

Barrons GRE Vocabulary 2

antiseptic

substance that prevents infection; substance that restricts the growth of disease-causing microorganisms

Regular washing with antiseptic is often enough to heal a skin infection.

antithesis

contrast; direct contrast; opposition

This tyranny was the antithesis of all that he had hoped for, and he fought it with all his strength.

anvil

heavy block of iron or steel with a smooth, flat top on which metals are shaped by hammering

The man put the iron block on the anvil.

apathy

lack of caring; indifference

A firm believer in democratic government, she could not understand the apathy of people who never bothered to vote.

aperture

opening; diameter of such an opening; hole

She discovered a small aperture in the wall, through which the insects had entered the room.

apex

highest point; vertex; summit; climax

He was at the apex of his career: he had climbed to the top of the heap.

aphasia

loss of speech due to injury or illness

After the automobile accident, the victim had periods of aphasia when he could not speak at all or could only mumble incoherently.

aphorism

definition or concise statement of principle; tersely phrased statement of truth or opinion

An aphorism differs from an adage in that it is more philosophical or scientific.

apiary

place where bees and beehives are kept, especially where bees are raised for their honey

Although he spent many hours daily in the apiary, he was very seldom stung by a bee.

aplomb

poise; self-confident assurance

Gwen's aplomb in handling potentially embarrassing moments was legendary around the office; when one of her clients broke a piece of her best crystal, she coolly picked up her own goblet and hurled it into the fireplace.

apocalyptic

prophetic; involving or portending widespread devastation

The crowd jeered preacher's apocalyptic predictions of doom at the street.

apocryphal

untrue; of questionable authorship or authenticity; erroneous; fictitious

To impress his friends, Tom invented apocryphal tales of his adventures in the big city.

apogee

the highest point; point in orbit most distant from the body being orbited

When the moon in its orbit is farthest away from the earth, it is at its apogee.

apolitical

having aversion or lack of concern for political affairs

It was hard to remain apolitical during the Vietnam War; even people who generally ignored public issues felt they had to take political stands.

apologist

person who argues in defense or justification of something, such as doctrine, policy, or institution

Finally, the fifth item mentioned by the apologist is the rigid monotheism which stamps the whole volume.

apostate

one who abandons his religious faith or political beliefs

Because he switched from one party to another, his former friends shunned him as an apostate.

apotheosis

elevation to godhood; fact or action of becoming a god; an ideal example of something

The apotheosis of a Roman emperor was designed to insure his eternal greatness: people would worship at his altar forever.

appall

depress or discourage with fear; grow faint or become weak

The horrifying conditions in the city's jails might appall you.

apparent

capable of being seen, or easily seen; open to view; visible to eye

It is apparent to all that he was guilty; do you think anyone still trusts him now?

apparition

ghostly figure; sudden or unusual sight; appearance; state of being visible

On the castle battlements, an apparition materialized and spoke to Hamlet, warning him of his uncle's treachery.

appease

bring peace, quiet, or calm to; satisfy or relieve

Tom and Jody tried to appease the crying baby by offering him one toy after another, but he would not calm down.

appellation

name; title; act of naming; act of appealing for aid, sympathy

Macbeth was startled when the witches greeted him with an incorrect appellation. Why did they call him Thane of Cawdor, he wondered, when the holder of that title still lived?.

append

attach; add as supplement or appendix

When you append a bibliography to a text, you have just created an supplementary material.

application

close attention; work of applying something; verbal or written request for assistance

Pleased with how well Tom had whitewashed the fence, Aunt Polly praised him for his application to the task.

apposite

strikingly appropriate and relevant; well-suited

He was always able to find the apposite phrase, the correct expression for every occasion.

appraise

estimate value of; evaluate, especially in official capacity

It is difficult to appraise the value of old paintings; it is easier to call them priceless.

appreciate

be thankful for; increase in worth; be thoroughly conscious of

I am truly thankful for the stocks, which would appreciate in value considerably in future years.

apprehend

take into custody; arrest a criminal; grasp mentally; perceive

The police will apprehend the culprit and convict him.

apprehensive

capable of apprehending; knowing; conscious; relating to the faculty of apprehension; sensible; feeling; perceptive

