6 Build Your Vocabulary

- **The SAT High-Frequency Word List**
- **The SAT Hot Prospects Word List**
- **The 3,500 Basic Word List**
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The more you study actual SAT critical reading questions, the more you realize one thing: *the key to doing well on the critical reading portions of SAT is a strong working vocabulary of college-level words.* And the key to building that strong working vocabulary can be summed up in one word: READ.

Read widely, read deeply, read daily. If you do, your vocabulary will grow. If you don't it won't.

Reading widely, however, may not always help you remember the words you read. You may have the words in your passive vocabulary and be able to recognize them when you see them in a context and yet be unable to define them clearly or think of synonyms for them. In addition, unless you have already begun to upgrade your reading to the college level, reading widely also may not acquaint you most efficiently with college-level words.

What are college-level words? In going through the preceding two chapters, you have examined dozens of questions taken from recently published SATs. Some of the words in these questions—*govern* and *tyrant*—have been familiar to you; others—*pundit* and *interlocutor*—have not. Still others—*husband* and *nip*—have looked familiar, but have turned out to be defined in unexpected ways. All these words belong in your college-level vocabulary; any of them may turn up when you take SAT.

Use the vocabulary and word parts lists in this chapter to upgrade your vocabulary to a college level. They are all excellent vocabulary building tools.

No matter how little time you have before you take SAT, you can familiarize yourself with the sort of vocabulary you will be facing on the test. First, look over the words on our SAT High-Frequency Word List, which you'll find on the following pages. Each of these words has appeared (as answer choices or as question words) from eight to forty times on SATs published in the past two decades.

Next, look over the words on our Hot Prospects List, which appears immediately after the High-Frequency List. Though these words don't appear as often as the high-frequency words do, when they do appear, the odds are that they're *key* words in questions. As such, they deserve your special attention.

Now you're ready to master the words on the High-Frequency and Hot Prospects Word Lists. First, check off those words you think you know. Then, look up all the words and their definitions in our 3,500 Basic Word List. Pay particular attention to the words you thought you knew. See whether any of them are defined in an unexpected way. If they are, make a special note of them. As you know from the preceding chapters, SAT often stumps students with questions based on unfamiliar meanings of familiar-looking words.

Use the flash cards in the back of this book and create others for the words you want to master. Work up memory tricks to help yourself remember them. Try using them on your parents and friends. Not only will going over these high-frequency words reassure you that you *do* know some SAT-type words, but also it may well help you on the actual day of the test. These words have turned up on recent tests; some of them may well turn up on the test you take.

The SAT High-Frequency Word List*

abridge
abstemious
abstract
abstruse
accessible
acclaim
acknowledge
adulation
adversary
adversity
advocate
aesthetic
affable
affirmation
alleviate
aloof
altruistic
ambiguous
ambivalence
analogous
anarchist
anecdote
animosity
antagonism
antidote
antiquated
apathy
appease
apprehension
arbitrary
archaic
arrogance
articulate
artifact
artisan
ascendancy
ascetic
aspire
astute
attribute (V)
augment
austere
authoritarian
autonomous
aversion
belie
benevolent
bolster
braggart
brevity
cajole
calculated
candor
capricious
censorious
censure
coercion
commemorate
compile
complacency
compliance
composure
comprehensive
concede
conciliatory
concise
concur
condone
conflagration
confound
consensus
constraint
contend
contentious
contract (V)
conviction
cordial
corroborate
credulity
criterion
cryptic
cursory
curtail
decorum
deference
degradation
delineate
denounce
deplore
depravity
deprecate
deride
derivative
despondent
detached
deterrent
detrimental
devious
devise
diffuse
digression
diligence
diminution
discerning
disclose
discordant
discount (V)
discrepancy
discriminating
disdain
disinclination
dismiss
disparage
disparity
disperse
disputatious
disseminate
dissent
divergent
doctrine
document (V)
dogmatic
dubious
duplicity
eclectic
egotism
elated
eloquence
elusive
embellish
emulate
endorse
enhance
enigma
enmity
ephemeral
equivocal
erroneous
erudite
esoteric
eulogy
euphemism
exacerbate
exalt
execute
exemplary
exemplify
exhaustive
exhilarating
exonerate
expedient
expedite
explicit
exploit (V)
extol
extraneous
extricate
exuberance
facilitate
fallacious
fanaticism
fastidious
feasible
fervor
flagrant
frivolous
frugality
furtive
garrulous
glutton
gratify
gratuitous
gravity
gregarious
guile
gullible
hamper (V)
hardy
haughtiness
hedonist
heresy
hierarchy
homogeneous
hypocritical
hypothetical
idiosyncrasy
illusory
immutable
impair
impeccable
impede
implausible
implement (V)
impudence
inadvertent
inane
incisive
incite
inclusive
incongruous
inconsequential
incorrigible
indict
indifferent
indiscriminate
induce
inert
ingenious
inherent
innate
innocuous
innovation
insipid
instigate
insularity
integrity
intervene
intimidate
intrepid
inundate
invert
ironic
lament
laud
lavish (ADJ)
lethargic
levity
linger
listless
lofty
malicious
marred
materialism
methodical
meticulous
miserly
mitigate
morose
mundane
negate
nonchalance
notoriety
novelty
nurture
obliterate
oblivion
obscure (V)
obstinate
ominous
opaque
opportunist
optimist
opulence
orator
ostentatious
pacifist
partisan
peripheral
perpetuate
pervasive
pessimism
phenomena
philanthropist
piety
placate
ponderous
pragmatic
preclude
precocious
predator
predecessor
presumptuous
pretentious
prevalent
prodigal
profane
profound
profusion
proliferation
prolific
provincial
proximity
prudent
qualified
quandary
ramble
rancor
ratify
rebuttal
recluse

recount
rectify
redundant
refute
relegate
remorse
renounce
repel
reprehensible
reprimand
reprove
repudiate
reserve (N)
resigned
resolution
resolve (N)
restraint
reticence
retract
reverent
rhetorical
rigor
robust
sage
sanction (V)
satirical
saturate
scanty
scrupulous
scrutinize
seclusion
servile
skeptic
sluggish
somber
sporadic
squander
stagnant
static (ADJ)
submissive
subordinate (ADJ)
subside
substantiate
succinct
superficial
superfluous
surpass
surreptitious
susceptible
sustain
sycophant
taciturn
temper (V)
tentative
terse
thrive
tranquillity
transient
trite
turbulence
turmoil
undermine
uniformity
unwarranted
usurp
vacillate
venerate
verbose
vigor
vilify
vindicate
virtuoso
volatile
whimsical
zealot

*This word list has been updated to include all released SAT exams through January 2002.

The SAT Hot Prospects Word List

abate
accolade
acquiesce
acrid
acrimony
aggregate (V)
amorphous
anachronistic
anomaly
antediluvian
antipathy
apocryphal
arable
ardent
assiduous
assuage
atrophy
audacious
avarice
avert
aviary
beguile
bequeath
bleak
blighted
bombastic
buttress
cacophonous
cardiologist
carping
certitude
charlatan
circumlocution
cliché
coalesce
colloquial
combustible
complementary
confluence
conjecture
converge
corrode
corrugated
culpable
debilitate
debunk
dehydrate
deleterious
depose
desiccate
diffidence
dilatory
discourse
discrepancy
disquiet
distend
dupe
ebullient
edify
efface
effervesce
elegy
elicit
elucidate
emaciated
emend
equanimity
equitable
evanescent
excerpt
fallow
falter
fathom (V)
fell (V)
fitful
florid
foolhardy
glacial
hackneyed
hyperbole
iconoclastic
ignominy
illicit
impecunious
impregnable
incidental
incontrovertible
indefatigable
indolent
ineffable
inexorable
insolvent
insuperable
intractable
irreproachable
jocular
labyrinth
laconic
laggard
lampoon
lassitude
lithe
lurid
luxuriant
meander
mercenary (ADJ)
mercurial
mirth
misanthrope
misnomer
mollify
mosaic
munificent
nefarious
nuance
obdurate
odious
ornate
pariah
parody
parsimony
paucity
penury
perfunctory
pernicious
pitfall
pithy
polemical
prattle
precarious
profligate (ADJ)
quagmire
quell
querulous
quiescent
rant
rarefy
raucous
ravenous
raze
recant
remission
replete
repugnant
rescind
respite
resplendent
savory
sedentary
soporific
spurious
spurn
steadfast
stolid
strident
stupefy
supplant
surfeit
swagger
tantamount
tenacity
terrestrial
threadbare
tirade
torpor
trepidation
trifling
truncate
unkempt
unprecedented
vaporize
viable
virulent
voluble
witticism

The 3,500 Basic Word List

The 3,500 Basic Word List begins on the following page. *Do not let this list overwhelm you*. You do not need to memorize every word.

The more than 3,500 words in this list have been compiled from various sources. They have been taken from the standard literature read by high school students throughout the country and from the many tests taken by high school and college students. Ever since this book first appeared in 1954, countless students have reported that working with this list has been of immense value in the taking of all kinds of college entrance and scholarship tests. It has been used with profit by people preparing for civil service examinations, placement tests, and promotional examinations in many industrial fields. Above all, it has been used with profit by people studying for SAT.

Even before the College Board began publishing its own SAT sample examinations, the Basic Word List was unique in its ability to reflect, and often predict, the actual vocabulary appearing on the SAT. Today, thanks to our ongoing research and computer analysis of published SAT materials, we believe our 3,500 Basic Word List is the best in the field.

For those of you who wish to work your way through the *entire* word list and feel the need for a plan, we recommend that you follow the procedure described below in order to use the lists and the exercises most profitably:

1. Allot a definite time each day for the study of a list.
2. Devote at least one hour to each list.
3. First go through the list looking at the flagged High-Frequency and Hot Prospects words and the short, simple-looking words (7 letters at most). Mark those you don't know. In studying, pay particular attention to them.
4. Go through the list again looking at the longer words. Pay particular attention to words with more than one meaning and familiar-looking words that have unusual definitions that come as a surprise to you. Study these secondary definitions.
5. List unusual words on index cards that you can shuffle and review from time to time, along with the flash cards in this book.
6. Use the illustrative sentences in the list as models and make up new sentences of your own.

For each word, the following is provided:

1. The word (printed in heavy type).
2. Its part of speech (abbreviated).
3. A brief definition.
4. A sentence illustrating the word's use.
5. Whenever appropriate, related words are provided, together with their parts of speech.

The word lists are arranged in strict alphabetical order. In each word list, High-Frequency words are marked with a square bullet (■), Hot Prospects with a round one (●).

Basic Word List

Word List 1 abase-adroit

abase V. lower; humiliate. Defeated, Queen Zenobia was forced to *abase* herself before the conquering Romans, who made her march in chains before the emperor in the procession celebrating his triumph. abasement, N.

abash V. embarrass. He was not at all *abashed* by her open admiration.

● **abate** V. subside; decrease, lessen. Rather than leaving immediately, they waited for the storm to *abate*. abatement, N.

abbreviate V. shorten. Because we were running out of time, the lecturer had to *abbreviate* her speech.

abdicate V. renounce; give up. When Edward VIII *abdicated* the British throne to marry the woman he loved, he surprised the entire world.

abduction N. kidnapping. The movie *Ransom* describes the attempts to rescue a multimillionaire's son after the child's *abduction* by kidnappers. abduct, V.

aberrant N. abnormal or deviant. Given the *aberrant* nature of the data, we doubted the validity of the entire experiment. also N.

abet V. aid, usually in doing something wrong; encourage. She was unwilling to *abet* him in the swindle he had planned.

abeyance N. suspended action. The deal was held in *abeyance* until her arrival.

abhor V. detest; hate. She *abhorred* all forms of bigotry. abhorrence, N.

abject ADJ. wretched; lacking pride. On the streets of New York the homeless live in *abject* poverty, huddling in doorways to find shelter from the wind.

abjure V. renounce upon oath. He *abjured* his allegiance to the king. abjuration, N.

ablution N. washing. His daily *ablutions* were accompanied by loud noises that he humorously labeled "Opera in the Bath."

abnegation N. repudiation; self-sacrifice. Though Rudolph and Duchess Flavia loved one another, their love was doomed, for she had to marry the king; their act of *abnegation* was necessary to preserve the kingdom.

abolish V. cancel; put an end to. The president of the college refused to *abolish* the physical education requirement. abolition, N.

abominable ADJ. detestable; extremely unpleasant; very bad. Mary liked John until she learned he was dating Susan; then she called him an *abominable* young man, with *abominable* taste in women.

aboriginal ADJ., N. being the first of its kind in a region; primitive; native. Her studies of the primitive art forms of the *aboriginal* Indians were widely reported in the scientific journals. aborigines, N.

abortive ADJ. unsuccessful; fruitless. Attacked by armed troops, the Chinese students had to abandon their *abortive* attempt to democratize Beijing peacefully. abort, V.

abrade V. wear away by friction; scrape; erode. Because the sharp rocks had *abraded* the skin on her legs, she dabbed iodine on the scrapes and *abrasions*.

abrasive ADJ. rubbing away; tending to grind down. Just as *abrasive* cleaning powders can wear away a shiny finish, *abrasive* remarks can wear away a listener's patience. abrade, V.

■ **abridge** V. condense or shorten. Because the publishers felt the public wanted a shorter version of *War and Peace*, they proceeded to *abridge* the novel.

abrogate ADJ. abolish. He intended to *abrogate* the decree issued by his predecessor.

abscond V. depart secretly and hide. The teller who *absconded* with the bonds went uncaptured until someone recognized him from his photograph on "America's Most Wanted."

absolute ADJ. complete; totally unlimited; certain. Although the King of Siam was an *absolute* monarch, he did not want to behead his unfaithful wife without *absolute* evidence of her infidelity.

absolve V. pardon (an offense). The father confessor *absolved* him of his sins. absolution, N.

absorb V. assimilate or incorporate; suck or drink up; wholly engage. During the nineteenth century, America *absorbed* hordes of immigrants, turning them into productive citizens. Can Huggies diapers *absorb* more liquid than Pampers can? This question does not *absorb* me; instead, it bores me. absorption, N.

abstain V. refrain; hold oneself back voluntarily from an action or practice. After considering the effect of alcohol on his athletic performance, he decided to *abstain* from drinking while he trained for the race. abstinence, N.

■ **abstemious** ADJ. sparing in eating and drinking; temperate. Concerned whether her vegetarian son's *abstemious* diet provided him with sufficient protein, the worried mother pressed food on him.

abstinence N. restraint from eating or drinking. The doctor recommended total *abstinence* from salted foods. abstain, V.

■ **abstract** ADJ. theoretical; not concrete; nonrepresentational. To him, hunger was an *abstract* concept; he had never missed a meal.

■ **abstruse** ADJ. obscure; profound; difficult to understand. Baffled by the *abstruse* philosophical texts assigned in

class, Dave asked Lexy to explain Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.*

abundant ADJ. plentiful; possessing riches or resources. At his immigration interview, Ivan listed his *abundant* reasons for coming to America: the hope of religious freedom, the prospect of employment, the promise of a more *abundant* life.

abusive ADJ. coarsely insulting; physically harmful. An *abusive* parent damages a child both mentally and physically.

abut V. border upon; adjoin. Where our estates *abut,* we must build a fence.

abysmal ADJ. bottomless. His arrogance is exceeded only by his *abysmal* ignorance.

abyss N. enormous chasm; vast bottomless pit. Darth Vader seized the evil emperor and hurled him down into the *abyss*.

academic ADJ. related to a school; not practical or directly useful. The dean's talk about reforming the college admissions system was only an *academic* discussion: we knew little, if anything, would change.

accede V. agree. If I *accede* to this demand for blackmail, I am afraid that I will be the victim of future demands.

accelerate V. move faster. In our science class, we learn how falling bodies *accelerate*.

accentuate V. emphasize; stress. If you *accentuate* the positive and eliminate the negative, you may wind up with an overoptimistic view of the world.

■ **accessible** ADJ. easy to approach; obtainable. We asked our guide whether the ruins were *accessible* on foot.

accessory N. additional object; useful but not essential thing. She bought an attractive handbag as an *accessory* for her dress. also ADJ.

■ **acclaim** V. applaud; announce with great approval. The NBC sportscasters *acclaimed* every American victory in the Olympics and decried every American defeat. also N.

acclimate V. adjust to climate. One of the difficulties of our present air age is the need of travelers to *acclimate* themselves to their new and often strange environments.

acclivity N. sharp upslope of a hill. The car would not go up the *acclivity* in high gear.

● **accolade** N. award of merit. In Hollywood, an "Oscar" is the highest *accolade*.

accommodate V. oblige or help someone; adjust or bring into harmony; adapt. Mitch always did everything possible to *accommodate* his elderly relatives, from driving them to medical appointments to helping them with paperwork. (secondary meaning)

accomplice N. partner in crime. Because he had provided the criminal with the lethal weapon, he was arrested as an *accomplice* in the murder.

accord N. agreement. She was in complete *accord* with the verdict.

accost V. approach and speak first to a person. When the two young men *accosted* me, I was frightened because I thought they were going to attack me.

accoutre V. equip. The fisherman was *accoutred* with the best that the sporting goods store could supply. accoutrements, N.

accretion N. growth; increase. Over the years, Bob put on weight; because of this *accretion* of flesh, he went from size M to size XXL.

accrue V. come about by addition. You must pay the interest that has *accrued* on your debt as well as the principal sum. accrual, N.

acerbity N. bitterness of speech and temper. The meeting of the United Nations General Assembly was marked with such *acerbity* that informed sources held out little hope of reaching any useful settlement of the problem. acerbic, ADJ.

acetic ADJ. vinegary. The salad had an exceedingly *acetic* flavor.

acidulous ADJ. slightly sour; sharp, caustic. James was unpopular because of his sarcastic and *acidulous* remarks.

■ **acknowledge** V. recognize; admit. Although Iris *acknowledged* that the Beatles' tunes sounded pretty dated nowadays, she still preferred them to the hip-hop songs her brothers played.

acme N. top; pinnacle. His success in this role marked the *acme* of his career as an actor.

acoustics N. science of sound; quality that makes a room easy or hard to hear in. Carnegie Hall is liked by music lovers because of its fine *acoustics*.

● **acquiesce** V. assent; agree without protesting. Although she appeared to *acquiesce* to her employer's suggestions, I could tell she had reservations about the changes he wanted made. acquiescence, N.; acquiescent, ADJ.

acquire V. obtain; get. Frederick Douglass was determined to *acquire* an education despite his master's efforts to prevent his doing so.

acquittal N. deliverance from a charge. His *acquittal* by the jury surprised those who had thought him guilty. acquit, V.

● **acrid** ADJ. sharp; bitterly pungent. The *acrid* odor of burnt gunpowder filled the room after the pistol had been fired.

● **acrimonious** ADJ. bitter in words or manner. The candidate attacked his opponent in highly *acrimonious* terms. acrimony, N.

acrophobia N. fear of heights. A born salesman, he could convince someone with a bad case of *acrophobia* to sign up for a life membership in a sky-diving club.

actuarial ADJ. calculating; pertaining to insurance statistics. According to recent *actuarial* tables, life expectancy is greater today than it was a century ago.

actuate V. motivate. I fail to understand what *actuated* you to reply to this letter so nastily.

acuity N. sharpness. In time his youthful *acuity* of vision failed him, and he needed glasses.

acumen N. mental keenness. His business *acumen* helped him to succeed where others had failed.

acute ADJ. quickly perceptive; keen; brief and severe. The *acute* young doctor realized immediately that the gradual deterioration of her patient's once *acute* hearing was due to a chronic illness, not an *acute* one.

adage N. wise saying; proverb. There is much truth in the old *adage* about fools and their money.

adamant ADJ. hard; inflexible. Bronson played the part of a revenge-driven man, *adamant* in his determination to punish the criminals who destroyed his family. adamancy, N.

adapt V. alter; modify. Some species of animals have become extinct because they could not *adapt* to a changing environment.

addendum N. an addition or supplement. As an *addendum* to the minutes, let me point out that Susan moved to appoint Kathy and Arthur to the finance committee.

addiction N. compulsive, habitual need. His *addiction* to drugs caused his friends much grief.

addle V. muddle; drive crazy; become rotten. This idiotic plan is confusing enough to *addle* anyone. addled, ADJ.

address V. direct a speech to; deal with or discuss. Due to *address* the convention in July, Brown planned to *address* the issue of low-income housing in his speech.

adept ADJ. expert at. She was *adept* at the fine art of irritating people. also N.

adhere V. stick fast. I will *adhere* to this opinion until proof that I am wrong is presented. adhesion, N.

adherent N. supporter; follower. In the wake of the scandal, the senator's one-time *adherents* quickly deserted him.

adjacent ADJ. adjoining; neighboring; close by. Philip's best friend Jason lived only four houses down the block, close but not immediately *adjacent*.

adjunct N. something added on or attached (generally nonessential or inferior). Although I don't absolutely need a second computer, I plan to buy a laptop to serve as an *adjunct* to my desktop model.

admonish V. warn; reprove. He *admonished* his listeners to change their wicked ways. admonition, N.

admonition N. warning. After the student protesters repeatedly rejected the dean's *admonitions*, the administration issued an ultimatum: either the students would end the demonstration at once or the campus police would arrest the demonstrators.

adorn V. decorate. Wall paintings and carved statues *adorned* the temple. adornment, N.

adroit ADJ. skillful. His *adroit* handling of the delicate situation pleased his employers.

Word List 2 adulation-amend

■ **adulation** N. flattery; admiration. The rock star thrived on the *adulation* of his groupies and yes men. adulate, V.

adulterate V. make impure by adding inferior or tainted substances. It is a crime to *adulterate* foods without informing the buyer; when consumers learned that Beech-Nut had *adulterated* their apple juice by mixing it with water, they protested vigorously.

advent N. arrival. Most Americans were unaware of the *advent* of the Nuclear Age until the news of Hiroshima reached them.

adventitious ADJ. accidental; casual. He found this *adventitious* meeting with his friend extremely fortunate.

■ **adversary** N. opponent. The young wrestler struggled to defeat his *adversary*.

adverse ADJ. unfavorable; hostile. The recession had a highly *adverse* effect on Father's investment portfolio: he lost so much money that he could no longer afford the butler and the upstairs maid. adversity, N.

■ **adversity** N. poverty; misfortune. We must learn to meet *adversity* gracefully.

advocacy N. support; active pleading on something's behalf. No threats could dissuade Bishop Desmond Tutu from his *advocacy* of the human rights of black South Africans.

■ **advocate** V. urge; plead for. The abolitionists *advocated* freedom for the slaves. also N.

aerie N. nest of a large bird of prey (eagle, hawk). The mother eagle swooped down on the unwitting rabbit and bore it off to her *aerie* high in the Rocky Mountains.

■ **aesthetic** ADJ. artistic; dealing with or capable of appreciation of the beautiful. The beauty of Tiffany's stained glass appealed to Esther's *aesthetic* sense. aesthete, N.

■ **affable** ADJ. easily approachable; warmly friendly. Accustomed to cold, aloof supervisors, Nicholas was amazed at how *affable* his new employer was.

affected ADJ. artificial; pretended; assumed in order to impress. His *affected* mannerisms—his "Harvard" accent, air of boredom, use of obscure foreign words—annoyed us: he acted as if he thought he was too good for his old high school friends. affectation, N.

affidavit N. written statement made under oath. The court refused to accept his statement unless he presented it in the form of an *affidavit.*

affiliation *N.* joining; associating with. His *affiliation* with the political party was of short duration for he soon disagreed with his colleagues.

affinity N. kinship. She felt an *affinity* with all who suffered; their pains were her pains.

■ **affirmation** N. positive assertion; confirmation; solemn pledge by one who refuses to take an oath. Despite Tom's *affirmations* of innocence, Aunt Polly still suspected he had eaten the pie.

affix V. fasten; attach; add on. First the registrar had to *affix* her signature to the license; then she had to *affix* her official seal.

affliction N. state of distress; cause of suffering. Even in the midst of her *affliction*, Elizabeth tried to keep up the spirits of those around her.

affluence N. abundance; wealth. Foreigners are amazed by the *affluence* and luxury of the American way of life.

affront N. insult; offense; intentional act of disrespect. When Mrs. Proudie was not seated beside the Archdeacon at the head table, she took it as a personal *affront* and refused to speak to her hosts for a week. also V.

aftermath N. consequences; outcome; upshot. People around the world wondered what the *aftermath* of China's violent suppression of the student protests would be.

agenda N. items of business at a meeting. We had so much difficulty agreeing upon an *agenda* that there was very little time for the meeting.

agent N. means or instrument; personal representative; person acting in an official capacity. "I will be the *agent* of America's destruction," proclaimed the beady-eyed villain, whose *agent* had gotten him the role. With his face, he could never have played the part of the hero, a heroic F.B.I. *agent*.

agglomeration N. collection; heap. It took weeks to assort the *agglomeration* of miscellaneous items she had collected on her trip.

aggrandize V. increase or intensify. The history of the past quarter century illustrates how a President may *aggrandize* his power to act aggressively in international affairs without considering the wishes of Congress.

● **aggregate** V. gather; accumulate. Before the Wall Street scandals, dealers in so-called junk bonds managed to *aggregate* great wealth in short periods of time. aggregation, N.

aggressor N. attacker. Before you punish both boys for fighting, see whether you can determine which one was the *aggressor*.

aghast ADJ. horrified. He was *aghast* at the nerve of the speaker who had insulted his host.

agility N. nimbleness. The *agility* of the acrobat amazed and thrilled the audience.

agitate V. stir up; disturb. Her fiery remarks *agitated* the already angry mob.

agnostic N. one who is skeptical of the existence or knowability of a god or any ultimate reality. *Agnostics* say we can neither prove nor disprove the existence of god; we simply just can't know. also ADJ.

agrarian ADJ. pertaining to land or its cultivation. Because its recent industrialization has transformed farmhands into factory workers, the country is gradually losing its *agrarian* traditions.

alacrity N. cheerful promptness. Eager to get away to the mountains, Phil and Dave packed up their ski gear and climbed into the van with *alacrity*.

alchemy N. medieval chemistry. The changing of baser metals into gold was the goal of the students of *alchemy.* alchemist, N.

alcove N. nook; small, recessed section of a room. Though their apartment lacked a full-scale dining room, an *alcove* adjacent to the living room made an adequate breakfast nook for the young couple.

alias N. an assumed name. John Smith's *alias* was Bob Jones. also ADV.

alienate V. make hostile; separate. Her attempts to *alienate* the two friends failed because they had complete faith in each other.

alimentary ADJ. supplying nourishment. The *alimentary* canal in our bodies is so named because digestion of foods occurs there. When asked for the name of the digestive tract, Sherlock Holmes replied, "*Alimentary*, my dear Watson."

alimony N. payments made to an ex-spouse after divorce. Because Tony had supported Tina through medical school, on their divorce he asked the court to award him $500 a month in *alimony*.

allay V. calm; pacify. The crew tried to *allay* the fears of the passengers by announcing that the fire had been controlled.

allege V. state without proof. Although it is *alleged* that she has worked for the enemy, she denies the *allegation* and, legally, we can take no action against her without proof. allegation, N.

allegiance N. loyalty. Not even a term in prison could shake Lech Walesa's *allegiance* to Solidarity, the Polish trade union he had helped to found.

allegory N. story in which characters are used as symbols; fable. *Pilgrim's Progress* is an *allegory* of the temptations and victories of man's soul. allegorical, ADJ.

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

alliteration N. repetition of beginning sound in poetry. "The furrow followed free" is an example of *alliteration.*

allocate V. assign. Even though the Red Cross had *allocated* a large sum for the relief of the sufferers of the disaster, many people perished.

alloy N. a mixture as of metals. *Alloys* of gold are used more frequently than the pure metal.

alloy V. mix; make less pure; lessen or moderate. Our delight at the Yankees' victory was *alloyed* by our concern for Dwight Gooden, who injured his pitching arm in the game.

allude V. refer indirectly. Try not to mention divorce in Jack's presence because he will think you are *alluding* to his marital problems with Jill.

allure V. entice; attract. *Allured* by the song of the sirens, the helmsman steered the ship toward the reef. also N.

allusion N. indirect reference. When Amanda said to the ticket scalper, "One hundred bucks? What do you want, a pound of flesh?," she was making an *allusion* to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

aloft ADV. upward. The sailor climbed *aloft* into the rigging. To get into a loft bed, you have to climb *aloft*.

■ **aloof** ADJ. apart; reserved. Shy by nature, she remained *aloof* while all the rest conversed.

altercation N. noisy quarrel; heated dispute. In that hot-tempered household, no meal ever came to a peaceful conclusion; the inevitable *altercation* might even end in blows.

■ **altruistic** ADJ. unselfishly generous; concerned for others. In providing tutorial assistance and college scholarships for hundreds of economically disadvantaged youths, Eugene Lang performed a truly *altruistic* deed. altruism, N.

amalgamate V. combine; unite in one body. The unions will attempt to *amalgamate* their groups into one national body.

amass V. collect. The miser's aim is to *amass* and hoard as much gold as possible.

ambidextrous ADJ. capable of using either hand with equal ease. A switch-hitter in baseball should be naturally *ambidextrous*.

ambience N. environment; atmosphere. She went to the restaurant not for the food but for the *ambience*.

■ **ambiguous** ADJ. unclear or doubtful in meaning. His *ambiguous* instructions misled us; we did not know which road to take. ambiguity, N.

■ **ambivalence** N. the state of having contradictory or conflicting emotional attitudes. Torn between loving her parents one minute and hating them the next, she was confused by the *ambivalence* of her feelings. ambivalent, ADJ.

amble N. moving at an easy pace. When she first mounted the horse, she was afraid to urge the animal to go faster than a gentle *amble*. also V.

ambulatory ADJ. able to walk; not bedridden. Juan was a highly *ambulatory* patient; not only did he refuse to be confined to bed, but he insisted on riding his skateboard up and down the halls.

ameliorate V. improve. Many social workers have attempted to *ameliorate* the conditions of people living in the slums.

amenable ADJ. readily managed; willing to be led. Although the ambassador was usually *amenable* to friendly suggestions, he balked when we hinted that he should waive his diplomatic immunity and pay his parking tickets.

amend V. correct; change, generally for the better. Hoping to *amend* his condition, he left Vietnam for the United States.

Word List 3 amenities-apostate

amenities N. convenient features; courtesies. In addition to the customary *amenities* for the business traveler—fax machines, modems, a health club—the hotel offers the services of a butler versed in the social *amenities*.

amiable ADJ. agreeable; lovable; warmly friendly. In *Little Women*, Beth is the *amiable* daughter whose loving disposition endears her to all who know her.

amicable ADJ. politely friendly; not quarrelsome. Beth's sister Jo is the hot-tempered tomboy who has a hard time maintaining *amicable* relations with those around her. Jo's quarrel with her friend Laurie finally reaches an *amicable* settlement, but not because Jo turns amiable overnight.

amiss ADJ. wrong; faulty. Seeing her frown, he wondered if anything were *amiss*. also ADV.

amity N. friendship. Student exchange programs such as the Experiment in International Living were established to promote international *amity*.

amnesia N. loss of memory. Because she was suffering from *amnesia*, the police could not get the young girl to identify herself.

amnesty N. pardon. When his first child was born, the king granted *amnesty* to all in prison.

amoral ADJ. nonmoral. The *amoral* individual lacks a code of ethics; he cannot tell right from wrong. The immoral person can tell right from wrong; he chooses to do something he knows is wrong.

amorous ADJ. moved by sexual love; loving. "Love them and leave them" was the motto of the *amorous* Don Juan.

● **amorphous** ADJ. formless; lacking shape or definition. As soon as we have decided on our itinerary, we shall send you a copy; right now, our plans are still *amorphous*.

amphibian ADJ. able to live both on land and in water. Frogs are classified as *amphibian*. also N.

amphitheater N. oval building with tiers of seats. The spectators in the *amphitheater* cheered the gladiators.

ample ADJ. abundant. Bond had *ample* opportunity to escape. Why did he let us catch him?

amplify V. broaden or clarify by expanding; intensify; make stronger. Charlie Brown tried to *amplify* his remarks, but he was drowned out by jeers from the audience. Lucy was smarter: she used a loudspeaker to *amplify* her voice.

amputate V. cut off part of body; prune. Though the doctors had to *amputate* his leg to prevent the spread of cancer, the young athlete refused to let the loss of a limb keep him from participating in sports.

amulet N. charm; talisman. Around her neck she wore the *amulet* that the witch doctor had given her.

● **anachronistic** ADJ. having an error involving time in a story. The reference to clocks in *Julius Caesar* is *anachronistic*: clocks did not exist in Caesar's time. anachronism, N.

analgesic ADJ. causing insensitivity to pain. The *analgesic* qualities of this lotion will provide temporary relief.

■ **analogous** ADJ. comparable. She called our attention to the things that had been done in an *analogous* situation and recommended that we do the same.

analogy N. similarity; parallelism. A well-known *analogy* compares the body's immune system with an army whose defending troops are the lymphocytes or white blood cells.

■ **anarchist** N. person who seeks to overturn the established government; advocate of abolishing authority. Denying she was an *anarchist*, Katya maintained she wished only to make changes in our government, not to destroy it entirely. anarchy, N.

anarchy N. absence of governing body; state of disorder. The assassination of the leaders led to a period of *anarchy.*

anathema N. solemn curse; someone or something regarded as a curse. The Ayatolla Khomeini heaped *anathema* upon "the Great Satan," that is, the United States. To the Ayatolla, America and the West were *anathema*; he loathed the democratic nations, cursing them in his dying words. anathematize, V.

ancestry N. family descent. David can trace his *ancestry* as far back as the seventeenth century, when one of his *ancestors* was a court trumpeter somewhere in Germany. ancestral, ADJ.

anchor V. secure or fasten firmly; be fixed in place. We set the post in concrete to *anchor* it in place. anchorage, N.

ancillary ADJ. serving as an aid or accessory; auxiliary. In an *ancillary* capacity, Doctor Watson was helpful; however, Holmes could not trust the good doctor to solve a perplexing case on his own. also N.

■ **anecdote** N. short account of an amusing or interesting event. Rather than make concrete proposals for welfare reform, President Reagan told *anecdotes* about poor people who became wealthy despite their impoverished backgrounds.

anemia N. condition in which blood lacks red corpuscles. The doctor ascribes her tiredness to *anemia.* anemic, ADJ.

anesthetic N. substance that removes sensation with or without loss of consciousness. His monotonous voice acted like an *anesthetic*; his audience was soon asleep. anesthesia, N.

anguish N. acute pain; extreme suffering. Visiting the site of the explosion, the governor wept to see the *anguish* of the victims and their families.

angular ADJ. sharp-cornered; stiff in manner. Mr. Spock's features, though *angular*, were curiously attractive, in a Vulcan way.

animated ADJ. lively; spirited. Jim Carrey's facial expressions are highly *animated*: when he played Ace Ventura, he looked practically rubber-faced.

■ **animosity** N. active enmity. He incurred the *animosity* of the ruling class because he advocated limitations of their power.

animus N. hostile feeling or intent. The speaker's sarcastic comments about liberal do-gooders and elitist snobs revealed his deep-seated *animus* against his opponent.

annals N. records; history. "In this year our good King Richard died," wrote the chronicler in the kingdom's *annals.*

annex V. attach; take possession of. Mexico objected to the United States' attempts to *annex* the territory that later became the state of Texas.

annihilate V. destroy. The enemy in its revenge tried to *annihilate* the entire population.

annotate V. comment; make explanatory notes. In explanatory notes following each poem, the editor carefully *annotated* the poet's more esoteric references.

annuity N. yearly allowance. The *annuity* he set up with the insurance company supplements his social security benefits so that he can live very comfortably without working.

annul V. make void. The parents of the eloped couple tried to *annul* the marriage.

anoint V. consecrate. The prophet Samuel *anointed* David with oil, crowning him king of Israel.

anomalous ADJ. abnormal; irregular. He was placed in the *anomalous* position of seeming to approve procedures which he despised.

● **anomaly** N. irregularity. A bird that cannot fly is an *anomaly.*

anonymity N. state of being nameless; anonymousness. The donor of the gift asked the college not to mention him by name; the dean readily agreed to respect his *anonymity.*

anonymous ADJ. having no name. She tried to ascertain the identity of the writer of the *anonymous* letter.

■ **antagonism** N. hostility; active resistance. Barry showed his *antagonism* toward his new stepmother by ignoring her whenever she tried talking to him. antagonistic, ADJ.

antecede V. precede. The invention of the radiotelegraph *anteceded* the development of television by a quarter of a century.

antecedents N. preceding events or circumstances that influence what comes later; ancestors or early background. Susi Bechhofer's ignorance of her Jewish background had its *antecedents* in the chaos of World War II. Smuggled out of Germany and adopted by a Christian family, she knew nothing of her birth and *antecedents* until she was reunited with her family in 1989.

● **antediluvian** ADJ. antiquated; extremely ancient. Looking at his great-aunt's antique furniture, which must have been cluttering up her attic since the time of Noah's flood, the young heir exclaimed, "Heavens! How positively *antediluvian*!"

anthem N. song of praise or patriotism. Let us now all join in singing the national *anthem.*

anthology N. book of literary selections by various authors. This *anthology* of science fiction was compiled by the late Isaac Asimov. anthologize, V.

anthropocentric ADJ. regarding human beings as the center of the universe. Without considering any evidence that might challenge his *anthropocentric* viewpoint, Hector categorically maintained that dolphins could not be as intelligent as men. anthropocentrism, N.

anthropoid ADJ. manlike. The gorilla is the strongest of the *anthropoid* animals. also N.

anthropologist N. a student of the history and science of mankind. *Anthropologists* have discovered several relics of prehistoric man in this area.

anthropomorphic ADJ. having human form or characteristics. Primitive religions often have deities with *anthropomorphic* characteristics. anthropomorphism, N.

anticlimax N. letdown in thought or emotion. After the fine performance in the first act, the rest of the play was an *anticlimax*. anticlimactic, ADJ.

■ **antidote** N. medicine to counteract a poison or disease. When Marge's child accidentally swallowed some cleaning fluid, the local poison control hotline instructed Marge how to administer the *antidote*.

● **antipathy** N. aversion; dislike. Tom's extreme *antipathy* for disputes keeps him from getting into arguments with his temperamental wife. Noise in any form is *antipathetic* to him. Among his other *antipathies* are honking cars, boom boxes, and heavy metal rock.

■ **antiquated** ADJ. old-fashioned; obsolete. Philip had grown so accustomed to editing his papers on word processors that he thought typewriters were too *antiquated* for him to use.

antiseptic N. substance that prevents infection. It is advisable to apply an *antiseptic* to any wound, no matter how slight or insignificant. also ADJ.

antithesis N. contrast; direct opposite of or to. This tyranny was the *antithesis* of all that he had hoped for, and he fought it with all his strength.

■ **apathy** N. lack of caring; indifference. A firm believer in democratic government, she could not understand the *apathy* of people who never bothered to vote. apathetic, ADJ.

ape V. imitate or mimic. He was suspended for a week because he had *aped* the principal in front of the whole school.

aperture N. opening; hole. She discovered a small *aperture* in the wall, through which the insects had entered the room.

apex N. tip; summit; climax. At the *apex* of his career, the star was deluged with offers of leading roles; two years later, he was reduced to acting in mouthwash ads.

aphasia N. loss of speech due to injury or illness. After the automobile accident, the victim had periods of *aphasia* when he could not speak at all or could only mumble incoherently.

aphorism N. pithy maxim. An *aphorism* differs from an adage in that it is more philosophical or scientific. "The proper study of mankind is man" is an *aphorism*. "There's no smoke without a fire" is an adage. aphoristic, ADJ.

apiary N. a place where bees are kept. Although he spent many hours daily in the *apiary,* he was very seldom stung by a bee.

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

apocalyptic ADJ. prophetic; pertaining to revelations. The crowd jeered at the street preacher's *apocalyptic* predictions of doom. The *Apocalypse* or *Book of Revelations* of Saint John prophesies the end of the world as we know it and foretells marvels and prodigies that signal the coming doom.

● **apocryphal** ADJ. untrue; made up. To impress his friends, Tom invented *apocryphal* tales of his adventures in the big city.

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

apolitical ADJ. having an aversion or lack of concern for political affairs. It was hard to remain *apolitical* during the Vietnam War; even people who generally ignored public issues felt they had to take political stands.

apologist N. one who writes in defense of a cause or institution. Rather than act as an *apologist* for the current regime in Beijing and defend its brutal actions, the young diplomat decided to defect to the West.

apostate N. one who abandons his religious faith or political beliefs. Because he switched from one party to another, his former friends shunned him as an *apostate.* apostasy, N.

Word List 4 apotheosis-astigmatism

apotheosis N. elevation to godhood; an ideal example of something. The *apotheosis* of a Roman emperor was designed to insure his eternal greatness: people would worship at his altar forever. The hero of the musical *How to Succeed in Business*…was the *apotheosis* of yuppieness: he was the perfect upwardly-bound young man on the make.

appall V. dismay; shock. We were *appalled* by the horrifying conditions in the city's jails.

apparatus N. equipment. Firefighters use specialized *apparatus* to fight fires.

apparition N. ghost; phantom. On the castle battlements, an *apparition* materialized and spoke to Hamlet, warning him of his uncle's treachery. In *Ghostbusters*, hordes of *apparitions* materialized, only to be dematerialized by the specialized apparatus wielded by Bill Murray.

■ **appease** V. pacify or soothe; relieve. Tom and Jody tried to *appease* the crying baby by offering him one toy after another, but he would not calm down until they *appeased* his hunger by giving him a bottle.

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

append V. attach. When you *append* a bibliography to a text, you have just created an *appendix*.

application N. diligent attention. Pleased with how well Tom had whitewashed the fence, Aunt Polly praised him for his *application* to the task. apply, V. (secondary meaning)

apposite ADJ. appropriate; fitting. He was always able to find the *apposite* phrase, the correct expression for every occasion.

appraise V. estimate value of. It is difficult to *appraise* the value of old paintings; it is easier to call them priceless. appraisal, N.

appreciate V. be thankful for; increase in worth; be thoroughly conscious of. Little Orphan Annie truly *appreciated* the stocks Daddy Warbucks gave her, which *appreciated* in value considerably over the years.

apprehend V. arrest (a criminal); dread; perceive. The police will *apprehend* the culprit and convict him before long.

■ **apprehension** N. fear. His nervous glances at the passersby on the deserted street revealed his *apprehension.*

apprenticeship N. time spent as a novice learning a trade from a skilled worker. As a child, Pip had thought it would be wonderful to work as Joe's *apprentice*; now he hated his *apprenticeship* and scorned the blacksmith's trade.

apprise V. inform. When he was *apprised* of the dangerous weather conditions, he decided to postpone his trip.

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

appropriate V. acquire; take possession of for one's own use. The ranch owners *appropriated* the lands that had originally been set aside for the Indians' use.

apropos PREP. with reference to; regarding. I find your remarks *apropos* of the present situation timely and pertinent. also ADJ. and ADV.

aptitude N. fitness; talent. The counselor gave him an *aptitude* test before advising him about the career he should follow.

aquatic ADJ. pertaining to water. Paul enjoyed *aquatic* sports such as scuba diving and snorkeling.

aquiline ADJ. curved, hooked. Cartoonists exaggerated the senator's *aquiline* nose, curving it until it looked like the beak of an eagle.

● **arable** ADJ. fit for growing crops. The first settlers wrote home glowing reports of the New World, praising its vast acres of *arable* land ready for the plow.

arbiter N. a person with power to decide a dispute; judge. As an *arbiter* in labor disputes, she has won the confidence of the workers and the employers.

■ **arbitrary** ADJ. capricious; randomly chosen; tyrannical. Tom's *arbitrary* dismissal angered him; his boss had no reason to fire him. He threw an *arbitrary* assortment of clothes into his suitcase and headed off, not caring where he went.

arbitrator N. judge. Because the negotiating teams had been unable to reach a contract settlement, an outside *arbitrator* was called upon to mediate the dispute between union and management. arbitration, N.

arboretum N. place where different tree varieties are exhibited. Walking along the tree-lined paths of the *arboretum,* Rita noted poplars, firs, and some particularly fine sycamores.

arcade N. a covered passageway, usually lined with shops. The *arcade* was popular with shoppers because it gave them protection from the summer sun and the winter rain.

arcane ADJ. secret; mysterious; known only to the initiated. Secret brotherhoods surround themselves with *arcane* rituals and trappings to mystify outsiders. So do doctors. Consider the *arcane* terminology they use and the impression they try to give that what is *arcane* to us is obvious to them.

archaeology N. study of artifacts and relics of early mankind. The professor of *archaeology* headed an expedition to the Gobi Desert in search of ancient ruins.

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

archetype N. prototype; primitive pattern. The Brooklyn Bridge was the *archetype* of the many spans that now connect Manhattan with Long Island and New Jersey.

archipelago N. group of closely located islands. When Gauguin looked at the map and saw the *archipelagoes* in the South Seas, he longed to visit them.

archives N. public records; place where public records are kept. These documents should be part of the *archives* so that historians may be able to evaluate them in the future.

● **ardent** ADJ. intense; passionate; zealous. Katya's *ardor* was contagious; soon all her fellow demonstrators were busily making posters and handing out flyers, inspired by her *ardent* enthusiasm for the cause. ardor, N.

arduous ADJ. hard; strenuous. Her *arduous* efforts had sapped her energy.

aria N. operatic solo. At her Metropolitan Opera audition, Marian Anderson sang an *aria* from *Norma.*

arid ADJ. dry; barren. The cactus has adapted to survive in an *arid* environment.

aristocracy N. hereditary nobility; privileged class. Americans have mixed feelings about hereditary *aristocracy*: we say all men are created equal, but we describe particularly outstanding people as natural *aristocrats*.

armada N. fleet of warships. Queen Elizabeth's navy defeated the mighty *armada* that threatened the English coast.

aromatic ADJ. fragrant. Medieval sailing vessels brought *aromatic* herbs from China to Europe.

arousal N. awakening; provocation (of a response). On *arousal*, Papa was always grumpy as a bear. The children tiptoed around the house, fearing they would *arouse* his anger by waking him up.

arraign V. charge in court; indict. After his indictment by the Grand Jury, the accused man was *arraigned* in the County Criminal Court.

array V. marshal; draw up in order. His actions were bound to *array* public sentiment against him. also N.

array V. clothe; adorn. She liked to watch her mother *array* herself in her finest clothes before going out for the evening. also N.

arrears N. being in debt. He was in *arrears* with his payments on the car.

arrest V. stop or slow down; catch someone's attention. Slipping, the trapeze artist plunged from the heights until a safety net luckily *arrested* his fall. This near-disaster *arrested* the crowd's attention.

■ **arrogance** N. pride; haughtiness. Convinced that Emma thought she was better than anyone else in the class, Ed rebuked her for her *arrogance*.

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

arsenal N. storage place for military equipment. People are forbidden to smoke in the *arsenal* for fear that a stray spark might set off the munitions stored there.

■ **articulate** ADJ. effective; distinct. Her *articulate* presentation of the advertising campaign impressed her employers. also V.

■ **artifact** N. object made by human beings, either handmade or mass-produced. Archaeologists debated the significance of the *artifacts* discovered in the ruins of Asia Minor but came to no conclusion about the culture they represented.

artifice N. deception; trickery. The Trojan War proved to the Greeks that cunning and *artifice* were often more effective than military might.

■ **artisan** N. manually skilled worker; craftsman, as opposed to artist. A noted *artisan*, Arturo was known for the fine craftsmanship of his inlaid cabinets.

artless ADJ. without guile; open and honest. Sophisticated and cynical, Jack could not believe Jill was as *artless* and naive as she appeared to be.

■ **ascendancy** N. controlling influence; domination. Leaders of religious cults maintain *ascendancy* over their followers by methods that can verge on brainwashing.

ascertain V. find out for certain. Please *ascertain* her present address.

■ **ascetic** ADJ. practicing self-denial; austere. The wealthy, self-indulgent young man felt oddly drawn to the strict, *ascetic* life led by members of some monastic orders. also N.

ascribe V. refer; attribute; assign. I can *ascribe* no motive for her acts.

aseptic ADJ. preventing infection; having a cleansing effect. Hospitals succeeded in lowering the mortality rate as soon as they introduced *aseptic* conditions.

ashen ADJ. ash-colored. Her face was *ashen* with fear.

asinine ADJ. stupid. "What an *asinine* comment!" said Bob contemptuously. "I've never heard such a stupid remark."

askance ADJ. with a sideways or indirect look. Looking *askance* at her questioner, she displayed her scorn.

askew ADJ. crookedly; slanted; at an angle. Judy constantly straightened the doilies on her furniture: she couldn't stand seeing them *askew*.

asperity N. sharpness (of temper). These remarks, spoken with *asperity,* stung the boys to whom they had been directed.

aspersion N. slander; slur; derogatory remark. Unscrupulous politicians practice character assassination as a political tool, casting *aspersions* on their rivals.

aspirant N. seeker after position or status. Although I am an *aspirant* for public office, I am not willing to accept the dictates of the party bosses. also ADJ.

■ **aspire** V. seek to attain; long for. Because he *aspired* to a career in professional sports, Philip enrolled in a graduate program in sports management. aspiration, N.

assail V. assault. He was *assailed* with questions after his lecture.

assay V. analyze; evaluate. When they *assayed* the ore, they found that they had discovered a very rich vein. also N.

assent V. agree; accept. It gives me great pleasure to *assent* to your request.

assert V. declare or state with confidence; put oneself forward boldly. Malcolm *asserted* that if Reese quit acting like a wimp and *asserted* himself a bit more, he'd improve his chances of getting a date. assertion, N.

assessment N. evaluation; judgment. Your high school record plays an important part in the admission committee's *assessment* of you as an applicant.

