		or evil **mal**adroit = "bad" + adroit (skillful) = lacking skill
mega- **megalo-**	big *or* great *or* million	**mega**phone **megalo**mania = "great + mad" = insane belief that one is all-powerful
meta-	beyond *or* change	**meta**morphose = "change + shape" = transform
micro-	small	**micro**scope, **micro**processor
mis-	bad *or* hate	**mis**apply, **mis**take, **mis**interpret **mis**anthropy = "hate + human" = hatred of humankind **mis**ogyny = "hate + women" = hatred of women
mono-	one	**mono**culture **mono**graph = "one + write" = a written report or paper on a narrow subject **mono**poly = "one + sell" = condition in which there is only one seller
multi-	many	**multi**ple, **multi**national **multi**farious = "many + places" = diverse, varied
neo-	new	**neo**logism = "new + word" = new word or expression **neo**phyte = "new + planted" = beginner, novice
non-	not	**non**sensical, **non**profit

		nondescript = "not + described" = lacking distinctive qualities **non**pareil = "not + equal" = without equal
ob- **can drop b and double next letter** **oc-, etc.**	in front of *or* against *or* toward	**ob**jection **ob**durate = "against + hard" = hard of heart, stubborn **oc**clude = "against + close" = block off or conceal **ob**sequious = "toward + follow" = overly obedient, submissive, flattering
omni-	all	**omni**present, **omni**potent **omni**science = "all + know" = state of knowing everything
pan-	all	**pan**demic = "all + people" = something affecting everyone, usually a disease
para-	beside	**para**llel, **para**phrase
per-	through *or* detrimental to	**per**mit **per**spicacious = "through + look" = able to perceive hidden truth **per**ambulate = "through + walk" = walk through, inspect **pel**lucid = "through + clear" = absolutely clear **per**fervid = "through + boil" = overexcited, overwrought **per**fidious = "detrimental + faith" =

		disloyal, treacherous
peri-	around	**peri**meter **peri**pheral = "around + carry" = on the outskirts, not central **peri**patetic = "around + walk" = moving or walking from place to place
poly-	many	**poly**technical, **poly**gon **poly**theist = "many + god" = someone who believes in many gods **poly**glot = "many + tongue" = someone who speaks many languages
pre-	before	**pre**cede **pre**cedent = "before + go" = earlier example **pre**rogative = "before + ask" = special right **pre**clude = "before + close" = prevent, rule out beforehand **pre**scient = "before + know" = knowing ahead of time, able to predict events
pro-	forward *or* before *or* for	**pro**ponent **pro**gnosticate = "before + know" = predict, foretell **pro**venance = "before + come" = source, or history of ownership
re-	back *or* again	**re**do, **re**state, **re**flect, **re**tract, **re**ject, **re**cede **re**miss = "back + sent" = negligent,

		careless, lax **re**cidivism = "back + fall" = tendency to relapse to earlier behavior or crime
retro-	backward	**retro**active, **retro**spect **retro**grade = "backward + go" = moving backward
sub-	below *or* under	**sub**standard, **sub**marine **sub**ordinate = "below + order" = in a lower rank, controlled by higher ranks **sub**liminal = "below + threshold" = below the level of consciousness
super-	above *or* over	**super**natural, **super**ior **super**fluous = "over + flow" = unnecessary, wasteful **super**ficial = on the surface **super**impose = "over + on + put" = place over **super**sede = "above + sit" = replace, transcend by being better
syn-	together *or* with	**syn**thesis = "together + thesis" = combination of ideas **syn**cretism = "together + Cretan cities" = fusion of ideas and practices **syn**optic = "together + eye" = taking a comprehensive view
trans- **tra-**	across *or* beyond *or* through	**trans**fer, **tra**jectory, **tran**smit, **trans**portation **trans**gression = "across + step" =

		violation of a law or rule **trans**lucent = "through + shine" = permitting (some) passage of light
un-	not	**un**happy **un**obtrusive = "not + against + push" = not noticeable or attention-drawing
uni- **un-**	one	**uni**form, **uni**cycle **un**animous = "one + spirit" = in complete agreement

Part III: Suffixes

Fortunately, suffixes are much more stable in meaning than roots or prefixes, meaning you know most of them already—just by speaking and reading in English! However, it is still worth looking over this list, in particular to examine how suffixes often change one part of speech into another.

SUFFIX	DESCRIPTION	PART OF SPEECH	MADE FROM	EXAMPLES
-able **-ible**	able to be X-ed	adjective	verb	think**able**, desir**able**, inconceiv**able**, frang**ible**, feas**ible**
-al **-ial** **-ile**	relating to X	adjective	noun *or* verb	tri**al**, crit**ical**, lab**ile**, duct**ile**, versat**ile**
-ance **-ancy** **-ence** **-ency**	state *or* process of doing X *or* being X	noun (abstract)	verb *or* adjective	intelli**gence**, flipp**ancy**, deca**dence**, exorbit**ance**, despon**dency**
-ant **-ent**	doing X	adjective *or* noun	verb	accor**dant**, accoun**tant**, cogni**zant**, differ**ent**, intransig**ent**, fer**vent**
-ar **-ary**	related to X	adjective	noun	so**lar**, stel**lar**, po**lar**
-ate (usually pronounced like ate) **-ite**	do X	verb	root	interro**gate**, prevari**cate**, mu**tate**, ig**nite**, expe**dite**
-ate (usually pronounced like it) **-ite**	formed by doing X *or* related to doing X	noun *or* adjective	verb	aggre**gate**, insubordi**nate**, perqui**site**, requi**site**
-dom	state of being X *or* condition related to X	noun (abstract)	noun *or* adjective	free**dom**, fief**dom**, wis**dom**
-er **-or**	doer of X	noun (person)	verb	speak**er**, run**ner**, wander**er**
-fic	making into X *or* causing X	adjective	noun *or* adjective	horri**fic**, beati**fic**, proli**fic**, sopori**fic**
-fy **-ify**	make into X cause X	verb	noun *or* adjective	magni**fy**, dei**fy**, indemni**fy**, ossi**fy**, rei**fy**
-ful	filled with X	adjective	noun	bounti**ful**, beauti**ful**, plenti**ful**, fret**ful**, art**ful**

-ic **-iac**	relating to X	adjective *or* noun	noun *or* verb	man**ic**, man**iac**, aseptic, bombast**ic**
-ification	process of making into X	noun (action)	noun *or* adjective	desert**ification**, ram**ification**, beaut**ification**, ed**ification**
-ine	relating to X	adjective	noun *or* verb	saturn**ine**, mar**ine**, sal**ine**, clandest**ine**
-ish	similar to X	adjective	noun *or* adjective	redd**ish**, mul**ish**, fiend**ish**, lout**ish**
-ism	system *or* characteristic of X	noun (abstract)	noun *or* adjective *or* verb	capital**ism**, social**ism**, commun**ism**, stoic**ism**, anachron**ism**, euphem**ism**
-ist **-istic**	characteristic of X *or* a person who espous- es X	adjective *or* noun	noun *or* adjective	capital**ist**, social**ist**, commun**ist**, anachron**istic**, euphem**istic**
-ite	native *or* adherent of X	noun	noun *or* adjective	anchor**ite**, Ludd**ite**, sybar**ite**
-ity **-ty**	state or quality of be- ing X *or* doing X	noun (abstract)	adjective *or* verb	polar**ity**, certain**ty**, convex**ity**, perplex**ity**
-ive **-ative**	tending toward the action of X	adjective	verb *or* noun	exclus**ive**, act**ive**, cohes**ive**, authorit**ative**, evas**ive**
-ize **-ise**	make into X	verb	adjective *or* noun	eulog**ize**, polar**ize**, scrutin**ize**, lion**ize**, advert**ise**, improv**ise**
-ization **-isation**	process of making into X	noun (action)	adjective	character**ization**, polar**ization**, lion**ization**, improv**isation**
-less	without X	adjective	noun	harm**less**, guile**less**, feck**less**
-ment	state *or* result of doing X	noun	verb	develop**ment**, judg**ment**, punish**ment**
-ory	characteristic of doing X *or* a place for doing X	adjective *or* noun	verb	refract**ory**, sav**ory**, deposit**ory**, compuls**ory**, mandat**ory**
-ous **-ious** **-ose**	characteristic of being X *or* doing X	adjective	verb *or* noun	carnivor**ous**, dev**ious**, numer**ous**, mellifl**uous**, mendac**ious**, verb**ose**
-tion **-ation** **-ion**	process *or* result of doing X	noun (action)	verb	poll**ution**, crea**tion**, destruc**tion**
-tude	state *or* quality of being X	noun (abstract)	adjective	sol**itude**, vicissi**tude**, pulchri**tude**, desue**tude**

Appendix B
of
Text Completion & Sentence Equivalence

1,000 WORDS FOR THE GRE

In This Chapter...

500 Essential Words for the GRE

500 Advanced Words for the GRE

The list below contains 500 *essential* words that you should learn for the GRE. Do not move ahead to the *advanced* word list until you have learned these (advanced words can be found later in this appendix).

This list contains all of the words in the Manhattan Prep 500 Essential Words for the GRE flash card set (available for purchase on our website, on Amazon.com, and at major bookstores). However, the flash cards contain *much* more information about each word, including synonyms, etymologies, and idiomatic usages. If you already have the flash cards, we suggest using those as your primary study tool, and using this list as an alphabetic reference.

WORD	P.O.S	DEFINITION	USAGE
abate	(verb)	Reduce, diminish	Her stress over spending so much money on a house abated when the real estate broker told her about the property's 15-year tax abatement.
abdicate	(verb)	Formally give up the throne (or some other power or responsibility)	King Edward VIII of England famously abdicated the throne in order to marry an American divorcée. / Parents can be charged with neglect for abdicating their responsibilities towards their

			children.
aberrant	(adj)	Abnormal, deviant	The teen's aberrant behavior made his family suspect that he was using drugs. / Losing rather than gaining weight over the holidays is certainly an aberration.
abhor	(verb)	Detest, regard with disgust	“Go out with you?” she replied. “I abhor you! I would rather stab myself with a rusty bread knife than be your girlfriend!”
abjure	(verb)	Give up, renounce; repudiate, recant, or shun (especially formally or under oath)	To become a citizen of the United States, you must abjure loyalty to the nation of your birth. / Since enrolling in that nutrition class, she has abjured sugar and saturated fats.
abrasive	(adj)	Rough, suitable for grinding or polishing (such as sandpaper); causing irritation or annoyance	Could the inside of this mascot costume be any more abrasive? It's rubbing my skin raw! I have some seriously abrasive remarks for whomever designed this thing.
abridge	(verb)	Condense or curtail; shorten	Our romantic vacation was abridged when the babysitter

		by omitting parts throughout while retaining the main idea	called to say that the kids were sick and we should come home. / Audio books are almost always abridged, since few people want to listen to a 200-hour book.
abstain	(verb)	Hold back, refrain (especially from something bad or unhealthy); decline to vote	The church board voted on whether to hold an abstinence rally to encourage young people not to become sexually active; while most members voted in favor, one voted against and two abstained, with one abstainer commenting that, as far as she knew, the church's teens were pretty abstemious already.
acme	(noun)	Summit, peak, highest point	The acme of my vacation was when I finally climbed to the acme of the mountain and enjoyed the gorgeous vista.
activism	(noun)	The practice of pursuing political or other goals through vigorous action, often including	Lindsay's parents had a hard time accepting that, after incurring $100,000 in student loans, their daughter had decided to enter the low-paying field of environmental

		protests and demonstrations	activism.
adhere	(verb)	Stick (to), such as with glue, or to a plan or belief	I have a message board that adheres to my refrigerator with magnets; on it, I've written some affirmations to help me adhere to my diet plan.
admonish	(verb)	Mildly scold; caution, advise, or remind to do something	She was an exacting boss who castigated an employee for jamming the copier, yet she merely admonished her five-year-old for the same offense.
adverse	(adj)	Opposing, harmful	Pioneer women persevered despite adverse circumstances, even when fording a river—baby in one arm, leading a horse with the other—against an adverse current.
advocate	(verb, noun)	Speak or argue in favor of (verb); a person who pleads for a cause or on behalf of another person (noun)	I cannot possibly vote for a candidate who advocates oil drilling in federally protected nature preserves. / Children often have advocates appointed to represent them in court.
aesthetic	(adj, noun)	Concerning the	The twins were so different.

		appreciation of beauty or good taste, pertaining to the science of what is beautiful (adj); a set of principles or tastes guiding an artistic practice (noun)	One possessed a truly baroque aesthetic, preferring golden, gilded decor. The other lived in a world of pure logic, untouched by any aesthetic sense whatsoever; art did not move him, his house was bare, and he married his wife solely because she was a master of calculus.
affable	(adj)	Warm and friendly, pleasant, approachable	The professional wrestler played at belligerence in the ring, but in real life, he was quite an affable fellow: sociable, easy-going, and always ready to lend a hand.
affectation	(noun)	Fake behavior (such as in speech or dress) adopted to give a certain impression	I'm annoyed whenever Americans move to England and suddenly start speaking with an affected British accent; such affectations, when practiced by celebrities, are only likely to alienate their fans.
aggrandize	(verb)	Make greater; exaggerate	I can't stand when my coworker aggrandizes her role in our group projects. / Stop it

			with your constant self-aggrandizing—we don't care how many automobiles you own!
aggregate	(verb, adj)	Gather together, amount to (verb); constituting a whole made up of constituent parts (adj)	While some of the company's divisions did better than others, in aggregate, we made a profit. / Concrete is created when crushed rock or glass is aggregated with cement; in aggregate, concrete is stronger than cement alone.
alacrity	(noun)	Cheerful or speedy willingness	Any boss wants an employee to respond with alacrity to his or her requests, handling them promptly and with enthusiasm.
alienate	(verb)	Cause to become unfriendly, hostile, or distant	The talk-show host was trying to help, but only alienated her viewers when she suggested that they cope with a tough economy by checking themselves into a spa.
alleviate	(verb)	Lessen, make easier to endure	The stimulus package has alleviated the pangs of the Great Recession, but times are still tough.
ambiguous	(adj)	Not clear, hard	The meaning of this ancient

		to understand, open to having several meanings or interpretations	text is ambiguous—either we are missing some cultural context, or else the writer actually wanted to be mysterious.
ambivalent	(adj)	Uncertain; unable to decide, or wanting to do two contradictory things at once	I've been accepted to two amazing graduate programs, one inexpensive and close to home, and one in a big, exciting city. I'm ambivalent—don't know how I'm going to decide. / When I asked you if you thought we'd get married some day, your ambivalence hurt my feelings.
analogous	(adj)	Comparable, corresponding in some particular way (making a good analogy)	In the U.S., whenever opponents of a war want to suggest that the war is unwinnable, they point out all the ways in which the war is analogous to the Vietnam War.
anarchy	(noun)	Absence of law or government; chaos, disorder	Once the dictator was assassinated, the country fell into total anarchy, as none of the opposition groups were strong enough to seize power.
anoint	(verb)	Rub or sprinkle	After Principal Smitters raised

		oil on; make sacred, such as by a ceremony that includes applying oil to someone	test scores over 60% at her school, it was only a matter of time before she was anointed superintendent by a fawning school board.
anomaly	(noun)	Deviation from what is common; inconsistency	While the cosmetics division of this company has many female executives, it is an anomaly; in the rest of the company, sadly, only 4% of management positions are filled by women.
antagonize	(verb)	Make hostile or unfriendly	"Josie! Stop antagonizing your little brother! Give him back that firetruck and tell him you're sorry for pulling his hair!"
antipathy	(noun)	Deep dislike, aversion, or repugnance, sometimes without reason	As an environmentalist, Mr. Subramanian had nothing but antipathy for the mining company drilling in and polluting his hometown.
apathy	(noun)	Not caring; absence of feeling; lack of interest or concern	Many parents of teenagers are concerned by their indolent teens' apathy about the future. Few teens are totally apathetic, however, many get quite

			excited about video games, flirting, or trips to the mall.
apocryphal	(adj)	Of questionable authenticity; false	I'm sorry, but this putative letter from George Washington that you found at a garage sale is clearly apocryphal—it is riddled with anachronisms (for instance, Washington was long dead by the time silent films were invented), and also, Washington most certainly didn't refer to Martha Washington as "baby."
appease	(verb)	Pacify, satisfy, relieve; concede to belligerent demands, sometimes at the expense of principles	My mother is so angry she wasn't the first person we called when the baby was born—I'm hoping to appease her by spending Christmas at her house this year.
appreciable	(adj)	Enough to be perceived, considerable	She ruefully concluded that the "Pot Pie Diet" was a scam and had made no appreciable difference in her appearance—after four weeks, she had lost three-quarters of a pound.
arbitrary	(adj)	Based entirely	The judge's rulings were truly

