle, and as far as the GRE is concerned, you can treat them as the same word. Like amiable, this word is great to use to describe people we know. After all, everyone knows an _____ person.

For all his surface _____, Marco was remarkably glum when he wasn't around other people.

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a-words

(verb)

_____ means to weaken (in terms of intensity), to taper off/become thinner. _____ can refer to both abstract and tangible things.

Her animosity towards Bob _____ over the years, and she even went so far as to invite him to her party.

The stick is _____ at one end to allow the villagers to forage for ants.

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a-words

(adj.)

_____ means not normal, out of the ordinary, and is simply the adjective—and scarier looking—form of anomaly, which is a noun. _____ can be used in cases to describe something that is not typical, like an unusually cold California spring.

According to those who do not believe in climate change, the extreme weather over the last five years is simply _____—average temps should return to average, they believe.

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aberration



acrimony



amorphous



ambiguous



a-words

(noun)

_____ means bitterness and ill will. Don't forget the adjective form, _____, which describes relationships filled with bitterness and ill will.

The _____ dispute between the president and vice-president sent an unequivocal signal to voters: the health of the current administration was imperiled.

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a-words

(adj.)

_____ means open to more than one interpretation. Let's say I have two friends, Bob and Paul. If I tell you that he is coming to my house today, then that is _____. Who do I mean? Paul or Bob?

The coach told his team, "Move towards that side of the field"; because he did not point, his directions were _____, and the team had no idea to which side he was referring.

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Magoosh

a-words

(noun)

A deviation from what is normal or expected: this word is tinged with a negative connotation. For instance, in psychology there is a subset of behavior known as _____ behavior. So, basically, if you're narcissistic, psychotic, or just plain old cuckoo, you are demonstrating _____ behavior.

_____ in climate have become the norm: rarely a week goes by without some meteorological phenomenon makes headlines.

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a-words

(adj.)

_____ means shapeless. Morph- comes from the Latin for shape. The root a-, as in atypical, means not or without. Therefore, if something is _____, it lacks shape.

His study plan for the GRE was at best _____; he would do questions from random pages in any one of seven test prep books.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

A-WORDS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

amiable (adj.)

A-WORDS

Amiable means friendly. It is very similar to amicable, another common GRE word. Amicable, however, does not refer to a person the way that amiable does, but rather refers to relationships between people. You'll notice that amicable is, therefore, the opposite of acrimonious (see below).

Amy's name was very apt: she was so amiable that she was twice voted class president.

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amenable (adj.)

A-WORDS

Amenable means easily persuaded. If someone is cooperative and goes along with the program, so to speak, that person is amenable. Amenable can also be used in the medical sense: if a disease is amenable to treatment, that disease can be treated.

Even though she did not like bad weather, Shirley was generally amenable and decided to accompany her brother to the picnic.

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animosity (noun)

A-WORDS

Meaning Intense hostility, animosity should be reserved for extreme cases. That is, if you really loathe someone, and that person feels the same way, then you can say **animosity** exists between the two of you.

A related word, and a synonym, is animus (though animus can also mean motivation, as in impetus).

The governor's animosity toward his rival was only inflamed when the latter spread false lies regarding the governor's first term.

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affable (adj.)

A-WORDS

Likeable, easy to talk to: **affable** is similar to amiable. The differences are subtle, and as far as the GRE is concerned, you can treat them as the same word. Like amiable, this word is great to use to describe people we know. After all, everyone knows an affable person.

For all his surface affability, Marco was remarkably glum when he wasn't around other people.

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attenuate (verb)

A-WORDS

Attenuate means to weaken (in terms of intensity), to taper off/become thinner. Attenuate can refer to both abstract and tangible things.

Her animosity towards Bob attenuated over the years, and she even went so far as to invite him to her party.

The stick is attenuated at one end to allow the villagers to forage for ants.

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anomalous (adj.)

A-WORDS

Anomalous means not normal, out of the ordinary, and is simply the adjective—and scarier looking—form of anomaly, which is a noun. Anomalous can be used in cases to describe something that is not typical, like an unusually cold California spring.

According to those who do not believe in climate change, the extreme weather over the last five years is simply anomalous—average temps should return to average, they believe.

