

abandon

n. lacking restraint or control; feeling of extreme emotional intensity; unbounded enthusiasm

With her parents out of town, Kelly danced all night with abandon.

abduction

n. the criminal act of capturing and carrying away by force

The movie Ransom describes the attempts to rescue a multimillionaire's son after the child's abduction by kidnappers.

abject

a. being of the most miserable kind; wretched; lacking pride; brought low in condition or status

On the streets of New York, the homeless live in abject poverty, huddling in doorways to find shelter from the wind.

abrasive

a. rubbing away; tending to grind down

The ash can also cause long-term abrasive damage to planes that could lead to later disasters if not dealt with.

absolute

a. perfect in quality or nature; complete; totally unlimited; certain

Although the King was an absolute monarch, he did not want to behead his unfaithful wife without certain evidence.

absolve

v. pronounce clear of guilt or blame; grant remission of sin to; acquit

The priest will absolve him and tell him how to say at the party.

absorb

v. assimilate or incorporate; suck or drink up; occupy full attention

By contrast, what students can absorb from a one-day visit to a college are the tangibles.

abstinence

n. restraint from eating or drinking; refraining from indulging appetite or desire

The doctor recommended total abstinence from salted foods.

abstract

a. theoretical; not concrete; not applied or practical; difficult to understand

To him, hunger was an abstract concept; he had never missed a meal.

abusive

a. coarsely insulting; physically harmful; characterized by improper or wrongful use

There has been abusive language on both sides that never want to get agreement from the beginning.

abyss

n. enormous chasm; vast bottomless pit; any deep, immeasurable space; hell

Are we to believe that the only thing between us and the abyss is the deficit's size, and the more the government borrows, the better off we shall be?

academic

a. related to school; not practical or directly useful; relating to the scholarly organization; based on formal education

The dean's talk about reforming the college admissions system was only an academic discussion.

accelerate

v. move faster; cause to develop or progress more quickly; occur sooner than expected

Demand for Taiwanese goods likely will accelerate from the second quarter, as strong Asian demand offsets the effects of a U.S. slowdown.

accessible

a. easily approached or entered; obtainable; easy to talk to or get along with

Simon and James will no longer be posting to The Hearing; however, all previous posts will remain accessible here.

accessory

n. additional object; useful but not essential thing; subordinate or supplementary item

Another accessory is a tripod needed to prevent camera shake, especially when the shutter speed drops below the tenth second at a wide-angle shot.

accommodate

v. do a favor or service for; provide for; supply with; make suitable; adapt; allow for

The stage in the public auditorium can easily be adjusted to accommodate from a full-scale musical production to one by a solo vocalist.

accomplice

n. partner in crime; associate in wrongdoing

Because your accomplice is a stranger, it's safer than asking a friend to participate in your ruse.

accord

n. settlement or compromise of conflicting opinions; written agreement between two states

Although the accord is a small step forward, politicians worldwide have their work cut out for them.

acknowledge

v. declare to be true or admit; express obligation, thanks

Although I acknowledge that the Beatles' tunes sound pretty dated today, I still prefer them to my brothers' songs.

acme

n. the highest point or level, as of achievement or development; maturity or perfection of animal

His success in this role marked the acme of his career as an actor.

acquire

v. gain through experience or effort; gain possession of; locate with a tracking system

They acquire a reputation for being difficult to work with.

acquittal

n. state of being found or proved not guilty; judgment of not guilty

His acquittal by the jury surprised those who had thought him guilty.

acute

a. quickly perceptive; keen; having a sharp point or tip; extremely sharp or severe

Her early writing was grounded in acute observation of the natural world.

adage

n. wise saying; brief familiar proverb; expression of popular wisdom

After reflecting on how I felt a year ago during the election itself and how I feel now, I do have to say that the adage is true: governing is harder than campaigning.

adamant

a. extremely hard; inflexible; stubbornly unyielding

Speaker Pelosi came out of that meeting, and she was once again adamant about saying a public option must be in the bill.

adapt

v. make fit for; change to suit a new purpose

One way to adapt is to become smaller, generation by generation.

addiction

n. the compulsive physiological and psychological need for a substance; being abnormally dependent on something

No matter what form we find it in, addiction is not fun; drugs, alcohol, overeating, overworking, smoking or sex.

address

v. make a formal speech to; deal with or discuss; direct efforts or attention of

Brown planned to address the issue of low-income housing in his speech.

adept

a. expert at; very skilled; having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude

Williams was known as an adept improviser who effortlessly switched between classical, jazz, and pop styles.

adhere

v. stick fast; stick to firmly; be compatible or in accordance with

That is why the clay is necessary; it makes the grain adhere to the earth; otherwise, it would float.

adjacent

a. adjoining; neighboring; close to; lying near

Philip's best friend Jason lived only four houses down the block, close but not immediately adjacent.