		on one's discretion; capricious, unreasonable, or having no basis	arbitrary: one defendant got community service for stealing a television, and another got three years for the same crime. / It doesn't really matter which brand of baking soda you buy, just arbitrarily pick one so we can get out of this grocery store before dinnertime.
arcane	(adj)	Known or understood by only a few; obscure, secret	To win at *Jeopardy*, you must be full of arcane knowledge. / The wizard's shop was full of arcana, from Latin-to-Ancient Greek dictionaries to entire books on magic spells relating only to elephants.
archaic	(adj)	Characteristic of an earlier period, ancient, primitive	The school's archaic computer system predated even floppy disks—it stored records on tape drives! / Sometimes, when you look up a word in the dictionary, certain definitions are marked "archaic"—unless you are a Shakespeare scholar, you can safely ignore those archaisms.
arduous	(adj)	Very difficult,	The arduous hike up rocky

		strenuous; severe, hard to endure	terrain was all worth it once the hikers reached the summit. / It was an arduous winter on the prairie; the family barely survived.
articulate	(adj, verb)	Using language in a clear, fluent way (adj); speak distinctly or give clarity to an idea (verb)	She's so articulate that I'm sure she'll make a good lawyer. / The group voted on who would be the best spokesperson, able to articulate their needs to the panel.
artifact	(noun)	Any object made by humans, especially those from an earlier time, such as those excavated by archaeologists	The archaeologists dug up countless artifacts, from simple pottery shards and coins to complex written tablets. / The girl's room was full of the artifacts of modern teenage life: Justin Bieber posters, *Twilight* books, and a laptop open to Facebook.
artless	(adj)	Free of deceit or craftiness, natural, genuine; lacking skill or knowledge, crude,	Children can be so artless that, when you try to explain war to them, they say things like, “But isn't that mean?”/ His artless attempt at negotiating a raise began with “I need more money, please”

		uncultured	and ended with "Okay, sorry I asked."
ascertain	(verb)	Find out with certainty	Hopefully, the investigation will allow us to ascertain who is at fault here.
ascetic	(adj, noun)	abstinent or austere in lifestyle (adj); a person who leads an austere and simple life without material pleasures, esp. someone who does this for religious reasons (noun)	Ascetics such as monks actually take vows of poverty. / The graduate student lived an ascetic existence, her apartment containing only a futon couch and a single bowl and set of chopsticks, which she used to eat ramen noodles every night.
assuage	(verb)	Make milder, relieve; soothe, pacify, or calm	After losing a million-dollar account, he tried to assuage his furious boss by pointing out that he was close to winning a new account worth at least as much.
audacious	(adj)	Very bold or brave, often in a rude or reckless way; extremely original	He audaciously asked for a raise after working at the company for less than two months!

augment	(verb)	Make larger	If you memorize the definitions on all of these flash cards, you will have notably augmented your vocabulary!
austere	(adj)	Severe in manner or appearance; very self-disciplined, ascetic; without luxury or ease; sober or serious	Her design sense was so minimalist as to be austere; all-white walls, hard, wooden furniture, not a single picture, throw pillow, or cozy comfort anywhere. / The graduation speaker delivered an austere message: the economy is bad, and academic success alone isn't enough to succeed in the job market.
autonomous	(adj)	Self-governing, independent	As leader of an autonomous region, the newly elected president was received as a peer by some world leaders, although he was not entitled to send a representative to the United Nations. / It is normal for young people to desire greater autonomy as they grow up.
aver	(verb)	Declare or affirm with	"Despite your insistence that ethics are completely

bolster	(verb)	Strengthen or support	The general requested reinforcements to bolster the defensive line set up at the border. / Some people believe that self-affirmation exercises are an effective way to bolster self-esteem and even performance.
boor	(noun)	Rude, ill-mannered, or insensitive person; a peasant or country bumpkin	Milton was such a boor that, when Jane brought him home to meet her parents, he laughed at their garden gnome and made fun of everyone's hairstyles in old family photos. “Don't be so boorish!” said his mortified girlfriend.
buffer	(noun)	Something that shields, protects, absorbs shock, or cushions	During the colonial era, England wanted Georgia as a buffer between its original colonies and Spanish Florida. / A railroad car has a buffer (similar to a bumper on a car) to absorb shock in case of contact with other cars. / When Joel came out to his family, he used his mother as a buffer. He knew she would be supportive, so he allowed

			her to relay the news to everyone else, and to relay their responses back to him.
bureaucracy	(noun)	Government characterized by many bureaus and petty administrators or by excessive, seemingly meaningless requirements	Some nations have a worse reputation for bureaucracy than others; in order to get a visa, he had to file papers with four different agencies, wait for hours in three different waiting rooms, and, weeks later, follow up with some petty bureaucrat who complained that the original application should've been filed in triplicate.
burgeon	(verb)	Grow or flourish rapidly; put forth buds or shoots (of a plant)	The dictator was concerned about the people's burgeoning discontent and redoubled his personal security. / Spending an hour a day on vocabulary studies will soon cause your lexicon to burgeon.
buttress	(verb, noun)	Support or encourage (verb); a support or prop, esp. projecting from and	A self-defense class really helped to buttress Elaine's confidence. / David used his Ph.D. as a buttress against criticism. “I have a doctorate,” he would say. “I just don't

		in order to correct	she castigated—rather than merely admonished—her child for throwing a box of instant oatmeal.
catalyst	(noun)	Causer of change	The young manager was a catalyst at the stodgy old company—once he introduced employee laptops, telecommuting, and mobile workstations, even the most conventional of employees totally changed the way they worked.
caustic	(adj)	Capable of corroding metal or burning the skin; very critical or sarcastic	Wait, those chemicals are caustic! You need safety gloves and goggles before performing this experiment, or else you risk not only getting your skin burned off, but also some seriously caustic remarks from our chemistry teacher.
censure	(noun, verb)	Strong disapproval or official reprimand (noun); to issue such	The senator was censured by the Senate for campaign fund improprieties; in fact, he narrowly avoided being expelled from office.

		disapproval or reprimand (verb)	
chauvinism	(noun)	Fanatical patriotism or blind enthusiasm for military glory; undue or biased devotion to any group, cause, etc.	He's such a chauvinist that he denies that any other nation could be better than ours at anything—he insists our wine is better than France's, our ski slopes are better than Norway's, and even that we grow more rice than China!
chronological	(adj)	Arranged in or relating to time order	Joey, I'm afraid you've done the assignment wrong—the point of making a timeline is to put the information in chronological order. You've put it in alphabetical order instead!
clamor	(verb)	Noisy uproar or protest, as from a crowd; a loud, continuous noise	As soon as a scent of scandal emerged, the press was clamoring for details. / The mayor couldn't even make herself heard over the clamor of the protestors.
clinch	(verb)	Make final or settle conclusively; to	When their best player was benched, the team fell behind, but once he was allowed back

concede	(verb)	Give in, admit, yield; acknowledge reluctantly; grant or give up (such as giving up land after losing a war)	The negotiations were pointless, with each side's representatives instructed by their home countries to make no concessions whatsoever. / Quebec was a French concession to Britain in the Treaty of Paris in 1763. / I suppose I will have to concede the argument now that you've looked up evidence on Wikipedia.
conciliatory	(adj)	Reconciling, appeasing, attempting to make the peace	The hotel manager was horrified at how the guest had been treated, and approached him in a conciliatory manner, offering him numerous freebies and apologizing repeatedly.
concur	(verb)	Approve, agree	John Locke wrote that justice is based on the social contract, and I concur—in fact, my latest book is all about contractual justice.
condone	(verb)	Overlook, tolerate, regard as harmless	While underage drinking is illegal, at many universities, it is tacitly condoned by administrations that neglect to

			enforce antidrinking policies.
confer	(verb)	Consult, compare views; bestow or give	A Ph.D. confers upon a person the right to be addressed as “Doctor” as well as eligibility to pursue a tenure-track professorship. / Excuse me for a moment to make a call—I can't buy this car until I confer with my spouse.
connoisseur	(noun)	Expert, especially in the fine arts; person of educated, refined tastes	A chocolate connoisseur, Mom eschews grocery store brands and will only eat 80% cocoa-or-higher artisanal chocolate that is less than a week old.
console	(verb, noun)	Lessen the suffering or grief of (verb); a control panel, or small table or cabinet (noun)	I was unable to console Tina after she fell asleep at the console of her airplane and thereby failed her pilot's exam.
consolidate	(verb)	Unite, combine, solidify, make coherent	She consolidated her student loans so she would only have to make one payment per month. / As group leader, Muriel will consolidate all of our research into a single

convoluted	(adj)	Twisted; very complicated	Your argument is so convoluted that I'm not even able to understand it enough to start critiquing it. / To get from the hotel room to the pool requires following a convoluted path up two staircases and down two others—to get to someplace on the same floor we started on!
copious	(adj)	Plentiful, bountiful	Although she took copious notes in class, she found that she was missing a big picture that would have tied all the information together. / The fertile, copious land yielded a rich harvest.
corroborate	(verb)	Support, add evidence to	You're telling me you were 30 miles away riding a roller coaster when the school was vandalized? I have a hard time believing that. Is there anyone who can corroborate your story?
cosmopolitan	(adj)	Belonging to the entire world, at home globally;	Trapped in a small town, he dreamed of a more cosmopolitan existence filled

		free from local or national prejudices or attachments	with world travel, exotic cuisine, and scintillating parties where he would meet famous authors and other cosmopolites.
countenance	(noun, verb)	Facial expression or face (noun); approve or tolerate (verb)	Her countenance said it all—the look on her face was pure terror. / I saw you cheating off my paper, and I can't countenance cheating—either you turn yourself in or I'll report you.
counterintuitive	(adj)	Against what one would intuitively expect	Although it seems counterintuitive, for some extreme dieters, eating more can actually help them to lose weight, since the body is reassured that it is not facing a period of prolonged starvation.
counterpoint	(noun)	Contrasting item, opposite; a complement; the use of contrast or interplay in a work of art	The play's lighthearted, witty narrator provides a welcome counterpoint to the seriousness and grief expressed by the other characters. / The hot peppers work in counterpoint to an otherwise sweet dish.

		pessimistic	they wouldn't feel so guilty about all the mean things they must be saying behind her back.
daunt	(verb)	Discourage, dishearten, lessen the courage of	Amazingly undaunted after his accident, Devon vowed to complete a marathon in his wheelchair. Not even a dented rim on mile 19 could daunt him—he dauntlessly completed the race anyway.
debase	(verb)	Degrade; lower in quality, value, rank, etc.; lower in moral quality	You have debased yourself by accepting bribes. / Members of the mainstream church argued that the fringe sect was practicing a debased version of the religion, twisting around its precepts and missing the point. / I can tell from the weight that this isn't pure gold, but rather some debased mixed metal.
debunk	(verb)	Expose, ridicule, or disprove false or exaggerated claims	Galileo spent his last years under house arrest for debunking the widely held idea that the Sun revolved around the Earth. / The show *MythBusters* debunks

			pseudoscientific claims.
decorous	(adj)	Behaving with propriety and good taste; polite	Miss Etiquette writes an advice column about decorum. One writer asked, “What's the most decorous way to tell guests exactly what I want for my wedding?” Miss Etiquette replied, “Young lady, there is no decorous way to solicit gifts, and even asking that question is entirely indecorous of you.”
deem	(verb)	Judge; consider	“You can take the black belt exam when I deem you ready, and not a moment before,” said the karate instructor.
deface	(verb)	Vandalize, mar the appearance of	Ernest was charged with three counts of vandalism after being caught defacing a row of townhouses with spray paint.
defamatory	(adj)	Slanderous, injurious to someone's reputation	One interesting issue in free speech law is defamation. / The political blogs are filled with defamatory language; it seems anyone with a computer and an opinion can destroy a politician's reputation these days.

		beyond its literal meaning.)	indicates any particular group of people, but due to the expression “crotchety old man,” the word connotes, for many people, an image of an especially unpleasant male senior citizen.
deride	(verb)	Mock, scoff at, laugh at contemptuously	The manager really thought that deriding his employees as “stupid” or “lazy” would motivate them to work harder; instead, it motivated them to constantly hide his office supplies as an act of revenge.
derivative	(adj)	Derived from something else; not original	The singer's first album was a disappointment, derivative of several hit albums from the previous year, as though a management team had simply picked out the elements from other popular songs that they thought would make the most money.
desiccate	(verb)	Thoroughly dried up, dehydrated	The key to maintaining odor-free shoes is to desiccate the insole by placing a drying agent, such as a small pouch of baking soda, inside the

			shoe between wears. / Beef jerky is a desiccated meat product.
detached	(adj)	Impartial, disinterested; unconcerned, distant, aloof	He found her detached demeanor inappropriate for a funeral. It's fine to politely ask how someone died, but it's not appropriate to coldly question a relative on the medical history of the deceased. / The divorce proceeding was full of anger and recriminations, but the judge was able to make a detached decision.
deterrent	(noun)	Something that restrains or discourages	Some argue that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime; that is, the point is not just to punish the guilty, but to frighten other prospective criminals.
diatribe	(noun)	Bitter, abusive attack or criticism; rant	I'd stay out of the living room for a while—Grandpa's on another one of his diatribes about how it's un-American to call a large coffee a “venti.” You can hear him ranting from here!

discriminating	(adj)	Judicious, discerning, having good judgment or insight (as an adj, positive spin; as a verb, negative spin!)	He is a man of discriminating tastes—all his suits are handmade in Italy, and I once saw him send back an entrée when he complained that black truffle oil had been substituted for white. The chef was astounded. / You can tell a real Prada bag by the discriminating mark on the inside.
disingenuous	(adj)	Insincere, not genuine	Steven's offer of help turned out to be disingenuous; when it was finally time for me to move, he was nowhere to be found! / My dog's wide-eyed expression of remorse for playing with the children's toys must be disingenuous, because she continues to snatch a toy every chance she gets.
disinterested	(adj)	Unbiased, impartial; not interested	Let's settle this argument once and for all! We'll get a disinterested observer to judge who can sing the highest note.
disjointed	(adj)	Disconnected,	The novel seemed disjointed,

		not coherent, jerky	as though whole chunks of it were missing, or as though the author had tried to stitch together drafts of several different stories.
dismiss	(verb)	Allow to disperse or leave; fire from a job; put aside or reject, especially after only a brief consideration	"Before I dismiss class," said the teacher, "I want to remind you of the importance of dismissing biases in your research by ruling out or adjusting for factors other than the variable you are testing that may have led to your results."
dispassionate	(adj)	Unbiased, not having a selfish or personal motivation; calm, lacking emotion	The defendant tearfully described how much her young child needed her at home, but the judge, who dispassionately sentenced her to 10 years for selling drugs, was unmoved.
dispatch	(noun, verb)	Speed, promptness; send off or deal with in a speedy way	So, you want to be a bike messenger? I need messengers who approach every delivery with alacrity, care, and dispatch—if the customers wanted their packages to arrive slowly,

		the essential elements of	countries, it is important to only drink distilled water so you don't get sick. / Jules, it's not necessary to read your entire PowerPoint presentation to us. Can you just distill it down to the main point?
diverge	(verb)	Differ, deviate; branch off or turn aside, as from a path	Go five miles until the old post office, then the road diverges—you want the branch that winds off to the left. / The high school sweethearts found that their paths diverged when they were accepted to different colleges.
divest	(verb)	Deprive or strip of a rank, title, etc., or of clothing or gear; to sell off holdings (opposite of invest)	When she found out that the most profitable stock in her portfolio was that of a company that tested products on animals, she immediately divested by telling her broker to sell the stock. / Once his deception was exposed, he was divested of his position on the Board.
divine	(verb)	Discover through	I've been poring over these quarterly reports all day, trying

		divination or supernatural means; perceive by insight	to divine whether I should buy or sell this stock.
document	(verb)	Support with evidence, cite sources in a detailed way, create documentary evidence of	Journalists embedded with military units are able to document a war as it happens. / It's hard to deny her conclusion when her book is so well documented—she cites a relevant scientific study on practically every page.
dogma	(noun)	A system of principles laid down by an authority; established belief	It is part of the dogma of modern education that there are multiple intelligences that are equally valuable; try to suggest that some people just aren't that smart, and you'll find yourself a pariah. / Dogmatic people will never change their minds, even in the face of evidence.
dormant	(adj)	Asleep, inactive, on a break	Some famous writers' skills have lain dormant until quite late in life; Laura Ingalls Wilder didn't publish *Little House on the Prairie* until she was 65.

