**precarious**

PRONUNCIATION
pre·car·i·ous

DEFINITION
adjective
1. depending on the will or pleasure of another
2. dependent on uncertain premises: dubious

ETYMOLOGY
1646, a legal word, "held through the favor of another," from L. precarius "obtained by asking or praying," from prex (gen. precis) "entreaty, prayer." Notion of "dependent on the will of another" led to sense "risky, dangerous, uncertain" (1687).

USAGE
1. Christian Hosoi earned a precarious livelihood as a skateboarder.
2. The strong wind almost knocked him off of his precarious perch on the edge of the cliff.

**ingress**

PRONUNCIATION
in·gress

DEFINITION
noun
1. the act of going in or entering.
2. the right to enter.
3. a means or place of entering; entryway.

ETYMOLOGY
1400–50; late Middle English < Latin ingressus a going in, commencing, equivalent to ingred-, stem of ingredi to go or step into, commence

USAGE
1. The new security policy at Millstone River and Village schools will closely monitor visitor ingress into the school buildings.

**recession**

PRONUNCIATION
re·ces·sion [ri-sesh-u h n]

DEFINITION
noun
1. the act of receding or withdrawing.
2. a receding part of a wall, building, etc.
3. Economics. a period of an economic contraction, sometimes limited in scope or duration.

ETYMOLOGY
1640–50; < Latin recessiōn- (stem of recessū ).
USAGE
1. Many people believe that house prices will drop sharply during a recession.
2. "It’s a recession when your neighbour loses his job; it’s a depression when you lose yours" [Harry S. Truman]
3. The recession in the lower wall was from wear and tear over the years.

**acceptance**

PRONUNCIATION
ac·cept·ance

DEFINITION
noun
1. the act of taking or receiving something offered.
2. favorable reception; approval; favor.
3. the act of assenting or believing

ETYMOLOGY
1565–75; accept + -ance

USAGE
1. President Obama delivered an acceptance speech after he won the second Presidential elections.
2. The children’s acceptance of the new teacher was much appreciated.

**inevitable**

PRONUNCIATION
[in-əv-i-tuh-buhl_]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. unable to be avoided, evaded, or escaped; certain; necessary: an inevitable conclusion.
2. sure to occur, happen, or come; unalterable: The inevitable end of human life is death.

noun:
3. that which is unavoidable.

ETYMOLOGY
mid-15c., from Latin inevitabilis "unavoidable," from in- "not, opposite of" (see in- (1)) + evitabilis "avoidable," from evitare "to avoid," from ex- "out" (see ex-) + vitare "shun," originally "go out of the way."

USAGE
“But since Owen, the "scientific" view of dinosaurs had undergone many changes. Because the Victorians believed in the **inevitability** of progress, they insisted that the dinosaurs must necessarily be inferior - why else would they be extinct?”

“I’m not going to worry about whether he eats or doesn’t. Everyone will eventually get hungry and want to eat something. It is **inevitable.**”

**lethargic**
Pronunciation
[luh-thahr-jik]

Definition
adjective:
1. of, pertaining to, or affected with lethargy; drowsy; sluggish.
2. producing lethargy.

Lethargy
noun: the quality or state of being drowsy and dull, listless and unenergetic, or indifferent and lazy; apathetic or sluggish inactivity.

Etymology
late 14c., litargik, from Latin lethargicus "affected with lethargy," from Greek lethargikos, from lethargos (see lethargy). Related: Lethargically.

Lethargy -late 14c., litarge, from Old French litargie or directly from Medieval Latin litargia, from Late Latin lethargia, from Greek lethargia "forgetfulness," from lethargos "forgetful," originally "inactive through forgetfulness," from lethe "forgetfulness" (see latent) + argos "idle" (see argon). The form with -th- is from 1590s in English.

Usage
“So the Victorians made them fat, lethargic, and dumb-big dopes from the past. This perception was elaborated, so that by the early twentieth century, dinosaurs had become so weak that they could not support their own weight.”

“If you feel lethargic, it could be that your body is telling you that you need rest. However, lethargy and apathy can be two very different things.”

Renegade
Pronunciation
[ren-i-geyd_

Definition
noun:
1. a person who deserts a party or cause for another.
2. an apostate from a religious faith.

Etymology
1580s, "apostate," probably (with change of suffix) from Spanish renegado, originally "Christian turned Muslim," from Medieval Latin renegatus, prop. past participle of renegare "deny" (see reneg). General sense of "turncoat" is from 1660s. The form renegate, directly from Medieval Latin, is attested in English from late 14c.

Usage
“That view didn't change until the 1960s, when a few renegade scientists, led by John Ostrom, began to imagine quick, agile, hot-blooded dinosaurs.”

“Everyone just went along with what the front office told them to do. Only the renegade, Mrs. S., questioned what was happening. It's a good thing that she did too.”

Agile
Pronunciation
[aj-uhl_]
DEFINITION
adjective:
1. quick and well-coordinated in movement; lithe: an agile leap.
2. active; lively: an agile person.
3. marked by an ability to think quickly; mentally acute or aware: She's 95 and still very agile.

ETYMOLOGY
1580s, from Middle French agile (14c.) and directly from Latin agilis "nimble, quick," from agere "to move, drive" (see act (n.)). Related: Agilely.

USAGE
“That view didn't change until the 1960s, when a few renegade scientists, led by John Ostrom, began to imagine quick, agile, hot-blooded dinosaurs.”

“What leads to having an agile mind? Rest, good nutrition, and exercise – exercises for the brain: questions, thoughts, writing, reading, thinking, talking, rebutting, creating, judging, etc., etc., etc.”

temérity
PRONUNCIATION
[tuh-mer-i-tee_]

DEFINITION
adjective: reckless boldness; rashness.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., from Middle French témérité (15c.), from Latin temeritatem (nominative temeritas) "blind chance, accident, rashness," from temere "by chance, blindly, casually, rashly," related to tenebrae "darkness," from PIE root *temes- "dark" (cf. Sanskrit tamas- "darkness," tamsrah "dark;" Avestan temah "darkness;" Lithuanian tamsa "darkness," tamsus "dark;" Old Church Slavonic tima "darkness;" Old High German dinstar "dark;" Old Irish temel "darkness").

USAGE
“Because these scientists had the temérity to question dogma, they were brutally criticized for years, even though it now seemed their ideas were correct.”

“The consultant didn’t pay attention, didn’t ask any questions, and left the room often to answer his screeching cell phone. Afterwards, he had the temérity to say that the less-than-ideal results weren’t his fault.”

dogma
PRONUNCIATION
[ _dawg-muh]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. an official system of principles or tenets concerning faith, morals, behavior, etc., as of a church. Synonyms: doctrine, teachings, set of beliefs, philosophy.
2. a specific tenet or doctrine authoritatively laid down, as by a church: the dogma of the Assumption; the recently defined dogma of papal infallibility. Synonyms: tenet, canon, law.
3. prescribed doctrine proclaimed as unquestionably true by a particular group: the difficulty of resisting political dogma.
4. a settled or established opinion, belief, or principle: the classic dogma of objectivity in scientific observation. Synonyms: conviction, certainty.

ETYMOLOGY
c.1600 (in plural dogmata), from Latin dogma "philosophical tenet," from Greek dogma (genitive dogmatos) "opinion, tenet," literally "that which one thinks is true," from dokein "to seem good, think" (see decent). Treated in 17c.-18c. as a Greek word in English.

USAGE
“Because these scientists had the temerity to question dogma, they were brutally criticized for years, even though it now seemed their ideas were correct.”

“Modern political dogma states that taxes are a bad thing. But what about all of the good that taxes have helped to create: roads and bridges, programs to help those in need, money for educational programs and much more?”

“Educational dogma sometimes tends towards comforting children and telling them that they are doing great…all of the time. Is this really helping children to become independent and well-balanced?”

auto-didact
PRONUNCIATION
[aw-toh-dahy-dakt_]

DEFINITION
noun: a person who has learned a subject without the benefit of a teacher or formal education; a self-taught person.

ETYMOLOGY
"self-taught," 1838, from Greek autodidaktikos "self-taught," from autos "self" (see auto-) + didaktos "taught" (see didactic).

USAGE
“Thomas Keller is an auto-didactic chef and in the 1980s, after working at several notable restaurants in the city and also in Paris, he decided to pursue his dream of opening his own fine-dining restaurant.”

“She never took a course on how to use Photoshop. Instead, she just fiddled with it, practiced, experimented and observed the results, learning more each time she sat in front of the computer. She is a digital image auto-didact.”

indulgence
PRONUNCIATION
[in-duhl-juhns]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. the act or practice of indulging; gratification of desire.
2. the state of being indulgent.
3. indulgent allowance or tolerance.
4. a catering to someone's mood or whim; humoring: The sick man demanded indulgence as his due.
5. something indulged in: Her favorite indulgence was candy.

ETYMOLOGY
mid-14c., "freeing from temporal punishment for sin," from Old French indulgence or directly from Latin indulgentia "complaisance, fondness, remission," from indulgentem (nominative indulgens) "indulgent, kind, tender, fond," present participle of indulgere "be kind, yield," of unknown origin; perhaps from in- "in" + derivative of PIE root *dlegh- "to engage oneself."

Sense of "gratification of another's desire or humor" is attested from late 14c. That of "yielding to one's inclinations" (technically self-indulgence) is from 1640s. In British history, Indulgence also refers to grants of certain liberties to Nonconformists under Charles II and James II, as special favors rather than legal rights; specifically the Declarations of Indulgence of 1672, 1687, and 1688 in England and 1669, 1672, and 1687 in Scotland.

Usage
“After 40 long days of Lenten abstention, Easter is a time for indulgence. And for those of us who don't observe Lent — well, who can resist all those chocolate bunnies? It's a time for sweets, with or without an excuse.”

cOMPONENT
PRONUNCIATION
[kuhm-poh-nuhnt_]

Definition
noun:
1. a constituent part; element; ingredient.
2. a part of a mechanical or electrical system: hi-fi components.
3. Physics. the projection of a vector quantity, as force or velocity, along an axis.
4. Physical Chemistry. one of the set of the minimum number of chemical constituents by which every phase of a given system can be described.
5. Mathematics.
   a. a connected subset of a set, not contained in any other connected subset of the set.
   b. a coordinate of a vector.

Etymology
1640s, "constitutional element" (earlier "one of a group of persons," 1560s), from Latin componentem (nominative componens), present participle of componere "to put together" (see composite). As an adjective, from 1660s.

Usage
“These dough rolls marked with a cross had a religious component, certainly, but they're also symbolic of another kind of devotion, Keller explains. ‘Eating the hot cross bun with your friend meant that you'd be friends for life, so it really signified that kind of friendship in a positive way,’ he says.”

IMPART
PRONUNCIATION
[im-pahrt_]

Definition
verb (used with object):
1. to make known; tell; relate; disclose: to impart a secret.
2. to give; bestow; communicate: to impart knowledge.
3. to grant a part or share of.

Etymology
early 15c., "to give a part of (one's possessions); late 15c., "to share, take part," from Old French impartir (14c.), from Late Latin impartire (also impertire) "to share in, divide with another, communicate," from assimilated form of in- "into, in" (see in- (2)) + partire "to divide, part" (see part (v.)). Related: Imparted; imparting.

**USAGE**

“Bouchon's egg-shaped, homemade marshmallows turn that childhood memory into a grown-up treat. The marshmallow **imparts** a richness that can come as a surprise — Montagne describes it as ‘almost like thick cream.’”

**ample**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌəm-pŭl]  

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. fully sufficient or more than adequate for the purpose or needs; plentiful; enough: *an ample supply of water; ample time to finish.*  
2. of sufficient or abundant measure; liberal; copious: *an ample reward.*  
3. of adequate or more than adequate extent, size, or amount; large; spacious; roomy: *ample storage space.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

mid-15c., from Middle French ample, from Latin amplus "large, spacious," related to ampla "handle, grip."

**USAGE**

“Be sure to set aside **ample** time for these treats — they are all multiday projects, with some sort of overnight component. After all, you don't cook your way to three Michelin stars by taking shortcuts.”

**cliché**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[klei-shē]  

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. a trite, stereotyped expression; a sentence or phrase, usually expressing a popular or common thought or idea, that has lost originality, ingenuity, and impact by long overuse, as *sadder but wiser,* or *strong as an ox.*  
2. (in art, literature, drama, etc.) a trite or hackneyed plot, character development, use of color, musical expression, etc.  
3. anything that has become trite or commonplace through overuse.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1832, from French cliché, a technical word in printer's jargon for "stereotype," supposedly echoic of the sound of a mold striking molten metal, thus pp. of clichier "to click" (18c.). Figurative extension to "worn-out expression" is first attested 1888, following the course of stereotype. Related: Cliched (1928).

**USAGE**

“Long dismissed as takeout **cliché,** egg foo yung deserves a second look.”

“The movie had a scene where the girl was being chased through a dark forest where, of course, she had to trip and fall, getting her legs impossibly tangled in vines…such a movie **cliché**!”

**tweak**

**PRONUNCIATION**
**tweak**

**DEFINITION**

verb (used with object):
1. to pinch and pull with a jerk and twist: *to tweak someone's ear; to tweak someone's nose.*
2. to pull or pinch the nose of, especially gently: *He tweaked the baby on greeting.*
3. to make a minor adjustment to: *to tweak a computer program.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

"pinch, pluck, twist," usually to the nose, probably from Old English twiccian "to pluck," of obscure origin; perhaps related to twitch. Meaning "to make fine adjustments" is attested from 1966. Related: Tweaked; tweaking. The noun in this sense is recorded by 1989.

**USAGE**

“*Tweaked* over decades to suit American palates, the cuisine — standard suburban takeout fare — originated with 19th-century immigrants from Canton in southern China.”