administration

n. management; supervision; people who are in charge of management; the activity of government for powers and duties

Obviously, the key person in administration is the man in the White House.

adolescence

n. state of growing up from childhood to manhood or womanhood; transitional period between youth and maturity

The big issue in adolescence is that all kids strive for independence.

adversary

n. the opponent in a contest; someone who offers opposition

The young wrestler struggled to defeat his adversary.

adverse

a. in opposing direction; harmful or unfavorable; acting or serving to oppose

The recession had a highly adverse effect on his father's investment portfolio: he lost so much money that he could no longer afford the house.

adversity

n. state of misfortune, hardship, or affliction; misfortune

A young boy whose strength in adversity is an inspiration to all who know him.

advocate

v. speak, plead, or argue in favor of; plead for; push for something

Some doctors advocate a smoking ban in the entire house.

aesthetic

a. elegant or tasteful; of or concerning the appreciation of beauty or good taste

Kenneth Cole, the American designer, known for his modern, urban aesthetic, is hawking \$35 T-shirts.

affected

a. speaking or behaving in an artificial way; emotionally stirred or moved; infected or attacked

The other boys laughed so unmercifully at what they termed my affected accent.

affidavit

n. written statement made under oath

This is an official affidavit from the court, and it is saying that the whole thing was a hoax.

affiliation

n. partnership; alliance; association in the same family or society

This affiliation is a way for us to provide our clients with the full spectrum of services and expertise they need.

affliction

n. cause or condition of pain, suffering, or distress

Even in the midst of her affliction, Elizabeth tried to keep up the spirits of those around her.

aftermath

n. outcome; consequence, especially of a disaster or misfortune

The most critical lesson Barbara has learned from her diagnosis and the aftermath is the importance of selecting a good facility and sticking with it.

agenda

n. items of business at a meeting; list or program of things to be done or considered

His agenda is certainly different from the President's and the administration's, but we will seek additional opportunities to work together with him.

agent

n. one that acts on behalf of other persons or organizations

Whether your agent is acting in your best interests, I posed that question to a spokesman for the National Association of Realtors.

aggressor

n. one that engages in aggression; a person who first attacks

The most violent reactions arise when the aggressor is the child's stepfather, the mother's new boyfriend, or her new husband.

alias

n. assumed name; another name; a name that has been assumed temporarily

Since the alias is already defined in our management pack, it should work fine.

alien

a. dissimilar, inconsistent, or opposed in nature; very different place, society, or person

If you think about it, that's totally alien to what a drug company might be expected to do because if you eradicate a disease, there's no need for that drug at all.

alienate

v. cause to become unfriendly or hostile; transfer property or ownership; isolate or

dissociate emotionally

We could not see what should again alienate us from one another or how one brother could again oppress another.

alimony

n. payment by a husband to his divorced wife, or vice versa

Also, payer and payee can't file joint tax returns in the same year alimony is paid.

allegiance

n. loyalty to a nation, sovereign, or cause; fidelity to any person or thing; devotion

They didn't want to salute the flag, saying that kind of allegiance is only for God.

alleviate

v. provide physical relief, as from pain; make easier; remove in part

This should alleviate the pain; if it does not, we shall have to use stronger drugs.

alloy

n. mixture; a combination of diverse things

In its ideal form, the alloy is a crystal with each element occupying specific crystal locations relative to one another.

allure

v. attract with something desirable; be highly, often subtly attractive

Promises of quick profits allure the unwary investor.

aloof

a. apart; remote in manner; distant physically or emotionally; reserved and remote

In this age of information and communication, no sector can remain aloof from the revolution in these fields.

altercation

n. a noisy quarrel; contention in words; dispute carried on with heat or anger; controversy

So loud were their voices raised in an altercation that the storm without was scarce heeded.

amend

v. change for the better; improve; remove faults or errors

Would McCain amend executive orders to ensure that communications between persons outside government and White House staff are disclosed to the public?

amiss

a. out of proper order; not in perfect shape; faulty

I knew that weapons would not come in amiss, and I re-entered his room to get his rifle and shot-gun.

ammunition

n. military stores or provisions; articles used in weapons, as powder, balls, shot, shells

I will carry these two rifles myself; the ammunition is all there except that bag in the corner.

amnesia

n. partial or total loss of memory, usually resulting from shock or illness

Selective amnesia is a politically valuable trait.

amnesty

n. the general pardon granted by the government, especially for political offenses

If the amnesty is approved by parliament, it will apply to capital stashed in off-shore tax havens up to the end of last year.

amoral

a. lacking moral sensibility; not caring about right and wrong

Compared with evil immorality, being amoral is more like being naughty.

ample

a. more than enough in size or scope or capacity; relatively large

They insist that food is being provided to the Palestinians in ample supplies and that the only way to weaken Hamas is to maintain the blockade.