		social spheres	instance, men and women could be found in equal proportions downshifting to part-time work to make time for child-care.
egregious	(adj)	Extraordinarily or conspicuously bad; glaring	Your conduct is an egregious violation of our Honor Code—not only did you steal your roommate's paper off his computer and turn it in as your own, you also sold his work to a plagiarism website so other cheaters could purchase it!
elated	(adj)	Very happy, in high spirits	I am elated that you flew my twin brother in from Australia to surprise me at my birthday party!
elevate	(verb)	Raise, lift up; lift the spirits of; move up to a higher rank or status or raise up to a higher spiritual or intellectual plane	After a year getting coffee and making copies, he hoped to be promoted to a more elevated position suitable for a law school graduate. / Our goal here at Morality Publishing is not just to sell books, but to elevate our readers social consciences.
elicit	(verb)	Call forth, bring	The touchdown elicited wild

		out, evoke	cheers from the crowd. / While the death of Ellen's elderly cat was indeed sad, Ellen's constant, mournful looks whenever anyone mentioned any animal at all were nothing but a play to elicit sympathy.
eloquent	(adj)	Marked by forceful, fluid, apt speech; expressive, emotionally moving	Wow, he's such an eloquent speaker, he could sell snow to Antarcticans! / When Mom suggested that everyone might enjoy a museum instead of the beach, she was met with the children's eloquent looks of disgust.
embellish	(verb)	Decorate, add ornamentation; enhance (a story) with fictional or fanciful details	Every time she tells that story, she embellishes it quite a bit—at first, she was lost in the woods, and then she was found. The part with the grizzly bear was added later. / The Christmas sweater was embellished with festive jingle bells!
eminent	(adj)	Prominent, distinguished, of high rank	The undergraduate shocked everyone by asking the eminent old professor,

			baking a cake—just find a recipe on the internet!
ephemeral	(adj)	Lasting only a short time, fleeting	"Thank you for this jacket that says 'Eugene's Girl,'" said Marie, "but I fear that your love will prove to be ephemeral—over the last two years, I've seen four other girls in school with the same jacket. Do you buy them in six-packs?"
equitable	(adj)	Fair, equal, just	As the university president was heavily biased towards the sciences, faculty in the liberal arts felt they had to fight to get an equitable share of funding for their departments.
erratic	(adj)	Inconsistent, wandering, having no fixed course	When someone engages in erratic behavior, family members often suspect drug use or mental illness. However, sometimes the person is just building a top-secret invention in the garage!
erroneous	(adj)	Mistaken, in error; improper, morally	Hilda was completely unable to assemble her new desk chair after the instructions

		incorrect	erroneously instructed her to screw the left armrest onto a small lever on the bottom of the seat.
erudite	(adj)	Scholarly, knowledgeable; possessing deep, often systematic, knowledge	Some have said that Americans dislike erudite leaders; while German leaders frequently have Ph.D.'s, even speaking a foreign language is considered pretentious by many American voters.
eschew	(verb)	Shun, avoid, abstain from	As a vegan, he eschewed not only meat and dairy but also anything made of leather.
esoteric	(adj)	Understood by or intended for only a few; secret	In his first year of university-level physics, he felt he was merely memorizing information found in every textbook on the subject; by his fourth year, he spent his days poring over esoteric journal articles that few people had ever read or understood.
estimable	(adj)	Worthy of esteem, admirable; able to be estimated	As the first black president of the *Harvard Law Review*, Barack Obama presented an estimable résumé when he ran for president in 2008. / Riding

		from without, not belonging	information; this paragraph about the author's life doesn't happen to be relevant to your thesis. / Maize, which originated in the New World, is extraneous to Europe.
extrapolate	(verb)	Conjecture about an unknown by projecting information about something known; predict by projecting past experience	No, I've never been to Bryn Mawr, but I've visited several small, private women's colleges in the Northeast, so I think I can extrapolate.
facetious	(adj)	Joking, humorous, esp. inappropriately; not serious, concerned with frivolous things	When I said, "Sure, you can take anything in my house as a souvenir of this study session," I was being facetious! I would like my nightgown back now. / He's a facetious person—I doubt he will take your offer of a spiritual quest very seriously.
facilitate	(verb)	Make easier, help the progress of	A good meeting facilitator lets everyone be heard while still keeping the meeting focused.

			/ As a midwife, my goal is simply to facilitate a natural process.
fallacious	(adj)	Containing a fallacy, or mistake in logic; logically unsound; deceptive	The formal study of logic can enable a student to more easily identify fallacious reasoning and, furthermore, to point out its fallacies.
fanatical	(adj)	Excessively devoted, enthusiastic, or zealous in an uncritical way	We avoid our neighbors—they're fanatics who can't go five minutes without trying to convert you to their beliefs. / Mrs. Becker was fanatical about grammar, once deducting 15 points from a student's paper for a misused semicolon—and it was a physics class!
fanciful	(adj)	Whimsical, capricious; imaginary; freely imaginative rather than based on reason or reality	The play was set in a fanciful version of New York City, one where all the cab drivers spoke perfect English and the Statue of Liberty seemed to be in the middle of the island.
fathom	(verb)	Measure the depth of	I cannot even remotely fathom how you interpreted an

			proposed marriage!
foment	(verb)	Incite, instigate, stir up, promote the growth of; apply medicated liquid to a body part	The revolutionary group was quietly fomenting a rebellion, galvanizing student radicals, leading unions in revolutionary songs, and anonymously pasting incendiary posters in every quarter of the city.
foreshadow	(verb)	Indicate or suggest beforehand, presage	You didn't know this was a horror movie? I thought it was pretty clear that the children's ghost story around the campfire was meant to foreshadow the horrible things that would happen to them years later as teenagers at a motel in the middle of the woods.
forfeit	(verb)	Surrender or lose as a result of an error, crime, or failure to fulfill an obligation	"The rules are clear," said the umpire. "This is a co-ed league, and if your team doesn't have at least three women, you forfeit. Sorry, everybody, no game today!" / If you are found guilty of defrauding this casino, the forfeiture of your winnings will

			be only the first of the consequences coming your way.

fortify	(verb)	Strengthen, invigorate, encourage	The white bread found in American grocery stores has been stripped of all the nutrients naturally found in wheat, and then artificially fortified with vitamins and minerals. / The general called for reinforcements to fortify the defenses around the capital.
fringe	(noun, adj)	On the margin, periphery (adj); the people in a group who hold the most extreme views (noun)	In America, reincarnation is a fringe belief, but in primarily Hindu countries, the belief is quite mainstream. / Stacey and Mark liked to say they lived on the fringe of the big city, but really they had just moved to the suburbs.
frugal	(adj)	Economical, thrifty, not wasteful with money; inexpensive	It wasn't terribly surprising when Lea—who was so frugal in restaurants that she always drank water, ate salad, and requested a separate check—said she had never tried

			lobster.
futile	(adj)	Producing no useful result, ineffective; trivial or unimportant	She spent months trying to coax Fluffy to fetch and sit, but it was futile—cats just can't be trained to perform tricks.
gainsay	(verb)	Declare false, deny; oppose	The professor is quite intolerant of challenges to her opinions—she's been known to lower the grade of any student who dares gainsay her.
garrulous	(adj)	Talkative, wordy, rambling	Uncle Bill is so garrulous that our dinner conversation lasted three hours—and the only person who said more than ten words was Uncle Bill.
gauche	(adj)	Tactless, lacking social grace, awkward, crude	It is terribly gauche to put ketchup on your steak and then talk with your mouth full as you eat it. That's the last time I ever bring you to a nice place.
gawky	(adj)	Physically awkward (esp. of a tall, skinny person,	As a teenager, she thought of herself as

guile	(noun)	Clever deceit, cunning, craftiness	The game of poker is all about guile, manipulating your own body language, and patter to lead other players to erroneous conclusions about the cards you're holding.
hackneyed	(adj)	So commonplace as to be stale; not fresh or original	This screenplay is so hackneyed—the leading lady has a quirky, artsy job in the city and has a minor problem early in the movie from which the male lead rescues her, and they get together but then break up due to a misunderstanding, and then they end up together anyway, all while the female lead's "sassy" friend gives advice. Ugh. I'll bet they're auditioning Jennifer Aniston right now.
hardy	(adj)	Bold, brave, capable of withstanding hardship,	While the entire family enjoyed the trip to South

		fatigue, cold, etc.	America, only the hardier members even attempted to hike to the top of Ecuador's tallest volcano.
haven	(noun)	Harbor or port; refuge, safe place	The relief workers set up the camp as a haven from persecution.
hearken	(verb)	Listen, pay attention to	"Hearken, students!" said the old-fashioned music teacher. "We are going to practice 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing.'
hedonist	(noun)	Person devoted to pleasure	A vacation is a fine time to practice hedonism, letting your troubles go and indulging in every conceivable luxury and pleasure.
heterogeneous	(adj)	Different in type, incongruous; composed of different types of elements	Rather than build the wall with plain brick, we used a heterogeneous mixture of stones—they are not only different colors, but a variety of sizes as well.
hierarchy	(noun)	A ranked series; a classification of people	The activist, accustomed to groups ruled by

imminent	(adj)	Ready to occur, impending	In the face of imminent war, the nation looked to FDR for reassurance. / Everyone was excited and nervous; Madonna's arrival was imminent!
impair	(verb)	Make worse, weaken	Playing in a rock band without earplugs will almost certainly impair your hearing over time.
impartial	(adj)	Unbiased, fair	Judge Gonzales recused himself from the case because, having a personal connection to the school where the shooting took place, he did not think he could be appropriately impartial.
impede	(verb)	Hold back, obstruct the progress of	I didn't realize business school would be entirely group work; sadly, there's always at least one person in every group who impedes the group's progress more than helps it.
implication	(noun)	Act of implying or that which is implied; close	When the boss said, “Times are tight around

		connection, esp. in an incriminating way	here, I just think you should know," the implication was that maybe we should start looking for new jobs. / She implicated her boyfriend in the robbery after less than 20 minutes of interrogation.
implicit	(adj)	Implied, not stated directly; involved in the very essence of something, unquestionable	He didn't have to be told to resign; it was implicit in his not getting the promotion that he had no future at the company. / I enjoy ice climbing with my father because, in such a dangerous situation, it's important to have a partner you trust implicitly.
implode	(verb)	Burst inward; fall apart	The startup struggled for years before it simply imploded—the management team broke into factions, all the clients were scared off, and employees who hadn't been paid in

		harmonious	halls, Angelina's submission was incongruous, a dark, gruesome, and even worldly work amidst the happy family portraits and other childish drawings.
inconsequential	(adj)	Insignificant, unimportant; illogical	You wrote a bestselling book and got a stellar review in the *New York Times*—whatever your cousin has to say about it is simply inconsequential.
incorporate	(verb)	Include, take in; combine, unite; form a legal corporation; embody, give physical form to	When a business incorporates, it becomes a separate legal entity; for instance, the business can declare bankruptcy without the owners doing so. / Local legend has it that ghosts can incorporate on one night of the year and walk among the living.
indeterminate	(adj)	Not fixed or determined, indefinite; vague	The results of the drug trial were indeterminate;

			further trials will be needed to ascertain whether the drug can be released. / The lottery can have an indeterminate number of winners—the prize is simply divided among them.
indifferent	(adj)	Not caring, having no interest; unbiased, impartial	Do whatever you want; I'm indifferent. I won't even notice.
inform	(verb)	Inspire, animate; give substance, essence, or context to; be the characteristic quality of	Her work as an art historian is informed by a background in drama; where others see a static tableau, she sees a protagonist, a conflict, a denouement.
ingenuous	(adj)	Genuine, sincere, not holding back; naïve	Multilevel marketing scams prey on the ingenuous, those who really think there's someone out there who just wants to help them get rich.
ingrained	(adj)	Deep-rooted, forming part of the very essence;	Religious observance had been ingrained in

jargon	(noun)	Vocabulary specific to a group or occupation; convoluted or unintelligible language	The information my doctor gave me was so full of medical jargon I couldn't understand it at all! I'm going to look on the Internet for something written for regular people.
jocular	(adj)	Joking or given to joking all the time; jolly, playful	If we were friends, I'm sure I'd find his antics amusing, but as his professor, I do wish he'd contribute some serious comments to the class discussion instead of his constant stream of jocular comments.
judicious	(adj)	Using good judgment; wise, sensible	In his will, the old titan of industry left little to his hard-partying younger son, and left the bulk of his estate to the more judicious older son, with instructions that the older son see that the rest of the family was taken care of.
juncture	(noun)	Critical point in time,	We are at a critical

		such as a crisis or a time when a decision is necessary; a place where two things are joined together	juncture in the history of this organization: either we can remain a nonprofit, or we can register as a political action committee and try to expand our influence. / The little canoe started to sink when it split at the juncture between the old wood and the new material used to repair it.
keen	(adj)	Sharp, piercing; very perceptive or mentally sharp; intense (of a feeling)	Dogs have a keen sense of smell. / As homecoming queen, she had experienced the envy of others, but their jealousy only grew more keen when she was selected for a small role in a movie.
kudos	(noun)	Praise, honor, congratulations	"Kudos on your amazing GRE score!" said the teacher. / While the critics weren't impressed, the play received plentiful kudos from the audience.

			lassitude enough to get out of this hammock, much less study for the GRE.
laudable	(adj)	Worthy of praise	When a major discount mart fired several employees for subduing a gunman, most people considered the action a laudable act of heroism, but the discount chain fired the employees for "violating company policies." Nevertheless, the mayor lauded the former employees in a medal-granting ceremony.
lavish	(adj, verb)	Abundant or giving in abundance; marked by excess (adj); give very generously (verb)	Anita wanted to live as she imagined Beyoncé lived, and ran up huge credit card bills pursuing a lavish lifestyle she could scarcely afford. / Although her rich banker boyfriend lavished gifts on her, she didn't want to be with someone she didn't really love.

layperson	(noun)	A person who is not a member of the clergy or not a member of a particular profession (such as medicine, law, etc.)	The actress Jenny McCarthy has written a book about autism. While her experience as a parent is interesting to anyone in a similar situation, it's still important to remember that McCarthy is a layperson, not a doctor.
levity	(noun)	Lightness (of mind, spirit, or mood) or lack of seriousness, sometimes in an inappropriate way	My late uncle Bill loved practical jokes and absolutely would have approved of the iPod mix my aunt played at the wake, which added a little levity by segueing from "Amazing Grace" to the party anthem "Let's Get It Started."
levy	(verb, noun)	Collect tax from, wage war on, or enlist for military service (verb); act of collecting tax or amount owed, or the drafting of troops into military service (noun)	When England levied yet another tax on the colonists, the colonists were pushed one further step towards levying war. Soon, the worried British began to raise troops by levy.

			sleep—much as, in her work as a spy during World War II, Grandma used her beauty and charm to lull foreign dignitaries into giving up their secrets.
makeshift	(noun, adj)	A temporary, often improvised, substitute (noun); improvised for temporary use (adj)	Lost in the woods for over 24 hours, the children were eventually found sleeping under a makeshift tent made from branches and old plastic bags. / I don't have a ladder, but I can stack up some boxes as a makeshift.
malleable	(adj)	Able to be bent, shaped, or adapted	The more malleable the material, the easier it is to bend into jewelry—and the easier it is to damage that jewelry. / My mother is a little too malleable—she said she liked all the things her first husband liked, and now she says she likes all the things her second husband likes.

maverick	(noun)	Rebel, individualist, dissenter	Most cop movies feature heroes who are maverick police officers, breaking all the rules, blowing things up, and getting their guns confiscated by the chief, but who ultimately save the day.
mendacious	(adj)	Lying, habitually dishonest	She was so mendacious that, when she broke the television, she blamed it on her little brother, even though he was in a wheelchair and could hardly have tipped over a piece of furniture. Her mendacity knows no bounds!
mercurial	(adj)	Quickly and unpredictably changing moods; fickle, flighty	It's tough being married to someone so mercurial. One minute she's happy as a clam; the next, she's inexplicably depressed.
metamorphosis	(noun)	A complete change or transformation (in biology, a change such as a caterpillar becoming	Many reality show competitions are based on the idea of a contestant undergoing a

			to avoid violating deeply conservative cultural mores.
mundane	(adj)	Common, ordinary, everyday	Dominique had been excited to visit France for the first time, but she was soon disappointed at how mundane the stay with her relatives was: they shopped at the market, cooked dinner, chatted with one another, and occasionally went shopping.
naïve	(adj)	Simple and unsophisticated, unsuspecting, lacking worldly experience and critical judgment	I was a little naïve during the hiring process—the Human Resources rep asked for my acceptable salary range, and I answered honestly. Of course, I got an offer for the very lowest number in the range! Now I know I should have tried to get a number from her first, or named a higher number so I could negotiate down.