“If you are a hard-working person who is honest and thoughtful…if something doesn’t go the way you want it to at school, you really only need to *tweak* your modus operandi, unlike those folks who never pay attention or who have very lackadaisical work habits…those folks need more than a little adjustment — they might need a major redesign…which they might not be able to *affect* quickly enough to make the most of their school days.”

*hoity-toity*

**PRONUNCIATION**

[hoi-tee-toi-tee__]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. assuming airs; pretentious; haughty; snooty; arrogant; full of self-importance
2. giddy; flighty.

**ETYMOLOGY**

also hoity toity, 1660s, "riotous behavior," from earlier highty tighty "frolicsome, flighty," perhaps an alteration and reduplication of dialectal hoyting "acting the hoyden, romping" (1590s), see hoyden. Sense of "haughty" first recorded late 1800s, probably on similarity of sound.

**USAGE**

“My mother, who hailed from northern China, had a *hoity-toity* attitude towards anything Cantonese.”

“Since he had been labeled as ‘gifted and talented’ at his previous school, his progress was held back by his *hoity-toity* attitude towards anything done in the ‘regular’ classroom, as if the things done in the classroom were beneath him and his lofty intellect.”

*sashay*

**PRONUNCIATION**

[sa-shey__]

**DEFINITION**

verb (used without object) *Informal*:
1. to glide, move, or proceed easily or nonchalantly: *She just sashayed in as if she owned the place.*
2. prance, strut, flounce with a self-important air about oneself
3. to *chassé* in dancing.
ETYMOLOGY
1836, mangled Anglicization of French chassé "gliding step" (in square dancing), literally "chased," pp. of chasser "to chase," from Old French chacier "to hunt," from Vulgar Latin *captiare (see capable, and cf. chase, catch). Related: Sashayed; sashaying. The noun is attested from 1900.

USAGE
“In the young adult novel The Westing Game** by Ellen Raskin, Mr. Hoo serves such dishes in his Wisconsin restaurant, while his young Chinese wife sashays in a cheongsam and shouts ‘Boom!’ which is one of the only English words she knows.”

“The Colonia consultant had a habit of sashaying into the room, full of recommendations and new directives, confident (and inwardly relieved) that she had to take no ultimate responsibility for making such harebrained plans actually work in the classroom.”

**Ugh! I didn’t like The Westing Game at all. Too many characters!

scheming
PRONUNCIATION
[_skee-ming]

DEFINITION
adjective: given to making plans, especially sly and underhand ones; crafty.

ETYMOLOGY
1550s, "figure of speech," from Medieval Latin schema "shape, figure, form, figure of speech," from Greek skhema (genitive skhematos) "figure, appearance, the nature of a thing," related to skein "to get," and ekhein "to have," from PIE root *segh- "to hold, to hold in one's power, to have" (cf. Sanskrit sahate "he masters, overcomes," sahah "power, victory;" Avestan hazah "power, victory;" Greek ekhein "to have, hold;" Gothic sigis, Old High German sigu, Old Norse sigr, Old English sige "victory").

The sense "program of action" first is attested 1640s. Unfavorable overtones (selfish, devious) began to creep in early 18c. Color scheme is attested from 1884.

USAGE
“With its red silk wall hangings and art deco touches, Golden Temple felt like a place where Anna May Wong, the Chinese American film noir star, might be found scheming in the corner.”

“Instead of planning and scheming new, elaborate, and usually ineffective ways to avoid discomfiting feelings or worry and stress, perhaps you should just do your job to the best of your ability. It’s a simpler way of living.”

frou-frou
PRONUNCIATION
[froo-froo_]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. fussy or showy, elaborate or exaggerated, especially with ornamentation: He preferred a more straightforward style of teaching, getting rid of the frou-frou elements that were present to merely impress an onlooker.

noun:
2. elaborate decoration, as frills, ribbons, or ruffles, especially on women's clothing.
3. A rustling sound, as of silk.

ETYMOLOGY
1870, "a rustling," from French (19c.), possibly imitative of the rustling of a dress. Meaning "fussy details" is from 1876.

USAGE
“No one quite knows how our egg foo yung sprung from that frou-fou dish, but Cantonese-style cooking proved a hit after it was introduced by Chinese who arrived in California during the Gold Rush hoping to strike it rich.”

“Since the United States, even in more difficult economic times, is still the land-of-plenty, there is still a great deal of frou-frou, symbols of a luxurious life not known to other people in the world. Here in the U.S., we create our own problems.”

skeptical
PRONUNCIATION
[skep-ti-kuhl]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. inclined to skepticism; having doubt: a skeptical young woman.
2. showing doubt: a skeptical smile.
3. denying or questioning the tenets of a religion: a skeptical approach to the nature of miracles.

ETYMOLOGY
also sceptic, 1580s, "member of an ancient Greek school that doubted the possibility of real knowledge," from French sceptique, from Latin scepticus, from Greek skeptikos (plural Skeptikoi "the Skeptics"), literally "inquiring, reflective," the name taken by the disciples of the Greek philosopher Pyrrho (c.360-c.270 B.C.E.), from skeptesthai "to reflect, look, view" (see scope (n.1)).

USAGE
“Miller says the petition does not seek to change existing regulations that require added sweeteners (such as aspartame or stevia) to be named in the list of ingredients — usually found on the back of a container. ‘We are not trying to be sneaky,’ Miller says. But so far, lots of folks seem skeptical of the plan.”

customer
PRONUNCIATION
[kuhn-see-mer]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a person or thing that consumes.
2. Economics. a person or organization that uses a commodity or service.
3. Ecology. an organism, usually an animal, that feeds on plants or other animals.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., "one who squanders or wastes," agent noun from consume. In economic sense, "one who uses up goods or articles" (opposite of producer) from 1745. Consumer goods is attested from 1890. In U.S., consumer price index calculated since 1919, tracking "changes in the prices paid by urban consumers for a representative basket of goods and services" [Bureau of Labor Statistics]; abbreviation CPI is attested by 1971.
"More than 90,000 people have joined a new online petition organized by SumOfUs.org, a consumer advocacy group, opposing the dairy industry's petition."

**advocate**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ad-vuh-keyt]

**DEFINITION**

verb (used with object):
1. to speak or write in favor of; support or urge by argument; recommend publicly: *He advocated higher salaries for teachers.*

noun:
2. a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person, cause, etc. (usually followed by of): *an advocate of peace.*
3. a person who pleads for or in behalf of another; intercessor.
4. a person who pleads the cause of another in a court of law.

**ETYMOLOGY**

mid-14c., "one whose profession is to plead cases in a court of justice," a technical term from Roman law, from Old French avocat "barrister, advocate, spokesman," from Latin advocatus "one called to aid; a pleader, advocate," noun use of pp. of advocare "to call" (as witness or advisor) from ad- "to" (see ad-) + vocare "to call," related to vocem (see voice (n.)). Also in Middle English as "one who intercedes for another," and "protector, champion, patron." Feminine forms advocatess, advocatrice were in use in 15c.

"And the dairy industry's petition is also facing opposition from school food advocates."

"More than 90,000 people have joined a new online petition organized by SumOfUs.org, a consumer advocacy group, opposing the dairy industry's petition."

**unconscionable**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[_uhn-kon-shuh-nuh-buhl]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. not guided by conscience; unscrupulous.
2. not in accordance with what is just or reasonable: *unconscionable behavior.*
3. excessive; extortionate: *an unconscionable profit.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

1560s, "showing no regard for conscience," from un- (1) + now rare conscionable "conscientious." Related: Unconscionably.

"I think it's unconscionable," says school chef Ann Cooper, who's been working to reform the way kids eat at school. She argues that parents and students will have a hard time discerning what's in the milk."

**discern**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[dih-surn_]
DEFINITION
verb (used with object):
1. to perceive by the sight or some other sense or by the intellect; see, recognize, or apprehend: They discerned a sail on the horizon.
2. to distinguish mentally; recognize as distinct or different; discriminate: He is incapable of discerning right from wrong.

verb (used without object):
3. to distinguish or discriminate.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., from Old French discerner (13c.) "distinguish (between), separate" (by sifting), and directly from Latin discernere "to separate, set apart, divide, distribute; distinguish, perceive," from dis- "off, away" (see dis-) + cernere "distinguish, separate, sift" (see crisis). Related: Discerned; discerning.

USAGE
"I think it's unconscionable," says school chef Ann Cooper, who's been working to reform the way kids eat at school. She argues that parents and students will have a hard time discerning what's in the milk.”

commence
PRONUNCIATION
[kuh-mens]

DEFINITION
verb: to begin; start.

ETYMOLOGY
c.1300, from Old French comencer "to begin, start" (10c., Modern French commencer), from Vulgar Latin *cominiciare, originally "to initiate as priest, consecrate," from Latin com- "together" (see com-) + initiare "to initiate," from initium (see initial (adj.)). Spelling with double -m- began in French and was established in English by 1500. Related: Commenced; commencing.

USAGE
"With President Obama's signing of the order to commence the sequester spending cuts of $85 billion from this fiscal year's federal budget, what was once unthinkable is now hard reality.”

indiscriminate
PRONUNCIATION
[in-di-skrim-uh-nit_

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. not discriminating; lacking in care, judgment, selectivity, etc.: indiscriminate in one's friendships.
2. not discriminate; haphazard; thoughtless: indiscriminate slaughter.
3. not kept apart or divided; thrown together; jumbled: an indiscriminate combination of colors and styles.

ETYMOLOGY
1640s, from in- (1) "not, opposite of" + discriminate (adj.).
1620s, from Latin discriminatus, pp. of discriminare "to divide, separate," from discrimen (genitive discriminis) "interval, distinction, difference," derived noun from discernere (see discern). The adverse (usually racial) sense is first recorded 1866, American English. Positive sense remains in discriminating. Related: Discriminated. Also used 17c. and after as an adjective meaning "distinct."
“The indiscriminate, across-the-board spending cuts to the Defense Department and domestic programs were supposed to be so odious and harebrained that, of course, the president and Congress would agree on a more reasonable path to deficit reduction.”

**odious**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[oh-dee-uhs _]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. deserving or causing hatred; hateful; detestable.
2. highly offensive; repugnant; disgusting.

**ETYMOLOGY**

late 14c., from Anglo-French odious, from Old French odieus (late 14c., Modern French odieux) or directly from Latin odiosus "hateful, offensive, unpleasant," from odium "hatred" (see odium).

“The indiscriminate, across-the-board spending cuts to the Defense Department and domestic programs were supposed to be so odious and harebrained that, of course, the president and Congress would agree on a more reasonable path to deficit reduction.”

**harebrained**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ _hair-breynd ]

**DEFINITION**

adjective: reckless, scatterbrained, irresponsible, absurd, foolish, crazy

**ETYMOLOGY**

also harebrained, 1550s, from hare-brain "giddy or reckless person" (1540s), probably from hare, on notion of "flighty, skittish."

“The indiscriminate, across-the-board spending cuts to the Defense Department and domestic programs were supposed to be so odious and harebrained that, of course, the president and Congress would agree on a more reasonable path to deficit reduction.”

**dysfunctional**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[dis-fuhngk-shuh-nl _]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. not performing normally, as an organ or structure of the body; malfunctioning.
2. having a malfunctioning part or element: It is hard to get bills through a dysfunctional congress.
3. behaving or acting outside social norms: All the siblings in their extremely dysfunctional family lost contact as adults.

**ETYMOLOGY**
1917, from dysfunction + -al (1). Related: Dysfunctionally. 1916, from dys- "bad, abnormal, difficult" + function (n.).

USAGE
“In this, the parties obviously underestimated just how **dysfunctional** Washington is.”

**spate**

PRONUNCIATION
[ˌspeɪt]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a sudden, almost overwhelming, outpouring: *a spate of angry words.*
2. **British.**
   a. a flood or inundation.
   b. a river flooding its banks.
   c. a sudden or heavy rainstorm.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., originally Scottish and northern English, "a sudden flood, especially one caused by heavy rains or a snowmelt," of unknown origin. Perhaps from Old French espoit "flood," from Dutch spuiten "to flow, spout;" related to spout. Figurative sense of "unusual quantity" is attested from 1610s.

USAGE
“Those of you who don’t keep up with Edinburgh’s literary world through Twitter may have missed the recent **spate** of mysterious paper sculptures appearing around the city.”

**anonymous**

PRONUNCIATION
[ˌɑnəˈnɔməs]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. without any name acknowledged, as that of author, contributor, or the like: *an anonymous letter to the editor; an anonymous donation.*
2. of unknown name; whose name is withheld: *an anonymous author.*
3. lacking individuality, unique character, or distinction: *an endless row of drab, anonymous houses.*

ETYMOLOGY
c.1600, from Late Latin anonymus, from Greek anonymos "without a name," from an- "without" (see an- (1)) + onyma, Æolic dialectal form of onoma "name" (see name (n.)).

USAGE
“One day in March, staff at the Scottish Poetry Library came across a wonderful creation, left **anonymously** on a table in the library.”

**forthcoming**

PRONUNCIATION
[ˌfɔːrˈwɜːθ-ˌkuːm-ɪŋ]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. coming, forth, or about to come forth; about to appear; approaching in time: the forthcoming concert.
2. ready or available when required or expected: He assured us that payment would be forthcoming.
3. frank and cooperative; candid: In his testimony, the senator could have been more forthcoming.
4. friendly and outgoing; sociable.

ETYMOLOGY
"about to happen," 1530s; earlier was Old English ford cum an _"to come forth, come to pass;"_ meaning _"informative, responsive;"_ is from 1835.

USAGE
"Nobody knew where it came from, nor was anyone forthcoming with information in person or online, despite a fair amount of local news coverage."

recipient

PRONUNCIATION
[ri-sip-ee-uhnt]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a person or thing that receives; receiver: the recipient of a prize.

adjective:
2. receiving or capable of receiving.

ETYMOLOGY
1550s, from Middle French récipient (16c.), from Latin recipientem (nominative recipiens), prp. of recipere (see receive).