Here I walked about for a long time, feeling very strange, and mortally apprehensive of some one coming in and kidnapping me.

apprise

inform; give notice to; make aware

If you apprise him the dangerous weather conditions, he has to postpone his trip.

approbation

expression of warm approval; praise

She looked for some sign of approbation from her parents, hoping her good grades would please them.

apropos

with reference or regard; in respect

I'll admit - this list is completely in apropos of nothing.

aptitude

inherent ability; quickness in learning and understanding

The counselor gave him an aptitude test before advising him about the career he should follow.

aquiline

curved or hooked like an eagle's beak

He can be recognized by his aquiline nose, curved like the beak of the eagle.

arable

fit for growing crops, as by plowing

The first settlers wrote home glowing reports of the New World, praising its vast acres of arable land ready for the plow.

arbiter

person with power to decide a dispute; judge

As an arbiter in labor disputes, she has won the confidence of the workers and the employers.

arbitrary

randomly chosen; determined by chance or impulse, and not by reason or principle

He threw an arbitrary assortment of clothes into his suitcase and headed off, not caring where he went.

arboreal

tree-dwelling; treelike; living in trees

Learn about the arboreal emblems that represent the provinces and territories of Canada.

arboretum

place where different tree varieties are exhibited

Walking along the tree-lined paths of the arboretum, Rita noted poplars, firs, and some particularly fine sycamores.

arcade

covered passageway, usually lined with shops; simple arched opening in a wall; vault or vaulted place

The arcade was popular with shoppers because it gave them protection from the summer sun and the winter rain.

arcane

secret; mysterious; known only to the initiated

Secret brotherhoods surround themselves with arcane rituals and trappings to mystify outsiders.

archaeology

study of artifacts and relics of early mankind

The professor of archaeology headed an expedition to the Gobi Desert in search of ancient ruins.

archaic

no longer current or applicable; antiquated

"Methinks," "thee," and "thou" are archaic words that are no longer part of our normal vocabulary.

archetype

prototype; original model or type after which other similar things are patterned

The Brooklyn Bridge was the archetype of the many spans that now connect Manhattan with Long Island and New Jersey.

archipelago

group of closely located islands

When I looked at the map and saw the archipelago in the South Seas, I longed to visit them.

archives

public records; place where public records are kept

These documents should be part of the archives so that historians may be able to evaluate them in the future.

arduous

demanding great effort or labor; difficult

Her arduous efforts had sapped her energy.

aria

operatic solo; solo vocal piece with instrumental accompaniment

Of course, throwing a pop star at an aria is a particularly uninspired solution.

arid

dry; lacking moisture, especially having insufficient rainfall to support trees or plants

The cactus has adapted to survive in an arid environment.

aristocracy

hereditary nobility; privileged class

Americans have mixed feelings about hereditary aristocracy.

armada

a fleet of warships; a large group of moving things

Queen Elizabeth's navy defeated the mighty armada that threatened the English coast.

aromatic

fragrant or sweet-smelling; caused by fragrant odor

Medieval sailing vessels brought aromatic herbs from China to Europe.

arraign

officially charge someone in a court of law

After his indictment by the Grand Jury, the County Criminal Court should arraign the accused man.

array

set out for display or use; place in orderly arrangement

He requested to array the whole regiment on the parade ground.

arrears

being in debt; unpaid, overdue debt or an unfulfilled obligation

He was in arrears with his payments on the car.

arroyo

deep gully; a dry gulch; brook or creek; watercourse

Until the heavy rains of the past spring, this arroyo had been a dry bed.

arsenal

storage place for military equipment; stock of weapons

People are forbidden to smoke in the arsenal for fear that a stray spark might set off the munitions stored there.

artery

one of the vessels or tubes which carry either venous or arterial blood from the heart; major transit corridor

The Yangtze River is the main artery of traffic in center China.

articulate

expressing oneself easily in clear and effective language

Her articulate presentation of the advertising campaign impressed her employers.

artifice

subtle but base deception; trickery; cleverness or skill; ingenuity

The Trojan War proved to the Greeks that cunning and artifice were often more effective than military might.

artisan

manually skilled worker; craftsman, as opposed to artist

A noted artisan, Arturo was known for the fine craftsmanship.