nascent	(adj)	Coming into existence, still developing	The violin teacher was always very encouraging with children. All children sound terrible the first couple of years, so she offered plenty of praise to encourage nascent talents.
negate	(verb)	Deny or refute; make void or cause to be ineffective	Darling, if you add "I promise to try to work things out for at least a couple of weeks before giving up" to our wedding vows, it would kind of negate the part where you promise to love, honor, and cherish me "until death do us part." / The debate coach reminded the students that they had to negate each one of their opponents' major points in order to win.
net	(adj, verb)	Remaining after expenses or other factors have been deducted; ultimate (adj); to bring in as profit, or	In one day of trading, my portfolio went up $10,000 and down $8,000, for a net gain of $2,000. / All those

			philosophers argue that things like “love” and “guilt” don't exist, and that only objective reality—that is, physical matter—is of consequence.
obsequious	(adj)	Servile, very compliant, fawning	An obsequious assistant, Sammy thought he could get ahead by doing everything asked of him, but instead, his boss gave a promotion to someone he viewed as more of a peer; truthfully, he thought Sammy's sucking up was pretty pathetic.
obsolete	(adj)	Out of date, no longer in use	She kept her old laptop so long that it was obsolete—she couldn't sell it on Craigslist, and the local elementary school didn't even want it as a donation. / When you look up a word in the dictionary and see “Archaic” next to a definition, that means

			that definition is obsolete—people don't use the word that way anymore, although you might want to know that meaning if you're reading old texts.
obstinate	(adj)	Stubborn or hard to control	It's difficult to get an obstinate child to eat food he doesn't want to eat. When Toby realized that his son would rather sit and starve than eat mahi-mahi, he gave in and made him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
obviate	(verb)	Prevent, eliminate, or make unnecessary	Adding protective heel taps to your dress shoes can obviate the need to take them to the shoe repair store later, once the heels have worn down.
occult	(noun, adj, verb)	The supernatural (noun); pertaining to magic, astrology, etc.; mysterious, secret or	A group of religious parents demanded that a popular series of young adult vampire novels be

orthodox	(adj)	Adhering to a traditional, established faith, or to anything customary or commonly accepted	I appreciate that the new dentist thinks that my oral health can be improved through yoga, but I really prefer a more orthodox approach to dental care.
oscillate	(verb)	Swing back and forth; waver, change one's mind	I wish we had air conditioning, but at least I replaced our old fan with this oscillating one that swings side to side and blows air on the whole room. / Stop oscillating and pick a restaurant! Seriously—Indian or Thai?
outstrip	(verb)	Surpass, exceed; be larger or better than; leave behind	Our sales figures this quarter have outstripped those of any other quarter in the company's history.
overshadow	(verb)	Cast a shadow over, darken; dominate, make to seem less important	She was a straight-A student who excelled at field hockey, but she still felt overshadowed by her older sister, who won a national science

			competition for her work on cancer in mice, and also had time to become a pole vaulting champion and model who walked in Fashion Week.
paradigm	(noun)	Model or pattern; worldview, set of shared assumptions, values, etc.	Far from being atypically bawdy, this limerick is a paradigm of the form—nearly all of them rely on off-color jokes.
paradox	(noun)	Contradiction, or seeming contradiction that is actually true	Kayla was always bothering the youth minister with her paradoxes, like "If God is all-powerful, can He make a burrito so big He can't eat it?"
pariah	(noun)	Social outcast, untouchable	After the schoolteacher was fired for participating in what some called a "hate rally," he became a pariah in his own town—even his longtime barber refused him a haircut.
partial	(adj)	Biased, prejudiced, favoring one over others;	Although I grew up in New York, I've always

			dinner and made that rack of lamb! I'm afraid neither of us is a professional chef like you are, though, so we hope you won't mind that we've made something more pedestrian: hot dogs and French fries.
penchant	(noun)	Liking or inclination (usually penchant for)	He seems like a mild-mannered accountant, but twice a year he jets off to Australia to satisfy his penchant for adventure sports.
perfidious	(adj)	Disloyal, treacherous, violating one's trust	The perfidious soldier sold out his comrades, giving secrets to the enemy in exchange for money and protection.
peripheral	(adj)	Relating to or making up an outer boundary or region; not of primary importance, fringe	My main goal is to get into a good grad school. Whether it has good fitness facilities is really a peripheral concern.
permeate	(verb)	Spread or penetrate throughout	Under the Emperor Constantine, Christianity

			began to permeate every sector of public life.
pervasive	(adj)	Tending to spread throughout	Poverty is pervasive in our school system; 65% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch.
philanthropy	(noun)	Efforts to improve the well-being of humankind, generally through giving money	Many wealthy people turn to philanthropy as a way to create social good, and many others turn to it as a way to hobnob with the rich and famous.
phony	(adj)	Fake, counterfeit; insincere, not genuine	Phony Louis Vuitton bags are easily purchased in Chinatown, but they are illegal—selling them can land a vendor in jail, and the counterfeit bags are often made with child labor. / She's such a phony person, pretending to befriend people and then talking about them behind their backs.
pious	(adj)	Devout; religiously	Some matrimonial

plummet	(verb)	Plunge, fall straight down	During the first 60 seconds or so of a skydive, the diver plummets towards Earth in freefall; then, he or she activates a parachute and floats down at what seems like a relatively leisurely pace.
polarized	(adj)	Divided into sharply opposed groups	The school board was used to rationally discussing issues, but when it came to the teaching of evolution in schools, the board was polarized, immediately splitting into two camps, with the discussion devolving into a shouting match within minutes.
ponderous	(adj)	Heavy; bulky and unwieldy; dull, labored	The book assigned by her professor was a ponderous tome, more a reference book than something you could read straight through. She was so bored she thought she would die.

posthumous	(adj)	Happening or continuing after death	Ernest Hemingway died in 1961. His novel *The Garden of Eden* was published posthumously in 1986.
potentate	(noun)	Ruler, person of great power	At 62 year's old, Prince Charles has certainly waited long enough to become potentate of England; his mother, Elizabeth II, has been ruling for his entire life.
pragmatic	(adj)	Practical; dealing with actual facts and reality	Megan and Dave were in love, but Megan decided to be pragmatic—she doubted they'd stay together through a four-year long distance relationship as they attended different colleges, so she figured they might as well end things now.
preamble	(noun)	Introductory statement, preface	The Preamble to the Constitution is a brief introduction that begins, "We the People of the United States, in Order

		is proper	mean, I thought he was attractive until he walked up to me and said, "We should go out—I looked up your address on Google and I'll pick you up at 8." The nerve!
pretentious	(adj)	Claiming or demanding a position of importance or dignity, esp. when unjustified; showing off, creating a deceptive, false show of worth	Josie found her date's habit of constantly dropping French phrases into conversation to be incredibly pretentious, especially since he knew she didn't speak French. He sure did sound fancy, though.
principled	(adj)	Having high moral standards	Donna was only an intern, but she was also quite principled—although she knew it would kill her shot at a full-time job, she was the one who alerted the authorities when asked to violate federal law via corrupt accounting practices.
pristine	(adj)	In an original, pure state;	Having grown up in a

		uncorrupted	rural area, Billy had been in plenty of forests where people regularly left beer cans and shotgun shells behind. So it truly took his breath away, after hiking hours through the Himalayas, to visit a pristine forest, seemingly untouched by humans.
probity	(noun)	Honesty, integrity	After losing the last election when its candidate's string of mistresses came to light, the party vowed to only nominate candidates whose probity was beyond any doubt.
prodigal	(adj)	Wasteful, extravagant; giving abundantly, lavish	If you're going to leave a trust fund for your children, you should raise them not to be prodigal, or they'll blow through all the cash the minute they get their hands on it. / The prodigal land produced larger crops than the people could even

			law enforcement can keep up.
prologue	(noun)	Introductory part to a book, play, etc.	The novel's prologue gives some historical background so that the main story can be better understood in context.
pronounced	(adj)	Distinct, strong, clearly indicated	Aunt Shirley claimed we would never know that her “secret recipe” for brownies involved lots of healthy vegetables, but the brownies had a pronounced asparagus flavor.
propriety	(noun)	Conforming to good manners or appropriate behavior; justness	The parent questioned the propriety of the punishment meted out to her son—sitting in a corner all day seemed a little harsh for using the pencil sharpener at the wrong time. / Saying the accounting firm was complicit in “financial impropriety” was a rather polite way to refer to the fraud it committed

			against its investors.
prosaic	(adj)	Dull, ordinary	Finding his friends' bar mitzvahs at the local synagogue a bit prosaic, Justin instead asked his dad to rent out the local laser tag center.
proscribe	(verb)	Prohibit, outlaw; denounce; exile or banish	Plagiarism is proscribed by every college's code of conduct.
prospective	(adj)	Potential, in the future	Everyone had a hard time correctly saying the name of the seminar, "Perspectives for Prospective Doctors." Even the prospective doctors—college students hoping to be admitted to medical school—were a bit confused.
prudent	(adj)	Wise in practical matters, carefully providing for the future	Sophie's friends blew all kinds of money on spring break, but Sophie prudently kept to her usual spending habits.
pugnacious	(adj)	Inclined to fight, combative	Maria had hoped to avoid inviting Uncle

			recluse who hadn't left her house in six years.
refute	(verb)	Prove to be false	She's not a very valuable member of the debate team, actually—she loves making speeches, but she's not very good at refuting opponents' arguments.
relegate	(verb)	Send or commit to an inferior place, rank, condition, etc.; exile, banish; assign (a task) to someone else	After the legal associate offended one of the partners, he found himself relegated to working on minor—even unwinnable—cases. / This protest is occurring because we refuse to be relegated to the fringes of society—we demand full inclusion!
remedial	(adj)	Providing a remedy, curative; correcting a deficient skill	After harassment occurs in the workplace, it is important that the company take remedial action right away, warning or firing the offender as appropriate, and making sure the

			complainant's concerns are addressed. / For those who need remedial reading help, we offer a summer school program that aims to help students read at grade level.
render	(verb)	Give, submit, surrender; translate; declare formally; cause to become	When you render your past due payments, we will turn your phone back on. / Only in her second year of Japanese, she was unable to render the classic poem into English. / The judge rendered a verdict that rendered us speechless.
replete	(adj)	Supplied in abundance, filled, gorged (used with *with*)	This essay is replete with errors—I don't think you even bothered to use spellcheck.
reproach	(noun, verb)	Blame, disgrace (noun); criticize, express disappointment in (verb)	I'm not really enjoying my foreign study program. My host mom reproached me in Spanish; it sounded really harsh, but I

			as the new bosses curtailed their freedoms and put a hold on their projects.
reticent	(adj)	Not talking much; private (of a person), restrained, reserved	She figured that, to rise to the top, it was best to be reticent about her personal life; thus, even her closest colleagues were left speculating at the water cooler about whether her growing belly actually indicated a pregnancy she simply declined to mention to anyone.
retrospective	(adj, noun)	Looking to the past or backward; applying to the past, retroactive (adj); an art exhibit of an artist's work over a long period of time (noun)	The proposed law is retrospective: anyone who violated the law before the law even existed can be prosecuted.
reverent	(adj)	Feeling or expressing very deep respect and awe	Ayn Rand is a controversial figure, but critical views are not welcome at the local Objectivist Club meeting, where everyone

			expresses a reverent view of the author.
rhetoric	(noun)	The art or study of persuasion through speaking or writing; language that is elaborate or pretentious but actually empty, meaning little	The ancient Greeks used to study rhetoric as a major academic subject. Today, if you want to improve your rhetorical skills, you will probably have to hunt down a public speaking class or join Toastmasters. / The politician's blather is all rhetoric and no substance.
rife	(adj)	Happening frequently, abundant, currently being reported	Reports of financial corruption are rife.
rudimentary	(adj)	Elementary, relating to the basics; undeveloped, primitive	My knowledge of Chinese is quite rudimentary—I get the idea of characters, and I can order food, but I really can't read this document you've just given me.
rustic	(adj, noun)	Relating to country life, unsophisticated; primitive; made of rough	For their honeymoon, they eschewed fancy hotels and instead chose

		of (noun); undermine, weaken, tire out (verb)	a free iPad to test and keep! I feel like such a sap. / In order to make maple syrup, you must drain sap from a sugar maple tree. They call this "sapping" the tree, which I can understand, because I feel pretty sapped doing it! It's tiring work.
satiate or sate	(verb)	To fully satisfy; to go beyond satisfying to the point of excess (possibly inducing disgust, tiredness, etc.)	I usually just eat a tiny salad or something while I'm at work, but since I had a half day off, I went to the Indian buffet and stayed for a whole hour! I've never been more satiated (or sated) in my life. / To maintain a healthy weight, stop eating before you reach the point of satiety.
saturate	(verb)	Soak or imbue thoroughly; cause a substance to unite with the greatest possible amount of another substance	We got married on a rainy beach, and my dress was saturated. Although the pictures were a bit dark, the photographer was able

			to increase the saturation in Photoshop, making our wedding photos ultimately look quite vivid. / I simply cannot dissolve any more sugar into this iced tea—it's saturated!
savor	(noun, verb)	A characteristic taste or flavor (usually pleasant) (noun); appreciate fully, taste or smell with pleasure (verb)	As a parent, it's important to take a step back and really savor the special moments—those children will grow up sooner than you think!
scant	(adj)	Not enough or barely enough	The new intern was scant help at the conference—he disappeared all day to smoke and didn't seem to realize that he was there to assist his coworkers. / The soldiers were always on the verge of hunger, complaining about their scanty rations.
scathing	(adj)	Severe, injurious; bitterly harsh or critical (as a remark)	The school superintendant gave a scathing criticism of the

			make her mother a grandmother. She was exhausted changing the subject two dozen times! / The creek skirts our property on the west, so it's easy to tell where our farm ends.
slack	(adj, verb, noun)	Loose, negligent, lazy, weak (adj); neglect to do one's duties; loosen up, relax (verb); period of little work (noun)	As the product of slack parenting, I never learned good time management skills—Mom and Dad never checked my homework or made me go to bed at a certain time. / The holidays represent an opportunity for employees to slack a bit.
slew	(noun)	A large number or quantity	As soon as we switched software packages, we encountered a whole slew of problems.
slight	(adj, verb, noun)	Small, not very important, slender or delicate (adj); treat as though not very important; snub, ignore	She was very sensitive, always holding a grudge against her coworkers for a variety of slights, both real and imagined. /

		(verb); an act of treating in this way, a discourtesy (noun)	Actress Natalie Portman has always been slight, but she became even thinner to portray a ballerina in the movie *Black Swan*. / I felt slighted when my husband told you about his promotion before he told me.
solicitous	(adj)	Concerned or anxious (about another person), expressing care; eager or desirous; very careful	A solicitous host, Derek not only asked each person how he or she was doing, but asked by name about everyone's spouses and kids. / Solicitous of fame, she would do anything to get near celebrities.
soporific	(adj, noun)	Causing sleep; sleepy, drowsy (adj); something that causes sleep (noun)	I was excited to take a class with Professor Baria because I had enjoyed her books, but sadly, she is a better writer than speaker—her lectures are soporific. / I was so distressed after the crash that the doctor gave me a soporific and,

		next in a continuous way)	of a language where speakers in different dialect groups can understand some, but not all, of the other groups; for instance, people in the west can understand people in the middle, and people in the middle can understand people in the east, but people in the west and the east cannot talk to one another.
speculate	(verb)	Contemplate; make a guess or educated guess about; engage in a risky business transaction, gamble	During the Gold Rush, speculators bought up land, sometimes with borrowed funds, expecting to prospect the land for gold and get rich quickly. / She speculated that, in zero gravity, showers would have to exist as closed rooms in which a giant bubble of water formed, and a person got inside it.
sporadic	(adj)	Occasional, happening irregularly or in scattered	Her attendance was sporadic at best, so

		locations	when she flounced into class after a two-session absence, she discovered that not only was everyone working on group projects, but that the professor hadn't even thought to assign her to a group. / “Be seeing you.” “Yeah, I hope not sporadically.”
sportive	(adj)	Playful, merry, joking around, done “in sport” (rather than intended seriously)	After Will shot a ball entirely off the pool table, knocking a woman's purse off a bar stool, his friends laughed hysterically and called him “purse-snatcher” all night, but he took it as sportive and bought the next round of drinks.
standing	(noun, adj)	Status, rank, reputation (noun); existing indefinitely, not movable (adj)	As he had feared, his divorce greatly reduced his standing as a relationship expert. / I'm disappointed that you don't want to leave your current job, but I want

			the kidnappers cut off the boy's ear. This famous cheapskate then demanded that his son (the boy's father) pay him back! What a miser.
stoic or stoical	(adj, noun)	Indifferent to pleasure or pain, enduring without complaint; person indifferent to pleasure or pain (noun)	Della was not only calm but positively stoic, facing the measles vaccination without a single yelp, in spite of her terrible fear of needles.
stolid	(adj)	Unemotional, showing little emotion, not easily moved	Dad is so stolid that we can't get a rise out of him no matter what we do—Jody got a tattoo, Max declared himself a communist, and Helen won a Rhodes Scholarship. No response! Dad just nodded and said "Alright, then."
stymie or stymy	(verb, noun)	Block, hinder, or thwart (verb); an obstacle (noun)	Celine feared that her learning disability would stymie her success in college, but the support

			services offered were excellent, and she was fine academically; the thing that really stymied her college career was poor time management.
subjective	(adj)	Existing in the mind or relating to one's own thoughts, opinions, emotions, etc.; personal, individual, based on feelings	Naturally, anyone's experience of a movie is subjective, and some will enjoy this picture despite its flaws; however, it is an objective fact that the cinematography is very bad. / We can give names to colors, but we can never quite convey the subjective experience of them—what if my "red" is different from your "red"?
subside	(verb)	Sink, settle down, become less active; return to a normal level	When her terror subsided, she realized that the house wasn't really haunted. / It is a chronic illness—symptoms will flare up and subside over one's lifetime.