amulet

n. object worn, especially around the neck, as a charm against evil or injury; charm

In Thailand, the Jatukam Ramathep amulet is popular with everyone from Bangkok bankers to village taxi drivers.

analogy

n. the similarity in some respects; comparison based on similarity

This analogy is almost always noted without further comment, although it may be taken further.

anarchy

n. absence of governing body; state of disorder; political disorder and confusion

One might say that eastern Congo is already in anarchy, but Congo has faded from the headlines in recent months.

anchor

v. secure or fasten firmly; be fixed in place; narrate or coordinate

We set the post in concrete to anchor it in place.

anecdote

n. a short account of the amusing or interesting event; short narrative; a secret story of history or biography

Of all the millions who are moved by this historic occasion, my anecdote is and would be far less remarkable while I am amongst these.

anemia

n. condition in which blood lacks red corpuscles; deficiency of red blood cells; lack of vitality

Long-standing illnesses often result in anemia, loss of weight, and occasional bleeding from the stomach.

anesthetic

n. a substance that causes loss of sensation; producing temporary loss or impairment of feeling

His monotonous voice acted as an anesthetic; his audience was soon asleep.

anguish

n. agonizing physical or mental pain; extreme suffering

Visiting the explosion site, the governor wept to see the anguish of the victims and their families.

animated

a. having life or vigor or spirit; filled with activity; in the form of cartoon

On entering his room, I found Holmes in animated conversation with two men.

animosity

n. bitter hostility; active hatred; hostile feeling or act

I've worked for Bill Clinton for years, and Bill Clinton, another Democrat who pushed socially responsible programs, got a lot of animosity from the right.

annex

v. append or attach; take possession of; incorporate into an existing political unit
Mexico objected to the United States' attempts to annex the territory that later became Texas.

anomaly

n. irregularity; a person or something unusual; departure from the normal or common order

No doubt, this anomaly is the result of the uncertain international environment and high-interest rates.

anonymity

n. state of being nameless; one that is unknown or unacknowledged

In my view, death in anonymity is the ultimate insult to human dignity.

anonymous

a. having no name; having an unknown or unacknowledged name

The buyer, who wished to remain anonymous, is a foreigner with homes in Europe.

anthem

n. song of praise or patriotism; the song of devotion or loyalty

Let us now all join in singing the national anthem.

anthropologist

n. one who studies history and science of mankind

Eighty-three years ago, an anthropologist from the Field Museum dug up the remains of 22 people from marked graves in Labrador, Canada.

antidote

n. medicine to counteract a poison or disease; an agent that relieves or counteracts

They believe that because this anti-heroin antidote is what finally worked with some of the victims.

antiquated

a. too old to be fashionable, suitable, or useful; obsolete; aged

We are tolerably conversant with the early English poets; and can discover no resemblance whatever, except in antiquated spelling and a few obsolete words.

antiseptic

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

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

ape

v. imitate; mimic, as an ape imitates human actions

You will be suspended for a week if you ape the principal in front of the whole school like Tom.

apocalyptic

a. prophetic; involving or portending widespread devastation

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

apparatus

n. a group of parts that work together to perform a given function; appliance, or device for a particular purpose

When the apparatus is at work, this gas becomes luminous, giving out a white and continuous light.

appease

v. 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.

application

n. 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.

appreciate

v. 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

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

The police will apprehend the culprit and convict him.

appropriate

v. acquire; take possession of for one's own use; set apart for specific use

The ranch owners appropriate the lands that have originally been set aside for the Indians' use.

aptitude

n. inherent ability; quickness in learning and understanding

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

arbitrary

a. 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.

arbitrator

n. someone chosen to judge and decide the disputed issue; one having the power to make authoritative decisions

Claimants in these cases would choose a single public arbitrator from a list of qualified individuals.

arcade

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

The arcade was popular with shoppers because it protected the summer sun and the winter rain.

archives

n. public records; place where public records are kept

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

aria

n. operatic solo; a solo vocal piece with instrumental accompaniment

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

array

v. set out for display or use; place in orderly arrangement

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

arrest

v. stop or slow down; catch someone's attention; take into custody

The trapeze artists plunge from the heights until a safety net luckily arrest their fall.

arrogance

n. overbearing pride; haughtiness; manifest feeling of personal superiority in rank, power, or estimation

I also think his arrogance is also turning people off.

arrogant

a. arising from feeling or assumption of one's superiority toward others

He often speaks in an arrogant tone, which doesn't encourage others to discuss with him.

arsenal

n. storage place for military equipment; a stock of weapons

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

articulate

a. expressing oneself easily in clear and effective language

Her articulate presentation of the advertising campaign impressed her employers.