● **assiduous** ADJ. diligent. He was *assiduous*, working at this task for weeks before he felt satisfied with his results. assiduity, N.

assimilate V. absorb; cause to become homogeneous. The manner in which the United States was able to *assimilate* the hordes of immigrants during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will always be a source of pride to Americans. The immigrants eagerly *assimilated* new ideas and customs; they soaked them up, the way plants soak up water.

● **assuage** V. ease or lessen (pain); satisfy (hunger); soothe (anger). Jilted by Jane, Dick tried to *assuage* his heartache by indulging in ice cream. One gallon later, he had *assuaged* his appetite but not his grief.

assumption N. something taken for granted; taking over or taking possession of. The young princess made the foolish *assumption* that the regent would not object to her *assumption* of power. assume, V.

assurance N. promise or pledge; certainty; self-confidence. When Guthrie gave Guinness his *assurance* that rehearsals were going well, he spoke with such *assurance* that Guinness felt relieved. assure, V.

asteroid N. small planet. Most *asteroids* are found in the region of space located between Mars and Jupiter, commonly known as the *asteroid* belt.

astigmatism N. eye defect that prevents proper focus. As soon as his parents discovered that the boy suffered from *astigmatism,* they took him to the optometrist for corrective glasses.

Word List 5 astral-barb

astral ADJ. relating to the stars. She was amazed at the number of *astral* bodies the new telescope revealed.

astringent ADJ. binding; causing contraction. The *astringent* quality of the unsweetened lemon juice made swallowing difficult. also N.

astronomical ADJ. enormously large or extensive. The government seems willing to spend *astronomical* sums on weapons development.

■ **astute** ADJ. wise; shrewd; keen. John Jacob Astor made *astute* investments in land, shrewdly purchasing valuable plots throughout New York City.

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

asylum N. place of refuge or shelter; protection. The refugees sought *asylum* from religious persecution in a new land.

asymmetric ADJ. not identical on both sides of a dividing central line. Because one eyebrow was set markedly higher than the other, William's face had a particularly *asymmetric* appearance.

atavism N. reversion to an earlier type; throwback. In his love for gardening, Martin seemed an *atavism* to his Tuscan forebears, who lavished great care on their small plots of soil.

atheistic ADJ. denying the existence of God. His *atheistic* remarks shocked the religious worshippers.

atlas N. a bound volume of maps, charts, or tables. Embarrassed at being unable to distinguish Slovenia from Slovakia, George W. finally consulted an *atlas*.

atone V. make amends for; pay for. He knew no way in which he could *atone* for his brutal crime.

atrocity N. brutal deed. In time of war, many *atrocities* are committed by invading armies.

● **atrophy** V. waste away. After three months in a cast, your calf muscles are bound to *atrophy*; you'll need physical therapy to get back in shape. also N.

attain V. achieve or accomplish; gain. The scarecrow sought to *attain* one goal: he wished to obtain a brain.

attentive ADJ. alert and watchful; considerate; thoughtful. Spellbound, the *attentive* audience watched the final game of the tennis match, never taking their eyes from the ball. A cold wind sprang up; Stan's *attentive* daughter slipped a sweater over his shoulders without distracting his attention from the game.

attenuate V. make thin; weaken. By withdrawing their forces, the generals hoped to *attenuate* the enemy lines.

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

attribute N. essential quality. His outstanding *attribute* was his kindness.

■ **attribute** V. ascribe; explain. I *attribute* her success in science to the encouragement she received from her parents.

attrition N. gradual decrease in numbers; reduction in the work force without firing employees; wearing away of opposition by means of harassment. In the 1960s urban churches suffered from *attrition* as members moved from the cities to the suburbs. Rather than fire staff members, church leaders followed a policy of *attrition*, allowing elderly workers to retire without replacing them.

atypical ADJ. not normal. The child psychiatrist reassured Mrs. Keaton that playing doctor was not *atypical* behavior for a child of young Alex's age. "Yes," she replied, "but not charging for house calls!"

● **audacious** ADJ. daring; bold. Audiences cheered as Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia made their *audacious,* death-defying leap to freedom, escaping Darth Vader's troops. audacity, N.

audit N. examination of accounts. When the bank examiners arrived to hold their annual *audit,* they discovered the embezzlements of the chief cashier. also V.

auditory ADJ. pertaining to the sense of hearing. Audrey suffered from *auditory* hallucinations: she thought Elvis was speaking to her from the Great Beyond.

■ **augment** V. increase; add to. Armies *augment* their forces by calling up reinforcements; teachers *augment* their salaries by taking odd jobs.

augury N. omen; prophecy. He interpreted the departure of the birds as an *augury* of evil. augur, V.

august ADJ. impressive; majestic. Visiting the palace at Versailles, she was impressed by the *august* surroundings in which she found herself.

aureole N. sun's corona; halo. Many medieval paintings depict saintly characters with *aureoles* around their heads.

auroral ADJ. pertaining to the aurora borealis. The *auroral* display was particularly spectacular that evening.

auspicious ADJ. favoring success. With favorable weather conditions, it was an *auspicious* moment to set sail. Thomas, however, had doubts about sailing: a paranoid, he became suspicious whenever conditions seemed *auspicious*.

■ **austere** ADJ. forbiddingly stern; severely simple and unornamented. The headmaster's *austere* demeanor tended to scare off the more timid students, who never visited his study willingly. The room reflected the man, *austere* and bare, like a monk's cell, with no touches of luxury to moderate its *austerity*.

authenticate V. confirm as genuine. After a thorough chemical analysis of the pigments and canvas, the experts were prepared to *authenticate* the painting as an original Rembrandt.

■ **authoritarian** ADJ. subordinating the individual to the state; completely dominating another's will. The leaders of the *authoritarian* regime ordered the suppression of the democratic protest movement. After years of submitting to the will

of her *authoritarian* father, Elizabeth Barrett ran away from home with the poet Robert Browning.

authoritative ADJ. having the weight of authority; peremptory and dictatorial. Impressed by the young researcher's well-documented presentation, we accepted her analysis of the experiment as *authoritative*.

autocratic ADJ. having absolute, unchecked power; dictatorial. Someone accustomed to exercising authority may become *autocratic* if his or her power is unchecked. Dictators by definition are *autocrats*. Bosses who dictate behavior as well as letters can be *autocrats* too.

automaton N. robot; person performing a task mechanically. The assembly line job called for no initiative or intelligence on Homer's part; on automatic pilot, he pushed button after button like an *automaton*.

■ **autonomous** ADJ. self-governing. Although the University of California at Berkeley is just one part of the state university system, in many ways Cal Berkeley is *autonomous*, for it runs several programs that are not subject to outside control. autonomy, N.

autopsy N. examination of a dead body; post-mortem. The medical examiner ordered an *autopsy* to determine the cause of death. also V.

auxiliary ADJ. helper, additional or subsidiary. To prepare for the emergency, they built an *auxiliary* power station. also N.

avalanche N. great mass of falling snow and ice. The park ranger warned the skiers to stay on the main trails, where they would be in no danger of being buried beneath a sudden *avalanche*.

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

avenge V. take vengeance for something (or on behalf of someone). Hamlet vowed he would *avenge* his father's murder and punish Claudius for his horrible crime.

aver V. assert confidently; affirm. Despite overwhelming popular skepticism about his voyage, Columbus *averred* he would succeed in finding a direct sea route to the Far East.

averse ADJ. reluctant; disinclined. The reporter was *averse* to revealing the sources of his information.

■ **aversion** N. firm dislike. Bert had an *aversion* to yuppies; Alex had an *aversion* to punks. Their mutual *aversion* was so great that they refused to speak to one another.

● **avert** V. prevent; turn away. She *averted* her eyes from the dead cat on the highway.

● **aviary** N. enclosure for birds. The *aviary* at the zoo held nearly 300 birds.

avid ADJ. greedy; eager for. *Avid* for pleasure, Abner partied with great *avidity*. avidity, N.

avocation N. secondary or minor occupation. His hobby proved to be so fascinating and profitable that gradually he abandoned his regular occupation and concentrated on his *avocation*.

avow V. declare openly. Lana *avowed* that she never meant to steal Debbie's boyfriend, but no one believed her *avowal* of innocence.

avuncular ADJ. like an uncle. *Avuncular* pride did not prevent him from noticing his nephew's shortcomings.

awe N. solemn wonder. The tourists gazed with *awe* at the tremendous expanse of the Grand Canyon.

awry ADV. crooked; wrong; amiss. Noticing that the groom's tie was slightly *awry*, the bride reached over to set it straight. A careful organizer, she hated to have anything go *awry* with her plans.

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

azure ADJ. sky blue. *Azure* skies are indicative of good weather.

babble V. chatter idly. The little girl *babbled* about her doll. also N.

bacchanalian ADJ. drunken. Emperor Nero attended the *bacchanalian* orgy.

badger V. pester; annoy. She was forced to change her telephone number because she was *badgered* by obscene phone calls.

badinage N. teasing conversation. Her friends at work greeted the news of her engagement with cheerful *badinage*.

baffle V. frustrate; perplex. The new code *baffled* the enemy agents.

bait V. harass; tease. The school bully *baited* the smaller children, terrorizing them.

baleful ADJ. deadly; having a malign influence; ominous. The fortune teller made *baleful* predictions of terrible things to come.

balk V. foil or thwart; stop short; refuse to go on. When the warden learned that several inmates were planning to escape, he took steps to *balk* their attempt. However, he *balked* at punishing them by shackling them to the walls of their cells.

ballast N. heavy substance used to add stability or weight. The ship was listing badly to one side; it was necessary to shift the *ballast* in the hold to get her back on an even keel. also V.

balm N. something that relieves pain. Friendship is the finest *balm* for the pangs of disappointed love.

balmy ADJ. mild; fragrant. A *balmy* breeze refreshed us after the sultry blast.

banal ADJ. hackneyed; commonplace; trite; lacking originality. The hack writer's worn-out clichés made his comic sketch seem *banal*. He even resorted to the *banality* of having someone slip on a banana peel!

bandy V. discuss lightly or glibly; exchange (words) heatedly. While the president was happy to *bandy* patriotic generalizations with anyone who would listen to him, he refused to *bandy* words with unfriendly reporters at the press conference.

bane N. cause of ruin; curse. Lucy's little brother was the *bane* of her existence: his attempts to make her life miserable worked so well that she could have poisoned him with ratsbane for having such a *baneful* effect.

bantering ADJ. good-natured ridiculing. They resented his *bantering* remarks because they thought he was being sarcastic.

barb N. sharp projection from fishhook, etc.; openly cutting remark. If you were a politician, which would you prefer, being caught on the *barb* of a fishhook or being subjected to malicious verbal *barbs*? Who can blame the president if he's happier fishing than back in the capitol listening to his critics' *barbed* remarks?

Word List 6 bard-bluff

bard N. poet. The ancient *bard* Homer sang of the fall of Troy.

baroque ADJ. highly ornate. Accustomed to the severe lines of contemporary buildings, the architecture students found the flamboyance of *baroque* architecture amusing. They simply didn't go for *baroque*.

barrage N. barrier laid down by artillery fire. The company was forced to retreat through the *barrage* of heavy cannons.

barren ADJ. desolate; fruitless and unproductive; lacking. Looking out at the trackless, *barren* desert, Indiana Jones feared that his search for the missing expedition would prove *barren*.

barricade N. hastily put together defensive barrier; obstacle. Marius and his fellow students hurriedly improvised a rough *barricade* to block police access to the students' quarter. Malcolm and his brothers *barricaded* themselves in their bedroom to keep their mother from seeing the hole in the bedroom floor. also V.

barterer N. trader. The *barterer* exchanged trinkets for the natives' furs. It seemed smarter to *barter* than to pay cash.

bask V. luxuriate; take pleasure in warmth. *Basking* on the beach, she relaxed so completely that she fell asleep.

bastion N. fortress; defense. The villagers fortified the town hall, hoping this improvised *bastion* could protect them from the guerillas' raids.

bate V. let down; restrain. Until it was time to open the presents, the children had to *bate* their curiosity. bated, ADJ.

bauble N. trinket; trifle. The child was delighted with the *bauble* she had won in the grab bag.

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

beam N. ray of light; long piece of metal or wood; course of a radio signal. V. smile radiantly. If a *beam* of light falls on you, it illuminates you; if a *beam* of iron falls on you, it eliminates you. (No one feels like *beaming* when crushed by an iron *beam*.)

beatific ADJ. giving bliss; blissful. The *beatific* smile on the child's face made us very happy.

beatitude N. blessedness; state of bliss. Growing closer to God each day, the mystic achieved a state of indescribable *beatitude*.

bedizen V. dress with vulgar finery. The witch doctors were *bedizened* in all their gaudiest costumes.

bedraggle V. wet thoroughly; stain with mud. We were so *bedraggled* by the severe storm that we had to change into dry clothing. bedraggled, ADJ.

beeline N. direct, quick route. As soon as the movie was over, Jim made a *beeline* for the exit.

befuddle V. confuse thoroughly. His attempts to clarify the situation succeeded only in *befuddling* her further.

beget V. father; produce; give rise to. One good turn may deserve another; it does not necessarily *beget* another.

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

● **beguile** V. mislead or delude; pass time. With flattery and big talk of easy money, the con men *beguiled* Kyle into betting his allowance on the shell game. Broke, he *beguiled* himself during the long hours by playing solitaire.

behemoth N. huge creature; monstrous animal. Sportscasters nicknamed the linebacker "The *Behemoth*."

belabor V. explain or go over excessively or to a ridiculous degree; attack verbally. The debate coach warned her student not to bore the audience by *belaboring* her point.

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

beleaguer V. besiege or attack; harassed. The babysitter was surrounded by a crowd of unmanageable brats who relentlessly *beleaguered* her.

■ **belie** V. contradict; give a false impression. His coarse, hard-bitten exterior *belied* his inner sensitivity.

belittle V. disparage or depreciate; put down. Parents should not *belittle* their children's early attempts at drawing, but should encourage their efforts. Barry was a put-down artist: he was a genius at *belittling* people and making them feel small.

bellicose ADJ. warlike. His *bellicose* disposition alienated his friends.

belligerent ADJ. quarrelsome. Whenever he had too much to drink, he became *belligerent* and tried to pick fights with strangers. belligerence, N.

bemoan V. lament; express disapproval of. The widow *bemoaned* the death of her beloved husband. Although critics *bemoaned* the serious flaws in the author's novels, each year his latest book topped the best-seller list.

bemused ADJ. confused; lost in thought; preoccupied. Jill studied the garbled instructions with a *bemused* look on her face.

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

benefactor N. gift giver; patron. Scrooge later became Tiny Tim's *benefactor* and gave him gifts.

beneficial ADJ. helpful; useful. Tiny Tim's cheerful good nature had a *beneficial* influence on Scrooge's once-uncharitable disposition.

beneficiary N. person entitled to benefits or proceeds of an insurance policy or will. In Scrooge's will, he made Tiny Tim his *beneficiary*: everything he left would go to young Tim.

■ **benevolent** ADJ. generous; charitable. Mr. Fezziwig was a *benevolent* employer, who wished to make Christmas merrier for young Scrooge and his other employees.

benign ADJ. kindly; favorable; not malignant. Though her *benign* smile and gentle bearing made Miss Marple seem a sweet little old lady, in reality she was a tough-minded, shrewd observer of human nature. benignity, N.

bent ADJ; N. determined; natural talent or inclination. *Bent* on advancing in the business world, the secretary-heroine of *Working Girl* has a true *bent* for high finance.

● **bequeath** V. leave to someone by a will; hand down. Though Maud had intended to *bequeath* the family home to her nephew, she died before changing her will. bequest, N.

berate V. scold strongly. He feared she would *berate* him for his forgetfulness.

bereavement N. state of being deprived of something valuable or beloved. His friends gathered to console him upon his sudden *bereavement*.

bereft ADJ. deprived of; lacking; desolate because of a loss. The foolish gambler soon found himself *bereft* of funds.

berserk ADV. frenzied. Angered, he went *berserk* and began to wreck the room.

beseech V. beg; plead with. The workaholic executive's wife *beseeched* him to spend more time with their son.

beset V. harass or trouble; hem in. Many vexing problems *beset* the American public school system. Sleeping Beauty's castle was *beset* on all sides by dense thickets that hid it from view.

besiege V. surround with armed forces; harass (with requests). When the bandits *besieged* the village, the villagers holed up in the town hall and prepared to withstand a long siege. Members of the new administration were *besieged* with job applications from people who had worked on the campaign.

besmirch V. soil, defile. The scandalous remarks in the newspaper *besmirch* the reputations of every member of the society.

bestial ADJ. beastlike; brutal. According to legend, the werewolf was able to abandon its human shape and take on a *bestial* form.

bestow V. give. He wished to *bestow* great honors upon the hero.

betoken V. signify; indicate. The well-equipped docks, tall piles of cargo containers, and numerous vessels being loaded all *betoken* Oakland's importance as a port.

betray V. be unfaithful; reveal (unconsciously or unwillingly). The spy *betrayed* his country by selling military secrets to the enemy. When he was taken in for questioning, the tightness of his lips *betrayed* his fear of being caught.

betroth V. become engaged to marry. The announcement that they had become *betrothed* surprised their friends who had not suspected any romance. betrothal, N.

bevy N. large group. The movie actor was surrounded by a *bevy* of starlets.

biased ADJ. slanted; prejudiced. Because the judge played golf regularly with the district attorney's father, we feared he might be *biased* in the prosecution's favor. bias, N.

bicameral ADJ. two-chambered, as a legislative body. The United States Congress is a *bicameral* body.

bicker V. quarrel. The children *bickered* morning, noon, and night, exasperating their parents.

biennial ADJ. every two years. Seeing no need to meet more frequently, the group held *biennial* meetings instead of annual ones. Plants that bear flowers *biennially* are known as *biennials*.

bigotry N. stubborn intolerance. Brought up in a democratic atmosphere, the student was shocked by the *bigotry* and narrowness expressed by several of his classmates.

bilious ADJ. suffering from indigestion; irritable. His *bilious* temperament was apparent to all who heard him rant about his difficulties.

bilk V. swindle; cheat. The con man specialized in *bilking* insurance companies.

billowing ADJ. swelling out in waves; surging. Standing over the air vent, Marilyn Monroe tried vainly to control her *billowing* skirts.

bivouac N. temporary encampment. While in *bivouac*, we spent the night in our sleeping bags under the stars. also V.

bizarre ADJ. fantastic; violently contrasting. The plot of the novel was too *bizarre* to be believed.

blanch V. bleach; whiten. Although age had *blanched* his hair, he was still vigorous and energetic.

bland ADJ. soothing or mild; agreeable. Jill tried a *bland* ointment for her sunburn. However, when Jack absent-mindedly patted her on the sunburned shoulder, she couldn't maintain a *bland* disposition.

blandishment N. flattery. Despite the salesperson's *blandishments,* the customer did not buy the outfit.

blare N. loud, harsh roar or screech; dazzling blaze of light. I don't know which is worse: the steady *blare* of a boom box deafening your ears or a sudden *blare* of flashbulbs dazzling your eyes.

blasé ADJ. bored with pleasure or dissipation. Although Beth was as thrilled with the idea of a trip to Paris as her classmates were, she tried to act super cool and *blasé*, as if she'd been abroad hundreds of times.

blasphemy N. irreverence; sacrilege; cursing. In my father's house, the Dodgers were the holiest of holies; to cheer for another team was to utter words of *blasphemy*. blasphemous, ADJ.

blatant ADJ. flagrant; conspicuously obvious; loudly offensive. To the unemployed youth from Dublin, the "No Irish Need Apply" placard in the shop window was a *blatant* mark of prejudice.

● **bleak** ADJ. cold or cheerless; unlikely to be favorable. The frigid, inhospitable Aleutian Islands are *bleak* military outposts. It's no wonder that soldiers assigned there have a *bleak* attitude toward their posting.

● **blighted** ADJ. suffering from a disease; destroyed. The extent of the *blighted* areas could be seen only when viewed from the air.

blithe ADJ. gay; joyous; carefree. Without a care in the world, Beth went her *blithe*, lighthearted way.

bloated ADJ. swollen or puffed as with water or air. Her *bloated* stomach came from drinking so much water.

bludgeon N. club; heavy-headed weapon. Attacked by Dr. Moriarty, Holmes used his walking stick as a *bludgeon* to defend himself. "Watson," he said, "I fear I may have *bludgeoned* Moriarty to death."

bluff ADJ. rough but good-natured. Jack had a *bluff* and hearty manner that belied his actual sensitivity; he never let people know how thin-skinned he really was.

bluff N. pretense (of strength); deception; high cliff. Claire thought Lord Byron's boast that he would swim the Hellespont was just a *bluff;* she was astounded when he dove from the high *bluff* into the waters below. also V.

Word List 7 blunder-canter

blunder N. error. The criminal's fatal *blunder* led to his capture. also V.

blurt V. utter impulsively. Before she could stop him, he *blurted* out the news.

bluster V. blow in heavy gusts; threaten emptily; bully. "Let the stormy winds *bluster*," cried Jack, "we'll set sail tonight." Jill let Jack *bluster*: she wasn't going anywhere, no matter what he said.

bode V. foreshadow; portend. The gloomy skies and the sulphurous odors from the mineral springs seemed to *bode* evil to those who settled in the area.

bogus ADJ. counterfeit; not authentic. The police quickly found the distributors of the *bogus* twenty-dollar bills.

bohemian ADJ. unconventional (in an artistic way). Gertrude Stein ran off to Paris to live an eccentric, *bohemian* life with her writer friends. Oakland was not *bohemian*: it was too bourgeois, too middle-class.

boisterous ADJ. violent; rough; noisy. The unruly crowd became even more *boisterous* when he tried to quiet them.

■ **bolster** V. support; reinforce. The debaters amassed file boxes full of evidence to *bolster* their arguments.

bolt N. door bar; fastening pin or screw; length of fabric. The carpenter shut the workshop door, sliding the heavy metal *bolt* into place. He sorted through his toolbox for the nuts and *bolts* and nails he would need. Before he cut into the *bolt* of canvas, he measured how much fabric he would need.

bolt V. dash or dart off; fasten (a door); gobble down. Jack was set to *bolt* out the front door, but Jill *bolted* the door. "Eat your breakfast," she said, "don't *bolt* your food."

bombardment N. attack with missiles. The enemy *bombardment* demolished the town. Members of the opposition party *bombarded* the prime minister with questions about the enemy attack.

bombastic ADJ. pompous; using inflated language. Puffed up with conceit, the orator spoke in such a *bombastic* manner that we longed to deflate him. bombast, N.

booming ADJ. deep and resonant; flourishing, thriving. "Who needs a microphone?" cried the mayor in his *booming* voice. Cheerfully he *boomed* out that, thanks to him, the city's economy was *booming*. boom, V.

boon N. blessing; benefit. The recent rains that filled our empty reservoirs were a *boon* to the whole community.

boorish ADJ. rude; insensitive. Though Mr. Collins constantly interrupted his wife, she ignored his *boorish* behavior, for she had lost hope of teaching him courtesy.

boundless ADJ. unlimited; vast. Mike's energy was *boundless*: the greater the challenge, the more vigorously he tackled the job.

bountiful ADJ. abundant; graciously generous. Thanks to the good harvest, we had a *bountiful* supply of food and we could be as *bountiful* as we liked in distributing food to the needy.

bourgeois ADJ. middle class; selfishly materialistic; dully conventional. Technically, anyone who belongs to the middle class is *bourgeois*, but, given the word's connotations, most people resent it if you call them that.

bovine ADJ. cowlike; placid and dull. Nothing excites Esther; even when she won the state lottery, she still preserved her air of *bovine* calm.

bowdlerize V. expurgate. After the film editors had *bowdlerized* the language in the script, the motion picture's rating was changed from "R" to "PG."

boycott V. refrain from buying or using. To put pressure on grape growers to stop using pesticides that harmed the farm workers' health, Cesar Chavez called for consumers to *boycott* grapes.

■ **braggart** N. boaster. Modest by nature, she was no *braggart*, preferring to let her accomplishments speak for themselves.

brandish V. wave around; flourish. Alarmed, Doctor Watson wildly *brandished* his gun until Holmes told him to put the thing away before he shot himself.

bravado N. swagger; assumed air of defiance. The *bravado* of the young criminal disappeared when he was confronted by the victims of his brutal attack.

brawn N. muscular strength; sturdiness. It takes *brawn* to become a champion weightlifter. brawny, ADJ.

brazen ADJ. insolent. Her *brazen* contempt for authority angered the officials.

breach N. breaking of contract or duty; fissure or gap. Jill sued Jack for *breach* of promise, claiming he had broken his promise to marry her. They found a *breach* in the enemy's fortifications and penetrated their lines. also V.

breadth N. width; extent. We were impressed by the *breadth* of her knowledge.

■ **brevity** N. conciseness. *Brevity* is essential when you send a telegram or cablegram; you are charged for every word.

brindled ADJ. tawny or grayish with streaks or spots. He was disappointed in the litter because the puppies were *brindled;* he had hoped for animals of a uniform color.

bristling ADJ. rising like bristles; showing irritation. The dog stood there, *bristling* with anger.

brittle ADJ. easily broken; difficult. My employer's self-control was as *brittle* as an egg-shell. Her *brittle* personality made it difficult for me to get along with her.

broach V. introduce; open up. Jack did not even try to *broach* the subject of religion with his in-laws. If you *broach* a touchy subject, it may cause a breach.

brochure N. pamphlet. This *brochure* on farming was issued by the Department of Agriculture.

brooch N. ornamental clasp. She treasured the *brooch* because it was an heirloom.

browbeat V. bully; intimidate. Billy resisted Ted's attempts *browbeat* him into handing over his lunch money.

browse V. graze; skim or glance at casually. "How now, brown cow, *browsing* in the green, green grass." I remember lines of verse that I came across while *browsing* through the poetry section of the local bookstore.

brunt N. main impact or shock. Tom Sawyer claimed credit for painting the fence, but the *brunt* of the work fell on others. However, he bore the *brunt* of Aunt Polly's complaints when the paint began to peel.

brusque ADJ. blunt; abrupt. Was Bruce too *brusque* when he brushed off Bob's request with a curt "Not now!"?

buccaneer N. pirate. At Disneyland the Pirates of the Caribbean sing a song about their lives as bloody *buccaneers*.

bucolic ADJ. rustic; pastoral. Filled with browsing cows and bleating sheep, the meadow was a charmingly *bucolic* sight.

buffet N. table with food set out for people to serve themselves; meal at which people help themselves to food that's been set out. Please convey the soufflé on the tray to the *buffet*. (*Buffet* rhymes with tray.)

buffet V. slap; batter; knock about. To *buffet* something is to rough it up. (*Buffet* rhymes with Muffett.) Was Miss Muffett *buffeted* by the crowd on the way to the buffet tray?

buffoonery N. clowning. In the Ace Ventura movies, Jim Carrey's *buffoonery* was hilarious: like Bozo the Clown, he's a natural *buffoon*.

bullion N. gold and silver in the form of bars. Much *bullion* is stored in the vaults at Fort Knox.

bulwark N. earthwork or other strong defense; person who defends. The navy is our principal *bulwark* against invasion.

bumptious ADJ. self-assertive. His classmates called him a show-off because of his *bumptious* airs.

bungalow N. small cottage. Every summer we rent a *bungalow* on Cape Cod for our vacation home. The rent is high, the roof is low—it's a basic *bungalow*.

bungle V. mismanage; blunder. Don't botch this assignment, Bumstead; if you *bungle* the job, you're fired!

buoyant ADJ. able to float; cheerful and optimistic. When the boat capsized, her *buoyant* life jacket kept Jody afloat. Scrambling back on board, she was still in a *buoyant* mood, certain that despite the delay she'd win the race.

bureaucracy N. over-regulated administrative system marked by red tape. The Internal Revenue Service is the ultimate *bureaucracy*: taxpayers wasted so much paper filling out IRS forms that the IRS *bureaucrats* printed up a new set of rules requiring taxpayers to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act.

burgeon V. grow forth; send out buds. In the spring, the plants that *burgeon* are a promise of the beauty that is to come.

burlesque V. give an imitation that ridicules. In *Spaceballs*, Rick Moranis *burlesques* Darth Vader of *Star Wars*, outrageously parodying Vader's stiff walk and hollow voice.

burly ADJ. husky; muscular. The *burly* mover lifted the packing crate with ease.

burnish V. make shiny by rubbing; polish. The maid *burnished* the brass fixtures until they reflected the lamplight.

bustle V. move about energetically; teem. David and the children *bustled* about the house getting in each other's way as they tried to pack for the camping trip. The whole house *bustled* with activity.

● **buttress** V. support; prop up. The attorney came up with several far-fetched arguments in a vain attempt to *buttress* his weak case. also N.

buxom ADJ. plump; full-bosomed. Fashion models are usually slim and willowy rather than *buxom*.

cabal N. small group of persons secretly united to promote their own interests. The *cabal* was defeated when their scheme was discovered.

cache N. hiding place. The detectives followed the suspect until he led them to the *cache* where he had stored his loot. He had *cached* the cash in a bag for trash: it was a hefty sum.

● **cacophonous** ADJ. discordant; inharmonious. Do the students in the orchestra enjoy the *cacophonous* sounds they make when they're tuning up? I don't know how they can stand the racket. cacophony, N.

cadaver N. corpse. In some states, it is illegal to dissect *cadavers*.

cadaverous ADJ. like a corpse; pale. By his *cadaverous* appearance, we could see how the disease had ravaged him.

cadence N. rhythmic rise and fall (of words or sounds); beat. Marching down the road, the troops sang out, following the *cadence* set by the sergeant.

■ **cajole** V. coax; wheedle. Diane tried to *cajole* her father into letting her drive the family car. cajolery, N.

calamity N. disaster; misery. As news of the *calamity* spread, offers of relief poured in to the stricken community.

■ **calculated** ADJ. deliberately planned; likely. Lexy's choice of clothes to wear to the debate tournament was carefully *calculated*. Her conventional suit was one *calculated* to appeal to the conservative judges.

caldron N. large kettle. "Why, Mr. Crusoe," said the savage heating the giant *caldron*, "we'd love to have you for dinner!"

caliber N. ability; quality. The scholarship committee searched for students of high *caliber*, ones with the intelligence and ability to be a credit to the school.

calligraphy N. beautiful writing; excellent penmanship. As we examine ancient manuscripts, we become impressed with the *calligraphy* of the scribes.

callous ADJ. hardened; unfeeling. He had worked in the hospital for so many years that he was *callous* to the suffering in the wards. callus, N.

callow ADJ. youthful; immature; inexperienced. As a freshman, Jack was sure he was a man of the world; as a sophomore, he made fun of freshmen as *callow* youths. In both cases, his judgment showed just how *callow* he was.

calorific ADJ. heat-producing. Coal is much more *calorific* than green wood.

calumny N. malicious misrepresentation; slander. He could endure his financial failure, but he could not bear the *calumny* that his foes heaped upon him.

camaraderie N. good-fellowship. What he loved best about his job was the sense of *camaraderie* he and his coworkers shared.

cameo N. shell or jewel carved in relief; star's special appearance in a minor role in a film. Don't buy *cameos* from the street peddlers in Rome: the workmanship is wretched. Did you catch Bill Murray's *cameo* in *Little Shop of Horrors*? He was on-screen so briefly that if you blinked you missed him.

camouflage V. disguise; conceal. In order to rescue Han Solo, Princess Leia *camouflaged* herself in the helmet and cloak of a space bandit.

■ **candor** N. frankness; open honesty. Jack can carry *candor* too far: when he told Jill his honest opinion of her, she nearly slapped his face. candid, ADJ.

canine ADJ. related to dogs; dog-like. Some days the *canine* population of Berkeley seems almost to outnumber the human population.

canny ADJ. shrewd; thrifty. The *canny* Scotsman was more than a match for the swindlers.

cant N. insincere expressions of piety; jargon of thieves. Shocked by news of the minister's extramarital love affairs, the worshippers dismissed his talk about the sacredness of marriage as mere *cant*. *Cant* is a form of hypocrisy: those who can, pray; those who *cant*, pretend.

cantankerous ADJ. ill humored; irritable. Constantly complaining about his treatment and refusing to cooperate with the hospital staff, he was a *cantankerous* patient.

cantata N. story set to music, to be sung by a chorus. The choral society sang the new *cantata* composed by its leader.

canter N. slow gallop. Because the racehorse had outdistanced its competition so easily, the reporter wrote that the race was won in a *canter*. also V.

Word List 8 canto-chameleon

canto N. division of a long poem. Dante's poetic masterpiece *The Divine Comedy* is divided into *cantos*.

canvass V. determine votes, etc. After *canvassing* the sentiments of his constituents, the congressman was confident that he represented the majority opinion of his district. also N.

capacious ADJ. spacious. In the *capacious* rotunda of the railroad terminal, thousands of travelers lingered while waiting for their train.

capacity N. mental or physical ability; role; ability to accommodate. Mike had the *capacity* to handle several jobs at once. In his *capacity* as president of SelecTronics he marketed an electronic dictionary with a *capacity* of 200,000 words.

capitulate V. surrender. The enemy was warned to *capitulate* or face annihilation.

caprice N. sudden, unexpected fancy; whim. On a *caprice*, Jack tried drag-racing, but paid the price—his father took his Chevy Caprice away from him.

■ **capricious** ADJ. unpredictable; fickle. The storm was *capricious*: it changed course constantly. Jill was *capricious*, too: she changed boyfriends almost as often as she changed clothes.

caption N. title; chapter heading; text under illustration. The *captions* that accompany *The Far Side* cartoons are almost as funny as the pictures. also V.

captivate V. charm or enthrall. Bart and Lisa were *captivated* by their new nanny's winning manner.

carat N. unit of weight for precious stones; measure of fineness of gold. He gave her a three-*carat* diamond mounted in an eighteen-*carat* gold band.

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

● **cardiologist** N. doctor specializing in the heart. When the pediatrician noticed Philip had a slight heart murmur, she referred him to a *cardiologist* for further tests.

careen V. lurch; sway from side to side. The taxicab *careened* wildly as it rounded the corner.

caricature N. exaggerated picture or description; distortion. The cartoonist's *caricature* of President Bush grossly exaggerated the size of the president's ears. also V.

carnage N. destruction of life. The film *The Killing Fields* vividly depicts the *carnage* wreaked by Pol Pot's followers in Cambodia.

carnal ADJ. fleshly. Is the public more interested in *carnal* pleasures than in spiritual matters? Compare the number of people who read *Playboy* daily to the number of those who read the Bible or Koran every day.

carnivorous ADJ. meat-eating. The lion's a *carnivorous* beast. A hunk of meat makes up his feast. A cow is not a *carnivore*. She likes the taste of grain, not gore.

● **carping** ADJ. finding fault. A *carping* critic is a nit-picker: he loves to point out flaws. If you don't like this definition, feel free to *carp*.

cartographer N. map-maker. Though not a professional *cartographer,* Tolkien was able to construct a map of his fictional world.

cascade N. small waterfall. On such a hot day, the hikers felt refreshed by the spray from the series of *cascades* pouring down the side of the cliff.

castigate V. criticize severely; punish. When the teacher threatened that she would *castigate* the mischievous boys if they didn't behave, they shaped up in a hurry.

casualty N. serious or fatal accident. The number of automotive *casualties* on this holiday weekend was high.

cataclysm N. violent upheaval; deluge. The Russian Revolution was a political and social *cataclysm* that overturned czarist society. cataclysmic, ADJ.

catalyst N. agent which brings about a chemical change while it remains unaffected and unchanged. Many chemical reactions cannot take place without the presence of a *catalyst*.

catapult N. slingshot; a hurling machine. Airplanes are sometimes launched from battleships by *catapults*. also V.

cataract N. great waterfall; eye abnormality. She gazed with awe at the mighty *cataract* known as Niagara Falls.

catastrophe N. calamity; disaster. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake was a *catastrophe* that destroyed most of the city. A similar earthquake striking today could have even more *catastrophic* results.

catcall N. shout of disapproval; boo. Every major league pitcher has off days during which he must learn to ignore the *catcalls* and angry hisses from the crowd.

catechism N. book for religious instruction; instruction by question and answer. He taught by engaging his pupils in a *catechism* until they gave him the correct answer.

categorical ADJ. without exceptions; unqualified; absolute. Though the captain claimed he was never, never sick at sea, he finally had to qualify his *categorical* denial: he was "hardly ever" sick at sea.

cater to V. supply something desired (whether good or bad). The chef was happy to *cater to* the tastes of his highly sophisticated clientele. Critics condemned the movie industry for *catering to* the public's ever-increasing appetite for violence.

catharsis N. purging or cleansing of any passage of the body. Aristotle maintained that tragedy created a *catharsis* by purging the soul of base concepts.

catholic ADJ. broadly sympathetic; liberal. He was extremely *catholic* in his taste and read everything he could find in the library.

caucus N. private meeting of members of a party to select officers or determine policy. At the opening of Congress, the members of the Democratic Party held a *caucus* to elect the Majority Leader of the House and the Party Whip.

caulk V. make watertight by filling in cracks. Jack had to *caulk* the tiles in the shower stall to stop the leak into the basement below.

causal ADJ. implying a cause-and-effect relationship. The psychologist maintained there was a *causal* relationship between the nature of one's early childhood experiences and one's adult personality. causality, N.

caustic ADJ. burning; sarcastically biting. The critic's *caustic* comments angered the actors, who resented his cutting remarks.

cavalcade N. procession; parade. As described by Chaucer, the *cavalcade* of Canterbury pilgrims was a motley group.

cavalier ADJ. offhand or casual; haughty. The disguised prince resented the *cavalier* way in which the palace guards treated him. How dared they handle a member of the royal family so unceremoniously!

cavil V. make frivolous objections. It's fine when you make sensible criticisms, but it really bugs me when you *cavil* about unimportant details. also N.

cede V. yield (title, territory) to; surrender formally. Eventually the descendants of England's Henry II were forced to *cede* their French territories to the King of France.

celebrated ADJ. famous; well-known. Thanks to their race to break Roger Maris's home-run record, Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire are two of America's most *celebrated* baseball players. celebrity, N.

celerity N. speed; rapidity. Hamlet resented his mother's *celerity* in remarrying within a month after his father's death.

celestial ADJ. heavenly; relating to the sky. Pointing his primitive telescope at the heavens, Galileo explored the *celestial* mysteries.

celibate ADJ. unmarried; abstaining from sexual intercourse. Though Havelock Ellis wrote extensively about sexual practices, recent studies maintain he was *celibate* throughout his life. celibacy, N.

censor N. overseer of morals; person who reads to eliminate inappropriate remarks. Soldiers dislike having their mail read by a *censor* but understand the need for this precaution. also V.

■ **censorious** ADJ. critical. *Censorious* people delight in casting blame.

■ **censure** V. blame; criticize. The senator was *censured* for behavior inappropriate to a member of Congress. also N.

centigrade ADJ. measure of temperature used widely in Europe. On the *centigrade* thermometer, the freezing point of water is zero degrees.

centrifugal ADJ. radiating; departing from the center. Many automatic drying machines remove excess moisture from clothing by *centrifugal* force.

centripetal ADJ. tending toward the center. Does *centripetal* force or the force of gravity bring orbiting bodies to the earth's surface?

centurion N. Roman army officer. Because he was in command of a company of one hundred soldiers, he was called a *centurion.*

cerebral ADJ. pertaining to the brain or intellect. The heroes of *Dumb and Dumber* were poorly equipped for *cerebral* pursuits.

cerebration N. thought. Mathematics problems sometimes require much *cerebration.*

ceremonious ADJ. marked by formality. Ordinary dress would be inappropriate at so *ceremonious* an affair.

● **certitude** N. certainty. Though there was no *certitude* of his getting the job, Lou thought he had a good chance of doing so.

cessation N. stoppage. The airline's employees threatened a *cessation* of all work if management failed to meet their demands. cease, V.

cession N. yielding to another; ceding. The *cession* of Alaska to the United States is discussed in this chapter.

chafe V. warm by rubbing; make sore (by rubbing). Chilled, he *chafed* his hands before the fire. The collar of his school uniform *chafed* Tom's neck, but not as much the school's strict rules *chafed* his spirit. also N.

chaff N. worthless products of an endeavor. When you separate the wheat from the *chaff,* be sure you throw out the *chaff.*

chaffing ADJ. bantering; joking. Sometimes Chad's flippant, *chaffing* remarks annoy us. Still, Chad's *chaffing* keeps us laughing. also N.

chagrin N. vexation (caused by humiliation or injured pride); disappointment. Embarrassed by his parents' shabby, working-class appearance, Doug felt their visit to his school would bring him nothing but *chagrin.* Someone filled with *chagrin* doesn't grin: he's too mortified.

chalice N. goblet; consecrated cup. In a small room adjoining the cathedral, many ornately decorated *chalices* made by the most famous European goldsmiths were on display.

chameleon N. lizard that changes color in different situations. Like the *chameleon,* he assumed the political thinking of every group he met.

Word List 9 champion-colander

champion V. support militantly. Martin Luther King, Jr., won the Nobel Peace Prize because he *championed* the oppressed in their struggle for equality.

chaotic ADJ. in utter disorder. He tried to bring order into the *chaotic* state of affairs. chaos, N.

charisma N. divine gift; great popular charm or appeal of a political leader Political commentators have deplored the importance of a candidate's *charisma* in these days of television campaigning.

● **charlatan** N. quack; pretender to knowledge. When they realized that the Wizard didn't know how to get them back to Kansas, Dorothy and her companions were indignant that they'd been duped by a *charlatan.*

chary ADJ. cautious; sparing or restrained about giving. A prudent, thrifty, New Englander, DeWitt was as *chary* of investing money in junk bonds as he was *chary* of paying people unnecessary compliments.

chasm N. abyss. Looking down from the Cliffs of Doom, Frodo and his companions could not see the bottom of the *chasm.*

chassis N. framework and working parts of an automobile. Examining the car after the accident, the owner discovered that the body had been ruined but that the *chassis* was unharmed.

chaste ADJ. pure; virginal; modest. To ensure that his bride would stay *chaste* while he was off to the wars, the crusader had her fitted out with a *chastity* belt. chastity, N.

chasten V. discipline; punish in order to correct. Whom God loves, God *chastens.*

chastise V. punish. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" was Miss Watson's motto: she relished whipping Huck with a birch rod to *chastise* him.

chauvinist N. blindly devoted patriot. A *chauvinist* cannot recognize any faults in his country, no matter how flagrant they may be. Likewise, a male *chauvinist* cannot recognize his bias in favor of his own sex, no matter how flagrant that may be. chauvinistic, ADJ.

check V. stop motion; curb or restrain. Thrusting out her arm, Grandma *checked* Bobby's lunge at his sister. "Young man," she said, "you'd better *check* your temper." (secondary meaning)

checkered ADJ. marked by changes in fortune. During his *checkered* career he had lived in palatial mansions and in dreary boardinghouses.

cherubic ADJ. angelic; innocent-looking. With her cheerful smile and rosy cheeks, she was a particularly *cherubic* child.

chicanery N. trickery; deception. Those sneaky lawyers misrepresented what occurred, made up all sorts of implausible alternative scenarios to confuse the jurors, and in general depended on *chicanery* to win the case.

chide V. scold. Grandma began to *chide* Steven for his lying.

chimerical ADJ. fantastically improbable; highly unrealistic; imaginative. As everyone expected, Ted's *chimerical* scheme to make a fortune by raising ermines in his back yard proved a dismal failure.

chisel N. wedgelike tool for cutting. With his hammer and *chisel*, the sculptor chipped away at the block of marble.

chisel V. swindle or cheat; cut with a chisel. That crook *chiseled* me out of a hundred dollars when he sold me that "marble" statue he'd *chiseled* out of some cheap hunk of rock.

chivalrous ADJ. courteous; faithful; brave. *Chivalrous* behavior involves noble words and good deeds.

choleric ADJ. hot-tempered. His flushed, angry face indicated a *choleric* nature.

choreography N. art of representing dances in written symbols; arrangement of dances. Merce Cunningham uses a computer in designing *choreography*: a software program allows him to compose sequences of possible moves and immediately view them on-screen.

chortle V. chuckle with delight. When she heard that her rival had just been jailed for embezzlement, she *chortled* with joy. She was *not* a nice lady.

chronic ADJ. long established as a disease. The doctors were finally able to attribute his *chronic* headaches and nausea to traces of formaldehyde gas in his apartment.

chronicle V. report; record (in chronological order). The gossip columnist was paid to *chronicle* the latest escapades of the socially prominent celebrities. also N.

churlish ADJ. boorish; rude. Dismayed by his *churlish* manners at the party, the girls vowed never to invite him again.

cipher N. secret code. Lacking his code book, the spy was unable to decode the message sent to him in *cipher*.

cipher N. nonentity; worthless person or thing. She claimed her ex-husband was a total *cipher* and wondered why she had ever married him.

circuitous ADJ. roundabout. To avoid the traffic congestion on the main highways, she took a *circuitous* route. circuit, N.

● **circumlocution** N. indirect or roundabout expression. He was afraid to call a spade a spade and resorted to *circumlocutions* to avoid direct reference to his subject.

circumscribe V. limit; confine. School regulations *circumscribed* Elle's social life: she hated having to follow rules that limited her activities.

circumspect ADJ. prudent; cautious. Investigating before acting, she tried always to be *circumspect.*

circumvent V. outwit; baffle. In order to *circumvent* the enemy, we will make two preliminary attacks in other sections before starting our major campaign.

cistern N. reservoir or water tank. The farmers were able to withstand the dry season by using rainwater they had stored in an underground *cistern*.

citadel N. fortress. The *citadel* overlooked the city like a protecting angel.

cite V. quote; command. She could *cite* passages in the Bible from memory. citation, N.

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

clairvoyant ADJ., N. having foresight; fortuneteller. Cassandra's *clairvoyant* warning was not heeded by the Trojans. clairvoyance, N.

clamber V. climb by crawling. She *clambered* over the wall.

clamor N. noise. The *clamor* of the children at play outside made it impossible for her to take a nap. also V.

clandestine ADJ. secret. After avoiding their chaperon, the lovers had a *clandestine* meeting.

clangor N. loud, resounding noise. The blacksmith was accustomed to the *clangor* of hammers on steel.

clapper N. striker (tongue) of a bell. Wishing to be undisturbed by the bell, Dale wound his scarf around the *clapper* to muffle the noise of its striking.

clasp N. fastening device; firm grip. When the *clasp* on Judy's bracelet broke, Fred repaired it, bending the hook back into shape. He then helped her slip on the bracelet, holding it firm in the sure *clasp* of his hand.

claustrophobia N. fear of being locked in. His fellow classmates laughed at his *claustrophobia* and often threatened to lock him in his room.

cleave V. split or sever; cling to; remain faithful to. With her heavy cleaver, Julia Child can *cleave* a whole roast duck in two. Soaked through, the soldier tugged at the uniform that *cleaved* annoyingly to his body. He would *cleave* to his post, come rain or shine.

cleft N. split. Trying for a fresh handhold, the mountain-climber grasped the edge of a *cleft* in the sheer rockface. also ADJ.

clemency N. disposition to be lenient; mildness, as of the weather. The lawyer was pleased when the case was sent to Judge Smith's chambers because Smith was noted for her *clemency* toward first offenders.

clench V. close tightly; grasp. "Open wide," said the dentist, but Clint *clenched* his teeth even more tightly than before.

● **cliché** N. phrase dulled in meaning by repetition. High school compositions are often marred by such *clichés* as "strong as an ox."

clientele N. body of customers. The rock club attracted a young, stylish *clientele.*

climactic ADJ. relating to the highest point. When he reached the *climactic* portions of the book, he could not stop reading. climax, N.

clime N. region; climate. His doctor advised him to move to a milder *clime.*

clip N. section of filmed material. Phil's job at Fox Sports involved selecting *clips* of the day's sporting highlights for later broadcast. also V.

clique N. small exclusive group. Fitzgerald wished that he belonged to the *clique* of popular athletes and big men on campus who seemed to run Princeton's social life.

cloister N. monastery or convent. The nuns lived a secluded life in the *cloister*.

clout N. great influence (especially political or social). Gatsby wondered whether he had enough *clout* to be admitted to the exclusive club.

cloying ADJ. distasteful (because excessive); excessively sweet or sentimental. Disliking the *cloying* sweetness of standard wedding cakes, Jody and Tom chose to have homemade carrot cake at the reception. cloy, V.

clump N. cluster or close group (of bushes, trees); mass; sound of heavy treading. Hiding behind the *clump* of bushes, the fugitives waited for the heavy *clump* of the soldiers' feet to fade away.

coagulate V. thicken; congeal; clot. Even after you remove the pudding from the burner, it will continue to *coagulate* as it stands; therefore, do not overcook the pudding, lest it become too thick.

● **coalesce** V. combine; fuse. The brooks *coalesce* into one large river. When minor political parties *coalesce*, their *coalescence* may create a major coalition.

coalition N. partnership; league; union. The Rainbow *Coalition* united people of all races in a common cause.

coddle V. to treat gently. Don't *coddle* the children so much; they need a taste of discipline.

codicil N. supplement to the body of a will. Miss Havisham kept her lawyers busy drawing up *codicils* to add to her already complicated will.

codify V. arrange (laws, rules) as a code; classify. We need to take the varying rules and regulations of the different health agencies and *codify* them into a national health code.