synchronous	(adj)	Happening at the same time; occurring at the same rate and thus happening together repeatedly	The sound of that bell is a signal for the dancers to make perfectly synchronous entrances from opposite sides of the stage. / The two nearby churches have synchronous church bells—if you stand halfway between the buildings as the bells chime out the hour, it sounds really cool!
table	(verb)	Lay aside to discuss later, often as a way to postpone discussion indefinitely	I see we're not going to agree on whether to scrap our entire curriculum and develop a new one, so let's table that discussion and move on to voting on the budget.
tacit	(adj)	Understood without being said; implied, not stated directly	Her parents never told her she could smoke, but they gave their tacit consent when they didn't say anything about the obvious smell coming from her bedroom.

taciturn	(adj)	Not talking much, reserved; silent, holding back in conversation	Because he felt self-conscious about his stutter, Mike had always been taciturn, but after some very good speech therapy, soon he was much more voluble.
tangential	(adj)	Only slightly relevant, going off-topic	It's hard to get a quick answer out of Noah—ask him any question, and you'll get a wide range of tangential remarks before he gets around to the point.
temperance	(noun)	Moderation, self-control, esp. regarding alcohol or other desires or pleasures; total abstinence from alcohol	After the end of the Civil War, economic change led to an increase in alcohol problems and the birth of the Temperance Movement, which ultimately led to Prohibition. / Grandma is a model of temperance—she drinks red wine every night, but only the one-third of a glass that she read was conducive to preventing heart attacks.

transitory	(adj)	Temporary, short-lived, not lasting	While a few people marry their high school sweethearts, generally, our teenage years are full of transitory relationships.
trifling or trifle	(adj, noun)	Trivial, not very important; so small as to be unimportant; frivolous, shallow	Luis broke up with Cara because she was always obsessed with some trifling matter—he tried to talk about foreign aid dependency, and she changed the subject to what the actress Katie Holmes dressed her daughter Suri in for a shopping trip. / The young heiress was so wealthy that she considered the salary from her internship a mere trifle, and didn't even notice when her paycheck was days late.
trite	(adj)	Lacking freshness and originality, lacking effectiveness due to overuse, cliché	The topic of your speech is “Children Are the Future”? That's pretty trite. Maybe you should think harder and come

			up with something original.

ubiquitous	(adj)	Existing everywhere at the same time	Pay phones, which used to be ubiquitous in urban areas, are now nearly impossible to find in operation. / Butterflies seem to be ubiquitous in the habitat; watch any surface for several minutes, and a butterfly is sure to alight on it.
undermine	(verb)	Weaken, cause to collapse by digging away at the foundation (of a building or an argument); injure or attack in a secretive or underhanded way	Rather than searching impartially for the truth, these pharmaceutical company "scientists" willfully ignored any evidence that undermined the conclusion they were being paid to produce. / You are nice to my face, but you are undermining me behind my back, suggesting to others in the office that I am making mistakes in my work and that you have been fixing them.

underscore	(verb)	Emphasize (or, literally, to underline text)	"You're not going to mess with Otto anymore," said Otto. His new bodyguards stepped forward threateningly, as though to underscore his point.
unearth	(verb)	Dig up, uncover, expose	The ACLU's Prison Project works tirelessly to unearth evidence from old cases that might exonerate innocent people who have spent years or even decades in prison. / The archaeologist unearthed what appears to be the world's oldest known gravesite, showing that the earliest humans cared for their deceased loved ones.
unequivocal	(adj)	Unambiguous, clear, absolute; having only one possible meaning	Although Chuck denied he had a problem, his family was unequivocal in demanding that he check into rehab.

viable	(adj)	Capable of living (or growing, developing, etc.); practical, workable	I have three screenplay ideas, but the studio head said only one was commercially viable. Apparently, it's important to have a human lead character and a satisfying ending. / Due to leaps forward in technology, premature babies are considered viable earlier and earlier—currently around 24 weeks.
vintage	(adj, noun)	Related to items of high quality from a previous era, old-fashioned, antique (adj); the wine of a particular year (noun)	He didn't want just *any* vintage Darth Vader action figure—he wanted a particular vintage, the 1978 telescoping lightsaber one. / She special-ordered her favorite vintage of the Côtes du Rhône, then turned to her George Clooney–lookalike husband and joked that she liked men of a certain vintage

			as well.
virtual	(adj)	Existing only in the mind or by means of a computer network; existing in results or in essence but not officially or in name	The Tamagotchi is a handheld virtual pet made in Japan. You have to “care” for it by performing various actions with the device, but in the end, your “pet” still looks very much like a keychain.
vituperate	(verb)	Verbally abuse, rebuke or criticize harshly	All couples fight, but your girlfriend vituperates you so severely that I'm not sure she loves you at all. Verbal abuse is actually a pretty good reason to break up.
volatile	(adj)	Varying, inconstant, fleeting; tending to violence, explosive	Following the sudden revolution, the political environment in the country was so volatile that anything could have started a riot. / Stock prices are by nature volatile. If you want a “safe and steady” investment, try

			quite offended when her coworker suggested that she use her "feminine wiles" to make the sale.
zeal	(noun)	Great fervor or enthusiasm for a cause, person, etc.; tireless diligence in furthering that cause; passion, ardor	Whether you agree with their views or not, you have to admit that the employees of PETA have great zeal for animal rights—most work for less than $25,000 a year, and often participate in protests that get them shouted at or even arrested.
zenith	(noun)	High point, culmination	At the zenith of her career, the actress could command $5 million per film. Now, she is mostly seen in made-for-TV movies.

The list below contains 500 *advanced* words that you should learn for the GRE. If you have not already studied the *essential* word list, go back and do that now.

This list contains all of the words in the Manhattan Prep 500 Advanced Words for the GRE flash card set (available for purchase on our website, on Amazon.com, and at major bookstores). However, the flash cards contain *much* more information about each word, including synonyms, etymologies, and idiomatic usages. If you already have the flash cards, we suggest using those as your primary study tool, and using this list as an alphabetic reference.

WORD	P.O.S.	DEFINITION	USAGE
abase	(verb)	Degrade or humble; to lower in rank, status, or esteem	After messing up at work, the man faced a thorough abasement from his boss; when he realized he had forgotten his own wedding anniversary, he further abased himself in front of his wife.
abeyance	(noun)	Temporary suspension, inactivity	The baseball player's contract negotiations are in abeyance while doctors try to determine whether his injuries will heal in time for the season.

			be doing with my life.
acumen	(noun)	Keen, quick, accurate insight or judgment	His political acumen allowed him to bargain behind the scenes and get bills passed despite being in the minority party.
adulterate	(verb)	Make impure by adding inappropriate or inferior ingredients	Some bars adulterate top-shelf liquor by pouring cheaper brands into the more expensive brands' bottles.
adumbrate	(verb)	Give a rough outline of; foreshadow; reveal only partially; obscure	When I took on the lead role in the movie, I agreed not to give away the plot, but I suppose I could give a brief adumbration of the premise.
aerie	(noun)	Dwelling or fortress built on a high place; the nest of a bird of prey, such as an eagle or hawk, built on a mountain or cliff	The billionaire smoked a cigar out his window and watched the riots in the streets below, safe in the aerie of his penthouse apartment.
albeit	(conjunction)	Although, even though	The village leader was illiterate albeit highly intelligent. / The trip was

			exciting albeit brief.
aloof	(adj)	Distant physically or emotionally; reserved; indifferent	Perceiving her parents as cold and aloof, the child was naturally drawn to her warm, genial aunt.
amalgamate	(verb)	Blend, merge, or unite	The Amalgamated Transit Union is so called because it contains many local unions of bus operators, subway operators, baggage handlers, etc. / When turning her life story into a memoir, she amalgamated two important relatives into a single character, even amalgamating their names (Mary and Rose) into the character "Aunt Mary Rose."
ameliorate	(verb)	Improve; make better or more bearable	If you spill water on your computer keyboard, you can ameliorate the damage by leaving the keyboard upside down to dry; it may still be ruined, but that's still the best chance you've got of saving it.
amortize	(verb)	Gradually pay off	A mortgage is a common

		contrast, as in *love me or hate me*)	
apostate	(noun, adj)	Person who deserts a party, cause, religion, etc.	Many people considered "freedom fighters" by some are considered apostates by others. / Some women's rights leaders in very conservative nations receive death threats from religious leaders who consider them apostate.
apostle	(noun)	Pioneer of a reform movement (originally, an early follower of Jesus)	In the 1980s, when low-fat diets were all the rage, Dr. Rubens became an apostle of the Mediterranean diet, which was high in healthy fats, and traveled the world proselytizing to groups of physicians and nutritionists.
apposite	(adj)	Highly appropriate, suitable, or relevant	He searched his brain for an apposite word to describe wealthy Americans' addiction to consumer goods, until he discovered the neologism "affluenza."

apprise	(verb)	Inform, give notice to	I can't believe you failed to apprise me that my child was biting the other children in his preschool class. If I had known, I could've addressed this issue before all the other parents threatened to sue.
approbation	(noun)	Praise or approval, especially formal approval	In her speech for class president, she won the approbation of her peers by promising not only to save the prom, but to raise enough money to make it free for everyone.
appropriate	(verb)	Set aside or authorize (such as money) for a particular purpose; take for one's own use	The school board appropriated money for new textbooks. / In putting together the perfect outfit for Career Day at her high school, Mackenzie appropriated her mother's stethoscope and her little brother's stuffed pig, making it clear to everyone that she wanted to be a veterinarian.
arbiter	(noun)	Judge, umpire,	Professional mediators

		defamation, slander	business partner, who acted friendly to his face but then spewed aspersions about him behind his back.
assail	(verb)	Attack violently, assault	One strategy for winning in boxing is to simply assail your opponent with so many blows that he becomes disoriented. / The debate team assailed the opposition with more evidence than they could respond to.
assiduous	(adj)	Persevering, diligent, constant	Through assiduous effort over a substantial period of time, anyone can develop a prodigious vocabulary.
attenuate	(verb)	Weaken or thin out	Sadly, the day care center was so understaffed that the caregivers' efforts were attenuated, and many of the children barely received any attention at all.
attuned	(adj)	In harmony; in sympathetic relationship	Research shows that new mothers are keenly attuned to their babies' cries; even those who were formerly

			heavy sleepers often find that they now wake up immediately when their babies need attention. / In the sixth week of Melanie's foreign study program, she finally attuned herself to life on a French farm.
augury	(noun)	Telling the future, such as through supernatural means	Value investors such as Warren Buffett (who attempt to buy shares in undervalued companies by analyzing the businesses themselves) consider others' attempts to "time the market" as mere augury, equivalent to trying to predict rain by reading tea leaves.
august	(adj)	Venerable, majestic; inspiring admiration	"I welcome you to this august institution, where presidents and Nobel Prize winners have received the fruits of erudition," said the university president (rather bombastically) to the new crop of first-year students.
avarice	(noun)	Insatiable greed;	It is hard to fathom the

besiege	(verb)	Attack, overwhelm, crowd in on or surround	The regiment was besieged by attackers on all sides and finally surrendered. / I cannot go out this weekend—I am besieged by homework!
bevy	(noun)	Group of birds or other animals that stay close together; any large group	The bar owner cringed when a bevy of women in plastic tiaras came in. "Another drunken bachelorette party," he sighed.
bifurcate	(verb, adj)	To fork into two branches or divide into two halves	The medical student carefully bifurcated the cadaver brain, separating it precisely into right and left hemispheres. / The bifurcate tree stood tall, its two massive branches reaching for the sky.
bilk	(verb)	Cheat or defraud	The con artist bilked many elderly people out of their savings, promising to cure illnesses from diabetes to cancer with only 36 monthly payments of $99.99—for which the victims received nothing

			but useless placebo pills.
blight	(noun, verb)	Disease that kills plants rapidly, or any cause of decay or destruction (noun); ruin or cause to wither (verb)	Many potato farmers have fallen into poverty as a result of blight killing their crops. / Gang violence is a blight on our school system, causing innocent students to fear even attending classes. / Violence has blighted our town.
blithe	(adj)	Joyous, merry; excessively carefree (so as to ignore more important concerns)	Delighted about making the cheerleading team, she blithely skipped across the street without looking, and just narrowly avoided being hit by a bus.
bombastic	(adj)	(Of speech or writing) far too showy or dramatic than is appropriate; pretentious	Professor Knutsen's friends joked that he became quite bombastic after a few drinks, once asking a woman in a bar, “Is your daddy an aesthete? Because you are the epitome of ineffable pulchritude.” She replied, “I'm not impressed by your bombast.”

			created equal." Today, policy writers would probably catholicize a step further and write "All people."
chicanery	(noun)	Trickery, deception by knowingly false arguments	The defense lawyer's strategy for getting her client acquitted by knowingly misinterpreting words in an obscure precedent was nothing but chicanery.
circumscribe	(verb)	Strictly limit a role, range of activity, or area; in math, to be constructed around so as to touch as many points as possible	Sara's parent circumscribed her after-school activities; she was permitted only to study and to join organizations directly related to academic subjects. / A square circumscribed in a circle has all four of its vertices on the circle's circumference. / Our land is circumscribed by hedges and fences.
circumspect	(adj)	Cautious, prudent; careful to consider the	Tiana immediately forked over an initiation fee to become a vitamin

		circumstances and consequences	distributor, but her more circumspect brother had a list of at least 20 questions he wanted answered before he would consider joining.
clamber	(verb)	Climb awkwardly or with difficulty, scramble	The hiker had spent the last hour plodding lethargically up the side of the mountain, but when she caught sight of the summit, she excitedly began to clamber up even the steepest inclines.
cloying	(adj)	Disgustingly or distastefully sweet	I do like visiting our grandmother, but I can't stand those cloying movies she watches—last time it was some heart-tugging story where an orphan saves a suffering pony. / I do like cake, but I find that honey-covered angel food cake positively cloying.
coagulate	(verb)	Cause a liquid to become solid or semisolid	Hemophilia is a medical condition in which the blood doesn't coagulate, meaning that a hemophiliac can easily

			Bethlehem" as being to the west of "West Bethlehem." / He was already a little flummoxed in regards to differential equations, but reading an incorrectly edited Wikipedia page on the topic only confounded the problem.
connote	(verb)	Suggest or imply in addition to the precise, literal meaning	The word "titanic" simply means large or majestic, but because of the word's association with the sunken ship, "titanic" has a negative connotation to many people.
contraries	(noun)	Things that are opposing; either of two opposite things	The Machiavellian among us would say that ethics and expedience are contraries—at some point, one must win out over the other.
contrite	(adj)	Remorseful; feeling sorry for one's offenses or sins	He would have punished his son more severely for breaking his car's windshield in a "rock throwing contest," but the boy seemed truly contrite.

