

## GRE Vocabulary

Facing down hundreds of GRE terms without a concrete plan is a recipe for disaster. In this lesson, we've collected a number of strategies that you can use when creating your own personalized plan for learning GRE Vocabulary. Need some words to start learning? Check out our GRE Word List found at the end of this lesson.

### Group Words Together Categorically . . .

When trying to memorize a large number of words, group terms together that relate to one another in some general way, e.g. “words about communication” or “words that describe appearance.” You can make these categories as specific or as general as is helpful to you, but merely categorizing words like this can help you begin to sketch valuable interconnections that will be extremely helpful when you go about memorizing each one. After all, if you can remember that two words are very close in meaning, you effectively have only one definition to remember, not two! For words that are a bit more distant, if you can consider the group into which you've assigned a term, it can be helpful for narrowing your focus when selecting terms for blanks based on the context of a sentence. For example, if you know you need a word about communication but you recognize one of the answer choices as being about appearance, it doesn't matter if you remember more about that term's definition: you know it's not the correct word for the context.

### . . . and Identify Synonyms

As you group words into broad categories, note any that have definitions close enough that the terms qualify as synonyms, even distant ones. Sentence Equivalence questions require you to select two terms that when used to complete a sentence produce sentences with similar meanings. In short, you'll be asked to identify synonyms. Knowing this ahead of time can help you structure your review.

### Learn to Differentiate Between Words That Sound Similar

The GRE isn't above trickery such as asking you to choose a term between terms that are nearly homonyms. For example, “tepid,” “torpid,” “turgid,” “turbid,” and “turpid” can form a very confusing continuum if you're not familiar with their specific meanings. Prepare for these sorts of questions so that if you do encounter one, it doesn't disrupt your composure. You can turn groups of close-sounding terms to your advantage by memorizing them as a list, thus using their close pronunciations as a memorization tool.



## Pay Attention to Small Distinctions in Tone, Meaning, and Connotation

Pay good attention to small distinctions in connotation and meaning when a bunch of words mean essentially the same thing. Text Completion questions may present answer choices that differ only at the level of subtle connotations in order to test the depth of your knowledge. A surface-level understanding of what each term means won't be sufficient to get these questions right. Analyze words that qualify as synonyms with microscopic consideration of their meanings. Considering the etymologies (historical development of forms) of such terms can help bring some differentiating aspects to words that at first glance seem to state the exact same thing. If you're asked to differentiate between close terms, you'll be prepared to do so.

## Learn Prefixes, Roots, and Suffixes, But Be Aware of False Cognates

For some reviewers, prefixes, roots, and suffixes provide the structure they need to make sense of the onslaught of terms they need to retain. Learn the meanings of common morphemes so that you better understand the words you do know and are more prepared to tackle any unfamiliar terms that use familiar parts. Be careful, though: certain words can act as false cognates. While they may appear to use a familiar root, their etymology actually does not involve it and their meaning has nothing to do with it. Check the definitions of words that have significant roots carefully so that you don't end up confusing yourself.

## Use Mnemonics to Help with Mental Recall

Mnemonic devices are anagrams, acronyms, or other easy-to-remember mental reminders that can serve as scaffolding for other, more complex knowledge. Did you ever use the sentence "My very eager mother just served us nine pizzas" to remember the order of the planets (when Pluto was still included), or "PEMDAS" or "SOHCAHTOA" to recall order of operations or trigonometric functions, respectively? These are very common mnemonic devices, and while there aren't any pre-made ones specific to GRE vocabulary, you can make up your own to remember words that just won't stick. Remember: they don't have to be realistic or even make sense, as long as you remember them! Let's say we wanted to remember the difference between "tepid" and "torpid." Well, "tepid" starts with "te," like "tea," and you wouldn't want tepid (lukewarm) tea—you'd probably want hot tea. "Torpid," on the other hand, starts with "tor," like "torpedo." You wouldn't want to use a torpid (slow, lethargic) torpedo either! Single-sentence mnemonic devices like this can be very useful when memorizing GRE vocab, but be careful not to rely on them for more meaning than simple recall unless you designed them that way. For instance, part of the meaning of "torpid" is lethargic, which doesn't make sense when used to describe a torpedo, a non-living object. Just don't rely on mnemonics for more information than they contain, and they can be very useful tools!



