

寄托天下

专注留学 · 飞跃梦想

留学考试攻略

之

Magoosh

word list J to Z

By 寄托天下

DIY留学寄托论坛 www.gter.net/

前言

十六年来，寄托天下和每一位 GTer 一样坚持着自己的理想，希望为中国的有志青年提供一个中立、开放的出国留学交流平台。我们提倡 DIY，把备考和申请过程当成一次自我挑战和升华，更鼓励每一位孤独前行的 GTer 相互携手，温暖互助。在无数 GTers 的共同努力下，寄托论坛沉淀了丰富的留学考试申请的资源与信息。

作为一个有情怀的留学生活交流平台，寄托一直希望能够做些什么来回馈给支持我们的众多小伙伴们，因此留学史上第一套电子书——寄托电子书诞生啦！寄托整合了论坛上的优质资源，在小编与众多寄托版友的共同努力下，推出了寄托电子书系列。该系列囊括不同国家留学申请的各个阶段，包括考试，申请，选校，签证，租房等等。希望能够帮助众多 GTers 以及其他留学小伙伴们在留学道路上少走弯路提高效率。

今日为大家推送我们的第三份考试攻略——Magoosh Word List (J to Z)。

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本攻略的内容来自寄托版友 Arwen.Girl，转载请注明出处。

预祝各位童鞋在今后的留学生活中一切顺利，多姿多彩哈！

By 寄托天下



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Magoosh 作为美帝名校毕业生团队精心打造的杀 G 神器，在国内不断赢得好评，受到双满分大神 crazyrobin 等众多高分 G 神的强烈推荐。Magoosh 官网上没有公开的 word list，都是在线 app 的形式。本词汇表由寄托版友 Arwen.Girl 从官网上一条条手动复制下来的，并由寄托小编整理成方便阅读的 PDF 文档形式。有单词、解释和例句，个个是精华哟~~

另外，在 Magoosh 涨价后，因应广大童鞋的需求，与 Magoosh 沟通后，寄托决定再开一期团购！经过寄托超级版主 crazyrobin 的努力争取，这一次的团购，小伙伴可以劲省 70 刀！也就是说，大家能以 79 刀的价格入手 Magoosh 了！！本次活动时间将开创先河，持续三周，即自 2016.6.25 起至 7.15 日止，报名参团的童鞋将获得 70 刀的优惠！若参与人数超过 200 人，更可立享 10 刀返现优惠，即最高可获得 80 刀的优惠哦！！有兴趣团购 Magoosh 的童鞋可移步论坛查看详细的团购流程啦~~

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Magoosh Word List J to Z

J

jargon

noun: a characteristic language of a particular group

To those with little training in medicine, the jargon of doctors can be very difficult to understand.

jaundice

adjective: to be biased against due to envy or prejudice

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

jejune

adjective: dull; lacking flavor

Although many top chefs have secured culinary foam's popularity in haute cuisine, Waters criticizes it for being jejune and unfilling.

adjective: immature; childish

Her boss further cemented his reputation for being jejune after throwing a fit when the water cooler wasn't refilled.

jingoism

noun: fanatical patriotism

North Korea maintains intense control over its population through a combination of jingoism and cult of personality.

jingoist

noun: a person who thinks that their country should be at war

In the days leading up to war, a nation typically breaks up into the two opposing camps: doves, who do their best to avoid war, and jingoists, who are only too eager to wave national flags from their vehicles and vehemently denounce those who do not do the same.

jocular

adjective: characterized by jokes and good humor

My uncle was always in a jocular mood at family gatherings, messing up people's hair and telling knock-knock jokes to anyone who would listen.

jocular

adjective: characterized by jokes and good humor

My uncle was always in a jocular mood at family gatherings, messing up people's hair and telling knock-knock jokes to anyone who would listen.

jovial

adjective: full of or showing high-spirited merriment

The political candidate and his supporters were jovial once it was clear that she had won.

jubilant

adjective: full of high-spirited delight because of triumph or success

My hardwork paid off, and I was jubilant to receive a perfect score on the GRE.

juggernaut

noun: a force that cannot be stopped

Napoleon was considered a juggernaut until he decided to invade Russia in winter; after which, his once indomitable army was decimated by cold and famine.

junta

noun: an aggressive takeover by a group (usually military)

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

juxtapose

verb: place side by side

The appeal of her paintings comes from a classical style which is juxtaposed with modern themes.

K

kowtow

verb: to bow or act in a subservient manner

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

L

label

noun: a name or phrase given to a group of things to identify them (often negative)

The meaning of the label "punk" has changed greatly in the last 30 years.

verb: to give a label to something

Children are often unkind and label others who look different as outsiders.

laborious

adjective: characterized by effort to the point of exhaustion; especially physical effort

The most laborious job I've had was working 20 hours a day as a fisherman in King Salmon, Alaska.

lacerate

verb: deeply hurt the feelings of; distress

The teacher was fired for lacerating a student who wrote a poor essay.

lachrymose

adjective: showing sorrow

Lachrymose and depressed, Alexei Alexandrovich walked two miles home in the rain after learning that his wife was having an affair.

laconic

adjective: one who says very few words

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

lambast

verb: criticize severely or angrily

Showing no patience, the manager utterly lambasted the sales team that lost the big account.

lampoon

verb: ridicule with satire

Mark Twain understood that lampooning a bad idea with humor was the most effective criticism.

languid

adjective: not inclined towards physical exertion or effort; slow and relaxed

As the sun beat down and the temperature climbed higher, we spent a languid week lying around the house.

languish

verb: become feeble

Stranded in the wilderness for four days, the hiker languished, eating protein bars and nuts.

largess

noun: extreme generosity and giving

Uncle Frank was known for his largess, so his nephew was sad when he did not receive a present for his birthday.

lascivious

adjective: lecherous; sexually perverted

Lolita is a challenging novel for many, not necessarily because of the elevated prose style but because of the depravity of the main character, Humbert Humbert, who, as an old, lascivious man, falls in love with a girl.

laudable

adjective: worthy of high praise

To say that Gandhi's actions were laudable is the greatest understatement; he overthrew an empire without violence.

leery

adjective: openly distrustful and unwilling to confide

Without checking his references and talking to previous employers, I am leery of hiring the candidate.

lethargic

adjective: lacking energy

Nothing can make a person more lethargic than a big turkey dinner.

limpid

adjective: clarity in terms of expression

Her limpid prose made even the most recondite subjects accessible to all.

lionize

verb: assign great social importance to

Students in the U.S. learn to lionize Jefferson, Franklin, and Washington because they are the founding fathers of the nation.

litany

noun: any long and tedious account of something

Mr. Rogers spoke to a Senate committee and did not give a litany of reasons to keep funding the program, but instead, appealed to the basic human decency of all present.

loath

adjective: unwillingness to do something contrary to your custom (usually followed by 'to')

I was loath to leave the concert before my favorite band finished playing.

lucid

adjective: (of language) transparently clear; easily understandable

Though Walters writes about physics and time travel, his writing is always lucid, so readers with little scientific training can understand difficult concepts.

lugubrious

adjective: excessively mournful

At the funeral, lugubrious songs filled the small church.

M

macabre

adjective: suggesting the horror of death and decay; gruesome

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

machinate

verb: engage in plotting or enter into a conspiracy, swear together

The rebels met at night in an abandoned barn to machinate.

magisterial

adjective: offensively self-assured or given to exercising unwarranted power

Though she was only a third grade teacher, Ms. Martinet was magisterial in dealing with her class, lording over them like a queen.

magnanimous

adjective: noble and generous in spirit, especially towards a rival or someone less powerful

He was a great sportsman: in defeat he was complementary and in victory he was magnanimous.

maintain

verb: to assert

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

maladroit

adjective: clumsy

As a child she was quite maladroit, but as an adult, she has become an adept dancer.

malady

noun: a disease or sickness

The town was struck by a malady throughout the winter that left most people sick in bed for two weeks.

malapropism

noun: the confusion of a word with another word that sounds similar

Whenever I looked glum, my mother would offer to share "an amusing antidote" with me—an endearing malapropism of "anecdote" that never failed to cheer me up.

malevolent

adjective: wishing or appearing to wish evil to others; arising from intense ill will or hatred
Villians are known for their malevolent nature, oftentimes inflicting cruelty on others just for enjoyment.

malfeasance

adjective: misconduct or wrongdoing (especially by a public official)
Not even the mayor's trademark pearly-toothed grin could save him from charges of malfeasance: while in power, he'd been running an illegal gambling rink in the room behind his office.

malingerer

noun: someone shirking their duty by pretending to be sick or incapacitated
At one time, our country was full of hardworking respectful people, but now it seems that everyone is a malingerer with little inclination to work.

malleable

adjective: capable of being shaped or bent or drawn out
The clay became malleable and easy to work with after a little water was added.