USAGE
"It looked like this was a one-off, a beautiful and delicate piece of art created by a fan of the Poetry Library. Until, in late June, the National Library of Scotland found themselves the recipient of a similar piece."

infectious

PRONUNCIATION
[_in-fek-shuhs]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. communicable by infection, as from one person to another or from one part of the body to another: infectious diseases.
2. causing or communicating infection.
3. tending to spread from one to another: infectious laughter.
4. Law. capable of contaminating with illegality; exposing to seizure or forfeiture.
5. Obsolete, diseased.

ETYMOLOGY
"catching, having the quality of spreading from person to person," 1540s of diseases, 1610s of emotions, actions, etc.; see infect + -ous.

USAGE
“Many thanks to whoever has been crafting and distributing these magical objects, and thanks on behalf of the creator to those who have followed their discovery with such **infectious** delight.”

**disease**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[dih-zeez]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. a disordered or incorrectly functioning organ, part, structure, or system of the body resulting from the effect of genetic or developmental errors, infection, poisons, nutritional deficiency or imbalance, toxicity, or unfavorable environmental factors; illness; sickness; ailment.
2. any abnormal condition in a plant that interferes with its vital physiological processes, caused by pathogenic microorganisms, parasites, unfavorable environmental, genetic, or nutritional factors, etc.
3. any harmful, depraved, or morbid condition, as of the mind or society: His fascination with executions is a disease.
4. decomposition of a material under special circumstances: tin disease.

verb (used with object):
5. to affect with disease; make ill.

**bizarre**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[bih-zahr]

**DEFINITION**

adjective: markedly unusual in appearance, style, or general character and often involving incongruous or unexpected elements; outrageously or whimsically strange; odd: **bizarre clothing; bizarre behavior.** Synonyms: weird, freakish, grotesque; fantastic; unusual, strange, odd.

**aspire**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[uh-spahyuhr]

**DEFINITION**

verb (used without object), aspired, aspiring.
1. to long, aim, or seek ambitiously; be eagerly desirous, especially for something great or of high value (usually followed by to, after, or an infinitive): to aspire after literary immortality; to aspire to be a doctor.
2. Archaic. to rise up; soar; mount; tower.

**pneumonia**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[noo-mohn-yuh]

**DEFINITION**

noun: inflammation of the lungs with congestion.

**perpetual**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[per-pech-oo-uhl]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. continuing or enduring forever; everlasting.
2. lasting an indefinitely long time: perpetual snow.
3. continuing or continued without intermission or interruption; ceaseless: a perpetual stream of visitors all day.
4. blooming almost continuously throughout the season or the year.

noun:
5. a hybrid rose that is perpetual.
6. a perennial plant.

**ubiquitous**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌyoo-bik-wi-tuhs]

**DEFINITION**

djective: existing or being everywhere, especially at the same time; omnipresent: ubiquitous fog; ubiquitous little ants.

**ETYMOLOGY**
"turning up everywhere," 1837, from ubiquity + -ous. The earlier word was ubiquitary (1580s), from Modern Latin ubiquitarius, from ubique. Related: Ubiquitously; ubiquitousness.

**USAGE**
“The U.S. Postal Service announced on Wednesday that it will discontinue first class Saturday mail delivery, marking another milestone in the decline of the once-ubiquitous government service.”

**knell**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌnel]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. the sound made by a bell rung slowly, especially for a death or a funeral.
2. a sound or sign announcing the death of a person or the end, extinction, failure, etc., of something: the knell of parting day.
3. any mournful sound.

verb (used without object):  
4. to sound, as a bell, especially a funeral bell.
5. to give forth a mournful, ominous, or warning sound.

**ETYMOLOGY**
Old English cnyll "sound made by a bell when struck or rung slowly," perhaps of imitative origin. The Welsh cnull "death-bell" appears to be a borrowing from English. For vowel evolution, see bury. Old English cnyllan "to toll a bell; strike, knock," cognate with Middle High German erknellen "to resound," Old Norse knylla "to beat, thrash;" probably imitative. Related: Knelled; knelling.

**USAGE**
“It could be the start of a death knell that's being sounded way too late. The U.S. Postal Service is canceling Saturday delivery for everything except certain packages.”

**nickel-and-dime**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌnik-uhl-uhn-dahyhm]
DEFINITION
adjective:
1. of little or no importance; trivial; petty: *a nickel-and-dime business that soon folded.*

verb (used with object):
2. to expose to financial hardship or bankruptcy by the accumulation of small expenses, bills, etc.: *We're being nickel-and-dimed to death by these small weekly expenses.*
3. to hinder, annoy, or harass with trivialities or nonessentials: *to be nickeled-and-dimed by petty criticisms.*

ETYMOLOGY
To nickel-and-dime (someone) is from 1964 (nickels and dimes "very small amounts of money" is attested from 1893).

USAGE
“For years, the postal service hasn't been *nickel-and-diming* its customers, but trying to offset falling revenue with a penny increase here and another penny there.”

correspondence
PRONUNCIATION
[kawr-uh-spon-duhns]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. communication by exchange of letters.
2. a letter or letters that pass between correspondents: *It will take me all day to answer this business correspondence.*
3. Also, correspondency. an instance of corresponding.
4. similarity or analogy.
5. agreement; conformity.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., "harmony, agreement," from Medieval Latin correspondentia, from respondentem (nom. correspondens), prp. of correspondere (see correspond). Sense of "communication by letters" is first attested 1640s.

USAGE
“The explosion of email for correspondence and the ability to pay virtually anyone at any time online has been one factor pushing the postal service into obsolescence. The other — and more pressing — issue is a sharp spike in costs for future postal retiree health benefits.”

obsolescence
PRONUNCIATION
[_ob-suh-les-uhns_]

DEFINITION
noun: the state, process, or condition of being or becoming obsolete.

obsolete
PRONUNCIATION
[_ob-suh-leet_]

adjective:
1. no longer in general use; fallen into disuse: *an obsolete expression.*
2. of a discarded or outmoded type; out of date: *an obsolete battleship.*
ETYMOLOGY
_1570s, from Latin obsoletus "grown old, worn out," pp. of obsolescere "fall into disuse," probably from ob "away" (see ob-) + an expanded form of solere "to be used to, be accustomed" (see insolent).

USAGE
“The explosion of email for correspondence and the ability to pay virtually anyone at any time online has been one factor pushing the postal service into obsolescence. The other — and more pressing — issue is a sharp spike in costs for future postal retiree health benefits.”

complement
PRONUNCIATION
[ˌkɒm-ˌpluː-ment]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. something that completes or makes perfect: A good wine is a complement to a good meal.
2. the quantity or amount that completes anything: We now have a full complement of packers.
3. either of two parts or things needed to complete the whole; counterpart.
4. full quantity or amount; complete allowance.
5. the full number of officers and crew required on a ship.
verb (used with object):
6. to complete; form a complement to: This belt complements the dress better than that one.

ETYMOLOGY
1610s, "exchange courtesies," from complement (n.). Meaning "make complete" is from 1640s. Related: Complemented; complementing.

USAGE
“The snack rule will complement the standards set for school breakfast and lunch, which took effect last year as part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.”

“Paying attention in class and making an effort at home are two behaviors that complement one another; one makes the other more effective and vice versa.”

compliment
PRONUNCIATION
[ˌkɒm-ˌpluː-ment]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. an expression of praise, commendation, or admiration: A sincere compliment boosts one's morale.
2. a formal act or expression of civility, respect, or regard: The mayor paid him the compliment of escorting him.
3. compliments, a courteous greeting; good wishes; regards: He sends you his compliments.

ETYMOLOGY
"An act, or expression of civility, usually understood to include some hypocrisy, and to mean less than it declares" [Johnson], 1570s, complement, via French compliment (17c.), from Italian complimento "expression of respect and civility," from Vulgar Latin *complire, for Latin complere "to complete" (see complete (adj.)), via notion of "complete the obligations of politeness." Same word as complement but by a different etymological route; differentiated by spelling after 1650.
USAGE
“He liked Dana a lot; she was so pleasant and friendly. Consequently, he was ready to pay her a compliment whenever he saw her.”

“Compliments, like money, loses its value when the supply of it grows too large. ‘Excellent job!’ begins to mean ‘average’ instead of what it was originally meant to mean.”

affect
PRONUNCIATION
[af-ekt]

DEFINITION
verb (used with object):
1. to act on; produce an effect or change in: Cold weather affected the crops.
2. to impress the mind or move the feelings of: The music affected him deeply.
3. (of pain, disease, etc.) to attack or lay hold of.

ETYMOLOGY
"to make an impression on," 1630s; earlier "to attack" (c.1600), "act upon, infect" (early 15c.), from affect (n.). Related: Affected; affecting.

USAGE
“Reasonable limitations on when and where the standards apply. Ensuring that standards only affect foods that are sold on school campus during the school day. Foods sold at an afterschool sporting event or other activity will not be subject to these requirements.”

“I can’t be totally sure how not doing your homework will affect your success in life, but I think the effect of this behavior will not be a good one.”

effect
PRONUNCIATION
[ih-fekt]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. something that is produced by an agency or cause; result; consequence: Exposure to the sun had the effect of toughening his skin.
2. power to produce results; efficacy; force; validity; influence: His protest had no effect.
3. the state of being operative or functional; operation or execution; accomplishment or fulfillment: to bring a plan into effect.
4. a mental or emotional impression produced, as by a painting or a speech.
5. meaning or sense; purpose or intention: She disapproved of the proposal and wrote to that effect.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., "a result," from Old French efet (13c., Modern French effet) "result, execution, completion, ending," from Latin effectus "accomplishment, performance," from pp. stem of efficere "work out, accomplish," from ex- "out" (see ex-) + facere "to do" (see factitious).

USAGE
“The standards will not go into effect until at least one full school year after public comment is considered and an implementing rule is published to ensure that schools and vendors have adequate time to adapt.”
“I can’t be totally sure how not doing your homework will affect your success in life, but I think the effect of this behavior will not be a good one.”

**ensure**

PRONUNCIATION

[ˌen-ʃoo-rən]

DEFINITION

verb (used with object):

1. to secure or guarantee: *This letter will ensure you a hearing.*
2. to make sure or certain: measures to ensure the success of an undertaking.
3. to make secure or safe, as from harm.

ETYMOLOGY

_early 14c., from Anglo-French enssurer, from en- "make" (see en- (1)) + Old French sexeur "sure" (see sure); probably influenced by Old French asseurer "assure." Related: Ensured; ensures; ensuring.

USAGE

“Reasonable limitations on when and where the standards apply. **Ensuring** that standards only affect foods that are sold on school campus during the school day. Foods sold at an afterschool sporting event or other activity will not be subject to these requirements.

“To ensure that something will be done means *to make it certain to happen.*”

“If you want to ensure that you will get good grades on your report card, you will have to pay attention, do your homework, and make an effort with your studies.”

**insure**

PRONUNCIATION

[ˌin-ʃoo-rən]

DEFINITION

verb (used with object):

1. to guarantee against loss or harm.
2. to secure indemnity to or on, in case of loss, damage, or death.
3. to issue or procure an insurance policy on or for.

ETYMOLOGY

_mid-15c., insuren, spelling variant of ensuren (see ensure). Took on its particular sense of "make safe against loss by payment of premiums" from mid-17c. (replacing assure in that meaning). Related: Insured; insuring.

USAGE

“To insure someone or something means *to protect the person or object against risk* through certain actions or behaviors, i.e. *a seat belt is meant to insure against injury in the event of an accident.*”

“The no-texting law is a way to **insure** citizens from getting hurt while driving.”

**autonomy**

PRONUNCIATION

[ˌaw-ton-uh-mee]
DEFINITION
noun:
1. independence or freedom, as of the will or one's actions: the autonomy of the individual.
2. the state or condition of having independence or freedom, or of being autonomous; self-government, or the right of self-government: The rebels demanded autonomy from Spain.
3. a self-governing community.

ETYMOLGY
_1620s, of states, from Greek autonomia "independence," noun of quality from autonomos "independent, living by one's own laws," from auto- "self" (see auto-) + nomos "custom, law" (see numismatics). Of persons, from 1803.

USAGE
“Allowing significant local and regional autonomy by only establishing minimum requirements for schools.”

pathetic
PRONUNCIATION
[puh-thet-ik]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. causing or evoking pity, sympathetic sadness, sorrow, etc.; pitiful; pitiable: a pathetic letter; a pathetic sight.
2. affecting or moving the feelings.
3. pertaining to or caused by the feelings.
4. miserably or contemptibly inadequate: In return for our investment we get a pathetic three percent interest.

ETYMOLGY
_1590s, "affecting the emotions, exciting the passions," from Middle French pathétique "moving, stirring, affecting" (16c.), from Late Latin patheticus, from Greek pathetikos "subject to feeling, sensitive, capable of emotion," from pathetos "liable to suffer," verbal adjective of pathein "to suffer" (see pathos). Meaning "arousing pity, pitiful" is first recorded 1737. Colloquial sense of "so miserable as to be ridiculous" is attested from 1937.

USAGE
“What a pathetic reason to engage in such a potentially lethal endeavor!”

rebut
PRONUNCIATION
[ri-buht]

DEFINITION
verb (used with object):
1. to refute by evidence or argument.
2. to oppose by contrary proof.

rebuttal
PRONUNCIATION
[ri-buht-l]

ETYMOLOGY
noun: an act of rebutting, as in a debate; an argument or statement against a previously stated one: When accused of irresponsible behavior regarding the terrorist attack in Benghazi, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton offered an angry rebuttal. ( http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI06ezhGQ1s )
c.1300, from Old French rebuter "to thrust back," from re- "back" (see re-) + boter "to thrust, hit" (see butt (v.)). Sense of "try to disprove, refute" is from 1817. Related: Rebutted; rebutting.