artifact

n. the object made by human beings; inaccurate observation, effect, or result

Archaeologists debated the significance of the artifact discovered in the ruins of Asia Minor but did not conclude.

ascertain

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

Please ascertain her present address.

asinine

a. utterly stupid or silly; inanely foolish

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

aspire

v. 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.

assert

v. declare or state with confidence; put oneself forward boldly

If you quit acting like a wimp and assert yourself a bit more, you'd improve your chances of getting a date.

assessment

n. act of judging or assessing; amount determined as payable

Key to this assessment is the critical geographical fact that North Korea is adjacent to South Korea, an affluent democracy.

assumption

n. something taken for 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.

assurance

n. promise or pledge; certainty; self-confidence; freedom from doubt

Even in BP CEO Tony Hayward's new television commercial, his assurance is ambiguous.

asteroid

n. 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.

astral

a. relating to stars; star-shaped

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

astronomical

a. enormously large or extensive; relating to astronomy

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

astute

a. wise or keen; shrewd; with sharp intelligence

The painter was an astute observer, noticing every tiny detail of her model's appearance and knowing exactly how important each one was.

asylum

n. place of refuge or shelter; protection

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

atlas

n. a bound volume of maps, charts, or tables

Embarrassed at being unable to distinguish Slovenia from Slovakia, George W. finally consulted an atlas.

atone

v. 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.

attain

v. achieve or accomplish; gain

The scarecrow sought to attain one goal: he wished to obtain a brain.

attentive

a. alert and watchful; considerate; thoughtful

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

attest

v. testify; authenticate, affirm to be true

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

attribute

n. essential quality; reputation; honor

His outstanding attribute was his kindness.

audit

v. examine, verify, or correct the financial accounts of

Independent accountants audit the company annually.

auditorium

n. area of theater or concert hall where the audience sits

A seat in the stalls or in one of the elaborate boxes surrounding the horseshoe-shaped auditorium now costs nearly 700 pounds.

august

a. impressive; majestic; inspiring awe or admiration

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

authoritative

a. weighting authority; peremptory and dictatorial

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

autopsy

n. examination of dead body; post-mortem

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

auxiliary

a. helper, additional or subsidiary

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

avail

v. turn to the advantage of; be of service to; profit; promote

When his power ceases to avail, that is when a stronger than he appears upon the scene.

avalanche

n. a 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.

avenge

v. 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.

aversion

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

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

avert

v. prevent; turn or cause to turn off or away

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

avid

a. greedy; eager for; marked by keen interest and enthusiasm

He was avid for learning and read everything he could get.

awe

n. 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.

babble

v. talk foolishly or idly; utter meaningless confusion of words or sounds

The little girl likes to babble about her doll.

badger

v. pester; annoy persistently; persuade through constant efforts

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

bait

v. harass; tease; lure, entice, or entrap

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

balm

n. something that relieves pain

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

balmy

a. mild and pleasant; fragrant

A balmy breeze refreshed us after the sultry blast.

bane

n. 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.

barb

n. sharp projection from fishhook; openly cutting remark

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

barren

a. desolate; fruitless and unproductive; lacking

Looking out at the trackless, barren desert, Indiana Jones feared that his search for the missing expedition would prove fruitless.

beam

n. ray of light; a long piece of metal or wood; long piece fixed or movable in structure, machine, or tool

During a severe earthquake, each beam will absorb the shock by crumpling, thereby preventing severe damage to the tower.

begrudge

v. resent; give or expend with reluctance; be envious of

I begrudge every minute I have to spend attending meetings; they're a complete waste of time.

belittle

v. disparage or depreciate; put down

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

benefactor

n. gift giver; a person who gives people or institutions financial help

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

beneficial

a. helpful; tending to promote physical well-being

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

beneficiary

n. a 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.

benevolent

a. 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

a. 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

a. determined to do or have

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

berserk

a. mentally or emotionally upset; deranged; excessively agitated

Angered, he became berserk and began to wreck the room.

beseech

v. beg; plead with; ask for or request earnestly

The workaholic executive's wife had to beseech him to spend more time with their son.

bestow

v. give as a gift; present

He wished to bestow great honors upon the hero.

betray

v. be unfaithful; reveal unconsciously or unwillingly

The two spies betray their country by selling military secrets to the enemy.

biased

a. favoring one person or side over another; prejudiced

Because the judge played golf regularly with the district attorney's father, we feared he might be biased in the prosecution's favor.

bizarre

a. fantastic; violently contrasting; strangely unconventional in style or appearance

The plot of the novel was too bizarre to be believed.

bland

a. lacking stimulating or mild; agreeable

She kept her gaze level and her expression bland, but her teeth were gritted.

blasphemy

n. act of claiming for oneself the attributes and rights of God; utterance or writing concerning God

By our very nature, every single one of us believes in blasphemy.