## Use New Words in Conversation and Writing to Cement Them

It's difficult to retain any information you've memorized but aren't actively using, so as you add new terms to your vocabulary, go out of your way to use them in conversation and in writing where appropriate. Such use can help you get the most out of the work you've done to memorize the words in the first place by helping them stick in your memory. This way, you avoid having to learn them multiple times to no avail. While using pre-made vocabulary flashcards can be helpful, you may find that writing the words out is even more useful at improving your retention. If you do this, put each word in a sentence to give it context.

## Drill Vocabulary Cards: Repetition is Key

No matter whether you write them yourself or use some that someone else has put together, drilling vocabulary cards can help you incorporate the repetition necessary to remember hundreds of new words. The benefits of vocab cards are maximized when you drill them often, so consider carrying a 3x5 ring of cards with you as you go about your daily activities. Whenever you have downtime—on lunch breaks, on buses, or while waiting in lines—you can quickly study by learning new words, reviewing old ones, and giving extra consideration to those you find most difficult.



# GRE Word List

Abeyance	Baleful	Consequential	Divagate
Abrogate	Banausic	Consonant	Doctrinaire
Abstemious	Beatific	Contemn	Ebullience
Adumbrate	Beatify	Contrite	Éclat
Ait	Beatitude	Contumacious	Effrontery
Alacrity	Bedizen	Corrigible	Effulgence
Alloy	Belie	Countenance	Embargo
Ambivalent	Bellicose	Cozen	Emollient
Ambrosial	Benighted	Craven	Empyrean
Anathema	Bilious	Cynicism	Encomium
Apocryphal	Bilk	Cynosure	Enervate
Apogee	Blandishment	Dais	Enormity
Apostate	Bombast	Daunt	Entelechy
Apotheosis	Boor	Debate	Enumerate
Apposite	Brook	Declamatory	Equanimous
Apprise	Bucolic	Defenestrate	Equivocal
Approbation	Bulwark	Deliquesce	Errant
Apropos	Burgeon	Demur	Esoteric
Arcane	Byzantine	Denigrate	Essay
Arch	Cadge	Depredate	Etymology
Arrant	Cajole	Depredations	Exacerbate
Artful	Calumny	Deracinate	Excoriate
Artless	Caparison	Desuetude	Exculpate
Ascetic	Capricious	Desultory	Exemplum
Asperity	Castigate	Detraction	Exhort
Aspersions	Catharsis	Detumescence	Exigent
Assiduous	Celerity	Diaphanous	Exonerate
Assignment	Censorious	Diaspora	Expatiate
Astringent	Chary	Diatribes	Expurgate
Attenuate	Chauvinist	Diffident	Extemporaneous
Augury	Chicanery	Dilatory	Extirpate
August	Chimera	Dilettante	Facetious
Auspicious	Choleric	Disabuse	Fallow
Autochthonous	Churlish	Discomfit	Fatuous
Autodidact	Cogent	Disingenuous	Fauna
Aver	Complacent	Disinterested	Feckless
Axiom	Complaisant	Dissolution	Felicitous
Axiomatic	Complicit	Distract	Fell