artless

free of artificiality; natural; open and honest

Sophisticated and cynical, Jack could not believe Jill was as artless and naive as she appeared to be.

ascendancy

superiority or decisive advantage; domination

Leaders of religious cults maintain ascendancy over their followers by methods that can verge on brainwashing.

ascertain

find out for certain; discover with certainty; make sure of

Please ascertain her present address.

ascetic

leading a life of self-discipline and self-denial; austere

The wealthy, self-indulgent young man felt oddly drawn to the strict, ascetic life led by members of some monastic orders.

ascribe

inscribe or dedicate; attribute to a specified cause, source, or origin; assign as a quality

Other people ascribe his exclusion from the canon to an unsubtle form of racism.

aseptic

preventing infection; having cleansing effect

Hospitals succeeded in lowering the mortality rate as soon as they introduced aseptic conditions.

ashen

ash-colored; very pale; consisting of ashes

Her face was ashen with fear.

asinine

utterly stupid or silly; inanely foolish

Your asinine remarks prove that you have not given this problem any serious consideration.

askance

with sideways or indirect look; Turned to side, especially of eyes

Looking askance at her questioner, she displayed her scorn.

askew

turned or twisted toward one side; at an angle

When he placed his hat askew upon his head, his observers laughed.

asperity

sharpness of temper; roughness or harshness, as of surface, sound, or climate

These remarks, spoken with asperity, stung the boys to whom they had been directed.

aspirant

one who aspires, as to advancement, honors, or a high position

Although I am an aspirant for public office, I am not willing to accept the dictates of the party bosses.

aspire

seek to attain; long for; strive toward an end

If you aspire to a career in professional sports, please enroll in a graduate program in sports management.

assail

assault; attack with or as if with violent blows

These days nightmares assail him regularly.

assay

analyze; evaluate; examine by trial or experiment; put to test

When they assay the ore, they find that they have discovered a very rich vein.

assent

express agreement to what is alleged or proposed; accept

It gives me great pleasure to assent to your request.

assiduous

constant in application or attention; diligent; unceasing or persistent

He was assiduous, working at this task for weeks before he felt satisfied with his results.

assimilate

incorporate and absorb into mind; make similar; cause to resemble

The manner in which the United States was able to assimilate immigrants during the 19th and early 20th century will always be a source of pride to Americans.

assuage

ease or lessen pain; satisfy or appease

Jilted by Jane, Dick tried to assuage his heartache by indulging in ice cream.

assumption

something taken for granted or accepted as true without proof; taking over or taking possession of

The young princess made the foolish assumption that the regent would not object to power.

asteroid

small planet; any small celestial bodies that revolve around the sun

With Vista at opposition, the asteroid is at its closest point to Earth in its orbit.

astigmatism

eye defect that prevents proper focus

As soon as his parents discovered that the boy suffered from astigmatism, they took him to the optometrist for corrective glasses.

astral

relating to stars; star-shaped

She was amazed at the number of astral bodies the new telescope revealed.

astringent

causing contraction; having the effect of drawing tissue together; stern or austere

The juice from the last pressing being very dark and astringent, is put with the inferior wine.

astronomical

enormously large or extensive; relating to astronomy

The government seems willing to spend astronomical sums on weapons development.

asunder

into separate parts or pieces; apart

A fierce quarrel split the partnership asunder: the two partners finally sundered their connections because their points of view were poles apart.

asylum

place of refuge or shelter; protection

The refugees sought asylum from religious persecution in a new land.

asymmetric

not identical on both sides of a dividing central line

Because one eyebrow was set markedly higher than the other, William's face had a particularly asymmetric appearance.

atavism

resemblance to remote ancestors rather than to parents; deformity returning after passage of two or more generations

The doctors ascribed the child's deformity to an atavism.

atheistic

denying existence of God; godless

His atheistic remarks shocked the religious worshippers.

atone

make amends, as for sin or fault; pay for; turn away from sin

He knew no way in which he could atone for his brutal crime.

atrocious

brutal deed; atrocious condition, quality, or behavior; monstrosity

Unfortunately, the normal social reaction to atrocity is to banish it from our awareness.

atrophy

wasting away; decrease in size; reduction in the functionality of an organ caused by disease

It confirms earlier research showing a link between brain atrophy and low levels of B12.