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acrimony (noun)

A-WORDS

Acrimony means bitterness and ill will. Don't forget the adjective form, **acrimonious**, which describes relationships filled with bitterness and ill will.

The acrimonious dispute between the president and vice-president sent an unequivocal signal to voters: the health of the current administration was imperiled.

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ambiguous (adj.)

A-WORDS

Ambiguous means open to more than one interpretation. Let's say I have two friends, Bob and Paul. If I tell you that he is coming to my house today, then that is ambiguous. Who do I mean? Paul or Bob?

The coach told his team, "Move towards that side of the field"; because he did not point, his directions were ambiguous, and the team had no idea to which side he was referring.

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aberration (noun)

A-WORDS

A deviation from what is normal or expected: this word is tinged with a negative connotation. For instance, in psychology there is a subset of behavior known as **aberrant** behavior. So, basically, if you're narcissistic, psychotic, or just plain old cuckoo, you are demonstrating aberrant behavior.

Aberrations in climate have become the norm: rarely a week goes by without some meteorological phenomenon makes headlines.

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amorphous (adj.)

A-WORDS

Amorphous means shapeless. Morph- comes from the Latin for shape. The root a-, as in atypical, means not or without. Therefore, if something is amorphous, it lacks shape.

His study plan for the GRE was at best amorphous; he would do questions from random pages in any one of seven test prep books.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

C-WORDS

DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

corroborate



conciliate



commensurate



calumny



castigate



churlish



C-words

(verb)

To _____ is to make peace with.

His opponents believed his gesture to be _____, yet as soon as they put down their weapons, he unsheathed a hidden sword.

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C-words

(noun)

_____ is the making of a false statement meant to injure a person's reputation.

With the presidential primaries well under way, the air is thick with _____, and the mud already waist-high.

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C-words

(adj.)

Someone who is _____ lacks manners or refinement. A _____ person lacks tact and civility is often outright rude.

The manager was unnecessarily _____ to his subordinates, rarely deigning to say hello, but always quick with a sartorial jab if someone happened to be wearing anything even slightly unbecoming.

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Magoosh

C-words

(verb)

To _____ something is to confirm or lend support to (usually an idea or claim).

Her claim that frog populations were falling precipitously in Central America was _____ by locals, who reported that many species of frogs had seemingly vanished overnight.

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C-words

(adj.)

To be _____ to is to be in proportion or corresponding in degree or amount

The definition of this word tends to be a little unwieldy, regardless of the source. Therefore, it is a word that screams to be understood in context (for this very reason, the GRE loves _____, because they know that those who just devour flashcards will not understand how the word works in a sentence). Speaking of a sentence...

The convicted felon's life sentence was _____ to the heinousness of his crime.

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C-words

(verb)

To _____ someone is to reprimand harshly.

This word is very similar to chastise. They even have the same etymology (word history).

Drill sergeants are known to _____ new recruits so mercilessly that the latter often break down during their first week in training.

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cogent



chastise



chary



contentious



C-words

(verb)

Very similar to castigate, it also means to reprimand harshly.

Though _____ for his wanton abuse of the pantry, Lawrence shrugged off his mother's harsh words, and continued to plow through jars of cookies and boxes of donuts.

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Magoosh

C-words

(adj.)

_____ has two meanings: controversial (in terms of an issue); inclined to arguing (in terms of a person).

This word does not mean content. It comes from contend, which means to argue. Be wary (see below) of this word.

As soon as the discussion turns to politics, Uncle Hank becomes highly _____, vehemently disagreeing with those who endorse the same positions.

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C-words

(adj.)

Something that's _____ is clear and persuasive.

His essay writing, while full of clever turns of phrases, lacks _____; the examples he uses to support his points are at times irrelevant and, in one instance, downright ludicrous.

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C-words

(adj.)

_____ rhymes with wary, and it also means to be cautious. They are also synonyms.

Jack was wary of GRE words that looked similar, because they usually had different definitions; not so with _____, a word that he began to use interchangeably with wary.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

C-WORDS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

conciliate (verb)

C-WORDS

To **conciliate** is to make peace with.

His opponents believed his gesture to be conciliatory, yet as soon as they put down their weapons, he unsheathed a hidden sword.

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calumny (noun)

C-WORDS

Calumny is the making of a false statement meant to injure a person's reputation.