adjective: easily influenced
My little brother is so malleable that I can convince him to sneak cookies from the cupboard for me.

malodorous

adjective: having an unpleasant smell
Some thermally active fountains spew sulfur fumes--the air around them is sometimes so malodorous that many have to plug their noses.

martial

adjective: suggesting war or military life
Americans tend to remember Abraham Lincoln as kindly and wise, not at all martial, despite the fact that he was involved in the fiercest war America has even fought.

martinet

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

work Rebecca had done.

maudlin

adjective: overly emotional and sad

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

maunder

verb: wander aimlessly

Max liked to maunder down by the seaside and pick up whatever sea shells he would stumble upon.

verb: speak (about unimportant matters) rapidly and incessantly

After drinking two espressos each, the animated couple would maunder loudly, annoying the other patrons in the coffee shop.

maverick

noun: someone who exhibits great independence in thought and action

Officer Kelly was a maverick, rarely following police protocols or adopting the conventions for speech common among his fellow officers.

mawkish

adjective: overly sentimental to the point that it is disgusting

The film was incredibly mawkish, introducing highly likeable characters only to have them succumb to a devastating illnesses by the end of the movie.

maxim

noun: a short saying expressing a general truth

Johnson initially suggests that the secret to business can be summarized in a single maxim but then requires a 300-page book to explain exactly what he means.

meander

verb: to wander aimlessly

A casual observer might have thought that Peter was meandering through the city, but that day he was actually seeking out those places where he and his long lost love had once visited.

melancholy

noun: a deep, long-lasting sadness

Hamlet is a figure of tremendous melancholy: he doesn't have a truly cheerful scene throughout the

melee

noun: a wild, confusing fight or struggle

After enduring daily taunts about my name, I became enraged and pummeled the schoolyard bully and his sycophantic friends in a brutal melee.

mellifluous

adjective: smooth and sweet-sounding

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

mendacity

noun: the tendency to be untruthful

I can forgive her for her mendacity but only because she is a child and is seeing what she can get away with.

mendicant

noun: a pauper who lives by begging

Tolstoy was an aristocrat, but he strove to understand the Christianity of the Russian peasants by wandering among them as a mendicant.

mercurial

adjective: (of a person) prone to unexpected and unpredictable changes in mood

The fact that Ella's moods were as mercurial as the weather was problematic for her relationships—it didn't help that she lived in Chicago.

mesmerize

verb: to spellbind or enthrall

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

meteoric

adjective: like a meteor in speed or brilliance or transience

The early spectacular successes propelled the pitcher to meteoric stardom, but a terribly injury tragically cut short his career.

meticulous

adjective: marked by extreme care in treatment of details

The Japanese noodle maker was meticulous in making his noodles and would never let another person take over the task.

mettlesome

adjective: filled with courage or valor

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

mettlesome

adjective: filled with courage or valor

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misanthrope

noun: a hater of mankind

Kevin is such a misanthrope that he refused to attend the Christmas party, claiming that everyone's happiness was "fake" and "annoying."

misattribute

verb: To erroneously attribute; to falsely ascribe; used especially of authorship.

I made a mistake; I misattributed "Crime and Punishment" to Leo Tolstoy when it was actually written by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

misconstrue

verb: interpret in the wrong way

The politician never trusted journalists because he thought that they misconstrue his words and misrepresent his positions.

miscreant

noun: a person who breaks the law

"Come back you miscreant!" yelled the woman who just had her purse stolen.

miser

noun: a person who doesn't like to spend money (because they are greedy)

Monte was no miser, but was simply frugal, wisely spending the little that he earned.

misogynist

noun: a person who dislikes women in particular

Many have accused Hemingway of being a quiet misogynist, but recently unearthed letters argue against this belief.

mitigate

verb: make less severe or harsh

I can only spend so much time mitigating your disagreements with your wife, and at certain point, you need to do it on your own.

verb: lessen the severity of an offense

If it weren't for the mitigating circumstances, he would have certainly lost his job.

modicum

noun: a small or moderate or token amount

If my sister had even a modicum of sense, she wouldn't be engaged to that barbarian.

mollify

verb: to make someone angry less angry; placate

In the morning, Harriat was unable to mollify Harry, if he happened to become angry, unless he had his cup of coffee.

moment

noun: significant and important value

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

moot

adjective: open to argument or debate; undecidable in a meaningless or irrelevant way

Since the Board just terminated Steve as the CEO, what the finance committee might have thought of his proposed marketing plan for next year is now a moot point.

mordant

adjective: biting and caustic in thought, manner, or style

While Phil frequently made mordant remarks about company policy overall, he always was considerably gentler in discussing any person in particular.

moribund

adjective: being on the point of death; declining rapidly losing all momentum in progress
Whether you like it or not, jazz as a genre is moribund at best, possibly already dead.

morose

adjective: ill-tempered and not inclined to talk; gloomy
After Stanley found out he was no longer able to go on vacation with his friends, he sat in his room morosely.

morph

verb: To undergo dramatic change in a seamless and barely noticeable fashion.
The earnestness of the daytime talk shows of the 1970's has morphed into something far more sensational and vulgar: today guests actually standup and threaten to take swings at one another.

mulct

verb: to defraud or swindle
The so-called magical diet cure simply ended up mulcting Maria out of hundreds of dollars, but did nothing for her weight.

mundane

adjective: repetitive and boring; not spiritual
Nancy found doing dishes a thoroughly mundane task, although Peter found a kind of Zen pleasure in the chore.

adjective: relating to the ordinary world
Though we think of the pope as someone always dealing in holy matters, he is also concerned with mundane events, such as deciding when to set his alarm each morning.

munificent

adjective: very generous
Uncle Charley was known for his munificence, giving all seven of his nephews lavish Christmas presents each year.

muted

adjective: softened, subdued
Helen preferred muted earth colors, such as green and brown, to the bright pinks and red her sister liked.

myopic

adjective: lacking foresight or imagination

The company ultimately went out of business because the myopic managers couldn't predict the changes in their industry.

myriad

noun: a large indefinite number

There are a myriad of internet sites hawking pills that claim to boost energy for hours on end.

N

nadir

noun: the lowest point

For many pop music fans, the rap and alternative-rock dominated 90s were the nadir of musical expression.

negligible

adjective: so small as to be meaningless; insignificant

The GRE tests cumulative knowledge, so if you cram the night before it is, at best, likely to only have a negligible impact on your score.

nettlesome

adjective: causing irritation or annoyance

Maria found her coworker's cell phone nettlesome, because every few minutes it would buzz to life with another text message.

noisome

adjective: having an extremely bad smell

Each August, when the winds moved in a south easterly direction, the garbage dump would spread noisome vapors through the small town.

nonchalant

adjective: coming across as uninterested or unconcerned; overly casual

The twenty-somethings at the coffee shop always irked Sheldon, especially the way in which they acted nonchalantly towards everything, not even caring when Sheldon once spilled his mocha on them.

nonplussed

verb: unsure how to act or respond

Shirley was totally nonplussed when the angry motorist cut her off and then stuck his finger out the window.

nuance

noun: a subtle difference in meaning or opinion or attitude

Because of the nuances involved in this case, I hired an outside consultant to advise us and help.

nuance

noun: a subtle difference in meaning or opinion or attitude

Because of the nuances involved in this case, I hired an outside consultant to advise us and help.

O

obdurate

adjective: stubbornly persistent in changing an opinion or action

No number of pleas and bribes would get him to change his obdurate attitude.

objurgate

verb: express strong disapproval of

The manager spent an hour objurgating the employee in the hopes that he would not make these mistakes again.

obliging

adjective: showing a cheerful willingness to do favors for others

Even after all his success, I found him to be accommodating and obliging, sharing with me his "secret tips" on how to gain wealth and make friends.

oblique

adjective: not straightforward; indirect

Herbert never explicitly revealed anything negative about Tom's past, but at times he would obliquely suggest that Tom was not as innocent as he seemed.

obscure

verb: make unclear

On the Smith's drive through the Grand Canyon, Mr. Smith's big head obscured much of Mrs. Robinson's view, so that she only saw momentary patches of red rock.

adjective: known by only a few

Many of the biggest movie stars were once obscure actors who got only bit roles in long forgotten films.

obsequious

adjective: attentive in an ingratiating or servile manner; attempting to win favor from influential people by flattery

The obsequious waiter did not give the couple a moment's peace all through the meal, constantly returning to their table to refill their water glasses and to tell them what a handsome pair they made.

obstinate

adjective: resistant to guidance or discipline; stubbornly persistent

The coach suggested improvements Sarah might make on the balance beam, but she remained obstinate, unwilling to modify any of the habits that made her successful in the past.

obstreperous

adjective: noisily and stubbornly defiant; willfully difficult to control

When the teacher asked the obstreperous student simply to bus his tray, the student threw the entire tray on the floor, shouted an epithet, and walked out.