USAGE
“And what if the rebuttal to this was, “But some motorcyclists get into serious accidents because they are riding in a reckless manner!”

majority
PRONUNCIATION
[ˌmuh-jawr-i-tee]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. the greater part or number; the number larger than half the total (opposed to minority): the majority of the population.
2. a number of voters or votes, jurors, or others in agreement, constituting more than half of the total number.
3. the amount by which the greater number, as of votes, surpasses the remainder (distinguished from plurality).
4. the party or faction with the majority vote: The Democratic party is the majority.
5. the state or time of being of full legal age: to attain one’s majority.

ETYMOLOGY
1550s, "condition of being greater, superiority," from Middle French majorité (16c.), from Medieval Latin majoritatem (nom. majoritas) "majority," from Latin maior "greater" (see major (adj.)). Sense of "state of being of full age" is attested from 1560s; meaning "greater number or part" (of votes, etc.) first recorded 1690s. The majority "the dead" recorded from 1719.

USAGE
“But if you do this, then the majority of motorcycle riders, who ride responsibly and don’t get into accidents will be penalized in the process.”

penalize
PRONUNCIATION
[ˈpɛn-ə-lijz]

DEFINITION
verb:
1. to subject to a penalty, as a person.
2. to declare (an action, deed, etc.) punishable by law or rule.
3. to put under a disadvantage or handicap.

ETYMOLOGY
"pertaining to punishment," mid-15c., from Old French peinal (12c., Modern French pénal) and directly from Medieval Latin penalis, from Latin poenalis "pertaining to punishment," from poena "punishment," from Greek poine "blood-money, fine, penalty, punishment," from PIE *kwoina, from root *kwei- "to pay, atone, compensate" (cf. Greek time "price, worth, honor, esteem, respect," tinein "to pay a price, punish, take vengeance;" Sanskrit cinoti "observes, notes;" Avestan kaena "punishment, vengeance;" Old Church Slavonic cena "honor, price;" Lithuanian kaina "value, price").

USAGE
“If you do this, then the majority of car drivers, who drive responsibly and don’t get into accidents will be penalized in the process.”
**sovereignty**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌsov-ri-ˈtē]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. the quality or state of being sovereign.
2. the status, dominion, power, or authority of a sovereign; royalty.
3. supreme and independent power or authority in government as possessed or claimed by a state or community.
4. rightful status, **independence**, or **prerogative**.
5. a sovereign state, community, or political unit.

**sovereign**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌsov-rin]

**adjective:**
1. having supreme rank, power, or authority.
2. supreme; preeminent; indisputable: a sovereign right.
3. greatest in degree; utmost or extreme.
4. being above all others in character, importance, excellence, etc.

**ETYMOLOGY**

_mid-14c., "pre-eminence," from Anglo-French sovereynete, from Old French souverainete, from soverain (see sovereign). Meaning "authority, rule" is recorded from late 14c.; sense of "existence as an independent state" is from 1715.

**USAGE**

“This is America, and sovereignty is an important value…but some people act irresponsibly and either hurt themselves or others through their reckless behavior.”

**steadfast**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌsted-fast]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. fixed in direction; steadily directed: a steadfast gaze.
2. firm in purpose, resolution, faith, attachment, etc., as a person: a steadfast friend.
3. unwavering, as resolution, faith, adherence, etc.
4. firmly established, as an institution or a state of affairs.
5. firmly fixed in place or position.

**ETYMOLOGY**

_Old English_ stedefÊst "secure in position," from _sted_ (see _stead_) + _fÊst_ (see _fast_ (adj.)); cf._

_Middle Low German_ stedevast, _Old Norse_ stafastr. _Related_: _steadfastly, steadfastness._

**USAGE**

“Here is an article that talks about the importance of the Civil Rights Movement and why it’s necessary to remember what Martin Luther King Jr. and many other people have done to help and create a country of equality, liberty and steadfastness.”
**homage**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌhom-ij]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. respect or reverence paid or rendered: *In his speech he paid homage to Washington and Jefferson.*
2. the formal public acknowledgment by which a feudal tenant or vassal declared himself to be the man or vassal of his lord, owing him fealty and service.
3. the relation thus established of a vassal to his lord.
4. something done or given in acknowledgment or consideration of the worth of another: *a Festschrift presented as an homage to a great teacher.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

late 13c., from Old French homage (12c., Modern French hommage) "allegiance or respect for one's feudal lord," from homme "man," from Latin homo (genitive hominis) "man" (see homunculus). Figurative sense of "reverence, honor shown" is from late 14c. As a verb, from 1590s (agent noun homager is from c.1400).

**USAGE**

“Beyond the customized cars, glittering floats and dancing bands that paraded Saturday through the streets of South Dallas lived a purpose: to pay homage to civil rights activist the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 45th year after his assassination.”

**prominent**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˈprəmənt]  

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. standing out so as to be seen easily; conspicuous; particularly noticeable: *Her eyes are her most prominent feature.*
2. standing out beyond the adjacent surface or line; projecting.
3. leading, important, or well-known: *a prominent citizen.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

1540s, from Latin prominentem (nom. prominens), prp. of prominere "jut or stand out," from pro- "before, forward" (see pro-) + minere "to project," from minae "projections, threats" (see menace).

**USAGE**

“A birthday song mixed with memorable parts of King’s speeches blasted from speakers on one of the floats. His face was prominent throughout the parade.”

**prejudice**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[prɛdʒuˈdɪs]  

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason.
2. any preconceived opinion or feeling, either favorable or unfavorable.
3. unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, regarding a racial, religious, or national group.
ETMYOLOGY

4. such attitudes considered collectively: *The war against prejudice is never-ending.*
5. damage or injury; detriment: *a law that operated to the prejudice of the majority.*

USAGE

“‘It’s a memory we can’t forget,’ said Annie Williams, 85, who attended the parade with three generations of women in her family who followed her. ‘I’m hoping we’ll see even more progress. There’s still a lot of prejudice out there.’”

commitment

DEFINITION
noun:
1. the act of committing.
2. the state of being committed.
3. the act of committing, pledging, or engaging oneself.
4. a pledge or promise; obligation: *We have made a commitment to pay our bills on time.*
5. engagement; involvement: *They have a sincere commitment to religion.*

ETMYOLOGY

_1610s, "action of officially consigning to the custody of the state," from commit + -ment. (Anglo-French had commettement.) Meaning "the committing of oneself, pledge, promise" is attested from 1793; hence, "an obligation, an engagement" (1864).

USAGE

“‘Dr. King did not ride floats,’ Price said. ‘I don’t want this just to be another day of celebration. It needs to be a day of commitment.’”

insufficient

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. not sufficient; lacking in what is necessary or required: *an insufficient answer.*
2. deficient in force, quality, or amount; inadequate: *insufficient protection.*

ETMYOLOGY

late 14c., from O.Fr. *insufficient* (14c.), from L. *insufficientem* (nom. *insufficientis*) "insufficient," from in- "not, opposite of" (see in- (1)) + *sufficientem* (see *sufficient*). Originally of persons, "inadequate, unable;" of things, from late 15c. Related: *Insufficiently.*

USAGE
“Talk of minting the coin grew throughout the week, though it was ruled by many as an insufficient solution to the debt crisis.”

**pseudonym**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌsoʊd-n-ɪm]

**DEFINITION**

noun: a fictitious name used by an author to conceal his or her identity; pen name.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1706 (in pseudonymous), from Fr. pseudonyme (adj.), from Gk. pseudonyms "having a false name," from pseudes "false" (see pseudo-) + onyma Aeolic dialectal variant of onoma "name" (see name (n.)).

**USAGE**

“The author was a lawyer writing under the pseudonym Beowulf.”

**numismatic**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌnəʊmɪsˈmætɪk]

**DEFINITION**

adjective: of, pertaining to, or consisting of coins, medals, paper money, etc.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1765, "pertaining to historical coins and coinage," from French numismatique (late 16c.), from Latin numismat-, stem of numisma "coin, currency," from Greek nomisma "current coin, money, usage," lit. "what has been sanctioned by custom or usage," from nomizein "have in use, adopt a custom," from nomos "custom, law, usage," from PIE root *nem- "to divide, distribute, allot" (see nemesis). Related: Numismatical (1716). Earlier in the same sense was nummary (1650s), from Latin nummarius, from nummus "a coin."

**USAGE**

“Curiously enough Congress has already delegated to [Treasury] all the seignorage power authority it needs to mint a $1 trillion coin (even numismatic coins are legal tender at their face value and must be accepted by the Federal Reserve) — the catch is, it's gotta be made of platinum.”

**default**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[dɪh-ˈfɔːlt]

**DEFINITION**

noun:

1. failure to act; inaction or neglect: They lost their best client by sheer default.
2. failure to meet financial obligations.
3. Law. failure to perform an act or obligation legally required, especially to appear in court or to plead at a time assigned.
4. Sports. failure to arrive in time for, participate in, or complete a scheduled match.
5. lack; want; absence.

verb:

6. to fail in fulfilling or satisfying an engagement, claim, or obligation.
7. to fail to meet financial obligations or to account properly for money in one's care: When he defaulted in his payments, the bank foreclosed on the car.
ETymology
Early 13c., "offense, crime, sin," later (late 13c.) "failure, failure to act," from Old French defaute (12c.) "fault, defect, failure, culpability, lack, privation," from Vulgar Latin *defallita "a deficiency or failure," pp. of *defallere, from Latin de- "away" (see de-) + fallere "to deceive, to cheat; to put wrong, to lead astray, cause to be mistaken; to escape notice of, be concealed from" (see fail (v.)). The financial sense is first recorded 1858; the computing sense is from 1966.

Usage
"The government, having already reached its $16.4 trillion borrowing limit, will run out of way to cover its debts and might begin defaulting on government loans by late February or early March."

inaugural
PRONUNCIATION
[ˌɪnjuˈɡərl]
DEFINITION
adjective:
1. of or pertaining to an inauguration: Harding's inaugural address.
2. marking the beginning of a new venture, series, etc.: the inaugural run of the pony express.
noun:
3. an address, as of a president, at the beginning of a term of office.
4. an inaugural ceremony: to attend the presidential inaugural.

ETymology
1680s (adj.), from Fr. inaugural (17c.), from inaugurer "to inaugurate" (see inauguration). The noun meaning "an inaugural address" is recorded from 1832, American English.

Usage
"The Presidential Inaugural Committee requests the honor of your presence to participate in the inauguration of Barack H. Obama."

"The Money Project auction will take place in February. This is not the first time an auction has been held in Mr. Eng’s class so it cannot be called an ‘inaugural’ event."

innovate
PRONUNCIATION
[ˌɪnəˈvɛt]
DEFINITION
verb (used without object):
1. to introduce something new; make changes in anything established.
verb (used with object):
2. to introduce (something new) for or as if for the first time: to innovate a computer operating system.
3. Archaic. to alter.
innovative
PRONUNCIATION
[in uh veyt tiv]
adjective: tending to innovate or characterized by innovation.
1540s, "introduce as new," from L. innovatus, pp. of innovare "to renew, restore; to change," from in- "into" (see in- (2)) + novus "new" (see new). Meaning "make changes in something established" is from 1590s.

USAGE
“We understand that many of you will choose to celebrate at home in your communities, so we are pleased to once again offer innovative ways for you to participate alongside your fellow Americans, wherever you are.”

“The Spanish Empire made the mistake of not being innovative. They didn’t invent or create new products to sell. They didn’t think of new ways to make life better in Spain. They just used the tons of gold from the New World and minted gold and silver coins. The economy of the Spanish Empire was obliterated because of this.”

legacy
PRONUNCIATION
[_leg-uh-see]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. Law. a gift of property, especially personal property, as money, by will; a bequest.
2. anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor: the legacy of ancient Rome.
3. an applicant to or student at a school that was attended by his or her parent.
adjective:
4. of or pertaining to old or outdated computer hardware, software, or data that, while still functional, does not work well with up-to-date systems.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., "body of persons sent on a mission," from O.Fr. legatie "legate's office," from M.L. legatia, from L. legatus "ambassador, envoy," noun use of pp. of legare "appoint by a last will, send as a legate"

USAGE
“To honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., the President, Vice President and their families will participate in service projects in Washington D.C., and they will be joined by Americans in communities across the country.”

Examples of service projects: http://www.wwpea.net/wwpeacares.htm

commemorate
PRONUNCIATION
[kuh-mem-uh-reyt]

DEFINITION
verb (used with object), com·mem·o·rat·ed, com·mem·o·rat·ing.
1. to serve as a memorial or reminder of: The monument commemorates the signing of the declaration of independence.
2. to honor the memory of by some observance: to commemorate the dead by a moment of silence; to commemorate Bastille Day.
3. to make honorable mention of.

commemorative
PRONUNCIATION
[kuh-mem-uh-rey-tiv]
adjective:
1. serving to commemorate: a commemorative monument; a commemorative dinner.
2. (of a coin, medal, or postage stamp) issued to commemorate a historical event, to honor the memory of a personage, etc.

ETYMOLOGY
_1590s, from Latin *commemoratus*, pp. of *commemorare* "bring to remembrance" (see *commemoration*). Related: *Commemorated; commemorates; commemorating.*

USAGE
“Please note that this is a *commemorative* invitation, it is not an actual ticket.”

**endeavor (also endeavour)**
**PRONUNCIATION**
[en-de-ver]

**DEFINITION**
verb (used without object):
1. to exert oneself to do or effect something; make an effort; strive: *We must constantly endeavor if we are to succeed.*

verb (used with object):
2. to attempt; try: *He endeavors to keep things neat in his apartment.*
3. *Archaic.* to attempt to achieve or gain.

noun:
4. a strenuous effort; attempt.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., "pains taken to attain an object," lit. "in duty," from phrase *put (oneself) in dever* "make it one's duty" (a partial translation of O.Fr. *mettre en deveir* "put in duty"), from O.Fr. *dever* "duty," from L. *debere* "to owe" (see debt).

USAGE
“To *endeavor* with a task, to persist and not give in or give up, to improve yourself through your educated efforts…that is how to be considered special and unique.”