With the presidential primaries well under way, the air is thick with calumny, and the mud already waist-high.

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Magoosh

churlish (adj.)

C-WORDS

Someone who is **churlish** lacks manners or refinement. A churlish person lacks tact and civility is often outright rude.

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 unbecoming.

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corroborate (verb)

C-WORDS

To **corroborate** something is to confirm or lend support to (usually an idea or claim).

Her claim that frog populations were falling precipitously in Central America was corroborated by locals, who reported that many species of frogs had seemingly vanished overnight.

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commensurate (adj.)

C-WORDS

To be **commensurate** to is to be in proportion or corresponding in degree or amount.

The definition of this word tends to be a little unwieldy, regardless of the source. Therefore, it is a word that screams to be understood in context (for this very reason, the GRE loves commensurate, because they know that those who just devour flashcards will not understand how the word works in a sentence). Speaking of a sentence...

The convicted felon's life sentence was commensurate to the heinousness of his crime.

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castigate (verb)

C-WORDS

To **castigate** someone is to reprimand harshly.

This word is very similar to chastise. They even have the same etymology (word history).

Drill sergeants are known to castigate new recruits so mercilessly that the latter often break down during their first week in training.

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chastise (verb)

C-WORDS

Very similar to castigate, it also means to reprimand harshly.

Though chastised for his wanton abuse of the pantry, Lawrence shrugged off his mother's harsh words, and continued to plow through jars of cookies and boxes of donuts.

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Magoosh

contentious (adj.)

C-WORDS

Contentious has two meanings: controversial (in terms of an issue); inclined to arguing (in terms of a person).

This word does not mean content. It comes from contend, which means to argue. Be chary (see below) of this word.

As soon as the discussion turns to politics, Uncle Hank becomes highly contentious, vehemently disagreeing with those who endorse the same positions.

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cogent (adj.)

C-WORDS

Something that's **cogent** is clear and persuasive.

His essay writing, while full of clever turns of phrases, lacks cogency: the examples he uses to support his points are at times irrelevant and, in one instance, downright ludicrous.

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chary (adj.)

C-WORDS

Chary rhymes with wary, and it also means to be cautious. They are also synonyms.

Jack was wary of GRE words that looked similar, because they usually had different definitions; not so with chary, a word that he began to use interchangeably with wary.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

F-WORDS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

factious



fractious



factitious



f-words

(adj.)

If someone is _____, he/she is irritable and is likely to cause disruption.

We rarely invite my _____ Uncle over for dinner; he always complains about the food, and usually launches into a tirade on some touchy subject.

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f-words

(adj.)

Factions result when a large group splinters into smaller ones. Anything that causes factions is _____. _____ is typically not used to describe people.

The controversial bill proved _____, as dissension even within parties resulted.

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f-words

(adj.)

A tricky word, to say the least. When I preface a word by saying it's tricky, you can bet that the word's definition is not what you would expect. _____ is no exception, in that it does not relate to fact. Indeed, _____ is almost the opposite of fact. _____ means artificial, not natural. A laugh can be _____. A gesture. Your alacrity on the first day of a new job.

_____ can also be used literally to refer to something artificial. The houseplant that never needs watering, for instance. A good synonym for _____—and a word people use frequently—is phony.

The defendant's story was largely _____ and did not accord with eyewitness testimonies.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

F-WORDS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

fractious (adj.)

F-WORDS

If someone is **fractious**, he/she is irritable and is likely to cause disruption.

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.

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factitious (adj.)

F-WORDS

A tricky word, to say the least. When I preface a word by saying it's tricky, you can bet that the word's definition is not what you would expect. Factitious is no exception, in that it does not relate to fact. Indeed, factitious is almost the opposite of fact. **Factitious** means artificial, not natural. A laugh can be factitious. A gesture. Your alacrity on the first day of a new job.

Factitious can also be used literally to refer to something artificial. The houseplant that never needs watering, for instance. A good synonym for factitious—and a word people use frequently—is phony.

The defendant's story was largely factitious and did not accord with eyewitness testimonies.

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factious (adj.)

F-WORDS

Factions result when a large group splinters into smaller ones. Anything that causes factions is **factious**. Factious is typically not used to describe people.