contumacious	(adj)	Rebellious; stubbornly disobedient	The psychologist's book *Dealing with Your Contumacious Teenager* would have sold many more copies to parents of rude and rebellious youth if only people knew what *contumacious* meant.
convoke	(verb)	Call together, as to a meeting	The dean has convoked this gathering to discuss the Honor Code.
cosset	(verb)	Treat as a pet, pamper	The cosseted toddler was lovingly wrapped up in his snow gear, so much so that he could barely even move his arms enough to make his first snowball.
coterie	(noun)	Close or exclusive group, clique	The pop star never traveled anywhere without a coterie of assistants and managers.
cupidity	(noun)	Greed, great or excessive desire	The doctor's medical license was revoked after it was discovered that, out of sheer cupidity, he had diagnosed people with illnesses they didn't have and pocketed insurance

			which was rarely. / Don't mind my daughter; there's no need to let a toddler's desultory remarks pull an adult conversation off track.
diaphanous	(adj)	Very sheer, fine, translucent	The wedding dress was a confection of diaphanous silk, made of at least ten layers of the thin fabric, each layer of which was so fine you could see through it.
dichotomy	(noun)	Division into two parts or into two contradictory groups	There is a dichotomy in the sciences between theoretical or "pure" sciences, such as physics and chemistry, and the life sciences, which often deal more with classifying than with theorizing.
dictum	(noun)	Formal or authoritative pronouncement; saying or proverb	The king's dictum stated that each feudal lord must provide a certain number of soldiers within three weeks' time. / "A stitch in time saves nine" is an old dictum meaning that it's

			easier to solve a problem before it gets too big.
diffident	(adj)	Lacking confidence, shy	Natasha was so diffident that she never believed her comments could be worth anything in class, even when she knew the answer.
diffuse	(verb, adj)	Spread widely, disseminate (verb); dispersed, widely spread out, or wordy and going off-topic (adj)	It will be very difficult to diffuse the power among the people when transitioning from autocracy to democracy. / The spy attempted to root out the dissenters at the gala, but he was only able to detect a diffuse sense of discontent all around the room.
dilate	(verb)	To become wider or make wider, cause to expand; to speak or write at length, elaborate upon	The doctor gave her eye drops to make her pupils dilate. / These dinners at Professor Hwang's house usually run rather late; after the meal, he'll typically dilate on his latest research for at least an hour.
dilatory	(adj)	Slow, late; procrastinating or	Jack was supposed to start his presentation 10

			two disparate reasons: the strength of the computer science program, and the excellence of the hip-hop dance squad.
dissemble	(verb)	Mislead, conceal the truth, put on a false appearance of	Roxanne was used to dissembling in job interviews; when asked about the gap on her résumé from 1999–2003, she would say, "Oh, I was out of the workforce fulfilling some obligations"—a somewhat misleading way to describe a prison stint. / He won so much money at pool halls by dissembling inexperience, pretending at first that he had no idea how to even hold a pool cue; once bets were placed, he handily defeated his opponents.
dissolution	(noun)	Dissolving, the state of having been dissolved; breaking bonds or breaking up of	Alan went from garden-variety hedonism to utter dissolution—his three-day drug benders cost him his job and may land him in

		a group of people; death, disintegration; sinking into extreme hedonism, vice, and degradation	jail. / Following the dissolution of the corporation and the liquidation of our assets, each investor will receive a cash payment proportional to his or her shareholding in the company.
distaff	(adj, noun)	Female, esp. relating to the maternal side of the family; women or women's work; a staff that holds wool or flax for spinning	In completing your medical history, please try to remember which illnesses occurred on the distaff side of your family. / Medical studies using all-male study groups may produce results that cannot be replicated in distaff subjects.
distend	(verb)	Swell, expand, stretch, bloat	The emergency room doctor constantly saw people who came in with distended bellies, sure that they had appendicitis; usually, it was just gas.
dither	(verb, noun)	Act indecisively (verb); a state of fear or trembling excitement	“Stop dithering,” said the mother to her daughter. “Pick which sweater you want so I can pay for it and

dupe	(noun, verb)	Person who is easily fooled or used (noun); to fool or exploit (verb)	The dashing rogue used flattery and lies to dupe several old ladies out of their money. “I feel like a total dupe,” said Hazel Rosenbaum. “I thought he and I were going to get married, but he really just wanted my Social Security checks.”
duplicity	(noun)	Deceit, double-dealing, acting in two different ways for the purpose of deception	The campaign worker's duplicity finally came to light when it was discovered that, despite rising to a trusted position within the local Workers Party, he was actually a registered National Party member and was feeding information back to his cronies.
dyspeptic	(adj)	Grumpy, pessimistic, irritable; suffering from dyspepsia (indigestion)	The dyspeptic professor was so angered by a question from a student who hadn't done the homework that he actually stomped out of class.
ebullient	(adj)	Very enthusiastic,	The children were so

		lively, excited; bubbling as though being boiled	ebullient upon their arrival at Disneyworld that their parents, while happy to see them so excited, wished that there were a way to forcibly restrain them in case they took off running towards the rides.
echelon	(noun)	A level, rank, or grade; the people at that level	Obtaining a job on Wall Street doesn't guarantee access to the upper echelon of executives, where multimillion-dollar bonuses are the norm. / I'm not sure I'm cut out to analyze poetry; I find it hard to dig beyond the most accessible echelon of meaning.
edify	(verb)	Uplift, enlighten, instruct, or improve in a spiritual or moral way	Look, I'm glad that you're reading, but I really wish you would read something more edifying than that magazine that gives tips for winning at violent video games.
effigy	(noun)	Representation or image of a	The dictator was disturbed to look out the palace

epicure	(noun)	Person with cultivated, refined tastes, esp. in food and wine	A true epicure, he served only the finest wines, and bragged about how the pancetta was imported from Italy and the Stilton cheese from the English countryside.
equanimity	(noun)	Composure, evenness of mind; mental or emotional stability, esp. under stress	Having worked for many years in mental hospitals, her equanimity was unparalleled—you could throw a chair or a bowl of spaghetti at her, and she would just say, "Settle down, now."
equivocate	(verb)	Use unclear language to deceive or avoid committing to a position	Not wanting to lose supporters, the politician equivocated on the issue, tossing out buzzwords related to each side while also claiming more study was needed.
ersatz	(adj)	Artificial, synthetic; being an inferior substitute	I hate this health food restaurant! I do not want to eat some ersatz meatballs made of textured vegetable protein!
erstwhile	(adj, adv)	Former, previous	A novelist and erstwhile

		(adj); in the past, formerly (adv)	insurance salesman, he told us his story of the long road to literary success, before he was able to quit his day job.
ethos	(noun)	The character, personality, or moral values specific to a person, group, time period, etc.	At the prep school, the young man happily settled into an ethos of hard work and rigorous athletic competition.
euphemism	(noun)	Substitution of a mild, inoffensive, or indirect expression for one that is considered offensive or too direct	Many euphemisms surround death and disease; rather than "Joe died of cancer," many people feel better saying "Joe's suffering is finally over." / When potty training their children, some parents use hilarious euphemisms for body parts.
euphony	(noun)	Pleasing or sweet sound, esp. as formed by a harmonious use of words	Poetry in translation can keep its meaning, but often loses the euphony the poet worked so laboriously to create.
exigent	(adj)	Requiring	My boss said she would

			unused part of the land to become renewed with minerals. / It is terribly important that we make college affordable for underprivileged students, lest great minds lie fallow, and the world never benefit from their genius.
fastidious	(adj)	Excessively particular, difficult to please; painstaking, meticulous, requiring excessive attention to detail	Steve was a fastidious housekeeper, fluffing his couch pillows at least twice a day and never allowing the tiniest speck of dust to settle on any exposed surface.
fatuous	(adj)	Foolish, silly, esp. in a smug or complacent manner	Sadly, every philosophy class seems to have one person who responds to every discussion, from metaphysics to ethics, with the fatuous question, “But what if we don't really exist?”
fawn	(verb)	Show affection or try to please in the manner of a	Although he was only president of a chain of grocery stores, he was used

		dog; try to win favor through flattery and submissive behavior	to being fawned over like a king or rock star. “You are truly king of the low-priced produce world,” said the regional manager. “May I wash your car for you?”
fecund	(adj)	Fruitful, fertile; capable of abundantly producing offspring, vegetation, or creative or intellectual work	Rabbits are quite fecund; if you've got two, you'll soon have forty. / While some novelists seem to return to the same themes over and over, Bredlaw's fecund mind produced whole new universes for every story he wrote.
felicitous	(adj)	Admirably appropriate, very well-suited for the occasion; pleasant, fortunate, marked by happiness	“What a felicitous occasion!” said the new grandfather, arriving at the hospital with an “It's a Girl!” balloon. The new father found the balloon remarkably felicitous, especially since the baby's gender had been announced less than an hour ago.
fervid	(adj)	Very hot; heated in passion or	He is a fervid fan of Virginia Tech football, so

		to walk or ride a vehicle across (noun); to cross at such a place (verb)	fordable again. A week later, the waters were shallow enough to ford the river with their entire caravan—horses, wagons, and all.
forestall	(verb)	Delay, hinder, prevent by taking action beforehand	Our research has been forestalled by a lack of funding; we're all just biding our time until the university approves our grant proposal.
fortuitous	(adj)	Happening by chance; lucky	It was amazingly fortuitous that the exclusive beach resort had a cancellation for exactly the weekend she had wanted to get married, allowing her to have the perfect wedding after all.
fracas	(noun)	Noisy disturbance or fight; brawl	Rugby is one of the most aggressive of sports; when the players rush to pile on top of the person with the ball, bones can easily be broken in the fracas.
fractious	(adj)	Unruly, troublemaking; irritable	The Students for Progressive Action were a fractious bunch, always

			fighting with one another over exactly which progressive action should take priority.
frenetic	(adj)	Wildly excited, frantic, distracted	The advice in the expert's time management book struck many as unrealistic, as not everyone can handle the frenetic lifestyle the author espouses: getting up before dawn to begin work before spending quality time with the kids over breakfast, taking conference calls from the treadmill, etc.
fulminate	(verb)	Attack verbally in a vehement, thunderous way; explode, detonate;	Please don't bring up anything related to gun control around my family or my dad will fulminate for hours about the Second Amendment.
furtive	(adj)	Done secretly; stealthy, sly, shifty	As a spokesperson for a popular diet plan, the actress had to be quite furtive about eating junk food, even hiding her M&Ms in a breath mint

		one's thumb; swindle, extort money from (verb)	gouged out and gross stuff like that.
graft	(verb, noun)	Insert part of a plant into another plant, where it continues to grow; join living tissue (such as skin) to part of the body where it will continue to live and grow; attach as if by grafting (verb); the part so grafted (as in a graft of skin); the act of acquiring money or other benefits through illegal means, esp. by abusing one's power (noun)	The part of the book describing the financial crisis is good, but the "What You Can Do" section seems grafted on, almost as though written by a different author. / It's not cool for your boss to pressure you into buying Girl Scout cookies from his daughter. If she were selling something larger, we'd call that graft.
grandiloquent	(adj)	Relating to lofty speech, esp. to the point of being	After memorizing 1,000 vocabulary flashcards for the GRE, Derek couldn't

		pompous, overblown, bombastic	help but become a little grandiloquent, declaring his desire to “abscond from my familial domicile and satisfy my penchant for erudition.” “You can do that later,” said his mother, “but now it's your turn to do the dishes.”
grandstand	(verb)	Perform showily in an attempt to impress onlookers	I was really passionate about the candidate when he spoke at our school, but now that I think about it, he was just grandstanding. I mean, who could disagree that young people are the future? And doing a cheer for the environment doesn't actually signify a commitment to change any public policies about it.
grating	(adj)	Irritating; harsh or discordant (of a noise); scraping	Folding jeans at the mall finally became unbearable when her kindly old supervisor was replaced with a young woman whose grating tone made commands like “Fold faster and then clean up this

			losing and breaking things, as though bad luck simply follows wherever he goes.
harangue	(noun, verb)	Long, intense verbal attack, esp. when delivered publicly (noun); to speak to in a forceful way (verb)	Look, I'll clean the gutters when I get a free weekend—I don't need you to keep haranguing me about it.
harrow	(noun, verb)	Farming tool that breaks up soil (noun); painfully disturb or distress (verb)	Let's start our garden together; you harrow, and I'll follow behind you planting the seeds. / The bus ride across Siberia was a harrowing experience—the roads were all ice, and the ancient, barely heated vehicle seemed to be lacking both headlights and brakes.
hedge	(verb)	Avoid commitment by leaving provisions for withdrawal or changing one's mind; protect a	While he coaxed and cajoled us all into seeing "the best movie ever," he hedged once we were in the theater: "I don't know if you all like this sort of thing," he said. "I mean,

		bet by also betting on the other side	you can make up your own minds."
hegemony	(noun)	Domination, authority; influence by one country over others socially, culturally, economically, etc.	The discovery of oil by a previously poor nation disrupted the larger, richer nation's hegemony in the region—suddenly, the hegemon had a competitor.
hermetic	(adj)	Airtight, sealed, isolated; reclusive; pertaining to alchemy, occult	These packaged meals are hermetically sealed—they'll last years in storage, but once opened, you need to finish the contents within a couple of days. / While writing hundreds of vocabulary flash cards, the GRE instructor lived a hermetic lifestyle, her skin growing pallid and her social network drastically shrinking.
hew	(verb)	Strike, chop, or hack (as with an axe, sword. etc.); make or shape something (such	The pioneer had to hew his own way through the brush in order to proceed westward. / She preferred rustic furniture; her dining

		devotion or adoration	Howard Gardner and his theory of multiple intelligences. “Gardner isn't a god,” she would say, “and you simply can't learn calculus through movement or interpersonal skills.”
idyllic or idyll	(adj, noun)	Presenting a positive, peaceful view of rural life (as poetry or prose); pleasant in a natural, simple way (adj); a happy, enjoyable experience (noun)	An action-packed vacation wasn't their style. For their honeymoon, they enjoyed a quiet idyll in a cabin in the woods, just watching the deer and enjoying nature.
ignoble	(adj)	Not noble; having mean, base, low motives; low quality	What you have done may not be illegal, but it surely is ignoble—people who don't read the user agreement surely do not expect that, by clicking “I Agree,” they have signed up for a Jelly-of-the-Month club!

imbue	(verb)	Permeate or saturate, as dye in a fabric; influence throughout	After shearing the sheep and spinning the yarn, the next step is to imbue the yarn with dye. / His poems are imbued with a sense of longing for a lost homeland.
immutable	(adj)	Unchangeable	Studies of the brains of stroke patients have shown that our identities are not fixed and immutable; rather, physical injuries to the brain can drastically change our personalities.
impasse	(noun)	Position or road from which there is no escape; deadlock	If the union won't budge on its demands and the transit authority won't raise salaries, then we are at an impasse.
impassive	(adj)	Not having or not showing physical feeling or emotion	Having been in and out of hospitals all his life, he accepted this latest diagnosis impassively. “Whatever happens, happens,” he said.
impecunious	(adj)	Poor, without money	Having grown up with impecunious parents who could barely keep the

			gift certificate nor a complimentary doggie sweater would reduce his fury.
imprecation	(noun)	Curse; prayer for harm to come to someone	The haunted house features a "wicked witch" chanting imprecations at all who pass through.
impugn	(verb)	Attack the truth or integrity of	I hate to impugn the motives of the volunteers, but I think that some of them are here for personal gain, not to help.
impute	(verb)	Credit, attribute; lay blame or responsibility for (sometimes falsely)	The ineffectual CEO was nevertheless a master of public relations—he made sure that all successes were imputed to him, and all of the failures were imputed to others.
incarnadine	(adj, noun)	Blood red or flesh-colored	The police took the body to the morgue; all that was left at the murder scene was an incarnadine stain on a pillow.
inconstancy	(noun)	Fickleness, unreliability; the state of changing	Old-fashioned poems often praised a lover's constancy; the poet would likely be

		without good reason	shocked by any inconstancy from his lady, such as if she were receiving poems from other poets.
inculcate	(verb)	Teach persistently, implant (an idea) in a person	Parents spend years trying to inculcate morality in their children, constantly teaching and correcting them.
indefatigable	(adj)	Untiring, not able to become fatigued	The boxer was indefatigable; round after round, he never lost speed or energy, even after he had thoroughly defatigated his opponent.
indigence	(noun)	Extreme poverty	The city government has several agencies that provide shelter, food, and other assistance to help relieve indigence.
indolent	(adj)	Lazy, slothful	Having worked all his life, the CEO was constantly frustrated with his indolent son, who used his inherited wealth as an excuse to sunbathe and party.