■ **coercion** N. use of force to get someone to obey. The inquisitors used both physical and psychological *coercion* to force Joan of Arc to deny that her visions were sent by God. coerce, V.

cogent ADJ. convincing. It was inevitable that David chose to go to Harvard: he had several *cogent* reasons for doing so, including a full-tuition scholarship. Katya argued her case with such *cogency* that the jury had to decide in favor of her client.

cogitate V. think over. *Cogitate* on this problem; the solution will come.

cognate ADJ. related linguistically: allied by blood: similar or akin in nature. The English word "mother" is *cognate* to the Latin word "mater," whose influence is visible in the words "maternal" and "maternity." also N.

cognitive ADJ. having to do with knowing or perceiving; related to the mental processes. Though Jack was emotionally immature, his *cognitive* development was admirable; he was very advanced intellectually.

cognizance N. knowledge. During the election campaign, the two candidates were kept in full *cognizance* of the international situation.

cohere V. stick together. Solids have a greater tendency to *cohere* than liquids.

cohesion N. tendency to keep together. A firm believer in the maxim "Divide and conquer," the evil emperor, by means of lies and trickery, sought to disrupt the *cohesion* of the federation of free nations.

coiffure N. hairstyle. You can make a statement with your choice of *coiffure*: in the sixties many African-Americans affirmed their racial heritage by wearing their hair in Afros.

coin V. make coins; invent or fabricate. Mints *coin* good money; counterfeiters *coin* fakes. Slanderers *coin* nasty rumors; writers *coin* words. A neologism is an expression that's been newly-*coined*.

coincidence N. two or more things occurring at the same time by chance. Was it just a *coincidence* that John and she had chanced to meet at the market for three days running, or was he deliberately trying to seek her out? coincidental, ADJ.

colander N. utensil with perforated bottom used for straining. Before serving the spaghetti, place it in a *colander* to drain it.

Word List 10 collaborate-congenital

collaborate V. work together. Two writers *collaborated* in preparing this book.

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

collate V. examine in order to verify authenticity; arrange in order. They *collated* the newly found manuscripts to determine their age.

collateral N. security given for loan. The sum you wish to borrow is so large that it must be secured by *collateral*.

● **colloquial** ADJ. pertaining to conversational or common speech. Some of the new, less formal reading passages on the SAT have a *colloquial* tone that is intended to make them more appealing to students.

collusion N. conspiring in a fraudulent scheme. The swindlers were found guilty of *collusion.*

colossal ADJ. huge. Radio City Music Hall has a *colossal* stage.

comatose ADJ. in a coma; extremely sleepy. The long-winded orator soon had his audience in a *comatose* state.

● **combustible** ADJ. easily burned. After the recent outbreak of fires in private homes, the fire commissioner ordered that all *combustible* materials be kept in safe containers. also N.

comely ADJ. attractive; agreeable. I would rather have a poor and *comely* wife than a rich and homely one.

comeuppance N. rebuke; deserts. After his earlier rudeness, we were delighted to see him get his *comeuppance.*

commandeer V. to draft for military purposes; to take for public use. The policeman *commandeered* the first car that approached and ordered the driver to go to the nearest hospital.

■ **commemorate** V. honor the memory of. The statue of the Minute Man *commemorates* the valiant soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary War.

commensurate ADJ. equal in extent. Your reward will be *commensurate* with your effort.

commiserate V. feel or express pity or sympathy for. Her friends *commiserated* with the widow.

commodious ADJ. spacious and comfortable. After sleeping in small roadside cabins, they found their hotel suite *commodious*.

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

compact N. agreement; contract. The signers of the Mayflower *Compact* were establishing a form of government.

compact ADJ. tightly packed; firm; brief. His short, *compact* body was better suited to wrestling than to basketball.

comparable ADJ. similar. People whose jobs are *comparable* in difficulty should receive *comparable* pay.

compatible ADJ. harmonious; in harmony with. They were *compatible* neighbors, never quarreling over unimportant matters. compatibility, N.

compelling ADJ. overpowering; irresistible in effect. The prosecutor presented a well-reasoned case, but the defense attorney's *compelling* arguments for leniency won over the jury.

compensatory ADJ. making up for; repaying. Can a *compensatory* education program make up for the inadequate schooling he received in earlier years?

■ **compile** V. assemble; gather; accumulate. We planned to *compile* a list of the words most frequently used on SAT examinations.

■ **complacency** N. self-satisfaction; smugness. Full of *complacency* about his latest victories, he looked smugly at the row of trophies on his mantelpiece. complacent, ADJ.

complaisant ADJ. trying to please; obliging. Always ready to accede to his noble patron's wishes, Mr. Collins was a *complaisant*, even obsequious, character.

complement V. complete; consummate; make perfect. The waiter recommended a glass of port to *complement* the cheese. also N.

● **complementary** ADJ. serving to complete something. John and Lisa's skills are *complementary*: he's good at following a daily routine, while she's great at improvising and handling emergencies. Together they make a great team.

■ **compliance** N. readiness to yield; conformity in fulfilling requirements. Bullheaded Bill was not noted for easy *compliance* with the demands of others. As an architect, however, Bill recognized that his design for the new school had to be in *compliance* with the local building code.

compliant ADJ. yielding. Because Joel usually gave in and went along with whatever his friends desired, his mother worried that he might be too *compliant*.

complicity N. participation; involvement. You cannot keep your *complicity* in this affair secret very long; you would be wise to admit your involvement immediately.

component N. element; ingredient. I wish all the *components* of my stereo system were working at the same time.

■ **composure** N. mental calmness. Even the latest work crisis failed to shake her *composure*.

compound V. combine; constitute; pay interest; increase. The makers of the popular cold remedy *compounded* a nasal decongestant with an antihistamine. also N.

■ **comprehensive** ADJ. thorough; inclusive. This book provides a *comprehensive* review of verbal and math skills for the SAT.

compress V. close; squeeze; contract. She *compressed* the package under her arm.

comprise V. include; consist of. If the District of Columbia were to be granted statehood, the United States of America would *comprise* fifty-one states, not just fifty.

compromise V. adjust or settle by making mutual concessions; endanger the interests or reputation of. Sometimes the presence of a neutral third party can help adversaries *compromise* their differences. Unfortunately, you're not neutral; therefore, your presence here *compromises* our chances of reaching an agreement. also N.

compunction N. remorse. The judge was especially severe in his sentencing because he felt that the criminal had shown no *compunction* for his heinous crime.

compute V. reckon; calculate. He failed to *compute* the interest, so his bank balance was not accurate. computation, N.

concave ADJ. hollow. The back-packers found partial shelter from the storm by huddling against the *concave* wall of the cliff.

■ **concede** V. admit; yield. Despite all the evidence Monica had assembled, Mark refused to *concede* that she was right.

conceit N. vanity or self-love; whimsical idea; extravagant metaphor. Although Jack was smug and puffed up with *conceit*, he was an entertaining companion, always expressing himself in amusing *conceits* and witty turns of phrase.

concentric ADJ. having a common center. The target was made of *concentric* circles.

conception N. beginning; forming of an idea. At the first *conception* of the work, he was consulted. conceive, V.

concerted ADJ. mutually agreed on; done together. All the Girl Scouts made a *concerted* effort to raise funds for their annual outing. When the movie star appeared, his fans let out a *concerted* sigh.

concession N. an act of yielding. Before they could reach an agreement, both sides had to make certain *concessions*.

■ **conciliatory** ADJ. reconciling; soothing. She was still angry despite his *conciliatory* words. conciliate, V.

■ **concise** ADJ. brief and compact. When you define a new word, be *concise*: the shorter the definition, the easier it is to remember.

conclusive ADJ. decisive; ending all debate. When the stolen books turned up in John's locker, we finally had *conclusive* evidence of the identity of the mysterious thief.

concoct V. prepare by combining; make up in concert. How did the inventive chef ever *concoct* such a strange dish? concoction, N.

concomitant N. that which accompanies. Culture is not always a *concomitant* of wealth. also ADJ.

concord N. harmony; agreement between people or things. Watching Tweedledum and Tweedledee battle, Alice wondered at their lack of *concord*.

■ **concur** V. agree. Did you *concur* with the decision of the court or did you find it unfair?

concurrent ADJ. happening at the same time. In America, the colonists were resisting the demands of the mother country; at the *concurrent* moment in France, the middle class was sowing the seeds of rebellion.

condemn V. censure; sentence; force or limit to a particular state. In *My Cousin Vinnie*, Vinnie's fiancée *condemned* Vinnie for mishandling his cousin Tony's defense. If Vinnie didn't do a better job defending Tony, the judge would *condemn* Tony to death, and Vinnie would be *condemned* to cleaning toilets for a living.

condense V. make more compact or dense; shorten or abridge; reduce into a denser form. If you squeeze a slice of Wonder Bread, taking out the extra air, you can *condense* it into a pellet the size of a sugar cube. If you cut out the unnecessary words from your essay, you can *condense* it to a paragraph. As the bathroom cooled down, the steam from the shower *condensed* into droplets of water.

condescend V. act conscious of descending to a lower level; patronize. Though Jill had been a star softball player in college, when she played a pickup game at the park she never *condescended* to her less experienced teammates. condescension, N.

condiments N. seasonings; spices. The chef seasoned the dish with so much garlic that we could hardly taste the other *condiments*.

condole V. express sympathetic sorrow. His friends gathered to *condole* with him over his loss. condolence, N.

■ **condone** V. overlook; forgive; give tacit approval; excuse. Unlike Widow Douglass, who *condoned* Huck's minor offenses, Miss Watson did nothing but scold.

conducive ADJ. contributive; tending to. Rest and proper diet are *conducive* to good health.

conduit N. aqueduct; passageway for fluids. Water was brought to the army in the desert by an improvised *conduit* from the adjoining mountain.

confidant N. trusted friend. He had no *confidants* with whom he could discuss his problems at home.

confine V. shut in; restrict. The terrorists had *confined* their prisoner in a small room. However, they had not chained him to the wall or done anything else to *confine* his movements further. confinement, N.

confirm V. corroborate; verify; support. I have several witnesses who will *confirm* my account of what happened.

confiscate V. seize; commandeer. The army *confiscated* all available supplies of uranium.

■ **conflagration** N. great fire. In the *conflagration* that followed the 1906 earthquake, much of San Francisco was destroyed.

● **confluence** N. flowing together; crowd. They built the city at the *confluence* of two rivers.

conformity N. harmony; agreement. In *conformity* with our rules and regulations, I am calling a meeting of our organization.

■ **confound** V. confuse; puzzle. No mystery could *confound* Sherlock Holmes for long.

confrontation N. act of facing someone or something; encounter, often hostile. Morris hoped to avoid any *confrontations* with his ex-wife, but he kept on running into her at the health club. How would you like to *confront* someone who can bench press 200 pounds? confront, V., confrontational, ADJ.

congeal V. freeze; coagulate. His blood *congealed* in his veins as he saw the dread monster rush toward him.

congenial ADJ. pleasant; friendly. My father loved to go out for a meal with *congenial* companions.

congenital ADJ. existing at birth. Were you born stupid, or did you just turn out this way? In other words, is your idiocy acquired or *congenital*? Doctors are able to cure some *congenital* deformities such as cleft palates by performing operations on infants.

Word List 11 conglomeration-countermand

conglomeration N. mass of material sticking together. In such a *conglomeration* of miscellaneous statistics, it was impossible to find a single area of analysis.

congruent ADJ. in agreement; corresponding. In formulating a hypothesis, we must keep it *congruent* with what we know of the real world; it cannot disagree with our experience.

conifer N. pine tree; cone-bearing tree. According to geologists, the *conifers* were the first plants to bear flowers.

● **conjecture** V. surmise; guess. Although there was no official count, the organizers *conjectured* that more than 10,000 marchers took part in the March for Peace. also N.

conjugal ADJ. pertaining to marriage. Their dreams of *conjugal* bliss were shattered as soon as their temperaments clashed.

conjure V. summon a devil; practice magic; imagine or invent. Sorcerers *conjure* devils to appear. Magicians *conjure* white rabbits out of hats. Political candidates *conjure* up images of reformed cities and a world at peace.

connivance N. assistance; pretense of ignorance of something wrong; permission to offend. With the *connivance* of his friends, he plotted to embarrass the teacher. connive, V.

connoisseur N. person competent to act as a judge of art, etc.; a lover of an art. She had developed into a *connoisseur* of fine china.

connotation N. suggested or implied meaning of an expression. Foreigners frequently are unaware of the *connotations* of the words they use.

connubial ADJ. pertaining to marriage or the matrimonial state. In his telegram, he wished the newlyweds a lifetime of *connubial* bliss.

conscientious ADJ. scrupulous; careful. A *conscientious* editor, she checked every definition for its accuracy.

consecrate V. dedicate; sanctify. We shall *consecrate* our lives to this noble purpose.

■ **consensus** N. general agreement. Every time the garden club members had nearly reached a *consensus* about what to plant, Mistress Mary, quite contrary, disagreed.

consequential ADJ. pompous; important; self-important. Convinced of his own importance, the actor strutted about the dressing room with a *consequential* air.

conservatory N. school of the fine arts (especially music or drama). A gifted violinist, Marya was selected to study at the *conservatory*.

consign V. deliver officially; entrust; set apart. The court *consigned* the child to her paternal grandmother's care. consignment, N.

consistency N. absence of contradictions; dependability; uniformity; degree of thickness. Holmes judged puddings and explanations on their *consistency:* he liked his puddings without lumps and his explanations without improbabilities.

console V. lessen sadness or disappointment; give comfort. When her father died, Marius did his best to *console* Cosette.

consolidation N. unification; process of becoming firmer or stronger. The recent *consolidation* of several small airlines into one major company has left observers of the industry wondering whether room still exists for the "little guy" in aviation. consolidate, V.

consonance N. harmony; agreement. Her agitation seemed out of *consonance* with her usual calm.

consort V. associate with. We frequently judge people by the company with whom they *consort*.

consort N. husband or wife. The search for a *consort* for the young Queen Victoria ended happily.

conspicuous ADJ. easily seen; noticeable; striking. Janet was *conspicuous* both for her red hair and for her height.

conspiracy N. treacherous plot. Brutus and Cassius joined in the *conspiracy* to kill Julius Caesar. conspire, V.

constituent N. supporter. The congressman received hundreds of letters from angry *constituents* after the Equal Rights Amendment failed to pass.

■ **constraint** N. compulsion; repression of feelings. There was a feeling of *constraint* in the room because no one dared to criticize the speaker. constrain, V.

construe V. explain; interpret. If I *construe* your remarks correctly, you disagree with the theory already advanced.

consummate ADJ. complete. I have never seen anyone who makes as many stupid errors as you do; what a *consummate* idiot you are! also V.

contagion N. infection. Fearing *contagion,* they took great steps to prevent the spread of the disease.

contaminate V. pollute. The sewage system of the city so *contaminated* the water that swimming was forbidden.

contemporary N. person belonging to the same period. Though Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot were *contemporaries,* the two novelists depicted their Victorian world in markedly different ways. also ADJ.

contempt N. scorn; disdain. The heavyweight boxer looked on ordinary people with *contempt*, scorning them as weaklings who couldn't hurt a fly. We thought it was *contemptible* of him to be *contemptuous* of people for being weak.

■ **contend** V. struggle; compete; assert earnestly. Sociologist Harry Edwards *contends* that young black athletes are exploited by some college recruiters.

contention N. claim; thesis. It is our *contention* that, if you follow our tactics, you will boost your score on the SAT. contend, V.

■ **contentious** ADJ. quarrelsome. Disagreeing violently with the referees' ruling, the coach became so *contentious* that they threw him out of the game.

contest V. dispute. The defeated candidate attempted to *contest* the election results.

context N. writings preceding and following the passage quoted. Because these lines are taken out of *context*, they do not convey the message the author intended.

contiguous ADJ. adjacent to; touching upon. The two countries are *contiguous* for a few miles; then they are separated by the gulf.

continence N. self-restraint; sexual chastity. At the convent, Connie vowed to lead a life of *continence*. The question was, could Connie be content with always being *continent*?

contingent ADJ. dependent on; conditional. Caroline's father informed her that any raise in her allowance was *contingent* on the quality of her final grades. contingency, N.

contingent N. group that makes up part of a gathering. The New York *contingent* of delegates at the Democratic National Convention was a boisterous, sometimes rowdy lot.

contortions N. twistings; distortions. As the effects of the opiate wore away, the *contortions* of the patient became more violent and demonstrated how much pain she was enduring.

contraband N. ADJ. illegal trade; smuggling. The Coast Guard tries to prevent traffic in *contraband* goods.

■ **contract** V. compress or shrink; make a pledge; catch a disease. Warm metal expands; cold metal *contracts*.

contravene V. contradict; oppose; infringe on or transgress. Mr. Barrett did not expect his frail daughter Elizabeth to *contravene* his will by eloping with Robert Browning.

contrite ADJ. penitent. Her *contrite* tears did not influence the judge when he imposed sentence. contrition, N.

contrived ADJ. forced; artificial; not spontaneous. Feeling ill at ease with his new in-laws, James made a few *contrived* attempts at conversation and then retreated into silence.

controvert V. oppose with arguments; attempt to refute; contradict. The witness's testimony was so clear and her reputation for honesty so well-established that the defense attorney decided it was wiser to make no attempt to *controvert* what she said.

contusion N. bruise. Black and blue after her fall, Sue was treated for *contusions* and abrasions.

conundrum N. riddle. During the long car ride, she invented *conundrums* to entertain the children.

convene V. assemble. Because much needed legislation had to be enacted, the governor ordered the legislature to *convene* in special session by January 15.

convention N. social or moral custom; established practice. Flying in the face of *convention*, George Sand shocked society by taking lovers and wearing men's clothes.

conventional ADJ. ordinary; typical. His *conventional* upbringing left him wholly unprepared for his wife's eccentric family.

● **converge** V. approach; tend to meet; come together. African-American men from all over the United States *converged* on Washington to take part in the historic Million Men march.

conversant ADJ. familiar with. The lawyer is *conversant* with all the evidence.

converse N. opposite. The inevitable *converse* of peace is not war but annihilation.

converse V. chat; talk informally. Eva was all ears while Lulu and Lola *conversed*. Wasn't it rude of her to eavesdrop on their *conversation*? conversation, N.

convert N. one who has adopted a different religion or opinion. On his trip to Japan, though the President spoke at length about the virtues of American automobiles, he made few *converts* to his beliefs. also V.

convex ADJ. curving outward. He polished the *convex* lens of his telescope.

conveyance N. vehicle; transfer. During the transit strike, commuters used various kinds of *conveyances*.

■ **conviction** N. judgment that someone is guilty of a crime; strongly held belief. Even her *conviction* for murder did not shake Peter's *conviction* that Harriet was innocent of the crime.

convivial ADJ. festive; gay; characterized by joviality. The *convivial* celebrators of the victory sang their college songs.

convoke V. call together. Congress was *convoked* at the outbreak of the emergency. convocation, N.

convoluted ADJ. coiled around; involved; intricate. The new tax regulations are so *convoluted* that even accountants have trouble following their twists and turns.

copious ADJ. plentiful. She had *copious* reasons for rejecting the proposal.

coquette N. flirt. Because she refused to give him an answer to his proposal of marriage, he called her a *coquette*. also V.

■ **cordial** ADJ. gracious; heartfelt. Our hosts greeted us at the airport with a *cordial* welcome and a hearty hug.

cordon N. extended line of men or fortifications to prevent access or egress. The police *cordon* was so tight that the criminals could not leave the area. also V.

cornucopia N. horn overflowing with fruit and grain; symbol of abundance. The encyclopedia salesman claimed the new edition was a veritable *cornucopia* of information, an inexhaustible source of knowledge for the entire family.

corollary N. consequence; accompaniment. Brotherly love is a complex emotion, with sibling rivalry its natural *corollary*.

coronation N. ceremony of crowning a queen or king. When the witches told Macbeth he would be king, they failed to warn him he would lose his crown soon after his *coronation*.

corporeal ADJ. bodily; material. The doctor had no patience with spiritual matters: his job was to attend to his patients' *corporeal* problems, not to minister to their souls.

corpulent ADJ. very fat. The *corpulent* man resolved to reduce. corpulence, N.

correlation N. mutual relationship. He sought to determine the *correlation* that existed between ability in algebra and ability to interpret reading exercises. correlate, V., N.

■ **corroborate** V. confirm; support. Though Huck was quite willing to *corroborate* Tom's story, Aunt Polly knew better than to believe either of them.

● **corrode** V. destroy by chemical action. The girders supporting the bridge *corroded* so gradually that no one suspected any danger until the bridge suddenly collapsed. corrosion, N.

corrosive ADJ. eating away by chemicals or disease. Stainless steel is able to withstand the effects of *corrosive* chemicals. corrode, V.

● **corrugated** ADJ. wrinkled; ridged. She wished she could smooth away the wrinkles from his *corrugated* brow.

cosmic ADJ. pertaining to the universe; vast. *Cosmic* rays derive their name from the fact that they bombard the earth's atmosphere from outer space. cosmos, N.

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

coterie N. group that meets socially; select circle. After his book had been published, he was invited to join the literary *coterie* that lunched daily at the hotel.

countenance V. approve; tolerate. He refused to *countenance* such rude behavior on their part.

countenance N. face. When Jose saw his newborn daughter, a proud smile spread across his *countenance*.

countermand V. cancel; revoke. The general *countermanded* the orders issued in his absence.

Word List 12 counterpart-decelerate

counterpart N. a thing that completes another; things very much alike. Night and day are *counterparts*, complementing one another.

coup N. highly successful action or sudden attack. As the news of his *coup* spread throughout Wall Street, his fellow brokers dropped by to congratulate him.

couple V. join; unite. The Flying Karamazovs *couple* expert juggling and amateur joking in their nightclub act.

courier N. messenger. The publisher sent a special *courier* to pick up the manuscript.

covenant N. agreement. We must comply with the terms of the *covenant*.

covert ADJ. secret; hidden; implied. Investigations of the Central Intelligence Agency and other secret service networks reveal that such *covert* operations can get out of control.

covetous ADJ. avaricious; eagerly desirous of. The child was *covetous* by nature and wanted to take the toys belonging to his classmates. covet, V.

cow V. terrorize; intimidate. The little boy was so *cowed* by the hulking bully that he gave up his lunch money without a word of protest.

cower V. shrink quivering, as from fear. The frightened child *cowered* in the corner of the room.

coy ADJ. shy; modest; coquettish. Reluctant to commit herself so early in the game, Kay was *coy* in her answers to Ken's offer.

cozen V. cheat; hoodwink; swindle. He was the kind of individual who would *cozen* his friends in a cheap card game but remain eminently ethical in all business dealings.

crabbed ADJ. sour; peevish. The *crabbed* old man was avoided by the children because he scolded them when they made noise.

craftiness N. slyness; trickiness. In many Native American legends, the coyote is the clever trickster, the embodiment of *craftiness*. crafty, N.

crass ADJ. very unrefined; grossly insensible. The film critic deplored the *crass* commercialism of movie-makers who abandon artistic standards in order to make a quick buck.

craven ADJ. cowardly. Lillian's *craven* refusal to join the protest was criticized by her comrades, who had expected her to be brave enough to stand up for her beliefs.

credence N. belief. Do not place any *credence* in his promises.

credibility N. believability. Because the candidate had made some pretty unbelievable promises, we began to question the *credibility* of everything she said.

credo N. creed. I believe we may best describe his *credo* by saying that it approximates the Golden Rule.

■ **credulity** N. belief on slight evidence; gullibility; naivete. Con artists take advantage of the *credulity* of inexperienced investors to swindle them out of their savings. credulous, ADJ.

creed N. system of religious or ethical belief. Any loyal American's *creed* must emphasize love of democracy.

crescendo N. increase in the volume or intensity, as in a musical passage; climax. The music suddenly shifted its mood, dramatically switching from a muted, contemplative passage to a *crescendo* with blaring trumpets and clashing cymbals.

crest N. highest point of a hill; foamy top of a wave. Fleeing the tidal wave, the islanders scrambled to reach the *crest* of Mount Lucinda. With relief, they watched the *crest* of the wave break well below their vantage point.

crestfallen ADJ. dejected; dispirited. We were surprised at his reaction to the failure of his project; instead of being *crestfallen*, he was busily engaged in planning new activities.

crevice N. crack; fissure. The mountain climbers found footholds in the tiny *crevices* in the mountainside.

cringe V. shrink back, as if in fear. The dog *cringed*, expecting a blow.

■ **criterion** N. standard used in judging. What *criterion* did you use when you selected this essay as the prizewinner? criteria, PL.

crop V. cut off unwanted parts of a photograph; graze. With care, David *cropped* the picture until its edges neatly framed the flock of sheep *cropping* the grass.

crotchety ADJ. eccentric; whimsical. Although he was reputed to be a *crotchety* old gentleman, I found his ideas substantially sound and sensible.

crux N. crucial point. This is the *crux* of the entire problem: everything centers on its being resolved.

crypt N. secret recess or vault, usually used for burial. Until recently, only bodies of rulers and leading statesmen were interred in this *crypt*.

■ **cryptic** ADJ. mysterious; hidden; secret. Thoroughly baffled by Holmes's *cryptic* remarks, Watson wondered whether Holmes was intentionally concealing his thoughts about the crime.

cubicle N. small compartment partitioned off; small bedchamber. Hoping to personalize their workspace, the staff members decorated their tiny identical *cubicles* in markedly individual ways.

cuisine N. style of cooking. French *cuisine* is noted for its use of sauces and wines.

culinary ADJ. relating to cooking. Many chefs attribute their *culinary* skill to the wise use of spices.

cull V. pick out; reject. Every month the farmer *culls* the nonlaying hens from his flock and sells them to the local butcher. also N.

culminate V. attain the highest point; climax. George Bush's years of service to the Republican Party *culminated* in his being chosen as the Republican candidate for the presidency. His subsequent inauguration as President of the United States marked the *culmination* of his political career.

● **culpable** ADJ. deserving blame. Corrupt politicians who condone the activities of the gamblers are equally *culpable*.

culvert N. artificial channel for water. If we build a *culvert* under the road at this point, we will reduce the possibility of the road's being flooded during the rainy season.

cumbersome ADJ. heavy; hard to manage. He was burdened down with *cumbersome* parcels.

cumulative ADJ. growing by addition. Vocabulary building is a *cumulative* process: as you go through your flash cards, you will add new words to your vocabulary, one by one.

cupidity N. greed. The defeated people could not satisfy the *cupidity* of the conquerors, who demanded excessive tribute.

curator N. superintendent; manager. The members of the board of trustees of the museum expected the new *curator* to plan events and exhibitions that would make the museum more popular.

curmudgeon N. churlish, miserly individual. Although he was regarded by many as a *curmudgeon*, a few of us were aware of the many kindnesses and acts of charity that he secretly performed.

cursive ADJ. flowing, running. In normal writing we run our letters together in *cursive* form; in printing, we separate the letters.

■ **cursory** ADJ. casual; hastily done. Because a *cursory* examination of the ruins indicates the possibility of arson, we believe the insurance agency should undertake a more extensive investigation of the fire's cause.

■ **curtail** V. shorten; reduce. When Herb asked Diane for a date, she said she was really sorry she couldn't go out with him, but her dad had ordered her to *curtail* her social life.

cynical ADJ. skeptical or distrustful of human motives. *Cynical* from birth, Sidney was suspicious whenever anyone gave him a gift "with no strings attached." cynic, N.

cynosure N. the object of general attention. As soon as the movie star entered the room, she became the *cynosure* of all eyes.

dabble V. work at in a non-serious fashion; splash around. The amateur painter *dabbled* at art, but seldom produced a finished piece. The children *dabbled* their hands in the bird bath, splashing one another gleefully.

dais N. raised platform for guests of honor. When he approached the *dais*, he was greeted by cheers from the people who had come to honor him.

dank ADJ. damp. The walls of the dungeon were *dank* and slimy.

dapper ADJ. neat and trim. In "The Odd Couple" TV show, Tony Randall played Felix Unger, an excessively *dapper* soul who could not stand to have a hair out of place.

dappled ADJ. spotted. The sunlight filtering through the screens created a *dappled* effect on the wall.

daub V. smear (as with paint). From the way he *daubed* his paint on the canvas, I could tell he knew nothing of oils. also N.

daunt V. intimidate; frighten. "Boast all you like of your prowess. Mere words cannot *daunt* me," the hero answered the villain.

dauntless ADJ. bold. Despite the dangerous nature of the undertaking, the *dauntless* soldier volunteered for the assignment.

dawdle V. loiter; waste time. We have to meet a deadline so don't *dawdle*; just get down to work.

deadlock N. standstill; stalemate. Because negotiations had reached a *deadlock*, some of the delegates had begun to mutter about breaking off the talks. also V.

deadpan ADJ. wooden; impersonal. We wanted to see how long he could maintain his *deadpan* expression.

dearth N. scarcity. The *dearth* of skilled labor compelled the employers to open trade schools.

debacle N. sudden downfall; complete disaster. In the *Airplane* movies, every flight turns into a *debacle*, with passengers and crew members collapsing, engines falling apart, and carry-on baggage popping out of the overhead bins.

debase V. reduce in quality or value; lower in esteem; degrade. In *The King and I*, Anna refuses to kneel down and prostrate herself before the king, for she feels that to do so would *debase* her position, and she will not submit to such *debasement*.

debauch V. corrupt; seduce from virtue. Did Socrates' teachings lead the young men of Athens to be virtuous citizens, or did they *debauch* the young men, causing them to question the customs of their fathers? Clearly, Socrates' philosophical talks were nothing like the wild *debauchery* of the toga parties in *Animal House*.

● **debilitate** V. weaken; enfeeble. Michael's severe bout of the flu *debilitated* him so much that he was too tired to go to work for a week.

debonair ADJ. friendly; aiming to please. The *debonair* youth was liked by all who met him, because of his cheerful and obliging manner.

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

● **debunk** V. expose as false, exaggerated, worthless, etc; ridicule. Pointing out that he consistently had voted against strengthening anti-pollution legislation, reporters *debunked* the candidate's claim that he was a fervent environmentalist.

debutante N. young woman making formal entrance into society. As a *debutante,* she was often mentioned in the society columns of the newspapers.

decadence N. decay. The moral *decadence* of the people was reflected in the lewd literature of the period.

decapitate V. behead. They did not hang Lady Jane Grey; they *decapitated* her. "Off with her head!" cried the Duchess, eager to *decapitate* poor Alice.

decelerate V. slow down. Seeing the emergency blinkers in the road ahead, he *decelerated* quickly.

Word List 13 deciduous-dermatologist

deciduous ADJ. falling off as of leaves. The oak is a *deciduous* tree; in winter it looks quite bare.

decimate V. kill, usually one out of ten. We do more to *decimate* our population in automobile accidents than we do in war.

decipher V. interpret secret code. Lacking his code book, the spy was unable to *decipher* the scrambled message sent to him from the KGB.

declivity N. downward slope. The children loved to ski down the *declivity.*

decolleté ADJ. having a low-necked dress. Current fashion decrees that evening gowns be *decolleté* this season; bare shoulders are again the vogue.

decomposition N. decay. Despite the body's advanced state of *decomposition,* the police were able to identify the murdered man.

■ **decorum** N. propriety; orderliness and good taste in manners. Even the best-mannered students have trouble behaving with *decorum* on the last day of school. decorous, ADJ.

decoy N. lure or bait. The wild ducks were not fooled by the *decoy.* also V.

decrepit ADJ. worn out by age. The *decrepit* car blocked traffic on the highway.

decrepitude N. state of collapse caused by illness or old age. I was unprepared for the state of *decrepitude* in which I had found my old friend; he seemed to have aged twenty years in six months.

decry V. express strong disapproval of; disparage. The founder of the Children's Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman, strongly *decries* the lack of financial and moral support for children in America today.

deducible ADJ. derived by reasoning. If we accept your premise, your conclusions are easily *deducible.*

deface V. mar; disfigure. If you *deface* a library book, you will have to pay a hefty fine.

defame V. harm someone's reputation; malign; slander. If you try to *defame* my good name, my lawyers will see you in court. If rival candidates persist in *defaming* one another, the voters may conclude that all politicians are crooks. defamation, N.

default N. failure to act. When the visiting team failed to show up for the big game, they lost the game by *default.* When Jack failed to make the payments on his Jaguar, the dealership took back the car because he had *defaulted* on his debt.

defeatist ADJ. attitude of one who is ready to accept defeat as a natural outcome. If you maintain your *defeatist* attitude, you will never succeed. also N.

defection N. desertion. The children, who had made him an idol, were hurt most by his *defection* from our cause.

defer V. delay till later; exempt temporarily. In wartime, some young men immediately volunteer to serve; others *defer* making plans until they hear from their draft boards. During the Vietnam War, many young men, hoping to be *deferred*, requested student *deferments*.

defer V. give in respectfully; submit. When it comes to making decisions about purchasing software, we must *defer* to Michael, our computer guru; he gets the final word. Michael, however, can *defer* these questions to no one; only he can decide.

■ **deference** N. courteous regard for another's wish. In *deference* to the minister's request, please do not take photographs during the wedding service.

defiance N. refusal to yield; resistance. When John reached the "terrible two's," he responded to every parental request with howls of *defiance*. defy, V.

defile V. pollute; profane. The hoodlums *defiled* the church with their scurrilous writing.

definitive ADJ. final; complete. Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln* may be regarded as the *definitive* work on the life of the Great Emancipator.

deflect V. turn aside. His life was saved when his cigarette case *deflected* the bullet.

defoliate V. destroy leaves. In Vietnam the army made extensive use of chemical agents to *defoliate* the woodlands.

defray V. pay the costs of. Her employer offered to *defray* the costs of her postgraduate education.

deft ADJ. neat; skillful. The *deft* waiter uncorked the champagne without spilling a drop.

defunct ADJ. dead; no longer in use or existence. The lawyers sought to examine the books of the *defunct* corporation.

defuse V. remove the fuse of a bomb; reduce or eliminate a threat. Police negotiators are trained to *defuse* dangerous situations by avoiding confrontational language and behavior.

degenerate V. become worse; deteriorate. As the fight dragged on, the champion's style *degenerated* until he could barely keep on his feet.

■ **degradation** N. humiliation; debasement; degeneration. Some secretaries object to fetching the boss a cup of coffee because they resent the *degradation* of being made to do such lowly tasks. degrade, V.

● **dehydrate** V. remove water from; dry out. Running under a hot sun quickly *dehydrates* the body; joggers soon learn to carry water bottles and to drink from them frequently.

deify V. turn into a god; idolize. Admire Elvis Presley all you want; just don't *deify* him.

deign V. condescend; stoop. The celebrated fashion designer would not *deign* to speak to a mere seamstress; his overburdened assistant had to convey the master's wishes to the lowly workers assembling his great designs.

delectable ADJ. delightful; delicious. We thanked our host for a most *delectable* meal.

delete V. erase; strike out. Less is more: if you *delete* this paragraph, your whole essay will have greater appeal.

● **deleterious** ADJ. harmful. If you believe that smoking is *deleterious* to your health (and the Surgeon General certainly does), then quit!

deliberate V. consider; ponder. Offered the new job, she asked for time to *deliberate* before she told them her decision.

■ **delineate** V. portray; depict; sketch. Using only a few descriptive phrases, Austen *delineates* the character of Mr. Collins so well that we can predict his every move. delineation, N.

delirium N. mental disorder marked by confusion. In his *delirium*, the drunkard saw pink panthers and talking pigs. Perhaps he wasn't *delirious*: he might just have wandered into a movie.

delude V. deceive. His mistress may have *deluded* herself into believing that he would leave his wife and marry her.

deluge N. flood; rush. When we advertised the position, we received a *deluge* of applications.

delusion N. false belief; hallucination. Don suffers from *delusions* of grandeur: he thinks he's a world-famous author when he's published just one paperback book.

delve V. dig; investigate. *Delving* into old books and manuscripts is part of a researcher's job.

demagogue N. person who appeals to people's prejudice; false leader of people. He was accused of being a *demagogue* because he made promises that aroused futile hopes in his listeners.

demean V. degrade; humiliate. Standing on his dignity, he refused to *demean* himself by replying to the offensive letter. If you truly believed in the dignity of labor, you would not think it would *demean* you to work as a janitor.

demeanor N. behavior; bearing. His sober *demeanor* quieted the noisy revelers.

demented ADJ. insane. Doctor Demento was a lunatic radio personality who liked to act as if he were truly *demented*. If you're *demented*, your mental state is out of whack; in other words, you're wacky.

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

demolition N. destruction. One of the major aims of the air force was the complete *demolition* of all means of transportation by bombing of rail lines and terminals. demolish, V.

demoniac ADJ. fiendish. The Spanish Inquisition devised many *demoniac* means of torture. demon, N.

demur V. object (because of doubts, scruples); hesitate. When offered a post on the board of directors, David *demurred*: he had scruples about taking on the job because he was unsure he could handle it in addition to his other responsibilities.

demure ADJ. grave; serious; coy. She was *demure* and reserved, a nice modest girl whom any young man would be proud to take home to his mother.

demystify V. clarify; free from mystery or obscurity. Helpful doctors *demystify* medical procedures by describing them in everyday language, explaining that a myringotomy, for example, is an operation involving making a small hole in one's eardrum.

denigrate V. blacken. All attempts to *denigrate* the character of our late president have failed; the people still love him and cherish his memory.

denizen N. inhabitant or resident; regular visitor. In *The Untouchables*, Eliot Ness fights Al Capone and the other *denizens* of Chicago's underworld. Ness's fight against corruption was the talk of all the *denizens* of the local bars.

denotation N. meaning; distinguishing by name. A dictionary will always give us the *denotation* of a word; frequently, it will also give us the connotations. denote, V.

denouement N. outcome; final development of the plot of a play. The play was childishly written; the *denouement* was obvious to sophisticated theatergoers as early as the middle of the first act.

■ **denounce** V. condemn; criticize. The reform candidate *denounced* the corrupt city officers for having betrayed the public's trust. denunciation, N.

depict V. portray. In this sensational exposé, the author *depicts* Beatle John Lennon as a drug-crazed neurotic. Do you question the accuracy of this *depiction* of Lennon?

deplete V. reduce; exhaust. We must wait until we *deplete* our present inventory before we order replacements.

■ **deplore** V. regret; disapprove of. Although I *deplore* the vulgarity of your language, I defend your right to express yourself freely.

deploy V. spread out [troops] in an extended though shallow battle line. The general ordered the battalion to *deploy* in order to meet the enemy offensive.

● **depose** V. dethrone; remove from office. The army attempted to *depose* the king and set up a military government.

deposition N. testimony under oath. He made his *deposition* in the judge's chamber.

■ **depravity** N. extreme corruption; wickedness. The *depravity* of Caligula's behavior came to sicken even those who had willingly participated in his earlier, comparatively innocent orgies.

■ **deprecate** V. express disapproval of; protest against; belittle. A firm believer in old-fashioned courtesy, Miss Post *deprecated* the modern tendency to address new acquaintances by their first names. deprecatory, ADJ.

depreciate V. lessen in value. If you neglect this property, it will *depreciate*.

depredation N. plundering. After the *depredations* of the invaders, the people were penniless.

derange V. make insane; disarrange. Hamlet's cruel rejection *deranged* poor Ophelia; in her madness, she drowned herself.

derelict ADJ. abandoned; negligent. The *derelict* craft was a menace to navigation. Whoever abandoned it in the middle of the harbor was *derelict* in living up to his responsibilities as a boat owner. also N.

■ **deride** V. ridicule; make fun of. The critics *derided* his pretentious dialogue and refused to consider his play seriously. derision, N.

■ **derivative** ADJ. unoriginal; derived from another source. Although her early poetry was clearly *derivative* in nature, the critics thought she had promise and eventually would find her own voice.

dermatologist N. physician who studies the skin and its diseases. I advise you to consult a *dermatologist* about your acne.

Word List 14 derogatory-disgruntle

derogatory ADJ. expressing a low opinion. I resent your *derogatory* remarks.

descant V. discuss fully. He was willing to *descant* upon any topic of conversation, even when he knew very little about the subject under discussion. also N.

descry V. catch sight of. In the distance, we could barely *descry* the enemy vessels.

desecrate V. profane; violate the sanctity of. Shattering the altar and trampling the holy objects underfoot, the invaders *desecrated* the sanctuary.

● **desiccate** V. dry up. A tour of this smokehouse will give you an idea of how the pioneers used to *desiccate* food in order to preserve it.

desolate ADJ. unpopulated. After six months in the crowded, bustling metropolis, David was so sick of people that he was ready to head for the most *desolate* patch of wilderness he could find.

desolate V. rob of joy; lay waste to; forsake. The bandits *desolated* the countryside, burning farms and carrying off the harvest.

despise V. look on with scorn; regard as worthless or distasteful. Mr. Bond, I *despise* spies; I look down on them as mean, *despicable*, honorless men, whom I would wipe from the face of the earth with as little concern as I would scrape dog droppings from the bottom of my shoe.

despoil V. strip of valuables; rob. Seeking plunder, the raiders *despoiled* the village, carrying off any valuables they found.

■ **despondent** ADJ. depressed; gloomy. To the dismay of his parents, William became seriously *despondent* after he broke up with Jan; they despaired of finding a cure for his gloom. despondency, N.

despot N. tyrant; harsh, authoritarian ruler. How could a benevolent king turn overnight into a *despot*?

destitute ADJ. extremely poor. Because they had no health insurance, the father's costly illness left the family *destitute*.

desultory ADJ. aimless; haphazard; digressing at random. In prison Malcolm X set himself the task of reading straight through the dictionary; to him, reading was purposeful, not *desultory*.

■ **detached** ADJ. emotionally removed; calm and objective; physically unconnected. A psychoanalyst must maintain a *detached* point of view and stay uninvolved with his or her patients' personal lives. To a child growing up in an apartment or a row house, to live in a *detached* house was an unattainable dream.

detergent N. cleansing agent. Many new *detergents* have replaced soap.

determination N. resolve; measurement or calculation; decision. Nothing could shake his *determination* that his children would get the best education that money could buy. Thanks to my pocket calculator, my *determination* of the answer to the problem took only seconds of my time.

■ **deterrent** N. something that discourages; hindrance. Does the threat of capital punishment serve as a *deterrent* to potential killers? deter, V.

detonation N. explosion. The *detonation* of the bomb could be heard miles away.

detraction N. slandering; aspersion. He is offended by your frequent *detractions* of his ability as a leader.

■ **detrimental** ADJ. harmful; damaging. The candidate's acceptance of major financial contributions from a well-known racist ultimately proved *detrimental* to his campaign, for he lost the backing of many of his early grassroots supporters. detriment, N.

deviate V. turn away from (a principle, norm); depart; diverge. Richard never *deviated* from his daily routine: every day he set off for work at eight o'clock, had his sack lunch (peanut butter on whole wheat) at 12:15, and headed home at the stroke of five.

■ **devious** ADJ. roundabout; erratic; not straightforward. The Joker's plan was so *devious* that it was only with great difficulty we could follow its shifts and dodges.

■ **devise** V. think up; invent; plan. How clever he must be to have *devised* such a devious plan! What ingenious inventions might he have *devised* if he had turned his mind to science and not to crime.

devoid ADJ. lacking. You may think her mind is a total void, but she's actually not *devoid* of intelligence. She just sounds like an airhead.

devotee N. enthusiastic follower. A *devotee* of the opera, he bought season tickets every year.

devout ADJ. pious. The *devout* man prayed daily.

dexterous ADJ. skillful. The magician was so *dexterous* that we could not follow him as he performed his tricks.

diabolical ADJ. devilish. "What a fiend I am, to devise such a *diabolical* scheme to destroy Gotham City," chortled the Joker gleefully.

diagnosis N. art of identifying a disease; analysis of a condition. In medical school Margaret developed her skill at *diagnosis*, learning how to read volumes from a rapid pulse or a hacking cough. diagnose, V.; diagnostic, ADJ.

dialectical ADJ. relating to the art of debate; mutual or reciprocal. The debate coach's students grew to develop great forensic and *dialectical* skill. Teaching, however, is inherently a *dialectical* situation: the coach learned at least as much from her students as they learned from her. dialectics, N.

diaphanous ADJ. sheer; transparent. Through the *diaphanous* curtains, the burglar could clearly see the large jewelry box on the dressing table.

diatribe N. bitter scolding; invective. During the lengthy *diatribe* delivered by his opponent he remained calm and self-controlled.

dichotomy N. split; branching into two parts (especially contradictory ones). Willie didn't know how to resolve the *dichotomy* between his ambition to go to college and his childhood longing to run away and join the circus. Then he heard about Ringling Brothers Circus College, and he knew he'd found the perfect school.

dictum N. authoritative and weighty statement; saying; maxim. University administrations still follow the old *dictum* of "Publish or perish." They don't care how good a teacher you are; if you don't publish enough papers, you're out of a job.

didactic ADJ. teaching; instructional. Pope's lengthy poem *An Essay on Man* is too *didactic* for my taste: I dislike it when poets turn preachy and moralize.

differentiate V. distinguish; perceive a difference between. Tweedledum and Tweedledee were like two peas in a pod; not even Mother Tweedle could *differentiate* the one from the other.

● **diffidence** N. shyness. You must overcome your *diffidence* if you intend to become a salesperson.

■ **diffuse** ADJ. wordy; rambling; spread out (like a gas). If you pay authors by the word, you tempt them to produce *diffuse* manuscripts rather than brief ones. diffusion, N.

■ **digression** N. wandering away from the subject. Nobody minded when Professor Renoir's lectures wandered away from their official theme; his *digressions* were always more fascinating than the topic of the day. digress, V.

dilapidated ADJ. ruined because of neglect. The *dilapidated* old building needed far more work than just a new coat of paint. dilapidation, N.

dilate V. expand. In the dark, the pupils of your eyes *dilate.*

● **dilatory** ADJ. delaying. If you are *dilatory* in paying bills, your credit rating may suffer.

dilemma N. problem; choice of two unsatisfactory alternatives. In this *dilemma,* he knew no one to whom he could turn for advice.

dilettante N. aimless follower of the arts; amateur; dabbler. He was not serious in his painting; he was rather a *dilettante.*

■ **diligence** N. steadiness of effort; persistent hard work. Her employers were greatly impressed by her *diligence* and offered her a partnership in the firm. diligent, ADJ.

dilute V. make less concentrated; reduce in strength. She preferred to *dilute* her coffee with milk.

■ **diminution** N. lessening; reduction in size. Old Jack was as sharp at eighty as he had been at fifty; increasing age led to no *diminution* of his mental acuity.

din N. continued loud noise. The *din* of the jackhammers outside the classroom window drowned out the lecturer's voice. also V.

dinghy N. small ship's boat. In the film *Lifeboat*, an ill-assorted group of passengers from a sunken ocean liner are marooned at sea in a *dinghy*.

dingy ADJ. dull; not fresh; cheerless. Refusing to be depressed by her *dingy* studio apartment, Bea spent the weekend polishing the floors and windows and hanging bright posters on the walls.

dint N. means; effort. By *dint* of much hard work, the volunteers were able to place the raging forest fire under control.

diorama N. life-size three-dimensional scene from nature or history. Because they dramatically pose actual stuffed animals against realistic painted landscapes, the *dioramas* at the Museum of Natural History particularly impress high school biology students.

dire ADJ. disastrous. People ignored her *dire* predictions of an approaching depression.

dirge N. lament with music. The funeral *dirge* stirred us to tears.

disabuse V. correct a false impression; undeceive. I will attempt to *disabuse* you of your impression of my client's guilt; I know he is innocent.

disaffected ADJ. disloyal. Once the most loyal of Gorbachev's supporters, Sheverdnaze found himself becoming increasingly *disaffected*.

disapprobation N. disapproval; condemnation. The conservative father viewed his daughter's radical boyfriend with *disapprobation.*

disarray N. a disorderly or untidy state. After the New Year's party, the once orderly house was in total *disarray*.

disavowal N. denial; disclaiming. His *disavowal* of his part in the conspiracy was not believed by the jury. disavow, V.

disband V. dissolve; disperse. The chess club *disbanded* after its disastrous initial season.

disburse V. pay out. When you *disburse* money on the company's behalf, be sure to get a receipt.

discernible ADJ. distinguishable; perceivable. The ships in the harbor were not *discernible* in the fog. discern, V.

■ **discerning** ADJ. mentally quick and observant; having insight. Though no genius, the star was sufficiently *discerning* to tell her true friends from the countless phonies who flattered her.

disclaim V. disown; renounce claim to. If I grant you this privilege, will you *disclaim* all other rights?

■ **disclose** V. reveal. Although competitors offered him bribes, he refused to *disclose* any information about his company's forthcoming product. disclosure, N.

discombobulated ADJ. confused; discomposed. The novice square dancer became so *discombobulated* that he wandered into the wrong set.

discomfit V. put to rout; defeat; disconcert. This ruse will *discomfit* the enemy. discomfiture, N. discomfited, ADJ.

discomposure N. agitation; loss of poise. Perpetually poised, Agent 007 never exhibited a moment's *discomposure*.

disconcert V. confuse; upset; embarrass. The lawyer was *disconcerted* by the evidence produced by her adversary.

disconsolate ADJ. sad. The death of his wife left him *disconsolate.*

discord N. conflict; lack of harmony. Watching Tweedledum battle Tweedledee, Alice wondered what had caused this pointless *discord*.