The controversial bill proved factious, as dissension even within parties resulted.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

X-WORDS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

extenuating



excoriate



exegesis



execrate



exhort



X-words

(verb)

To yell at someone is one thing; to _____ them is a whole other. A martinet of a boss whom you've once again upset; a drill sergeant berating a feckless, smirking recruit; now we are closer.

So to criticize really, really harshly is to _____. Interestingly, the second definition of the word is to tear one's skin from his/her body. To verbally _____, figuratively speaking, is to rip off a person's skin.

Entrusted with the prototype to his company's latest smartphone, Larry, during a late night karaoke bout, let the prototype slip into the hands of a rival company—the next day Larry was _____, and then fired.

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X-words

(verb)

This word just sounds awful. The good news is the meaning of _____ is consistent with the way it sounds. To _____ somebody is to curse and hiss at them. For instance a certain American basketball player left his team of many years so he could make more money with another team. Fans of the original team _____ the player for his perfidy and, what they claim, were his mercenary motives.

Interestingly, the adjective form of _____ is the relatively common GRE word _____. If something is _____, it is so awful that it is worthy of our hissing.

Though the new sitcom did decently in the ratings, Nelson railed against the show, saying that it was nothing more than _____ pastiche of tired cliché's and canned laughter.

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X-words

(adj.)

_____ means making less guilty or more forgivable. The phrase "_____ circumstances" is common courtroom lingo. Say somebody broke into a drugstore to steal some expensive medication. Later we learn that medication was for that person's wife, who was dying of some disease that only the medication could cure. Most of us, presumably, would be more likely to forgive the man. Why? Because of the _____ factor of his wife's disease.

The jury was hardly moved by the man's plea that his loneliness was an _____ factor in his crime of dognapping a prized pooch.

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X-words

(noun)

This word refers to a critical interpretation of a scholarly work. If you think that definition is intimidating, the adjective form is _____.

The Bible is fertile ground for _____—over the past five centuries there have been as many interpretations as there are pages in a Gideon.

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X-words

(verb)

To _____ means to strongly urge on, encourage. The encouragement is for a positive action. So a mentor figure will _____ you to make the most of your life, whereas the miscreant will cajole you into doing something you'll regret.

Nelson's parents _____ him to study medicine, urging him to choose a respectable profession; intransigent, Nelson left home to become a graffiti artist.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

X-WORDS

ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

excoriate (verb)

X-WORDS

To yell at someone is one thing; to excoriate them is a whole other. A martinet of a boss whom you've once again upset; a drill sergeant berating a feckless, smirking recruit; now we are closer.

So to criticize really, really harshly is to **excoriate**. Interestingly, the second definition of the word is to tear one's skin from his/her body. To verbally excoriate, figuratively speaking, is to rip off a person's skin.

Entrusted with the prototype to his company's latest smartphone, Larry, during a late night karaoke bout, let the prototype slip into the hands of a rival company—the next day Larry was excoriated, and then fired.

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execrate (verb)

X-WORDS

This word just sounds awful. The good news is the meaning of execrate is consistent with the way it sounds. To **execrate** somebody is to curse and hiss at them. For instance a certain American basketball player left his team of many years so he could make more money with another team. Fans of the original team execrated the player for his perfidy and, what they claim, were his mercenary motives.

Interestingly, the adjective form of execrate is the relatively common GRE word execrable. If something is execrable, it is so awful that it is worthy of our hissing.

Though the new sitcom did decently in the ratings, Nelson railed against the show, saying that it was nothing more than execrable pastiche of tired clichés and canned laughter.

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exhort (verb)

X-WORDS

To **exhort** means to strongly urge on, encourage. The encouragement is for a positive action. So a mentor figure will exhort you to make the most of your life, whereas the miscreant will cajole you into doing something you'll regret.

Nelson's parents exhorted him to study medicine, urging him to choose a respectable profession; intransigent, Nelson left home to become a graffiti artist.

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extenuating (adj.)

X-WORDS

Extenuating means making less guilty or more forgivable. The phrase "extenuating circumstances" is common courtroom lingo. Say somebody broke into a drugstore to steal some expensive medication. Later we learn that medication was for that person's wife, who was dying of some disease that only the medication could cure. Most of us, presumably, would be more likely to forgive the man. Why? Because of the extenuating factor of his wife's disease.