			AARP crosswords as the 65-year-old company president.
inimical	(adj)	Hostile, adverse, harmful	Most people think that being shouted at in the freezing rain is inimical to learning; sadly, our boot camp instructor disagreed.
iniquity	(noun)	Injustice, wickedness, sin	The preacher's sermon about loving your neighbor was regarded by some as a welcome departure from his usual fiery homilies railing against iniquity. / Iniquitous corporations, such as those that spill oil into our oceans, must be punished.
inordinate	(adj)	Excessive, not within proper limits, unrestrained	Students taking practice Computer-Adaptive Tests at home often take an inordinate number of breaks. Remember, on the real thing, you can't stop just because you're tired or hungry.

inquest	(noun)	Legal or judicial inquiry, esp. before a jury and esp. made by a coroner into the cause of someone's death; the results of such an inquiry	The family waited nervously for the results of the inquest, which finally returned a verdict of misadventure; that is, their grandfather had not been murdered, but rather died in a freak accident of his own doing.
insensible	(adj)	Incapable of feeling; unconscious, unaware	Very intoxicated people can be insensible to pain, leading to serious problems as they injure themselves and don't realize it. / I cannot believe that, while I was insensible after the operation, you put funny hats on me and took pictures!
insinuate	(verb)	Hint, suggest slyly; introduce (an idea) into someone's mind in a subtle, artful way	"Where's your boyfriend? You didn't leave him home alone, did you?" asked Ming. "Are you insinuating something?" asked Helen. "If you have something to say, just say it."

		not function; any period of freedom from authority or break or interruption in a series	interregnum between Madonna and Lady Gaga, there was no single female pop star who commanded such titanic audiences.
intransigent	(adj)	Refusing to compromise, inflexible, having extreme attitudes	"Even three detentions and a note home to your parents haven't convinced you to behave yourself in class!" the teacher said to the intransigent child.
inundate	(verb)	Flood, cover with water, overwhelm	As the city was inundated with water, the mayor feared that many evacuees would have nowhere to go. / I can't go out—I am inundated with homework!
inure	(verb)	Toughen up; accustom or habituate to pain, hardship, etc.	Having had over a dozen surgeries before she was 10, spending months at a time in the hospital, she considered herself inured to pain and disappointment.
invective	(noun)	Violent	Although the money was

		denunciation; accusations, insults, or verbal abuse	good, she quit her job after nearly having a nervous breakdown from her boss's invective.
inveigle	(verb)	Entice, lure; get something by flattery, cleverness, or offering incentives	After Mrs. Kim found out that her son's friends had inveigled him into doing something stupid, she gave him a lecture on standing up to peer pressure.
investiture	(noun)	Investing; formally giving someone a right or title	The former dean had her academic robes dry cleaned in preparation for her investiture as university president.
invidious	(adj)	Hateful, offensive, injurious	School bullying has become a serious problem, with ongoing invidious behavior driving students to suicide.
irascible	(adj)	Irritable, easily angered	“I spent my entire childhood tiptoeing around so as not to anger my irascible mother,” Isaiah told his therapist.

		motion	what she had learned in science class: a ball sitting on a table has potential energy, but a ball falling towards the ground has kinetic energy.
knell	(noun, verb)	The sound made by a bell for a funeral, or any sad sound or signal of a failure, death, ending, etc. (noun); to make such a sound (verb)	The Senate minority leader's speech was a death knell for the bill; all hope of bipartisan cooperation was lost.
lachrymose	(adj)	Tearful, mournful	Accustomed to lachrymose occasions, the funeral home kept boxes of tissues near every seat.
larceny	(noun)	Theft	The department store employs a security officer whose job it is to prevent larceny.
largess or largesse	(noun)	Generosity, the giving of money or gifts (esp. with the	While I did attend an expensive private school, my parents were actually

		implication that the giver is a bit superior to the recipient)	quite poor—I was at that school through the largesse of my grandfather.
latent	(adj)	Potential; existing but not visible or active	Certain experts believe that some people have a genetic propensity for addiction; however, if such a person never comes into contact with drugs, the propensity for addiction can remain latent for life.
laudable	(adj)	Worthy of praise	"Your loyalty to your friends is laudable," the principal said, "but if you don't start naming names, you'll end up in trouble yourself."
lax	(adj)	Not strict; careless, loose, slack	My parents were really lax about homework—they never checked to see if I did it or not. Sadly, this legacy of laxity is not serving me well while studying for the GRE.
leery	(adj)	Suspicious or wary	You should be leery of

listless	(adj)	Spiritless, lacking interest or energy	"I'm too tired to care about homework," mumbled the listless child, staring blankly at the wall. "Maybe if someone brought me a glass of milk and a cookie..."
livid	(adj)	Furiously angry, enraged	Diane was livid when she discovered that her daughter had borrowed her wedding dress to wear to an '80s party. "I have never been angrier in my life," she said.
lugubrious	(adj)	Mournful, gloomy (sometimes in an exaggerated way)	Kiara was having a good time at the Irish pub until the Traditional Music Hour started, and the lugubrious tunes made her cry into her Guinness.
lumber	(verb)	Walk in a heavy or clumsy way, sometimes due to being weighed down	Alicia was a model and was accustomed to walking everywhere as though on a catwalk, so she was quite displeased when she broke her leg

			and had to lumber around in a cast, thumping the ground everywhere she went.
luminous	(adj)	Shining, radiant, well-lit; brilliant or enlightening	Use our new light-reflecting shimmer blush for a luminous complexion. / We are conferring this honorary degree on the author in appreciation for sharing his luminous intellect with the world. He is truly a luminary.
lurid	(adj)	Gruesome or excessively vivid; sensational, shocking, unrestrained	I do like to keep up with what celebrities are doing, but that tabloid is just too lurid for me—just look at the cover: "Worst Cellulite in Hollywood" and "Exclusive Crash Photos." Truly horrible.
machination or machinations	(noun, usually plural)	Crafty schemes or plots	It's cute to think that teen idols became famous because their talent was simply so great that the music

			said his stomach hurt and spent the afternoon in the nurse's office. By Wednesday, though, the nurse accused him of malingering and sent him back to class.
manifest	(verb, adj)	Obvious, apparent, perceptible to the eye (adj); to show, make clear, or prove (verb)	My superstitious aunt claims that she saw a manifestation of our deceased grandfather, who appeared during a thunderstorm to warn us all about our cousin's fiance. / Lupus is difficult to diagnose, but sometimes manifests as muscular weakness or joint pain.
mannered	(adj)	Having a particular manner, esp. an artificial one	Although he grew up in rural Ohio, sometime before he got his own makeover show on television he adopted a mannered way of speaking, as though he had grown up in some very odd corner of Victorian England.

mar	(verb)	Damage, spoil, ruin	The interior designer's secret was to buy furnishings and fixtures that had been marred on the shop floor and therefore were sold at steep discounts; she would then fix the defects herself or add additional aging effects to the pieces.
martinet	(noun)	Person who adheres to rules extremely closely; strict disciplinarian	It was no fun growing up with a military officer for a dad. He was such a martinet he once made me do 20 pushups for being one minute late to bed—even though the reason I was late was that I wanted to kiss him goodnight.
maudlin	(adj)	Excessively sentimental, showing sadness or some other emotion in a foolish or silly way	I had no idea the film was going to be a maudlin affair in which the male lead dies and the female lead has his baby, who then also dies. Half the theater was weeping, and the other

		a swamp or muddy area), soiled	mistakes, the new CEO found it difficult to take the company in a new direction.
mirth	(noun)	Jollity, merriment; amusement or laughter	Nothing could beat the mirth of the office holiday party—once everyone had heard how fat their bonuses would be, the delighted staff formed a conga line and drank and danced the night away.
misanthrope or misanthropist	(noun)	Hater of humankind	He is such a misanthrope that when some Girl Scouts going door to door asked if he'd like to sponsor a hungry child overseas, he replied, "The fewer people in the world, the better," and shut the door in their faces!
missive	(noun)	Letter, written message	While Don was overseas fighting in World War II, he lived for the missives from the wife he had left behind.

modicum	(noun)	A little bit or limited quantity	In her first five years in Hollywood, she experienced only a modicum of success as an actress, appearing twice in commercials and once as a waitress on *Desperate Housewives*.
modish	(adj)	Stylish, contemporary	While some sculptors sought to make their work universal and timeless, Dania sculpted modish creations that captured the pop-cultural zeitgeist—for instance, a sculpture of Rihanna with an umbrella, or a three-foot high representation of the latest Alexander McQueen heels.
molt	(verb)	Shed or cast off, esp. to regularly shed skin, feathers, etc. (as a snake)	The translucent cylinder left behind when a snake molts is weirdly beautiful; it looks like a piece of blown glass.
monastic	(adj)	Relating to or resembling a	Christine decided that the only way she was

		monastery (where monks or nuns live), esp. by being quiet, secluded, contemplative, strict, and/or lacking luxuries	going to finish her Ph.D. was to live a monastic lifestyle: she broke up with her boyfriend, cancelled her cable service, left the house only when necessary, and ultimately had a draft of her dissertation a few months later.
morose	(adj)	Gloomy, sullen	She had always been a happy child, but once she hit high school and decided to become a goth, she adopted a morose attitude to match her all-black clothing.
multifarious	(adj)	Diverse, having a lot of variety	Last year's jewelry line was all metal and neutrals, but this year's presents a multifarious array of brilliant colors.
munificent	(adj)	Generous, giving liberally	The elderly titan of industry was notoriously miserly, sometimes called “the cheapest man alive.” But his wife was quite munificent, and

			after his death, she used his fortune to support numerous charities and to buy a house for their longtime maid.
myopic	(adj)	Near-sighted; lacking long-term thinking, short-sighted	To raise prices in a time of crisis is both wrong and deeply myopic—our profits would go up in the short term, but our customers' resentment would simmer for decades. / Myron's myopia is so strong that he cannot be helped by contact lenses and has to wear the heavy glasses he has worn for decades.
nadir	(noun)	Lowest point	It was only when Ming reached her absolute nadir—what her recovery program called "rock bottom"—that she admitted she had a problem and checked herself into rehab.
neologism	(noun)	New word or phrase (or a new	You won't find "fauxhawk" in the

		merely describing that which is happening)	and I am simply reporting and analyzing how people actually talk.
obdurate	(adj)	Stubborn, hardhearted, hardened in wrongdoing	The first mate reported that there was some fuzzy shape on the horizon, but the captain insisted that the instruments showed no such object, and obdurately sailed straight ahead—right into an iceberg. / This obdurate criminal should never be let out on parole—he simply cannot be reformed.
oblique	(adj)	Slanting or sloping; indirect, misleading, or evasive	After the fifteenth oblique reference that Bella made to George or George made to Bella, everyone in the office figured out that they were dating. / The serial killer loved to talk to interrogators, but gave only oblique answers that were useless in finding the bodies.

occlude	(verb)	Stop up, close, shut in or shut off	This drain guard is here to make sure nothing (like silverware) ends up occluding your garbage disposal.
opine	(verb)	Express an opinion	He was happy to opine on everything from books to wine to politics, unaware that people didn't see him as intelligent enough to be worth listening to.
opprobrium	(noun)	Disgrace and disapproval that result from outrageously shameful actions	Some young starlets seem to think a DUI offense isn't such a big deal, but drunk driving deserves opprobrium—driving under the influence maims and kills innocent people every year.
orotund	(adj)	Full, rich, and clear (of the voice or speaking); pompous, bombastic	The actor James Earl Jones has long been sought after for voiceover work as well as acting jobs because of his dignified, orotund voice.

		illness	continued treatments when there was no hope of a cure, so we gave consent for him to be transferred to the palliative care wing where he would be made as comfortable as possible in his final weeks.
pallid	(adj)	Abnormally pale (as skin); lacking color or vitality	When Adolfo left the office mid-day, we knew from the pallor that had overtaken him that he really was getting sick. / We need this blog to really hit hard against the special interest groups ruining our country, and your pallid writing isn't doing it—you're going to bore people to death with this wimpy prose.
panache	(noun)	Flair, style, swagger; a flamboyant or grand way of acting	Not only did he quit, but he did so with panache, actually delivering a PowerPoint presentation that we thought would be about the budget, but

			which turned out to be quite obscene. He then pulled out a flask, guzzled its contents, and walked out. That guy's kind of a legend.
panegyric	(noun)	Formal or lofty expression of praise	Lincoln enthusiasts were excited that a new biography was to be published, and many hoped that new light would be cast on certain controversies. However, the book was pure panegyric, nothing but heroic tales, uncritically presented.
panoply	(noun)	Splendid, wide-ranging, impressive display or array	Our old cafeteria had only premade salads, but the new cafeteria has a salad bar with a panoply of toppings.
paragon	(noun)	Model of excellence, perfect example	Unlike his sister, he was a paragon of responsibility, taking in her three children when she went to jail, and even switching jobs so he

			peddling lies to our children," said Mrs. Mahmood, protesting an event in which fringe political candidates were invited to speak to kids.
pejorative	(adj, noun)	Disparaging, derogatory, belittling (adj); a name or word that is disparaging (noun)	I'm open to constructive criticism, but I think my supervisor's remarks are inappropriately pejorative—it's never okay to call an employee a "sniveling dullard." / Although these insults wouldn't be understood by most, "poetaster" and "mathematicaster" are pejoratives for minor, incompetent poets and mathematicians, respectively.
pellucid	(adj)	Transparent, translucent; clear, easy to understand	He decided that the cove's pellucid waters were an excellent place to teach his daughter to swim, reasoning that, if she started to sink, he would easily be able to see where she was.

penitent	(adj, noun)	Regretful, feeling remorse for one's sins or misdeeds (adj); a person who feels this way (noun)	After being "separated" from the college for plagiarism, she wrote a letter to the Dean expressing her deep regret and penitence and hoping to be readmitted.
penumbra	(noun)	Outer part of a shadow from an eclipse; any surrounding region, fringe, periphery; any area where something "sort of" exists	The Constitution doesn't specifically mention a right to privacy, but some experts consider this to exist in the penumbra of the Constitution, as a guarantee of privacy is needed in order to exercise the rights that are enumerated. / The rent in Chicago was too high, so they moved to a suburb in the penumbra of the city.
penury	(noun)	Extreme poverty or scarcity	The young model married an elderly billionaire thinking she'd be set for life, but she ended up living in penury after her husband died and his middle-aged

			move forward.
phalanx	(noun)	Formation of soldiers carrying shields close together for defense; any very close group of people	To even enter the embassy, the diplomats had to make their way through a phalanx of protestors.
philistine	(noun)	Person deficient in or hostile to culture	Her date was very handsome, but she decided he was an absolute philistine when he said that documentaries were "boring" and that the "best picture" Oscar should go to *Resident Evil: Afterlife 3D*.
phlegmatic	(adj)	Apathetic, sluggish, not easily excited or made emotional	He had a phlegmatic disposition, refusing to get angry or even noticeably upset when his wife left him for his brother.
platitude	(noun)	A shallow, overused statement; cliché	Everyone who knew my mother knows she was an atheist, so I can't imagine why people at

			her funeral would think we'd enjoy their soppy platitudes about Mom's "being in a better place now."
plebeian	(adj)	Of the common people	I toured a luxury apartment building, and I laughed when I saw that the apartments had walk-in closets and whirlpool bathtubs, but hilariously tiny ovens. Because, of course, the wealthy would never do something so plebian as cook their own food.
plethora	(noun)	Excess; excessive amount	She had a plethora of excuses, but there is simply no justification for arriving to class drunk.
plucky	(adj)	Brave, spirited	Feminist critics have commented that today's romantic comedies tend to feature passive, helpless female leads, whereas the romantic comedies of the 1940s

			modular brain—a self that is a mix of different brain parts, with no central "coordinator."
prattle	(verb)	Talk in an idle, simple-minded, meaningless, or foolish way; chatter, babble	It was infuriating to listen to the boss prattle on about some new restaurant in town when everyone was just waiting to find out if they'd been laid off.
precipitate	(verb)	Cause to happen suddenly or prematurely; fling, plunge, or hurl down	Mr. and Mrs. Sikos had been considering a move to Florida for years, but the sudden destruction of their house in a hurricane precipitated their decision to finally make the move. / "Stay away from the precipice!" said the mother to her child. "I wouldn't want my darling son to be precipitated to his doom!"
précis	(noun)	Concise summary, abstract	Just as scientific journals publish abstracts of their articles online (and then

			charge for access to the full version), the entrepreneur decided to publish a précis of her whitepaper online, while charging for access to the full version.
predilection	(noun)	Preference, tendency, or favorability towards	She has completed teacher training allowing her to teach grades K–6, but she discovered that she really has a predilection for teaching kindergarten.
prescient	(adj)	Having foreknowledge or foresight, seeing the future	Mariposa swears she's prescient—she thinks she sees the future in her dreams. / The science fiction novel, published in 1955, was strangely prescient—it pictures the year 2000 as having no flying cars, but a communication system known as the "interconnect," used largely for online shopping and wasting time.