■ **discordant** ADJ. not harmonious; conflicting. Nothing is quite so *discordant* as the sound of a junior high school orchestra tuning up.

■ **discount** V. disregard; dismiss. Be prepared to *discount* what he has to say about his ex-wife.

● **discourse** N. formal discussion; conversation. The young Plato was drawn to the Agora to hear the philosophical *discourse* of Socrates and his followers. also V.

discredit V. defame; destroy confidence in; disbelieve. The campaign was highly negative in tone; each candidate tried to *discredit* the other.

● **discrepancy** N. lack of consistency; difference. The police noticed some *discrepancies* in his description of the crime and did not believe him.

discrete ADJ. separate; unconnected. The universe is composed of *discrete* bodies.

discretion N. prudence; ability to adjust actions to circumstances. Use your *discretion* in this matter and do not discuss it with anyone. discreet, ADJ.

■ **discriminating** ADJ. able to see differences; prejudiced. A superb interpreter of Picasso, she was sufficiently *discriminating* to judge the most complex works of modern art. (secondary meaning) discrimination, N.

discursive ADJ. digressing; rambling. As the lecturer wandered from topic to topic, we wondered what if any point there was to his *discursive* remarks.

■ **disdain** V. view with scorn or contempt. In the film *Funny Face*, the bookish heroine *disdained* fashion models for their lack of intellectual interests. also N.

disembark V. go ashore; unload cargo from a ship. Before the passengers could *disembark*, they had to pick up their passports from the ship's purser.

disenfranchise V. deprive of a civil right. The imposition of the poll tax effectively *disenfranchised* poor Southern blacks, who lost their right to vote.

disengage V. uncouple; separate; disconnect. A standard movie routine involves the hero's desperate attempt to *disengage* a railroad car from a moving train.

disfigure V. mar in beauty; spoil. An ugly frown *disfigured* his normally pleasant face.

disgorge V. surrender something; eject; vomit. Unwilling to *disgorge* the cash he had stolen from the pension fund, the embezzler tried to run away.

disgruntle V. make discontented. The passengers were *disgruntled* by the numerous delays.

Word List 15 dishearten-duplicity

dishearten V. discourage; cause to lose courage or hope. His failure to pass the bar exam *disheartened* him.

disheveled ADJ. untidy. Your *disheveled* appearance will hurt your chances in this interview.

■ **disinclination** N. unwillingness. Some mornings I feel a great *disinclination* to get out of bed.

disingenuous ADJ. lacking genuine candor; insincere. Now that we know the mayor and his wife are engaged in a bitter divorce fight, we find their earlier remarks regretting their lack of time together remarkably *disingenuous*.

disinter V. dig up; unearth. They *disinterred* the body and held an autopsy.

disinterested ADJ. unprejudiced. Given the judge's political ambitions and the lawyers' financial interest in the case, the only *disinterested* person in the courtroom may have been the court reporter.

disjointed ADJ. disconnected. His remarks were so *disjointed* that we could not follow his reasoning.

dislodge V. remove (forcibly). Thrusting her fist up under the choking man's lower ribs, Margaret used the Heimlich maneuver to *dislodge* the food caught in his throat.

dismantle V. take apart. When the show closed, they *dismantled* the scenery before storing it.

dismay V. discourage; frighten. The huge amount of work she had left to do *dismayed* her. also N.

dismember V. cut into small parts. When the Austrian Empire was *dismembered,* several new countries were established.

■ **dismiss** V. put away from consideration; reject. Believing in John's love for her, she *dismissed* the notion that he might be unfaithful. (secondary meaning)

■ **disparage** V. belittle. A doting mother, Emma was more likely to praise her son's crude attempts at art than to *disparage* them.

disparate ADJ. basically different; unrelated. Unfortunately, Tony and Tina have *disparate* notions of marriage: Tony sees it as a carefree extended love affair, while Tina sees it as a solemn commitment to build a family and a home.

■ **disparity** N. difference; condition of inequality. Their *disparity* in rank made no difference at all to the prince and Cinderella.

dispassionate ADJ. calm; impartial. Known in the company for his cool judgment, Bill could impartially examine the causes of a problem, giving a *dispassionate* analysis of

what had gone wrong, and go on to suggest how to correct the mess.

dispatch N. speediness; prompt execution; message sent with all due speed. Young Napoleon defeated the enemy with all possible *dispatch;* he then sent a *dispatch* to headquarters informing his commander of the great victory. also V.

dispel V. scatter; drive away; cause to vanish. The bright sunlight eventually *dispelled* the morning mist.

■ **disperse** V. scatter. The police fired tear gas into the crowd to *disperse* the protesters. dispersion, N.

dispirited ADJ. lacking in spirit. The coach used all the tricks at his command to buoy up the enthusiasm of his team, which had become *dispirited* at the loss of the star player.

■ **disputatious** ADJ. argumentative; fond of arguing. Convinced he knew more than his lawyers, Alan was a *disputatious* client, ready to argue about the best way to conduct the case. disputant, N.

disquiet V. make uneasy or anxious. Holmes's absence for a day, slightly *disquieted* Watson; after a week with no word, however, Watson's uneasiness about his missing friend had grown into a deep fear for his safety. disquietude, N.

dissection N. analysis; cutting apart in order to examine. The *dissection* of frogs in the laboratory is particularly unpleasant to some students.

dissemble V. disguise; pretend. Even though John tried to *dissemble* his motive for taking modern dance, we all knew he was there not to dance but to meet girls.

■ **disseminate** V. distribute; spread; scatter (like seeds). By their use of the Internet, propagandists have been able to *disseminate* their pet doctrines to new audiences around the globe.

■ **dissent** V. disagree. In the recent Supreme Court decision, Justice O'Connor *dissented* from the majority opinion. also N.

dissertation N. formal essay. In order to earn a graduate degree from many of our universities, a candidate is frequently required to prepare a *dissertation* on some scholarly subject.

dissident ADJ. dissenting; rebellious. In the purge that followed the student demonstrations at Tiananmen Square, the government hunted down the *dissident* students and their supporters. also N.

dissimulate V. pretend; conceal by feigning. Although the governor tried to *dissimulate* his feelings about the opposing candidate, we all knew he despised his rival.

dissipate V. squander; waste; scatter. He is a fine artist, but I fear he may *dissipate* his gifts if he keeps wasting his time playing games.

dissolute ADJ. loose in morals. The *dissolute* life led by the ancient Romans is indeed shocking.

dissolution N. breaking of a union; decay; termination. Which caused King Lear more suffering: the *dissolution* of his kingdom into warring factions, or the *dissolution* of his aged, failing body?

dissonance N. discord. Composer Charles Ives often used *dissonance*—clashing or unresolved chords—for special effects in his musical works.

dissuade V. persuade not to do; discourage. Since Tom could not *dissuade* Huck from running away from home, he decided to run away with him. dissuasion, N.

distant ADJ. reserved or aloof; cold in manner. His *distant* greeting made me feel unwelcome from the start. (secondary meaning)

● **distend** V. expand; swell out. I can tell when he is under stress by the way the veins *distend* on his forehead.

distill V. extract the essence; purify; refine. A moonshiner *distills* mash into whiskey; an epigrammatist *distills* thoughts into quips.

distinction N. honor; contrast; discrimination. A holder of the Medal of Honor, George served with great *distinction* in World War II. He made a *distinction*, however, between World War II and Vietnam, which he considered an immoral conflict.

distort V. twist out of shape. It is difficult to believe the newspaper accounts of the riots because of the way some reporters *distort* and exaggerate the actual events. distortion, N.

distraught ADJ. upset; distracted by anxiety. The *distraught* parents frantically searched the ravine for their lost child.

diurnal ADJ. daily. A farmer cannot neglect his *diurnal* tasks at any time; cows, for example, must be milked regularly.

diva N. operatic singer; prima donna. Although world famous as a *diva,* she did not indulge in fits of temperament.

diverge V. vary; go in different directions from the same point. The spokes of the wheel *diverge* from the hub.

■ **divergent** ADJ. differing; deviating. Since graduating from medical school, the two doctors have taken *divergent* paths, one going on to become a nationally prominent surgeon, the other dedicating himself to a small family practice in his home town. divergence, N.

diverse ADJ. differing in some characteristics; various. The professor suggested *diverse* ways of approaching the assignment and recommended that we choose one of them. diversity, N.

diversion N. act of turning aside; pastime. After studying for several hours, he needed a *diversion* from work. divert, V.

diversity N. variety; dissimilitude. The *diversity* of colleges in this country indicates that many levels of ability are being cared for.

divest V. strip; deprive. He was *divested* of his power to act and could no longer govern. divestiture, N.

divine V. perceive intuitively; foresee the future. Nothing infuriated Tom more than Aunt Polly's ability to *divine* when he was telling the truth.

divulge V. reveal. No lover of gossip, Charlotte would never *divulge* anything that a friend told her in confidence.

docile ADJ. obedient; easily managed. As *docile* as he seems today, that old lion was once a ferocious, snarling beast. docility, N.

doctrinaire ADJ. unable to compromise about points of doctrine; dogmatic; unyielding. Weng had hoped that the student-led democracy movement might bring about change in China, but the repressive response of the *doctrinaire* hard-liners crushed his dreams of democracy.

■ **doctrine** N. teachings, in general; particular principle (religious, legal, etc.) taught. He was so committed to the *doctrines* of his faith that he was unable to evaluate them impartially.

■ **document** V. provide written evidence. She kept all the receipts from her business trip in order to *document* her expenses for the firm. also N.

doff V. take off. A gentleman used to *doff* his hat to a lady.

dogged ADJ. determined; stubborn. *Les Miserables* tells of Inspector Javert's long, *dogged* pursuit of the criminal Jean Valjean.

doggerel N. poor verse. Although we find occasional snatches of genuine poetry in her work, most of her writing is mere *doggerel.*

■ **dogmatic** ADJ. opinionated; arbitrary; doctrinal. We tried to discourage Doug from being so *dogmatic*, but never could convince him that his opinions might be wrong.

doldrums N. blues; listlessness; slack period. Once the excitement of meeting her deadline was over, she found herself in the *doldrums.*

doleful ADJ. sorrowful. He found the *doleful* lamentations of the bereaved family emotionally disturbing and he left as quickly as he could.

dolt N. stupid person. The heroes of *Dumb and Dumber* are, as the title suggests, a classic pair of *dolts*.

domicile N. home. Although his legal *domicile* was in New York City, his work kept him away from his residence for many years. also V.

domineer V. rule over tyrannically. Students prefer teachers who guide, not ones who *domineer.*

don V. put on. When Clark Kent has to *don* his Superman outfit, he changes clothes in a convenient phone booth.

doodle V. scribble or draw aimlessly; waste time. Art's teachers scolded him when he *doodled* all over the margins of his papers.

dormant ADJ. sleeping; lethargic; latent. At fifty her long-*dormant* ambition to write flared up once more; within a year she had completed the first of her great historical novels.

dormer N. window projecting from roof. In remodeling the attic into a bedroom, we decided that we needed to put in *dormers* to provide sufficient ventilation for the new room.

dossier N. file of documents on a subject. Ordered by J. Edgar Hoover to investigate the senator, the FBI compiled a complete *dossier* on him.

dote V. be excessively fond of; show signs of mental decline. Not only grandmothers bore you with stories about their brilliant grandchildren; grandfathers *dote* on the little rascals, too. Poor old Alf clearly *doted*: the senile old *dotard* was past it; in fact, he was in his *dotage*.

douse V. plunge into water; drench; extinguish. They *doused* each other with hoses and water balloons.

dowdy ADJ. slovenly; untidy. She tried to change her *dowdy* image by buying a new fashionable wardrobe.

downcast ADJ. disheartened; sad. Cheerful and optimistic by nature, Beth was never *downcast* despite the difficulties she faced.

drab ADJ. dull; lacking color; cheerless. The Dutch woman's *drab* winter coat contrasted with the distinctive, colorful native costume she wore beneath it.

draconian ADJ. extremely severe. When the principal canceled the senior prom because some seniors had been late to school that week, we thought the *draconian* punishment was far too harsh for such a minor violation of the rules.

dregs N. sediment; worthless residue. David poured the wine carefully to avoid stirring up the *dregs.*

drivel N. nonsense; foolishness. Why do I have to spend my days listening to such idiotic *drivel*? *Drivel* is related to *dribble*: think of a dribbling, *driveling* idiot.

droll ADJ. queer and amusing. He was a popular guest because his *droll* anecdotes were always entertaining.

drone N. idle person; male bee. Content to let his wife support him, the would-be writer was in reality nothing but a *drone*.

drone V. talk dully; buzz or murmur like a bee. On a gorgeous day, who wants to be stuck in a classroom listening to the teacher *drone?*

dross N. waste matter; worthless impurities. Many methods have been devised to separate the valuable metal from the *dross.*

drudgery N. menial work. Cinderella's fairy godmother rescued her from a life of *drudgery.*

■ **dubious** ADJ. questionable; filled with doubt. Many critics of the SAT contend the test is of *dubious* worth. Jay claimed he could get a perfect 2400 on the new SAT, but Ellen was *dubious*: she knew he hadn't cracked a book in three years.

ductile ADJ. malleable; flexible; pliable. Copper is an extremely *ductile* material: you can stretch it into the thinnest of wires, bend it, even wind it into loops.

dulcet ADJ. sweet sounding. The *dulcet* sounds of the birds at dawn were soon drowned out by the roar of traffic passing our motel.

dumbfound V. astonish. Egbert's perfect 2400 on his SAT exam *dumbfounded* his classmates, who had always found him to be perfectly dumb.

● **dupe** N. someone easily fooled. While the gullible Watson often was made a *dupe* by unscrupulous parties, Sherlock Holmes was far more difficult to fool. also V.

■ **duplicity** N. double-dealing; hypocrisy. When Tanya learned that Mark had been two-timing her, she was furious at his *duplicity*.

Word List 16 duration-encroachment

duration N. length of time something lasts. Because she wanted the children to make a good impression on the dinner guests, Mother promised them a treat if they'd behave for the *duration* of the meal.

duress N. forcible restraint, especially unlawfully. The hostages were held under *duress* until the prisoners' demands were met.

dutiful ADJ. respectful; obedient. When Mother told Billy to kiss Great-Aunt Hattie, the boy obediently gave the old woman a *dutiful* peck on her cheek.

dwarf V. cause to seem small. The giant redwoods and high cliffs *dwarfed* the elegant Ahwahnee Hotel, making it appear a modest lodge rather than an imposing hostelry.

dwindle V. shrink; reduce. The food in the life boat gradually *dwindled* away to nothing; in the end, they ate the ship's cook.

dynamic ADJ. energetic; vigorously active. The *dynamic* aerobics instructor kept her students on the run; she was a little *dynamo*.

earthy ADJ. unrefined; coarse. His *earthy* remarks often embarrassed the women in his audience.

ebb V. recede; lessen. Sitting on the beach, Mrs. Dalloway watched the tide *ebb*: the waters receded, drawing away from her as she sat there all alone. also N.

● **ebullient** ADJ. showing excitement; overflowing with enthusiasm. Amy's *ebullient* nature could not be repressed; she was always bubbling over with excitement. ebullience, N.

eccentric ADJ. irregular; odd; whimsical; bizarre. The comet veered dangerously close to the earth in its *eccentric* orbit. People came up with some *eccentric* ideas for dealing with the emergency: someone even suggested tieing a knot in the comet's tail!

eccentricity N. oddity; idiosyncrasy. Some of his friends tried to account for his rudeness to strangers as the *eccentricity* of genius.

ecclesiastic ADJ. pertaining to the church. The minister donned his *ecclesiastic* garb and walked to the pulpit. also N.

■ **eclectic** ADJ. composed of elements drawn from disparate sources. His style of interior decoration was *eclectic*: bits and pieces of furnishings from widely divergent periods, strikingly juxtaposed to create a unique decor. eclecticism, N.

eclipse V. darken; extinguish; surpass. The new stock market high *eclipsed* the previous record set in 1995.

ecologist N. a person concerned with the interrelationship between living organisms and their environment. The *ecologist* was concerned that the new dam would upset the natural balance of the creatures living in Glen Canyon.

economy N. efficiency or conciseness in using something. Reading the epigrams of Pope, I admire the *economy* of his verse: in few words he conveys worlds of meaning. (secondary meaning)

ecstasy N. rapture; joy; any overpowering emotion. When Allison received her long-hoped-for letter of acceptance from Harvard, she was in *ecstasy*. ecstatic, ADJ.

eddy N. swirling current of water, air, etc. The water in the tide pool was still, except for an occasional *eddy.*

edict N. decree (especially issued by a sovereign); official command. The emperor issued an *edict* decreeing that everyone should come see him model his magnificent new clothes.

● **edify** V. instruct; correct morally. Although his purpose was to *edify* and not to entertain his audience, many of his listeners were amused rather than enlightened.

eerie ADJ. weird. In that *eerie* setting, it was easy to believe in ghosts and other supernatural beings.

● **efface** V. rub out. The coin had been handled so many times that its date had been *effaced*.

effectual ADJ. able to produce a desired effect; valid. Medical researchers are concerned because of the development of drug-resistant strains of bacteria; many once useful antibiotics are no longer *effectual* in curing bacterial infections.

● **effervescence** N. inner excitement or exuberance; bubbling from fermentation or carbonation. Nothing depressed Sue for long; her natural *effervescence* soon reasserted itself. Soda that loses its *effervescence* goes flat. effervescent, ADJ. effervesce, V.

effete ADJ. lacking vigor; worn out; sterile. Is the Democratic Party still a vital political force, or is it an *effete*, powerless faction, wedded to outmoded liberal policies?

efficacy N. power to produce desired effect. The *efficacy* of this drug depends on the regularity of the dosage. efficacious, ADJ.

effigy N. dummy. The mob showed its irritation by hanging the judge in *effigy.*

effrontery N. shameless boldness. She had the *effrontery* to insult the guest.

effusive ADJ. pouring forth; gushing. Her *effusive* manner of greeting her friends finally began to irritate them. effusion, N.

egoism N. excessive interest in one's self; belief that one should be interested in one's self rather than in others. His *egoism* prevented him from seeing the needs of his colleagues.

■ **egotistical** ADJ. excessively self-centered; self-important; conceited. Typical *egotistical* remark: "But enough of this chit-chat about you and your little problems. Let's talk about what's really important: *Me!*"

egregious ADJ. notorious; conspicuously bad or shocking. She was an *egregious* liar; we all knew better than to believe a word she said. Ed's housekeeping was *egregious*: he let his dirty dishes pile up so long that they were stuck together with last week's food.

egress N. exit. Barnum's sign "To the *Egress*" fooled many people who thought they were going to see an animal and instead found themselves in the street.

ejaculation N. exclamation. He could not repress an *ejaculation* of surprise when he heard the news.

elaboration N. addition of details; intricacy. Tell what happened simply, without any *elaboration.* elaborate, V.

■ **elated** ADJ. overjoyed; in high spirits. Grinning from ear to ear, Bonnie Blair was clearly *elated* by her fifth Olympic gold medal. elation, N.

● **elegy** N. poem or song expressing lamentation. On the death of Edward King, Milton composed the *elegy* "Lycidas." elegiacal, ADJ.

● **elicit** V. draw out by discussion. The detectives tried to *elicit* where he had hidden his loot.

elixir N. cure-all; something invigorating. The news of her chance to go abroad acted on her like an *elixir.*

ellipsis N. omission of words from a text. Sometimes an *ellipsis* can lead to a dangling modifier, as in the sentence "Once dressed, you should refrigerate the potato salad."

elliptical ADJ. oval; ambiguous, either purposely or because key words have been left out. An *elliptical* billiard ball wobbles because it is not perfectly round; an *elliptical* remark baffles because it is not perfectly clear.

■ **eloquence** N. expressiveness; persuasive speech. The crowds were stirred by Martin Luther King's *eloquence.* eloquent, ADJ.

● **elucidate** V. explain; enlighten. He was called upon to *elucidate* the disputed points in his article.

■ **elusive** ADJ. evasive; baffling; hard to grasp. Trying to pin down exactly when the contractors would be finished remodeling the house, Nancy was frustrated by their *elusive* replies. elude, V.

● **emaciated** ADJ. thin and wasted. Many severe illnesses leave their victims so *emaciated* that they must gain back their lost weight before they can fully recover.

emanate V. issue forth. A strong odor of sulphur *emanated* from the spring.

emancipate V. set free. At first, the attempts of the Abolitionists to *emancipate* the slaves were unpopular in New England as well as in the South.

embargo N. ban on commerce or other activity. As a result of the *embargo*, trade with the colonies was at a standstill.

embark V. commence; go on board a boat or airplane; begin a journey. In devoting herself to the study of gorillas, Dian Fossey *embarked* on a course of action that was to cost her her life.

embed V. enclose; place in something. Tales of actual historical figures like King Alfred have become *embedded* in legends.

■ **embellish** V. adorn; ornament. The costume designer *embellished* the leading lady's ball gown with yards and yards of ribbon and lace.

embezzlement N. stealing. The bank teller confessed his *embezzlement* of the funds.

embody V. personify; make concrete; incorporate. Cheering on his rival Mark McGwire's efforts to break Roger Maris's home run record, Sammy Sosa *embodied* the spirit of true sportsmanship.

embrace V. hug; adopt or espouse; accept readily; encircle; include. Clasping Maid Marian in his arms, Robin Hood *embraced* her lovingly. In joining the outlaws in Sherwood Forest, she had openly *embraced* their cause.

embroider V. decorate with needlework; ornament with fancy or fictitious details. For her mother's birthday, Beth *embroidered* a lovely design on a handkerchief. When asked what made her late getting home, Jo *embroidered* her account with tales of runaway horses and rescuing people from a ditch. embroidery, N.

embroil V. throw into confusion; involve in strife; entangle. He became *embroiled* in the heated discussion when he tried to arbitrate the dispute.

embryonic ADJ. undeveloped; rudimentary. The CEO reminisced about the good old days when the computer industry was still in its *embryonic* stage and start-up companies were founded in family garages.

● **emend** V. correct; correct by a critic. The critic *emended* the book by selecting the passages which he thought most appropriate to the text.

emendation N. correction of errors; improvement. Please initial all the *emendations* you have made in this contract.

eminent ADJ. high; lofty. After his appointment to this *eminent* position, he seldom had time for his former friends.

emissary N. agent; messenger. The secretary of state was sent as the president's special *emissary* to the conference on disarmament.

emollient N. soothing or softening remedy. The nurse applied an *emollient* to the inflamed area. also ADJ.

empathy N. ability to identify with another's feelings, ideas, etc. What made Ann such a fine counselor was her *empathy*, her ability to put herself in her client's place and feel his emotions as if they were her own. empathize, V.

empirical ADJ. based on experience. He distrusted hunches and intuitive flashes; he placed his reliance entirely on *empirical* data.

■ **emulate** V. imitate; rival. In a brief essay, describe a person you admire, someone whose virtues you would like to *emulate*.

enamored ADJ. in love. Narcissus became *enamored* of his own beauty.

encipher V. encode; convert a message into code. One of Bond's first lessons was how to *encipher* the messages he sent to Miss Moneypenny so that none of his other lady friends could decipher them.

enclave N. territory enclosed within an alien land. The Vatican is an independent *enclave* in Italy.

encomium N. high praise; eulogy. Uneasy with the *encomiums* expressed by his supporters, Tolkien felt unworthy of such high praise.

encompass V. surround. A moat, or deep water-filled trench, *encompassed* the castle, protecting it from attack.

encroachment N. gradual intrusion. The *encroachment* of the factories upon the neighborhood lowered the value of the real estate.

Word List 17 encumber-etymology

encumber V. burden. Some people *encumber* themselves with too much luggage when they take short trips.

endearment N. fond statement. Your gifts and *endearments* cannot make me forget your earlier insolence.

endemic ADJ. prevailing among a specific group of people or in a specific area or country. This disease is *endemic* in this part of the world; more than 80 percent of the population are at one time or another affected by it.

■ **endorse** V. approve; support. Everyone waited to see which one of the rival candidates for the city council the mayor would *endorse*. (secondary meaning) endorsement, N.

enduring ADJ. lasting; surviving. Keats believed in the *enduring* power of great art, which would outlast its creators' brief lives.

energize V. invigorate; make forceful and active. Rather than exhausting Maggie, dancing *energized* her.

enervate V. weaken. She was slow to recover from her illness; even a short walk to the window would *enervate* her.

enfranchise V. to admit to the rights of citizenship (especially the right to vote). Although Blacks were *enfranchised* shortly after the Civil War, women did not receive the right to vote until 1920.

engage V. attract; hire; pledge oneself; confront. "Your case has *engaged* my interest, my lord," said Holmes. "You may *engage* my services."

engaging ADJ. charming; attractive. Everyone liked Nancy's pleasant manners and *engaging* personality.

engender V. cause; produce. To receive praise for real accomplishments *engenders* self-confidence in a child.

engross V. occupy fully. John was so *engrossed* in his studies that he did not hear his mother call.

■ **enhance** V. increase; improve. You can *enhance* your chances of being admitted to the college of your choice by learning to write well; an excellent essay can *enhance* any application.

■ **enigma** N. puzzle; mystery. "What *do* women want?" asked Dr. Sigmund Freud. Their behavior was an *enigma* to him.

enigmatic ADJ. obscure; puzzling. Many have sought to fathom the *enigmatic* smile of the *Mona Lisa.*

■ **enmity** N. ill will; hatred. At Camp David, President Carter labored to bring an end to the *enmity* that prevented the peaceful coexistence of Egypt and Israel.

ennui N. boredom. The monotonous routine of hospital life induced a feeling of *ennui* that made him moody and irritable.

enormity N. hugeness (in a bad sense). He did not realize the *enormity* of his crime until he saw what suffering he had caused.

enrapture V. please intensely. The audience was *enraptured* by the freshness of the voices and the excellent orchestration.

ensconce V. settle comfortably. Now that their children were *ensconced* safely in the private school, the jet-setting parents decided to leave for Europe.

ensemble N. group of (supporting) players; organic unity; costume. As a dancer with the Oakland Ballet, Benjamin enjoyed being part of the *ensemble*. Having acted with one another for well over a decade, the cast members have developed a true sense of *ensemble*: they work together seamlessly. Mitzi wore a charming two-piece *ensemble* designed by Donna Karan.

entail V. require; necessitate; involve. Building a college-level vocabulary will *entail* some work on your part.

enterprising ADJ. full of initiative. By coming up with fresh ways to market the company's products, Mike proved himself to be an *enterprising* businessman.

enthrall V. capture; enslave. From the moment he saw her picture, he was *enthralled* by her beauty.

entice V. lure; attract; tempt. She always tried to *entice* her baby brother into mischief.

entitlement N. right to claim something; right to benefits. While Bill was *entitled* to use a company car while he worked for the firm, the company's lawyers questioned his *entitlement* to the vehicle once he'd quit his job.

entity N. real being. As soon as the Charter was adopted, the United Nations became an *entity* and had to be considered as a factor in world diplomacy.

entomology N. study of insects. Kent found *entomology* the most annoying part of his biology course; studying insects bugged him.

entourage N. group of attendants; retinue. Surrounded by the members of his *entourage*, the mayor hurried into city hall, shouting a brusque "No comment!" to the reporters lining the steps.

entrance V. put under a spell; carry away with emotion. Shafts of sunlight on a wall could *entrance* her and leave her spellbound.

entreat V. plead; ask earnestly. She *entreated* her father to let her stay out till midnight.

entrepreneur N. businessman; contractor. Opponents of our present tax program argue that it discourages *entrepreneurs* from trying new fields of business activity.

enumerate V. list; mention one by one. Huck hung his head in shame as Miss Watson *enumerated* his many flaws.

enunciate V. speak distinctly. Stop mumbling! How will people understand you if you do not *enunciate*?

eon N. long period of time; an age. It has taken *eons* for our civilization to develop.

■ **ephemeral** ADJ. short-lived; fleeting. The mayfly is an *ephemeral* creature: its adult life lasts little more than a day.

epic N. long heroic poem, or similar work of art. Kurosawa's film *Seven Samurai* is an *epic* portraying the struggle of seven warriors to destroy a band of robbers. also ADJ.

epicure N. connoisseur of food and drink. *Epicures* frequent this restaurant because it features exotic wines and dishes. epicurean, ADJ.

epigram N. witty thought or saying, usually short. Poor Richard's *epigrams* made Benjamin Franklin famous.

epilogue N. short speech at conclusion of dramatic work. The audience was so disappointed in the play that many did not remain to hear the *epilogue*.

episodic ADJ. loosely connected; divided into incidents. Though he tried to follow the plot of *Gravity's Rainbow,* John found the novel too *episodic*; he enjoyed individual passages, but had trouble following the work as a whole.

epistolary ADJ. consisting of letters. Mark Harris's *Wake Up, Stupid!* is a modern *epistolary* novel that uses letters, telegrams, and newspaper clippings to tell the hero's story. The movie *You've Got Mail* tells a story using e-mail; does that make it an *e-pistolary* movie? epistle, N.

epitaph N. inscription in memory of a dead person. In his will, he dictated the *epitaph* he wanted placed on his tombstone.

epithet N. word or phrase characteristically used to describe a person or thing. So many kings of France were named Charles that you could tell them apart only by their *epithets*: Charles the Wise was someone far different from Charles the Fat.

epitome N. perfect example or embodiment. Singing "I am the very model of a modern Major-General," in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Major-General Stanley proclaimed himself the *epitome* of an officer and a gentleman.

epoch N. period of time. The glacial *epoch* lasted for thousands of years.

equable ADJ. tranquil; steady; uniform. After the hot summers and cold winters of New England, he found the climate of the West Indies *equable* and pleasant.

● **equanimity** N. calmness of temperament; composure. Even the inevitable strains of caring for an ailing mother did not disturb Bea's *equanimity*.

equestrian N. rider on horseback. These paths in the park are reserved for *equestrians* and their steeds. also ADJ.

equilibrium N. balance. After the divorce, he needed some time to regain his *equilibrium.*

equine ADJ. resembling a horse. His long, bony face had an *equine* look to it.

equinox N. period of equal days and nights; the beginning of Spring and Autumn. The vernal *equinox* is usually marked by heavy rainstorms.

● **equitable** ADJ. fair; impartial. I am seeking an *equitable* solution to this dispute, one that will be fair and acceptable to both sides.

equity N. fairness; justice. Our courts guarantee *equity* to all.

■ **equivocal** ADJ. ambiguous; intentionally misleading. Rejecting the candidate's *equivocal* comments on tax reform, the reporters pressed him to state clearly where he stood on the issue. equivocate, V.

equivocate V. lie; mislead; attempt to conceal the truth. No matter how bad the news is, give it to us straight. Above all, don't *equivocate*.

erode V. eat away. The limestone was *eroded* by the dripping water until only a thin shell remained. erosion, N.

erotic ADJ. arousing sexual desire; pertaining to sexual love. Films with significant *erotic* content are rated R; pornographic films are rated X.

erratic ADJ. odd; unpredictable. Investors become anxious when the stock market appears *erratic*.

■ **erroneous** ADJ. mistaken; wrong. I thought my answer was correct, but it was *erroneous*.

■ **erudite** ADJ. learned; scholarly. Unlike much scholarly writing, Huizinga's prose was entertaining as well as *erudite*, lively as well as learned.

escapade N. prank; flighty conduct. The headmaster could not regard this latest *escapade* as a boyish joke and expelled the young man.

escapism N. avoiding reality by diverting oneself with amusements. Before you criticize her constant reading as mere *escapism*, note how greatly her vocabulary has improved since she began spending her days buried in books.

eschew V. avoid. Hoping to present himself to his girlfriend as a totally reformed character, he tried to *eschew* all the vices, especially chewing tobacco and drinking bathtub gin.

■ **esoteric** ADJ. hard to understand; known only to the chosen few. *The New Yorker* short stories often include *esoteric* allusions to obscure people and events: the implication is, if you are in the in-crowd, you'll get the reference; if you come from Cleveland, you won't.

espionage N. spying. In order to maintain its power, the government developed a system of *espionage* that penetrated every household.

espouse V. adopt; support. She was always ready to *espouse* a worthy cause.

esteem V. respect; value. Jill *esteemed* Jack's taste in music, but she deplored his taste in clothes.

estranged ADJ. separated; alienated. The *estranged* wife sought a divorce. estrangement, N.

ethereal ADJ. light; heavenly; unusually refined. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the spirit Ariel is an *ethereal* creature, too airy and unearthly for our mortal world.

ethnic ADJ. relating to races. Intolerance between *ethnic* groups is deplorable and usually is based on lack of information.

ethos N. underlying character of a culture, group, etc. Seeing how tenderly ordinary Spaniards treated her small daughter made author Barbara Kingsolver aware of how greatly children were valued in the Spanish *ethos*.

etymology N. study of word parts. A knowledge of *etymology* can help you on many English tests: if you know what the roots and prefixes mean, you can determine the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Word List 18 eulogy-faculty

■ **eulogy** N. expression of praise, often on the occasion of someone's death. Instead of delivering a spoken *eulogy* at Genny's memorial service, Jeff sang a song he had written in her honor.

■ **euphemism** N. mild expression in place of an unpleasant one. The expression "he passed away" is a *euphemism* for "he died."

euphonious ADJ. pleasing in sound. *Euphonious* even when spoken, the Italian language is particularly pleasing to the ear when sung. euphony. N.

euphoria N. feeling of great happiness and well-being (sometimes exaggerated). Delighted with her SAT scores, sure that the university would accept her, Allison was filled with *euphoria.* euphoric, ADJ.

● **evanescent** ADJ. fleeting; vanishing. Brandon's satisfaction in his new job was *evanescent*, for he immediately began to notice its many drawbacks. evanescence, N.

evasive ADJ. not frank; eluding. Your *evasive* answers convinced the judge that you were withholding important evidence. evade, V.

evenhanded ADJ. impartial; fair. Do men and women receive *evenhanded* treatment from their teachers, or, as recent studies suggest, do teachers pay more attention to male students than to females?

evince V. show clearly. When he tried to answer the questions, he *evinced* his ignorance of the subject matter.

evocative ADJ. tending to call up (emotions, memories). Scent can be remarkably *evocative*: the aroma of pipe tobacco *evokes* the memory of my father; a whiff of talcum powder calls up images of my daughter as a child.

ewe N. female sheep. The flock of sheep was made up of dozens of *ewes*, together with only a handful of rams.

■ **exacerbate** V. worsen; embitter. The latest bombing *exacerbated* England's already existing bitterness against the IRA, causing the prime minister to break off the peace talks abruptly.

exacting ADJ. extremely demanding. Cleaning the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel was an *exacting* task, one that demanded extremely meticulous care on the part of the restorers. exaction, N.

■ **exalt** V. raise in rank or dignity; praise. The actor Alec Guinness was *exalted* to the rank of knighthood by the queen.

exasperate V. vex. Johnny often *exasperates* his mother with his pranks.

exceptionable ADJ. objectionable. Do you find the punk rock band Green Day a highly *exceptionable*, thoroughly distasteful group, or do you think they are exceptionally talented performers?

● **excerpt** N. selected passage (written or musical). The cinematic equivalent of an *excerpt* from a novel is a clip from a film. also V.

excise V. cut away; cut out. When you *excise* the dead and dying limbs of a tree, you not only improve its appearance but also enhance its chances of bearing fruit. excision. N.

exclaim V. cry out suddenly. "Watson! Behind you!" Holmes *exclaimed*, seeing the assassin hurl himself on his friend.

excoriate V. scold with biting harshness; strip the skin off. Seeing the holes in Bill's new pants, his mother furiously *excoriated* him for ruining his good clothes. The tight, starched collar chafed and *excoriated* his neck, rubbing it raw.

exculpate V. clear from blame. He was *exculpated* of the crime when the real criminal confessed.

execrable ADJ. very bad. The anecdote was in such *execrable* taste that it revolted the audience.

■ **execute** V. put into effect; carry out. The choreographer wanted to see how well she could *execute* a pirouette. (secondary meaning) execution, N.

exegesis N. explanation; interpretation, especially of a biblical text. The minister based her sermon on her *exegesis* of a difficult passage from the book of Job. exegetical, ADJ.

■ **exemplary** ADJ. serving as a model; outstanding. At commencement the dean praised Ellen for her *exemplary* behavior as class president.

■ **exemplify** V. serve as an example of; embody. For a generation of balletgoers, Rudolf Nureyev *exemplified* the ideal of masculine grace.

exempt ADJ. not subject to a duty, obligation. Because of his flat feet, Foster was *exempt* from serving in the armed forces. also V.

exertion N. effort; expenditure of much physical work. The *exertion* spent in unscrewing the rusty bolt left her exhausted.

■ **exhaustive** ADJ. thorough; comprehensive. We have made an *exhaustive* study of all published SAT tests and are happy to share our research with you.

■ **exhilarating** ADJ. invigorating and refreshing; cheering. Though some of the hikers found tramping through the snow tiring, Jeffrey found the walk on the cold, crisp day *exhilarating*.

exhort V. urge. The evangelist *exhorted* all the sinners in his audience to repent. exhortation, N.

exhume V. dig out of the ground; remove from the grave. Could evidence that might identify the serial killer have been buried with his victim? To answer this question, the police asked the authorities for permission to *exhume* the victim's body.

exigency N. urgent situation. In this *exigency,* we must look for aid from our allies.

exodus N. departure. The *exodus* from the hot and stuffy city was particularly noticeable on Friday evenings.

■ **exonerate** V. acquit; exculpate. The defense team feverishly sought fresh evidence that might *exonerate* their client.

exorbitant ADJ. excessive. The people grumbled at his *exorbitant* prices but paid them because he had a monopoly.

exorcise V. drive out evil spirits. By incantation and prayer, the medicine man sought to *exorcise* the evil spirits which had taken possession of the young warrior.

exotic ADJ. not native; strange. Because of his *exotic* headdress, he was followed in the streets by small children who laughed at his strange appearance.

expansive ADJ. outgoing and sociable; broad and extensive; able to increase in size. Mr. Fezziwig was in an *expansive* humor, cheerfully urging his guests to join in the Christmas feast. Looking down on his *expansive* paunch, he sighed: if his belly *expanded* any further, he'd need an *expansive* waistline for his pants.

expatriate N. exile; someone who has withdrawn from his native land. Henry James was an American *expatriate* who settled in England.

■ **expedient** ADJ. suitable; practical; politic. A pragmatic politician, he was guided by what was *expedient* rather than by what was ethical. expediency, N.

■ **expedite** V. hasten. Because we are on a tight schedule, we hope you will be able to *expedite* the delivery of our order. The more *expeditious* your response is, the happier we'll be.

expenditure N. payment or expense; output. When you are operating on an expense account, you must keep receipts for all your *expenditures*. If you don't save your receipts, you won't get repaid without the *expenditure* of a lot of energy arguing with the firm's accountants.

expertise N. specialized knowledge; expert skill. Although she was knowledgeable in a number of fields, she was hired for her particular *expertise* in computer programming.

expiate V. make amends for (a sin). Jean Valjean tried to *expiate* his crimes by performing acts of charity.

expletive N. interjection; profane oath. The sergeant's remarks were filled with *expletives* that offended the new recruits.

explicate V. explain; interpret; clarify. Harry Levin *explicated* James Joyce's often bewildering novels with such clarity that even *Finnegan's Wake* seemed comprehensible to his students.

■ **explicit** ADJ. totally clear; definite; outspoken. Don't just hint around that you're dissatisfied: be *explicit* about what's bugging you.

exploit N. deed or action, particularly a brave deed. Raoul Wallenberg was noted for his *exploits* in rescuing Jews from Hitler's forces.

■ **exploit** V. make use of, sometimes unjustly. Cesar Chavez fought attempts to *exploit* migrant farmworkers in California. exploitation, N. exploitative, ADJ.

expository ADJ. explanatory; serving to explain. The manual that came with my VCR was no masterpiece of *expository* prose: its explanations were so garbled that I couldn't even figure out how to rewind a tape. exposition, N.

exposure N. risk, particularly of being exposed to disease or to the elements; unmasking; act of laying something open. *Exposure* to sun and wind had dried out her hair and weathered her face. She looked so changed that she no longer feared *exposure* as the notorious Irene Adler, one-time antagonist of Sherlock Holmes.

expropriate V. take possession of. He questioned the government's right to *expropriate* his land to create a wildlife preserve.

expunge V. cancel; remove. If you behave, I will *expunge* this notation from your record.

expurgate V. clean; remove offensive parts of a book. The editors felt that certain passages in the book had to be *expurgated* before it could be used in the classroom.

extant ADJ. still in existence. Although the book is out of print, some copies are still *extant*. Unfortunately, all of them are in libraries or private collections; none are for sale.

extent N. degree; magnitude; scope. What is the *extent* of the patient's injuries? If they are not too *extensive*, we can treat him on an outpatient basis.

extenuate V. weaken; mitigate. It is easier for us to *extenuate* our own shortcomings than those of others.

■ **extol** V. praise; glorify. The president *extolled* the astronauts, calling them the pioneers of the Space Age.

extort V. wring from; get money by threats, etc. The blackmailer *extorted* money from his victim.

extradition N. surrender of prisoner by one state to another. The lawyers opposed the *extradition* of their client on the grounds that for more than five years he had been a model citizen.

■ **extraneous** ADJ. not essential; superfluous. No wonder Ted can't think straight! His mind is so cluttered up with *extraneous* trivia, he can't concentrate on the essentials.

extrapolation N. projection; conjecture. Based on their *extrapolation* from the results of the primaries on Super Tuesday, the networks predicted that Bob Dole would be the Republican candidate for the presidency. extrapolate, V.

■ **extricate** V. free; disentangle. Icebreakers were needed to *extricate* the trapped whales from the icy floes that closed them in.

extrinsic ADJ. external; not essential; extraneous. A critically acclaimed *extrinsic* feature of the Chrysler Building is its ornate spire. The judge would not admit the testimony, ruling that it was *extrinsic* to the matter at hand.

extrovert N. person interested mostly in external objects and actions. A good salesman is usually an *extrovert*, who likes to mingle with people.

extrude V. force or push out. Much pressure is required to *extrude* these plastics.

■ **exuberance** N. overflowing abundance; joyful enthusiasm; flamboyance; lavishness. I was bowled over by the *exuberance* of Amy's welcome. What an enthusiastic greeting!

exude V. discharge; give forth. We get maple syrup from the sap that *exudes* from the trees in early spring. exudation, N.

exult V. rejoice. We *exulted* when our team won the victory.

fabricate V. build; lie. If we *fabricate* the buildings in this project out of standardized sections, we can reduce con-

struction costs considerably. Because of Jack's tendency to *fabricate*, Jill had trouble believing a word he said.

facade N. front (of building); superficial or false appearance. The ornate *facade* of the church was often photographed by tourists, who never bothered to walk around the building to view its other sides. Susan seemed super-confident, but that was just a *facade* she put on to hide her insecurity.

facet N. small plane surface (of a gem); a side. The stonecutter decided to improve the rough diamond by providing it with several *facets*.

facetious ADJ. joking (often inappropriately); humorous. I'm serious about this project; I don't need any *facetious*, smart-alecky cracks about do-gooder little rich girls.

facile ADJ. easily accomplished; ready or fluent; superficial. Words came easily to Jonathan: he was a *facile* speaker and prided himself on being ready to make a speech at a moment's notice.

■ **facilitate** V. help bring about; make less difficult. Rest and proper nourishment should *facilitate* the patient's recovery.

facsimile N. copy. Many museums sell *facsimiles* of the works of art on display.

faction N. party; clique; dissension. The quarrels and bickering of the two small *factions* within the club disturbed the majority of the members.

faculty N. mental or bodily powers; teaching staff. As he grew old, Professor Twiggly feared he might lose his *faculties* and become unfit to teach. However, he had tenure: whether or not he was in full possession of his *faculties*, the school couldn't kick him off the *faculty*.

Word List 19 fallacious-flinch

■ **fallacious** ADJ. false; misleading. Paradoxically, *fallacious* reasoning does not always yield erroneous results: even though your logic may be faulty, the answer you get may nevertheless be correct. fallacy, N.

fallible ADJ. liable to err. I know I am *fallible,* but I feel confident that I am right this time.

● **fallow** ADJ. plowed but not sowed; uncultivated. Farmers have learned that it is advisable to permit land to lie *fallow* every few years.

● **falter** V. hesitate. When told to dive off the high board, she did not *falter,* but proceeded at once.

■ **fanaticism** N. excessive zeal; extreme devotion to a belief or cause. When Islamic fundamentalists demanded the death of Salman Rushdie because his novel questioned their faith, world opinion condemned them for their *fanaticism*.

fancy N. notion; whim; inclination. Martin took a *fancy* to paint his toenails purple. Assuming he would outgrow such *fanciful* behavior, his parents ignored his *fancy* feet. also ADJ.

fanfare N. call by bugles or trumpets. The exposition was opened with a *fanfare* of trumpets and the firing of cannon.

farce N. broad comedy; mockery. Nothing went right; the entire interview degenerated into a *farce*. farcical, ADJ.

■ **fastidious** ADJ. difficult to please; squeamish. Bobby was such a *fastidious* eater that he would eat a sandwich only if his mother first cut off every scrap of crust.

fatalism N. belief that events are determined by forces beyond one's control. With *fatalism,* he accepted the hardships that beset him. fatalistic, ADJ.

● **fathom** V. comprehend; investigate. I find his motives impossible to *fathom*; in fact, I'm totally clueless about what goes on in his mind.

fatuous ADJ. foolish; inane. He is far too intelligent to utter such *fatuous* remarks.

fauna N. animals of a period or region. The scientist could visualize the *fauna* of the period by examining the skeletal remains and the fossils.

fawning ADJ. courting favor by cringing and flattering. She was constantly surrounded by a group of *fawning* admirers who hoped to win some favor. fawn, V.

faze V. disconcert; dismay. No crisis could *faze* the resourceful hotel manager.

■ **feasible** ADJ. practical. Is it *feasible* to build a new stadium for the Yankees on New York's West Side? Without additional funding, the project is clearly unrealistic.

fecundity N. fertility; fruitfulness. The *fecundity* of his mind is illustrated by the many vivid images in his poems.

feign V. pretend. Bobby *feigned* illness, hoping that his mother would let him stay home from school.

feint N. trick; shift; sham blow. The boxer was fooled by his opponent's *feint* and dropped his guard. also V.

felicitous ADJ. apt; suitably expressed; well chosen. He was famous for his *felicitous* remarks and was called upon to serve as master-of-ceremonies at many a banquet. felicity, N.

felicity N. happiness; appropriateness (of a remark, choice, etc.). She wrote a note to the newlyweds wishing them great *felicity* in their wedded life.

fell ADJ. cruel; deadly. Newspaper reports of the SARS epidemic told of the tragic spread of the *fell* disease.

● **fell** V. cut or knock down; bring down (with a missile). Crying "Timber!" Paul Bunyan *felled* the mighty redwood tree. Robin Hood loosed his arrow and *felled* the king's deer.

felon N. person convicted of a grave crime. A convicted *felon* loses the right to vote.

feral ADJ. not domestic; wild. Abandoned by their owners, dogs may revert to their *feral* state, roaming the woods in packs.

ferment N. agitation; commotion. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, much of Eastern Europe was in a state of *ferment*.

ferret V. drive or hunt out of hiding. She *ferreted* out their secret.

fervent ADJ. ardent; hot. She felt that the *fervent* praise was excessive and somewhat undeserved.

fervid ADJ. ardent. Her *fervid* enthusiasm inspired all of us to undertake the dangerous mission.

■ **fervor** N. glowing ardor; intensity of feeling. At the protest rally, the students cheered the strikers and booed the dean with equal *fervor*.

fester V. rankle; produce irritation or resentment. Joe's insult *festered* in Anne's mind for days, and made her too angry to speak to him.

festive ADJ. joyous; celebratory. Their wedding in the park was a *festive* occasion.

fetid ADJ. malodorous. The neglected wound became *fetid*.

fetter V. shackle. The prisoner was *fettered* to the wall.

fiasco N. total failure. Tanya's attempt to look sophisticated by taking up smoking was a *fiasco*: she lit the filter, choked when she tried to inhale, and burned a hole in her boyfriend's couch.

fickle ADJ. changeable; faithless. As soon as Romeo saw Juliet, he forgot all about his old girlfriend Rosaline. Was Romeo *fickle*?

fictitious ADJ. imaginary. Although this book purports to be a biography of George Washington, many of the incidents are *fictitious*.

fidelity N. loyalty. Iago wickedly manipulates Othello, arousing his jealousy and causing him to question his wife's *fidelity*.

figment N. invention; imaginary thing. Was he hearing real voices in the night, or were they just a *figment* of his imagination?

figurative ADJ. not literal, but metaphorical; using a figure of speech. "To lose one's marbles" is a *figurative* expression; if you're told that Jack has lost his marbles, no one expects you to rush out to buy him a replacement set.

figurine N. small ornamental statuette. In *The Maltese Falcon,* Sam Spade was hired to trace the missing *figurine* of a black bird.

filament N. fine thread or fiber; threadlike structure within a lightbulb. A ray of sunlight illuminated the *filaments* of the spider web, turning the web into a net of gold.

filch V. steal. The boys *filched* apples from the fruit stand.

filial ADJ. pertaining to a son or daughter. Many children forget their *filial* obligations and disregard the wishes of their parents.

filibuster V. to block legislation by making long speeches. Even though we disapproved of Senator Foghorn's political goals, we were impressed by his ability to *filibuster* endlessly to keep an issue from coming to a vote.

finale N. conclusion. It is not until we reach the *finale* of this play that we can understand the author's message.

finesse N. delicate skill. The *finesse* and adroitness with which the surgeon wielded her scalpel impressed all the observers in the operating room.

finicky ADJ. too particular; fussy. The little girl was *finicky* about her food, leaving over anything that wasn't to her taste.

firebrand N. hothead: troublemaker. The police tried to keep track of all the local *firebrands* when the President came to town.

fissure N. crevice. The mountain climbers secured footholds in tiny *fissures* in the rock.