obtain

adjective: be valid, applicable, or true

The custom of waiting your turn in line does not obtain in some countries, in which many people try to rush to front of the line at the same time.

obtuse

adjective: slow to learn or understand; lacking intellectual acuity; lacking in insight or discernment

Jackson was the most obtuse member of the team: the manager's subtle ironies were always lost on him.

officious

adjective: intrusive in a meddling or offensive manner

The professor had trouble concentrating on her new theorem, because her officious secretary would barge in frequently reminding her of some trivial detail involving departmental paperwork.

opaque

adjective: not clearly understood or expressed

The meaning of the professor's new research was opaque to most people, so no one asked any questions.

opulence

noun: wealth as evidenced by sumptuous living

Russian oligarchs are famous for their opulence, living in fancy homes and dining on expensive caviar.

ornate

adjective: marked by elaborate rhetoric and elaborated with decorative details

The ornate Victorian and Edwardian homes spread throughout San Francisco are my favorite part of

ossify

verb: make rigid and set into a conventional pattern

Even as a young man, Bob had some bias against poor people, but during his years in social services, his bad opinions ossified into unshiftable views.

ostentatious

adjective: intended to attract notice and impress others; tawdry or vulgar

Matt wanted to buy stone lions for front of the house, but Cynthia convinced him that such a display would be too ostentatious for a modest house in an unassuming neighborhood.

ostracize

verb: exclude from a community or group

Later in his life, Leo Tolstoy was ostracized from the Russian Orthodox Church for his writings that contradicted church doctrine.

overweening

adjective: arrogant; presumptuous

Mark was so convinced of his basketball skills that in his overweening pride he could not fathom that his name was not on the varsity list; he walked up to the basketball coach and told her she had forgotten to add his name.

P

palatable

adjective: acceptable to the taste or mind

MIkey didn't partake much in his friends' conversations, but found their presence palatable.

palaver

verb: speak (about unimportant matters) rapidly and incessantly

During the rain delay, many who had come to see the game palavered, probably hoping that idle chatter would make the time go by faster.

palimpsest

noun: something that has been changed numerous times but on which traces of former iterations can still be seen

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

panacea

noun: hypothetical remedy for all ills or diseases; a universal solution

While the company credit card has made most large purchases easier, it is no panacea: some smaller basic transactions still must be conducted in cash.

panache

noun: distinctive and stylish elegance

Jim, with his typical panache, came to the wedding reception with a top hat, a cane, and a long cape covered in sequins.

panegyric

noun: a formal expression of praise

Dave asked Andrew to do just a simple toast, but Andrew launched into a full panegyric, enumerating a complete list of Dave's achievements and admirable qualities.

paradoxical

adjective: seemingly contradictory but nonetheless possibly true

That light could be both a particle and a wave seems paradoxical, but nonetheless, it is true.

paragon

noun: model of excellence or perfection of a kind; one having no equal

Even with the rise of Kobe Bryant, many still believe that Michael Jordan is the paragon for basketball players.

noun: an ideal instance; a perfect embodiment of a concept

Some say that Athens was the paragon of democracy, but these people often forget that slaves and women were still not allowed to vote.

pariah

noun: an outcast

The once eminent scientist, upon being found guilty of faking his data, has become a pariah in the research community.

parochial

adjective: narrowly restricted in scope or outlook

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

parsimonious

adjective: extremely frugal; miserly

Katie is so parsimonious that she only buys a pair of socks if all of her other socks have holes in them.

parvenu

noun: a person who has suddenly become wealthy, but not socially accepted as part of a higher class

The theater was full of parvenus who each thought that they were surrounded by true aristocrats.

pastoral

adjective: relating to the countryside in a pleasant sense

Those who imagine America's countryside as a pastoral region are often disappointed to learn that much of rural U.S. is filled with cornfields extending as far as the eye can see.

patent

adjective: glaringly obvious

Since the book had been through no fewer than six proof runs, the staff was shocked to see such a patent spelling mistake remaining, right in the middle of the front cover!

patronize

verb: treat condescendingly

She says she genuinely wanted to help me, but instead she patronized me, constantly pointing out how I was inferior to her.

paucity

noun: a lack of something

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

pecuniary

adjective: relating to or involving money

The defendant was found guilty and had to serve a period of community service as well as pay pecuniary damages to the client.

pedantic

adjective: marked by a narrow focus on or display of learning especially its trivial aspects

Professor Thompson was regarded as an expert in his field, but his lectures were utterly pedantic, focused on rigorous details of the most trivial conventions in the field.

pedestrian

adjective: lacking imagination

While Nan was always engaged in philosophical speculation, her brother was occupied with far more pedestrian concerns: how to earn a salary and run a household.

peevish

adjective: easily irritated or annoyed

Our office manager is peevish, so the rest of us tip-toe around him, hoping not to set off another one of his fits.

pejorative

adjective: expressing disapproval (usu. refers to a term)

Most psychologists object to the pejorative term "shrink", believing that they expand the human mind, not limit it.

pellucid

adjective: transparently clear; easily understandable

The professor had a remarkable ability make even the most difficult concepts seem pellucid.

penurious

adjective: lacking money; poor

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

adjective: miserly

Warren Buffett, famous multi-billionaire, still drives a cheap sedan, not because he is penurious, but because luxury cars are gaudy and impractical.

perceive

verb: to be aware of, to sense or feel

If hunters are skilled, the animals will not perceive their presence.

percipient

adjective: highly perceptive

Even the most percipient editor will make an occasional error when proofreading.

peremptory

adjective: bossy and domineering

My sister used to peremptorily tell me to do the dishes, a chore I would either do perfunctorily or avoid doing altogether.

perennial

adjective: lasting an indefinitely long time; eternal; everlasting

Even at the old-timers games, Stan Musial would get the loudest cheer: he was a perennial favorite of the fans there.

perfidy

noun: an act of deliberate betrayal; a breach of a trust

The lowest circles in Dante's Inferno were for those who had practiced perfidy, and among these, the very lowest was for those, such as Judas, who had been treacherous to one of their benefactors.

perfunctory

adjective: done routinely and with little interest or care

The short film examines modern perfunctory cleaning rituals such as washing dishes, doing laundry and tooth-brushing.

peripatetic

adjective: traveling by foot

Jim always preferred a peripatetic approach to discovering a city: he felt that he could see so many more details while walking.

pernicious

adjective: exceedingly harmful; working or spreading in a hidden and injurious way

The most successful viruses are pernicious: an infected person may feel perfectly healthy for several months while incubating and spreading the virus.

perpetuate

verb: cause to continue

If you do not let him do things for himself, you are merely perpetuating bad habits that will be even harder to break in the future.

perquisite

noun: a right reserved exclusively by a particular person or group (especially a hereditary or official right)

Even as the dishwasher at the French restaurant, Josh quickly learned that he had the perquisite of being able to eat terrific food for half the price diners would pay.

perspicacious

adjective: acutely insightful and wise

Many modern observers regard Eisenhower as perspicacious, particularly in his accurate prediction of the growth of the military.

pertinent

adjective: having precise or logical relevance to the matter at hand

While the salaries of the players might draw attention in the media, such monetary figures are not pertinent to the question of who plays the best on the field.

perturb

verb: disturb in mind or cause to be worried or alarmed

Now that Henry is recovering from a major illness, he no longer lets the little trivialities, such as late mail, perturb him.

peruse

verb: to read very carefully

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

petulant

adjective: easily irritated or annoyed

When Ed first met Ruth, he didn't realize she was so petulant, but now that they are three months into their relationship, Ed feels a day doesn't go by in which she isn't whining about some minor issue.

phantasmagorical

adjective: illusive; unreal

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

philistine

adjective: smug and ignorant towards artistic and cultural values

Jane considered Al completely philistine, because he talked almost exclusively about video games; she was entirely unaware of how well read he really was.

phlegmatic

adjective: showing little emotion

Arnold is truly noble, remaining reserved until an issue of significance arises, but Walter is simply phlegmatic: he doesn't have the energy or inclination to care about anything.

picayune

adjective: trifling or petty (a person)

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

pillory

verb: ridicule or expose to public scorn

After the candidate confessed, the press of the opposing party took the opportunity to pillory him, printing editorials with the most blatantly exaggerated accusations.

pine

verb: to yearn for

Standing forlornly by the window, she pined for her lost love.

pinnacle

noun: the highest point

At its pinnacle, the Roman Empire extended across most of the landmass of Eurasia, a feat not

paralleled to the rise of the British Empire in the 18th and 19th century.

piquant

adjective: having an agreeably pungent taste

The chef, with a mere flick of the salt shaker, turned the bland tomato soup into a piquant meal.

pith

noun: the most essential part of something

When Cynthia hears a speaker presenting a complex argument, she is always able to discard the irrelevant details and extract the pith of what the speaker is trying to convey.