The jury was hardly moved by the man's plea that his loneliness was an extenuating factor in his crime of dognapping a prized pooch.

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exegesis (noun)

X-WORDS

This word refers to a critical interpretation of a scholarly work. If you think that definition is intimidating, the adjective form is exegetical.

The Bible is fertile ground for exegesis—over the past five centuries there have been as many interpretations as there are pages in a Gideon.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

HIGH DIFFICULTY WORDS

VOCAB FLASHCARDS

MISLEADING ROOTS DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

impertinent



insufferable



immaterial



unconscionable



unnerve



inflammable



misleading roots

(adj.)

Think of somebody, or something, that you simply can't tolerate. That thing is _____. A person bleating into their cell phones on a crowded bus is _____. So is a person who only talks about him or herself, and usually in the most flattering vein possible. Depending on the person, certain television shows or genres can be _____. This word is derived from the second definition of suffer, which means to put up with, or tolerate.

Chester always tried to find some area in which he excelled above others; unsurprisingly, his co-workers found him _____ and chose to exclude him from daily luncheons out.

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misleading roots

(adj.)

If you are thinking of being knocked over the head and lying in a pool of blood on the sidewalk, you have the wrong word (not to mention a vivid imagination). In this case, the correct word is _____. If an act is so horrible and deplorable that it makes everyone around aghast, then that action is _____. _____ can also mean something that is in excess of what is deemed tolerable. This second definition doesn't have the unethical smear of the first definition.

The lawyer's demands were _____, and rather than pay an exorbitant sum or submit himself to any other inconveniences, the man decided to find a new lawyer.

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misleading roots

(adj.)

Depending on the circumstances, this can be a very important word. That is, if you read that something is _____, that means it can easily light on fire. The opposite would be nonflammable. Strangely enough, _____ is the same as flammable in the sense that it describes anything that can light on fire. _____—but not flammable—can mean extremely controversial, incendiary.

It only takes one person to leave an _____ comment on an Internet thread for that thread to blow up into pages upon pages of reader indignation.

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misleading roots

(adj.)

_____ can actually be the opposite of pertinent, but this definition is seldom used. Most of the time, _____ means not showing the proper respect. You can think of it this way – if somebody's behavior is not pertinent to the given social context, e.g. an occasion calling for formality, then you can think of that person as being _____. The definition usually only applies if a person is being rude where respect is expected, and not staid where frivolity is apt.

Dexter, distraught over losing his pet dachshund, Madeline, found the police officer's questions _____—after all, he thought, did she have to pry into such details as to what Madeline's favorite snack was?

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misleading roots

(adj.)

While _____ can describe a ghost, phantom, or run-of-the-mill ectoplasm, _____ primarily means not relevant.

The judge found the defendant's comments _____ to the trial, and summarily dismissed him from the witness stand.

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misleading roots

(verb)

This word does not mean to make less nervous, but its opposite. If you _____ a person, you disconcert him or her to the point he or she is likely to fail.

At one time _____ by math problems, she began avidly "Magoosh-ing", and soon became adept at even combinations and permutations questions.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

MISLEADING ROOTS ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

insufferable (adj.)

MISLEADING ROOTS

Think of somebody, or something, that you simply can't tolerate. That thing is **insufferable**. A person bleating into their cell phones on a crowded bus is insufferable. So is a person who only talks about him or herself, and usually in the most flattering vein possible. Depending on the person, certain television shows or genres can be insufferable. This word is derived from the second definition of suffer, which means to put up with, or tolerate.

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.

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unconsciousable (adj.)

MISLEADING ROOTS

If you are thinking of being knocked over the head and lying in a pool of blood on the sidewalk, you have the wrong word (not to mention a vivid imagination). In this case, the correct word is unconscious. If an act is so horrible and deplorable that it makes everyone around aghast, then that action is unconsciousable. **Unconsciousable** can also mean something that is in excess of what is deemed tolerable. This second definition doesn't have the unethical smear of the first definition.

The lawyer's demands were unconsciousable, and rather than pay an exorbitant sum or submit himself to any other inconveniences, the man decided to find a new lawyer.

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inflammable (adj.)