**income inequality**
**PRONUNCIATION**
[in-kuhm in-i-kwol-i-tee]

**DEFINITION**
noun: A measurement of the distribution of income that highlights the gap between individuals or households making most of the income in a given country and those making very little. From 1980 to 2010, income inequality in the U.S. increased. The top 20% of earners in the U.S. in 2010 earned almost 50% of the total income while the bottom 15% earned less than 4%.

ETYMOLOGY
c.1300, "entrance, arrival," lit. "what enters," perhaps a noun use of the late Old English verb *incuman* "come in," from *in* (adv.) + *cuman* "to come" (see come). Meaning "money made through business or labor" (i.e., "that which 'comes in' as a product of work or business") first recorded c.1600.

early 15c., "difference of rank or dignity," from O.Fr. *inequalité* (14c.) and directly from M.L. *inaequalitas*, from L. *inaequalis* "unequal," from in- "not, opposite of" (see in- (1)) + *aequalis* "equal" (see equal).

USAGE
“For all the talk about **income inequality** in the United States, there is too little recognition of education's role in the problem.”

**flourish**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌflur-iʃ]

**DEFINITION**

verb:
1. to be in a vigorous state; thrive: *a period in which art flourished.*
2. to be in its or in one's prime; be at the height of fame, excellence, influence, etc.
3. to be successful; prosper.
4. to grow luxuriantly, or thrive in growth, as a plant.
5. to make dramatic, sweeping gestures: *Flourish more when you act out the king's great death scene.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

c.1300, "to blossom, grow," from O.Fr. floriss-, stem of florir "blossom, flower, bloom, flourish," from L. florere "to bloom, blossom, flower," figuratively "to flourish, be prosperous," from flos "a flower" (see flora).

**USAGE**

“On average, students don't know the words they need to **flourish** as learners, earners or citizens.”

**ballyhoo**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌbæl-ɛ-hoo]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. a clamorous and vigorous attempt to win customers or advance any cause; blatant advertising or publicity.
2. clamor or outcry.

**ETYMOLOGY**

"publicity, hype," 1908, from circus slang, "a short sample of a sideshow" (1901), of unknown origin. There is a village of Ballyhooly in County Cork, Ireland. In nautical lingo, ballahou or ballahoo (1867, perhaps 1836) meant "an ungainly vessel," from Spanish balahu "schooner."

**USAGE**

“Yes, we should instruct students in science, technology, engineering and math, the much-**ballyhooed** STEM subjects—but only after equipping them with a base of wide general knowledge and vocabulary.”

**gist**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[jist]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. the main or essential part of a matter: *What was the gist of his speech? What is the gist of learning all of these vocabulary words?*
2. the ground of a legal action.

**ETYMOLOGY**
"the real point" (of a law case, etc.), from Anglo-Fr. legalese phrases, e.g. *cest action gist* "this action lies," meaning "this case is sustainable by law," from O.Fr. *gist en* "it consists in, it lies in" (third person singular present indicative of *gésir* "to lie"), from L. *iacet* "it lies." Extended sense of "essence" first recorded 1823.

**USAGE**

“They do so by guessing new meanings within the overall *gist* of what they are hearing or reading. And understanding the *gist* requires background knowledge.”

**probe**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[_prohb]  

**DEFINITION**

verb:
1. to search into or examine thoroughly; question closely: *to probe one's conscience.*  
2. to examine or explore with a probe.  

noun:
3. a slender surgical instrument for exploring the depth or direction of a wound, sinus, or the like.

**ETYMOLOGY**

early 15c., "instrument for exploring wounds, etc.,” also "an examination," from M.L. *proba* "examination," in L.L. "test, proof," from L. *probare* (see prove). Meaning "act of probing" is 1890, from the verb; figurative sense of "penetrating investigation" is from 1903. Meaning "small, unmanned exploratory craft" is attested from 1953.

**USAGE**

“Analyses of schoolbooks between 1940 and 1960 show a marked dilution of subject matter and vocabulary. Little surprise, then, that students began scoring lower on tests that *probed* knowledge and vocabulary size.”

**cumulative**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[_kyoo-myuh-luh-tiv]  

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. increasing or growing by accumulation or successive additions: *the cumulative effect of one rejection after another.*  
2. formed by or resulting from accumulation or the addition of successive parts or elements.  
3. of or pertaining to interest or dividends that, if not paid when due, become a prior claim for payment in the future: *cumulative preferred stocks.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

c.1600, from L. *cumulatus*, pp. of *cumulare* "to heap," from *cumulus* "heap" (see *cumulus*) + -ive.

**USAGE**

“Students would be better off gaining knowledge by studying real subject matters in a sensible, *cumulative* sequence.”

**withdrawn**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[_with-drawn]
DEFINITION
verb:
1. past participle of withdraw.
adjective:
2. removed from circulation, contact, competition, etc.
3. shy; retiring; reticent.

ETYMOLOGY
1175–1225; Middle English withdrawn.

USAGE
“A University of Texas study that says hydraulic natural gas fracturing is safe has been withdrawn, and its author has retired and left the university.”

taint

PRONUNCIATION
[_teynt]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a trace of something bad, offensive, or harmful.
2. a trace of infection, contamination, or the like.
3. a trace of dishonor or discredit.
4. Obsolete. color; tint.
verb (used with object):
5. to modify by or as if by a trace of something offensive or deleterious.
6. to infect, contaminate, corrupt, or spoil.
7. to sully or tarnish (a person's name, reputation, etc.).
8. Obsolete. to color or tint.

ETYMOLOGY
1570s, "to corrupt, contaminate," also "to trouch, tinge, imbue slightly" (1590s), from M.E. teynten "to convict, prove guilty" (late 14c.), partly from O.Fr. ataint, pp. of ataindre "to touch upon, seize" (see attainder). Also from Anglo-Fr. teinter "to color, dye" (early 15c.), from O.Fr. teint (12c.), pp. of teindre "to dye, color," from L. tingere (see tincture).

USAGE
“The fracking study is now a black eye to the University of Texas after an independent review of national experts found it scientifically unsound and tainted by conflicts of interest.”

conflict of interest

PRONUNCIATION
[_k_u_h_n_-f_l_i_k_t uhv in-ter-ist]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. the circumstance of a public officeholder, business executive, or the like, whose personal interests might benefit from his or her official actions or influence: The senator placed his stocks in trust to avoid possible conflict of interest.
2. the circumstance of a person who finds that one of his or her activities, interests, etc., can be advanced only at the expense of another of them.
ETYMOLOGY
_early 15c., from L. conflictus, pp. of confligere "to strike together, be in conflict," from com- "together" (see com-) + fligere "to strike" (see afflict). The noun also dates from early 15c. Psychological sense of "incompatible urges in one person" is from 1859 (hence conflicted, pp. adj.); Phrase conflict of interest was in use by 1743.

USAGE
“The fracking study is now a black eye to the University of Texas after an independent review of national experts found it scientifically unsound and tainted by conflicts of interest.”

scathing
PRONUNCIATION
[_s_k_e_y - t_h_i_n_g_]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. bitterly severe, as a remark: a scathing review of the play.
2. harmful, injurious, or searing.

ETYMOLOGY
_ c. 1 2 0 0 , from O. N. skáda "to hurt, injure," from P. Gmc. *skath- (cf. O. E. sceapian "to hurt, injure," O. Fris. skethia, M. Du. scaden, Du. schaden, O. H. G. scadon, Ger. schaden, Goth. scapjan "to injure, damage"), from PIE root *sket- "to injure." Only cognate outside Germanic seems to be in Gk. a-skethes "unharmed, unscathed." Survives mostly in its negative form, unscathed, and in figurative meaning "sear with invective or satire" (1852, usually as scathing) which developed from the sense of "scar, scorch" used by Milton in "Paradise Lost" i. 613 (1667).

USAGE
“The author of the study, Dr. Charles Groat, retired in the wake of the scathing review, and the university announced that Dr. Raymond Orbach, head of the university's Energy Institute that released the study, has resigned his position.”

c contrary
PRONUNCIATION
[_k_o_n-trer-ee_]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. opposite in nature or character; diametrically or mutually opposed: contrary to fact; contrary propositions.
2. opposite in direction or position: departures in contrary directions.
3. being the opposite one of two: I will make the contrary choice.
4. unfavorable or adverse.
5. perverse; stubbornly opposed or willful.

noun:
6. something that is contrary or opposite: to prove the contrary of a statement.
7. either of two contrary things.
8. Logic. a proposition so related to another proposition that both may not be true though both may be false, as with the propositions “All judges are male,” and “No judges are male.”

adverb:
9. in opposition; oppositely; counter: to act contrary to one's own principles.

Idioms:
10. by contraries, contrary to expectation.
11. on the contrary,
   a. in opposition to what has been stated.
   b. from another point of view: On the contrary, there may be some who would agree with you.
12. to the contrary,
   a. to the opposite effect: I believe he is innocent, whatever they may say to the contrary.
   b. to a different effect.

ETYMOLOGY
mid-14c., from Anglo-Fr. contrarie, from L. contrarius "opposite, opposed," from contra "against" (see contra).

USAGE
“The original fracking study concluded that hydraulic fracturing was safe, the danger of water contamination low and suggestions to the contrary mostly media bias.”

controversy
PRONUNCIATION
[_kon-truh-vur-see]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a prolonged public dispute, debate, or contention; disputation concerning a matter of opinion.
2. contention, strife, or argument.

controversial
[_k_o_n-_t_r_u_h-_v_u_r-_s_h_u_h_l_]

adjective:
1. of, pertaining to, or characteristic of controversy; polemical: a controversial book.
2. subject to controversy; debatable: a controversial decision.
3. given to controversy; disputatious.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., from O.Fr. controversie or directly from L. controversia, from controversus "turned in an opposite direction, disputed, turned against," from contra- "against" (see contra) + versus

USAGE
“Robert Siegel talks to Sports Illustrated senior writer Michael Rosenberg about a controversial decision by the basketball coach of the San Antonio Spurs.”

sanctions
PRONUNCIATION
[_s_a_n_g_k-_s_h_u_h_ns]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. authoritative permission or approval, as for an action.
2. something that serves to support an action, condition, etc.
3. something that gives binding force, as to an oath, rule of conduct, etc.
4. Law.
   a. a provision of a law enacting a penalty for disobedience or a reward for obedience.
   b. the penalty or reward.
5. International Law: action by one or more states toward another state calculated to force it to comply with legal obligations.

ETYMOLOGY
1560s, "confirmation or enactment of a law," from L. sanctionem (nom. sanctio) "act of decreeing or ordaining." In international diplomacy, 1919, plural of sanction (n.) in the sense of "part or clause of a law which spells out the penalty for breaking it" (1650s).

USAGE
“Even so, NBA commissioner David Stern is threatening the Spurs with sanctions. ‘Not playing those stars,’ he said, ‘was an unacceptable decision.’”

forfeit
PRONUNCIATION
[fawr-fit]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. something lost or given up as a penalty for a fault, mistake, etc
2. the act of losing or surrendering something in this manner
3. law something confiscated as a penalty for an offence, breach of contract, etc
4. (sometimes plural)
   a. a game in which a player has to give up an object, perform a specified action, etc, if he commits a fault
   b. an object so given up
verb:
5. to lose or be liable to lose in consequence of a mistake, fault, etc
   a. to confiscate as punishment
   b. to surrender (something exacted as a penalty)

ETYMOLOGY
_c.1300, "misdeed," from O.Fr. forfait "crime, punishable offense" (12c.), originally pp. of forfaire "transgress," from for- "outside, beyond" (from L. foris; see foreign) + faire "to do" (from L. facere; see factitious). Translating M.L. foris factum. Sense shifted mid-15c. from the crime to the penalty: "something to which the right is lost through a misdeed." As an adjective from late 14c., from O.Fr. forfait.

USAGE
“Well, that would be pretty laughable since they had a lead, I think, with two mintues left. So it’s kind of hard to argue that they forfeited it.”

hypocrisy
PRONUNCIATION
[hi-pok-ruh-see]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a pretense of having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs or principles, etc., that one does not really possess.
2. a pretense of having some desirable or publicly approved attitude, but not behaving in a manner consistent with one’s stated beliefs.
3. an act or instance of hypocrisy.

**ETYMOLOGY**
c.1200, *ipocrisie*, from O.Fr. *ypocrisie*, from L.L. *hypocrisis*, from Gk. *hypokrisis* "acting on the stage, pretense," from *hypkrinesthai* "play a part, pretend," also "answer," from *hypo-* "under" (see sub-) + middle voice of *krinein* "to sift, decide" (see *crisis*). The sense evolution in Attic Greek is from "separate gradually" to "answer" to "answer a fellow actor on stage" to "play a part." The h- was restored in English 16c.

Hypocrisy is the art of affecting qualities for the purpose of pretending to an undeserved virtue. Because individuals and institutions and societies most often live down to the suspicions about them, hypocrisy and its accompanying equivocations underpin the conduct of life. Imagine how frightful truth unvarnished would be. [Benjamin F. Martin, "France in 1938," 2005]

**USAGE**
“T’im not sure why they ended up playing four games in five nights on the road. But, you know what? That does affect the quality of play and that’s where the hypocrisy of the NBA comes in. They’re getting mad at the Spurs for saying, ‘We’re not putting our best product on national television.’ Well, you know what? When you ask guys to play four games in four cities in five nights, you’re not going to get your best product anyway because they’re going to get into town at 3 A.M. They’re going to be wiped out. It’s like any other business travel. You forget what city you’re in. You’re not as sharp as you should be.”

*modus operandi* ("M.O.")
**PRONUNCIATION**
[_m_o_h-_d_u_h_s_ _o_p_-u_h_-r_a_n_-d_e_e_]

**DEFINITION**
noun: mode or method or way of operating or working.

**ETYMOLOGY**
"way of doing or accomplishing," 1650s, Latin, lit. “mode of operating” (see *modus*). Abbreviation “m.o.” is attested from 1955.