blatant

a. flagrant; conspicuously obvious; loudly offensive

To Dublin's unemployed youth, the 'No Irish Need Apply' placard in the shop window was a blatant mark of prejudice.

bleak

a. cold or cheerless; unlikely to be favorable

The frigid, inhospitable Aleutian Islands are bleak military outposts.

bloated

a. swollen or puffed as with water or air

Her bloated stomach came from drinking so much water.

bluff

n. the pretense of strength; mislead or deceive

If only, I thought, he had called our bluff from the start and told us firmly that he knew the figures but wouldn't say.

blunt

a. having a dull edge or end; not sharp; lacking in feeling; insensitive

Public employee unions are demanding in blunt terms that Democrats make the tax code more progressive.

blurt

v. utter suddenly and impulsively

Before she can stop you, you should blurt out the news.

bode

v. foreshadow; indicate by signs; be an omen of; predict

The gloomy skies and the odors from the mineral springs seemed to bode evil to those who settled in the area.

bogus

a. counterfeit or fake; not authentic; not genuine

The police quickly found the distributors of the bogus twenty-dollar bills.

bolt

v. dash or dart off; move or jump suddenly

Jack was set to bolt out the front door.

booming

a. deep and resonant; flourishing; thriving

'Who needs a microphone?' cried the mayor in his booming voice.

boundless

a. being without boundaries or limits; infinite; vast

Mike's energy was boundless: the greater the challenge, the more vigorously he tackled the job.

bourgeois

a. middle class; selfishly materialistic; dully conventional

Technically, anyone who belongs to the middle class is bourgeois, but most people resent it if you call them that.

boycott

v. refrain from buying or using

Cesar Chavez called for consumers to boycott grapes to put pressure on grape growers to stop using pesticides that harmed the farm workers' health.

bravado

n. defiant or swaggering behavior; the pretense of courage; false show of bravery

The bravado of the young criminal disappeared when the victims of his brutal attack confronted him.

brazen

a. having loud, usually harsh, resonant sound; shameless

His entire premiership has become an exercise in brazen dishonesty.

breach

n. breaking of contract or duty; breaking of waves or surf; fissure or gap

Jill sued Jack for breach of promise, claiming he had broken his promise to marry her.

brittle

a. easily broken; having little elasticity

My employer's self-control was as brittle as an egg-shell.

brochure

n. pamphlet; small book usually having a paper cover

The Department of Agriculture issued this brochure on farming.

brooch

n. ornamental clasp; decorative pin worn by women

The brooch was a gift from Burton, and she wore it when she wed him.

browse

v. graze; skim or glance at casually

'How now, brown cow, browsing in the green, green grass.' I remember lines of verse that I came across while I browsed through the bookstore's poetry section.

buffet

n. table with food set out for people to serve themselves; meal at which people help themselves to food that's been set out

Please convey them on the tray to the buffet.

bureaucracy

n. over-regulated administrative system

The Internal Revenue Service is the ultimate bureaucracy; taxpayers wasted so much paper filling out IRS forms to comply with the Paper-work Reduction Act.

burly

a. husky; muscular and heavily built

That was 25 years ago, but I still recall the burly driver eyeing me in the rear-view mirror as we idled at a red light on Michigan Avenue.

cache

n. hiding place; secret store of valuables or money

The detectives followed the suspect until he led them to the cache where he had stored his loot.

cadaver

n. corpse; dead body, especially one intended for dissection

In some states, it is illegal to dissect cadaver.

calculated

a. deliberately planned; carefully thought out in advance

Her conventional suit was one calculated to appeal to the conservative judges.

caliber

n. ability; degree or grade of excellence or worth; diameter of a tube or gun barrel

Einstein's cleaning the blackboards again? Albert quit it! A man of your caliber shouldn't have to do such tasks.

callous

a. emotionally hardened; unfeeling; toughened

He had worked in the hospital for so many years that he was callous to the suffering in the wards.

camouflage

v. exploit natural surroundings to disguise something; conceal

To rescue Han Solo, Princess Leia decided to camouflage herself in the helmet and cloak of a space bandit.

candor

n. frankness; quality of being honest and straightforward in attitude and speech

Jack can carry candor too far: when he told Jill his honest opinion of her, she nearly slapped his face.

canine

a. related to dogs; dog-like; affecting or derived from dogs

They will then incubate the viruses in canine tissue cells to see how well they grow.

cant

n. inclination or slope; slanted or oblique surface; jargon, especially of thieves; dialect

I strayed from my own voice and slipped into jargon, cant, or false sentiment.

capacity

n. mental or physical ability; ability to accommodate

Mike had the capacity to handle several jobs at once.

caprice

n. sudden, unexpected fancy; impulsive change of mind

Some revolutions may have originated in caprice or generated in ambition.

caption

n. title; chapter heading; text under illustration

We got a caption error in The Far Side cartoons shown yesterday.