MISLEADING ROOTS

Depending on the circumstances, this can be a very important word. That is, if you read that something is inflammable, that means it can easily light on fire. The opposite would be nonflammable. Strangely enough, inflammable is the same as flammable in the sense that it describes anything that can light on fire. **Inflammable**—but not flammable—can mean extremely controversial, incendiary.

It only takes one person to leave an inflammable comment on an Internet thread for that thread to blow up into pages upon pages of reader indignation.

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impertinent (adj.)

MISLEADING ROOTS

Impertinent can actually be the opposite of pertinent, but this definition is seldom used. Most of the time, impertinent means not showing the proper respect. You can think of it this way – if somebody's behavior is not pertinent to the given social context, e.g. an occasion calling for formality, then you can think of that person as being impertinent. The definition usually only applies if a person is being rude where respect is expected, and not staid where frivolity is apt.

Dexter, distraught over losing his pet dachshund, Madeline, found the police officer's questions *impertinent*—after all, he thought, did she have to pry into such details as to what Madeline's favorite snack was?

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immaterial (adj.)

MISLEADING ROOTS

While immaterial can describe a ghost, phantom, or run-of-the-mill ectoplasm, **immaterial** primarily means not relevant.

The judge found the defendant's comments *immaterial* to the trial, and summarily dismissed him from the witness stand.

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unnerve (verb)

MISLEADING ROOTS

This word does not mean to make less nervous, but its opposite. If you **unnerve** a person, you disconcert him or her to the point he or she is likely to fail.

At one time unnerved by math problems, she began avidly "Magoosh-ing", and soon became adept at even combinations and permutations questions.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

disinterested

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

belie

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

undermine

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

equivocal

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

propitiate

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

sententious

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

difficult gre favorite

(verb)

This is ETS's number one favorite word for harder questions. Period. If ETS needs to make a Text Completion or Sentence Equivalence questions difficult, all it needs to do is throw in _____.

The key to answering a text completion question that uses _____ is to know how the word functions in context. Let's take a look below:

Her surface calm _____ her roiling emotions.

The effortless fluidity with which the pianist's fingers moved _____ the countless hours he had practiced.

Her upbeat attitude during the group project _____ her inherent pessimism towards any collective endeavor.

In each case, note how the outward appearance does not match up with the reality. That contradiction is the essence of _____.

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difficult gre favorite

(adj.)

_____ does not mean equal. It means vague, undecided.

_____, especially in its more common form _____, has a negative connotation. If a politician is _____, he/she is not answering a question directly, but is beating around the bush.

In the academic GRE sense, if a phenomenon is open to multiple interpretations it is _____.

Whether we can glean an artist's unconscious urges through his or her art remains _____ – that we can ever even really tap into another person's hidden motives remains in doubt.

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difficult gre favorite

(adj.)

This word looks like it would relate to a sentence. If you know the GRE, you will know this is probably not the case, as the GRE is likely to subvert people's gut reactions. _____ means to be moralizing, usually in a pompous sense.

The old man, casting his nose up in the air at the group of adolescents, intoned _____, "Youth is wasted on the young."

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difficult gre favorite

(adj.)

Much as the addition of *belie* is a difficult vocabulary word that tends to make a question harder, the addition of _____ into a text completion can make it a difficult question. Why? Everybody assumes that _____ means not interested. While this is acceptable colloquially, the GRE, as you've probably come to learn by now, is anything but colloquial. The definition of _____ is unbiased, neutral.

The potential juror knew the defendant, and therefore could not serve on the jury, which must consist only of _____ members.

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difficult gre favorite

(verb)

_____ is common in all sections of the GRE, not just difficult sections. It can pop up in reading comprehension answer choices just as commonly as text completion questions.

_____ means to weaken and is usually paired with an abstract term, such as authority. It can also have the connotation of slowly or insidiously eroding (insidious mean subtly harmful).

The student _____ the teacher's authority by questioning the teacher's judgment on numerous occasions.

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difficult gre favorite

(verb)

Want to make an angry person less angry? Well, then you attempt to placate or appease. Or, if you like really big GRE words, you _____ them.

The two sons, plying their angry father with cheesy neckties for Christmas, were hardly able to _____ him – the father already had a drawer full of ones he had never worn before or ever planned to.

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tendentious

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

feckless

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

betray

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

limpid

 DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

difficult gre favorite

(adj.)