pithy

adjective: concise and full of meaning

I enjoy reading the Daodejing for its pithy and insightful prose; it always gives me something to think about.

pittance

noun: a small amount (of money)

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

placate

verb: cause to be more favorably inclined; gain the good will of

I was able to placate the angry mob of students by promising to bring cookies on Monday.

placid

adjective: not easily irritated

Doug is normally placid, so we were all shocked to see him yelling at the television when the Mets lost the game.

platitude

noun: a trite or obvious remark

The professor argued that many statements regarded as wise in previous times, such as the Golden Rule, are now regarded as mere platitudes.

plodding

adjective: (of movement) slow and laborious

Charlie may seem to run at a plodding pace, but he is an ultramarathoner, meaning he runs distances

of up to 100 miles, and can run for ten hours at a stretch.

ploy

noun: a clever plan to turn a situation to one's advantage

Dennis arranged an elaborate ploy, involving 14 different people lying for him in different situations, so that it could appear that he was meeting Mary completely by chance at the wedding reception.

plucky

adjective: marked by courage and determination

Some scouts initially doubted Pedroia because of his short stature, but he is a plucky player, surprising everyone with his boundless energy and fierce determination.

poignant

adjective: emotionally touching

After the Montagues and Capulets discover the dead bodies of Romeo and Juliet, in the play's most poignant moment, the two griefstricken families agree to end their feud once and for all.

polemic

noun: a strong verbal or written attack on someone or something.

The professor launched into a polemic, claiming that Freudian theory was a pack of lies that absolutely destroyed European literary theory.

pollyannaish

adjective: extremely optimistic

Even in the midst of a lousy sales quarter, Debbie remained Pollyannaish, never losing her shrill voice and wide smile, even when prospective customers hung up on her.

ponderous

adjective: weighed-down; moving slowly

Laden with 20 kilograms of college text books, the freshman moved ponderously across the campus.

pontificate

verb: talk in a dogmatic and pompous manner

The vice-president would often pontificate about economic theory, as if no one else in the room were qualified to speak on the topic.

portentous

adjective: ominously prophetic

When the captain and more than half the officers were sick on the very first night of the voyage, many of the passengers felt this was portentous, but the rest of the voyage continued without any problems.

posit

verb: assume as fact

Initially, Einstein posited a repulsive force to balance Gravity, but then rejected that idea as a blunder.

powwow

noun: an informal meeting or discussion

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

pragmatic

adjective: guided by practical experience and observation rather than theory

Rather than make a philosophical appeal to the Congressmen, the Speaker decided to take a far more pragmatic approach, making small side-deals that would add votes to his bill.

precarious

adjective: fraught with danger

People smoke to relax and forget their cares, but ironically, in terms of health risks, smoking is far more precarious than either mountain-climbing or skydiving.

precedent

noun: an example that is used to justify similar occurrences at a later time

The principal explained that even though one student had done modelling work outside of school, the outfits that student wore in those photographs in no way established a precedent for what could be worn at school dances.

precipitate

adjective: hasty or rash

Instead of conducting a thorough investigation after the city hall break-in, the governor acted precipitately, accusing his staff of aiding and abetting the criminals.

verb: to cause to happen

The government's mishandling the hurricane's aftermath precipitated a widespread outbreak of looting and other criminal activity.

precipitous

adjective: done with very great haste and without due deliberation

He was expecting a precipitous rise in the value of a "hot" tech stock, so he was disappointed when it only inched up a dollar or two each day.

preclude

verb: keep from happening or arising; make impossible

The manager specified that all other gates be locked, to preclude the possibility of persons without tickets entering the arena undetected.

precocious

adjective: characterized by or characteristic of exceptionally early development or maturity (especially in mental aptitude)

Though only seven years old, she was a precocious chess prodigy, able to beat players twice her age.

predilection

noun: a strong liking

Monte had a predilection for the fine things in life: Cuban cigars, 200 dollar bottles of wine, and trips to the French Riviera.

preempt

verb: take the place of or have precedence over

A governmental warning about an imminent terrorist attack would preempt ordinary network programming on television.

preemptive

adjective: done before someone else can do it

Just as Martha was about to take the only cookie left on the table, Noah preemptively swiped it.

prescience

noun: the power to foresee the future

Baxter's warnings about investing in technology stocks seemed like an act of prescience after the whole market declined significantly.

presentiment

noun: a feeling of evil to come

On the night that Lincoln would be fatally shot, his wife had a presentiment about going to Ford's Theater, but Lincoln persuaded her that everything would be fine.

presumption

noun: an assumption that is taken for granted

When Mr. Baker found out the family car was gone, he acted under the presumption that his rebellious son had taken the car, calling his son's phone and yelling at him; only later did Mr. Baker realize that Mrs. Baker had simply gone out to get her nails done.

noun: audacious (even arrogant) behavior that you have no right to

The new neighbor quickly gained a reputation for her presumption; she had invited herself to several neighbors' homes, often stopping over at inopportune times and asking for a drink.

presumptuous

adjective: excessively forward

Many felt that Barney was presumptuous in moving into the large office before the management even made any official announcement of his promotion.

prevail

verb: be widespread in a particular area at a particular time; be current:

During the labor negotiations, an air of hostility prevailed in the office.

verb: prove superior

Before the cricket match, Australia was heavily favored, but India prevailed.

prevaricate

verb: to speak in an evasive way

The cynic quipped, "There is not much variance in politicians; they all seem to prevaricate".

primacy

noun: the state of being first in importance

The primacy of Apple Computers is not guaranteed, as seen in the recent lawsuits and weak growth.

pristine

adjective: Unspoiled, untouched (usu. of nature)

The glacial lake was pristine and we filled our canteens to drink deeply.

adjective: Immaculately clean and unused

Drill sergeants are known for demanding pristine cabinets, uniforms, and beds, and often make new recruits clean and clean and clean until they meet the expected high standards.

probity

noun: integrity, strong moral principles

The ideal politician would have the probity to lead, but reality gravely falls short of the ideal of morally upright leaders.

prodigal

adjective: rashly or wastefully extravagant

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

prodigious

adjective: so great in size or force or extent as to elicit awe

After the relatively small homerun totals in the "dead ball" era, Babe Ruth's homerun totals were truly prodigious: every year, he set a new all-time record.

profligate

adjective: spending resources recklessly or wastefully;

The composer Wagner, while living on a limited salary, was so profligate as to line all the walls of his apartment with pure silk.

noun: someone who spends resources recklessly or wastefully

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

profuse

adjective: plentiful; pouring out in abundance

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

profusion

noun: the property of being extremely abundant

When Maria reported that she had been visited by Jesus Christ and had proof, a profusion of reporters and journalists descended on the town.

prognostication

noun: a statement made about the future

When the Senator was asked about where the negotiations would lead, he said that any guess he could make would be an unreliable prognostication.

prolific

adjective: intellectually productive

Schubert was the most prolific composer, producing hundreds of hours of music before he died at the age of 31.

prolixity

noun: boring verbosity

I loved my grandfather dearly, but his prolixity would put me to sleep, regardless of the topic.

promulgate

verb: state or announce

The President wanted to promulgate the success of the treaty negotiations, but he had to wait until Congress formally approved the agreement.

propitiate

verb: to placate or appease

The two sons, plying their angry father with cheesy neckties for Christmas, were hardly able to propitiate him – the father already had a drawer full of ones he had never worn before or ever planned to.

propitious

adjective: presenting favorable circumstances; likely to result in or show signs of success

The child's heartbeat is still weak, but I am seeing many propitious signs and I think that she may be healing.

proponent

noun: a person who pleads for a cause or propounds an idea

Ironically, the leading proponent of Flat-Earth Theory flies all over the world in an effort to win more adherents.

prosaic

adjective: dull and lacking imagination

Unlike the talented artists in his workshop, Paul had no such bent for the visual medium, so when it was time for him to make a stained glass painting, he ended up with a prosaic mosaic.

proscribe

verb: command against

My doctor proscribes that I not eat donuts with chocolate sauce and hamburger patties for breakfast.

proselytize

verb: convert to another religion, philosophy, or perspective

Lisa loves her Mac but says little about it; by contrast, Jake will proselytize, interrogating anyone with an Android about why she didn't purchase an iPhone.

protean

adjective: readily taking on different roles; versatile

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

provident

adjective: careful in regard to your own interests; providing carefully for the future

In a move that hardly could be described as provident, Bert spend his entire savings on a luxurious cruise, knowing that other bills would come due a couple months later.

provincial

adjective: characteristic of the a limited perspective; not fashionable or sophisticated

Maggie's enthusiasm about her high school teams seemed provincial to her college classmates, all of whom were following a nationally ranked college team.

provisional

adjective: under terms not final or fully worked out or agreed upon

Until the corporate office hands down a definitive decision on use of the extra offices, we will share their use in a provisional arrangement.

puerile

adjective: of or characteristic of a child; displaying or suggesting a lack of maturity

Helen enjoyed blowing soap bubbles, but Jim regarded this as puerile, totally unworthy of a woman with a Ph.D.

pugnacious

adjective: eager to fight or argue; verbally combative

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

puissant

adjective: powerful

Over the years of service, and quite to his surprise, he became a puissant advisor to the community.

punctilious

adjective: marked by precise accordance with details

The colonel was so punctilious about enforcing regulations that men feel compelled to polish even the soles of their shoes.

pundit

noun: someone who has been admitted to membership in a scholarly field

Steven Pinker's credentials are unquestioned as a pundit; he has taught at MIT and Stanford, teaches at Harvard, and has published a number of influential books on cognition, language, and psychology.

pyrrhic

adjective: describing a victory that comes at such a great cost that the victory is not worthwhile

George W. Bush's win in the 2000 election was in many ways a pyrrhic victory: the circumstances of his win alienated half of the U.S. population.