carat

n. unit of weight for precious stones; a measure of fineness of gold

He gave her a three carat diamond mounted in a gold band.

cardinal

a. chief; serving as an essential component

If you want to increase your word power, the cardinal rule of vocabulary-building is to read.

cardiologist

n. the doctor who specializes in medical problems related to heart

When the physician noticed Philip had a slight heart murmur, she referred him to a cardiologist for further tests.

carnage

n. destruction of life; the savage and excessive killing of many people

The film The Killing Fields vividly depicts the carnage wreaked by Pol Pot's followers in Cambodia.

carnal

a. fleshly; of or relating to body or flesh; bodily

This wasn't about love; this was about raw animal attraction, about kindred spirits in carnal lust.

cascade

n. small waterfall; sudden downpour

We were too tired to appreciate the beauty of this cascade because we had to detour around it to avoid watering down.

casualty

n. serious or fatal accident; someone injured or killed in an accident

On holiday weekends, this city usually has at least one automotive casualty.

catalyst

n. an agent which brings about chemical change while it remains unaffected and unchanged

Many chemical reactions cannot take place without the presence of a catalyst.

catastrophe

n. calamity; disaster; state of extreme ruin and misfortune

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake was a catastrophe that destroyed most of the city.

catholic

a. broadly sympathetic; universal; related to Roman Catholic Church

He was extremely catholic in his taste and read everything he could find in the library.

caucus

n. a private meeting of members of a party to select officers or determine policy

At the opening of Congress, the members of the Democratic Party held a caucus to elect the Majority Leader of the House and the Party Whip.

cavalier

a. offhand or casual; given to haughty disregard of others

The disguised prince resented the cavalier way in which the palace guards treated him. How dared they handle a member of the royal family so unceremoniously!

celebrated

a. famous; well-known; having illustrious past

Thanks to their race to break Roger Maris's home-run record, Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire are two of America's most celebrated baseball players.

censor

n. overseer of morals; official responsible for removal of objectionable or sensitive content

Soldiers dislike having their mail read by a censor but understand the need for this precaution.

cerebral

a. relating to the brain or cerebrum; intellectual rather than emotional

The content of philosophical works is cerebral in nature and requires much thought.

champion

v. protect or fight for the first place

They believe he could champion the oppressed in their struggle for equality.

chaotic

a. in utter disorder; lacking visible order or organization

He tried to bring order into the chaotic state of affairs.

charisma

n. divine gift; great popular charm or appeal of a political leader

Political commentators have deplored the importance of a candidate's charisma in these days of television campaigning.

charlatan

n. quack; one who pretends to knowledge, skill, or importance

When they realized that the Wizard didn't know how to get them back to Kansas, Dorothy and her companions were indignant that a charlatan had duped them.

chaste

a. morally pure in thought or conduct; decent and modest

However, if he remarried or did not remain chaste, the money would pass to her mother.

check

v. stop motion; curb or restrain

Young man, you'd better check your temper.

checkered

a. divided into squares; diversified in color; marked by great changes or shifts in fortune

During his checkered career, he had lived in palatial mansions and dreary boarding houses.

chisel

n. a metal tool with a sharp edge used to cut and shape stone, wood, or metal
With his hammer and chisel, the sculptor chipped away at the block of marble.

chivalrous

a. having qualities of ideal knight; faithful; brave
Toward his royal captive, he behaved in chivalrous fashion.

choreography

n. art of representing dances in written symbols; the arrangement of dances
He has begun to use a computer in designing choreography; a software program allows him to compose arrangements of possible moves and immediately view them onscreen.

chronic

a. lasting for a long period; marked by frequent recurrence, as certain diseases
The doctors were finally able to attribute his chronic headaches to traces of formaldehyde gas in his apartment.

chronicle

v. report or record in chronological order
The gossip columnist was paid to chronicle the latest escapades of the socially prominent celebrities.

cite

v. quote; adduce as an instance
She could cite passages in the Bible from memory.

civil

a. having to do with citizens or the state; courteous and polite
Although Internal Revenue Service agents are civil servants, they are not always courteous to suspected tax cheats.

clairvoyant

n. having foresight; fortuneteller
The Trojans did not heed Cassandra's clairvoyant warning.

clandestine

a. secret; conducted with or marked by hidden aims or methods
After avoiding their chaperon, the lovers had a clandestine meeting.

clasp

n. fastening device; firm grip
When the clasp on Judy's bracelet broke, Fred repaired it, bending the hook back into shape.

clemency

n. mildness, as of the weather; merciful, kind, or lenient act
The lawyer was pleased when the case was sent to Judge Smith's chambers because Smith was noted for her clemency toward first offenders.

clientele

n. clients of professional person; the body of customers or patrons
Her clientele is slightly different from the average movie store because most of her customers only have a limited interest in a film due to busy schedules.