_____, probably for its phonetic similarity to another word, has been dropped from the language. That or the lexicographers have become _____, which means that they lacked the drive or initiative to include _____ in the dictionary. _____ means lazy and irresponsible. So, don't get _____ and drop the -less, lest somebody totally misinterprets you. In which case, you'll have to do a fair amount of propitiating.

By the way, I'm _____—I won't include an example sentence (oops, I just walked into a contradiction).

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difficult gre favorite

(adj.)

This word does not relate to limp, it relates to clarity in terms of expression. _____ is typically used to describe writing or music.

Her _____ prose made even the most recondite subjects accessible to all.

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difficult gre favorite

(adj.)

If you are likely to espouse a controversial view, you are being _____. A good synonym for _____ is biased, though if you are biased you aren't necessarily leaning towards a view that is controversial.

Because political mudslinging has become a staple of the 24-hour media cycle, most of us, despite proclamations to the contrary, are _____ on many of today's pressing issues.

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difficult gre favorite

(verb)

To _____ means to go against one's country or friends. Right? Well, yes, but not always. Especially on the GRE. To _____ means to reveal or make known something, usually unintentionally.

Let's try a Text Completion question:

As we age, our political leanings tend to become less _____: the once dyed-in-wool conservative can _____ liberal leanings, and the staunch progressive may suddenly embrace conservative policies.

- (A) pronounced
- (B) obscured
- (C) contrived
- (D) earnest
- (E) diplomatic

In this case _____ means reveal. As we age our political biases become less obvious/extreme (my own words). Which word is the closest? (A) pronounced.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS

believe (verb)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

This is ETS's number one favorite word for harder questions. Period. If ETS needs to make a Text Completion or Sentence Equivalence questions difficult, all it needs to do is throw in **believe**.

The key to answering a text completion question that uses **believe** is to know how the word functions in context. Let's take a look below:

Her surface calm belied her roiling emotions.

The effortless fluidity with which the pianist's fingers moved belied the countless hours he had practiced.

Her upbeat attitude during the group project belied her inherent pessimism towards any collective endeavor.

In each case, note how the outward appearance does not match up with the reality. That contradiction is the essence of **believe**.

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equivocal (adj.)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

Equivocal does not mean equal. It means vague, undecided.

Equivocal, especially in its more common form equivocate, has a negative connotation. If a politician is equivocating, he/she is not answering a question directly, but is beating around the bush.

In the academic GRE sense, if a phenomenon is open to multiple interpretations it is equivocal.

Whether we can glean an artist's unconscious urges through his or her art remains equivocal – that we can ever even really tap into another person's hidden motives remains in doubt.

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sententious (adj.)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

This word looks like it would relate to a sentence. If you know the GRE, you will know this is probably not the case, as the GRE is likely to subvert people's gut reactions. **Sententious** means to be moralizing, usually in a pompous sense.

The old man, casting his nose up in the air at the group of adolescents, intoned sententiously, "Youth is wasted on the young."

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disinterested (adj.)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

Much as the addition of **believe** is a difficult vocabulary word that tends to make a question harder, the addition of **disinterested** into a text completion can make it a difficult question. Why? Everybody assumes that **disinterested** means not interested. While this is acceptable colloquially, the GRE, as you've probably come to learn by now, is anything but colloquial. The definition of **disinterested** is unbiased, neutral.

The potential juror knew the defendant, and therefore could not serve on the jury, which must consist only of disinterested members.

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undermine (verb)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

Undermine is common in all sections of the GRE, not just difficult sections. It can pop up in reading comprehension answer choices just as commonly as text completion questions.

Undermine means to weaken and is usually paired with an abstract term, such as authority. It can also have the connotation of slowly or insidiously eroding (insidious mean subtly harmful).

The student undermined the teacher's authority by questioning the teacher's judgment on numerous occasions.

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propitiate (verb)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

Want to make an angry person less angry? Well, then you attempt to placate or appease. Or, if you like really big GRE words, you **propitiate** them.

The two sons, plying their angry father with cheesy neckties for Christmas, were hardly able to propitiate him – the father already had a drawer full of ones he had never worn before or ever planned to.