**USAGE**
“Well, he’s not really one to say, ‘I was wrong and my ego got in the way.’ That’s not really been his M.O. over the years.”

*schadenfreude*
**PRONUNCIATION**
[_shahd-n-froi-duh_]

**DEFINITION**
noun: satisfaction or pleasure felt at someone else's misfortune.

**ETYMOLOGY**
"malicious joy in the misfortunes of others," 1922, German, lit. "damage-joy," from *schaden* "damage, harm, injury" (see *scathe*) + *freude*, from O.H.G. *frewida* "joy," from *fro* "happy," lit. "hopping for joy," from P.Gmc. *frawa-* (see *frolic*).

**USAGE**
“And Petraeus himself, while he has a very large body of followers and loyal acolytes, was also disliked by a lot of more traditional generals. They saw him as being too much of a showboat; too much of an intellectual; taking credit for things too much. And this - there - I am quite positive that there is quite a lot of schadenfreude going on in certain circles of the Army, at this point.”

“There were a whole bay of various speakers, one of whom said that the way to achieve success was to eliminate the word 'impossible' from your vocabulary. And this was really the idea that you should just refuse to acknowledge that failure can happen. So it was with a certain sort of schadenfreude, I'm afraid, that I discovered later on that the business that he ran had gone bankrupt operating along these principles.”

“After two years of misguided leadership that resulted in staff alienation, bureaucratic paperwork, and countless academic boondoggles, I felt a sense of schadenfreude when she announced that she had ‘voluntarily’ decided to resign to pursue her graduate studies.”

in stitches
PRONUNCIATION
[in stich-iz]

DEFINITION
idiom:
convulsed with laughter: The comedian had us in stitches all evening.

ETYMOLOGY
Sense of "amusing person or thing" is from 1968, from the notion of laughing so much that one gets stitches of pain (cf. verbal expression to have (someone) in stitches, 1935).

USAGE
“Mia said I can share a story that she relayed to me the other night over dinner. It had me in stitches:”

“When the nation's second lady was introducing her husband in New Hampshire, the audience was in stitches after a certain gesture combined with her words took on a meaning she certainly didn't intend. The vice president, though, seemed to love it.”

“The book, 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' keeps kids of all ages in stitches.”

swag
PRONUNCIATION
[swag]

DEFINITION
verb - slang (for swagger):
1. to walk or strut with a defiant or insolent air.
2. to boast or brag noisily.

NOTE: “Swag” is an internet slang term often found in comments, discussion forums and image macros used as a synonym for “swagger,” a type of style or presence that exudes confidence and is sometimes interpreted as arrogance.

ETYMOLOGY
_1590, first recorded in Shakespeare ("Midsummer Night's Dream," III.i.79), probably a frequentative form of swag (v.). Related: Swaggered; swaggering. The noun is attested from 1725.
“Apparently ‘swag’ is short for ‘swagger.’ The kids add the word to their name or activity/club they are in (for ex., emilyswag or danceswag). – Mrs. P********


**knowledgeable**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[nol-i-juh-buhl]

**DEFINITION**

adjective: possessing or exhibiting knowledge, insight, or understanding; intelligent; well-informed; discerning; perceptive.

**ETYMOLOGY**

also knowledgeable, c.1600, "capable of being known, recognizable" (a sense now obsolete), from knowledge in its Middle English verbal sense + -able. The modern sense of "having knowledge, displaying knowledge" is from 1829 and probably a new formation.

**USAGE**

“Learning the definitions and spellings of new words is one of many ways to make yourself more knowledgeable about the world.”

“Opportunity and education are a part of becoming more knowledgeable, but those parts don’t mean a whole lot without choice...meaning, a person must choose to take advantage of the opportunity and choice that is available to them.”

**unprecedented**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[_uhn-pres-i-den-tid]  

**DEFINITION**

adjective: without previous instance; never before known or experienced; unexampled or unparalleled: an unprecedented event.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1620s, from un- (1) "not" + precedent. In common use from c.1760. precedent - early 15c., "case which may be taken as a rule in similar cases," from M.Fr. precedent, from L. praecedentum (nom. praecedens), prp. of praecedere "go before."

**USAGE**

“An unprecedented 13-foot surge of seawater — 3 feet above the previous record — gushed into Gotham, inundating tunnels, subway stations and the electrical system that powers Wall Street, and sent hospital patients and tourists scrambling for safety.”

“NCAA Hits Penn State With Unprecedented Penalties, including: banning the team from bowl games for the next four years, stripping it of all victories between 1998 and 2011 and fining the school $60 million.”
“Lance Armstrong announced Tuesday that he will come out of retirement to try for an unprecedented eighth victory at the Tour de France.” - September 10, 2008

anoint
PRONUNCIATION
[uh-noint]

DEFINITION
verb (used with object):
1. to rub or sprinkle on; apply an unguent, ointment, or oily liquid to.
2. to smear with any liquid.
3. to consecrate or make sacred in a ceremony that includes the token applying of oil: He anointed the new high priest.
4. to dedicate to the service of God.

ETYMOLOGY
c.1300 (implied in anointing), from O.Fr. enoint "smeared on," pp. of enoindre "smear on," from L. inunguere "to anoint," from in- "on" + unguere "to smear." Originally in reference to grease or oil smeared on for medicinal purposes; its use in the Coverdale Bible in reference to Christ (cf. The Lord's Anointed) has spiritualized the word.

USAGE
“Alfred Morris, the sixth-round draft pick who was anointed the Washington Redskins surprise starter and is currently tied for first in the NFC in rushing touchdowns, is still driving his 1991 Mazda 626 to work.”

amenity
PRONUNCIATION
[_uh-men-i-tee]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. an agreeable way or manner; courtesy; civility: the graceful amenities of society.
2. any feature that provides comfort, convenience, or pleasure: The house has a swimming pool, two fireplaces, and other amenities.
3. the quality of being pleasing or agreeable in situation, prospect, disposition, etc.; pleasantness: the amenity of the Caribbean climate.
4. amenities, lavatory; bathroom: used as a euphemism.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., "quality of being pleasant or agreeable," from O.Fr. amenite, from L. amoenitatem (nom. amoenitas) "delightfulness, pleasantness," from amoenus "pleasant," perhaps related to amare "to love."

USAGE
“It's got all the amenities: cloth seats, power steering, tape deck, AM and FM radio and has the added bonus of being made the same year the Redskins last won a Super Bowl.”

sentimental
PRONUNCIATION
[_sen-tuh-men-tl]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. express[ive of or appealing to sentiment, especially the tender emotions and feelings, as love, pity, or nostalgia: a sentimental song.
2. pertaining to or dependent on sentiment: We kept the old photograph for purely sentimental reasons.
3. weakly emotional; mawkishly susceptible or tender: the sentimental Victorians.
4. characterized by or showing sentiment or refined feeling.

ETYMOLOGY
_1 late 14c., sentement, "personal experience, one's own feeling," from O.Fr. sentement (12c.), from M.L. sentimentum "feeling, affection, opinion," from L. sentire "to feel." Meaning "what one feels about something" (1630s) and modern spelling seem to be a re-introduction from French (where it was spelled sentiment by this time). A vogue word with wide application mid-18c., commonly "a thought colored by or proceeding from emotion" (1762), especially as expressed in literature or art. The 17c. sense is preserved in phrases such as my sentiments exactly.

USAGE
"It has some sentimental value to it now,' Morris told The Redskins Blog."

grounded
PRONUNCIATION
[ground-id]

DEFINITION
adjective: sensible and down-to-earth; having one's feet on the ground

ETYMOLOGY
"learned," late 14c.; "firmly fixed or established," 1540s, pp. adjective from ground (v.). Electrical sense is from 1889.

USAGE
"It just keeps me grounded, where I came from and all the hard work for me to get to this point. So that's what helps me."

pittance
PRONUNCIATION
[_pit-ns]

DEFINITION
noun:
_1. a small amount or share._
_2. a small allowance or sum, as of money for living expenses._
_3. a scanty income or remuneration._

ETYMOLOGY
early 13c., "pious donation to a religious house or order to provide extra food," from O.Fr. pittance "portion of food allowed a monk or poor person by a pious bequest," lit. "pity," from pitié (see pity). Meaning "small amount, portion" first recorded 1560s.

USAGE
“Even the lowest-paid NFL players, like Morris, make good money, though it's a pittance compared to some teammates.”
**conundrum**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[kuh-nuhn-druhm]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. a riddle, the answer to which involves a pun or play on words, as *What is black and white and read all over? A newspaper.*
2. a puzzling question or problem

**ETYMOLOGY**

1590s, Oxford University slang for "pedant," also "whim," etc., later (1790) "riddle, puzzle." Also spelled *quonundrum*. The sort of ponderous pseudo-Latin word that was once the height of humor in learned circles.

**USAGE**

“Fiscal cliff” is the popular shorthand term used to describe the *conundrum* that the U.S. government will face at the end of 2012, when the terms of the Budget Control Act of 2011 are scheduled to go into effect.”

**debt**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[det]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. something that is owed or that one is bound to pay to or perform for another: *a debt of $50.*
2. a liability or obligation to pay or render something: *My debt to her for advice is not to be discharged easily.*
3. the condition of being under such an obligation: *His gambling losses put him deeply in debt.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

late 13c., *dette*, from O.Fr. *dete*, from L. *debitum* "thing owed," neuter pp. of *debere* "to owe," originally, "keep something away from someone," from *de-* "away" + *habere* "to have."

**USAGE**

“A little *debt* is alright, but if a people create too much *debt* for themselves, they might not be able to pay the money back.”

**deficit**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[def-uh-sit]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. the amount by which a sum of money falls short of the required amount.
2. the amount by which expenditures or liabilities exceed income or assets.
3. a lack or shortage; deficiency.
4. a disadvantage, impairment, or handicap: *The team's major deficit is its poor pitching.*
5. a loss, as in the operation of a business.

**ETYMOLOGY**

_1782, from Fr. *déficit* (late 17c.), from L. *deficit* "it is wanting," an introductory word in clauses of inventory, third person singular present indicative of *deficere* "to be deficient"
"They can cancel some or all of the scheduled tax increases and spending cuts, which would add to the deficit and increase the odds that the United States could face a crisis similar to that which is occurring in Europe."

**procrastinate**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[proh-kras-tuh-neyt]

**DEFINITION**

verb (used without object):
1. to defer action; delay: *to procrastinate until an opportunity is lost*

verb (used with object):
2. to put off till another day or time; defer; delay.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1580s, from L. *procrastinare* (see *procrastination*).

**USAGE**

“**PROCRASTINATE**! Congress, the Senate, and the President can delay the December 31st deadline and decide to ‘deal with it later’ which is like a kid saying, ‘I’ll do my writing notebook entry right after dinner’…which then becomes, ‘I’ll do my writing notebook entry right before I go to bed’…which then becomes, ‘I’ll do it first thing when I wake up tomorrow morning,’…which then becomes, ‘On the bus ride on the way to school,’…which then becomes, ‘While I’m walking down the hallway to my classroom…’”

**gridlock**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[grid-lok]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. the stoppage of free vehicular movement in an urban area because key intersections are blocked by traffic.
2. the blocking of an intersection by vehicular traffic entering the intersection but unable to pass through it.
3. any situation in which nothing can move or proceed in any direction: *a financial gridlock due to high interest rates*.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1980 (n. – when Mr. Eng was in 6th grade!); 1987 (v.); from grid + lock.

**USAGE**

“This problem isn’t new, after all: lawmakers have had three years to address this issue, but Congress – mired in political **gridlock** – has largely put off the search for a solution rather than seeking to solve the problem directly.”

**compromise**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[kom-pruh-mahyz]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. a settlement of differences by mutual concessions; an agreement reached by adjustment of conflicting or opposing claims, principles, etc., by reciprocal modification of demands.
2. the result of such a settlement.
3. something intermediate between different things: *The split-level is a compromise between a ranch house and a multistoried house.*

4. an endangering, especially of reputation; exposure to danger, suspicion, etc.: *a compromise of one's integrity.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

early 15c., "a joint promise to abide by an arbiter's decision," from M.Fr. *compromis* (13c.), from L. *compromissus*, pp. of *compromittere* "to make a mutual promise" (to abide by an arbiter's decision), from *com-* "together" + *promittere*.

**USAGE**

“Presidents are elected not by national popular vote but by an 18th century constitutional *compromise* called the Electoral College.”

“He wanted to watch a love story. She wanted to watch an action movie. They decided to *compromise* and watch a comedy instead.”

**eligible**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˌeˈlɪdʒəbəl]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. fit or proper to be chosen; worthy of choice; desirable: *to marry an eligible bachelor.*
2. meeting the stipulated requirements, as to participate, compete, or work; qualified.
3. legally qualified to be elected or appointed to office: *eligible for the presidency.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

early 15c., "fit or proper to be chosen," from M.Fr. *eligible* "fit to be chosen" (14c.), from L.L. *eligibilis* "that may be chosen," from L. *eligere* "choose"

**USAGE**

“One group said Congress should do it; the other said it should be a national vote of *eligible* citizens.”

“In order to be *eligible* for Friday recess time, you must not have any trangressions for the week.”

**apportion**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[ˈæpərˌtoʊn]

**DEFINITION**

verb: to distribute or allocate proportionally; divide and assign according to some rule of proportional distribution: *to apportion expenses among the three men.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

1570s, from M.Fr. *apportionner*, from O.Fr. *aporcioner* "apportion, share out," from a- "to" + *portioner* "to divide into portions," from *portion* "share, portion"

**USAGE**

“In Maine and Nebraska, votes are *apportioned* by congressional districts.”