Q

quail

verb: draw back, as with fear or pain

Craig always claimed to be a fearless outdoorsman, but when the thunderstorm engulfed the valley, he quailed at the thought of leaving the safety of his cabin.

qualify

verb: to be eligible for a role, status, or benefit by meeting specific requirements;

If James had made more than \$50,000 last year, then he wouldn't have qualified for the low-income scholarship.

verb: to make less severe; to limit (a statement)

Chris qualified his love for San Francisco, adding that he didn't like the weather as much as the weather in Los Angeles.

qualm

noun: uneasiness about the fitness of an action

While he could articulate no clear reason why Harkner's plan would fail, he nevertheless felt qualms about committing any resources to it.

quandary

noun: state of uncertainty or perplexity especially as requiring a choice between equally unfavorable options

Steve certainly is in a quandary: if he doesn't call Elaine, she will blame him for everything, but if he does call her, the evidence of where he currently is could cost him his job.

querulous

adjective: habitually complaining

The querulous old woman was beginning to wear down even the happier members of the staff with her ceaseless complaining.

quip

noun: a witty saying or remark

In one of the most famous quips about classical music, Mark Twain said: "Wagner's music is better than it sounds."

verb: to make a witty remark, to say in jest

When a old English teacher criticized Churchill for ending a sentence with a preposition, he quipped, "This is the kind of criticism up with which we will not put!"

quisling

noun: a traitor

History looks unfavorably upon quislings; indeed they are accorded about the same fondness as Nero—he who watched his city burn down while playing the violin.

quixotic

adjective: wildly idealistic; impractical

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

quotidian

adjective: found in the ordinary course of events

Phil gets so involved thinking about Aristotle's arguments that he totally forgets quotidian concerns, such as exercising and eating regularly.

R

raconteur

noun: a person skilled in telling anecdotes

Jude is entertaining, but he is no raconteur: beyond the handful of amusing stories he has memorized, he has absolutely no spontaneous story-telling ability.

raffish

adjective: marked by a carefree unconventionality or disreputableness

The men found him raffish, but the women adored his smart clothes and casual attitude.

raft

noun: a large number of something

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

raillery

noun: light teasing

The new recruit was not bothered by the raillery, finding most of it light-hearted and good-natured.

rakish

adjective: marked by a carefree unconventionality or disreputableness

As soon as he arrived in the city, the rakish young man bought some drugs and headed straight for the seedy parts of town.

rankle

verb: gnaw into; make resentful or angry

His constant whistling would rankle her, sometimes causing her to leave in a huff.

rapprochement

noun: the reestablishing of cordial relations

Although Ann hoped that her mother and her aunt would have a rapprochement, each one's bitter accusations against the other made any reconciliation unlikely.

rarefied

verb: make more subtle or refined

Jack's vulgar jokes were not so successful in the rarefied environment of college professors.

rash

adjective: marked by defiant disregard for danger or consequences; imprudently incurring risk

Although Bruce was able to make the delivery in time with a nighttime motorcycle ride in the rain, Susan criticized his actions as rash.

ravenous

adjective: extremely hungry; devouring or craving food in great quantities

John didn't eat much at all during the week he had the flu, so now that he is regaining his health, it's not surprising that he has a ravenous appetite.

rebuke

verb: criticize severely or angrily; censure

The police chief rebuked the two officers whose irresponsible decisions almost led to the deaths of seven innocent by-standers.

recapitulation

noun: a summary (think of recap)

Every point of the professors lesson was so clear that the students felt his concluding recapitulation was not necessary.

reconcile

verb: make (one thing) compatible with (another)

Peggy was unable to reconcile her kind friend Jane with the cruel and merciless character Jane played on television.

recondite

adjective: difficult to penetrate; incomprehensible to one of ordinary understanding or knowledge

I found Ulysses recondite and never finished the book, waiting instead to read it with someone else so we could penetrate its meaning together.

recrimination

noun: mutual accusations

The two brothers sat and cried, pointing fingers and making elaborate recriminations of the other's guilt.

recrudescence

verb: to break out or happen again

After years of gamblers anonymous, Tony thought he'd broken his compulsive slot machine playing, but it took only one trip to the Atlantic City for a full recrudescence--he lost \$5k on the one armed bandit.

redoubtable

adjective: inspiring fear or awe

On television basketball players don't look that tall, but when you stand in front of a seven-foot tall NBA player, he is truly redoubtable.

redress

noun: an act of making something right

Barry forgot his wife's birthday two years in a row, and was only able to redress his oversight by surprising his wife with a trip to Tahiti.

refractory

adjective: stubbornly resistant to authority or control

Used to studious high school students, Martha was unprepared for the refractory Kindergarteners who neither sat still nor listened to a single word she said.

refute

verb: prove to be false or incorrect

No one could refute his theories or propositions, and that is why he was esteemed by all his colleagues in the philosophy department.

register

verb: to put your name or other information in a list for something

If you'd like to buy a meal plan, you can register at the student affairs office.

verb: to identify and show on a tool for measuring

The bomb was so strong that far away weather balloons registered the heat.

relegate

verb: assign to a lower position

When Dexter was unable to fulfill his basic duties, instead of firing him, the boss relegated him to kitchen cleanup.

relevant

adjective: closely connected to the topic and therefore important

I think Professor McGarry can give you some relevant books to help you write that essay.

remiss

adjective: to be negligent in one's duty

Remiss in his duty to keep the school functioning efficiently, the principal was relieved of his position after only three months.

remonstrate

verb: to make objections while pleading

The mothers of the kidnapped victims remonstrated to the rogue government to release their children, claiming that the detention violated human rights.

renege

verb: fail to fulfill a promise or obligation

We will no longer work with that vendor since it has reneged on nearly every agreement.

replete

adjective: completely stocked or furnished with something

Only weeks after the hurricane made landfall, the local supermarket shelves were replete with goods, so quick was the disaster relief response.

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adjective: completely stocked or furnished with something

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reprisal

noun: a retaliatory action against an enemy in wartime

The Old Testament doctrine of an eye for an eye is not the kind of retaliation practiced in war; rather, an arm, a leg, and both ears are the reprisal for the smallest scratch.

reproach

verb: to express criticism towards

At first, Sarah was going to yell at the boy, but she didn't want to reproach him for telling the truth about the situation.

reprobate

noun: a person who is disapproved of

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

repudiate

verb: reject as untrue or unfounded

Many in the public believed the rumors of a UFO crash outside town, so the chief of police did everything he could to repudiate the rumors.

rescind

verb: cancel officially

The man's driver's license was rescinded after his tenth car accident, which meant he would never be allowed to legally drive again.

reservation

noun: an unstated doubt that prevents you from accepting something wholeheartedly

I was initially excited by the idea of a trip to Washington, D.C. but now that I have read about the high crime statistics there, I have some reservations.

resignation

noun: the acceptance of something unpleasant that can't be avoided

Since Jack could not think of a convincing reason why he had to miss the seminar, he attended it with a sense of resignation.

resolve

verb: reach a conclusion after a discussion or deliberation

After much thought, Ted resolved not to travel abroad this summer because he didn't have much money in his bank account.

resource

noun: some saved material that can be used for a purpose (especially money, anything used to make energy such as oil, or information sources such as books)

Many of the richest countries have surprisingly few natural resources and must buy oil or gas from other countries.