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feckless (adj.)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

Feck, probably for its phonetic similarity to another word, has been dropped from the language. That or the lexicographers have become feckless, which means that they lacked the drive or initiative to include feck in the dictionary. **Feckless** means lazy and irresponsible. So, don't get feckless and drop the -less, lest somebody totally misinterprets you. In which case, you'll have to do a fair amount of propitiating.

By the way, I'm feckless—I won't include an example sentence (oops, I just walked into a contradiction).

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limpid (adj.)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

This word does not relate to limp, it relates to clarity in terms of expression. **Limpid** is typically used to describe writing or music.

Her limpid prose made even the most recondite subjects accessible to all.

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tendentious (adj.)

DIFFICULT GRE FAVORITE

If you are likely to espouse a controversial view, you are being **tendentious**. A good synonym for tendentious is biased, though if you are biased you aren't necessarily leaning towards a view that is controversial.

Because political mudslinging has become a staple of the 24-hour media cycle, most of us, despite proclamations to the contrary, are tendentious on many of today's pressing issues.

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betray (verb)

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To betray means to go against one's country or friends. Right? Well, yes, but not always. Especially on the GRE. To **betray** means to reveal or make known something, usually unintentionally.

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In this case betray means reveal. As we age our political biases become less obvious/extreme (my own words). Which word is the closest? (A) pronounced.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

**RE-DOESN'T MEAN
AGAIN
DOUBLE-SIDED FLASHCARDS**

restive

 RE- IS NOT AGAIN

remiss

 RE- IS NOT AGAIN

remonstrate

 RE- IS NOT AGAIN

repine

 RE- IS NOT AGAIN

re- is not again

(adj.)

_____ does not mean to miss again. It means to be negligent in one's duty. For some reason, students of mine have always had difficulty remembering this word. Sometimes I chide them, "Don't be _____ as vocabulary scholars by forgetting the word _____. While arguably clever, this admonishment isn't usually as efficacious as I'd hope it would be. (So don't be _____!).

_____ in his duty to keep the school functioning efficiently, the principle was relieved of his position after only three months.

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re- is not again

(verb)

The verb pine means to yearn for. Like remiss, however, the addition of the prefix re- does not signify again. To _____ means to complain or fret over something. Note: the verb pine can also mean to waste away.

Even if born in to poverty and war, to _____ at your misfortune in life helps nothing.

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re- is not again

(adj.)

_____ sounds like rest. It's actually the opposite, and means restless. Though most of the 're-' words are common, _____ is definitely the re- word you are most likely to see test day. It can be used to describe both people and groups of people.

The crowd grew _____ as the comedian's opening jokes fell flat.

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re- is not again

(verb)

You've probably guessed already that this does not mean to demonstrate again. To _____ means to make objections while pleading.

The mothers of the kidnapped victims _____ to the rogue government to release their children, claiming that the detention violated human rights.

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VOCAB FLASHCARDS

**RE-DOESN'T MEAN
AGAIN
ONE-SIDED FLASHCARDS**

remiss (adj.)

RE- IS NOT AGAIN

Remiss does not mean to miss again. It means to be negligent in one's duty. For some reason, students of mine have always had difficulty remembering this word. Sometimes I chide them, "Don't be remiss as vocabulary scholars by forgetting the word *remiss*." While arguably clever, this admonishment isn't usually as efficacious as I'd hope it would be. (So don't be *remiss*!).

Remiss in his duty to keep the school functioning efficiently, the principle was relieved of his position after only three months.

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repine (verb)

RE- IS NOT AGAIN

The verb *pine* means to yearn for. Like *remiss*, however, the addition of the prefix re- does not signify again. To **repine** means to complain or fret over something. Note: the verb *pine* can also mean to waste away.

Even if born in to poverty and war, to repine at your misfortune in life helps nothing.

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restive (adj.)

RE- IS NOT AGAIN

Restive sounds like rest. It's actually the opposite, and means restless. Though most of the 're-' words are common, *restive* is definitely the re- word you are most likely to see test day. It can be used to describe both people and groups of people.

The crowd grew restive as the comedian's opening jokes fell flat.

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remonstrate (verb)

RE- IS NOT AGAIN

You've probably guessed already that this does not mean to demonstrate again. To **remonstrate** means to make objections while pleading.

The mothers of the kidnapped victims remonstrated to the rogue government to release their children, claiming that the detention violated human rights.

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