clip

n. a small section of filmed or filed material
Phil's job at Fox Sports involved selecting the most important clip of the day's sporting highlights for later broadcast.

clout

n. blow, especially with the fist; great influence, especially political or social
But then again, the new administration's foreign policy clout is yet to be truly tested.

coalition

n. partnership; league; state of being combined into one body
The Rainbow coalition united people of all races in a common cause.

coercion

n. use of force to get someone to obey
The inquisitors used physical and psychological coercion to force Joan of Arc to deny that God sent her visions.

coin

v. make pieces of money from metal; invent or fabricate
Slanderers coin nasty rumors.

coincidence

n. two or more things occurring at the same time by chance
Was it just a coincidence that she and John had chanced to meet at the market, or was he deliberately trying to seek her out?

collage

n. work of art put together from fragments
Scraps of cloth, paper doilies, and old photographs all went into her collage.

collateral

n. security pledged for repayment of loan
The sum you wish to borrow is so large that it must be secured by collateral.

colossal

a. of extraordinary size; huge; gigantic
Radio City Music Hall has a colossal stage.

comatose

a. in coma; extremely sleepy; unconscious
We would expect a reasonable adult, if a kid is in comatose, to call an ambulance.

commemorate

v. serve as a memorial to; honor the memory of with a ceremony
The story of Fairchild that Mr. Moore was helping to commemorate is well-known in Silicon Valley.

communal

a. held in common; of a group of people
When they were divorced, they had trouble dividing their communal property.

commute

v. obtain or bargain for exemption or substitution; regularly travel from a place of residence to another place
In exchange for cooperating with detectives on another case, he criminally tried to commute his charges.

compact

n. small and economical car; small cosmetics case
I decide to buy a compact because a small car helps to save gas.

compatible

a. harmonious; having similar disposition and tastes

They were compatible neighbors, never quarreling over unimportant matters.

compelling

a. overpowering; drivingly forceful; urgently requiring attention

They had better not succeed in compelling anyone to work the proposed shift to midnight.

complement

v. complete; consummate; make perfect

The waiter recommended a glass of port to complement the cheese.

compliance

n. readiness to yield; happy friendly agreement

Bullheaded Bill was not noted for easy compliance with the demands of others.

component

n. element; ingredient; abstract part of something

Like all others of my stereo system, I hope this component is working at the same time.

compound

n. combination of two or more elements or parts

As the compound is already patented, her team will probably have to design something slightly different to patent it as a new drug.

comprehensive

a. thorough; including all or everything; broad in scope

Mr. Skubel has since completed what he describes as a comprehensive two-week training program and is now setting up his franchise in his hometown.

compress

v. close; squeeze or press together; contract

She has to compress the package under her arm.

compromise

v. adjust or settle by making mutual concessions; endanger the interests or reputation of

Sometimes the presence of a neutral third party can help adversaries compromise their differences.

compute

v. reckon; make a mathematical calculation

He failed to compute the interest, so his bank balance was not accurate.

concede

v. admit; yield; give up physical control of another

Despite all the evidence Monica had assembled, Mark refused to concede that she was right.

conception

n. beginning; forming of an idea; an act of conceiving

At the first conception of the work, he was consulted.

concession

n. act of yielding; point yielded; acknowledgment or admission

Before they could reach an agreement, both sides had to make their own concession.

concord

n. agreement of opinions; harmonious state of things

The sisters are now in concord about the car they had to share.

conundrum

n. riddle; difficult problem; dilemma

For this reason, the best way out of this conundrum is a political compromise.

convene

v. cause to come together formally

Six days' public notice must be given when announcing the meeting schedules, meaning the earliest the board can next convene is July 24.

convention

n. social or moral custom; formal meeting of members, representatives, or delegates; agreement between states

Moreover, following this convention is our friend's normal behavior when in such a mood.

conventional

a. based upon traditional rules; formed by agreement or compact

In Russia, hardliners contend that their nation should rely more on nuclear weapons to offset NATO's superiority in conventional military forces.

converse

v. chat; talk informally; engage in a spoken exchange of thoughts

Eva is all ears while Lulu and Lola converse.

convert

n. change something into another form; transform

However, he suggests that this only be done if the convert is also willingly accepted into his position by the community.

conviction

n. the judgment that someone is guilty of a crime; strongly held belief

Even her murder conviction did not shake Peter's judgment that Harriet was innocent of the crime.

cordial

a. gracious; showing warmth and friendliness

Our hosts greeted us at the airport with a cordial welcome and a hearty hug.

coronation

n. ceremony of crowning queen or king

When the witches told Macbeth he would be king; they failed to warn him he would lose his crown soon after his coronation.