Never forget to make use of the library during your studies; it's full of great resources.

respite

noun: a pause from doing something (as work)

Every afternoon, the small company has a respite in which workers play foosball or board games.

restive

adjective: restless

The crowd grew restive as the comedian's opening jokes fell flat.

resurgent

adjective: rising again as to new life and vigor

The team sank to fourth place in June, but is now resurgent and about to win the division.

reticent

adjective: reluctant to draw attention to yourself; temperamentally disinclined to talk

When asked about her father, Helen lost her outward enthusiasm and became rather reticent.

retiring

adjective: to be shy, and to be inclined to retract from company

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

retract

verb: pull inward or towards a center; formally reject or disavow a formerly held belief, usually under pressure

Email is wonderfully efficient, but once something awkward or damaging has been sent, there is no way to retract it.

reverent

adjective: feeling or showing profound respect or veneration

The professor could speak objectively about the other composers, but he always lectured about Brahms with a particularly reverent air, unable to offer a single criticism of his compositions.

ribald

adjective: humorously vulgar

The speaker was famous for his ribald humor, but the high school principal asked him to keep the talk G-rated when he spoke to the student body.

rile

verb: cause annoyance in; disturb, especially by minor irritations

Dan is usually calm and balanced, but it takes only one intense glare from Sabrina to rile him.

robust

adjective: sturdy and strong in form, constitution, or construction

Chris preferred bland and mild beers, but Bhavin preferred a beer with more robust flavor.

row

noun: an angry dispute

The Prime Minister looked very foolish after his row with the foreign dignitary was caught on video and posted on youtube.

rudimentary

adjective: being in the earliest stages of development; being or involving basic facts or principles

I would love to be able to present a fully polished proposal to the board, but right now, our plans for the product are still in the most rudimentary stages.

rustic

adjective: characteristic of rural life; awkwardly simple and provincial

The vacation cabin had no electricity and no indoor plumbing, but despite these inconveniences, Nigel adored its rustic charm.

S

sagacious

adjective: having good judgement and acute insight Steve Jobs is surely one of the most sagacious CEOs, making Apple the most recognizable and valuable companies in the world.

sanctimonious

adjective: making a show of being pious; holier-than-thou

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

sanction

verb: give authority or permission to

The authorities have sanctioned the use of the wilderness reserve for public use; many expect to see hikers and campers enjoying the park in the coming months.

noun: a legal penalty for a forbidden action

International sanctions have been placed on certain shipping lanes that were thought to be involved in human trafficking.

sangfroid

noun: calmness or poise in difficult situations

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

sanguine

adjective: cheerful; optimistic

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

sardonic

adjective: disdainfully or ironically humorous; scornful and mocking

A stand-up comedian walks a fine line when making jokes about members of the audience; such fun and joking can quickly become sardonic and cutting.

sartorial

adjective: related to fashion or clothes

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

saturnine

adjective: morose or gloomy

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

savvy

noun: a perceptive understanding

Although a great CEO, he did not have the political savvy to win the election.

verb: get the meaning of something

The student savvies the meaning of astrophysics with little effort.

adjective: well-informed or perceptive

With his savvy business partner, the company was able to turn a profit within a year.

schadenfreude

noun: joy from watching the suffering of others

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

scintillating

adjective: describes someone who is brilliant and lively

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

screed

noun: an abusive rant (often tedious)

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

scrupulous

adjective: characterized by extreme care and great effort

Because of his scrupulous nature, Mary put him in charge of numbering and cataloging the entire collection of rare stamps.

adjective: having a sense of right and wrong; principled

Everyone trusted what he said and followed his example because he was scrupulous and honest.

sedulous

adjective: done diligently and carefully

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

self-effacing

adjective: reluctant to draw attention to yourself

The most admirable teachers and respected leaders are those who are self-effacing, directing attention and praise to their students and workers.

semblance

noun: an outward or token appearance or form that is deliberately misleading

While the banker maintained a semblance of respectability in public, those who knew him well were familiar with his many crimes.

sententious

adjective: to be moralizing, usually in a pompous sense

The old man, casting his nose up in the air at the group of adolescents, intoned sententiously, “Youth is wasted on the young.”

sentimental

adjective: effusively or insincerely emotional, especially in art, music, and literature

I don't like romanticism for the same reason I don't like melodramatic acting and soap operas—overly sentimental.

serendipity

noun: the instance in which an accidental, fortunate discovery is made

By pure serendipity, Sarah discovered, at a flea market in Peoria, a matching earring to replace the one that fell down the storm drain back home.

serene

adjective: calm and peaceful

I'd never seen him so serene; usually, he was a knot of stress and anxiety from hours of trading on the stock exchange.

simulacrum

noun: a representation of a person (especially in the form of sculpture)

The Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center showcases a simulacrum of all the present and approved buildings in the city of Shanghai.

noun: a bad imitation

The early days of computer graphics made real people into a simulacrum that now seems comical.

sinecure

noun: an office that involves minimal duties

The position of Research Director is a sinecure: the job entails almost no responsibilities, nor does the person in that position have to answer to anyone.

slapdash

adjective: carelessly and hastily put together

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

smattering

noun: a slight or superficial understanding of a subject; a small amount of something

I know only a smattering of German, but Helen is able to read German newspapers and converse with natives.

smug

adjective: marked by excessive complacency or self-satisfaction

When Phil was dating the model, he had a smug attitude that annoyed his buddies.

snide

adjective: expressive of contempt; derogatory or mocking in an indirect way

The chairman interpreted Taylor's question about promotions as a snide remark, but in all innocence Taylor was trying to figure out the company's process.

snub

verb: refuse to acknowledge; reject outright and bluntly

Wheeler was completely qualified for the committee, but the board snubbed him, choosing an obviously lesser qualified candidate instead.

solecism

noun: a socially awkward or tactless act

Mother Anna was always on guard against any solecism from her children and scolded them immediately if any of them talked out of place in public.

solicitous

adjective: showing hovering attentiveness

Our neighbors are constantly knocking on our door to make sure we are ok, and I don't know how to ask them to stop being so solicitous about our health.

solicitude

noun: a feeling of excessive concern

I walked to his house in the rain to make sure he had enough to eat while he was sick, but he seemed not to appreciate my solicitude.

soporific

adjective: inducing mental lethargy; sleep inducing

Although the professor is brilliant, his bland monotone gives his lectures a soporific effect.

sordid

adjective: involving ignoble actions and motives; arousing moral distaste and contempt; foul and run-down and repulsive

The nightly news simply announced that the senator had had an affair, but the tabloid published all the sordid details of the interaction.

spartan

adjective: unsparing and uncompromising in discipline or judgment; practicing great self-denial

After losing everything in a fire, Tim decided to live in spartan conditions, sleeping on the floor and owning as little furniture as a possible.

specious

adjective: based on pretense; deceptively pleasing

Almost every image on TV is specious and not to be trusted.

adjective: plausible but false

He made a career out of specious arguments and fictional lab results, but lost his job and reputation when his lies were exposed by an article in The New York Times.

spendthrift

noun: one who spends money extravagantly

Taking weekly trips to Vegas, Megan was a spendthrift whose excesses eventually caught up to her.

splenetic

adjective: very irritable

Ever since the car accident, Frank has been unable to walk without a cane, and so he has become splenetic and unpleasant to be around.

sporadic

adjective: recurring in scattered and irregular or unpredictable instances

The signals were at first sporadic, but now we detect a clear, consistent pattern of electromagnetic radiation emanating from deep space.

spurious

adjective: plausible but false

When listening to a politician speak, it is hard to distinguish the spurious claims from the authentic ones.

spurn

verb: reject with contempt

She spurned all his flattery and proposals, and so he walked off embarrassed and sad.

squander

verb: spend thoughtlessly; waste time, money, or an opportunity

Fearing his money would be squandered by his family, he gave all of it to charity when he died.

squelch

verb: suppress or crush completely

After the dictator consolidated his power, he took steps to squelch all criticism, often arresting any journalist who said anything that could be interpreted as negative about his regime.

staid

adjective: characterized by dignity and propriety

Frank came from a staid environment, so he was shocked that his college roommate sold narcotics.

stalwart

adjective: dependable; inured to fatigue or hardships

Despite all the criticism directed at the President during this scandal, Lisa has remained his stalwart supporter.

start

verb: to suddenly move in a particular direction

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

staunch

adjective: firm and dependable especially in loyalty

No longer a staunch supporter of the movement, Todd now will openly question whether its goals are worthwhile.

steadfast

adjective: marked by firm determination or resolution; not shakable

A good captain needs to be steadfast, continuing to hold the wheel and stay the course even during the most violent storm.

stem

verb: to hold back or limit the flow or growth of something

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

stipend

noun: a regular allowance (of money)

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

stolid

adjective: having or revealing little emotion or sensibility; not easily aroused or excited Elephants may appear stolid to casual observers, but they actually have passionate emotional lives.

stringent

adjective: demanding strict attention to rules and procedures

Most of the students disliked the teacher because of his stringent homework policy, but many students would later thank him for demanding so much from them.

stultify

verb: cause one, through routine, to lose energy and enthusiasm

As an undergraduate Mark felt stultified by classes outside his area of study; only in grad school, in which he could focus solely on literary analysis, did he regain his scholarly edge.

stymie

verb: hinder or prevent the progress or accomplishment of

The engineers found their plans stymied at every turn and were ultimately able to make almost no progress on the project.