attentive

alert and watchful; considerate; thoughtful

Spellbound, the attentive audience watched the final game of the tennis match, never taking their eyes from the ball.

attenuate

make slender, fine, or small; weaken; lessen density of

By withdrawing their forces, the generals hoped to attenuate the enemy lines.

attest

testify; authenticate, affirm to be true

Having served as a member of the Grand Jury, I can attest that our system of indicting individuals is in need of improvement.

attire

clothing; dress

I will attire my Jane in satin and lace, and she shall have roses in her hair; and I will cover the head I love best with a priceless veil.

attribute

essential quality; reputation; honor

His outstanding attribute was his kindness.

attrition

gradual decrease in numbers; reduction in work force without firing employees; wearing away of opposition by means of harassment

In the 1960s urban churches suffered from attrition as members moved from the cities to the suburbs.

atypical

not normal; unusual or irregular; not representative of a group, class, or type

The child psychiatrist reassured Mrs. Keaton that playing doctor was not atypical behavior for a child of young Alex's age.

audacious

fearlessly, often recklessly daring; bold

Audiences cheered as Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia made their audacious, death defying leap to freedom, escaping Darth Vader's troops.

audit

examination of accounts; adjustment or correction of accounts

When the bank examiners arrived to hold their annual audit, they discovered the embezzlements of the chief cashier.

augment

make greater, as in size, extent, or quantity

Armies augment their forces by calling up reinforcements.

augury

sign of something coming; art or practice of foretelling events by signs or omens

He interpreted the departure of the birds as an augury of evil.

august

impressive; majestic; inspiring awe or admiration

Visiting the palace at Versailles, she was impressed by the august surroundings in which she found herself.

auroral

characteristic of dawn; dawning, eastern, like new beginning; relating to the atmospheric phenomenon auroras

The auroral display was particularly spectacular that evening.

auspicious

attended by favorable circumstances; marked by success; prosperous

With favorable weather conditions, it was an auspicious moment to set sail.

authenticate

prove genuine; establish authenticity of

An expert was needed to authenticate the original Van Gogh painting, distinguishing it from its imitation.

authoritative

having weight of authority; peremptory and dictatorial

Impressed by the young researcher's well-documented presentation, we accepted her analysis of the experiment as authoritative.

autocratic

having absolute, unchecked power; dictatorial

Someone accustomed to exercising authority may become autocratic if his or her power is unchecked.

automaton

mechanism that imitates actions of humans

Long before science fiction readers became aware of robots, at this book writer was presenting a story of automaton who could outperform men.

autonomous

self-governing; not controlled by others or by outside forces; independent

Although the University of California at Berkeley is just one part of the state university system, in many ways it is autonomous, for it runs several programs that are not subject to outside control.

autopsy

examination of dead body; post-mortem

The medical examiner ordered an autopsy to determine the cause of death.

auxiliary

helper, additional or subsidiary

To prepare for the emergency, they built an auxiliary power station.

avalanche

great mass of falling snow and ice

The park ranger warned the skiers to stay on the main trails, where they would be in no danger of being buried beneath a sudden avalanche.

avarice

greediness for wealth; insatiable desire of gain

King Midas is a perfect example of avarice, for he was so greedy that he wished everything he touched would turn to gold.

avenge

take vengeance for something, or on behalf of someone

Hamlet vowed he would avenge his father's murder and punish Claudius for his horrible crime.

aver

declare to be true; affirm

The witnesses aver that he was holding a gun.

averse

reluctant; disinclined; turned away or backward; unwilling

The reporter was averse to revealing the sources of his information.

aversion

firm dislike; turning away; avoidance of a thing, situation, or behavior because of dislike

Risk aversion is one of the most serious problems and largest cost of our human space flight.

avert

prevent; turn or cause to turn off or away

She had to avert her eyes from the dead cat on the highway.

aviary

large cage, building, or enclosure in which birds are reared or kept
The aviary at the zoo held nearly 300 birds.

avid

greedy; eager for; marked by keen interest and enthusiasm
He was avid for learning and read everything he could get.

avocation

activity taken up in addition to one's regular work or profession, usually for enjoyment
His hobby proved to be so fascinating and profitable that gradually he abandoned his regular occupation and concentrated on his avocation.