● **fitful** ADJ. spasmodic; intermittent. After several *fitful* attempts, he decided to postpone the start of the project until he felt more energetic.

flabbergasted ADJ. astounded; astonished; overcome with surprise. In the film *Flubber,* the hero invents a remarkable substance whose amazing properties leave his coworkers *flabbergasted*. flabbergast, V.

flaccid ADJ. flabby. His sedentary life had left him with *flaccid* muscles.

flag V. droop; grow feeble. When the opposing hockey team scored its third goal only minutes into the first quarter, the home team's spirits *flagged*. flagging, ADJ.

■ **flagrant** ADJ. conspicuously wicked; blatant; outrageous. The governor's appointment of his brother-in-law to the State Supreme Court was a *flagrant* violation of the state laws against nepotism (favoritism based on kinship).

flair N. talent. She has an uncanny *flair* for discovering new artists before the public has become aware of their existence.

flamboyant ADJ. ornate. Modern architecture has discarded the *flamboyant* trimming on buildings and emphasizes simplicity of line.

flaunt V. display ostentatiously. Mae West saw nothing wrong with showing off her considerable physical charms, saying, "Honey, if you've got it, *flaunt* it!"

fleck V. spot. Her cheeks, *flecked* with tears, were testimony to the hours of weeping.

fledgling ADJ. inexperienced. The folk dance club set up an apprentice program to allow *fledgling* dance callers a chance to polish their skills. also N.

fleece N. wool coat of a sheep. They shear sheep of their *fleece,* which they then comb into separate strands of wool.

fleece V. rob; plunder. The tricksters *fleeced* him of his inheritance.

flick N. light stroke as with a whip. The horse needed no encouragement; one *flick* of the whip was all the jockey had to apply to get the animal to run at top speed.

flinch V. hesitate, shrink. He did not *flinch* in the face of danger but fought back bravely.

Word List 20 flippant-gaffe

flippant ADJ. lacking proper seriousness. When Mark told Mona he loved her, she dismissed his earnest declaration with a *flippant* "Oh, you say that to all the girls!" flippancy, N.

flit V. fly; dart lightly; pass swiftly by. Like a bee *flitting* from flower to flower, Rose *flitted* from one boyfriend to the next.

floe N. mass of floating ice. The ship made slow progress as it battered its way through the ice *floes*.

flora N. plants of a region or era. Because she was a botanist, she spent most of her time studying the *flora* of the desert.

● **florid** ADJ. ruddy; reddish; flowery. If you go to Florida and get a sunburn, your complexion will look *florid*. If your postcards about the trip praise Florida in flowery words, your prose sounds *florid*.

flounder V. struggle and thrash about; proceed clumsily or falter. Up to his knees in the bog, Floyd *floundered* about, trying to regain his footing. Bewildered by the new software, Flo *floundered* until Jan showed her how to get started.

flourish V. grow well; prosper; decorate with ornaments. The orange trees *flourished* in the sun.

flout V. reject; mock. The headstrong youth *flouted* all authority; he refused to be curbed.

fluctuate V. waver; shift. The water pressure in our shower *fluctuates* wildly; you start rinsing yourself off with a trickle, and, two minutes later, a blast of water nearly knocks you down.

fluency N. smoothness of speech. He spoke French with *fluency* and ease.

fluke N. unlikely occurrence; stroke of fortune. When Douglas defeated Tyson for the heavyweight championship, some sportscasters dismissed his victory as a *fluke*.

fluster V. confuse. The teacher's sudden question *flustered* him and he stammered his reply.

flux N. flowing; series of changes. While conditions are in such a state of *flux*, I do not wish to commit myself too deeply in this affair.

fodder N. coarse food for cattle, horses, etc. One of Nancy's chores at the ranch was to put fresh supplies of *fodder* in the horses' stalls.

foible N. weakness; slight fault. We can overlook the *foibles* of our friends; no one is perfect.

foil N. contrast. In *Star Wars*, dark, evil Darth Vader is a perfect *foil* for fair-haired, naive Luke Skywalker.

foil V. defeat; frustrate. In the end, Skywalker is able to *foil* Vader's diabolical schemes.

foliage N. masses of leaves. Every autumn before the leaves fell he promised himself he would drive through New England to admire the colorful fall *foliage*.

foment V. stir up; instigate. Cheryl's archenemy Heather spread some nasty rumors that *fomented* trouble in the club. Do you think Cheryl's foe meant to *foment* such discord?

● **foolhardy** ADJ. rash. Don't be *foolhardy*. Get the advice of experienced people before undertaking this venture.

fop N. dandy; man excessively concerned with his clothes. People who dismissed young Mizrahi as a *fop* felt chagrined when he turned into one of the top fashion designers of his day. foppish, ADJ.

forbearance N. patience. Be patient with John. Treat him with *forbearance*: he is still weak from his illness.

ford N. place where a river can be crossed on foot. Rather than risk using the shaky rope bridge, David walked a half-mile downstream until he came to the nearest *ford.* also V.

forebears N. ancestors. Reverence for one's *forebears* (sometimes referred to as ancestor worship) plays an important part in many Oriental cultures.

foreboding N. premonition of evil. Suspecting no conspiracies against him, Caesar gently ridiculed his wife's *forebodings* about the Ides of March.

forensic ADJ. suitable to debate or courts of law. In her best *forensic* manner, the lawyer addressed the jury. forensics, N.

foreshadow V. give an indication beforehand; portend; prefigure. In retrospect, political analysts realized that Yeltsin's defiance of the attempted coup *foreshadowed* his emergence as the dominant figure of the new Russian republic.

foresight N. ability to foresee future happenings; prudence. A wise investor, she had the *foresight* to buy land just before the current real estate boom.

forestall V. prevent by taking action in advance. By setting up a prenuptial agreement, the prospective bride and groom hoped to *forestall* any potential arguments about money in the event of a divorce.

forgo V. give up; do without. Determined to lose weight for the summer, Ida decided to *forgo* dessert until she could fit into a size eight again.

forlorn ADJ. sad and lonely; wretched. Deserted by her big sisters and her friends, the *forlorn* child sat sadly on the steps awaiting their return.

formality N. ceremonious quality; something done just for form's sake. The president received the visiting heads of state with due *formality*: flags waving, honor guards standing at attention, anthems sounding at full blast. Signing this petition is a mere *formality*; it does not obligate you in any way.

formidable ADJ. inspiring fear or apprehension; difficult; awe-inspiring. In the film *Meet the Parents,* the hero is understandably nervous around his fiancee's father, a *formidable* CIA agent.

forsake V. desert; abandon; renounce. No one expected Foster to *forsake* his wife and children and run off with another woman.

forswear V. renounce; abandon. The captured knight could escape death only if he agreed to *forswear* Christianity and embrace Islam as the one true faith.

forte N. strong point or special talent. I am not eager to play this rather serious role, for my *forte* is comedy.

forthright ADJ. outspoken; straightforward; frank. Never afraid to call a spade a spade, she was perhaps too *forthright* to be a successful party politician.

fortitude N. bravery; courage. He was awarded the medal for his *fortitude* in the battle.

fortuitous ADJ. accidental; by chance. Though he pretended their encounter was *fortuitous*, he'd actually been hanging around her usual haunts for the past two weeks, hoping she'd turn up.

forum N. place of assembly to discuss public concerns; meeting for discussion. The film opens with a shot of the ancient *Forum* in Rome, where several senators are discussing the strange new sect known as Christians. At the end of the movie, its director presided over a *forum* examining new fashions in filmmaking.

foster V. rear; encourage. According to the legend, Romulus and Remus were *fostered* by a she-wolf who raised the abandoned infants with her own cubs. also ADJ.

founder V. fail completely; sink. After hitting the submerged iceberg, the *Titanic* started taking in water rapidly and soon *foundered*.

founder N. person who establishes (an organization, business). Among those drowned when the *Titanic* sank was the *founder* of the Abraham & Straus department store.

fracas N. brawl, melee. The military police stopped the *fracas* in the bar and arrested the belligerents.

fractious ADJ. unruly; disobedient; irritable. Bucking and kicking, the *fractious* horse unseated its rider.

frail ADJ. weak. The delicate child seemed too *frail* to lift the heavy carton. frailty, N.

franchise N. right granted by authority; right to vote; business licensed to sell a product in a particular territory. The city issued a *franchise* to the company to operate surface transit lines on the streets for ninety-nine years. For most of American history women lacked the right to vote: not until the early twentieth century was the *franchise* granted to women. Stan owns a Carvel's ice cream *franchise* in Chinatown.

frantic ADJ. wild. At the time of the collision, many people became *frantic* with fear.

fraternize V. associate in a friendly way. After the game, the members of the two teams *fraternized* as cheerfully as if they had never been rivals.

fraudulent ADJ. cheating; deceitful. The government seeks to prevent *fraudulent* and misleading advertising.

fraught ADJ. filled. Since this enterprise is *fraught* with danger, I will ask for volunteers who are willing to assume the risks.

fray N. brawl. The three musketeers were in the thick of the *fray*.

frenetic ADJ. frenzied; frantic. His *frenetic* activities convinced us that he had no organized plan of operation.

frenzied ADJ. madly excited. As soon as they smelled smoke, the *frenzied* animals milled about in their cages.

fresco N. painting on plaster (usually fresh). The cathedral is visited by many tourists who wish to admire the *frescoes* by Giotto.

fret V. to be annoyed or vexed. To *fret* over your poor grades is foolish; instead, decide to work harder in the future.

friction N. clash in opinion; rubbing against. At this time when harmony is essential, we cannot afford to have any *friction* in our group.

frigid ADJ. intensely cold. Alaska is in the *frigid* zone.

■ **frivolous** ADJ. lacking in seriousness; self-indulgently carefree; relatively unimportant. Though Nancy enjoyed Bill's *frivolous*, lighthearted companionship, she sometimes wondered whether he could ever be serious. frivolity, N.

frolicsome ADJ. prankish; gay. The *frolicsome* puppy tried to lick the face of its master.

frond N. fern leaf; palm or banana leaf. After the storm the beach was littered with the *fronds* of palm trees.

■ **frugality** N. thrift; economy. In economically hard times, anyone who doesn't learn to practice *frugality* risks bankruptcy. frugal, ADJ.

fruition N. bearing of fruit; fulfillment; realization. After years of saving and scrimping, her dream of owning her own home finally came to *fruition*.

frustrate V. thwart; defeat. Constant partisan bickering *frustrated* the governor's efforts to convince the legislature to approve his proposed budget.

fugitive ADJ. fleeting or transitory; roving. The film brought a few *fugitive* images to her mind, but on the whole it made no lasting impression upon her.

fulcrum N. support on which a lever rests. If we use this stone as a *fulcrum* and the crowbar as a lever, we may be able to move this boulder.

fulsome ADJ. disgustingly excessive. Disgusted by her fans' *fulsome* admiration, the movie star retreated from the public, crying, "I want to be alone!"

fundamental V. basic; primary; essential. The committee discussed all sorts of side issues without ever getting down to addressing the *fundamental* problem.

furlough N. leave of absence; vacation granted a soldier or civil servant. Dreaming of her loved ones back in the States, the young soldier could hardly wait for her upcoming *furlough*.

furor N. frenzy; great excitement. The story of her embezzlement of the funds created a *furor* on the Stock Exchange.

■ **furtive** ADJ. stealthy; sneaky. Noticing the *furtive* glance the customer gave the diamond bracelet on the counter, the jeweler wondered whether he had a potential shoplifter on his hands.

fusion N. union; blending; synthesis. So-called rockabilly music represents a *fusion* of country music and blues that became rock and roll.

futile ADJ. useless; hopeless; ineffectual. It is *futile* for me to try to get any work done around here while the telephone is ringing every thirty seconds. futility, N.

gadfly N. animal-biting fly; an irritating person. Like a *gadfly,* he irritated all the guests at the hotel; within forty-eight hours, everyone regarded him as an annoying busybody.

gaffe N. social blunder. According to Miss Manners, to call your husband by your lover's name is worse than a mere *gaffe*; it is a tactical mistake.

Word List 21 gainsay-gory

gainsay V. deny. Even though it reflected badly upon him, he was too honest to *gainsay* the truth of the report.

gait N. manner of walking or running; speed. The lame man walked with an uneven *gait*.

galaxy N. large, isolated system of stars, such as the Milky Way; any collection of brilliant personalities. Science fiction stories speculate about the possible existence of life in other *galaxies*. The deaths of such famous actors as John Candy and George Burns tells us that the *galaxy* of Hollywood superstars is rapidly disappearing.

gale N. windstorm; gust of wind; emotional outburst (laughter, tears). The Weather Channel warned viewers about a rising *gale*, with winds of up to sixty miles per hour.

gall N. bitterness; nerve. The knowledge of his failure filled him with *gall*.

gall V. annoy; chafe. Their taunts *galled* him.

galleon N. large sailing ship. The Spaniards pinned their hopes on the *galleon,* the large warship; the British, on the smaller and faster pinnace.

galvanize V. stimulate by shock; stir up; revitalize. News that the prince was almost at their door *galvanized* the ugly stepsisters into a frenzy of combing and primping.

gambit N. opening in chess in which a piece is sacrificed. The player was afraid to accept his opponent's *gambit* because he feared a trap which as yet he could not see.

gambol V. skip; leap playfully. Watching the children *gambol* in the park, Betty marveled at their youthful energy and spirit.

gamely ADV. bravely; with spirit. Because he had fought *gamely* against a much superior boxer, the crowd gave him a standing ovation when he left the arena.

gamut N. entire range. In a classic put-down of actress Katharine Hepburn, the critic Dorothy Parker wrote that the actress ran the *gamut* of emotion from A to B.

gape V. open widely; stare open-mouthed. The huge pit *gaped* before him; if he stumbled, he would fall in. Slack-jawed in wonder, Huck *gaped* at the huge stalactites hanging down from the ceiling of the limestone cavern.

garbled ADJ. mixed up; jumbled; distorted. A favorite party game involves passing a whispered message from one person to another until, by the time it reaches the last player, the message is totally *garbled*.

gargantuan ADJ. huge; enormous. The *gargantuan* wrestler was terrified of mice.

garish ADJ. over-bright in color; gaudy. She wore a gaudy rhinestone necklace with an excessively *garish* gold lamé dress.

garner V. gather; store up. In her long career as an actress, Katharine Hepburn *garnered* many awards, including the coveted Oscar.

garnish V. decorate. The chef *garnished* the boiled potatoes with a sprinkling of parsley. also N.

■ **garrulous** ADJ. loquacious; wordy; talkative. My Uncle Henry is the most *garrulous* person in Cayuga County: he can outtalk anyone I know. garrulity, N.

gauche ADJ. clumsy; coarse and uncouth. Compared to the sophisticated young ladies in their elegant gowns, tomboyish Jo felt *gauche* and out of place.

gaudy ADJ. flashy; showy. The newest Trump skyscraper is typically *gaudy*, covered in gilded panels that gleam in the sun.

gaunt ADJ. lean and angular; barren. His once round face looked surprisingly *gaunt* after he had lost weight.

gavel N. hammerlike tool; mallet. "Sold!" cried the auctioneer, banging her *gavel* on the table to indicate she'd accepted the final bid.

gawk V. stare foolishly; look in open-mouthed awe. The country boy *gawked* at the skyscrapers and neon lights of the big city.

genealogy N. record of descent; lineage. He was proud of his *genealogy* and constantly referred to the achievements of his ancestors.

generality N. vague statement. This report is filled with *generalities*; be more specific in your statements.

generate V. cause; produce; create. In his first days in office, President Clinton managed to *generate* a new mood of optimism; we just hoped he could *generate* some new jobs.

generic ADJ. characteristic of an entire class or species. Sue knew so many computer programmers who spent their spare time playing fantasy games that she began to think that playing Dungeons & Dragons was a *generic* trait.

genesis N. beginning; origin. Tracing the *genesis* of a family is the theme of *Roots*.

geniality N. cheerfulness; kindliness; sympathy. This restaurant is famous and popular because of the *geniality* of the proprietor who tries to make everyone happy.

genre N. particular variety of art or literature. Both a short story writer and a poet, Langston Hughes proved himself equally skilled in either *genre*.

genteel ADJ. well-bred; elegant. We are looking for a man with a *genteel* appearance who can inspire confidence by his cultivated manner.

gentility N. those of gentle birth; refinement. Her family was proud of its *gentility* and elegance.

gentry N. people of standing; class of people just below nobility. The local *gentry* did not welcome the visits of the summer tourists and tried to ignore their presence in the community.

germane ADJ. pertinent; bearing upon the case at hand. The judge refused to allow the testimony to be heard by the jury because it was not *germane* to the case.

germinal ADJ. pertaining to a germ; creative. Such an idea is *germinal;* I am certain that it will influence thinkers and philosophers for many generations.

germinate V. cause to sprout; sprout. After the seeds *germinate* and develop their permanent leaves, the plants may be removed from the cold frames and transplanted to the garden.

gesticulation N. motion; gesture. We were still too far off to make out what Mother was shouting, but from her animated *gesticulations* we could tell she wanted us to hurry home instantly.

ghastly ADJ. horrible. The murdered man was a *ghastly* sight.

gibberish N. nonsense; babbling. Did you hear that fool boy spouting *gibberish* about monsters from outer space? gibber, V.

gibe V. mock; taunt; scoff at. The ugly stepsisters constantly *gibed* at Cinderella, taunting her about her ragged clothes.

gingerly ADV. very carefully. To separate egg whites, first crack the egg *gingerly*.

girth N. distance around something; circumference. It took an extra-large cummerbund to fit around Andrew Carnegie's considerable *girth.*

gist N. essence. She was asked to give the *gist* of the essay in two sentences.

● **glacial** ADJ. like a glacier; extremely cold. Never a warm person, when offended John could seem positively *glacial.*

glaring ADJ. highly conspicuous; harshly bright. *Glaring* spelling or grammatical errors in your resumé will unfavorably impress potential employers.

glaze V. cover with a thin and shiny surface. The freezing rain *glazed* the streets and made driving hazardous. also N.

glib ADJ. fluent; facile; slick. Keeping up a steady patter to entertain his customers, the kitchen gadget salesman was a *glib* speaker, never at a loss for a word.

glimmer V. shine erratically; twinkle. In the darkness of the cavern, the glowworms hanging from the cavern roof *glimmered* like distant stars.

gloat V. express evil satisfaction; view malevolently. As you *gloat* over your ill-gotten wealth, do you think of the many victims you have defrauded?

glossary N. brief explanation of words used in the text. I have found the *glossary* in this book very useful; it has eliminated many trips to the dictionary.

gloss over V. explain away. No matter how hard he tried to talk around the issue, President Bush could not *gloss over* the fact that he had raised taxes after all.

glossy ADJ. smooth and shining. I want this photograph printed on *glossy* paper, not matte.

glower V. scowl. The angry boy *glowered* at his father.

glut V. overstock; fill to excess. The many manufacturers *glutted* the market and could not find purchasers for the excess articles they had produced. also N.

■ **glutton** N. someone who eats too much. When Mother saw that Bobby had eaten all the cookies, she called him a little *glutton.* gluttonous, ADJ.

gnarled ADJ. twisted. The weather-beaten old sailor was as *gnarled* and bent as an old oak tree.

gnome N. dwarf; underground spirit. In medieval mythology, *gnomes* were the special guardians and inhabitants of subterranean mines.

goad V. urge on; spur; incite. Mother was afraid that Ben's wild friends would *goad* him into doing something that would get him into trouble with the law. also N.

gorge N. small, steep-walled canyon. The white-water rafting guide warned us about the rapids farther downstream, where the river cut through a narrow *gorge*.

gorge V. stuff oneself. The gluttonous guest *gorged* himself with food as though he had not eaten for days.

gory ADJ. bloody. The audience shuddered as they listened to the details of the *gory* massacre.

Word List 22 gouge-hiatus

gouge V. tear out. In that fight, all the rules were forgotten; the adversaries bit, kicked, and tried to *gouge* each other's eyes out.

gourmand N. epicure; person who takes excessive pleasure in food and drink. *Gourmands* lack self-restraint; if they enjoy a particular cuisine, they eat far too much of it.

gourmet N. connoisseur of food and drink. The *gourmet* stated that this was the best onion soup she had ever tasted.

graduated ADJ. arranged by degrees (of height, difficulty, etc.). Margaret loved her *graduated* set of Russian hollow wooden dolls; she spent hours happily putting the smaller dolls into their larger counterparts.

graft N. piece of transplanted tissue; portion of plant inserted in another plant. After the fire, Greg required skin *grafts* to replace the badly damaged areas on his forearms. also V.

grandeur N. impressiveness; stateliness; majesty. No matter how often he hiked through the mountains, David never failed to be struck by the *grandeur* of the Sierra Nevada range.

grandiloquent ADJ. pompous; bombastic; using high-sounding language. The politician could never speak simply; she was always *grandiloquent.*

grandiose ADJ. pretentious; high-flown; ridiculously exaggerated; impressive. The aged matinee idol still had *grandiose* notions of his supposed importance in the theatrical world.

granulate V. form into grains. Sugar that has been *granulated* dissolves more readily than lump sugar. granule, N.

graphic ADJ. pertaining to the art of delineating; vividly described. The description of the winter storm was so *graphic* that you could almost feel the hailstones.

grapple V. wrestle; come to grips with. He *grappled* with the burglar and overpowered him.

grate V. make a harsh noise; have an unpleasant effect; shred. The screams of the quarreling children *grated* on her nerves.

■ **gratify** V. please. Lori's parents were *gratified* by her successful performance on the SAT.

gratis ADJ. free. The company offered to give one package *gratis* to every purchaser of one of their products. also ADJ.

■ **gratuitous** ADJ. given freely; unwarranted; uncalled for. Quit making *gratuitous* comments about my driving; no one asked you for your opinion.

■ **gravity** N. seriousness. We could tell we were in serious trouble from the *gravity* of the principal's expression. (secondary meaning) grave, ADJ.

■ **gregarious** ADJ. sociable. Typically, partygoers are *gregarious*; hermits are not.

grievance N. cause of complaint. When her supervisor ignored her complaint, she took her *grievance* to the union.

grill V. question severely. In violation of the Miranda law, the police *grilled* the suspect for several hours before reading him his rights. (secondary meaning)

grimace N. a facial distortion to show feeling such as pain, disgust, etc. Even though he remained silent, his *grimace* indicated his displeasure. also V.

grisly ADJ. ghastly. She shuddered at the *grisly* sight.

grouse V. complain; fuss. Students traditionally *grouse* about the abysmal quality of "mystery meat" and similar dormitory food.

grotesque ADJ. fantastic; comically hideous. On Halloween people enjoy wearing *grotesque* costumes.

grove N. group of trees (smaller than a forest); orchard. To the child, the small *grove* of oaks was as vast as Sherwood Forest, in which he played that legendary hero, Robin Hood.

grovel V. crawl or creep on ground; remain prostrate. Mr. Wickfield was never harsh to his employees; he could not understand why Uriah would always cringe and *grovel* as if he expected a beating.

grudging ADJ. unwilling; reluctant; stingy. We received only *grudging* support from the mayor despite his earlier promises of aid.

gruel V. liquid food made by boiling oatmeal, etc., in milk or water. Our daily allotment of *gruel* made the meal not only monotonous but also unpalatable.

grueling ADJ. exhausting. The marathon is a *grueling* race.

gruesome ADJ. grisly; horrible. His face was the stuff of nightmares: all the children in the audience screamed when Freddy Kruger's *gruesome* countenance was flashed on the screen.

gruff ADJ. rough-mannered. Although he was blunt and *gruff* with most people, he was always gentle with children.

guffaw N. boisterous laughter. The loud *guffaws* that came from the closed room indicated that the members of the committee had not yet settled down to serious business. also V.

■ **guile** N. deceit; duplicity; wiliness; cunning. Iago uses considerable *guile* to trick Othello into believing that Desdemona has been unfaithful.

guileless ADJ. without deceit. He is naive, simple, and *guileless;* he cannot be guilty of fraud.

guise N. appearance; costume. In the *guise* of a plumber, the detective investigated the murder case.

■ **gullible** ADJ. easily deceived. Overly *gullible* people have only themselves to blame if they fall for con artists repeatedly. As the saying goes, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on *me*."

gustatory ADJ. affecting the sense of taste. The Thai restaurant offered an unusual *gustatory* experience for those used to a bland cuisine.

gusto N. enjoyment; enthusiasm. He accepted the assignment with such *gusto* that I feel he would have been satisfied with a smaller salary.

gusty ADJ. windy. The *gusty* weather made sailing precarious.

● **hackneyed** ADJ. commonplace; trite. When the reviewer criticized the movie for its *hackneyed* plot, we agreed; we had seen similar stories hundreds of times before.

haggard ADJ. wasted away; gaunt. After his long illness, he was pale and *haggard.*

haggle V. argue about prices. I prefer to shop in a store that has a one-price policy because, whenever I *haggle* with a shopkeeper, I am never certain that I paid a fair price for the articles I purchased.

hallowed ADJ. blessed; consecrated. Although the dead girl's parents had never been active churchgoers, they insisted that their daughter be buried in *hallowed* ground.

hallucination N. delusion. I think you were frightened by a *hallucination* you created in your own mind.

halting ADJ. hesitant; faltering. Novice extemporaneous speakers often talk in a *halting* fashion as they grope for the right words.

■ **hamper** V. obstruct. The new mother didn't realize how much the effort of caring for an infant would *hamper* her ability to keep an immaculate house.

haphazard ADJ. random; unsystematic; aimless. In place of a systematic family policy, America has a *haphazard* patchwork of institutions and programs created in response to immediate crises.

harangue N. noisy speech. In her lengthy *harangue,* the principal berated the offenders. also V.

harass V. to annoy by repeated attacks. When he could not pay his bills as quickly as he had promised, he was *harassed* by his creditors.

harbinger N. forerunner. The crocus is an early *harbinger* of spring.

harbor V. provide a refuge for; hide. The church *harbored* illegal aliens who were political refugees.

■ **hardy** ADJ. sturdy; robust; able to stand inclement weather. We asked the gardening expert to recommend particularly *hardy* plants that could withstand our harsh New England winters.

harrowing ADJ. agonizing; distressing; traumatic. At first the former prisoner did not wish to discuss his *harrowing* months of captivity as a political hostage.

■ **haughtiness** N. pride; arrogance. When she realized that Darcy believed himself too good to dance with his inferiors, Elizabeth took great offense at his *haughtiness*.

hazardous ADJ. dangerous. Your occupation is too *hazardous* for insurance companies to consider your application.

hazy ADJ. slightly obscure. In *hazy* weather, you cannot see the top of this mountain.

headlong ADJ. hasty; rash. The slave seized the unexpected chance to make a *headlong* dash across the border to freedom.

headstrong ADJ. stubborn; willful; unyielding. Because she refused to marry the man her parents had chosen for her, everyone scolded Minna and called her a foolish, *headstrong* girl.

heckler N. person who harasses others. The *heckler* kept interrupting the speaker with rude remarks. heckle, V.

■ **hedonist** N. one who believes that pleasure is the sole aim in life. A thoroughgoing *hedonist*, he considered only his own pleasure and ignored any claims others had on his money or time.

heed V. pay attention to; consider. We hope you *heed* our advice and get a good night's sleep before the test. also N.

heedless ADJ. not noticing; disregarding. He drove on, *heedless* of the danger warnings placed at the side of the road.

heinous ADJ. atrocious; hatefully bad. Hitler's *heinous* crimes will never be forgotten.

herbivorous ADJ. grain-eating. Some *herbivorous* animals have two stomachs for digesting their food.

■ **heresy** N. opinion contrary to popular belief; opinion contrary to accepted religion. Galileo's assertion that the earth moved around the sun directly contradicted the religious teachings of his day; as a result, he was tried for *heresy*. heretic, N.

hermetic ADJ. sealed by fusion so as to be airtight. After you sterilize the bandages, place them in a container and seal it with a *hermetic* seal to protect them from contamination by airborne bacteria.

hermitage N. home of a hermit. Even in his remote *hermitage* he could not escape completely from the world.

heterodox ADJ. unorthodox; unconventional. To those who upheld the belief that the earth did not move, Galileo's theory that the earth circled the sun was disturbingly *heterodox*.

heterogeneous ADJ. dissimilar; mixed. This year's entering class is a remarkably *heterogeneous* body: it includes students from forty different states and twenty-six foreign countries, some the children of billionaires, others the offspring of welfare families. heterogeneity, N.

heyday N. time of greatest success; prime. In their *heyday,* the San Francisco Forty-Niners won the Super Bowl two years running.

hiatus N. gap; interruption in duration or continuity; pause. During the summer *hiatus*, many students try to earn enough money to pay their tuition for the next school year.

Word List 23 hibernal-imbibe

hibernal ADJ. wintry. Bears prepare for their long *hibernal* sleep by overeating.

hibernate V. sleep throughout the winter. Bears are one of the many species of animals that *hibernate.* hibernation, N.

■ **hierarchy** N. arrangement by rank or standing; authoritarian body divided into ranks. To be low man on the totem pole is to have an inferior place in the *hierarchy*.

hilarity N. boisterous mirth. No longer able to contain their *hilarity*, they broke into great guffaws and whoops of laughter.

hindrance N. block; obstacle. Stalled cars along the highway are a *hindrance* to traffic that tow trucks should remove without delay. hinder, V.

histrionic ADJ. theatrical. He was proud of his *histrionic* ability and wanted to play the role of Hamlet. histrionics, N.

hoard V. stockpile; accumulate for future use. Whenever there are rumors of a food shortage, many people are tempted to *hoard* food. also N.

hoary ADJ. white with age. Old Father Time was *hoary* and wrinkled with age.

hoax N. trick; deception; fraud. In the case of Piltdown man, a scientific forgery managed to fool the experts for nearly half a century, when the *hoax* was finally unmasked. also V.

hodgepodge N. jumble; mixture of ill-suited elements. The reviewer roundly condemned the play as a *hodgepodge* of random and purposeless encounters carried out by a cast lacking any uniformity of accent or style.

holster N. pistol case. Even when he was not in uniform, he carried a *holster* and pistol under his arm.

homage N. honor; tribute. In her speech she tried to pay *homage* to a great man.

■ **homogeneous** ADJ. of the same kind. Because the student body at Elite Prep was so *homogeneous*, Sara and James decided to send their daughter to a school that offered greater cultural diversity. homogenize, V.

hone V. sharpen. To make shaving easier, he *honed* his razor with great care.

hoodwink V. deceive; delude. Having been *hoodwinked* once by the fast-talking salesman, he was extremely cautious when he went to purchase a used car.

horde N. crowd. Just before Christmas the stores are filled with *hordes* of shoppers.

horticultural ADJ. pertaining to cultivation of gardens. When he bought his house, he began to look for flowers and decorative shrubs, and began to read books dealing with *horticultural* matters.

host N. great number; person entertaining guests; animal or plant from which a parasite gets its nourishment. You must attend to a *host* of details if you wish to succeed as *host* of a formal dinner party. Leeches are parasites that cling to their *hosts* and drink their *hosts*' blood.

hostility N. unfriendliness; hatred. A child who has been the sole object of his parents' affection often feels *hostility* toward a new baby in the family, resenting the newcomer who has taken his place.

hovel N. shack; small, wretched house. He wondered how poor people could stand living in such a *hovel.*

hover V. hang about; wait nearby. The police helicopter *hovered* above the accident.

hue N. color; aspect. The aviary contained birds of every possible *hue.*

hulking ADJ. massive; bulky; great in size. Despite his *hulking* build, the heavyweight boxing champion was surprisingly light on his feet. hulk, N.

humane ADJ. marked by kindness or consideration. It is ironic that the *Humane* Society sometimes must show its compassion toward mistreated animals by killing them to put them out of their misery.

humdrum ADJ. dull; monotonous. After his years of adventure, he could not settle down to a *humdrum* existence.

humid ADJ. damp. Oakland's *humid* climate aggravated Richard's asthma, so he decided to move to a drier area.

humility N. humbleness of spirit. Despite his fame as a Nobel Prize winner, Bishop Tutu spoke with a *humility* and lack of self-importance that immediately won over his listeners.

hurtle V. crash; rush. The runaway train *hurtled* toward disaster.

husband V. use sparingly; conserve; save. Marathon runners must *husband* their energy so that they can keep going for the entire distance.

hybrid N. mongrel; mixed breed. Mendel's formula explains the appearance of *hybrids* and pure species in breeding. also ADJ.

hydrophobia N. rabies; fear of water. A dog that bites a human being must be observed for symptoms of *hydrophobia.*

hyperbole N. exaggeration; overstatement. As far as I'm concerned, Apple's claims about the new computer are pure *hyperbole*: no machine is that good!

hypercritical ADJ. excessively exacting. You are *hypercritical* in your demands for perfection; we all make mistakes.

hypochondriac N. person unduly worried about his health; worrier without cause about illness. The doctor prescribed chocolate pills for his patient who was a *hypochondriac.*

■ **hypocritical** ADJ. pretending to be virtuous; deceiving. It was *hypocritical* of Martha to say nice things about my poetry to me and then make fun of my verses behind my back. hypocrisy, N.

■ **hypothetical** ADJ. based on assumptions or hypotheses; supposed. Suppose you are accepted by Harvard, Stanford, and Brown. Which one would you choose to attend? Remember, this is only a *hypothetical* situation. hypothesis, N.

ichthyology N. study of fish. Jacques Cousteau's programs about sea life have advanced the cause of *ichthyology.*

icon N. religious image; idol. The *icons* on the walls of the church were painted in the 13th century.

● **iconoclastic** ADJ. attacking cherished traditions. Deeply *iconoclastic*, Jean Genet deliberately set out to shock conventional theatergoers with his radical plays.

ideology N. system of ideas of a group. For people who had grown up believing in the communist *ideology*, it was hard to adjust to capitalism.

idiom N. expression whose meaning as a whole differs from the meanings of its individual words; distinctive style. The phrase "to lose one's marbles" is an *idiom*: if I say that Joe's lost his marbles, I'm not asking you to find some for him. I'm telling you *idiomatically* that he's crazy.

■ **idiosyncrasy** N. individual trait, usually odd in nature; eccentricity. One of Richard Nixon's little *idiosyncrasies* was his liking for ketchup on cottage cheese. One of Hannibal Lecter's little *idiosyncrasies* was his liking for human flesh. idiosyncratic, ADJ.

idolatry N. worship of idols; excessive admiration. Such *idolatry* of singers of country music is typical of the excessive enthusiasm of youth.

ignite V. kindle; light. When Desi crooned, "Baby, light my fire," literal-minded Lucy looked around for some paper to *ignite*.

ignoble ADJ. unworthy; base in nature; not noble. Sir Galahad was so pure in heart that he could never stoop to perform an *ignoble* deed.

● **ignominy** N. deep disgrace; shame or dishonor. To lose the Ping-Pong match to a trained chimpanzee! How could Rollo stand the *ignominy* of his defeat? ignominious, ADJ.

● **illicit** ADJ. illegal. The defense attorney maintained that his client had never performed any *illicit* action.

illimitable ADJ. infinite. Man, having explored the far corners of the earth, is now reaching out into *illimitable* space.

illuminate V. brighten; clear up or make understandable; enlighten. Just as a lamp can *illuminate* a dark room, a perceptive comment can *illuminate* a knotty problem.

illusion N. misleading vision. It is easy to create an optical *illusion* in which lines of equal length appear different.

■ **illusory** ADJ. deceptive; not real. Unfortunately, the costs of running the lemonade stand were so high that Tom's profits proved *illusory.*

imbalance N. lack of balance or symmetry; disproportion. To correct racial *imbalance* in the schools, school boards have bussed black children into white neighborhoods and white children into black ones.

imbibe V. drink in. The dry soil *imbibed* the rain quickly.

Word List 24 immaculate-incessant

immaculate ADJ. spotless; flawless; absolutely clean. Ken and Jessica were wonderful tenants and left the apartment in *immaculate* condition when they moved out.

imminent ADJ. near at hand; impending. Rosa was such a last-minute worker that she could never start writing a paper till the deadline was *imminent*.

immobility N. state of being unable to move. Peter's fear of snakes shocked him into *immobility*; then the use of his limbs returned to him, and he bolted from the room.

immune ADJ. resistant to; free or exempt from. Fortunately, Florence had contracted chicken pox as a child and was *immune* to it when her baby broke out in spots.

■ **immutable** ADJ. unchangeable. All things change over time; nothing is *immutable*.

■ **impair** V. injure; hurt. Drinking alcohol can *impair* your ability to drive safely; if you're going to drink, don't drive.

impale V. pierce. He was *impaled* by the spear hurled by his adversary.

impalpable ADJ. imperceptible; intangible. The ash is so fine that it is *impalpable* to the touch but it can be seen as a fine layer covering the window ledge.

impart V. reveal or tell; grant. Polly begged Grandma to *impart* her recipe for rugeleh, but her grandmother wouldn't say a word.

impartial ADJ. not biased; fair. Knowing she could not be *impartial* about her own child, Jo refused to judge any match in which Billy was competing.

impassable ADJ. not able to be traveled or crossed. A giant redwood had fallen across the highway, blocking all four lanes: the road was *impassable*.

impasse N. predicament from which there is no escape; deadlock. The negotiators reported they had reached an *impasse* in their talks and had little hope of resolving the deadlock swiftly.

impassive ADJ. without feeling; imperturbable; stoical. Refusing to let the enemy see how deeply shaken he was by his capture, the prisoner kept his face *impassive*.

impeach V. charge with crime in office; indict. The angry congressman wanted to *impeach* the president for his misdeeds.

■ **impeccable** ADJ. faultless. The uncrowned queen of the fashion industry, Diana was acclaimed for her *impeccable* taste.

● **impecunious** ADJ. without money. Though Scrooge claimed he was too *impecunious* to give alms, he easily could have afforded to be charitable.

■ **impede** V. hinder; block; delay. A series of accidents *impeded* the launching of the space shuttle.

impediment N. hindrance; stumbling-block. She had a speech *impediment* that prevented her speaking clearly.

impel V. drive or force onward. A strong feeling of urgency *impelled* her; if she failed to finish the project right then, she knew that she would never get it done.

impenetrable ADJ. not able to be pierced or entered; beyond understanding. How could the murderer have gotten into the locked room? To Watson, the mystery, like the room, was *impenetrable.*

impending ADJ. nearing; approaching. The entire country was saddened by the news of his *impending* death.

impenitent ADJ. not repentant. We could see from his tough guy attitude that he was *impenitent.*

imperative ADJ. absolutely necessary; critically important. It is *imperative* that you be extremely agreeable to Great-Aunt Maud when she comes to tea: otherwise she might not leave you that million dollars in her will. also N.

imperceptible ADJ. unnoticeable; undetectable. Fortunately, the stain on the blouse was *imperceptible* after the blouse had gone through the wash.

imperial ADJ. like an emperor; related to an empire. When hotel owner Leona Helmsley appeared in ads as Queen Leona standing guard over the Palace Hotel, her critics mocked her *imperial* fancies.

imperious ADJ. domineering; haughty. Jane rather liked a man to be masterful, but Mr. Rochester seemed so bent on getting his own way that he was actually *imperious*!

impermeable ADJ. impervious; not permitting passage through its substance. Sue chose a raincoat made of Gore-Tex because the material is *impermeable* to liquids.

impertinent ADJ. insolent; rude. His neighbors' *impertinent* curiosity about his lack of dates angered Ted. It was downright rude of them to ask him such personal questions.

imperturbable ADJ. calm; placid; composed. In the midst of the battle, the Duke of Wellington remained *imperturbable* and in full command of the situation despite the hysteria and panic all around him. imperturbability, N.

impervious ADJ. impenetrable; incapable of being damaged or distressed. The carpet salesman told Simone that his most expensive brand of floor covering was warranted to be *impervious* to ordinary wear and tear. Having read so many negative reviews of his acting, the movie star had learned to ignore them, and was now *impervious* to criticism.

impetuous ADJ. violent; hasty; rash. "Leap before you look" was the motto suggested by one particularly *impetuous* young man.

impetus N. incentive; stimulus; moving force. A new federal highway program would create jobs and give added *impetus* to our economic recovery.

impiety N. irreverence; lack of respect for God. When members of the youth group draped the church in toilet paper one Halloween, the minister reprimanded them for their *impiety.*

impinge V. infringe; touch; collide with. How could they be married without *impinging* on one another's freedom?

impious ADJ. irreverent. The congregation was offended by her *impious* remarks.

implacable ADJ. incapable of being pacified. Madame Defarge was the *implacable* enemy of the Evremonde family.

■ **implausible** ADJ. unlikely; unbelievable. Though her alibi seemed *implausible,* it in fact turned out to be true.

■ **implement** V. put into effect; supply with tools. The mayor was unwilling to *implement* the plan until she was sure it had the governor's backing. also N.

implicate V. incriminate; show to be involved. Here's the deal: if you agree to take the witness stand and *implicate* your partners in crime, the prosecution will recommend that the judge go easy in sentencing you.

implication N. something hinted at or suggested. When Miss Watson said she hadn't seen her purse since the last time Jim was in the house, the *implication* was that she suspected Jim had taken it. imply, V.

implicit ADJ. understood but not stated. Jack never told Jill he adored her; he believed his love was *implicit* in his actions.

implore V. beg. He *implored* her to give him a second chance.

imply V. suggest a meaning not expressed; signify. When Aunt Millie said, "My! That's a big piece of pie, young man!" was she *implying* that Bobby was being a glutton in helping himself to such a huge piece?

imponderable ADJ. not able to be determined precisely. Psychology is not a precise science; far too many *imponderable* factors play a part in determining human behavior.

import N. importance; meaning. To Miss Manners, proper etiquette was a matter of great *import.* Because Tom knew so little about medical matters, it took a while for the full *import* of the doctor's words to sink in.

importunate ADJ. urging; demanding. He tried to hide from his *importunate* creditors until his allowance arrived.

importune V. beg persistently. Democratic and Republican phone solicitors *importuned* her for contributions so frequently that she decided to give nothing to either party.

impostor N. someone who assumes a false identity. "This man is no doctor! He is a fraud!" cried Holmes, exposing the *impostor*.

impotent ADJ. weak; ineffective. Although he wished to break the nicotine habit, he found himself *impotent* to resist the craving for a cigarette.

impoverished ADJ. poor. The loss of their farm left the family *impoverished* and without hope.

● **impregnable** ADJ. invulnerable. Until the development of the airplane as a military weapon, the fort was considered *impregnable.*

impromptu ADJ. without previous preparation; off the cuff; on the spur of the moment. The judges were amazed that she could make such a thorough, well-supported presentation in an *impromptu* speech.

impropriety N. improperness; unsuitableness. Because of the *impropriety* of the punk rocker's slashed T-shirt and jeans, the management refused to admit him to the hotel's very formal dining room.

improvident ADJ. thriftless. He was constantly being warned to mend his *improvident* ways and begin to "save for a rainy day." improvidence, N.

improvise V. compose on the spur of the moment. She would sit at the piano and *improvise* for hours on themes from Bach and Handel.

imprudent ADJ. lacking caution; injudicious. It is *imprudent* to exercise vigorously and become overheated when you are unwell.

■ **impudence** N. impertinence; insolence. Kissed on the cheek by a perfect stranger, Lady Catherine exclaimed, "Of all the nerve! Young man, I should have you horse-whipped for your *impudence*."

impugn V. dispute or contradict (often in an insulting way); challenge; gainsay. Our treasurer was furious when the finance committee's report *impugned* the accuracy of his financial records and recommended that he should take bonehead math.

impunity N. freedom from punishment or harm. A 98-pound weakling can't attack a beachfront bully with *impunity*: the poor, puny guy is sure to get mashed.

imputation N. accusation; charge; reproach. Paradoxically, the guiltier he was of the offense with which he was charged, the more he resented the *imputation.*

■ **inadvertently** ADV. unintentionally; by oversight; carelessly. Judy's great fear was that she might *inadvertently* omit a question on the exam and mismark her whole answer sheet.

inalienable ADJ. not to be taken away; nontransferable. The Declaration of Independence asserts that all people possess certain *inalienable* human rights that no powers on earth can take away.

■ **inane** ADJ. silly; senseless. There's no point to what you're saying. Why are you bothering to make such *inane* remarks?

inanimate ADJ. lifeless. She was asked to identify the still and *inanimate* body.

inarticulate ADJ. speechless; producing indistinct speech. He became *inarticulate* with rage and uttered sounds without meaning.

inaugurate V. start; initiate; install in office. The airline decided to *inaugurate* its new route to the Far East with a special reduced fare offer. inaugural, ADJ.

incandescent ADJ. strikingly bright; shining with intense heat. If you leave on an *incandescent* light bulb, it quickly grows too hot to touch.

incantation N. singing or chanting of magic spells; magical formula. Uttering *incantations* to make the brew more potent, the witch doctor stirred the liquid in the caldron.

incapacitate V. disable. During the winter, many people were *incapacitated* by respiratory ailments.

incarcerate V. imprison. The civil rights workers were willing to be arrested and even *incarcerated* if by their imprisonment they could serve the cause.

incarnation N. act of assuming a human body and human nature. The *incarnation* of Jesus Christ is a basic tenet of Christian theology.

incendiary N. arsonist. The fire spread in such an unusual manner that the fire department chiefs were certain that it had been set by an *incendiary.* also ADJ.

incense V. enrage; infuriate. Cruelty to defenseless animals *incensed* Kit: the very idea brought tears of anger to her eyes.

incentive N. spur; motive. Mike's strong desire to outshine his big sister was all the *incentive* he needed to do well in school.

inception N. start; beginning. She was involved with the project from its *inception.*

incessant ADJ. uninterrupted; unceasing. In a famous TV commercial, the frogs' *incessant* croaking goes on and on until eventually it turns into a single word: "Bud-weis-er."

Word List 25 inchoate-ingenious

inchoate ADJ. recently begun; rudimentary; elementary. Before the Creation, the world was an *inchoate* mass.

incidence N. rate of occurrence; particular occurrence. Health professionals expressed great concern over the high *incidence* of infant mortality in major urban areas.

● **incidental** ADJ. not essential; minor. The scholarship covered his major expenses at college and some of his *incidental* expenses as well.

incipient ADJ. beginning; in an early stage. I will go to sleep early for I want to break an *incipient* cold.

■ **incisive** ADJ. cutting; sharp. His *incisive* remarks made us see the fallacy in our plans.

■ **incite** V. arouse to action; goad; motivate; induce to exist. In a fiery speech, Mario *incited* his fellow students to go out on strike to protest the university's anti-affirmative action stand.

inclement ADJ. stormy; unkind. In *inclement* weather, I like to curl up on the sofa with a good book and listen to the storm blowing outside.

incline N. slope; slant. The architect recommended that the nursing home's ramp be rebuilt because its *incline* was too steep for wheelchairs.

inclined ADJ. tending or leaning toward; bent. Though I am *inclined* to be skeptical, the witness's manner *inclines* me to believe his story. also V.

■ **inclusive** ADJ. tending to include all. The comedian turned down the invitation to join the Players' Club, saying any club that would let him in was too *inclusive* for him.

incoherence N. unintelligibility; lack of logic or relevance. "This essay makes no sense at all," commented the teacher, giving it an F because of its *incoherence*.

incompatible ADJ. inharmonious. The married couple argued incessantly and finally decided to separate because they were *incompatible.* incompatibility, N.

■ **incongruous** ADJ. not fitting; absurd. Dave saw nothing *incongruous* about wearing sneakers with his tuxedo; he couldn't understand why his date took one look at him and started to laugh. incongruity, N.

■ **inconsequential** ADJ. insignificant; unimportant. Brushing off Ali's apologies for having broken the wineglass, Tamara said, "Don't worry about it; it's *inconsequential*."

inconsistency N. state of being self-contradictory; lack of uniformity or steadiness. How are lawyers different from agricultural inspectors? While lawyers check *inconsistencies* in witnesses' statements, agricultural inspectors check *inconsistencies* in Grade A eggs. inconsistent, ADJ.

incontinent ADJ. lacking self-restraint; licentious. His *incontinent* behavior off stage so shocked many people that they refused to attend the plays and movies in which he appeared.

● **incontrovertible** ADJ. indisputable; not open to question. Unless you find the evidence against my client absolutely *incontrovertible*, you must declare her not guilty of this charge.

incorporate V. introduce something into a larger whole; combine; unite. Breaking with precedent, President Truman ordered the military to *incorporate* blacks into every branch of the armed services. also ADJ.

incorporeal ADJ. lacking a material body; insubstantial. While Casper the friendly ghost is an *incorporeal* being, nevertheless he and his fellow ghosts make quite an impact on the physical world.