Festoon	Homily	Isthmus	Nonplussed
Firmament	Hubris	Itinerate	Nostrum
Flag	Iconoclasm	Jaundiced	Numinous
Flip	Idyll	Jejune	Obdurate
Flora	Ignominous	Jibe	Obloquy
Flout	Imbroglia	Jocose	Obsequious
Foment	Immutable	Jocund	Obstreperous
Forbearance	Impassive	Ken	Obtain
Forestall	Impecunious	Kinetic	Obtest
Forswear	Imperious	Labile	Obtuse
Forward	Implacable	Laconic	Obviate
Fracas	Import	Limn	Occlude
Fractious	Importunate	Limpid	Occult
Frission	Importune	List	Officious
Froward	Impugn	Magnanimity	Oneiric
Fulminate	Impunity	Malevolent	Onerous
Gainsay	Impute	Malingering	Opprobrium
Gambol	Inchoate	Manifold	Ossified
Garner	Incorrigible	March	Ostensible
Garrulous	Inculcate	Maunder	Ostentatious
Gauche	Indolent	Maverick	Otiose
Germane	Ineluctable	Melifluous	Oeuvre
Glib	Inerrant	Mendacity	Overweening
Gloam	Ingenue	Mendicant	Overwrought
Gossamer	Ingenuous	Meretricious	Paeon
Grandiloquence	Inimical	Mettlesome	Pale
Gregarious	Inimitable	Militate	Palliate
Grouse	Iniquitous	Milk	Palpable
Guile	Innervate	Minatory	Panegyric
Guileless	Inspid	Mince	Panoply
Guy	Insouciant	Mitigate	Paramour
Hackneyed	Insular	Mollify	Pariah
Halcyon	Interdict	Mordant	Parsimonious
Hale	Interdiction	Moribund	Partisan
Harangue	Interstice	Mulct	Peccadillo
Harrow	Intractable	Multifarious	Peckish
Hegemony	Intransigent	Nacreous	Pecunious
Hermeneutic	Inundate	Nadir	Pedantic
Hermetic	Inure	Natty	Pedestrian
Heterodox	Inveigh	Neologism	Pellucid
Hirsute	Inveigle	Nexus	Penurious
Homiletics	Inveterate	Nice	Peregrinate



Peremptory	Proscribe	Riparian	Steep
Perfidious	Providential	Roil	Stentorian
Perfunctory	Prurient	Rubric	Stint
Peripatetic	Puerile	Salacious	Stoic
Pernicious	Pugilism	Salient	Stolid
Persiflage	Pugnacious	Salubrious	Striated
Perspicacious	Puissance	Salutary	Strut
Pertinacious	Pulchritude	Sanctimonious	Stupefy
Petrous	Punctilious	Sanction	Stygian
Petulant	Pundit	Sanguine	Stymie
Philistine	Pungent	Sate	Subfusc
Phlegmatic	Pusillanimous	Saturnine	Sublimate
Pied	Quaff	Scintilla	Subpoena
Pillory	Quail	Scintillating	Succor
Pique	Qualify	Scrivener	Supercilious
Placebo	Querulous	Scurvy	Supine
Plaintive	Quintessence	Sedulous	Supperate
Plangent	Quixotic	Seine	Supplant
Plastic	Quotidian	Seminal	Suppliant
Platitude	Raffish	Sententious	Supplicant
Pleonastic	Rail	Sere	Surfeit
Plumb	Ramifications	Shibboleth	Svengali
Polemical	Ramify	Simper	Sybarite
Portentous	Rarefy	Sinecure	Sycophant
Prate	Rash	Sinuous	Sycophantic
Prattle	Reactionary	Slake	Table
Precept	Recalcitrant	Sobriquet	Taciturn
Precipitate	Recant	Sodden	Tamp
Preempt	Recondite	Solder	Tandem
Prescience	Reconnoiter	Sollicitous	Tautology
Prevaricate	Recreant	Somnolent	Tawdry
Probity	Recumbent	Sophistry	Tendentious
Proclivity	Redolent	Sophomoric	Tender
Procrustean	Redoubtable	Sordid	Timorous
Prodigious	Refractory	Specious	Tirade
Profligate	Refulgent	Spendthrift	Toady
Profuse	Regale	Splenetic	Torpid
Proleptic	Remonstrate	Spurious	Torpor
Prolix	Renegade	Squalid	Torrid
Prone	Repine	Stanch	Tortuous
Propinquity	Repudiate	Static	Torturous
Propitiate	Rescind	Staunch	Tout



Tractable  
Travesty  
Trenchant  
Truculent  
Tryst  
Tumescence  
Tumid  
Turbid  
Turgid  
Turpid  
Tyro  
Unfeigned  
Unmitigated  
Untenable  
Untoward  
Urbane  
Vacuous  
Vagaries  
Vaunt  
Venal  
Verisimilar  
Verisimilitude  
Veritable  
Villify  
Virulent  
Vitiate  
Vituperate  
Volatile  
Volatile  
Voluble  
Waft  
Welter  
Wend  
Whimsical  
Whinge  
Winnow  
Wry  
Xenophobic  
Zealous