“Since their brother was sick and couldn’t go trick-or-treating, his two older siblings decided to *apportion* their candy equally between the three of them.”
**preside**

**PRONUNCIATION**
[pri-zahyrd]

**DEFINITION**
verb (used without object):
1. to occupy the place of authority or control, as in an assembly or meeting; act as president or chairperson.
2. to exercise management or control (usually followed by over): *The lawyer presided over the estate.*

**ETYMOLOGY**
1610s, from Fr. présider "preside over, govern" (15c.), from L. praesidere "stand guard, superintend," lit. "sit in front of," from praer "before" + sedere "to sit"

**USAGE**
“Vice President Joe Biden will **preside** and declare the winner.”

“As Mr. Eng was knocked unconscious by a mysterious falling dictionary, the kids had to decide as to who would **preside** over the classroom during the Halloween party (which took place in November).”

**incumbent**

**PRONUNCIATION**
[_in_- k_u_h_m-_b_u_h_n_t]

**DEFINITION**
noun:
1. the holder of an office: *The incumbent was challenged by a fusion candidate.*
2. British. a person who holds an ecclesiastical benefice.

**ETYMOLOGY**
early 15c., "person holding a church position," from M.L. incumbentem (nom. incumbens) "holder of a church position," noun use of prp. of incumbere "to obtain or possess," from L. incumbere "recline on," figuratively "apply oneself to," from in- "on" + -combere "lie down," related to cubare "to lie."

**USAGE**
“Will it be the **incumbent**, Barack Obama? Or will it be the challenger, Mitt Romney?”

“The mayor of Plainsboro, NJ, Peter Cantu, has been the **incumbent** for more than 30 years.”

**populous**

**PRONUNCIATION**
[pop-yuh-luhs]

**DEFINITION**
adjective:
1. full of residents or inhabitants, as a region; heavily populated.
2. jammed or crowded with people: *There's no more populous place than Times Square on New Year's Eve.*
3. forming or comprising a large number or quantity: *Because of epidemics the tribes are not nearly so populous as they once were.*

**ETYMOLOGY**
mid-15c., from L. populosus (c.160) "full of people, populous," from populus "people"
“That’s up nearly 3 percent from last year, or at least it was until a massive storm took shape and angled itself toward the most populous regions of the U.S.”

**anxious**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[angk-shuhs]

**DEFINITION**

adjective:
1. full of mental distress or uneasiness because of fear of danger or misfortune; greatly worried; solicitous: *Her parents were anxious about her poor health.*
2. earnestly desirous; eager (usually followed by an infinitive or for ): *anxious to please; anxious for our happiness.*
3. attended with or showing solicitude or uneasiness: *anxious forebodings.*

**ETYMOLOGY**

1620s, from L. *anxius* "solicitous, uneasy, troubled in mind" (also "causing anxiety, troublesome"), from *angere, anguire* "choke, squeeze," figuratively "torment, cause distress." The same image is in Serbo-Croatian *tjeskoba* "anxiety," lit. "tightness, narrowness."

**USAGE**

“Retailers are *anxiously* watching the weather as expected spending gets revised downward.”

**enthusiasm**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[en-thoo-zee-az-uhm]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. absorbing or controlling possession of the mind by any interest or pursuit; lively interest: *He shows marked enthusiasm for his studies.*
2. an occupation, activity, or pursuit in which such interest is shown: *Hunting is his latest enthusiasm.*
3. any of various forms of extreme religious devotion, usually associated with intense emotionalism and a break with orthodoxy.

**ETYMOLOGY**

_c.1600, from M.Fr. *enthusiasme* (16c.) and directly from L.L. *enthusiasmus*, from Gk. *enthusiasmos* "divine inspiration," from *enthouziaein* "be inspired or possessed by a god, be rapt, be in ecstasy," from *entheos* "divinely inspired, possessed by a god," from en "in" + *theos* "god." Acquired a derogatory sense of "excessive religious emotion" (1650s) under the Puritans; generalized sense of "fervor, zeal" (the main modern sense) is first recorded 1716.

**USAGE**

“A wet spring keeps shoppers in doors and an unusually hot summer can help deaden enthusiasm for new clothes and outdoor athletic goods (but does wonders for air conditioner sales and movie tickets).”

**anticipation**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[an-tis-uh-pey-shuhn]
DEFINITION
noun:
1. the act of anticipating or the state of being anticipated.
2. realization in advance; foretaste.
3. expectation or hope.
4. previous notion; slight previous impression.
5. intuition, foreknowledge, or prescience.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., from L. *anticipat*ōnem (nom. *anticipatio*) "preconception, preconceived notion," noun of action from pp. stem of *anticipare* "take care of ahead of time." Meaning "action of looking forward to" is from 1809.

USAGE
“Just the anticipation of a historic storm has people preparing for the weather event rather than stringing up orange lights and fake cobwebs.”

wet blanket
PRONUNCIATION
[wet blang-kit]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a blanket dampened with water so as to extinguish a fire.
2. a person or thing that dampens enthusiasm or enjoyment: Nobody asked Mr. Eng to join the group because he's such a wet blanket.

ETYMOLOGY
Wet blanket (1830) is from the notion of a person who throws a damper on social situations like a wet blanket smothers a fire.

USAGE
“Sandy is going to be a big wet blanket on retail’s October sales.”

metaphor
PRONUNCIATION
[met-uh-fawr]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance, as in “A mighty fortress is our God.”
2. something used, or regarded as being used, to represent something else; emblem; symbol.

ETYMOLOGY
late 15c., from M.Fr. *metaphore* (O.Fr. *metafore*, 13c.), and directly from L. *metaphora*, from Gk. *metaphora* "a transfer," especially of the sense of one word to a different word, lit. "a carrying over," from *metapherein* "transfer, carry over; change, alter; to use a word in a strange sense," from *meta-* "over, across" + *pherein* "to carry, bear."

USAGE
“But maybe there is a way to talk about politicians in a fresher, cleaner way — without talking about politics. Like — or as — poets do it. Speaking metaphorically.”
quintessential
PRONUNCIATION
[kwin-tuh-sen-shuhl]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. of the pure and essential essence of something: the quintessential Jewish delicatessen.
2. of or pertaining to the most perfect embodiment of something: the quintessential performance of the Brandenburg Concertos.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., in ancient and medieval philosophy, "pure essence, substance of which the heavenly bodies are composed," lit. "fifth essence," from M.Fr. quinte essence (14c.), from M.L. quinta essentia, from L. quinta, fem. of quintus "fifth" + essentia. Loan-translation of Gk. pempte ousia, the "ether" added by Aristotle to the four known elements (water, earth, fire, air) and said to permeate all things. Its extraction was one of the chief goals of alchemy. Sense of "purest essence" (of a situation, character, etc.) is first recorded 1580s.

USAGE
"'While people have very set opinions about what makes an 'authentic' red velvet cake," she says, 'even folks that don't like it can't deny that it's a quintessentially American cake with a very loyal following.'"

fortitude
PRONUNCIATION
[fawr-ti-tood]

DEFINITION
noun: mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously: Never once did her fortitude waver during that long illness.

ETYMOLOGY
_early 15c., from M.Fr. fortitude, from L. fortitudo "strength, force, firmness," from fortis "strong, brave."

USAGE
"Like the unusual structure of stone, glass and titanium, Hutchins says, the president 'is full of promise. But does his interior life have the fortitude to allow him to live up to his potential?''"

pedigree
PRONUNCIATION
[ped-i-gree]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. an ancestral line; line of descent; lineage; ancestry.
2. a genealogical table, chart, list, or record, especially of a purebred animal.
3. distinguished, excellent, or pure ancestry.
4. derivation, origin, or history: the pedigree of a word.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., "genealogical table or chart," from Anglo-Fr. pe de gru, a variant of O.Fr. pied de gru "foot of a crane," from L. pedem accusative of pes "foot"
"He has a high pedigree and is backed by bold promises. He works well with a nice steak but might overpower a more common dinner."

**unflappable**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[uhn-flap-uh-buhl]

**DEFINITION**

adjective: not easily upset or confused, especially in a crisis; imperturbable.

**ETYMOLOGY**


**USAGE**

“And Obama, Weingarten says, is Jughead Jones from Archie comics — ‘cool, **unflappable**; existentially disconnected from the passions of ordinary men.’"

**malarkey**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[muh-lahr-kee]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
speech or writing designed to obscure, mislead, or impress; insincere or foolish talk

**ETYMOLOGY**

also malarky, "lies and exaggerations," 1924, American English, of unknown origin. It also is a surname.

**USAGE**

“So, folks, I’m not giving you the usual **malarkey** that every one of you are going to change the world, that everyone of you are going to become the Nobel laureates and the presidents and the corporate heads and the leaders of great organizations.”

**bunkum**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[buhng-kuhm]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. insincere speechmaking by a politician intended merely to please local constituents.
2. insincere talk; claptrap; humbug.

**ETYMOLOGY**

"nonsense," 1900, short for bunkum, phonetic spelling of Buncombe, a county in North Carolina. The usual story of its origin is this: At the close of the protracted Missouri statehood debates, on Feb. 25, 1820, N.C. Representative Felix Walker began what promised to be a "long, dull, irrelevant speech," and he resisted calls to cut it short by saying he was bound to say something that could appear in the newspapers in the home district and prove he was on the job. "I shall not be speaking to the House," he confessed, "but to Buncombe." Bunkum has been Amer.Eng. slang for "nonsense" since 1847.

**USAGE**
“Are you trying to say that doing more multiplication problems is causing you to become worse at multiplication? That’s a lot of bunkum!”

**hogwash**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[hawg-wosh]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. refuse given to hogs; swill.
2. any worthless stuff.
3. meaningless or insincere talk, writing, etc.; nonsense; bunk.

**ETYMOLOGY**

_mid-15c., "slops fed to pigs," from hog (n.) + wash (n.). Extended to "cheap liquor" (1712) then to "inferior writing" (1773).

**USAGE**

“Simply wear the ‘Flex Belt,’ and the electrical current from the ‘Electronic Muscle Stimulator’ will melt away fat from your midsection leaving the wearer with rock hard ab muscles? Now THAT is a big bunch of hogwash!”

**nonsense**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[non-sens]

**DEFINITION**

noun:
1. words or language having little or no sense or meaning.
2. conduct, action, etc., that is senseless, foolish, or absurd: to have tolerated enough nonsense.
3. impudent, insubordinate, or otherwise objectionable behavior: He doesn't have to take that nonsense from you.
4. something absurd or fatuous: the utter nonsense of such a suggestion.
5. anything of trifling importance or of little or no use.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1610s, from non- + sense; perhaps influenced by Fr. nonsens.

**USAGE**

“Do you mean to tell me that a middle school student needs the new iPhone 5 because it will allow kids to perform better research for school projects? That’s just plain nonsense if you ask any reasonable adult…or middle school student. Very little ‘research’ will be done…unless you’re writing a report on ‘texting.’”

**hooey**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[hoo-e-e]

**DEFINITION**

interjection:
1. (used to express disapproval or disbelief): Hooey! You know that's not true.

noun:
2. silly or worthless talk, writing, ideas, etc.; nonsense; bunk: That's a lot of hooey and you know it!
ETYMOLOGY
"nonsense, foolishness," 1922, American English slang, of unknown origin.

USAGE
“Everybody has a position. They’re either for climate change or they say it’s a load of hooey. I assume that those who are saying that it’s a load of hooey only mean that mankind is not causing global warming, and that they aren’t refuting that ice ages have existed and are cyclical.”

contribute
PRONUNCIATION
[kuhn-trib-yoot]

DEFINITION
verb:
1. to give (money, time, knowledge, assistance, etc.) to a common supply, fund, etc., as for charitable purposes.
2. to furnish (an original written work, drawing, etc.) for publication: to contribute stories to a magazine.

ETYMOLOGY
1520s, from L. contributus, pp. of contribuere "to bring together, add, unite, collect, contribute."

USAGE
“By clicking ‘Contribute,’ I agree that the following statements are true and accurate: 1. This contribution is made from my personal funds and is not drawn on an account maintained by a corporation, labor union, or national bank.”

obliterate
PRONUNCIATION
[uh-blit-uh-reyt]

DEFINITION
verb:
1. to remove or destroy all traces of; do away with; destroy completely.
2. to blot out or render undecipherable (writing, marks, etc.); efface.

ETYMOLOGY
c.1600, from L. obliteratus, pp. of obliterate "cause to disappear, blot out, erase, efface," figuratively "cause to be forgotten," from ob "against" + littera (also litera) "letter, script"; abstracted from phrase literas scribere "write across letters, strike out letters."

USAGE
“Right now the other side is trying to obliterate the hard work we’ve put in on the ground in this campaign by flooding the airwaves with factually inaccurate, negative attack ads.”

queue
PRONUNCIATION
[kyoo]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a braid of hair worn hanging down behind.
2. a file or line, especially of people waiting their turn.
3. Computers. a FIFO-organized sequence of items, as data, messages, jobs, or the like, waiting for action.

ETYMOLOGY
_15c., "tail of a beast" (heraldic term), from Fr. queue "a tail," from O.Fr. cue "tail," from L. coda (dialectal variant of cauda) "tail," of unknown origin. The Middle English metaphoric extension to "line of dancers" led to extended sense of "line of people, etc." (1837). Also used 18c. in sense of "braid of hair" (first attested 1748).

USAGE
“Take a small group walking tour of the Vatican Museums and St. Peter’s Basilica, and jump the queue by booking ahead. Our Skip-the-Line: Vatican Museums Walking Tour is one of the most popular tours from Rome.”

smitten
PRONUNCIATION
[smit-n]
DEFINITION
adjective:
1. struck, as with a hard blow.
2. grievously or disastrously stricken or afflicted.
3. very much in love.

ETYMOLOGY

USAGE
“I am smitten with this cinnamon. Simply the best. No more supermarket cinnamon for me…Very strong flavor and aroma. Love it, love it, love it.”

chaise lounge
PRONUNCIATION
[sheyz lawng]
DEFINITION
noun: a chair, with or without arms, for reclining, having a seat lengthened to form a complete leg rest and sometimes an adjustable back.