■ **incorrigible** ADJ. not correctable. Though Widow Douglass hoped to reform Huck, Miss Watson called him *incorrigible* and said he would come to no good end.

incredulous ADJ. withholding belief; skeptical. When Jack claimed he hadn't eaten the jelly doughnut, Jill took an *incredulous* look at his smeared face and laughed. incredulity, N.

increment N. increase. The new contract calls for a 10 percent *increment* in salary for each employee for the next two years.

incriminate V. accuse. The evidence gathered against the racketeers *incriminates* some high public officials as well.

incrustation N. hard coating or crust. In dry dock, we scraped off the *incrustation* of dirt and barnacles that covered the hull of the ship.

incubate V. hatch; scheme. Because our supply of electricity has been cut off, we shall have to rely on the hens to *incubate* these eggs.

inculcate V. teach; instill. In an effort to *inculcate* religious devotion, the officials ordered that the school day begin with the singing of a hymn.

incumbent ADJ. obligatory; currently holding an office. It is *incumbent* upon all *incumbent* elected officials to keep accurate records of expenses incurred in office. also N.

incur V. bring upon oneself. His parents refused to pay any future debts he might *incur.*

incursion N. temporary invasion. The nightly *incursions* and hit-and-run raids of our neighbors across the border tried the patience of the country to the point where we decided to retaliate in force.

● **indefatigable** ADJ. tireless. Although the effort of taking out the garbage tired Wayne out for the entire morning, when it came to partying, he was *indefatigable*.

indelible ADJ. not able to be erased. The *indelible* ink left a permanent mark on my shirt. Young Bill Clinton's meeting with President Kennedy made an *indelible* impression on the youth.

indentation N. notch; deep recess. You can tell one tree from another by examining their leaves and noting the differences in the *indentations* along the edges of the leaves. indent, V.

indenture V. bind as servant or apprentice to master. Many immigrants could come to America only after they had *indentured* themselves for several years. also N.

indeterminate ADJ. uncertain; not clearly fixed; indefinite. That interest rates shall rise appears certain; when they will do so, however, remains *indeterminate*.

indicative ADJ. suggestive; implying. A lack of appetite may be *indicative* of a major mental or physical disorder.

indices N. PL. signs; indications. Many college admissions officers believe that SAT scores and high school grades are the best *indices* of a student's potential to succeed in college. N. SG. index.

■ **indict** V. charge. The district attorney didn't want to *indict* the suspect until she was sure she had a strong enough case to convince a jury. indictment, N.

■ **indifferent** ADJ. unmoved or unconcerned by; mediocre. Because Ann felt no desire to marry, she was *indifferent* to Carl's constant proposals. Not only was she *indifferent* to him personally, but she felt that, given his general silliness, he would make an *indifferent* husband.

indigenous ADJ. native. Cigarettes are made of tobacco, a plant *indigenous* to the New World.

indigent ADJ. poor; destitute. Someone who is truly *indigent* can't even afford to buy a pack of cigarettes. [Don't mix up *indigent* and *indigenous*. See previous sentence.]

indignation N. anger at an injustice. He felt *indignation* at the ill-treatment of helpless animals.

indignity N. offensive or insulting treatment. Although he seemed to accept cheerfully the *indignities* heaped upon him, he was inwardly very angry.

indiscretion N. lack of tactfulness or sound judgment. Terrified that the least *indiscretion* could jeopardize his political career, the novice politician never uttered an unguarded word. indiscreet, ADJ.

■ **indiscriminate** ADJ. choosing at random; confused. She disapproved of her son's *indiscriminate* television viewing and decided to restrict him to educational programs.

indisputable ADJ. too certain to be disputed. In the face of these *indisputable* statements, I withdraw my complaint.

indissoluble ADJ. permanent. The *indissoluble* bonds of marriage are all too often being dissolved.

indoctrinate V. instruct in a doctrine or ideology. Cuban-Americans resisted sending Elian Gonzalez back to Cuba because he would be *indoctrinated* there with Communist principles.

● **indolent** ADJ. lazy. Couch potatoes lead an *indolent* life lying back on their Lazyboy recliners watching TV. indolence, N.

indomitable ADJ. unconquerable; unyielding. Focusing on her game despite all her personal problems, tennis champion Steffi Graf proved she had an *indomitable* will to win.

indubitable ADJ. unable to be doubted; unquestionable. Auditioning for the chorus line, Molly was an *indubitable* hit: the director fired the leading lady and hired Molly in her place!

■ **induce** V. persuade; bring about. After the quarrel, Tina said nothing could *induce* her to talk to Tony again. inducement, N.

indulgent ADJ. humoring; yielding; lenient. Jay's mom was excessively *indulgent*: she bought him every Nintendo cartridge and video game on the market. She *indulged* Jay so much, she spoiled him rotten.

industrious ADJ. diligent; hard-working. Look busy when the boss walks by your desk; it never hurts to appear *industrious*. industry, N.

inebriated ADJ. habitually intoxicated; drunk. Abe was *inebriated* more often than he was sober. Because of his *inebriety*, he was discharged from his job as a bus driver.

● **ineffable** ADJ. unutterable; cannot be expressed in speech. Looking down at her newborn daughter, Ruth felt such *ineffable* joy that, for the first time in her adult life, she had no words to convey what was in her heart.

ineffectual ADJ. not effective; weak. Because the candidate failed to get across his message to the public, his campaign was *ineffectual*.

inefficacious ADJ. not effective; unable to produce a desired result. All Lois's coaxing and urging was *inefficacious*: Clark still refused to join her and Superman for dinner. inefficacy, N.

inept ADJ. lacking skill; unsuited; incompetent. The *inept* glovemaker was all thumbs.

inequity N. unfairness. In demanding equal pay for equal work, women protest the basic *inequity* of a system that gives greater financial rewards to men.

■ **inert** ADJ. inactive; lacking power to move. "Get up, you lazybones," she cried to her husband, who lay in bed *inert*. inertia, N.

inevitable ADJ. unavoidable. Though death and taxes are both supposedly *inevitable*, some people avoid paying taxes for years.

● **inexorable** ADJ. relentless; unyielding; implacable. After listening to the pleas for clemency, the judge was *inexorable* and gave the convicted man the maximum punishment allowed by law.

infallible ADJ. unerring. Jane refused to believe the pope was *infallible*, reasoning, "All human beings are capable of error. The pope is a human being. Therefore, the pope is capable of error."

infamous ADJ. notoriously bad. Charles Manson and Jeffrey Dahmer are both *infamous* killers.

infantile ADJ. childish. When will he outgrow such *infantile* behavior?

infer V. deduce; conclude. From the students' glazed looks, it was easy for me to *infer* that they were bored out of their minds. inference, N.

infernal ADJ. pertaining to hell; devilish. Batman was baffled: he could think of no way to hinder the Joker's *infernal* scheme to destroy the city.

infidel N. unbeliever. The Saracens made war against the *infidels*.

infiltrate V. pass into or through; penetrate (an organization) sneakily. In order to be able to *infiltrate* enemy lines at night without being seen, the scouts darkened their faces and wore black coveralls. infiltrator, N.

infinitesimal ADJ. exceedingly small; so small as to be almost nonexistent. Making sure everyone was aware she

was on an extremely strict diet, Melanie said she would have only an *infinitesimal* sliver of pie.

infirmity N. weakness. Her greatest *infirmity* was lack of willpower.

inflated ADJ. exaggerated; pompous; enlarged (with air or gas). His claims about the new product were *inflated;* it did not work as well as he had promised.

influx N. flowing into. The *influx* of refugees into the country has taxed the relief agencies severely.

informal ADJ. absence of ceremony; casual. The English teacher preferred *informal* discussions to prepared lectures.

infraction N. violation (of a rule or regulation); breach. When Dennis Rodman butted heads with that referee, he committed a clear *infraction* of NBA rules.

infuriate V. enrage; anger. Her big brother's teasing always *infuriated* Margaret; no matter how hard she tried to keep her temper, he always got her goat.

infusion N. act of introducing or instilling a quality; liquid solution. The rookie quarterback brought an *infusion* of new life and vigor to the tired team. infuse, V.

■ **ingenious** ADJ. clever; resourceful. Kit admired the *ingenious* way that her computer keyboard opened up to reveal the built-in CD-ROM below. ingenuity, N.

Word List 26 ingenue-invigorate

ingenue N. an artless girl; an actress who plays such parts. Although she was forty, she still insisted that she be cast as an *ingenue* and refused to play more mature roles.

ingenuous ADJ. naive and trusting; young; unsophisticated. The woodsman had not realized how *ingenuous* Little Red Riding Hood was until he heard that she had gone off for a walk in the woods with the Big Bad Wolf.

ingrained ADJ. deeply established; firmly rooted. Try as they would, the missionaries were unable to uproot the *ingrained* superstitions of the natives.

ingrate N. ungrateful person. That *ingrate* Bob sneered at the tie I gave him.

ingratiate V. make an effort to become popular with. In *All About Eve,* the heroine, an aspiring actress, wages a clever campaign to *ingratiate* herself with Margo Channing, an established star.

■ **inherent** ADJ. firmly established by nature or habit. Katya's *inherent* love of justice caused her to champion anyone she considered treated unfairly by society.

inhibit V. restrain; retard or prevent. Only two things *inhibited* him from taking a punch at Mike Tyson: Tyson's left hook, and Tyson's right jab. The protective undercoating on my car *inhibits* the formation of rust.

inimical ADJ. unfriendly; hostile; harmful; detrimental. I've always been friendly to Martha. Why is she so *inimical* to me?

inimitable ADJ. matchless; not able to be imitated. We admire Auden for his *inimitable* use of language; he is one of a kind.

iniquitous ADJ. wicked; immoral; unrighteous. Whether or not King Richard III was responsible for the murder of the two young princes in the Tower, it was an *iniquitous* deed. iniquity, N.

initiate V. begin; originate; receive into a group. The college is about to *initiate* a program in reducing math anxiety among students.

injurious ADJ. harmful. Smoking cigarettes can be *injurious* to your health.

inkling N. hint. This came as a complete surprise to me as I did not have the slightest *inkling* of your plans.

■ **innate** ADJ. inborn. Mozart's parents soon recognized young Wolfgang's *innate* talent for music.

■ **innocuous** ADJ. harmless. An occasional glass of wine with dinner is relatively *innocuous* and should have no ill effect on you.

■ **innovation** N. change; introduction of something new. Although Richard liked to keep up with all the latest technological *innovations*, he didn't always abandon tried and true techniques in favor of something new. innovate, V.

innovative ADJ. novel; introducing a change. The establishment of our SAT computer data base has enabled us to come up with some *innovative* tactics for doing well on the SAT.

innuendo N. hint; insinuation. I can defend myself against direct accusations; *innuendos* and oblique attacks on my character are what trouble me.

inopportune ADJ. untimely; poorly chosen. A rock concert is an *inopportune* setting for a quiet conversation.

inordinate ADJ. unrestrained; excessive. She had an *inordinate* fondness for candy, eating two or three boxes in a single day.

inquisitor N. questioner (especially harsh); investigator. Fearing being grilled ruthlessly by the secret police, Masha faced her *inquisitors* with trepidation.

insalubrious ADJ. unwholesome; not healthful. The mosquito-ridden swamp was an *insalubrious* place, a breeding ground for malarial contagion.

insatiable ADJ. not easily satisfied; unquenchable; greedy. David's appetite for oysters was *insatiable*: he could easily eat four dozen at a single sitting.

inscrutable ADJ. impenetrable; not readily understood; mysterious. Experienced poker players try to keep their expressions *inscrutable*, hiding their reactions to the cards behind a so-called "poker face."

insensible ADJ. unconscious; unresponsive. Sherry and I are very different; at times when I would be covered with embarrassment, she seems *insensible* to shame.

insidious ADJ. treacherous; stealthy; sly. The fifth column is *insidious* because it works secretly within our territory for our defeat.

insightful ADJ. discerning; perceptive. Sol thought he was very *insightful* about human behavior, but he was actually clueless as to why people acted the way they did.

insinuate V. hint; imply; creep in. When you said I looked robust, did you mean to *insinuate* that I'm getting fat?

■ **insipid** ADJ. lacking in flavor; dull. Flat prose and flat ginger ale are equally *insipid*: both lack sparkle.

insolence N. impudent disrespect; haughtiness. How dare you treat me so rudely! The manager will hear of your *insolence*. insolent, ADJ.

● **insolvent** ADJ. bankrupt; unable to repay one's debts. Although young Lord Widgeon was *insolvent*, he had no fear of being thrown into debtors' prison, for he was sure that if his creditors pressed him for payment his wealthy parents would repay what he owed. insolvency, N.

insomnia N. wakefulness; inability to sleep. He refused to join us in a midnight cup of coffee because he claimed it gave him *insomnia.*

■ **instigate** V. urge; start; provoke. Rumors of police corruption led the mayor to *instigate* an investigation into the department's activities.

insubordination N. disobedience; rebelliousness. At the slightest hint of *insubordination* from the sailors of the *Bounty*, Captain Bligh had them flogged; finally, they mutinied.

insubstantial ADJ. lacking substance; insignificant; frail. His hopes for a career in acting proved *insubstantial*; no one would cast him, even in an *insubstantial* role.

■ **insularity** N. narrow-mindedness; isolation. The *insularity* of the islanders manifested itself in their suspicion of anything foreign. insular, ADJ.

insulated ADJ. set apart; isolated. A well-to-do bachelor, James spent his money freely, *insulated* from the cares of his friends, who had families to support.

● **insuperable** ADJ. insurmountable; unbeatable. Though the odds against their survival seemed *insuperable*, the Apollo 13 astronauts reached earth safely.

insurgent ADJ. rebellious. Because the *insurgent* forces had occupied the capital and had gained control of the railway lines, several of the war correspondents covering the uprising predicted a rebel victory.

insurmountable ADJ. overwhelming; unbeatable; insuperable. Faced by almost *insurmountable* obstacles, the members of the underground maintained their courage and will to resist.

insurrection N. rebellion; uprising. In retrospect, given how badly the British treated the American colonists, the eventual *insurrection* seems inevitable.

intangible ADJ. not able to be perceived by touch; vague. Though the financial benefits of his Oxford post were meager, Lewis was drawn to it by its *intangible* rewards: prestige, intellectual freedom, the fellowship of his peers.

integral ADJ. complete; necessary for completeness. Physical education is an *integral* part of our curriculum; a sound mind and a sound body are complementary.

integrate V. make whole; combine; make into one unit. We hope to *integrate* the French, Spanish, and Italian programs into a combined Romance languages department.

■ **integrity** N. uprightness; wholeness. Lincoln, whose personal *integrity* has inspired millions, fought a civil war to maintain the *integrity* of the Republic, that these United States might remain undivided for all time.

intellect N. higher mental powers. If you wish to develop your *intellect*, read the great books.

intelligentsia N. the intelligent and educated classes [often used derogatorily]. She preferred discussions about sports and politics to the literary conversations of the *intelligentsia.*

intemperate ADJ. immoderate; excessive; extreme. In a temper, Tony refused to tone down his *intemperate* remarks.

inter V. bury. They are going to *inter* the body tomorrow at Broadlawn Cemetery.

interim N. meantime. The company will not consider our proposal until next week; in the *interim,* let us proceed as we have in the past.

interloper N. intruder; unwanted meddler. The merchant thought of his competitors as *interlopers* who were stealing away his trade.

interment N. burial. *Interment* will take place in the church cemetery at 2 P.M. Wednesday.

interminable ADJ. endless. Although his speech lasted for only twenty minutes, it seemed *interminable* to his bored audience.

intermittent ADJ. periodic; on and off. The outdoor wedding reception had to be moved indoors to avoid the *intermittent* showers that fell on and off all afternoon.

interrogate V. question closely; cross-examine. Knowing that the Nazis would *interrogate* him about his background, the secret agent invented a cover story that would help him meet their questions.

■ **intervene** V. come between. When two close friends get into a fight, be careful if you try to *intervene*; they may join forces to gang up on you.

intimacy N. closeness, often affectionate; privacy; familiarity. In a moment of rare *intimacy*, the mayor allowed the reporters a glimpse of his personal feelings about his family. intimate, ADJ.

intimate V. hint; suggest. Was Dick *intimating* that Jane had bad breath when he asked if she'd like a breath mint?

■ **intimidate** V. frighten. I'll learn karate and then those big bullies won't be able to *intimidate* me any more.

● **intractable** ADJ. unruly; stubborn; unyielding. Charlie Brown's friend Pigpen was *intractable*: he absolutely refused to take a bath.

intransigence N. refusal of any compromise; stubbornness. The negotiating team had not expected such *intransigence* from the striking workers, who rejected any hint of a compromise. intransigent, ADJ.

■ **intrepid** ADJ. fearless. For her *intrepid* conduct nursing the wounded during the war, Florence Nightingale was honored by Queen Victoria.

intricate ADJ. complex; knotty; tangled. Philip spent many hours designing mazes so *intricate* that none of his classmates could solve them. intricacy, N.

intrinsic ADJ. essential; inherent; built-in. Although my grandmother's china has little *intrinsic* value, I shall always cherish it for the memories it evokes.

introspective ADJ. looking within oneself. Though young Francis of Assisi led a wild and worldly life, even then he had *introspective* moments during which he examined his soul.

introvert N. one who is introspective; inclined to think more about oneself. Uncommunicative by nature and disinclined to look outside himself, he was a classic *introvert*.

intrude V. trespass; enter as an uninvited person. She hesitated to *intrude* on their conversation.

intuition N. immediate insight; power of knowing without reasoning. Even though Tony denied that anything was wrong, Tina trusted her *intuition* that something was bothering him. intuitive, ADJ.

■ **inundate** V. overwhelm; flood; submerge. This semester I am *inundated* with work: You should see the piles of paperwork flooding my desk. Until the great dam was built, the waters of the Nile used to *inundate* the river valley like clockwork every year.

inured ADJ. accustomed; hardened. She became *inured* to the Alaskan cold.

invalidate V. weaken; destroy. The relatives who received little or nothing sought to *invalidate* the will by claiming that the deceased had not been in his right mind when he had signed the document.

invasive ADJ. tending to spread aggressively; intrusive. Giving up our war with the *invasive* blackberry vines that had taken over the back yard, we covered the lawn with concrete. invade, V.

invective N. abuse. He had expected criticism but not the *invective* that greeted his proposal. inveigh, V.

inveigle V. entice; persuade; wheedle. Flattering Adam about his good taste in food, Eve *inveigled* him into taking a bite of her apple pie.

inverse ADJ. opposite. There is an *inverse* ratio between the strength of light and its distance.

■ **invert** V. turn upside down or inside out. When he *inverted* his body in a handstand, he felt the blood rush to his head.

inveterate ADJ. deep-rooted; habitual. An *inveterate* smoker, Bob cannot seem to break the habit, no matter how hard he tries.

invidious ADJ. designed to create ill will or envy. We disregarded her *invidious* remarks because we realized how jealous she was.

invigorate V. energize; stimulate. A quick dip in the pool *invigorated* Meg, and with renewed energy she got back to work.

Word List 27 invincible-laggard

invincible ADJ. unconquerable. Superman is *invincible.*

inviolable ADJ. secure from corruption, attack, or violation; unassailable. Batman considered his oath to keep the people of Gotham City safe *inviolable*: nothing on earth could make him break this promise.

invocation N. prayer for help; calling upon as a reference or support. The service of Morning Prayer opens with an *invocation* during which we ask God to hear our prayers.

invoke V. call upon; ask for. She *invoked* her advisor's aid in filling out her financial aid forms.

invulnerable ADJ. incapable of injury. Achilles was *invulnerable* except in his heel.

iota N. very small quantity. She hadn't an *iota* of common sense.

irascible ADJ. irritable; easily angered. Miss Minchin's *irascible* temper intimidated the younger schoolgirls, who feared she'd burst into a rage at any moment.

irate ADJ. angry. When John's mother found out he had overdrawn his checking account for the third month in a row, she was so *irate* she could scarcely speak to him.

ire N. anger. The waiter tried unsuccessfully to placate the *ire* of the diner who had found a cockroach in her soup.

iridescent ADJ. exhibiting rainbowlike colors. She admired the *iridescent* hues of the oil that floated on the surface of the water.

irksome ADJ. annoying; tedious. He found working on the assembly line *irksome* because of the monotony of the operation he had to perform. irk, V.

■ **ironic** ADJ. resulting in an unexpected and contrary outcome. It is *ironic* that his success came when he least wanted it.

irony N. hidden sarcasm or satire; use of words that seem to mean the opposite of what they actually mean. Gradually his listeners began to realize that the excessive praise he was lavishing on his opponent was actually *irony*; he was in fact ridiculing the poor fool.

irrational ADJ. illogical; lacking reason; insane. Many people have such an *irrational* fear of snakes that they panic at the sight of a harmless garter snake.

irreconcilable ADJ. incompatible; not able to be resolved. Because the separated couple were *irreconcilable,* the marriage counselor recommended a divorce.

irrefutable ADJ. indisputable; incontrovertible; undeniable. No matter how hard I tried to find a good comeback for her argument, I couldn't think of one: her logic was *irrefutable*.

irrelevant ADJ. not applicable; unrelated. No matter how *irrelevant* the patient's mumblings may seem, they give us some indications of what he has on his mind.

irremediable ADJ. incurable; uncorrectable. The error she made was *irremediable;* she could see no way to repair it.

irreparable ADJ. not able to be corrected or repaired. Your apology cannot atone for the *irreparable* damage you have done to her reputation.

irrepressible ADJ. unable to be restrained or held back. My friend Kitty's curiosity was *irrepressible*: she poked her nose into everybody's business and just laughed when I warned her that curiosity killed the cat.

● **irreproachable** ADJ. blameless; impeccable. Homer's conduct at the office party was *irreproachable*; even Marge didn't have anything bad to say about how he behaved.

irresolute ADJ. uncertain how to act; weak. Once you have made your decision, don't waver; a leader should never appear *irresolute*.

irretrievable ADJ. impossible to recover or regain; irreparable. The left fielder tried to retrieve the ball, but it flew over the fence, bounced off a wall, and fell into the sewer: it was *irretrievable*.

irreverence N. lack of proper respect. Some audience members were amused by the *irreverence* of the comedian's jokes about the Pope; others felt offended by his lack of respect for their faith. irreverent, ADJ.

irrevocable ADJ. unalterable; irreversible. As Sue dropped the "Dear John" letter into the mailbox, she suddenly had second thoughts and wanted to take it back, but she could not: her action was *irrevocable*.

itinerant ADJ. wandering; traveling. He was an *itinerant* peddler and traveled through Pennsylvania and Virginia selling his wares. also N.

itinerary N. plan of a trip. Disliking sudden changes in plans when she traveled abroad, Ethel refused to make any alterations in her *itinerary*.

jabber V. chatter rapidly or unintelligibly. Why does the fellow insist on *jabbering* away in French when I can't understand a word he says?

jaded ADJ. fatigued; surfeited. He looked for exotic foods to stimulate his *jaded* appetite.

jargon N. language used by a special group; technical terminology; gibberish. The computer salesmen at the store used a *jargon* of their own that we simply couldn't follow; we had no idea what they were jabbering about.

jaundiced ADJ. prejudiced (envious, hostile or resentful); yellowed. Because Sue disliked Carolyn, she looked at Carolyn's paintings with a *jaundiced* eye, calling them formless smears. Newborn infants afflicted with *jaundice* look slightly yellow: they have *jaundiced* skin.

jaunt N. trip; short journey. He took a quick *jaunt* to Atlantic City.

jaunty ADJ. lighthearted; animated; easy and carefree. In *An American in Paris*, Gene Kelly sang and danced his way through "I Got Rhythm" in a properly *jaunty* style.

jeopardize V. endanger; imperil; put at risk. You can't give me a D in chemistry: you'll *jeopardize* my chances of getting into M.I.T. jeopardy, N.

jettison V. throw overboard. In order to enable the ship to ride safely through the storm, the captain had to *jettison* much of his cargo.

jingoist N. extremely aggressive and militant patriot; warlike chauvinist. Always bellowing "America first!," the congressman was such a *jingoist* you could almost hear the sabers rattling as he marched down the halls. jingoism, N.

jocose ADJ. given to joking. The salesman was so *jocose* that many of his customers suggested that he become a "stand-up" comic.

● **jocular** ADJ. said or done in jest. Although Bill knew the boss hated jokes, he couldn't resist making one *jocular* remark.

jollity N. gaiety; cheerfulness. The festive Christmas dinner was a merry one, and old and young alike joined in the general *jollity.*

jostle V. shove; bump. In the subway he was *jostled* by the crowds.

jovial ADJ. good-natured; merry. A frown seemed out of place on his invariably *jovial* face.

jubilation N. rejoicing. There was great *jubilation* when the armistice was announced. jubilant, ADJ.

judicious ADJ. sound in judgment; wise. At a key moment in his life, he made a *judicious* investment that was the foundation of his later wealth.

juncture N. crisis; joining point. At this critical *juncture,* let us think carefully before determining the course we shall follow.

junta N. group of men joined in political intrigue; cabal. As soon as he learned of its existence, the dictator ordered the execution of all of the members of the *junta.*

jurisprudence N. science of law. He was more a student of *jurisprudence* than a practitioner of the law.

justification N. good or just reason; defense; excuse. The jury found him guilty of the more serious charge because they could see no possible *justification* for his actions.

kaleidoscope N. tube in which patterns made by the reflection in mirrors of colored pieces of glass, etc., produce interesting symmetrical effects. People found a new source of entertainment while peering through the *kaleidoscope;* they found the ever-changing patterns fascinating.

kernel N. central or vital part; whole seed (as of corn). "Watson, buried within this tissue of lies there is a *kernel* of truth; when I find it, the mystery will be solved."

killjoy N. grouch; spoilsport. At breakfast we had all been enjoying our bacon and eggs until that *killjoy* John started talking about how bad animal fats were for our health.

kindle V. start a fire; inspire. One of the first things Ben learned in the Boy Scouts was how to *kindle* a fire by rubbing two dry sticks together. Her teacher's praise for her poetry *kindled* a spark of hope inside Maya.

kindred ADJ. related; belonging to the same family. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn were *kindred* spirits, born mischief makers who were always up to some new tomfoolery.

kinetic ADJ. producing motion. Designers of the electric automobile find that their greatest obstacle lies in the development of light and efficient storage batteries, the source of the *kinetic* energy needed to propel the vehicle.

kleptomaniac N. person who has a compulsive desire to steal. They discovered that the wealthy customer was a *kleptomaniac* when they caught her stealing some cheap trinkets.

knave N. untrustworthy person; rogue; scoundrel. Any politician nicknamed Tricky Dick clearly has the reputation of a *knave*. knavery, N.

knit V. contract into wrinkles; grow together. Whenever David worries, his brow *knits* in a frown. When he broke his leg, he sat around the house all day waiting for the bones to *knit*.

knoll N. little round hill. Robert Louis Stevenson's grave is on a *knoll* in Samoa; to reach the grave site, you must climb uphill and walk a short distance along a marked path.

knotty ADJ. intricate; difficult; tangled. What to Watson had been a *knotty* problem, to Sherlock Holmes was simplicity itself.

kudos N. honor; glory; praise. The singer complacently received *kudos* from his entourage on his performance.

laborious ADJ. demanding much work or care; tedious. In putting together his dictionary of the English language, Doctor Johnson undertook a *laborious* task.

● **labyrinth** N. maze. Hiding from Indian Joe, Tom and Becky soon lost themselves in the *labyrinth* of secret underground caves. labyrinthine, ADJ.

laceration N. torn, ragged wound. The stock car driver needed stitches to close up the *lacerations* he received in the car crash.

lachrymose ADJ. producing tears. His voice has a *lachrymose* quality more appropriate to a funeral than a class reunion.

lackadaisical ADJ. lacking purpose or zest; halfhearted; languid. Because Gatsby had his mind more on his love life than on his finances, he did a very *lackadaisical* job of managing his money.

lackluster ADJ. dull. We were disappointed by the *lackluster* performance.

● **laconic** ADJ. brief and to the point. Many of the characters portrayed by Clint Eastwood are *laconic* types: strong men of few words.

● **laggard** ADJ. slow; sluggish. The sailor had been taught not to be *laggard* in carrying out orders. also N. lag, N., V.

Word List 28 lament-low

■ **lament** V. grieve; express sorrow. Even advocates of the war *lamented* the loss of so many lives in combat. also N. lamentation, N.

● **lampoon** V. ridicule. This article *lampoons* the pretensions of some movie moguls. also N.

languid ADJ. weary; sluggish; listless. Her siege of illness left her *languid* and pallid.

languish V. lose animation; lose strength. Left at Miss Minchin's school for girls while her father went off to war, Sarah Crewe refused to *languish*; instead, she hid her grief and actively befriended her less fortunate classmates.

languor N. lassitude; depression. His friends tried to overcome the *languor* into which he had fallen by taking him to parties and to the theater.

lap V. take in food or drink with one's tongue; splash gently. The kitten neatly *lapped* up her milk. The waves softly *lapped* against the pier.

larceny N. theft. Because of the prisoner's record, the district attorney refused to reduce the charge from grand *larceny* to petty *larceny*.

larder N. pantry; place where food is kept. The first thing Bill did on returning home from school was to check what snacks his mother had in the *larder*.

largess N. generous gift. Lady Bountiful distributed *largess* to the poor.

● **lassitude** N. languor; weariness. After a massage and a long soak in the hot tub, I gave in to my growing *lassitude* and lay down for a nap.

latent ADJ. potential but undeveloped; dormant; hidden. Polaroid pictures are popular at parties, because you can see the *latent* photographic image gradually appear before your eyes.

lateral ADJ. coming from the side. In order to get good plant growth, the gardener must pinch off all *lateral* shoots.

latitude N. freedom from narrow limitations. I think you have permitted your son too much *latitude* in this matter.

■ **laud** V. praise. The NFL *lauded* Boomer Esiason's efforts to raise money to combat cystic fibrosis. laudable, laudatory, ADJ.

■ **lavish** ADJ. generous; openhanded; extravagant; wasteful. Her wealthy suitors wooed her with lavish gifts. also V.

lax ADJ. careless. We dislike restaurants where the service is *lax* and inattentive.

leaven V. cause to rise or grow lighter; enliven. As bread dough is *leavened*, it puffs up, expanding in volume.

lecherous ADJ. lustful; impure in thought and deed. The villain of the play, a *lecherous* old banker, lusted after the poor farmer's beautiful daughter.

leery ADJ. suspicious; cautious. Don't eat the sushi at this restaurant; I'm a bit *leery* about how fresh the raw fish is.

legacy N. a gift made by a will. Part of my *legacy* from my parents is an album of family photographs.

legend N. explanatory list of symbols on a map. The *legend* at the bottom of the map made it clear which symbols stood for rest areas along the highway and which stood for public camp sites. (secondary meaning)

legerdemain N. sleight of hand. The magician demonstrated his renowned *legerdemain.*

leniency N. mildness; permissiveness. Considering the gravity of the offense, we were surprised by the *leniency* of the sentence.

lethal ADJ. deadly. It is unwise to leave *lethal* weapons where children may find them.

■ **lethargic** ADJ. drowsy; dull. The stuffy room made her *lethargic*: she felt as if she was about to nod off.

levitate V. float in the air (especially by magical means). As the magician passed his hands over the recumbent body of his assistant, she appeared to rise and *levitate* about three feet above the table.

■ **levity** N. lack of seriousness; lightness. Stop giggling and wriggling around in the pew: such *levity* is improper in church.

levy V. impose (a fine); collect (a payment). Crying "No taxation without representation," the colonists demonstrated against England's power to *levy* taxes.

lewd ADJ. lustful. They found his *lewd* stories objectionable.

lexicographer N. compiler of a dictionary. The new dictionary is the work of many *lexicographers* who spent years compiling and editing the work.

lexicon N. dictionary. I cannot find this word in any *lexicon* in the library.

liability N. drawback; debts. Her lack of an extensive vocabulary was a *liability* that she was eventually able to overcome.

liaison N. contact keeping parts of an organization in communication; go-between; secret love affair. As the *liaison* between the American and British forces during World War II, the colonel had to ease tensions between the leaders of the two armies. Romeo's romantic *liaison* with Juliet ended in tragedy.

libel N. defamatory statement; act of writing something that smears a person's character. If Batman wrote that the Joker was a dirty, rotten, mass-murdering criminal, could the Joker sue Batman for *libel*?

liberator N. one who sets free. Simon Bolivar, who led the South American colonies in their rebellion against Spanish rule, is known as the great *liberator*. liberate, V.

libretto N. text of an opera. The composer of an opera's music is remembered more frequently than the author of its *libretto*.

licentious ADJ. amoral; lewd and lascivious; unrestrained. Unscrupulously seducing the daughter of his host, Don Juan felt no qualms about the immorality of his *licentious* behavior.

lilliputian ADJ. extremely small. Tiny and delicate, the model was built on a *lilliputian* scale. also N.

limber ADJ. flexible. Hours of ballet classes kept him *limber.*

limerick N. humorous short verse. The *limerick* form is the best; its meter is pure anapest. A *limerick's* fun for most everyone, and the word may occur on your test.

limpid ADJ. clear; transparent; lucid. We could see swarms of colorful tropical fish in the *limpid* waters of the peaceful cove.

linchpin N. something that holds or links various parts together. The *linchpin* in the district attorney's case was a photograph showing the defendant shaking hands with the hired killer.

lineage N. descent; ancestry. He traced his *lineage* back to Mayflower days.

■ **linger** V. loiter or dawdle; continue or persist. Hoping to see Juliet pass by, Romeo *lingered* outside the Capulet house for hours. Though Mother made stuffed cabbage on Monday, the smell *lingered* around the house for days.

linguistic ADJ. pertaining to language. Exposed to most modern European languages in childhood, she grew up to be a *linguistic* prodigy.

liniment N. ointment; lotion; salve. The trainer carefully applied the *liniment* to the quarterback's bruise, gently rubbing it into the skin.

lionize V. treat as a celebrity. She enjoyed being *lionized* and adored by the public.

liquidate V. settle accounts; clear up. He was able to *liquidate* all his debts in a short period of time.

list V. tilt; lean over. That flagpole should be absolutely vertical; instead, it *lists* to one side. (secondary meaning)

■ **listless** ADJ. lacking in spirit or energy. We had expected him to be full of enthusiasm and were surprised by his *listless* attitude.

litany N. supplicatory prayer. On this solemn day, the congregation responded to the prayers of the priest during the *litany* with fervor and intensity.

● **lithe** ADJ. flexible; supple. Her figure was *lithe* and willowy.

litigation N. lawsuit. Try to settle this without involving any lawyers; I do not want to become bogged down in *litigation*. litigant, N.

livid ADJ. lead-colored; black and blue; enraged. His face was so *livid* with rage that we were afraid that he might have an attack of apoplexy.

loath ADJ. reluctant; disinclined. Fearing for their son's safety, the overprotective parents were *loath* to let him go on the class trip.

loathe V. detest. Booing and hissing, the audience showed how much they *loathed* the wicked villain.

■ **lofty** ADJ. very high. Though Barbara Jordan's fellow students used to tease her about her *lofty* ambitions, she rose to hold one of the highest positions in the land.

log N. record of a voyage or flight; record of day to day activities. "Flogged two seamen today for insubordination" wrote Captain Bligh in the *Bounty's log*. To see how much work I've accomplished recently, just take a look at the number of new files listed on my computer *log*.

loiter V. hang around; linger. The policeman told him not to *loiter* in the alley.

loll V. lounge about. They *lolled* around in their chairs watching television.

longevity N. long life. When he reached ninety, the old man was proud of his *longevity.*

loom V. appear or take shape (usually in an enlarged or distorted form). The shadow of the gallows *loomed* threateningly above the small boy.

lope V. gallop slowly. As the horses *loped* along, we had an opportunity to admire the ever-changing scenery.

loquacious ADJ. talkative. Though our daughter barely says a word to us these days, put a phone in her hand and see how *loquacious* she can be: our phone bills are out of sight! loquacity, N.

lout N. clumsy person. That awkward *lout* dropped my priceless vase!

low V. moo. From the hilltop, they could see the herd like ants in the distance; they could barely hear the cattle *low*.

Word List 29 lucid-maul

lucid ADJ. easily understood; clear; intelligible. Ellen makes an excellent teacher: her explanations of technical points are *lucid* enough for a child to grasp.

lucrative ADJ. profitable. He turned his hobby into a *lucrative* profession.

ludicrous ADJ. ridiculous; laughable; absurd. Gwen tried to keep a straight face, but Bill's suggestion was so *ludicrous* that she finally had to laugh.

lugubrious ADJ. mournful. Gloomy Gus walked around town with a *lugubrious* expression on his face.

lull N. moment of calm. Not wanting to get wet, they waited under the awning for a *lull* in the rain.

lull V. soothe; cause one to relax one's guard; subside. The mother's gentle song *lulled* the child to sleep. Malcolm tried to come up with a plausible story to *lull* his mother's suspicions, but she didn't believe a word he said.

lumber V. move heavily or clumsily. Still somewhat torpid after its long hibernation, the bear *lumbered* through the woods.

luminary N. celebrity; dignitary. A leading light of the American stage, Ethel Barrymore was a theatrical *luminary* whose name lives on.

luminous ADJ. shining; issuing light. The sun is a *luminous* body.

lummox N. big, clumsy, often stupid person. Because he was highly overweight and looked ungainly, John Candy often was cast as a slow-witted *lummox*.

lunar ADJ. pertaining to the moon. *Lunar* craters can be plainly seen with the aid of a small telescope.

lunge V. quickly dive forward; thrust. The wide receiver *lunged* forward to grab the football. With his sword, Dartagnan *lunged* at his adversary.

● **lurid** ADJ. wild; sensational; graphic; gruesome. Do the *lurid* cover stories in the *Enquirer* actually attract people to buy that trashy tabloid?

lurk V. stealthily lie in waiting; slink; exist unperceived. "Who knows what evil *lurks* in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows."

luscious ADJ. pleasing to taste or smell. The ripe peach was *luscious*.

luster N. shine; gloss. The soft *luster* of the silk in the dim light was pleasing.

lustrous ADJ. shining. Her large and *lustrous* eyes lent a touch of beauty to an otherwise plain face.

● **luxuriant** ADJ. abundant; rich and splendid; fertile. Lady Godiva was completely covered by her *luxuriant* hair.

machinations N. evil schemes or plots. Fortunately, Batman saw through the wily *machinations* of the Riddler and saved Gotham City from destruction by the forces of evil.

madrigal N. pastoral song. His program of folk songs included several *madrigals* which he sang to the accompaniment of a lute.

maelstrom N. whirlpool. The canoe was tossed about in the *maelstrom*.

magnanimous ADJ. generous; great-hearted. Philanthropists by definition are *magnanimous*; misers, by definition, are not. Cordelia was too *magnanimous* to resent her father's unkindness to her; instead, she generously forgave him. magnanimity, N.

magnate N. person of prominence or influence. Growing up in Pittsburgh, Annie Dillard was surrounded by the mansions of the great steel and coal *magnates* who set their mark on that city.

magnitude N. greatness; extent. It is difficult to comprehend the *magnitude* of his crime.

maim V. mutilate; injure. The hospital could not take care of all who had been wounded or *maimed* in the railroad accident.

maladroit ADJ. clumsy; bungling. "Oh! My stupid tongue!" exclaimed Jane, embarrassed at having said anything so *maladroit*.

malady N. illness. A mysterious *malady* swept the country, filling doctors' offices with feverish, purple-spotted patients.

malaise N. uneasiness; vague feeling of ill health. Feeling slightly queasy before going onstage, Carol realized that this touch of *malaise* was merely stage fright.

malapropism N. comic misuse of a word. When Mrs. Malaprop accuses Lydia of being "as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile," she confuses "allegory" and "alligator" in a typical *malapropism*.

malcontent N. person dissatisfied with existing state of affairs. One of the few *malcontents* in Congress, he constantly voiced his objections to the presidential program. also ADJ.

malediction N. curse. When the magic mirror revealed that Snow White was still alive, the wicked queen cried out in rage and uttered dreadful *maledictions*.

malefactor N. evildoer; criminal. Mighty Mouse will save the day, hunting down *malefactors* and rescuing innocent mice from peril.

malevolent ADJ. wishing evil. Iago is a *malevolent* villain who takes pleasure in ruining Othello.

malfeasance N. wrongdoing. The authorities did not discover the campaign manager's *malfeasance* until after he had spent most of the money he had embezzled.

■ **malicious** ADJ. hateful; spiteful. Jealous of Cinderella's beauty, her *malicious* stepsisters expressed their spite by forcing her to do menial tasks. malice, N.

malign V. speak evil of; bad-mouth; defame. Putting her hands over her ears, Rose refused to listen to Betty *malign* her friend Susan.

malignant ADJ. injurious; tending to cause death; aggressively malevolent. Though many tumors are benign, some are *malignant*, growing out of control and endangering the life of the patient.

malingerer N. one who feigns illness to escape duty. The captain ordered the sergeant to punish all *malingerers* and force them to work. malinger, V.

malleable ADJ. capable of being shaped by pounding; impressionable. Gold is a *malleable* metal, easily shaped into bracelets and rings. Fagin hoped Oliver was a *malleable* lad, easily shaped into a thief.

malodorous ADJ. foul-smelling. The compost heap was most *malodorous* in summer.

mammal N. a vertebrate animal whose female suckles its young. Many people regard the whale as a fish and do not realize that it is a *mammal.*

mammoth ADJ. gigantic; enormous. To try to memorize every word on this vocabulary list would be a *mammoth* undertaking; take on projects that are more manageable in size.

mandate N. order; charge. In his inaugural address, the president stated that he had a *mandate* from the people to seek an end to social evils such as poverty. also V.

mandatory ADJ. obligatory; compulsory. It is *mandatory* that, before graduation, all students must pass the swimming test.

maniacal ADJ. raging mad; insane. Though Mr. Rochester had locked his mad wife in the attic, he could still hear her *maniacal* laughter echoing throughout the house.

manifest ADJ. evident; visible; obvious. Digby's embarrassment when he met Madonna was *manifest*: his ears turned bright pink, he kept scuffing one shoe in the dirt, and he couldn't look her in the eye.

manifesto N. declaration; statement of policy. The *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels proclaimed the principles of modern communism.

manipulate V. operate with one's hands; control or play upon (people, forces, etc.) artfully. Jim Henson understood how to *manipulate* the Muppets. Madonna understands how to *manipulate* men (and publicity).

mannered ADJ. affected; not natural. Attempting to copy the style of his wealthy neighbors, Gatsby adopted a *mannered*, artificial way of speech.

marital ADJ. pertaining to marriage. After the publication of her book of *marital* advice, she was often consulted by married couples on the verge of divorce.

maritime ADJ. bordering on the sea; nautical. The *Maritime* Provinces depend on the sea for their wealth.

marked ADJ. noticeable or pronounced; targeted for vengeance. He walked with a *marked* limp, a souvenir of an old I.R.A. attack. As British ambassador, he knew he was a *marked* man, for he knew the Irish Republican Army wanted him dead.

marquee N. canopy above an entrance, under which one can take shelter; rooflike shelter above a theater entrance. On stormy days, the hotel doorman keeps dry by standing directly beneath the *marquee*. The title of Arthur Kopit's play *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Momma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad* was too long to fit on the *marquee*.

■ **marred** ADJ. damaged; disfigured. She had to refinish the *marred* surface of the table. mar, V.

marshal V. put in order. At a debate tournament, extemporaneous speakers have only a minute or two to *marshal* their thoughts before they address their audience.

marsupial N. one of a family of mammals that nurse their offspring in a pouch. The most common *marsupial* in North America is the opossum.

martial ADJ. warlike. The sound of *martial* music inspired the young cadet with dreams of military glory.

martinet N. strict disciplinarian. No talking at meals! No mingling with the servants! Miss Minchin was a *martinet* who insisted that the schoolgirls in her charge observe each regulation to the letter.

martyr N. one who voluntarily suffers death for his or her religion or cause; great sufferer. By burning her at the stake, the English made Joan of Arc a *martyr* for her faith. Mother played the *martyr* by staying home cleaning the house while the rest of the family went off to the beach.

masochist N. person who enjoys his own pain. The *masochist* begs, "Hit me." The sadist smiles and says, "I won't."

material ADJ. made of physical matter; unspiritual; important. Probing the mysteries of this *material* world has always fascinated physicist George Whitesides. Reporters nicknamed Madonna the *Material* Girl because, despite her name, she seemed wholly uninterested in spiritual values. Lexy's active participation made a *material* difference to the success of the fund-raiser.

■ **materialism** N. preoccupation with physical comforts and things. By its nature, *materialism* is opposed to idealism, for where the materialist emphasizes the needs of the body, the idealist emphasizes the needs of the soul.

maternal ADJ. motherly. Many animals display *maternal* instincts only while their offspring are young and helpless.

matriarch N. woman who rules a family or larger social group. The *matriarch* ruled her gypsy tribe with a firm hand.

matriculate V. enroll (in college or graduate school). Incoming students formally *matriculate* at our college in a special ceremony during which they sign the official register of students.

matrix N. point of origin; array of numbers or algebraic symbols; mold or die. Some historians claim the Nile Valley was the *matrix* of Western civilization.

maudlin ADJ. effusively sentimental. Whenever a particularly *maudlin* tearjerker was playing at the movies, Marvin would embarrass himself by weeping copiously.

maul V. handle roughly. The rock star was *mauled* by his over-excited fans.

Word List 30 maverick-misrepresent

maverick N. rebel; nonconformist. To the masculine literary establishment, George Sand with her insistence on wearing trousers and smoking cigars was clearly a *maverick* who fought her proper womanly role.

mawkish ADJ. mushy and gushy; icky-sticky sentimental; maudlin. Whenever Gigi and her boyfriend would sigh and get all lovey-dovey, her little brother would shout, "Yuck!" protesting their *mawkish* behavior.

maxim N. proverb; a truth pithily stated. Aesop's story of the hare and the tortoise illustrates the *maxim* "Slow and steady wins the race."

meager ADJ. scanty; inadequate. Still hungry after his *meager* serving of porridge, Oliver Twist asked for a second helping.

● **meander** V. wind or turn in its course. Needing to stay close to a source of water, he followed every twist and turn of the stream as it *meandered* through the countryside.

meddlesome ADJ. interfering. He felt his marriage was suffering because of his *meddlesome* mother-in-law.

mediate V. settle a dispute through the services of an outsider. King Solomon was asked to *mediate* a dispute between two women, each of whom claimed to be the mother of the same child.

mediocre ADJ. ordinary; commonplace. We were disappointed because he gave a rather *mediocre* performance in this role.

meditation N. reflection; thought. She reached her decision only after much *meditation.*

medley N. mixture. To avoid boring dancers by playing any one tune for too long, bands may combine three or four tunes into a *medley*.

meek ADJ. quiet and obedient; spiritless. Can Lois Lane see through Superman's disguise and spot the superhero hiding behind the guise of *meek*, timorous Clark Kent? Mr. Barrett never expected his *meek* daughter would dare to defy him by eloping with her suitor.

melancholy ADJ. gloomy; morose; blue. To Eugene, stuck in his small town, a train whistle was a *melancholy* sound, for it made him think of all the places he would never get to see.

mellifluous ADJ. sweetly or smoothly flowing; melodious. Italian is a *mellifluous* language, especially suited to being sung.

membrane N. thin soft sheet of animal or vegetable tissue. Each individual section of an orange is covered with a thin, transparent *membrane*. membranous, ADJ.

memento N. token; reminder. Take this book as a *memento* of your visit.

menagerie N. collection of wild animals. Whenever the children run wild around the house, Mom shouts, "Calm down! I'm not running a *menagerie*!"

mendacious ADJ. lying; habitually dishonest. Distrusting Huck from the start, Miss Watson assumed he was *mendacious* and refused to believe a word he said.

mendicant N. beggar. "O noble sir, give alms to the poor," cried Aladdin, playing the *mendicant*.

menial ADJ. suitable for servants; lowly; mean. Her wicked stepmother forced Cinderella to do *menial* tasks around the house while her ugly stepsisters lolled around painting their toenails.

mentor N. teacher. During this very trying period, she could not have had a better *mentor*, for the teacher was sympathetic and understanding.

● **mercenary** ADJ. interested in money or gain. Andy's every act was prompted by *mercenary* motives: his first question was always "What's in it for me?"

● **mercurial** ADJ. capricious; changing; fickle. Quick as quicksilver to change, he was *mercurial* in nature and therefore unreliable.

merger N. combination (of two business corporations). When the firm's president married the director of financial planning, the office joke was that it wasn't a marriage, it was a *merger*.

mesmerize V. hypnotize. The incessant drone seemed to *mesmerize* him and place him in a trance.

metallurgical ADJ. pertaining to the art of removing metals from ores. During the course of his *metallurgical* research, the scientist developed a steel alloy of tremendous strength.

metamorphosis N. change of form; major transformation. The *metamorphosis* of caterpillar to butterfly is typical of many such changes in animal life. metamorphose, V.

metaphor N. implied comparison. "He soared like an eagle" is an example of a simile; "He is an eagle in flight," a *metaphor*.

metaphysical ADJ. pertaining to speculative philosophy. The modern poets have gone back to the fanciful poems of the *metaphysical* poets of the seventeenth century for many of their images. metaphysics, N.

■ **methodical** ADJ. systematic. An accountant must be *methodical* and maintain order among his financial records.

