

to double-cross: to cheat sb you have just committed a crime with
In this new novel, Pete double-crosses his partner in crime and runs off with the money.

to rig: to illegally arrange the result of an election

The Opposition leader claimed that the election was rigged.

to swindle: to get money from sb by deceiving them

He managed to swindle the shop out of £3,000 in three months.

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to carve: to cut meat into slices

He put a huge turkey on the table. "Will you carve?" he asked.

to mow: to cut grass

Your lawn needs mowing.

to slash: to cut sth violently with a knife

He looked at his car. Someone had slashed the tyres.

to trim: to make sth neat by cutting away untidy pieces

Your hair needs trimming.

You mow the lawn and I'll trim the hedge.

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to plummet: to fall dramatically (e.g. for prices)

The price of oil continues to plummet and has now reached an all-time low of 50 cents a barrel.

to plunge: (i) to fall dramatically (for prices and temperatures) (ii) to dive into water (iii) to move forwards and then fall a long way down

The temperature plunged to a record low.

He plunged into the sea and swam towards the shore.

The car crashed through the barrier and plunged over the cliff.

to slump: to suddenly or dramatically fall (for prices and business)

We were doing very well for the first three months of this year and then, for no discernible reason, our sales slumped.

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to die down: to become less intense (without necessarily disappearing)

We will have to wait for the storm to die down before we attempt to rescue them.

to fizzle out: to end and disappear in a weak and disappointing way

The protest against the new tax soon fizzled out as the government would not bow to the protestors' demands.

to peter out: to gradually disappear and come to an end

The rain eventually petered out.

to wear off: to stop having an effect

You'll be fine for a couple of hours, but when the anaesthetic wears off you will be in some pain.

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to bug: to put very small listening devices somewhere so as to listen to and/or record conversations

Be careful what you say, as the room may be bugged.

to eavesdrop: to intentionally listen to the private conversations of other people

He stood outside the room eavesdropping on their conversation.

to overhear: to unintentionally hear sb talking to sb else

As I walked past his office, I overheard him tell his secretary that he was thinking of resigning.

to tap: (a telephone): to put a very small listening device in so as to listen to telephone conversations

Suspicious noises led me to believe that my phone was being tapped.

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to dig up: to find sth which has remained hidden for a long time

We know she had cosmetic surgery about ten years ago. See what you can dig up about that.

to stumble on: to find by chance

A man who was out walking his dog stumbled on the treasure.

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to shadow/to tail: to follow and watch sb closely

The police have been shadowing/tailing her for a week.

to stalk: to follow and try to get near a person or animal in order to attack them

The cat was hiding in the long grass, stalking a mouse.

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to banish: to send sb out of their native country as a punishment for sth they have done

For her part in the plot, the King banished her from England.

to evacuate: to have to/ to force sb to leave a building or area because it is dangerous

Once the hurricane warning had been given, it took the authorities three hours to evacuate the village.

to evict: to force sb to leave the flat or house they live in because they have broken a law or the contract

They were evicted when they didn't pay the rent.

to expel: to dismiss sb from school permanently because they have done sth very bad

She was expelled from school for playing practical jokes on the teacher.

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to climb: to steadily increase (for money and temperature)

By mid-afternoon, the temperature had climbed to 37°.

to rocket: to increase dramatically (for prices)

House prices have rocketed by 65% in the last ten months.

to soar: to increase dramatically (for prices and temperatures)

Soaring inflation has made it impossible for people to manage.

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to curb: (for inflation, the rising tide of inner-city violence, the spread of a disease, etc) to do sth to stop sth bad from continuing/getting worse

A further 100 tax inspectors have been appointed to help curb increasing instances of tax evasion.

to hamper: to make movement or progress difficult

Rescue efforts have been hampered by bad weather.

to hinder: to prevent or delay progress

He is hindered by his shyness.

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to chuck: (informal) to throw

He screwed up the note and chucked it in the bin.

to fling: to throw sth somewhere or at sb with great force

He screwed up the letter and flung it in the fire.

to hurl: to throw sth violently and with great force, often because you are angry

He was sent off for hurling mud at the referee.

to pelt: to throw sth at sb and hit them with it [Note: **to pelt down** = to rain heavily]

They pelted each other with snowballs.

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to comb: to search a place thoroughly or look at information carefully

The police combed the entire area for clues.

to fish around in: to look for sth using your hands and not your eyes

She fished around in her handbag for her keys.

to scour: to make a thorough search of a place or sth

I scoured the entire house looking for my watch.

to sift through: to examine sth (e.g. evidence) thoroughly

The organisers are still sifting through the competition entries.

Practice

1. The words in the groups are connected because they are similar in meaning. Label the groups using the verbs from the list below to show what their similarities are.

cut – follow – find – fall – listen – increase – stop –
cheat – disappear – force to leave – throw – look for

- 1 : bug – eavesdrop – overhear – tap
- 2 : slash – trim – carve – mow
- 3 : peter out – fizzle out – wear off – die down
- 4 : evict – expel – banish – evacuate
- 5 : fling – hurl – chuck – pelt
- 6 : scour – sift through – comb – fish around in
- 7 : plummet – plunge – slump
- 8 : hamper – hinder – curb
- 9 : rig – swindle – double-cross
- 10 : stalk – tail – shadow
- 11 : stumble on – dig up
- 12 : rocket – soar – climb

2. Now complete the sentences below with an appropriate verb (in the correct tense or form) from exercise 1.

- 1 She was very late. She was flustered. She grabbed whatever clothes and toiletries were nearest at hand and, them into her suitcase, she rushed out of the door.
- 2 The old lady was out of her life savings by a man pretending to be an investment consultant.
- 3 We were from our last flat for not paying the rent.
- 4 Take an umbrella with you; it's down outside.
- 5 It was a schoolboy, out on a walk, who the prehistoric cave.
- 6 The price of oil to an all-time low yesterday when it was announced that a new engine had been developed which could run on water.
- 7 Driving rain and poor visibility rescue efforts to such an extent that the search was called off until the weather cleared up.
- 8 A further 100 police officers have been drafted into the high crime areas of the city in an attempt to the rising tide of armed robberies.
- 9 We can't go sailing until this storm
- 10 One of my Sunday chores was to the lawn.
- 11 Rescuers through the rubble looking for survivors from the earthquake.
- 12 In the last three years house prices have by an incredible 300%.
- 13 I was walking past John's office and I him saying to George that Mr Jenkins is retiring.
- 14 As the fire swept towards the town, thousands of people had to be from their homes.