corroborate

v. establish or strengthen as with new evidence or facts; support with evidence

Though Huck was quite willing to corroborate Tom's story, Aunt Polly knew better than to believe either.

cosmic

a. of the universe; vast

Cosmic rays derive their name from the fact that they bombard the earth's atmosphere from outer space.

cosmopolitan

a. sophisticated; of worldwide scope

Her years in the capitol had transformed her into a cosmopolitan young woman highly aware of international affairs.

covert

a. secretive, not openly shown

The covert military operation was not disclosed until weeks later after it was determined to succeed.

curator

n. one who manages museum or library; superintendent; manager

She believes the most important quality for a curator is a deep, engaged knowledge of and curiosity about what is happening in contemporary art.

curt

a. having been shortened; effectively cut short; rudely brief or abrupt, as in speech or manner

The grouchy shop assistant was curt with one of her customers, which resulted in a reprimand from her manager.

cynical

a. skeptical of motives of others; selfishly calculating; negative or pessimistic

I find it sad and cynical that this guy is essentially saying things will not be better by 2012.

dabble

v. splash liquid gently and playfully; undertake something without serious intent

When they retire at 45, they get another job, such as a real estate agent, and dabble in that industry.

dank

a. disagreeably damp or humid; cold moisture; unpleasant humidity

They're ten thousand miles away, hiding in dank caves and surrounded by hundreds of people.

deadlock

n. standstill resulting from the opposition of two forces or factions; stalemate

Because negotiations had reached a deadlock, some of the delegates had begun to mutter about breaking off the talks.

debacle

n. sudden downfall; complete disaster

Every flight turns into a debacle in the Airplane movies, with passengers and crew members collapsing and baggage popping out of the overhead bins.

debris

n. remains of something that has been destroyed or broken up

A full year after the earthquake in Mexico City, they were still carting away the debris.

debutante

n. young woman making formal entrance into society

After her father loses everything, the debutante is forced to flee, pursued by gangsters.

decipher

v. convert code into ordinary language; read with difficulty

Lacking his codebook, the spy could not decipher the scrambled message sent to him from the KGB.

decorum

n. propriety in manners and conduct; good taste in manners; conventions or requirements of polite behavior

Keeping public decorum is an important factor in media credibility.

decoy

n. lure or bait; means used to mislead or lead into danger

The decoy did not fool the wild ducks.

default

n. failure to act; an option that is selected automatically

When the visiting team failed to show up for the big game, they lost the game by default.

defer

v. delay till later; put off; hold back to a later time

I would again defer to responsible judgment when we're dealing with this kind of thing.

defiance

n. refusal to yield; readiness to contend or resist

Now I feel by imperceptible signs, which I cannot yet interpret but will later, that his defiance is about to thaw.

definitive

a. final; complete; precisely defined or explicit

And finally, the utility of the skeleton would be most likely to aid in definitive identification.

deflect

v. turn aside; draw someone's attention away from something

No one believed that his life was saved because his cigarette case could deflect the bullet.

defuse

v. remove the fuse of the bomb; reduce or eliminate the threat

Police negotiators are trained to defuse dangerous situations by avoiding confrontational language and behavior.

degenerate

v. become worse; decline; fall

Not appear to disgrace his family, degenerate from the popular qualities, or lose the influence.

degradation

n. humiliation; debasement; decline to a lower condition, quality, or level

Some secretaries object to fetching the boss a cup of coffee because they resent the degradation of being made to do such lowly tasks.

delectable

a. delightful; delicious; extremely pleasing to the sense of taste

We thanked our host for a most delectable meal.

delete

v. erase; strike out; remove or make invisible

Less is more: if you delete this paragraph, your whole essay will have greater appeal.

deliberate

v. consider; think about carefully; weigh

Offered the new job, she asked for time to deliberate before she told them her decision.

delusion

n. false belief; mistaken or unfounded opinion

Don suffers from grandeur delusion: he thinks he's a world-famous author when he's published just one paperback book.

demeanor

n. conduct; management; way in which a person behaves

It'll be interesting to see what her demeanor is and what kind of witness she is.

demented

a. insane; mad; of unsound mind; mentally ill

What kind of demented image of him have you painted in your head? In fact, he is a real gentleman.

demise

n. end of existence or activity; termination

Upon the demise of the dictator, a bitter dispute about succession to power developed.

demolition

n. act of overthrowing, pulling down, or destroying

One of the air force's major aims was the complete demolition of all means of transportation by the bombing of rail lines and terminals.

deploy

v. position troops in readiness for combat, as along a front or line; put into use or action

The general ordered the battalion to deploy to meet the enemy offensive.

deposition

n. testimony under oath; the act of depositing, especially laying down of matter by natural process

He made his deposition in the judge's chamber.

deranged

a. disordered; especially in mind; crazy; insane

How deranged is she to think that she can blackmail the possible next president of the US?