			or unfriendly by the others in his dorm.
prophetic	(adj)	Relating to prophesy, predicting, ominous	While most of the country was consumed with irrational optimism about the economy, this particular journalist possessed an almost prophetic pessimism—not only did she predict the crash, she even predicted the month it actually happened.
propitiate	(verb)	Attempt to reconcile with, satisfy, or reduce the animosity of (a person who is angry, offended, etc.)	The ancient Greeks would often attempt to propitiate angry gods by sacrificing animals to them.
propitious	(adj)	Favorable, giving good signs for the future, likely to work out; kind or forgiving	After having to postpone the game earlier in the week due to rain, the officials were pleased to see the propitious weather forecast. “We'll get this game in after all,” one of them

			exclaimed.
providential	(adj)	Lucky, fortunate, or relating to divine care (the idea that a deity has helped or cared for a person)	Every time their religious sister ran out of money, help always arrived! She viewed this as God's providential hand, but her family members viewed it as their always having to bail her out, and it was getting annoying.
proxy	(noun)	Agent, substitute, person authorized to act on behalf of another	She was in the hospital, but certainly didn't want to miss voting on the proposal, so she sent a proxy to the board meeting to vote "yes."
puerile	(adj)	Juvenile, immature	The retiring film critic decried the puerile humor common in so many modern American movies, pointing out that the classic comedies of the '40s were so much smarter and less reliant on jokes about bodily functions.
pugilism	(noun)	boxing, fighting	Pugilism has been called

			grew quiescent.
quixotic	(adj)	Extremely impractical but very romantic, chivalrous, or idealistic; impulsive	Prompted by a lesson their teacher devised for election year, the children shared what they would do if elected president. The plans were adorably quixotic, involving housing all the homeless in floating homes on the ocean, or teaching everyone to be nice to each other.
raconteur	(noun)	Witty storyteller	Miguel was quite the raconteur—the laughing party guests naturally congregated in a cluster around him as he held court.
rarefied	(adj)	Lofty, very high up or elevated (in a metaphorical way); exclusive, select; thin, pure, or less dense (as air at the top of a mountain)	Among the rarefied ranks of conference attendees, she counted two Nobel Prize Winners, a MacArthur Genius Grant winner, and Bill Gates—and that was just at one lunch table!
reactant	(noun)	Something that	The two men had been

		reacts; a substance that undergoes a change in a chemical reaction	rivals since high school; when both were elected to the city council, they became reactants in the worsening deadlock of an already-polarized city government.
recalcitrant	(adj)	Not obedient, resisting authority, hard to manage	As an aspiring kindergarten teacher, she had imagined days filled with giggles and singing songs about friendship—she was not prepared for a roomful of 20 recalcitrant children who wouldn't even sit down, much less learn the words to "Holding Hands around the World."
recant	(verb)	Withdraw, retract, or disavow something one has previously said, esp. formally	For saying that the Sun and not the Earth was the center of the universe, Galileo was brought on trial for heresy and forced to recant. He spent the rest of his life under house arrest. Of course, a

			am I?" I always think of the perfect witty comeback hours after I actually need it.
rend	(verb)	Tear violently, esp. to tear one's clothing or hair out of grief; pull apart, split, or tear away	Many figures in the Bible rend their clothing from grief at a loved one's death, an event that can surely rend one's heart as well.
repast	(noun, verb)	A meal (noun); to eat or feast (verb)	After a light repast in a country inn, the men got back on their horses and rode away.
repertorial	(adj)	Pertaining to a repertory or repertoire, a stock of available things or a number of theatrical performances presented regularly or in sequence	One theater observer noted that repertorial community theater can tie together different plays for a repeat audience: seeing the same actor as Hamlet one night and Romeo another prompts interesting parallels between the two plays.
repose	(noun)	The act or state of resting; peacefulness,	Thousands of people lined up to see the prime minister's body lying in

		tranquility; lying dead in a grave	repose in the capital building. / After working the last two weekends, Myrna was perfectly happy spending her day off in repose in her living room armchair with a cup of tea and a good book.
reprobate	(noun, adj)	Disreputable, unprincipled, or damned person (noun); shameless, depraved (adj)	The police joked that they had so many mug shots of the old reprobate that they could assemble them into a photography book called, *Faces of Petty Crime, 1976–2011*.
resurgent	(adj)	Having a revival, renewing, rising or surging again	Burlesque has experienced a resurgence in the last decade, as young women dress in old-fashioned finery and perform routines appropriate for the vaudeville halls or nightclubs of previous decades.
revamp	(verb, noun)	Renovate, redo,	I have my whole room

		mind, reflect on; chew cud (as a cow)	about that. Let me ruminate on it for a few days and I'll get back to you.
salient	(adj)	Obvious, standing out; projecting, protruding, jutting out	The attack on our organization was mostly just partisan bickering, but it did have a few salient points that I think we should respond to. / The windowless prison's side wall had only one salient feature: a sculpture of the state bird jutting out from the building.
sardonic	(adj)	Scornfully or ironically mocking, cynically derisive	A sardonic movie critic is one thing, but a sardonic film professor is another—I really wish Professor Dahl wouldn't sarcastically cut down his students the way he does cheesy horror films. / Dorothy Parker wrote sardonically, "If you want to know what God thinks about money, just look at the

			people he gave it to."
savant	(noun)	Learned person, scholar, someone admitted to membership in a scholarly field; a person with amazing mental abilities despite having a cognitive difference or disability	The TED conferences feature savants and newsmakers speaking on topics of great importance to the world.
scintilla	(noun)	A tiny bit or trace	With not one scintilla of food in the house, the pioneer woman resorted to desperate means, boiling weeds and even shoe leather to feed her children.
scurvy	(adj)	Contemptible, mean	Our neighbor is so scurvy that he deliberately broke my little brother's bicycle because, as he said, "Your kids are too loud!"
searchingly	(adv)	In a searching or penetrating manner; while	"I'm fired?" asked Ron, looking searchingly at his boss. "I thought I

			or not. / In medieval times, a sinecure was a paying position for a priest but without an attachment to a parish where he would actually have to show up and do something.
skittish	(adj)	Shy, fickle, uncertain, or prone to act suddenly due to nervousness; lively in a restless or excessive way	After his first experience working with a skittish horse who nervously jerked around and ended up stepping on his foot, Ernest learned to wear steel-toed boots. / The band began with an audience of 80 college students but could see that they were skittish—there was a whole festival going on outside, and the students were ready to head for the door if the band wasn't that great.
slake	(verb)	Satisfy, esp. thirst, cool, or refresh; make less active	Having been lost for hours, the weary hikers were more than willing to slake their thirst in a

			mountain stream. / The teacher's harsh, demanding attitude soon slaked the girls' enthusiasm for the ballet class.
sobriquet	(noun)	A nickname	James Brown, often referred to with the sobriquet "The Godfather of Soul," scored numerous smash hits and was also known for his feverish dancing.
solecism	(noun)	Nonstandard use of grammar or words; mistake, esp. in etiquette	"I could care less" is a solecism—what the speaker really means to say is "I couldn't care less." / Apparently, Libby had committed a solecism by asking a man if he wanted to dance. "In Lubbock, Texas," said her friend, "we keep things traditional."
solidarity	(noun)	Fellowship in interests, feelings, responsibilities,	The governor attempted to outlaw collective bargaining by unions,

			He poked his head into the hallway and flagged down the football coach walking by, who shut down the chaos immediately with a stentorian "Sit down and shut up!"
stigma	(noun)	Mark of disgrace, a figurative stain or mark on someone's reputation	In the 1950s, bearing a child out of wedlock was severely stigmatized, but today in many social circles, there is no stigma whatsoever on unmarried parents having a child.
stint	(noun, verb)	Period of time spent doing something, or a specific, limited amount of work (noun); to be frugal, to get by on little (verb)	After a stint in combat, Jared was used to eating whatever he was given, and being sparing with the few condiments available. After watching him stint on ketchup, his wife said, "Honey, seriously, here you can use all you want!"
stipulate	(verb)	Specify; make an open demand, esp.	Before taking the job, Bertram stipulated in his

		as a condition of agreement	contract that he would be able to leave early on Fridays to attend religious services.
stratagem	(noun)	Military maneuver to deceive or surprise; crafty scheme	The party's stratagem was to dig up a scandal on their candidate's opponent, and then release the photos the day before the election, leaving the opponent no time to defend himself before voters took to the polls.
stratum	(noun)	One of many layers (such as in a rock formation or in the classes of a society)	From overhearing his rich and powerful passengers' conversations, the chauffeur grew to despise the upper stratum of society. / I love this dish! It's like a lasagna, but with strata made of bread, eggs, and pancetta! Oh, look at the menu—it's actually called a strata! That makes perfect sense.

surrogate	(noun, adj)	Substitute, person who acts for another (noun); acting as a replacement (adj)	A study found that baby monkeys, once separated from their mothers, preferred a surrogate mother made of cloth to a less comforting, rigid monkey doll, even when induced with treats to change their behavior.
sybarite	(noun)	Person devoted to pleasure and luxury	The reality show about Beverly Hills "housewives" portrayed wealthy sybarites who actually seemed to be pursuing champagne and Pilates full-time.
symbiosis	(noun)	Mutually dependent relationship between two organisms, people, groups, etc.	In biology, one example of symbiosis is when a small creature feeds off bugs that live on a larger creature, thus protecting the larger creature from discomfort and possibly disease. / Although some celebrities complain about paparazzi, many have a symbiotic relationship with those same

			intrusive photographers—the paparazzi need to get paid, and the celebs need the photos to stay in the news.
synoptic	(adj)	Relating to a synopsis or summary; giving a general view	The movie studio had interns read screenplays and write up synoptic outlines for the executives to review.
syntax	(adj)	The rules governing grammar and how words join to make sentences (or how words and symbols join in writing computer code), the study of these rules, or any system or orderly arrangement	Now that my linguistics class is studying syntax, it makes a little more sense when my computer flashes "SYNTAX ERROR" at me. / Anyone learning a language is bound to make syntactical mistakes; even if he or she knows the appropriate vocabulary, it is still difficult to assemble the words perfectly.
tawdry	(adj)	Gaudy, cheap or cheap looking;	Tara modeled her prom look after something she

			back from the library. She actually had to stop and rest twice on the way home.
tortuous	(adj)	Twisting, winding, complex; devious, not straightforward	If I can follow your tortuous logic, you're saying that people who want the new law protecting the environment are actually hurting the environment because the majority of people deliberately do the opposite of laws? What? / The children found the tortuous path of the roller coaster both terrifying and exciting.
transgression	(noun)	Violation of a law, moral rule, order, etc.; sin	His transgression was so serious that his family disowned him: no one would be visiting him in prison.
travesty	(noun)	Exaggerated, debased, or grotesque imitation	That *Saturday Night Live* sketch was a pretty good travesty of the election scandal. / You call that a sales presentation? What

			you just did in front of our clients was a travesty! I can't believe you lost what was supposed to be an easy sale.
treacherous	(adj)	Betraying trust, not faithful or trustworthy; not dependable; dangerous or deceptive	Betraying one's country for money is the most base of acts—his treachery cost the lives of several soldiers whom he had pledged to fight alongside. / The small boat was capsized in the treacherous waters.
trenchant	(adj)	forceful or vigorous, effective, keen; caustic, sharp	The school's trenchant new antitruancy policy immediately increased class attendance by a noticeable margin. / Claudia would have gone on making excuses for hours had Juan not trenchantly stepped in and asked, “You want to quit, right?” “Yes!” she said, quite relieved.
truculent	(adj)	Fierce, cruel,	That guy is too truculent

unconscionable	(adj)	Not guided by conscience; morally wrong, unjust, unreasonable	It is unconscionable that you would deny your sister a bone marrow transplant knowing that you're the only person in the family who's a match.
unsparing	(adj)	Unmerciful, harsh (as in not sparing any criticism); generous, lavish (as in not sparing any help or gifts to others);	The mother was unsparing in praising her son, so he was in for quite a shock when his new teacher told him his work was substandard.
untempered	(adj)	Not toned down; not moderated, controlled, or counterbalanced	The report was an untempered condemnation of the company's practices—the investigators didn't have a single good thing to say.
upbraid	(verb)	Find fault with, criticize or scold severely	I'm not surprised they got divorced—you can't upbraid someone every time he forgets to put a water glass in the sink and then expect him to stick around.

usury	(noun)	Charging interest on a loan, esp. charging illegally high or excessive interest	I can't see how that payday lending place is even legal—a person borrowing $100 will end up paying over $150 interest in just a few months! Isn't that usury?
vanguard	(noun)	Leading units at the front of an army; leaders in a trend or movement, people on the "cutting edge"; the forefront of a trend or movement	While Google has won the search engine wars, in 1994, Yahoo was on the vanguard of search technology.
variegated	(adj)	Varied in color, having multicolored patches or spots; diverse	Unusually, the bridesmaids' dresses were boldly variegated, having many different colors. The bride reasoned that the dresses could be worn again. "Rainbow goes with anything!" she said. The bridesmaids privately agreed that they would never again wear those dresses as long as

			they lived.
verdant	(adj)	Green, such as with vegetation, plants, grass, etc.; young and inexperienced	Having grown up in Ethiopia, Dabir loved the lushness of the verdant forests in rainy Oregon. / The first-year associate was a little too verdant to be assigned to the big case.
verisimilitude	(noun)	The appearance of being true or real	The film manages to retain verisimilitude even though the plot is about a bunch of space aliens coming through a wormhole and enslaving humanity.
vernal	(adj)	Relating to the spring; fresh, youthful	Alma's favorite part of gardening was the vernal reawakening that followed a frozen winter.
vestige	(noun)	Trace or sign of something that once existed	They hadn't officially broken up, but she felt their relationship was running on fumes and that only vestiges of their former affection remained.
vex	(verb)	annoy or bother;	“Don't vex me,” said the

		puzzle or distress	nanny. “Behave, or I'll tell your parents.” / She was totally vexed by the crossword clue—nine letters, starting with “b,” meaning “person whose socks are either scratchy or imbued with magical powers.” What?
via	(preposition)	Through, by means of, by way of (by a route that goes through or touches)	We will be flying to Russia via Frankfurt. / Many of the students at our college got here via special programs that assist low-income students in preparing for college.
vicissitude	(noun)	Changes or variations over time, esp. regular changes from one thing to another	While she scrubbed pots and pans, she pondered the vicissitudes of life—she once had a house full of servants, and now was a maid herself.
vim	(noun)	Pep, enthusiasm, vitality, lively spirit	“I'm old, not dead!” said Grandpa Enrique, full of vim and ready for his first bungee jump.
virulent	(adj)	Extremely	The virulence of this

		luxurious	but unattainable (and possibly illegal!).
welter	(noun, verb)	Confused mass or pile, jumble; confusion or turmoil (noun); roll around, wallow, toss about, writhe (verb)	It said "thrift store," but inside it was just a welter of used clothing, draped everywhere and even lying in piles. / By the time the teacher broke up the fight, it was already pretty much over—the loser was weltering on the floor. / They struggled to keep the sailboat afloat on the weltering sea.
whet	(verb)	Stimulate, make keen or eager (esp. of an appetite)	Dinner will take another 20 minutes, but maybe this cheese plate can whet your appetite?
whitewash	(noun, verb)	A substance used to whiten walls, wood, etc. (noun); deception, covering up of wrongs, errors, misdeeds, etc. (verb)	The journalist accused the government of trying to whitewash the scandal in order to protect the vice president's reputation.
winnow	(verb)	Sift, analyze	We got 120 résumés for

		critically, separate the useful part from the worthless part	one job. It's going to take me a while just to winnow this down to a reasonable stack of people we want to interview.
winsome	(adj)	Charming, engaging, esp. in a sweet and innocent way	It's hard for some to believe that Lindsay Lohan, known for her current run-ins with the law, was once the winsome young starlet in *Freaky Friday*.
wizened	(adj)	Withered, shriveled	Fortunately, the wizened heads for sale at the Ecuadorian market weren't really shrunken heads—just plastic souvenirs for tourists. / The wizened old man still possessed a remarkably sharp mind.
xenophobia	(noun)	Fear or hatred of foreigners or that which is foreign	My mother's xenophobia is so great that she refuses to cross the border into Canada, and once told me that she'd rather die than try a

			mango because those foreign fruits are "sketchy."
yoke	(noun, verb)	A burden or something that oppresses; a frame for attaching animals (such as oxen) to each other and to a plow or other equipment to be pulled (noun); to unite together or to burden (verb)	The speaker argued that humanity had traded the yoke of servitude to kings and tyrants for the yoke of consumerism, which enslaves us just as much in the end.

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