■ **meticulous** ADJ. excessively careful; painstaking; scrupulous. Martha Stewart was a *meticulous* housekeeper, fussing about each and every detail that went into making up her perfect home.

metropolis N. large city. Every evening the terminal is filled with thousands of commuters going from this *metropolis* to their homes in the suburbs.

mettle N. courage; spirit. When challenged by the other horses in the race, the thoroughbred proved its *mettle* by its determination to hold the lead.

miasma N. swamp gas; heavy, vaporous atmosphere, often emanating from decaying matter; pervasive corrupting influence. The smog hung over Victorian London like a dark cloud; noisome, reeking of decay, it was a visible *miasma*.

microcosm N. small world; the world in miniature. The small village community that Jane Austen depicts serves as

a *microcosm* of English society in her time, for in this small world we see all the social classes meeting and mingling.

migrant ADJ. changing its habitat; wandering. *Migrant* workers return to the Central Valley each year at harvest time. also N.

migratory ADJ. wandering. The return of the *migratory* birds to the northern sections of this country is a harbinger of spring. migrate, V.

milieu N. environment; means of expression. Surrounded by smooth preppies and arty bohemians, the country boy from Smalltown, USA, felt out of his *milieu*. Although he has produced excellent oil paintings and lithographs, his proper *milieu* is watercolor.

militant ADJ. combative; bellicose. Although at this time he was advocating a policy of neutrality, one could usually find him adopting a more *militant* attitude. also N.

mimicry N. imitation. Her gift for *mimicry* was so great that her friends said that she should be in the theater.

mincing ADJ. affectedly dainty. Yum-Yum walked across the stage with *mincing* steps.

minuscule ADJ. extremely small. Why should I involve myself with a project with so *minuscule* a chance for success?

minute ADJ. extremely small. The twins resembled one another closely; only *minute* differences set them apart.

minutiae N. petty details. She would have liked to ignore the *minutiae* of daily living.

mirage N. unreal reflection; optical illusion. The lost prospector was fooled by a *mirage* in the desert.

mire V. entangle; stick in swampy ground. Their rear wheels became *mired* in mud. also N.

● **mirth** N. merriment; laughter. Sober Malvolio found Sir Toby's *mirth* improper.

● **misanthrope** N. one who hates mankind. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift portrays an image of humanity as vile, degraded beasts; for this reason, various critics consider him a *misanthrope*.

misapprehension N. error; misunderstanding. To avoid *misapprehension,* I am going to ask all of you to repeat the instructions I have given.

miscellany N. mixture of writings on various subjects. This is an interesting *miscellany* of nineteenth-century prose and poetry.

mischance N. ill luck. By *mischance,* he lost his week's salary.

misconception N. mistaken idea. "Sir, you are suffering from a *misconception*. I do not wish to marry you in the least!"

misconstrue V. interpret incorrectly; misjudge. She took the passage seriously rather than humorously because she *misconstrued* the author's ironic tone.

misdemeanor N. minor crime. The culprit pleaded guilty to a *misdemeanor* rather than face trial for a felony.

■ **miserly** ADJ. stingy; mean. Transformed by his vision on Christmas Eve, mean old Scrooge ceased being *miserly* and became a generous, kind old man.

misgivings N. doubts. Hamlet described his *misgivings* to Horatio but decided to fence with Laertes despite his foreboding of evil.

mishap N. accident. With a little care you could have avoided this *mishap.*

● **misnomer** N. wrong name; incorrect designation. His tyrannical conduct proved to all that his nickname, King Eric the Just, was a *misnomer.*

misrepresent V. give a false or incorrect impression, often deliberately; serve unsatisfactorily as a representative. In his job application, Milton *misrepresented* his academic background; he was fired when his employers discovered the truth. The reformers accused Senator Gunbucks of *misrepresenting* his constituents and claimed he took bribes from the NRA.

Word List 31 missile-natty

missile N. object to be thrown or projected. After carefully folding his book report into a paper airplane, Beavis threw the *missile* across the classroom at Butthead. Rocket scientists are building guided *missiles*; Beavis and Butthead can barely make unguided ones.

missive N. letter. The ambassador received a *missive* from the secretary of state.

mite N. very small object or creature; small coin. Gnats are annoying *mites* that sting.

■ **mitigate** V. appease; moderate. Nothing Jason did could *mitigate* Medea's anger; she refused to forgive him for betraying her.

mnemonic ADJ. pertaining to memory. He used *mnemonic* tricks to master new words.

mobile ADJ. movable; not fixed. The *mobile* blood bank operated by the Red Cross visited our neighborhood today. mobility, N.

mock V. ridicule; imitate, often in derision. It is unkind to *mock* anyone; it is stupid to *mock* anyone significantly bigger than you. mockery, N.

mode N. prevailing style; manner; way of doing something. The rock star had to have her hair done in the latest *mode*: frizzed, with occasional moussed spikes for variety. Henry plans to adopt a simpler *mode* of life: he is going to become a mushroom hunter and live off the land.

modicum N. limited quantity. Although his story is based on a *modicum* of truth, most of the events he describes are fictitious.

modulate V. tone down in intensity; regulate; change from one key to another. Always singing at the top of her lungs, the budding Brunhilde never learned to *modulate* her voice.

molecule N. the smallest particle (one or more atoms) of a substance, having all the properties of that substance. In

chemistry, we study how atoms and *molecules* react to form new substances.

● **mollify** V. soothe. The airline customer service representative tried to *mollify* the angry passenger by offering her a seat in first class.

molt V. shed or cast off hair or feathers. When Molly's canary *molted*, he shed feathers all over the house.

molten ADJ. melted. The city of Pompeii was destroyed by volcanic ash rather than by *molten* lava flowing from Mount Vesuvius.

momentous ADJ. very important. When Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium, they had no idea of the *momentous* impact their discovery would have upon society.

momentum N. quantity of motion of a moving body; impetus. The car lost *momentum* as it tried to ascend the steep hill.

monarchy N. government under a single ruler. Though England today is a *monarchy*, there is some question whether it will be one in twenty years, given the present discontent at the prospect of Prince Charles as king.

monastic ADJ. related to monks or monasteries; removed from worldly concerns. Withdrawing from the world, Thomas Merton joined a contemplative religious order and adopted the *monastic* life.

monetary ADJ. pertaining to money. Jane held the family purse strings: she made all *monetary* decisions affecting the household.

monochromatic ADJ. having only one color. Most people who are color blind actually can distinguish several colors; some, however, have a truly *monochromatic* view of a world all in shades of gray.

monolithic ADJ. solidly uniform; unyielding. Knowing the importance of appearing resolute, the patriots sought to present a *monolithic* front.

monosyllabic ADJ. having only one syllable. No matter what he was asked, the taciturn New Englander answered with a *monosyllabic* "Yep" or "Nope." monosyllable, N.

monotony N. sameness leading to boredom. What could be more deadly dull than the *monotony* of punching numbers into a computer hour after hour?

montage N. photographic composition combining elements from different sources. In one early *montage*, Beauchamp brought together pictures of broken mannequins and newspaper clippings about the Vietnam War.

monumental ADJ. massive. Writing a dictionary is a *monumental* task.

moodiness N. fits of depression or gloom. Her recurrent *moodiness* left her feeling as if she had fallen into a black hole.

moratorium N. legal delay of payment. If we declare a *moratorium* and delay collection of debts for six months, I am sure the farmers will be able to meet their bills.

morbid ADJ. given to unwholesome thought; moody; characteristic of disease. People who come to disaster sites just to peer at the grisly wreckage are indulging their *morbid* curiosity.

mores N. conventions; moral standards; customs. In America, Benazir Bhutto dressed as Western women did; in Pakistan, however, she followed the *mores* of her people, dressing in traditional veil and robes.

moribund ADJ. dying. Hearst took a *moribund*, failing weekly newspaper and transformed it into one of the liveliest, most profitable daily papers around.

■ **morose** ADJ. ill-humored; sullen; melancholy. Forced to take early retirement, Bill acted *morose* for months; then, all of a sudden, he shook off his sullen mood and was his usual cheerful self.

mortician N. undertaker. The *mortician* prepared the corpse for burial.

mortify V. humiliate; punish the flesh. She was so *mortified* by her blunder that she ran to her room in tears.

● **mosaic** N. picture made of colorful small inlaid tiles. The mayor compared the city to a beautiful *mosaic* made up of people of every race and religion on earth.

mote N. small speck. The tiniest *mote* in the eye is very painful.

motif N. theme. This simple *motif* runs throughout the entire score.

motley ADJ. multi-colored; mixed. The jester wore a *motley* tunic, red and green and blue and gold all patched together haphazardly. Captain Ahab had gathered a *motley* crew to sail the vessel: old sea dogs and runaway boys, pillars of the church and drunkards, even a tattooed islander who terrified the rest of the crew.

mottled ADJ. blotched in coloring; spotted. When old Falstaff blushed, his face was *mottled* with embarrassment, all pink and purple and red.

muddle V. confuse; mix up. His thoughts were *muddled* and chaotic. also N.

muggy ADJ. warm and damp. August in New York City is often *muggy*.

multifaceted ADJ. having many aspects. A *multifaceted* composer, Roger Davidson has recorded original pieces that range from ragtime tangos to choral masses.

multifarious ADJ. varied; greatly diversified. A career woman and mother, she was constantly busy with the *multifarious* activities of her daily life.

multiform ADJ. having many forms. Snowflakes are *multiform* but always hexagonal.

multilingual ADJ. having many languages. Because Switzerland is surrounded by France, Germany, Italy, and Austria, many Swiss people are *multilingual*.

multiplicity N. state of being numerous. He was appalled by the *multiplicity* of details he had to complete before setting out on his mission.

■ **mundane** ADJ. worldly as opposed to spiritual; everyday. Uninterested in philosophical or spiritual discussions, Tom talked only of *mundane* matters such as the daily weather forecast or the latest basketball results.

● **munificent** ADJ. very generous. Shamelessly fawning over a particularly generous donor, the dean kept on referring to her as "our *munificent* benefactor." munificence, N.

mural N. wall painting. The walls of the Chicano Community Center are covered with *murals* painted in the style of Diego Rivera, the great Mexican artist.

murky ADJ. dark and gloomy; thick with fog; vague. The *murky* depths of the swamp were so dark that one couldn't tell the vines and branches from the snakes.

muse V. ponder. For a moment he *mused* about the beauty of the scene, but his thoughts soon changed as he recalled his own personal problems. also N.

mushroom V. expand or grow rapidly. Between 1990 and 1999, the population of Silicon Valley *mushroomed*; with the rapidly increasing demand for housing, home prices skyrocketed as well.

musky ADJ. having the odor of musk. She left a trace of *musky* perfume behind her.

muster V. gather; assemble. Washington *mustered* his forces at Trenton. also N.

musty ADJ. stale; spoiled by age. The attic was dark and *musty*.

mutability N. ability to change in form; fickleness. Going from rags to riches, and then back to rags again, the bankrupt financier was a victim of the *mutability* of fortune.

muted ADJ. silent; muffled; toned down. Thanks to the thick, sound-absorbing walls of the cathedral, only *muted* traffic noise reached the worshippers within.

mutinous ADJ. unruly; rebellious. The captain had to use force to quiet his *mutinous* crew. mutiny, N.

myopic ADJ. nearsighted; lacking foresight. Stumbling into doors despite the coke bottle lenses on his glasses, the nearsighted Mr. Magoo is markedly *myopic*. In playing all summer long and ignoring to store up food for winter, the grasshopper in Aesop's fable was *myopic* as well.

myriad N. very large number. *Myriads* of mosquitoes from the swamps invaded our village every twilight. also ADJ.

mystify V. bewilder purposely. When doctors speak in medical jargon, they often *mystify* their patients, who have little knowledge of medical terminology.

nadir N. lowest point. Although few people realized it, the Dow-Jones averages had reached their *nadir* and would soon begin an upward surge.

naiveté N. quality of being unsophisticated; simplicity; artlessness; gullibility. Touched by the *naiveté* of sweet, convent-trained Cosette, Marius pledges himself to protect her innocence. naive, ADJ.

narcissist N. conceited person; someone in love with his own image. A *narcissist* is her own best friend.

narrative ADJ. related to telling a story. A born teller of tales, Tillie Olsen used her impressive *narrative* skills to advantage in her story "I Stand Here Ironing." narrate, V.

nascent ADJ. incipient; coming into being. If we could identify these revolutionary movements in their *nascent* state, we would be able to eliminate serious trouble in later years.

natty ADJ. neatly or smartly dressed. Priding himself on being a *natty* dresser, the gangster Bugsy Siegel collected a wardrobe of imported suits and ties.

Word List 32 nauseate-obsessive

nauseate V. cause to become sick; fill with disgust. The foul smells began to *nauseate* him.

nautical ADJ. pertaining to ships or navigation. The Maritime Museum contains many models of clipper ships, logbooks, anchors and many other items of a *nautical* nature.

navigable ADJ. wide and deep enough to allow ships to pass through; able to be steered. So much sand had built up at the bottom of the canal that the waterway was barely *navigable*.

nebulous ADJ. vague; hazy; cloudy. Phil and Dave tried to come up with a clear, intelligible business plan, not some hazy, *nebulous* proposal.

necromancy N. black magic; dealings with the dead. The evil sorceror performed feats of *necromancy*, calling on the spirits of the dead to tell the future.

● **nefarious** ADJ. very wicked. The villain's crimes, though various, were one and all *nefarious*.

■ **negate** V. cancel out; nullify; deny. A sudden surge of adrenalin can *negate* the effects of fatigue: there's nothing like a good shock to wake you up.

negligence N. neglect; failure to take reasonable care. Tommy failed to put back the cover on the well after he fetched his pail of water; because of his *negligence*, Kitty fell in.

negligible ADJ. so small, trifling, or unimportant that it may be easily disregarded. Because the damage to his car had been *negligible*, Michael decided he wouldn't bother to report the matter to his insurance company.

nemesis N. someone seeking revenge. Abandoned at sea in a small boat, the vengeful Captain Bligh vowed to be the *nemesis* of Fletcher Christian and his fellow mutineers.

neologism N. new or newly coined word or phrase. As we invent new techniques and professions, we must also invent *neologisms* such as "microcomputer" and "astronaut" to describe them.

neophyte N. recent convert; beginner. This mountain slope contains slides that will challenge experts as well as *neophytes*.

nepotism N. favoritism (to a relative). John left his position with the company because he felt that advancement was based on *nepotism* rather than ability.

nettle V. annoy; vex. Do not let him *nettle* you with his sarcastic remarks.

neutral ADJ. impartial; not supporting one side over another. Reluctant to get mixed up in someone else's quarrel, Bobby tried to remain *neutral,* but eventually he had to take sides.

nicety N. subtlety; precision; minute distinction; fine point. This word list provides illustrative sentences for each entry word; it cannot, however, explain all the *niceties* of current English usage.

nihilist N. one who believes traditional beliefs to be groundless and existence meaningless; absolute skeptic; revolutionary terrorist. In his final days, Hitler revealed himself a power-mad *nihilist*, ready to annihilate all of Western Europe, even to destroy Germany itself, in order that his will might prevail. The root of the word *nihilist* is *nihil*, Latin for *nothing*. nihilism, N.

nip V. stop something's growth or development; snip off; bite; make numb with cold. The twins were plotting mischief, but Mother intervened and *nipped* that plan in the bud. The gardener *nipped* off a lovely rose and gave it to me. Last week a guard dog *nipped* the postman in the leg; this week the extreme chill *nipped* his fingers till he could barely hold the mail.

nirvana N. in Buddhist teachings, the ideal state in which the individual loses himself in the attainment of an impersonal beatitude. Despite his desire to achieve *nirvana*, the young Buddhist found that even the buzzing of a fly could distract him from his meditation.

nocturnal ADJ. done at night. Mr. Jones obtained a watchdog to prevent the *nocturnal* raids on his chicken coops.

noisome ADJ. foul-smelling; unwholesome. The *noisome* atmosphere downwind of the oil refinery not only stank, it damaged the lungs of everyone living in the area.

nomadic ADJ. wandering. Several *nomadic* tribes of Indians would hunt in this area each year.

nomenclature N. terminology; system of names. Sharon found Latin word parts useful in translating medical *nomenclature*: when her son had to have a bilateral myringotomy, she figured out that he just needed a hole in each of his eardrums to end the earaches he had.

nominal ADJ. in name only; trifling. He offered to drive her to the airport for only a *nominal* fee.

■ **nonchalance** N. indifference; lack of concern; composure. Cool, calm, and collected under fire, James Bond shows remarkable *nonchalance* in the face of danger.

noncommittal ADJ. neutral; unpledged; undecided. We were annoyed by his *noncommittal* reply for we had been led to expect definite assurances of his approval.

nondescript ADJ. undistinctive; ordinary. The private detective was a short, *nondescript* fellow with no outstanding features, the sort of person one would never notice in a crowd.

nonentity N. person of no importance; nonexistence. Because the two older princes dismissed their youngest brother as a *nonentity*, they did not realize that he was quietly plotting to seize the throne.

nonplus V. bring to halt by confusion; perplex. Jack's uncharacteristic rudeness *nonplussed* Jill, leaving her uncertain how to react.

nostalgia N. homesickness; longing for the past. My grandfather seldom spoke of life in the old country; he had little patience with *nostalgia*. nostalgic, ADJ.

notable ADJ. conspicuous; important; distinguished. Normally *notable* for his calm in the kitchen, today the head cook was shaking, for the *notable* chef Julia Child was coming to dinner.

■ **notoriety** N. disrepute; ill fame. To the starlet, any publicity was good publicity: if she couldn't have a good reputation, she'd settle for *notoriety*. notorious, ADJ.

■ **novelty** N. something new; newness. The computer is no longer a *novelty* at work; every desk in our office has one. novel, ADJ.

novice N. beginner. Even a *novice* at working with computers can install *Barron's Computer Study Program for the SAT* by following the easy steps outlined in the user's manual.

noxious ADJ. harmful. We must trace the source of these *noxious* gases before they asphyxiate us.

● **nuance** N. shade of difference in meaning or color; subtle distinction. Jody gazed at the Monet landscape for an hour, appreciating every subtle *nuance* of color in the painting.

nullify V. to make invalid. Once the contract was *nullified,* it no longer had any legal force.

numismatist N. person who collects coins. The *numismatist* had a splendid collection of antique coins.

nuptial ADJ. related to marriage. Reluctant to be married in a traditional setting, they decided to hold their *nuptial* ceremony at the carousel in Golden Gate Park.

■ **nurture** V. nourish; educate; foster. The Head Start program attempts to *nurture* pre-kindergarten children so that they will do well when they enter public school. also N.

nutrient N. nourishing substance. As a budding nutritionist, Kim has learned to design diets that contain foods rich in important basic *nutrients*.

oaf N. stupid, awkward person. "Watch what you're doing, you clumsy *oaf*!" Bill shouted at the waiter who had drenched him with iced coffee.

● **obdurate** ADJ. stubborn. He was *obdurate* in his refusal to listen to our complaints.

obese ADJ. fat. It is advisable that *obese* people try to lose weight.

obfuscate V. confuse; muddle; cause confusion; make needlessly complex. Was the president's spokesman trying to clarify the hidden weapons mystery, or was he trying to *obfuscate* the issue so the voters would never figure out what had gone on?

obituary ADJ. death notice. I first learned of her death when I read the *obituary* column in the newspaper. also N.

objective ADJ. not influenced by emotions; fair. Even though he was her son, she tried to be *objective* about his behavior.

objective N. goal; aim. A degree in medicine was her ultimate *objective*.

obligatory ADJ. binding; required. It is *obligatory* that books borrowed from the library be returned within two weeks.

oblique ADJ. indirect; slanting (deviating from the perpendicular or from a straight line). Casting a quick, *oblique* glance at the reviewing stand, the sergeant ordered the company to march "*Oblique* Right."

■ **obliterate** V. destroy completely. The tidal wave *obliterated* several island villages.

■ **oblivion** N. obscurity; forgetfulness. After a decade of popularity, Hurston's works had fallen into *oblivion*; no one bothered to read them anymore.

oblivious ADJ. inattentive or unmindful; wholly absorbed. Deep in her book, Nancy was *oblivious* to the noisy squabbles of her brother and his friends.

obnoxious ADJ. offensive; objectionable. A sneak and a tattletale, Sid was an *obnoxious* little brat.

obscure ADJ. dark; vague; unclear. Even after I read the poem a fourth time, its meaning was still *obscure*. obscurity, N.

■ **obscure** V. darken; make unclear. At times he seemed purposely to *obscure* his meaning, preferring mystery to clarity.

obsequious ADJ. slavishly attentive; servile; sycophantic. Helen liked to be served by people who behaved as if they respected themselves; nothing irritated her more than an excessively *obsequious* waiter or a fawning salesclerk.

obsessive ADJ. related to thinking about something constantly; preoccupying. Ballet, which had been a hobby, began to dominate his life: his love of dancing became *obsessive*. obsession, N.

Word List 33 obsolete-pacifist

obsolete ADJ. no longer useful; outmoded; antiquated. The invention of the pocket calculator made the slide rule used by generations of engineers *obsolete*.

obstetrician N. physician specializing in delivery of babies. Unlike midwives, who care for women giving birth at home, *obstetricians* generally work in a hospital setting.

■ **obstinate** ADJ. stubborn; hard to control or treat. We tried to persuade him to give up smoking, but he was *obstinate* and refused to change. Blackberry stickers are the most *obstinate* weeds I know: once established in a yard, they're extremely hard to root out. obstinacy, N.

obstreperous ADJ. boisterous; noisy. What do you do when an *obstreperous* horde of drunken policemen goes carousing through your hotel, crashing into potted plants and singing vulgar songs?

obtrude V. push (oneself or one's ideas) forward or intrude; butt in; stick out or extrude. Because Fanny was reluctant to *obtrude* her opinions about child-raising upon her daughter-in-law, she kept a close watch on her tongue. obtrusive, ADJ.

obtuse ADJ. blunt; stupid. Because Mr. Collins was too *obtuse* to take a hint, Elizabeth finally had to tell him that she wouldn't marry him if he were the last man on earth.

obviate V. prevent; make unnecessary. In the twentieth century, people believed electronic communications would *obviate* the need for hard copy; they envisioned a paperless society.

● **odious** ADJ. hateful; vile. Cinderella's ugly stepsisters had the *odious* habit of popping their zits in public.

odium N. strong dislike or contempt; hatefulness; disrepute. Unable to bear the *odium* attached to their family name, the killer's parents changed their name and moved away from their hometown.

odorous ADJ. having an odor. This variety of hybrid tea rose is more *odorous* than the one you have in your garden.

odyssey N. long, eventful journey. The refugee's journey from Cambodia was a terrifying *odyssey*.

offensive ADJ. attacking; insulting; distasteful. Getting into street brawls is no minor matter for professional boxers, who are required by law to restrict their *offensive* impulses to the ring.

offhand ADJ. casual; done without prior thought. Expecting to be treated with due propriety by her hosts, Great-Aunt Maud was offended by their *offhand* manner.

officious ADJ. meddlesome; excessively pushy in offering one's services. Judy wanted to look over the new computer models on her own, but the *officious* salesman kept on butting in with "helpful" advice until she was ready to walk out of the store.

ogle V. look at amorously; make eyes at. At the coffee house, Walter was too shy to *ogle* the pretty girls openly; instead, he peeked out at them from behind a rubber plant.

olfactory ADJ. concerning the sense of smell. A wine taster must have a discriminating palate and a keen *olfactory* sense, for a good wine appeals both to the taste buds and to the nose.

oligarchy N. government by a privileged few. One small clique ran the student council: what had been intended as a democratic governing body had turned into an *oligarchy*.

■ **ominous** ADJ. threatening. Those clouds are *ominous*; they suggest a severe storm is on the way.

omnipotent ADJ. all-powerful. Under Stalin, the Soviet government seemed *omnipotent*: no one dared defy the all-powerful State.

omnipresent ADJ. universally present; ubiquitous. The Beatles are a major musical force, whose influence is *omnipresent* in all contemporary popular music.

omniscient ADJ. all-knowing. I may not be *omniscient*, but I know a bit more than you do, young man!

omnivorous ADJ. eating both plant and animal food; devouring everything. Some animals, including man, are *omnivorous* and eat both meat and vegetables; others are either carnivorous or herbivorous.

onerous ADJ. burdensome. He asked for an assistant because his work load was too *onerous*.

onset N. beginning; attack. Caught unprepared by the sudden *onset* of the storm, we rushed around the house closing windows and bringing the garden furniture into shelter. Caught unprepared by the enemy *onset*, the troops scrambled to take shelter.

onus N. burden; responsibility. The emperor was spared the *onus* of signing the surrender papers; instead, he relegated the assignment to his generals.

opalescent ADJ. iridescent; lustrous. The oil slick on the water had an *opalescent*, rainbow-like sheen.

■ **opaque** ADJ. dark; not transparent. The *opaque* window shade kept the sunlight out of the room. opacity, N.

opiate N. medicine to induce sleep or deaden pain; something that relieves emotions or causes inaction. To say that religion is the *opiate* of the people is to condemn religion as a drug that keeps the people quiet and submissive to those in power.

opportune ADJ. timely; well-chosen. Sally looked at her father struggling to balance his checkbook; clearly this would not be an *opportune* moment to ask him for a raise in her allowance.

■ **opportunist** N. individual who sacrifices principles for expediency by taking advantage of circumstances. Joe is such an *opportunist* that he tripled the price of bottled water at his store as soon as the earthquake struck. Because it can break water pipes, an earthquake is, to most people, a disaster; to Joe, it was an *opportunity*.

optician N. maker and seller of eyeglasses. The patient took the prescription given him by his oculist to the *optician.*

■ **optimist** N. person who looks on the good side. The pessimist says the glass is half-empty; the *optimist* says it is half-full.

optimum ADJ. most favorable. If you wait for the *optimum* moment to act, you may never begin your project. also N.

optional ADJ. not obligatory; left to one's choice. Most colleges require applicants to submit SAT scores; at some colleges, however, submitting SAT scores is *optional*.

■ **opulence** N. extreme wealth; luxuriousness; abundance. The glitter and *opulence* of the ballroom took Cinderella's breath away. opulent, ADJ.

opus N. work. Although many critics hailed his Fifth Symphony as his major work, he did not regard it as his major *opus*.

oracular ADJ. prophetic; uttered as if with divine authority; mysterious or ambiguous. Like many others who sought divine guidance from the *oracle* at Delphi, Oedipus could not understand the enigmatic *oracular* warning he received.

■ **orator** N. public speaker. The abolitionist Frederick Douglass was a brilliant *orator* whose speeches brought home to his audience the evils of slavery.

ordain V. decree or command; grant holy orders; predestine. The king *ordained* that no foreigner should be allowed to enter the city. The Bishop of Michigan *ordained* David a deacon in the Episcopal Church. The young lovers felt that fate had *ordained* their meeting.

ordeal N. severe trial or affliction. June was so painfully shy that it was an *ordeal* for her to speak up when the teacher called on her in class.

ordinance N. decree. Passing a red light is a violation of a city *ordinance.*

ordination N. ceremony making someone a minister. At the young priest's *ordination*, the members of the congregation presented him with a set of vestments. ordain, V.

orgy N. wild, drunken revelry; unrestrained indulgence in a tendency. The Roman emperor's *orgies* were far wilder than the toga party in the movie *Animal House*. When her income tax refund check finally arrived, Sally indulged in an *orgy* of shopping.

orient V. get one's bearings; adjust. Philip spent his first day in Denver *orienting* himself to the city.

orientation N. act of finding oneself in society. Freshman *orientation* provides the incoming students with an opportunity to learn about their new environment and their place in it.

● **ornate** ADJ. excessively or elaborately decorated. With its elaborately carved, convoluted lines, furniture of the Baroque period was highly *ornate*.

ornithologist N. scientific student of birds. Audubon's drawings of American bird life have been of interest not only to *ornithologists* but also to the general public.

ornithology N. study of birds. Audubon's studies of American birds greatly influenced the course of *ornithology*.

orthodox ADJ. traditional; conservative in belief. Faced with a problem, he preferred to take an *orthodox* approach rather than shock anyone. orthodoxy, N.

oscillate V. vibrate pendulumlike; waver. It is interesting to note how public opinion *oscillates* between the extremes of optimism and pessimism.

ossify V. change or harden into bone. When he called his opponent a "bonehead," he implied that his adversary's brain had *ossified* to the point that he was incapable of clear thinking.

ostensible ADJ. apparent; professed; pretended. Although the *ostensible* purpose of this expedition is to discover new lands, we are really interested in finding new markets for our products.

■ **ostentatious** ADJ. showy; pretentious; trying to attract attention. Donald Trump's latest casino in Atlantic City is the most *ostentatious* gambling palace in the East: it easily outglitters its competitors. ostentation, N.

ostracize V. exclude from public favor; ban. As soon as the newspapers carried the story of his connection with the criminals, his friends began to *ostracize* him. ostracism, N.

oust V. expel; drive out. The world wondered if Aquino would be able to *oust* Marcos from office. ouster, N.

outlandish ADJ. bizarre; peculiar; unconventional. The eccentric professor who engages in markedly *outlandish* behavior is a stock figure in novels with an academic setting.

outmoded ADJ. no longer stylish; old-fashioned. Unconcerned about keeping in style, Lenore was perfectly happy to wear *outmoded* clothes as long as they were clean and unfrayed.

outskirts N. fringes; outer borders. We lived, not in central London, but in one of those peripheral suburbs that spring up on the *outskirts* of a great city.

outspoken ADJ. candid; blunt. The candidate was too *outspoken* to be a successful politician; he had not yet learned to weigh his words carefully.

outstrip V. surpass; outdo. Jesse Owens easily *outstripped* his white competitors to win the gold medal at the Olympic Games.

outwit V. outsmart; trick. By disguising himself as an old woman, Holmes was able to *outwit* his pursuers and escape capture.

ovation N. enthusiastic applause. When the popular tenor Placido Domingo came on stage in the first act of *La Boheme*, he was greeted by a tremendous *ovation*.

overbearing ADJ. bossy and arrogant; decisively important. Certain of her own importance, and of the unimportance of everyone else, Lady Bracknell was intolerably *overbearing* in her manner. "In choosing a husband," she said, "good birth is of *overbearing* importance; compared to that, neither wealth nor talent signifies."

overt ADJ. open to view. According to the United States Constitution, a person must commit an *overt* act before he may be tried for treason.

overwrought ADJ. extremely agitated; hysterical. When Kate heard the news of the sudden tragedy, she became too *overwrought* to work and had to leave the office early.

pachyderm N. thick-skinned animal. The elephant is probably the best-known *pachyderm*.

■ **pacifist** N. one opposed to force; antimilitarist. During the war, though the *pacifists* refused to bear arms, they nevertheless served in the front lines as ambulance drivers and medical corpsmen.

Word List 34 pacify-peccadillo

pacify V. soothe; make calm or quiet; subdue. Dentists criticize the practice of giving fussy children sweets to *pacify* them.

pact N. agreement; treaty. Tweedledum and Tweedledee made a *pact* not to quarrel anymore.

paean N. song of praise or joy. *Paeans* celebrating the victory filled the air.

painstaking ADJ. showing hard work; taking great care. The new high-frequency word list is the result of *painstaking* efforts on the part of our research staff.

palatable ADJ. agreeable; pleasing to the taste. Neither Jack's underbaked opinions nor his overcooked casseroles were *palatable* to Jill.

paleontology N. study of prehistoric life. The *paleontology* instructor had a superb collection of fossils.

palette N. flat surface on which painter mixes pigments; range of colors commonly used by a particular artist. The artist's apprentices had the messy job of cleaning his brushes and *palette*. Through chromatic analysis, the forgers were able to match all the colors in Monet's *palette*.

pall V. grow tiresome. The study of word lists can eventually *pall* and put one to sleep.

palliate V. lessen the violence of (a disease); alleviate; moderate intensity; gloss over with excuses. Not content merely to *palliate* the patient's sores and cankers, the researcher sought a means of wiping out the disease. palliative, ADJ.

pallid ADJ. pale; wan. Because his job required that he work at night and sleep during the day, he had an exceptionally *pallid* complexion.

palpable ADJ. tangible; easily perceptible; unmistakable. The patient's enlarged spleen was *palpable:* even the first year medical student could feel it.

palpitate V. throb; flutter. As he became excited, his heart began to *palpitate* more and more erratically.

paltry ADJ. insignificant; petty; trifling. One hundred dollars for a genuine imitation Rolex watch! Lady, this is a *paltry* sum to pay for such a high-class piece of jewelry.

pan V. criticize harshly. Hoping for a rave review of his new show, the playwright was miserable when the critics *panned* it unanimously.

panacea N. cure-all; remedy for all diseases. The rich youth cynically declared that the *panacea* for all speeding tickets was a big enough bribe.

panache N. flair; flamboyance. Many performers imitate Noel Coward, but few have his *panache* and sense of style.

pandemic ADJ. widespread; affecting the majority of people. They feared the AIDS epidemic would soon reach *pandemic* proportions.

pandemonium N. wild tumult. When the ships collided in the harbor, *pandemonium* broke out among the passengers.

pander V. cater to the low desires of others. The reviewer accused the makers of *Lethal Weapon* of *pandering* to the masses' taste for violence.

panegyric N. formal praise. Blushing at all the praise heaped upon him by the speakers, the modest hero said, "I don't deserve such *panegyrics*."

panoramic ADJ. related to an unobstructed and comprehensive view. From Inspiration Point we had a magnificent *panoramic* view of the Marin headlands and San Francisco Bay. panorama, N.

pantomime N. acting without dialogue. Artists in *pantomime* need no words to communicate with their audience; their only language is gesture. also V.

papyrus N. ancient paper made from stem of papyrus plant. The ancient Egyptians were among the first to write on *papyrus*.

parable N. short, simple story teaching a moral. Let us apply to our own conduct the lesson that this *parable* teaches.

paradigm N. model; example; pattern. Pavlov's experiment in which he trains a dog to salivate on hearing a bell is a *paradigm* of the conditioned-response experiment in behavioral psychology. Barron's *How to Prepare for College Entrance Examinations* was a *paradigm* for all the SAT-prep books that followed.

paradox N. something apparently contradictory in nature; statement that looks false but is actually correct. Richard presents a bit of a *paradox*, for he is a card-carrying member of both the National Rifle Association and the relatively pacifist American Civil Liberties Union.

paragon N. model of perfection. Her fellow students disliked Lavinia because Miss Minchin always pointed her out as a *paragon* of virtue.

parallelism N. state of being parallel; similarity. Although the twins were separated at birth and grew up in different adoptive families, a striking *parallelism* exists between their lives.

parameter N. boundary; limiting factor; distinguishing characteristic. According to feminist Andrea Dworkin, men have defined the *parameters* of every subject; now women must redefine the limits of each field.

paramount ADJ. foremost in importance; supreme. Proper nutrition and hygiene are of *paramount* importance in adolescent development and growth.

paranoia N. psychosis marked by delusions of grandeur or persecution. Suffering from *paranoia*, Don claimed everyone was out to get him; ironically, his claim was accurate: even *paranoids* have enemies.

paraphernalia N. equipment; odds and ends. His desk was cluttered with paper, pen, ink, dictionary and other *paraphernalia* of the writing craft.

paraphrase V. restate a passage in one's own words while retaining thought of author. In 250 words or less, *paraphrase* this article. also N.

parasite N. animal or plant living on another; toady; sycophant. The tapeworm is an example of the kind of *parasite* that may infest the human body.

parched ADJ. extremely dry; very thirsty. The *parched* desert landscape seemed hostile to life.

● **pariah** N. social outcast. If everyone ostracized singer Mariah Carey, would she then be Mariah the *pariah*?

parity N. equality in status or amount; close resemblance. Unfortunately, some doubt exists whether women's salaries will ever achieve *parity* with men's.

parochial ADJ. narrow in outlook; provincial; related to parishes. Although Jane Austen sets her novels in small rural communities, her concerns are universal, not *parochial.*

● **parody** N. humorous imitation; spoof; takeoff; travesty. The show *Forbidden Broadway* presents *parodies* spoofing the year's new productions playing on Broadway.

paroxysm N. fit or attack of pain, laughter, rage. When he heard of his son's misdeeds, he was seized by a *paroxysm* of rage.

parry V. ward off a blow; deflect. Unwilling to injure his opponent in such a pointless clash, Dartagnan simply tried to *parry* his rival's thrusts. What fun it was to watch Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy *parry* each other's verbal thrusts in their classic screwball comedies!

● **parsimony** N. stinginess; excessive frugality. Furious because her father wouldn't let her buy out the clothing store, Annie accused him of *parsimony*.

partial ADJ. incomplete; having a liking for something. In this issue we have published only a *partial* list of contributors because we lack space to acknowledge everyone. I am extremely *partial* to chocolate eclairs.

partiality N. inclination; bias. As a judge, not only must I be unbiased, but I must also avoid any evidence of *partiality* when I award the prize.

■ **partisan** ADJ. one-sided; prejudiced; committed to a party. On certain issues of principle, she refused to take a *partisan* stand, but let her conscience be her guide. Rather than joining forces to solve our nation's problems, the Democrats and Republicans spend their time on *partisan* struggles. also N.

partition V. divide into parts. Before their second daughter was born, Jason and Lizzie decided each child needed a room of her own, and so they *partitioned* a large bedroom into two small but separate rooms. also N.

passive ADJ. not active; acted upon. Mahatma Gandhi urged his followers to pursue a program of *passive* resistance as he felt that it was more effective than violence and acts of terrorism.

passport N. legal document identifying the bearer as a citizen of a country and allowing him or her to travel abroad. In arranging your first trip abroad, be sure to allow yourself enough time to apply for and receive your *passport*: you won't be allowed to travel without one.

pastiche N. piece of writing or music made up of borrowed bits and pieces; hodgepodge. Her essay was a *pastiche* of fragments of articles she had found on the Internet.

pastoral ADJ. rural; simple and peaceful; idyllic; related to shepherds. Tired of the stress of life in the city, Dana dreamed of moving to the country and enjoying a simple *pastoral* life.

patent ADJ. open for the public to read; obvious. It was *patent* to everyone that the witness spoke the truth. also N.

pathetic ADJ. causing sadness, compassion, pity; touching. Everyone in the auditorium was weeping by the time he finished his *pathetic* tale about the orphaned boy.

pathological ADJ. related to the study of disease; diseased or markedly abnormal. Jerome's *pathological* fear of germs led him to wash his hands a hundred times a day. pathology, N.

pathos N. tender sorrow; pity; quality in art or literature that produces these feelings. The quiet tone of *pathos* that ran through the novel never degenerated into the maudlin or the overly sentimental.

patina N. green crust on old bronze works; tone slowly taken by varnished painting. Judging by the *patina* on this bronze statue, we can conclude that this is the work of a medieval artist.

patriarch N. father and ruler of a family or tribe. In many primitive tribes, the leader and lawmaker was the *patriarch*.

patrician ADJ. noble; aristocratic. We greatly admired her well-bred, *patrician* elegance. also N.

patronize V. support; act superior toward; be a customer of. Penniless artists hope to find some wealthy art-lover who will *patronize* them. If some condescending wine steward *patronized* me because he saw I knew nothing about fine wine, I'd refuse to *patronize* his restaurant.

● **paucity** N. scarcity. They closed the restaurant because the *paucity* of customers made it uneconomical to operate.

pauper N. very poor person. Though Widow Brown was living on a reduced income, she was by no means a *pauper*.

peccadillo N. slight offense. When Peter Piper picked a peck of Polly Potter's pickles, did Pete commit a major crime or just a *peccadillo*?

Word List 35 pecuniary-philanderer

pecuniary ADJ. pertaining to money. Seldom earning enough to cover their expenses, folk dance teachers work because they love dancing, not because they expect any *pecuniary* reward.

pedagogy N. teaching; art of education. Though Maria Montessori gained fame for her innovations in *pedagogy,* it took years before her teaching techniques were common practice in American schools.

pedant N. scholar who overemphasizes book learning or technicalities. Her insistence that the book be memorized marked the teacher as a *pedant* rather than a scholar.

pedantic ADJ. showing off learning; bookish. Leavening his decisions with humorous, down-to-earth anecdotes, Judge Walker was not at all the *pedantic* legal scholar. pedant, pedantry, N.

pedestrian ADJ. ordinary; unimaginative. Unintentionally boring, he wrote page after page of *pedestrian* prose.

pediatrician N. expert in children's diseases. The family doctor advised the parents to consult a *pediatrician* about their child's ailment.

peerless ADJ. having no equal; incomparable. The reigning operatic tenor of his generation, to his admirers Luciano Pavarotti was *peerless*: no one could compare with him.

pejorative ADJ. negative in connotation; having a belittling effect. Instead of criticizing Schwarzenegger's policies, the Democrats made *pejorative* comments about his character.

pellucid ADJ. transparent; limpid; easy to understand. After reading these stodgy philosophers, I find Bertrand Russell's *pellucid* style very enjoyable.

penchant N. strong inclination; liking. Dave has a *penchant* for taking risks: one semester he went steady with three girls, two of whom were stars on the school karate team.

pendant N. ornament (hanging from a necklace, etc.) The grateful team presented the coach with a silver chain and *pendant* engraved with the school's motto.

penitent ADJ. repentant. When he realized the enormity of his crime, he became remorseful and *penitent.* also N.

pensive ADJ. dreamily thoughtful; thoughtful with a hint of sadness; contemplative. The *pensive* lover gazed at the portrait of his beloved and deeply sighed.

● **penury** N. severe poverty; stinginess. When his pension fund failed, George feared he would end his days in *penury*. He became such a penny pincher that he turned into a closefisted, *penurious* miser.

perceptive ADJ. insightful; aware; wise. Although Maud was a generally *perceptive* critic, she had her blind spots: she could never see flaws in the work of her friends.

percussion ADJ. striking one object against another sharply. The drum is a *percussion* instrument. also N.

perdition N. damnation; complete ruin. Praying for salvation, young Steven Daedalus feared he was damned to eternal *perdition*.

peregrination N. journey. Auntie Mame was a world traveler whose *peregrinations* took her from Tiajuana to Timbuctoo.

peremptory ADJ. demanding and leaving no choice. From Jack's *peremptory* knock on the door, Jill could tell he would not give up until she let him in.

perennial N. something that is continuing or recurrent. These plants are hardy *perennials* and will bloom for many years. also ADJ.

perfidious ADJ. treacherous; disloyal. When Caesar realized that Brutus had betrayed him, he reproached his *perfidious* friend. perfidy, N.

perforate V. pierce; put a hole through. Before you can open the aspirin bottle, you must first *perforate* the plastic safety seal that covers the cap.

● **perfunctory** ADJ. superficial; not thorough; lacking interest, care, or enthusiasm. The auditor's *perfunctory* inspection of the books overlooked many errors. Giving the tabletop only a *perfunctory* swipe with her dust cloth, Betty promised herself she'd clean it more thoroughly tomorrow.

perimeter N. outer boundary. To find the *perimeter* of any quadrilateral, we add the lengths of the four sides.

■ **peripheral** ADJ. marginal; outer. We lived, not in central London, but in one of those *peripheral* suburbs that spring up on the outskirts of a great city.

periphery N. edge, especially of a round surface. He sensed that there was something just beyond the *periphery* of his vision.

perjury N. false testimony while under oath. Rather than lie under oath and perhaps be indicted for *perjury*, the witness chose to take the Fifth Amendment, refusing to answer any questions on the grounds that he might incriminate himself.

permeable ADJ. penetrable; porous; allowing liquids or gas to pass through. If your jogging clothes weren't made out of *permeable* fabric, you'd drown in your own perspiration (figuratively speaking).

permeate V. pass through; spread. The odor of frying onions *permeated* the air.

● **pernicious** ADJ. very destructive. Crack cocaine has had a *pernicious* effect on urban society: it has destroyed families, turned children into drug dealers, and increased the spread of violent crimes.

perpetrate V. commit an offense. Only an insane person could *perpetrate* such a horrible crime.

perpetual ADJ. everlasting. Ponce de Leon hoped to find the legendary fountain of *perpetual* youth.

■ **perpetuate** V. make something last; preserve from extinction. Some critics attack *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* because they believe Twain's book *perpetuates* a false image of Blacks in this country.

perquisite N. any gain above stipulated salary. The *perquisites* attached to this job make it even more attractive than the salary indicates.

persevere V. persist; endure; strive. Despite the church's threats to excommunicate him for heresy, Galileo *persevered* in his belief that the earth moved around the sun.

persona N. public personality or facade. Offstage the comedian was a sullen, irritable grumbler, a far cry from his ever-cheerful adopted stage *persona*.

personable ADJ. attractive. Though not as strikingly handsome as a movie star, James was nonetheless a *personable* young man.

perspicacious ADJ. having insight; penetrating; astute. "Absolutely brilliant, Holmes!" cried Watson, as Holmes made yet another *perspicacious* deduction. perspicacity, N.

pert ADJ. impertinent; forward. The matron in charge of the orphanage thought Annie was *pert* and disrespectful.

pertinacious ADJ. stubborn; persistent. He is bound to succeed because his *pertinacious* nature will not permit him to quit.

pertinent ADJ. to the point; relevant. Virginia Woolf's words on women's rights are as *pertinent* today as they were when she wrote them nearly a century ago.

perturb V. disturb greatly. The thought that electricity might be leaking out of the empty lightbulb sockets *perturbed* my aunt so much that at night she crept about the house screwing fresh bulbs in the vacant spots. perturbation, N.

peruse V. read with care. After the conflagration that burned down her house, Joan closely *perused* her home insurance policy to discover exactly what benefits her coverage provided her. perusal, N.

■ **pervasive** ADJ. pervading; spread throughout every part. Despite airing them for several hours, Martha could not rid her clothes of the *pervasive* odor of mothballs that clung to them. pervade, V.

perverse ADJ. stubbornly wrongheaded; wicked and perverted. When Jack was in a *perverse* mood, he would do the opposite of whatever Jill asked him. When Hannibal Lecter was in a *perverse* mood, he ate the flesh of his victims. Jack acted out of *perversity*. Hannibal's act proved his *perversion*.

■ **pessimism** N. belief that life is basically bad or evil; gloominess. Considering how well you have done in the course so far, you have no real reason for such *pessimism* about your final grade.

petrify V. turn to stone. His sudden, unexpected appearance shocked her into immobility: she was *petrified*.

petty ADJ. trivial; unimportant; very small. She had no major complaints to make about his work, only a few *petty* quibbles that were almost too minor to state.

petulant ADJ. touchy; peevish. If you'd had hardly any sleep for three nights and people kept phoning and waking you up, you'd sound pretty *petulant*, too.

■ **phenomena** N. observable facts; subjects of scientific investigation. We kept careful records of the *phenomena* we noted in the course of these experiments.

philanderer N. faithless lover; flirt. Swearing he had never so much as looked at another woman, Ralph assured Alice he was no *philanderer*.

Word List 36 philanthropist-precedent

■ **philanthropist** N. lover of mankind; doer of good. In his role as *philanthropist* and public benefactor, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., donated millions to charity; as an individual, however, he was a tight-fisted old man.

philistine N. narrow-minded person, uncultured and exclusively interested in material gain. A *philistine* knows the price of everything, but the value of nothing.

philology N. study of language. The professor of *philology* advocated the use of Esperanto as an international language.

phlegmatic ADJ. calm; not easily disturbed. The nurse was a cheerful but *phlegmatic* person, unexcited in the face of sudden emergencies.

phobia N. morbid fear. Her fear of flying was more than mere nervousness; it was a real *phobia*.

phoenix N. symbol of immortality or rebirth. Like the legendary *phoenix* rising from its ashes, the city of San Francisco rose again after its destruction during the 1906 earthquake.

phylum N. major class of plants; primary branch of animal kingdom; division. In sorting out her hundreds of packets of seeds, Katya decided to file them by *phylum*.

physiological ADJ. pertaining to the science of the function of living organisms. To understand this disease fully, we must examine not only its *physiological* aspects but also its psychological elements.

picaresque ADJ. pertaining to rogues in literature. *Tom Jones* has been hailed as one of the best *picaresque* novels in the English language.

piebald ADJ. mottled; spotted. You should be able to identify Polka Dot in this race; it is the only *piebald* horse running.

piecemeal ADV. one piece at a time; gradually. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is too huge to finish in one sitting; I'll have to read it *piecemeal*.

pied ADJ. variegated; multicolored. The *Pied* Piper of Hamelin got his name from the multicolored clothing he wore.

■ **piety** N. religious devotion; godliness. The nuns in the convent were noted for their *piety;* they spent their days in worship and prayer. pious, ADJ.

pigment N. coloring matter. Van Gogh mixed various *pigments* with linseed oil to create his paints.

pillage V. plunder. The enemy *pillaged* the quiet village and left it in ruins.

pine V. languish, decline; long for, yearn. Though she tried to be happy living with Clara in the city, Heidi *pined* for the mountains and for her gruff but loving grandfather.

pinnacle N. peak. We could see the morning sunlight illuminate the *pinnacle* while the rest of the mountain lay in shadow.

pious ADJ. devout; religious. The challenge for church people today is how to be *pious* in the best sense, that is, to be devout without becoming hypocritical or sanctimonious. piety, N.

piquant ADJ. pleasantly tart-tasting; stimulating. The *piquant* sauce added to our enjoyment of the meal. piquancy, N.

pique N. irritation; resentment. She showed her *pique* at her loss by refusing to appear with the other contestants at the end of the competition. also V.

pique V. provoke or arouse; annoy. "I know something *you* don't know," said Lucy, trying to *pique* Ethel's interest.

● **pitfall** N. hidden danger; concealed trap. Her parents warned young Sophie against the many *pitfalls* that lay in wait for her in the dangerous big city.