avow

declare openly; acknowledge openly, boldly, and unashamedly
Lana began to avow that she never meant to steal Debbie's boyfriend.

avuncular

in manner of uncle, pertaining to uncle; kind, genial, benevolent or tolerant
Avuncular pride did not prevent him from noticing his nephew's shortcomings.

awe

mixed emotion of reverence, respect, dread, and wonder; fear, as of something evil
The tourists gazed with awe at the tremendous expanse of the Grand Canyon.

awful

causing fear, dread, or terror; extremely bad or unpleasant; terrible
He says the budget is in awful shape and we need to take steps to fix it.

awry

in a position that is turned toward one side; away from correct course
He held his head awry, giving the impression that he had caught cold in his neck during the night.

axiom

self-evident truth requiring no proof
Before a student can begin to think along the lines of Euclidean geometry, he must accept certain principle or axiom.

azure

sky blue; light purplish-blue
Azure skies are indicative of good weather.

babble

talk foolishly or idly; utter meaningless confusion of words or sounds
The little girl likes to babble about her doll.

bacchanalian

drunken; relating to reveling and drunkenness
Emperor Nero attended the bacchanalian orgy.

badger

pester; annoy persistently; persuade through constant efforts

She is forced to change her telephone number because obscene phone calls badger her.

badinage

teasing conversation; good-humored, playful conversation

Her friends at work greeted the news of her engagement with cheerful badinage.

baffle

frustrate as by confusing or perplexing; impede force or movement of

The new code will baffle the enemy agents.

bait

harass; tease; lure, entice, or entrap

The school bully will bait the smaller children, terrorizing them.

baleful

portending evil; harmful in intent or effect.

The fortune teller made baleful predictions of terrible things to come.

balk

stop short and refuse to go on; refuse obstinately or abruptly

When the warden learned that several inmates were planning to escape, he took steps to balk their attempt.

ballast

heavy substance used to add stability or weight

The ship was listing badly to one side; it was necessary to shift the ballast in the hold to get her back on an even keel.

balm

something that relieves pain

Friendship is the finest balm for the pangs of disappointed love.

balmy

mild and pleasant; fragrant

A balmy breeze refreshed us after the sultry blast.

bandy

discuss lightly or glibly; exchange words heatedly

While the president was happy to bandy patriotic generalizations with anyone who would listen to him, he refused to exchange words with unfriendly reporters at the press conference.

bane

something causes misery or death; curse; fatal injury or ruin

Lucy's little brother was the bane of her existence: his attempts to make her life miserable worked so well that she could have poisoned him.

bantering

good-natured ridiculing; cleverly amusing in tone

They resented his bantering remarks because they thought he was being sarcastic.

bar

a counter where you can obtain food or drink; cafe; strip; stick

For low paid male workers - many from South Asia - the cafeterias are a social focus - the equivalent of a bar or pub in non-Muslim countries, a place to meet friends and workmates.

barb

sharp projection from fishhook; openly cutting remark

If you were a politician, would you prefer being caught on the barb of a fishhook?

bard

poet, especially lyric poet

The ancient bard Homer sang of the fall of Troy.

bargain

agreement between parties concerning the sale of property

"A part of me you must become," he answered steadily; "otherwise the whole bargain is void."

baroque

complex or bizarre, especially in ornamentation; irregular in shape

Accustomed to the severe lines of contemporary buildings, the architecture students found the flamboyance of baroque architecture amusing.

barrage

artificial obstruction; heavy curtain of artillery fire; rapid, concentrated discharge of missiles

The company was forced to retreat through the barrage of heavy cannons.

barterer

trader; one who trades goods for other goods without involving money

The barterer exchanged trinkets for the natives' furs. It seemed smarter to trade than to pay cash.

bask

luxuriate; take pleasure in warmth

Relaxing on the beach, they bask so completely that fell asleep.

bastion

fortress; projecting part of fortification; well-fortified position

The villagers fortified the town hall, hoping this improvised bastion could protect them from the guerillas' raids.

bate

let down; restrain; lessen force or intensity of; moderate

Until it was time to open the presents, the children had to bate their curiosity.

bauble

small, showy ornament of little value; child's plaything or toy

The child was delighted with the bauble she had won in the grab bag.