subsume

verb: contain or include

The rogue wave quickly subsumed the pier and boardwalk, destroying everything in its path.

verb: consider (an instance of something) as part of a general rule or principle

Don Quixote of La Mancha subsumes all other modern novels, demonstrating modern literary devices and predating even the idea of a postmodern, metanarrative.

subterfuge

noun: something intended to misrepresent the true nature of an activity

Finally deciding to abandon all subterfuge, Arthur revealed to Cindy everything about his secret affair over the past two years.

subversive

adjective: in opposition to a civil authority or government

The ruling political party has begun a campaign to shut down subversive websites that it deems as a threat to "national safety."

sullen

adjective: showing a brooding ill humor

Herbert took board games too seriously, often appearing sullen after losing.

summit

noun: the peak or highest point

After hiking for two days, the climbers finally reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

noun: a meeting of high-level leaders

Since climate change policy has been mired in congressional fighting, this summit should help set the goals for president's next term."

supercilious

adjective: haughty and disdainful; looking down on others

Nelly felt the Quiz Bowl director acted superciliously towards the underclassmen; really, she fumed, must he act so preternaturally omniscient each time he intones some obscure fact—as though everybody knows that Mt. Aconcagua is the highest peak in South America.

superfluous

adjective: serving no useful purpose

How can we hope to stay open if we don't eliminate all superfluous spending, like catered meetings and free acupuncture Tuesday?

adjective: more than is needed, desired, or required

The third paragraph in your essay is superfluous and can be deleted.

supplant

verb: take the place or move into the position of

For many, a cell phone has supplanted a traditional phone; in fact, most 20-somethings don't even have a traditional phone anymore.

surfeit

noun: an excessive amount of something

There was no such thing as a surfeit of shopping for Nancy--she could stay at the outlet stores from opening to closing time.

surly

adjective: inclined to anger or bad feelings with overtones of menace

Every morning, Bhavin was a surly unhappy person, but once he ate breakfast, he became loving, laughing, and a joy to be around.

surreptitious

adjective: stealthy, taking pains not to be caught or detected

Since his mom was a light sleeper, Timmy had to tiptoe surreptitiously through the entire house, careful to not make the floors creak, until he at last was able to enjoy his plunder: a box of chocolate chip cookies.

sybarite

noun: a person who indulges in luxury

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

sycophant

noun: a person who tries to please someone in order to gain a personal advantage

The CEO was unaware of the damaging consequences of his choices, largely because he surrounded himself with sycophants who would never dare criticize him.

T

taciturn

adjective: habitually reserved and uncommunicative

While the CEO enthusiastically shares his plans and agenda with all who will listen, the CFO is far more taciturn, rarely revealing his perspective.

tact

noun: consideration in dealing with others and avoiding giving offense

In a tremendous display of tact, Shelly was able to maintain a strong friendship with Marcia, even though Marcia's husband, Frank, confessed to finding Shelley more attractive than Marcia.

tantamount

adjective: being essentially equal to something

In many situations, remaining silent is tantamount to admitting guilt, so speak to prove your innocence.

tarnish

verb: make dirty or spotty, as by exposure to air; also used metaphorically

Pete Rose was one of the best baseball players of his generation, but his involvement with gambling on baseball games has tarnished his image in the eyes of many.

tawdry

adjective: tastelessly showy; cheap and shoddy

Carol expected to find New York City magical, the way so many movies had portrayed it, but she was surprised how often tawdry displays took the place of genuine elegance.

taxing

adjective: use to the limit; exhaust

The hike to the summit of Mt. Whitney was so taxing that I could barely speak or stand up.

telling

adjective: significant and revealing of another factor

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

telltale

adjective: revealing

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

temerity

noun: fearless daring

No child has the temerity to go in the rundown house at the end of the street and see if it is haunted.

temperance

noun: the trait of avoiding excesses

Welles wasn't known for his temperance--he usually ate enough for two and drank enough for three.

tempered

adjective: moderated in effect

The wide-eyed optimism of her youth was now tempered after she had worked many years in the criminal justice system.

tempestuous

adjective: as if driven by turbulent or conflicting emotions; highly energetic and wildly changing or fluctuating

Chuck and Kathy had always been stable and agreeable people on their own, but when they got involved, it was a tempestuous relationship.

tenacious

adjective: stubbornly unyielding

Even the most tenacious advocates for gun ownership must admit some of the dangers that firearms present.

tendentious

adjective: likely to lean towards a controversial view

Because political mudslinging has become a staple of the 24-hour media cycle, most of us, despite protestations to the contrary, are tendentious on many of today's pressing issues.

tender

verb: offer up something formally

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

thoroughgoing

adjective: very thorough; complete

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

thrifty

adjective: spending money wisely

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

thwart

verb: hinder or prevent (the efforts, plans, or desires) of

I wanted to spend a week in New York this autumn, but the high costs of travel and lodging thwarted my plans.

timorous

adjective: timid by nature or revealing fear and nervousness

Since this was her first time debating on stage and before an audience, Di's voice was timorous and quiet for the first 10 minutes.

tirade

noun: an angry speech

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

torpor

noun: inactivity resulting from lethargy and lack of vigor or energy

After work, I was expecting my colleagues to be enthusiastic about the outing, but I found them in a state of complete torpor.

tortuous

adjective: marked by repeated turns and bends; not straightforward

Because the logic behind McMahon's side of the debate was so tortuous, his audience came out either completely confused or, worse, feeling they'd been tricked.

tout

verb: advertize in strongly positive terms; show off

At the conference, the CEO touted the extraordinary success of his company's Research & Development division.

tractable

adjective: readily reacting to suggestions and influences; easily managed (controlled or taught or molded)

Compared to middle school students, who have an untamed wildness about them, high school students are somewhat more tractable.

transient

adjective: lasting a very short time

The unpredictable and transient nature of *deja vu* makes it a very difficult phenomenon to study properly.

transitory

adjective: lasting a very short time

If we lived forever and life was not transitory, do you think we would appreciate life less or more?

transmute

verb: change or alter in form, appearance, or nature

One of the goals of alchemy was to find the substance or process that would transmute lead into gold.

travail

noun: use of physical or mental energy; hard work; agony or anguish

While they experienced nothing but *travails* in refinishing the kitchen, they completed the master bedroom in less than a weekend.

travesty

noun: an absurd presentation of something; a mockery

What I expected to be an intelligent, nuanced historical documentary turned out to be a poorly-produced travesty of the form.

treacherous

adjective: tending to betray

Even though Jesse James was an outlaw, his killer, Robert Ford, is remembered more for his treacherous actions than for eliminating a criminal and murder.

adjective: dangerously unstable and unpredictable

The bridge built from twine and vine is treacherous to walk across, and so I think I will stay put right here.

trenchant

adjective: characterized by or full of force and vigor; having keenness and forcefulness and penetration in thought, expression, or intellect

Jill presented a rather superficial treatment of sales in Asia, but her trenchant analysis of sales in Europe inspired a number of insights into how to proceed in that market.

tribulation

noun: something, especially an event, that causes difficulty and suffering

As of 2013, nearly 1.5 million Syrians have fled their country hoping to escape the tribulations of a civil war tearing their country to pieces.

trite

adjective: repeated too often; overfamiliar through overuse

Many style guides recommend not using idioms in writing because these trite expressions are uninteresting and show a lack of imagination on the part of the writer.

truculence

noun: defiant aggressiveness

When the boss confronted Aaron about his earlier remarks, Aaron responded with utter truculence, simply throwing a glass of water in the boss' face and walking away.

truculent

adjective: having a fierce, savage nature

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

truncate

verb: reduce the length of something

The soccer game was truncated when the monsoon rain began to fall.

tumult

noun: a state of chaos, noise and confusion

Riots broke out just in front of our apartment building, and the tumult continued late into the night.

turgid

adjective: (of language) pompous and tedious

The amount of GRE vocabulary he used increased with his years--by the time he was 60, his novels were so turgid that even his diehard fans refused to read them.

turpitude

noun: depravity; a depraved act

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

tyro

noun: someone new to a field or activity

All great writers, athletes, and artists were tyros at one time—unknown, clumsy, and unskilled with much to learn.