ETYMOLOGY
1701, "pleasure carriage," from Fr. chaise "chair" (15c.), variant of chaire due to 15c.-16c. Parisian accent habit of swapping of -r- and -s-, often satirized by French writers. French chair and chaise then took respectively the senses of "high seat, throne, pulpit" and "chair, seat." Chaise lounge (1800) is corruption of Fr. chaise longue "long chair," the second word confused in English with lounge.

USAGE
“Buy this Somers Peach Strap Patio Chaise Lounge today only…while supplies last!”

financial
PRONUNCIATION
DEFINITION
adjective:
1. pertaining to monetary receipts and expenditures; pertaining or relating to money matters; pecuniary: *financial operations*.
2. of or pertaining to those commonly engaged in dealing with money and credit.

ETYMOLOGY
c.1400, "an end, settlement, retribution," from M.Fr. *finance* "ending, settlement of a debt" (13c.), noun of action from *finer* "to end, settle a dispute or debt," from *fin*. Cf. M.L. *finis* "a payment in settlement, fine or tax."

USAGE
“A Mattress Fell Out of the Sky and Almost Killed a Guy in the *Financial* District”

facade
PRONUNCIATION
[fuh-sahd]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. *Architecture.*
   a. the front of a building, especially an imposing or decorative one.
   b. any side of a building facing a public way or space and finished accordingly.
2. a superficial appearance or illusion of something: *They managed somehow to maintain a facade of wealth.*

ETYMOLOGY
1650s, "front of a building," from Fr. *façade* (16c.), from It. *facciata*, from *faccia* "face," from V.L. *facia*

USAGE
“In New York City, we go about our lives knowing that, at any moment, something could randomly fall on us from above, be it a poorly installed air conditioner, a crumbling facade, a piece of construction material, or a cat.”

resigned
PRONUNCIATION
[ri-zahynd]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. submissive or acquiescent.
2. characterized by or indicative of an accepting, unwavering attitude: *Having told his daughter to clean her room fifteen times and having found it still messy, he was resigned to the fact that she was not going to listen to him.*

ETYMOLOGY
*late 14c., "act of resigning" (an office, etc.), from Fr. *résignation* (14c.), from M.L. *resignationem*, from L. *resignare*. Meaning "submission, acquiescence" is from 1640s.

USAGE
“We have mentally *resigned* ourselves to this possibility and have learned to push the ever-present threat it poses to the back of our minds, allowing us to function normally as productive members of society.”
unconscious
PRONUNCIATION
[uhn-kon-shuhs]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. not conscious; without awareness, sensation, or cognition.
2. temporarily devoid of consciousness.
3. not perceived at the level of awareness; occurring below the level of conscious thought: an unconscious impulse.
4. not consciously realized, planned, or done; without conscious volition or intent: an unconscious social slight.
5. not endowed with mental faculties: the unconscious stones.

ETYMOLOGY
1712, "unaware, not marked by conscious thought," from un- "not" + conscious. Meaning "temporarily insensible, knocked out" is recorded from 1860. In psychology, the noun the unconscious (1884) is a loan-translation of Ger. das Unbewusste.

USAGE
“This afternoon a freshman at Kings College was walking to the Broad Street J/Z station when a futon mattress fell from the sky and knocked him unconscious.”

scenario
PRONUNCIATION
[si-nair-ee-oh]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. an outline of the plot of a dramatic work, giving particulars as to the scenes, characters, situations, etc.
2. the outline or the manuscript of a motion picture or television program, giving the action in the order in which it takes place, the description of scenes and characters, etc.
3. an imagined or projected sequence of events, especially any of several detailed plans or possibilities: One scenario calls for doubling profits by increasing our advertising, the other by reducing costs.

ETYMOLOGY
1878, "sketch of the plot of a play," from It. scenario, from L.L. scenarius "of stage scenes," from L. scena "scene"

USAGE
“A falling mattress may represent one of the better scenarios, actually, as it at least provides you a great spot to rest and recover after you're knocked unconscious.”

autumnal
PRONUNCIATION
[aw-tuhm-nl]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. belonging to or suggestive of autumn; produced or gathered in autumn: autumnal colors.
2. past maturity or middle life.
ETYMOLOGY
1570s, from L. *autumnalis* "pertaining to autumn," from *autumnus*

USAGE
“Summer officially turns to fall today (Sept. 22), with the arrival of the *autumnal* equinox, marking the time of year when day and night are of equal lengths.”

equinox
PRONUNCIATION
[ee-kwuh-noks]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. the time when the sun crosses the plane of the earth's equator, making night and day of approximately equal length all over the earth and occurring about March 21 (vernal equinox or spring equinox) and September 22 (autumnal equinox).
2. either of the equinoctial points.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., from O.Fr. *equinoce* (12c.) or directly from M.L. *equinoxium* "equality of night (and day)," from L. *aequinoctium* "the equinoxes," from *aequus* "equal" (see *equal*) + *nox* (gen. *noctis*) "night"

USAGE
“Summer officially turns to fall today (Sept. 22), with the arrival of the autumnal *equinox*, marking the time of year when day and night are of equal lengths.”

stifling
PRONUNCIATION
[stahy-fling]

DEFINITION
adjective: suffocating; oppressively close: the stifling atmosphere of the cavern.

ETYMOLOGY
late 14c., "to choke, suffocate, drown," of uncertain origin, possibly an alteration of O.Fr. *estouffer* "to stifle, smother," which may be from a Germanic source (cf. O.H.G. *stopfen* "to plug up, stuff")

USAGE
“The underground kingdom was a gloomy place. At times it grew too *stifling* for Hades. He longed to breathe fresh air and feel the warm sun on his skin.”

valid
PRONUNCIATION
[val-id]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. sound; just; well-founded: *a valid reason*.
2. producing the desired result; effective: *a valid antidote for gloom*.
3. having force, weight, or cogency; authoritative.
4. legally sound, effective, or binding; having legal force: *a valid contract*. 
5. **Logic.** (of an argument) so constructed that if the premises are jointly asserted, the conclusion cannot be denied without contradiction.

**ETYMOLOGY**
1570s, "having force in law, legally binding," from M.Fr. *valide*, from L. *validus* "strong, effective," from *valere* "be strong"

**USAGE**
"Turning to Hades, he said, ‘You took Persephone without her mother’s consent. According to the laws of the world above, this marriage is not **valid**.’”

**misery**

**PRONUNCIATION**
[miz-uh-ree]

**DEFINITION**
noun:
1. wretchedness of condition or circumstances.
2. distress or suffering caused by need, privation, or poverty.
3. great mental or emotional distress; extreme unhappiness.
4. a cause or source of distress.
5. *Older Use.*
   a. a pain: a misery in my left side.
   b. rheumatism.
   c. Often, miseries. a case or period of despondency or gloom.

**ETYMOLOGY**
late 14c., "condition of external unhappiness," from O.Fr. *misere* "miserable situation, misfortune, distress" (12c.), from L. *miseria* "wretchedness," from *miser* (see miser). Meaning "condition of one in great sorrow or mental distress" is from 1530s.

**USAGE**
“A year passed and nothing on Earth grew. It was a year of hunger and misery. No one recognized the Great Goddess, wrapped in her cloak, weeping and waiting for the world to die of hunger.”

**violation**

**PRONUNCIATION**
[vahy-uh-ley-shuhn]

**DEFINITION**
noun:
1. the act of violating.
2. the state of being violated.
3. a breach, infringement, or transgression, as of a law, rule, promise, etc.: *He was fined for a traffic violation.* (Ha! How appropriate!)
4. desecration; profanation: the violation of a cemetery.

**ETYMOLOGY**
early 15c., from L. *violationem* (nom. violatio) "an injury, irreverence," from pp. stem of *violare* "to violate, treat with violence, outrage, dishonor," perhaps related to *vis* "violence, strength."

**USAGE**
“Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, City & County of Philadelphia, PARKING VIOLATION.”

**consequence**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[kon-si-kwens]

**DEFINITION**

_noun:_
1. the effect, result, or outcome of something occurring earlier: The accident was the consequence of reckless driving.
2. an act or instance of following something as an effect, result, or outcome.
3. the conclusion reached by a line of reasoning; inference.
4. importance or significance: a matter of no consequence.
5. importance in rank or position; distinction: a man of great consequence in art.

**ETYMOLOGY**

late 14c., "inference, conclusion," from O.Fr. consequence "result" (13c., Mod.Fr. conséquence), from L. consequentia, from consequentem (nom. consequens), prp. of consequí "to follow after," from com- "with" + sequi "to follow." Sense of "importance" (c.1600) is from notion of being "pregnant with consequences."

**USAGE**

“The ticket is the consequence of my choice to not follow the rules.”

**penalty**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[pen-l-tee]

**DEFINITION**

_noun:_
1. a punishment imposed or incurred for a violation of law or rule.
2. a loss, forfeiture, suffering, or the like, to which one subjects oneself by nonfulfillment of some obligation.
3. something that is forfeited, as a sum of money.
4. a disadvantage imposed upon one of the competitors or upon one side for infraction of the rules of a game, sport, etc.
5. consequence or disadvantage attached to any action, condition, etc.

**ETYMOLOGY**

1510s, from M.Fr. penalité, from M.L. poenalitatem (nom. poenalitas), from L. poenalis. The sporting sense is first recorded 1885.

**USAGE**

“The ticket says that you can pay the penalty online, so I went to their web page.”

**incentive**

**PRONUNCIATION**

[in-sen-tiv]

**DEFINITION**

_noun:_
1. something that incites or tends to incite to action or greater effort, as a reward offered for increased productivity.

_adjective:_
2. inciting, as to action; stimulating; provocative.

ETYMOLOGY
early 15c., from L.L. incentivum, noun use of neuter of Latin adjective incentivus "setting the tune" (in L.L. "inciting"), from pp. stem of incinere "strike up," from in- "in, into." Sense influenced by association with incendere "to kindle." The adjective use, in reference to a system of rewards meant to encourage harder work, first attested 1943 in jargon of the U.S. war economy; as a noun, in this sense, from 1948.

USAGE
“In other words, it costs you more to pay online. That isn’t a very good incentive to pay over the internet.”

cultivate
PRONUNCIATION
[kuhl-tuh-veyt]

DEFINITION
verb (used with object):
1. to prepare and work on (land) in order to raise crops; till.
2. to use a cultivator on.
3. to promote or improve the growth of (a plant, crop, etc.) by labor and attention.
4. to produce by culture: to cultivate a strain of bacteria.
5. to develop or improve by education or training; train; refine: to cultivate a singing voice.

ETYMOLOGY
early 17c., from M.L. cultivatus, pp. of cultivare, from L.L. cultivus "tilled," from L. cultus. Figurative sense of "improve by training or education" is from 1680s.

USAGE
“If we want our children to be caring and responsible, we need to intentionally cultivate in them these qualities.”

hardship
PRONUNCIATION
[hahrd-ship]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. a condition that is difficult to endure; suffering; deprivation; oppression: a life of hardship.
2. an instance or cause of this; something hard to bear, as a deprivation, lack of comfort, or constant toil or danger: They faced bravely the many hardships of frontier life.

ETYMOLOGY
_ c.1200, "quality of being hard," from hard + -ship. Meaning "disadvantage, suffering, privation" is c.1400.

USAGE
“I have not asked for a single program which did not cause one or all Americans some inconvenience, or some hardship, or some sacrifice.”

discipline
PRONUNCIATION
[dis-uh-plin]
DEFINITION
noun:
1. training to act in accordance with rules; drill: military discipline.
2. activity, exercise, or a regimen that develops or improves a skill; training: A daily stint at the typewriter is excellent discipline for a writer.
3. punishment inflicted by way of correction and training.
4. the rigor or training effect of experience, adversity, etc.: the harsh discipline of poverty.
5. behavior in accord with rules of conduct; behavior and order maintained by training and control: good discipline in an army.

ETYMOLOGY
early 13c., from O.Fr. descepline (l.l.c.)
"discipline, physical punishment; teaching; suffering; martyrdom," and directly from L. disciplina "instruction given, teaching, learning, knowledge," also "object of instruction, knowledge, science, military discipline," from discipulus (see disciple).

USAGE
“The imbalance shows up when parents attack teachers for disciplining their unruly children.” (NOTE: This is the verb form of the noun “discipline.”)

persevere
PRONUNCIATION
[pur-suh-veer]

DEFINITION
verb (used without object):
1. to persist in anything undertaken; maintain a purpose in spite of difficulty, obstacles, or discouragement; continue steadfastly; not give up.
2. to persist in speech, interrogation, argument, etc.; insist.

ETYMOLOGY
mid-14c., from O.Fr. perseverer, from L. perseverare "continue steadfastly, persist," from perseverus "very strict, earnest," from per- "very" + severus "strict"

USAGE
“They will need to work hard, delay gratification, make sacrifices, cooperate with others, and persevere through hardship.”

flabby
PRONUNCIATION
[flab-ee]

DEFINITION
adjective:
1. hanging loosely or limply, as flesh or muscles; flaccid.
2. having such flesh.
3. lacking strength or determination.
ETYMOLOGY
1690s, variant of flappy, which is recorded in the sense of "softly fleshy" from 1590s

USAGE
"Those who are intellectually, emotionally, and morally flabby will be at a real disadvantage."

achievement
PRONUNCIATION
[uh-cheev-muhnt]

DEFINITION
noun:
1. something accomplished, especially by superior ability, special effort, great courage, etc.; a great or heroic deed: his remarkable achievements in art.
2. act of achieving; attainment or accomplishment: the achievement of one's object.
3. Heraldry. The full display of the armorial bearings of an individual or corporation.

ETYMOLOGY
late 15c., "act of completing something," from M.Fr. achèvement "a finishing," noun of action from O.Fr. achever

USAGE
“The reward for saying no comes when our kids are the adults who know when to say no and when to say yes to themselves; who can delay gratification in order to accomplish greater achievements.”