bawdy

indecent; obscene; humorously coarse

Jack took offense at Jill's bawdy remarks. What kind of young man did she think he was?

bearing

carrying another part; patient endurance; suffering without complaint; act of producing or giving birth

The U.S. Mint is set to unveil a new \$1 coin bearing the image of President Abraham Lincoln.

beatific

completely happy and contented; showing or producing exalted joy

The beatific smile on the child's face made us very happy.

beatitude

blessedness; state of extreme happiness

Growing closer to God each day, the mystic achieved a state of indescribable beatitude.

bedizen

ornament something in showy, tasteless, or gaudy finery

We usually bedizen witch doctors in all their gaudiest costumes.

bedraggle

wet thoroughly; stain with mud; soil or wet by dragging in dirt, mud, moist places

The severe storms bedraggle so heavily that we have to change into dry clothing.

beeline

direct, quick route; direct, straight course

As soon as the movie was over, Jim made a beeline for the exit.

befuddle

confuse thoroughly; becloud and confuse, as with liquor; make stupid with alcohol

His attempts to clarify the situation only befuddle her further.

beget

produce; give rise to

One good turn may deserve another; it does not necessarily beget another.

beguile

mislead; delude; deceive by guile

With flattery and big talk of easy money, the con men beguile Kyle into betting his allowance on the shell game.

behemoth

huge creature; something enormous in size or power

Just two weeks after Sam Stein first reported Citigroup's anti-union assault on the Employee Free Choice Act, the financial behemoth is taking their fight directly to the workers.

belabor

discuss repeatedly; attack verbally; work hard upon

The debate coach warns her students if they belabor her point they will bore the audience.

belated

having been delayed; done or sent too late

He apologized for his belated note of condolence to the widow of his friend and explained that he had just learned of her husband's untimely death.

beleaguer

besiege or attack; harass; surround with troops

The babysitter is surrounded by a crowd of unmanageable brats who relentlessly beleaguer her.

belie

contradict; give a false impression

His coarse, hard-bitten exterior does belie his inner sensitivity.

belittle

disparage or depreciate; put down

Parents should not belittle their children's early attempts at drawing, but should encourage their efforts.

bellicose

warlike or hostile in manner or temperament; showing or having impulse to be combative

His bellicose disposition alienated his friends.

belligerent

inclined or eager to fight; aggressive

Whenever he had too much to drink, he became belligerent and tried to pick fights with strangers.

bemoan

regret strongly; express disapproval of

Although critics bemoan the serious flaws in the author's novels, each year his latest book tops the best-seller list.

bemused

confused; lost in thought; preoccupied

Jill studied the garbled instructions with a bemused look on her face.

benediction

blessing; invocation of divine blessing; expression of good wishes

The appearance of the sun after the many rainy days was like a benediction.

benefactor

gift giver; person who gives people or institutions with financial help

Scrooge later became Tiny Tim's benefactor and gave him gifts.

beneficial

helpful; tending to promote physical well-being

Tiny Tim's cheerful good nature had a beneficial influence on Scrooge's charitable disposition.

beneficiary

person entitled to benefits or proceeds of an insurance policy or will

In Scrooge's will, he made Tiny Tim his beneficiary, everything he left would go to young Tim.

benefit

advantage; something that aids or promotes well-being ; welfare; gain

Another benefit for business is the elimination of currency risk in the Euro area - the possibility that you might lose money in cross border trade because of exchange rate movements.

benevolent

generous in providing aid to others; charitable

Mr. Fezziwig was a benevolent employer, who wished to make Christmas merrier for young Scrooge and his other employees.

benign

kindly; favorable; not malignant

Though her benign smile and gentle bearing made Miss Marple seem a sweet little old lady, in reality she was a tough-minded lady.

bent

determined to do or have

We are bent on going to the theater no matter how heavy the snow is.

bequeath

leave to someone by a will; hand down

Though Maud had intended to bequeath the family home to her nephew, she died before changing her will.

berate

rebuke or scold angrily and at length

He feared she would berate him for his forgetfulness.

bereavement

grievous loss; particularly, the loss of a relative or friend by death

His friends gathered to console him upon his sudden bereavement.

bereft

deprived of; lacking; desolate because of loss

The foolish gambler soon found himself bereft of funds.