U

umbrage

noun: a feeling of anger caused by being offended

Since he was so in love with her, he took umbrage at her comments, even though she had only meant to gently tease him.

unassailable

adjective: immune to attack; without flaws

Professor Williams is so self-assured as to seem arrogant, presenting each and every opinion as an unassailable fact.

uncanny

adjective: suggesting the operation of supernatural influences; surpassing the ordinary or normal

Reggie has an uncanny ability to connect with animals: feral cats will readily approach him, and sometimes even wild birds will land on his finger.

uncompromising

adjective: not making concessions

The relationship between Bart and Hilda ultimately failed because they were both so uncompromising, never wanting to change their opinions.

unconscionable

adjective: unreasonable; unscrupulous; excessive

The lawyer's demands were so unconscionable that rather than pay an exorbitant sum or submit himself to any other inconveniences, the defendant decided to find a new lawyer.

undermine

adjective: to weaken (usually paired with an abstract term)

The student undermined the teacher's authority by questioning the teacher's judgment on numerous occasions.

underscore

verb: give extra weight to (a communication)

While the hiking instructor agreed that carrying a first aid kit could be a good idea under certain circumstances, he underscored the importance of carrying enough water.

underwrite

verb: to support financially

The latest symphony broadcast was made possible with underwriting from the Carnegie Endowment.

unequivocal

adjective: admitting of no doubt or misunderstanding; having only one meaning or interpretation and leading to only one conclusion

The President's first statement on the subject was vague and open to competing interpretations, so when he spoke to Congress about the same subject later, he was careful to make his position completely unequivocal.

unflappable

adjective: not easily perturbed or excited or upset; marked by extreme calm and composure

The house shook and the ground quaked, but my dad was unflappable and comforted the family.

unforthcoming

adjective: uncooperative, not willing to give up information

The teacher demanded to know who broke the window while he was out of the room, but the students understandably were unforthcoming.

unimpeachable

adjective: free of guilt; not subject to blame; beyond doubt or reproach

After his long and unimpeachable service to the company, Sharat felt that a gold watch was a slap in the face rather than an honor.

unnerve

verb: to make nervous or upset

At one time unnerved by math problems, she began avidly “Magoosh-ing”, and soon became adept at even combinations and permutations questions.

unprecedented

adjective: having never been done or known before; novel

When America first created its national parks, the idea of setting aside the most beautiful land in a country was unprecedented in the history of mankind.

unprepossessing

adjective: creating an unfavorable or neutral first impression

World leaders coming to meet Gandhi would expect a towering sage, and often would be surprised

by the unprepossessing little man dressed only in a loincloth and shawl.

unpropitious

adjective: (of a circumstance) with little chance of success

With only a bottle of water and a sandwich, the hikers faced an unpropitious task: ascending a huge mountain that took most two days to climb.

unruly

adjective: (of persons) noisy and lacking in restraint or discipline; unwilling to submit to authority

Walk in to any preschool and I am sure that you will find an unruly and chaotic scene—unless it's nap time.

unscrupulous

adjective: without scruples or principles

In the courtroom, the lawyer was unscrupulous, using every manner of deceit and manipulation to secure a victory for himself.

unseemly

adjective: not in keeping with accepted standards of what is right or proper in polite society

He acted in an unseemly manner, insulting the hostess and then speaking ill of her deceased husband.

unstinting

adjective: very generous

Helen is unstinting with her time, often spending hours at the house of a sick friend.

untenable

adjective: (of theories etc) incapable of being defended or justified

With the combination of Kepler's brilliant theories and Galileo's telescopic observations, the old geocentric theory became untenable to most of the educated people in Europe.

untoward

adjective: unfavorable; inconvenient

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

untrammelled

adjective: not confined or limited untrammelled inspired the

American Revolution and was enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

unviable

adjective: not able to work, survive, or succeed (also spelled inviable).

The plan was obviously unviable considering that it lead to complete environmental destruction in the river valley.

upbraid

verb: to reproach; to scold

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

urbane

adjective: showing a high degree of refinement and the assurance that comes from wide social experience

Because of his service as an intelligence officer and his refined tastes, W. Somerset Maugham became the inspiration for the urbane and sophisticate spy James Bond.

V

vacillate

verb: be undecided about something; waver between conflicting positions or courses of action

Some students vacillate between schools when deciding which to attend, while others focus only on one school.

vacuous

adjective: devoid of intelligence, matter, or significance

To the journalist's pointed question, the senator gave a vacuous response, mixing a few of his overall campaign slogans with platitudes and completely avoiding the controversial subject of the question.

vanquish

verb: come out better in a competition, race, or conflict

For years, Argentina would dominate in World Cup qualifying matches, only to be vanquished by one of the European countries during the late stages of the tournament.

variance

noun: the quality of being different

The cynic quipped, "There is not much variance in politicians; they all seem to lie".

vaunted

adjective: highly or widely praised or boasted about

For years, they had heard of New York City's vaunted skyline, and when they finally saw it, the spectacular cityscape did not disappoint them in the least.

vehement

adjective: marked by extreme intensity of emotions or convictions

While the other employees responded to the bad news in a measured way, Andrew responded in a vehement manner, tipping over his desk and shouting at the top of his lungs.

venality

noun: the condition of being susceptible to bribes or corruption

Even some of the most sacred sporting events are not immune to venality, as many of the officials have received substantial bribes to make biased calls.

veneer

noun: covering consisting of a thin superficial layer that hides the underlying substance

Mark Twain referred to the Victorian Period in America as the "Gilded Age", implying the ample moral corruption that lay beneath a mere veneer of respectability.

venerate

verb: to respect deeply

The professor, despite his sleep-inducing lectures, was venerated amongst his colleagues, publishing more papers yearly than all of his peers combined.

venial

adjective: easily excused or forgiven; pardonable

His traffic violations ran the gamut from the venial to the egregious—on one occasion he simply did not come to a complete stop; another time he tried to escape across state lines at speeds in excess of 140 mph.

veracious

adjective: truthful

While we elect our leaders in the hope that every word they speak will be veracious, history has shown that such a hope is naive.

verisimilitude

noun: the appearance of truth

All bad novels are bad for numerous reasons; all good novels are good for their verisimilitude of reality, placing the readers in a world that resembles the one they know.

veritable

adjective: truthfully, without a doubt

Frank is a veritable life-saver -- last year, on two different occasions, he revived people using CPR.

vicarious

adjective: felt or undergone as if one were taking part in the experience or feelings of another

The advent of twitter is a celebrity stalker's dream, as he or she can—through hundreds of intimate "tweets"—vicariously live the life of a famous person.

vicissitude

noun: change in one's circumstances, usually for the worse

Even great rulers have their vicissitudes—massive kingdoms have diminished overnight, and once

beloved kings have faced the scorn of angry masses.

vie

verb: compete for something

While the other teams in the division actively vie for the championship, this team seems content simply to go through the motions of playing.

vilify

verb: spread negative information about Todd was noble after the divorce, choosing to say only complimentary things about Barbara, but Barbara did not hesitate to vilify Todd.

vindicate

verb: to clear of accusation, blame, suspicion, or doubt with supporting arguments or proof

Even seven Tour de France wins cannot vindicate Lance Armstrong in the eyes of the public--that the athlete used performance enhancing drugs invalidates all those wins.

vindictive

adjective: to have a very strong desire for revenge

Though the other girl had only lightly poked fun of Vanessa's choice in attire, Vanessa was so vindictive that she waited for an entire semester to get the perfect revenge.

virago

noun: an ill-tempered or violent woman

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

vitriol

noun: abusive or venomous language used to express blame or bitter deep-seated ill will

His vitriol spewed forth from a deep-seated racism that consumed his whole life.

vitriolic

adjective: harsh or corrosive in tone

While the teacher was more moderate in her criticism of the other student's papers, she was vitriolic toward Peter's paper, casting every flaw in the harshest light.

vituperate

adjective: to criticize harshly; to berate

Jason had dealt with disciplinarians before, but nothing prepared him for the first week of boot camp,

as drill sergeants vituperated him for petty oversights such as forgetting to double knot the laces on his boots.

vociferous

adjective: conspicuously and offensively loud; given to vehement outcry In giving Marcia a particular vociferous response, Paul caused people at every other table in the restaurant to turn around and look at them angrily.

volubility

noun: the quality of talking or writing easily and continuously
The professor's volubility knows no bounds; he could talk through a hurricane and elaborate a point from one St. Patrick's Day to the next.

voracious

adjective: very hungry; approaching an activity with gusto
Steven was a voracious reader, sometimes finishing two novels in the same day.

W

wanting

adjective: lacking

She did not think her vocabulary was wanting, yet there were so many words that inevitably she found a few she didn't know.

wanton

adjective: without check or limitation; showing no moral restraints to one's anger, desire, or appetites
Due to wanton behavior and crude language, the drunk man was thrown out of the bar and asked to never return.

wax

verb: to gradually increase in size or intensity

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

whimsical

adjective: determined by impulse or whim rather than by necessity or reason

Adults look to kids and envy their whimsical nature at times, wishing that they could act without reason and play without limitation.

winsome

adjective: charming in a childlike or naive way

She was winsome by nature, and many people were drawn to this free and playful spirit.

Z

zeitgeist

noun: spirit of the times

Each decade has its own zeitgeist—the 1990's was a prosperous time in which the promise of the American Dream never seemed more palpable.

zenith

noun: the highest point; culmination

At the zenith of his artistic career, Elvis was outselling any other artist on the charts.

Reference

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