● **pithy** ADJ. concise; meaningful; substantial; meaty. While other girls might have gone on and on about how uncool Elton was, Liz summed it up in one *pithy* remark: "He's bogus!"

pittance N. a small allowance or wage. He could not live on the *pittance* he received as a pension and had to look for an additional source of revenue.

pivotal ADJ. crucial; key; vital. The new "smart weapons" technology played a *pivotal* role in the quick resolution of the war with Iraq.

■ **placate** V. pacify; conciliate. The store manager tried to *placate* the angry customer, offering to replace the damaged merchandise or to give back her money right away.

placebo N. harmless substance prescribed as a dummy pill. In a controlled experiment, fifty volunteers were given aspirin tablets; the control group received only *placebos.*

placid ADJ. peaceful; calm. Looking at the storm-tossed waters of the lake, Bob wondered how people had ever come to call it Lake *Placid*.

plagiarism N. theft of another's ideas or writings passed off as original. The editor recognized the *plagiarism* and rebuked the culprit who had presented the manuscript as original.

plagiarize V. steal another's ideas and pass them off as one's own. The teacher could tell that the student had *plagiarized* parts of his essay; she could recognize whole paragraphs straight from *Barron's Book Notes*.

plaintive ADJ. mournful. The dove has *a plaintive* and melancholy call.

plasticity N. ability to be molded. When clay dries out, it loses its *plasticity* and becomes less malleable.

platitude N. trite remark; commonplace statement. In giving advice to his son, old Polonius expressed himself only in *platitudes*; every word out of his mouth was a commonplace.

plaudit N. enthusiastically worded approval; round of applause. The theatrical company reprinted the *plaudits* of the critics in its advertisements. plauditory, ADJ.

plausible ADJ. having a show of truth but open to doubt; specious. Your mother made you stay home from school because she needed you to program the VCR? I'm sorry, you'll have to come up with a more *plausible* excuse than that.

plenitude N. abundance; completeness. Looking in the pantry, we admired the *plenitude* of fruits and pickles we had preserved during the summer.

plethora N. excess; overabundance. She offered a *plethora* of excuses for her shortcomings.

pliable ADJ. flexible; yielding; adaptable. In remodeling the bathroom, we have replaced all the old, rigid lead pipes with new, *pliable* copper tubing.

pliant ADJ. flexible; easily influenced. Pinocchio's disposition was *pliant*; he was like putty in his tempters' hands.

plight N. condition, state (especially a bad state or condition); predicament. Many people feel that the federal government should do more to alleviate the *plight* of the homeless. Loggers, unmoved by the *plight* of the spotted owl, plan to continue logging whether or not they ruin the owl's habitat.

plumage N. feathers of a bird. Bird watchers identify different species of bird by their characteristic songs and distinctive *plumage*.

plumb ADJ. checking perpendicularity; vertical. Before hanging wallpaper it is advisable to drop a *plumb* line from the ceiling as a guide. also N. and V.

plumb V. examine critically in order to understand; measure depth (by sounding). Try as he would, Watson could never fully *plumb* the depths of Holmes's thought processes.

plummet V. fall sharply. Stock prices *plummeted* as Wall Street reacted to the crisis in the economy.

plutocracy N. society ruled by the wealthy. From the way the government caters to the rich, you might think our society is a *plutocracy* rather than a democracy.

podiatrist N. doctor who treats ailments of the feet. He consulted a *podiatrist* about his fallen arches.

podium N. pedestal; raised platform. The audience applauded as the conductor made his way to the *podium.*

poignancy N. quality of being deeply moving; keenness of emotion. Watching the tearful reunion of the long-separated mother and child, the social worker was touched by the *poignancy* of the scene. poignant, ADJ.

polarize V. split into opposite extremes or camps. The abortion issue has *polarized* the country into pro-choice and anti-abortion camps. polarization, N.

● **polemical** ADJ. aggressive in verbal attack; disputatious. Lexy was a master of *polemical* rhetoric; she should have worn a T-shirt with the slogan "Born to Debate."

politic ADJ. expedient; prudent; well advised. Even though he was disappointed by the size of the bonus he was offered, he did not think it *politic* to refuse it.

polygamist N. one who has more than one spouse at a time. He was arrested as a *polygamist* when his two wives filed complaints about him.

polyglot ADJ. speaking several languages. New York City is a *polyglot* community because of the thousands of immigrants who settle there.

pomposity N. self-important behavior; acting like a stuffed shirt. Although the commencement speaker had some good things to say, we had to laugh at his *pomposity* and general air of parading his own dignity. pompous, ADJ.

■ **ponderous** ADJ. weighty; unwieldy. His humor lacked the light touch; his jokes were always *ponderous.*

pontifical ADJ. pertaining to a bishop or pope; pompous or pretentious. From his earliest days at the seminary, John seemed destined for a high *pontifical* office. However, he sounded so pompous when he *pontificated* that he never was chosen *pontiff* after all.

pore V. study industriously; ponder; scrutinize. Determined to become a physician, Beth spent hours *poring* over her anatomy text.

porous ADJ. full of pores; like a sieve. Dancers like to wear *porous* clothing because it allows the ready passage of water and air.

portend V. foretell; presage. The king did not know what these omens might *portend* and asked his soothsayers to interpret them.

portent N. sign; omen; forewarning. He regarded the black cloud as a *portent* of evil.

portly ADJ. stately; stout. The overweight gentleman was referred to as *portly* by the polite salesclerk.

poseur N. person who pretends to be sophisticated, elegant, etc., to impress others. Some thought Salvador Dali was a brilliant painter; others dismissed him as a *poseur.*

posterity N. descendants; future generations. We hope to leave a better world to *posterity.*

posthumous ADJ. after death (as of child born after father's death or book published after author's death). The critics ignored his works during his lifetime; it was only after the *posthumous* publication of his last novel that they recognized his great talent.

postulate N. essential premise; underlying assumption. The basic *postulate* of democracy, set forth in the Declaration of Independence, is that all men are created equal.

potable ADJ. suitable for drinking. The recent drought in the Middle Atlantic states has emphasized the need for extensive research in ways of making sea water *potable.* also N.

potent ADJ. powerful; persuasive; greatly influential. Looking at the expiration date on the cough syrup bottle, we wondered whether the medication would still be *potent.* potency, N.

potentate N. monarch; sovereign. The *potentate* spent more time at Monte Carlo than he did at home on his throne.

potential ADJ. expressing possibility; latent. The cello teacher viewed every new pupil as a *potential* Yo-Yo Ma. also N.

potion N. dose (of liquid). Tristan and Isolde drink a love *potion* in the first act of the opera.

practicable ADJ. feasible. The board of directors decided that the plan was *practicable* and agreed to undertake the project.

practical ADJ. based on experience; useful. He was a *practical* man, opposed to theory.

practitioner N. someone engaged in a profession (law, medicine). In need of a hip replacement, Carl sought a *practitioner* with considerable experience performing this particular surgery.

■ **pragmatic** ADJ. practical (as opposed to idealistic); concerned with the practical worth or impact of something. This coming trip to France should provide me with a *pragmatic* test of the value of my conversational French class.

pragmatist N. practical person. No *pragmatist* enjoys becoming involved in a game he can never win.

prank N. mischievous trick. Is tipping over garbage cans on Halloween merely a childish *prank*, or is it vandalism?

prate V. speak foolishly; boast idly. Despite Elizabeth's obvious disinclination for the topic, Mr. Collins *prated* on and on about his wonderful prospects as a husband, thanks to his noble patron, Lady Catherine de Burgh.

● **prattle** V. babble. Baby John *prattled* on and on about the cats and his ball and the Cookie Monster.

preamble N. introductory statement. In the *Preamble* to the Constitution, the purpose of the document is set forth.

● **precarious** ADJ. uncertain; risky. Saying the stock would be a *precarious* investment, the broker advised her client against purchasing it.

precedent N. something preceding in time that may be used as an authority or guide for future action. If I buy you a car for your sixteenth birthday, your brothers will want me to buy them cars when they turn sixteen, too; I can't afford to set such an expensive *precedent.* The law professor asked Jill to state which famous case served as a *precedent* for the court's decision in *Brown II.*

Word List 37 precept-propitiate

precept N. practical rule guiding conduct. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is a worthwhile *precept.*

precinct N. district or division of a city. Ed McBain's detective novels set in the 87th *precinct* provide an exciting picture of police work.

precipice N. cliff; dangerous position. Suddenly Indiana Jones found himself dangling from the edge of a *precipice.*

precipitate ADJ. rash; premature; hasty; sudden. Though I was angry enough to resign on the spot, I had enough sense to keep myself from quitting a job in such a *precipitate* fashion.

precipitate V. throw headlong; hasten. The removal of American political support appears to have *precipitated* the downfall of the Marcos regime.

precipitous ADJ. steep; overhasty. This hill is difficult to climb because it is so *precipitous*; one slip, and our descent will be *precipitous* as well.

précis N. concise summing up of main points. Before making her presentation at the conference, Ellen wrote up a neat *précis* of the major elements she would cover.

precise ADJ. exact. If you don't give me *precise* directions and a map, I'll never find your place.

■ **preclude** V. make impossible; eliminate. The fact that the band was already booked to play in Hollywood on New Year's Eve *precluded* their accepting the New Year's Eve gig in London they were offered.

■ **precocious** ADJ. advanced in development. Listening to the grown-up way the child discussed serious topics, we couldn't help remarking how *precocious* she was. precocity, N.

precursor N. forerunner. Though Gray and Burns share many traits with the Romantic poets who followed them, most critics consider them *precursors* of the Romantic Movement, not true Romantics.

■ **predator** N. creature that seizes and devours another animal; person who robs or exploits others. Not just cats, but a wide variety of *predators*—owls, hawks, weasels, foxes—catch mice for dinner. A carnivore is by definition *predatory*, for he *preys* on weaker creatures.

■ **predecessor** N. former occupant of a post. I hope I can live up to the fine example set by my late *predecessor* in this office.

predetermine V. predestine; settle or decide beforehand; influence markedly. Romeo and Juliet believed that Fate had *predetermined* their meeting. Bea gathered estimates from caterers, florists, and stationers so that she could *predetermine* the costs of holding a catered buffet. Philip's love of athletics *predetermined* his choice of a career in sports marketing.

predicament N. tricky or dangerous situation; dilemma. Tied to the railroad tracks by the villain, Pauline strained against her bonds. How would she escape from this terrible *predicament*?

predilection N. partiality; preference. Although Ogden Nash wrote all sorts of poetry over the years, he had a definite *predilection* for limericks.

predispose V. give an inclination toward; make susceptible to. Oleg's love of dressing up his big sister's Barbie doll may have *predisposed* him to become a fashion designer. Genetic influences apparently *predispose* people to certain forms of cancer.

preeminent ADJ. outstanding; superior. The king traveled to Boston because he wanted the *preeminent* surgeon in the field to perform the operation.

preempt V. head off; forestall by acting first; appropriate for oneself; supplant. Hoping to *preempt* any attempts by the opposition to make educational reform a hot political issue, the candidate set out her own plan to revitalize the public schools. preemptive, ADJ.

preen V. make oneself tidy in appearance; feel self-satisfaction. As Kitty *preened* before the mirror, carefully smoothing her shining hair, she couldn't help *preening* over how pretty she looked.

prehensile ADJ. capable of grasping or holding. Monkeys use not only their arms and legs but also their *prehensile* tails in traveling through the trees.

prelate N. church dignitary. The archbishop of Moscow and other high-ranking *prelates* visited the Russian Orthodox seminary.

prelude N. introduction; forerunner. I am afraid that this border raid is the *prelude* to more serious attacks.

premeditate V. plan in advance. She had *premeditated* the murder for months, reading about common poisons and buying weed killer that contained arsenic.

premise N. assumption; postulate. Based on the *premise* that there's no fool like an old fool, P. T. Barnum hired a ninety-year-old clown for his circus.

premonition N. forewarning. In horror movies, the hero often has a *premonition* of danger, yet he foolishly ignores it.

preposterous ADJ. absurd; ridiculous. When he tried to downplay his youthful experiments with marijuana by saying he hadn't inhaled, we all thought, "What a *preposterous* excuse!"

prerogative N. privilege; unquestionable right. The president cannot levy taxes; that is the *prerogative* of the legislative branch of government.

presage V. foretell. The vultures flying overhead *presaged* the discovery of the corpse in the desert.

prescience N. ability to foretell the future. Given the current wave of Japan-bashing, it does not take *prescience* for me to foresee problems in our future trade relations with Japan.

presentiment N. feeling something will happen; anticipatory fear; premonition. Saying goodbye at the airport, Jack had a sudden *presentiment* that this was the last time he would see Jill.

prestige N. impression produced by achievements or reputation. Many students want to go to Harvard College not for the education offered but for the *prestige* of Harvard's name.

■ **presumptuous** ADJ. overconfident; impertinently bold; taking liberties. Matilda thought it was somewhat *presumptuous* of the young man to have addressed her without first having been introduced. Perhaps manners were freer here in the New World.

■ **pretentious** ADJ. ostentatious; pompous; making unjustified claims; overly ambitious. None of the other prize winners are wearing their medals; isn't it a bit *pretentious* of you to wear yours?

preternatural ADJ. beyond what is normal in nature. Malcolm's mother's total ability to tell when he was lying struck him as almost *preternatural*.

pretext N. excuse. He looked for a good *pretext* to get out of paying a visit to his aunt.

prevail V. induce; triumph over. He tried to *prevail* on her to type his essay for him.

■ **prevalent** ADJ. widespread; generally accepted. A radical committed to social change, Reed had no patience with the conservative views *prevalent* in the America of his day.

prevaricate V. lie. Some people believe that to *prevaricate* in a good cause is justifiable and regard such a statement as a "white lie."

prey N. target of a hunt; victim. In *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, Euell Gibbons has as his *prey* not wild beasts but wild plants. also V.

prim ADJ. very precise and formal; exceedingly proper. Never having worked as a governess before, Jane thought it best to assume a very *prim* and proper manner so that her charges would not take liberties with her.

primordial ADJ. existing at the beginning (of time); rudimentary. The Neanderthal Man is one of our *primordial* ancestors.

primp V. groom oneself with care; adorn oneself. The groom stood by idly while his nervous bride-to-be *primped* one last time before the mirror.

pristine ADJ. characteristic of earlier times; primitive; unspoiled. This area has been preserved in all its *pristine* wildness.

privation N. hardship; want. In his youth, he knew hunger and *privation*.

probe V. explore with tools. The surgeon *probed* the wound for foreign matter before suturing it. also N.

problematic ADJ. doubtful; unsettled; questionable; perplexing. Given the way building costs have exceeded estimates for the job, whether the arena will ever be completed is *problematic*.

proclivity N. inclination; natural tendency. Watching the two-year-old voluntarily put away his toys, I was amazed by his *proclivity* for neatness.

procrastinate V. postpone; delay or put off. Looking at four years of receipts and checks he still had to sort through, Bob was truly sorry he had *procrastinated* for so long and not finished filing his taxes long ago.

prod V. poke; stir up; urge. If you *prod* him hard enough, he'll eventually clean his room.

■ **prodigal** ADJ. wasteful; reckless with money. Don't be so *prodigal* spending my money; when you've earned some money yourself, you can waste it as much as you want! also N.

prodigious ADJ. marvelous; enormous. Watching the champion weight lifter heave the weighty barbell to shoulder height and then boost it overhead, we marveled at his *prodigious* strength.

prodigy N. marvel; highly gifted child. Menuhin *was a prodigy*, performing wonders on his violin when he was barely eight years old.

■ **profane** V. violate; desecrate; treat unworthily. The members of the mysterious Far Eastern cult sought to kill the British explorer because he had *profaned* the sanctity of their holy goblet by using it as an ashtray. also ADJ.

● **profligate** ADJ. dissipated; wasteful; wildly immoral. Although surrounded by wild and *profligate* companions, she nevertheless managed to retain some sense of decency.

■ **profound** ADJ. deep; not superficial; complete. Freud's remarkable insights into human behavior caused his fellow scientists to honor him as a *profound* thinker. profundity, N.

■ **profusion** N. overabundance; lavish expenditure; excess. Freddy was so overwhelmed by the *profusion* of choices on the menu that he knocked over his wine glass and soaked his host. He made *profuse* apologies to his host, the waiter, the bus boy, the people at the next table, and the attendant handing out paper towels.

progenitor N. ancestor. The Roth family, whose *progenitors* emigrated from Germany early in the nineteenth century, settled in Peru, Illinois.

progeny N. children; offspring. He was proud of his *progeny* in general, but regarded George as the most promising of all his children.

prognosis N. forecasted course of a disease; prediction. If the doctor's *prognosis* is correct, the patient will be in a coma for at least twenty-four hours.

projectile N. missile. Man has always hurled *projectiles* at his enemy, whether in the form of stones or of highly explosive shells.

proletarian N. member of the working class; blue collar person. "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains" is addressed to *proletarians*, not preppies. So is *Blue Collar Holler*. proletariat, N.

■ **proliferation** N. rapid growth; spread; multiplication. Times of economic hardship inevitably encourage the *proliferation* of countless get-rich-quick schemes. proliferate, V.

■ **prolific** ADJ. abundantly fruitful. My editors must assume I'm a *prolific* writer: they expect me to revise six books this year!

prolixity N. tedious wordiness; verbosity. A writer who suffers from *prolixity* tells his readers everything they *never* wanted to know about his subject (or were too bored to ask). prolix, ADJ.

prologue N. introduction (to a poem or play). In the *prologue* to *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare introduces the audience to the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets.

prolong V. make longer; draw out; lengthen. In their determination to discover ways to *prolong* human life, doctors fail to take into account that longer lives are not always happier ones.

prominent ADJ. conspicuous; notable; sticking out. Have you ever noticed that Prince Charles's *prominent* ears make him look like the big-eared character in *Mad* comics?

promiscuous ADJ. mixed indiscriminately; haphazard; irregular, particularly sexually. In the opera *La Bohème*, we get a picture of the *promiscuous* life led by the young artists of Paris.

promontory N. headland. They erected a lighthouse on the *promontory* to warn approaching ships of their nearness to the shore.

promote V. help to flourish; advance in rank; publicize. Founder of the Children's Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman ceaselessly *promotes* the welfare of young people everywhere.

prompt V. cause; provoke; provide a cue for an actor. Whatever *prompted* you to ask for such a big piece of cake when you're on a diet?

promulgate V. proclaim a doctrine or law; make known by official publication. When Moses came down from the mountaintop all set to *promulgate* God's commandments, he freaked out on discovering his followers worshipping a golden calf.

prone ADJ. inclined to; prostrate. She was *prone* to sudden fits of anger during which she would lie *prone* on the floor, screaming and kicking her heels.

propagate V. multiply; spread. Since bacteria *propagate* more quickly in unsanitary environments, it is important to keep hospital rooms clean.

propellants N. substances that propel or drive forward. The development of our missile program has forced our scientists to seek more powerful *propellants.*

propensity N. natural inclination. Convinced of his own talent, Sol has an unfortunate *propensity* to belittle the talents of others.

prophetic ADJ. foretelling the future. I have no magical *prophetic* powers; when I predict what will happen, I base my predictions on common sense. prophesy, V.

propinquity N. nearness; kinship. Their relationship could not be explained as being based on mere *propinquity;* they were more than relatives, they were true friends.

propitiate V. appease. The natives offered sacrifices to *propitiate* the gods.

Word List 38 propitious-quarry

propitious ADJ. favorable; fortunate; advantageous. Chloe consulted her horoscope to see whether Tuesday would be a *propitious* day to dump her boyfriend.

proponent N. supporter; backer; opposite of opponent. In the Senate, *proponents* of the universal health care measure lobbied to gain additional support for the controversial legislation.

propound V. put forth for analysis. In your discussion, you have *propounded* several questions; let us consider each one separately.

propriety N. fitness; correct conduct. Miss Manners counsels her readers so that they may behave with due *propriety* in any social situation and not embarrass themselves.

propulsive ADJ. driving forward. The jet plane has a greater *propulsive* power than the engine-driven plane.

prosaic ADJ. dull and unimaginative; matter-of-fact; factual. Though the ad writers came up with an original way to publicize the product, the head office rejected it for a more *prosaic*, ordinary slogan.

proscribe V. ostracize; banish; outlaw. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus *proscribed* all those who had conspired against Julius Caesar.

proselytize V. convert to a religion or belief. In these interfaith meetings, there must be no attempt to *proselytize; we* must respect all points of view.

prosperity N. good fortune; financial success; physical well-being. Promising to stay together "for richer, for poorer," the newlyweds vowed to be true to one another in *prosperity* and hardship alike.

prostrate V. stretch out full on ground. He *prostrated* himself before the idol. also ADJ.

protean ADJ. versatile; able to take on many shapes. A remarkably *protean* actor, Alec Guinness could take on any role.

protégé N. person receiving protection and support from a patron. Born with an independent spirit, Cyrano de Bergerac refused to be a *protégé* of Cardinal Richelieu.

protocol N. diplomatic etiquette. We must run this state dinner according to *protocol* if we are to avoid offending any of our guests.

prototype N. original work used as a model by others. The National Air and Space Museum displays the Wright brothers' first plane, the *prototype* of all the American aircraft that came after.

protract V. prolong. Seeking to delay the union members' vote, the management team tried to *protract* the negotiations endlessly.

protrude V. stick out. His fingers *protruded* from the holes in his gloves. protrusion, N.

protuberance N. protrusion; bulge. A ganglionic cyst is a fluid-filled tumor that develops near a joint membrane or tendon sheath, and that bulges beneath the skin, forming a *protuberance*.

provident ADJ. displaying foresight; thrifty; preparing for emergencies. In his usual *provident* manner, he had insured himself against this type of loss.

■ **provincial** ADJ. pertaining to a province; limited in outlook; unsophisticated. As *provincial* governor, Sir Henry administered the Queen's law in his remote corner of Canada. Caught up in local problems, out of touch with London news, he became sadly *provincial*.

provisional ADJ. tentative. Kim's acceptance as an American Express card holder was *provisional*: before issuing her a card, American Express wanted to check her employment record and credit history.

provocative ADJ. arousing anger or interest; annoying. In a typically *provocative* act, the bully kicked sand into the weaker man's face.

provoke V. stir to anger; cause retaliation. In order to prevent a sudden outbreak of hostilities, we must not *provoke* our foe. provocation, N.; provocative, ADJ.

prowess N. extraordinary ability; military bravery. Performing triple axels and double lutzes at the age of six, the young figure skater was world famous for her *prowess* on the ice.

■ **proximity** N. nearness. Blind people sometimes develop a compensatory ability to sense the *proximity* of objects around them.

proxy N. authorized agent. Please act as my *proxy* and vote for this slate of candidates in my absence.

prude N. excessively modest person. The X-rated film was definitely not for *prudes*. prudish, ADJ.

■ **prudent** ADJ. cautious; careful. A miser hoards money not because he is *prudent* but because he is greedy. prudence, N.

prune V. cut away; trim. With the help of her editor, she was able to *prune* her overlong manuscript into publishable form.

prurient ADJ. having or causing lustful thoughts and desires. Aroused by his *prurient* impulses, the dirty old man leered at the sweet young thing and offered to give her a sample of his "prowess."

pseudonym N. pen name. Samuel Clemens' *pseudonym* was Mark Twain.

psyche N. soul; mind. It is difficult to delve into the *psyche* of a human being.

pterodactyl N. extinct flying reptile. The remains of *pterodactyls* indicate that these flying reptiles had a wingspan of as much as twenty feet.

puerile ADJ. childish; immature. Throwing tantrums! You should have outgrown such *puerile* behavior years ago.

pugilist N. boxer. The famous *pugilist* Cassius Clay changed his name to Muhammed Ali.

pugnacity N. combativeness; disposition to fight. "Put up your dukes!" he cried, making a fist to show his *pugnacity*. pugnacious, ADJ.

pulchritude N. beauty; comeliness. I do not envy the judges who have to select this year's Miss America from this collection of female *pulchritude*.

pulverize V. crush or grind into dust. Before sprinkling the dried herbs into the stew, Michael first *pulverized* them into a fine powder.

pummel V. beat or pound with fists. Swinging wildly, Pam *pummeled* her brother around the head and shoulders.

punctilious ADJ. laying stress on niceties of conduct or form; minutely attentive to fine points (perhaps too much so). Percy is *punctilious* about observing the rules of etiquette whenever Miss Manners invites him to stay. punctiliousness, N.

pundit N. authority on a subject; learned person; expert. Some authors who write about SAT I as if they are *pundits* actually know very little about the test.

pungent ADJ. stinging; sharp in taste or smell; caustic. The *pungent* odor of ripe Limburger cheese appealed to Simone but made Stanley gag.

punitive ADJ. punishing. He asked for *punitive* measures against the offender.

puny ADJ. insignificant; tiny; weak. Our *puny* efforts to stop the flood were futile.

purchase N. firm grasp or footing. The mountaineer struggled to get a proper *purchase* on the slippery rock. (secondary meaning)

purge V. remove or get rid of something unwanted; free from blame or guilt; cleanse or purify. When the Communist government *purged* the party to get rid of members suspected of capitalist sympathies, they sent the disloyal members to labor camps in Siberia.

purported ADJ. alleged; claimed; reputed or rumored. The *purported* Satanists sacrificing live roosters in the park turned out to be a party of Shriners holding a chicken barbecue.

purse V. pucker; contract into wrinkles. Miss Watson *pursed* her lips to show her disapproval of Huck's bedraggled appearance.

purveyor N. furnisher of foodstuffs; caterer. As *purveyor* of rare wines and viands, he traveled through France and Italy every year in search of new products to sell.

pusillanimous ADJ. cowardly; fainthearted. In *The Wizard of Oz,* Dorothy's friend the Cowardly Lion wishes he were brave and not *pusillanimous*.

putrid ADJ. foul; rotten; decayed. When we removed the bandage, we could tell from the *putrid* smell that the wound had turned gangrenous. putrescence, N.

pyromaniac N. person with an insane desire to set things on fire. The detectives searched the area for the *pyromaniac* who had set these costly fires.

quack N. charlatan; impostor. Don't let that *quack* fool you with his extravagant claims; he can't cure you.

quadruped N. four-footed animal. Most mammals are *quadrupeds*.

quaff V. drink with relish. As we *quaffed* our ale, we listened to the lively songs of the students in the tavern.

● **quagmire** N. soft, wet, boggy land; complex or dangerous situation from which it is difficult to free oneself. Up to her knees in mud, Myra wondered how on earth she was going to extricate herself from this *quagmire*.

quail V. cower; lose heart. The Cowardly Lion was afraid that he would *quail* in the face of danger.

quaint ADJ. odd; old-fashioned; picturesque. Her *quaint* clothes and old-fashioned language marked her as an eccentric.

■ **qualified** ADJ. limited; restricted. Unable to give the candidate full support, the mayor gave him only a *qualified* endorsement. (secondary meaning)

qualms N. misgivings; uneasy fears, especially about matters of conscience. I have no *qualms* about giving this assignment to Helen; I know she will handle it admirably.

■ **quandary** N. dilemma. When both Harvard and Stanford accepted Laura, she was in a *quandary* as to which school she should attend.

quarantine N. isolation of person or ship to prevent spread of infection. We will have to place this house under *quarantine* until we determine the exact nature of the disease. also V.

quarry N. victim; object of a hunt. The police closed in on their *quarry*.

quarry V. dig into. They *quarried* blocks of marble out of the hillside. also N.

Word List 39 quay-recurrent

quay N. dock; landing place. Because of the captain's carelessness, the ship crashed into the *quay*.

queasy ADJ. easily nauseated; squeamish. Remember that great chase movie, the one with the carsick passenger? That's right: *Queasy Rider*!

● **quell** V. extinguish; put down; quiet. Miss Minchin's demeanor was so stern and forbidding that she could *quell* any unrest among her students with one intimidating glance.

quench V. douse or extinguish; assuage or satisfy. No matter how much water the hiker drank, she could not *quench* her thirst.

● **querulous** ADJ. fretful; whining. Even the most agreeable toddlers can begin to act *querulous* if they miss their nap.

query N. inquiry; question. In her column "Ask Beth," the columnist invites young readers to send her their *queries* about life and love.

quibble N. minor objection or complaint. Aside from a few hundred teensy-weensy *quibbles* about the set, the script, the actors, the director, the costumes, the lighting, and the props, the hypercritical critic loved the play. also V.

● **quiescent** ADJ. at rest; dormant; temporarily inactive. After the massive eruption, fear of Mount Etna was great; people did not return to cultivate the rich hillside lands until the volcano had been *quiescent* for a full two years. quiescence, N.

quietude N. tranquility. He was impressed by the air of *quietude* and peace that pervaded the valley.

quintessence N. purest and highest embodiment. Gandhi maintained that to befriend someone who regards himself as your enemy is the *quintessence* of true religion.

quip N. taunt. You are unpopular because you are too free with your *quips* and sarcastic comments. also V.

quirk N. startling twist; caprice. By a *quirk* of fate, he found himself working for the man whom he had discharged years before.

quiver V. tremble; shake. The bird dog's nose twitched and his whiskers *quivered* as he strained eagerly against the leash. also N.

quiver N. case for arrows. Robin Hood reached back and plucked one last arrow from his *quiver*. (secondary meaning)

quixotic ADJ. idealistic but impractical. Constantly coming up with *quixotic*, unworkable schemes to save the world, Simon has his heart in the right place, but his head somewhere in the clouds.

quizzical ADJ. teasing; bantering; mocking; curious. When the skinny teenager tripped over his own feet stepping into the bullpen, Coach raised one *quizzical* eyebrow, shook his head, and said, "Okay, kid. You're here, let's see what you've got."

quorum N. number of members necessary to conduct a meeting. The senator asked for a roll call to determine whether a *quorum* was present.

rabid ADJ. like a fanatic; furious. He was a *rabid* follower of the Dodgers and watched them play whenever he could go to the ballpark.

raconteur N. storyteller. My father was a gifted *raconteur* with an unlimited supply of anecdotes.

rail V. scold; rant. You may *rail* at him all you want; you will never change him.

raiment N. clothing. "How can I go to the ball?" asked Cinderella. "I have no *raiment* fit to wear."

rally V. call up or summon (forces, vital powers, etc.); revive or recuperate. Washington quickly *rallied* his troops to fight off the British attack. The patient had been sinking throughout the night, but at dawn she *rallied* and made a complete recovery.

■ **ramble** V. wander aimlessly (physically or mentally). Listening to the teacher *ramble,* Judy wondered whether he'd ever get to his point.

ramification N. branching out; subdivision. We must examine all the *ramifications* of this problem.

ramify V. divide into branches or subdivisions. When the plant begins to *ramify,* it is advisable to nip off most of the new branches.

ramp N. slope; inclined plane. The house was built with *ramps* instead of stairs in order to enable the man in the wheelchair to move easily from room to room and floor to floor.

rampant ADJ. growing in profusion; unrestrained. The *rampant* weeds in the garden choked the flowers until they died.

ramshackle ADJ. rickety; falling apart. The boys propped up the *ramshackle* clubhouse with a couple of boards.

rancid ADJ. having the odor of stale fat. The *rancid* odor filling the ship's galley nauseated the crew.

■ **rancor** N. bitterness; hatred. Thirty years after the war, she could not let go of the past but was still consumed with *rancor* against the foe.

random ADJ. without definite purpose, plan, or aim; haphazard. Although the sponsor of the raffle claimed all winners were chosen at *random*, people had their suspicions when the grand prize went to the sponsor's brother-in-law.

rankle V. irritate; fester. The memory of having been jilted *rankled* him for years.

● **rant** V. rave; talk excitedly; scold; make a grandiloquent speech. When he heard that I'd totaled the family car, Dad began to *rant* at me like a complete madman.

rapacious ADJ. excessively greedy; predatory. The *rapacious* brigands stripped the villagers of all their possessions. rapacity, N.

rapport N. emotional closeness; harmony. In team teaching, it is important that all teachers in the group have good *rapport* with one another.

rapt ADJ. absorbed; enchanted. Caught up in the wonder of the storyteller's tale, the *rapt* listeners sat motionless, hanging on his every word.

rarefied ADJ. made less dense [of a gas]. The mountain climbers had difficulty breathing in the *rarefied* atmosphere. rarefy, V.

raspy ADJ. grating; harsh. The sergeant's *raspy* voice grated on the recruits' ears.

■ **ratify** V. approve formally; confirm; verify. Party leaders doubted that they had enough votes in both houses of Congress to *ratify* the constitutional amendment.

ratiocination N. reasoning; act of drawing conclusions from premises. While Watson was a man of average intelligence, Holmes was a genius, whose gift for *ratiocination* made him a superb detective.

rationale N. fundamental reason or justification; grounds for an action. Her need to have someplace to hang her earring collection was Dora's *rationale* for piercing fifteen holes in each ear.

rationalize V. give a plausible reason for an action in place of a true, less admirable one; offer an excuse. When David told gabby Gabrielle he couldn't give her a ride to the dance because he had no room in the car, he was *rationalizing*; actually, he couldn't stand being cooped up in a car with anyone who talked as much as she did.

● **raucous** ADJ. harsh and shrill; disorderly and boisterous. The *raucous* crowd of New Year's Eve revelers got progressively noisier as midnight drew near.

rave N. overwhelmingly favorable review. Though critic John Simon seldom has a good word to say about most contemporary plays, his review of *All in the Timing* was a total *rave*.

ravel V. fall apart into tangles; unravel or untwist; entangle. A single thread pulled loose, and the entire scarf started to *ravel*.

● **ravenous** ADJ. extremely hungry. The *ravenous* dog upset several garbage pails in its search for food.

● **raze** V. destroy completely. Spelling is important: to raise a building is to put it up; to *raze* a building is to tear it down.

reactionary ADJ. recoiling from progress; politically ultraconservative. Opposing the use of English in worship services, *reactionary* forces in the church fought to reinstate the mass in Latin.

realm N. kingdom; field or sphere. In the animal *realm*, the lion is the king of beasts.

reaper N. one who harvests grain. Death, the Grim *Reaper*, cuts down mortal men and women, just as a farmer cuts down the ripened grain. reap, V.

rebuff V. snub; beat back. She *rebuffed* his invitation so smoothly that he did not realize he had been snubbed. also N.

rebuke V. scold harshly; criticize severely. No matter how sharply Miss Watson *rebuked* Huck for his misconduct, he never talked back but just stood there like a stump. also N.

■ **rebuttal** N. refutation; response with contrary evidence. The defense lawyer confidently listened to the prosecutor sum up his case, sure that she could answer his arguments in her *rebuttal*.

recalcitrant ADJ. obstinately stubborn; determined to resist authority; unruly. Which animal do you think is more *recalcitrant*, a pig or a mule?

● **recant** V. disclaim or disavow; retract a previous statement; openly confess error. Those who can, keep true to their faith; those who can't, *recant*. Hoping to make Joan of Arc *recant* her sworn testimony, her English captors tried to convince her that her visions had been sent to her by the Devil.

recapitulate V. summarize. Let us *recapitulate* what has been said thus far before going ahead.

recast V. reconstruct (a sentence, story, etc.); fashion again. Let me *recast* this sentence in terms your feeble brain can grasp: in words of one syllable, you are a fool.

receptive ADJ. quick or willing to receive ideas, suggestions, etc. Adventure-loving Huck Finn proved a *receptive* audience for Tom's tales of buried treasure and piracy.

recession N. withdrawal; retreat; time of low economic activity. The slow *recession* of the flood waters created problems for the crews working to restore power to the area. recede, V.

recidivism N. habitual return to crime. Prison reformers in the United States are disturbed by the high rate of *recidivism;* the number of men serving second and third terms in prison indicates the failure of prisons to rehabilitate the inmates.

recipient N. receiver. Although he had been the *recipient* of many favors, he was not grateful to his benefactor.

reciprocal ADJ. mutual; exchangeable; interacting. The two nations signed a *reciprocal* trade agreement.

reciprocate V. repay in kind. If they attack us, we shall be compelled to *reciprocate* and bomb their territory. reciprocity, N.

■ **recluse** N. hermit; loner. Disappointed in love, Miss Emily became a *recluse*; she shut herself away in her empty mansion and refused to see another living soul. reclusive, ADJ.

reconcile V. correct inconsistencies; become friendly after a quarrel. Each month when we try to *reconcile* our checkbook with the bank statement, we quarrel. However, despite these monthly lovers' quarrels, we always manage to *reconcile*.

reconnaissance N. survey of enemy by soldiers; reconnoitering. If you encounter any enemy soldiers during your *reconnaissance,* capture them for questioning.

■ **recount** V. narrate or tell; count over again. A born storyteller, my father loved to *recount* anecdotes about his early years in New York.

recourse N. resorting to help when in trouble. The boy's only *recourse* was to appeal to his father for aid.

recrimination N. countercharges. Loud and angry *recriminations* were her answer to his accusations.

■ **rectify** V. set right; correct. You had better send a check to *rectify* your account before American Express cancels your credit card.

rectitude N. uprightness; moral virtue; correctness of judgment. The Eagle Scout was a model of *rectitude*.

recumbent ADJ. reclining; lying down completely or in part. The command "AT EASE" does not permit you to take a *recumbent* position.

recuperate V. recover. The doctors were worried because the patient did not *recuperate* as rapidly as they had expected.

recurrent ADJ. occurring again and again. Richard's *recurrent* asthma attacks disturbed us and we consulted a physician.

Word List 40 redolent-rescind

redolent ADJ. fragrant; odorous; suggestive of an odor. Even though it is February, the air is *redolent* of spring.

redoubtable ADJ. formidable; causing fear. During the Cold War period, neighboring countries tried not to offend the Russians because they could be *redoubtable* foes.

redress N. remedy; compensation. Do you mean to tell me that I can get no *redress* for my injuries? also V.

■ **redundant** ADJ. superfluous; repetitious; excessively wordy. The bottle of wine I brought to Bob's was certainly *redundant*: how was I to know Bob owned a winery? In your essay, you repeat several points unnecessarily; try to be less *redundant* in the future. redundancy, N.

reek V. emit (odor). The room *reeked* of stale tobacco smoke. also N.

refraction N. bending of a ray of light. When you look at a stick inserted in water, it looks bent because of the *refraction* of the light by the water.

refractory ADJ. stubborn; unmanageable. Though his jockey whipped him, the *refractory* horse stubbornly refused to enter the starting gate.

refrain V. abstain from; resist. N. chorus. Whenever he heard a song with a lively chorus, Sol could never *refrain* from joining in on the *refrain*.

refurbish V. renovate; make bright by polishing. The furniture in the lobby was worn, the paint faded; clearly, it was time to *refurbish* the lobby.

■ **refute** V. disprove. The defense called several respectable witnesses who were able to *refute* the false testimony of the prosecution's sole witness. refutation, N.

regal ADJ. royal. Prince Albert had a *regal* manner.

regale V. entertain. John *regaled* us with tales of his adventures in Africa.

regeneration N. renewal or restoration (of a bodily part); spiritual rebirth. Hoping for insights into healing human injuries, biologists study the process of *regeneration* in lizards that regrow lost tails.

regime N. method or system of government. When the French mention the Old *Regime,* they refer to the government existing before the revolution.

regimen N. prescribed diet and habits. I doubt whether the results warrant our living under such a strict *regimen*.

rehabilitate V. restore to proper condition. We must *rehabilitate* those whom we send to prison.

reimburse V. repay. Let me know what you have spent and I will *reimburse* you.

reiterate V. repeat. He *reiterated* the warning to make sure everyone understood it.

rejoinder N. retort; comeback; reply. When someone has been rude to me, I find it particularly satisfying to come up with a quick *rejoinder*.

rejuvenate V. make young again. The charlatan claimed that his elixir would *rejuvenate* the aged and weary.

■ **relegate** V. banish to an inferior position; delegate; assign. After Ralph dropped his second tray of drinks that week, the manager swiftly *relegated* him to a minor post cleaning up behind the bar.

relent V. give in. When her stern father would not *relent* and allow her to marry Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett eloped with her suitor. relentless, ADJ.

relevant ADJ. pertinent; referring to the case in hand. How *relevant* Virginia Woolf's essays are to women writers today! It's as if Woolf in the 1930s foresaw our current literary struggles. relevancy, N.

relic N. surviving remnant; memento. Egypt's Department of Antiquities prohibits tourists from taking mummies and other ancient *relics* out of the country. Mike keeps his photos of his trip to Egypt in a box with other *relics* of his travels.

relinquish V. give up something with reluctance; yield. Denise never realized how hard it would be for her to *relinquish* her newborn son to the care of his adoptive parents. Once you get used to fringe benefits like expense

account meals and a company car, it's very hard to *relinquish* them.

relish V. savor; enjoy. Watching Peter enthusiastically chow down, I thought, "Now there's a man who *relishes* a good dinner!" also N.

remediable ADJ. reparable. Let us be grateful that the damage is *remediable.*

remedial ADJ. curative; corrective. Because he was a slow reader, he decided to take a course in *remedial* reading.

reminiscence N. recollection. Her *reminiscences* of her experiences are so fascinating that she ought to write a book.

remiss ADJ. negligent. The guard was accused of being *remiss* in his duty when the prisoner escaped.

● **remission** N. temporary moderation of disease symptoms; cancellation of a debt; forgiveness or pardon. Though the senator had been treated for cancer, his symptoms were in *remission*, and he was considered fit enough to handle the strains of a presidential race.

remnant N. remainder. I suggest that you wait until the store places the *remnants* of these goods on sale.

remonstrance N. protest; objection. The authorities were deaf to the pastor's *remonstrances* about the lack of police protection in the area. remonstrate, V.

■ **remorse** N. guilt; self-reproach. The murderer felt no *remorse* for his crime.

remunerative ADJ. compensating; rewarding. I find my new work so *remunerative* that I may not return to my previous employment. remuneration, N.

rend V. split; tear apart. In his grief, he tried to *rend* his garments. rent, N.

render V. deliver; provide; represent. He *rendered* aid to the needy and indigent.

rendition N. translation; artistic interpretation of a song, etc. The audience cheered enthusiastically as she completed her *rendition* of the aria.

renegade N. deserter; traitor. Because he had abandoned his post and joined forces with the Indians, his fellow officers considered the hero of *Dances with Wolves* a *renegade.* also ADJ.

renege V. deny; go back on. He *reneged* on paying off his debt.

■ **renounce** V. abandon; disown; repudiate. Even though she knew she would be burned at the stake as a witch, Joan of Arc refused to *renounce* her belief that her voices came from God. renunciation, N.

renovate V. restore to good condition; renew. We *renovated* our kitchen, replacing the old cabinets and countertop and installing new appliances.

renown N. fame. For many years an unheralded researcher, Barbara McClintock gained international *renown* when she won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine. renowned, ADJ.

rent N. rip; split. Kit did an excellent job of mending the *rent* in the lining of her coat.

reparable ADJ. capable of being repaired. Fortunately, the damage to our car was *reparable*, and after two weeks in the shop it looks brand new.

reparation N. amends; compensation. At the peace conference, the defeated country promised to pay *reparations* to the victors.

repast N. meal; feast; banquet. The caterers prepared a delicious *repast* for Fred and Judy's wedding day.

repeal V. revoke; annul. What would the effect on our society be if we decriminalized drug use by *repealing* the laws against the possession and sale of narcotics?

■ **repel** V. drive away; disgust. At first, the Beast's ferocious appearance *repelled* Beauty, but she came to love the tender heart hidden behind that beastly exterior.

repellent ADJ. driving away; unattractive. Mosquitoes find the odor so *repellent* that they leave any spot where this liquid has been sprayed. also N.

repercussion N. result or impact (of an event, etc.); rebound; reverberation. The brothers' quarrel had serious *repercussions*, for it led to their estrangement.

repertoire N. list of works of music, drama, etc., a performer is prepared to present. The opera company decided to include *Madame Butterfly* in its *repertoire* for the following season.

replenish V. fill up again. Before she could take another backpacking trip, Carla had to *replenish* her stock of freeze-dried foods.

● **replete** ADJ. filled to the brim or to the point of being stuffed; abundantly supplied. The movie star's memoir was *replete* with juicy details about the love life of half of Hollywood.

replica N. copy. Are you going to hang this *replica* of the Declaration of Independence in the classroom or in the auditorium?

replicate V. reproduce; duplicate. Because he had always wanted a palace, Donald decided to *replicate* the Taj Mahal in miniature on his estate.

repository N. storehouse. Libraries are *repositories* of the world's best thoughts.

■ **reprehensible** ADJ. deserving blame. Shocked by the viciousness of the bombing, politicians of every party uniformly condemned the terrorists' *reprehensible* deed.

repress V. restrain; crush; oppress. Anne's parents tried to curb her impetuosity without *repressing* her boundless high spirits.

reprieve N. temporary stay. During the twenty-four-hour *reprieve,* the lawyers sought to make the stay of execution permanent. also V.

■ **reprimand** V. reprove severely; rebuke. Every time Ermengarde made a mistake in class, she was afraid that Miss Minchin would *reprimand* her and tell her father how badly she was doing in school. also N.

reprisal N. retaliation. I am confident that we are ready for any *reprisals* the enemy may undertake.

reprise N. musical repetition; repeat performance; recurrent action. We enjoyed the soprano's solo in Act I so much that we were delighted by its *reprise* in the finale.

reproach V. express disapproval or disappointment. He never could do anything wrong without imagining how the

look on his mother's face would *reproach* him afterwards. reproachful, ADJ.

reprobate N. person hardened in sin, devoid of a sense of decency. I cannot understand why he has so many admirers if he is the *reprobate* you say he is.

■ **reprove** V. censure; rebuke. Though Aunt Bea at times had to *reprove* Opie for inattention in church, she believed he was at heart a God-fearing lad.

■ **repudiate** V. disown; disavow. On separating from Tony, Tina announced that she would *repudiate* all debts incurred by her soon-to-be ex-husband.

● **repugnant** ADJ. loathsome; hateful. Whereas some people like earthworms, others find them *repugnant* and view them with disgust.

repulsion N. distaste; act of driving back. Hating bloodshed, she viewed war with *repulsion*. Even defensive battles distressed her, for the *repulsion* of enemy forces is never accomplished bloodlessly.

reputable ADJ. respectable. If you want to buy antiques, look for a *reputable* dealer; far too many dealers today pass off fakes as genuine antiques.

reputed ADJ. supposed. Though he is the *reputed* father of the child, no one can be sure. repute, N.

requiem N. mass for the dead; dirge. They played Mozart's *Requiem* at the funeral.

requisite N. necessary requirement. Many colleges state that a student must offer three years of a language as a *requisite* for admission.

requite V. repay; revenge. The wretch *requited* his benefactors by betraying them.

● **rescind** V. cancel. Because of the public outcry against the new taxes, the senator proposed a bill to *rescind* the unpopular financial measure.

Word List 41 resentment-sacrosanct

resentment N. indignation; bitterness; displeasure. Not wanting to appear a sore loser, Bill tried to hide his *resentment* of Barry's success.

■ **reserve** N. self-control; formal but distant manner. Although some girls were attracted by Mark's air of *reserve,* Judy was put off by it, for she felt his aloofness indicated a lack of openness. reserved, ADJ.

residue N. remainder; balance. In his will, he requested that after payment of debts, taxes, and funeral expenses, the *residue* be given to his wife. residual, ADJ.

■ **resigned** ADJ. accepting one's fate; unresisting; patiently submissive. *Resigned* to his downtrodden existence, Bob Cratchit was too meek to protest Scrooge's bullying. resignation, N.

resilient ADJ. elastic; having the power of springing back. Highly *resilient*, steel makes excellent bedsprings. resilience, N.

■ **resolution** N. determination; resolve. Nothing could shake his *resolution* that his children would get the best education that money could buy. resolute, ADJ.

■ **resolve** N. determination; firmness of purpose. How dare you question my *resolve* to take up sky-diving! Of course I haven't changed my mind!

resolve V. decide; settle; solve. Holmes *resolved* to travel to Bohemia to *resolve* the dispute between Irene Adler and the king.

resonant ADJ. echoing; resounding; deep and full in sound. The deep, *resonant* voice of the actor James Earl Jones makes him particularly effective when he appears on stage.

respiration N. breathing; exhalation. The doctor found that the patient's years of smoking had adversely affected both his lung capacity and his rate of *respiration*.

● **respite** N. interval of relief; time for rest; delay in punishment. After working nonstop on this project for three straight months, I need a *respite*! For David, the two weeks vacationing in New Zealand were a delightful *respite* from the pressures of his job.

● **resplendent** ADJ. dazzling; glorious; brilliant. While all the adults were commenting how glorious the emperor looked in his *resplendent* new clothes, one little boy was heard to say, "But he's naked!"

responsiveness N. state of reacting readily to appeals, orders, etc. The audience cheered and applauded, delighting the performers by its *responsiveness*.

restitution N. reparation; indemnification. He offered to make *restitution* for the window broken by his son.

restive ADJ. restlessly impatient; obstinately resisting control. Waiting impatiently in line to see Santa Claus, even the best-behaved children grow *restive* and start to fidget.

■ **restraint** N. moderation or self-control; controlling force; restriction. Control yourself, young lady! Show some *restraint*!

resumption N. taking up again; recommencement. During summer break, Don had not realized how much he missed university life; at the *resumption* of classes, however, he felt marked excitement and pleasure. resume, V.

resurge V. rise again; flow to and fro. It was startling to see the spirit of nationalism *resurge* as the Soviet Union disintegrated into a loose federation of ethnic and national groups. resurgence, N.

retain V. keep; employ. Fighting to *retain* his seat in Congress, Senator Foghorn *retained* a new manager to head his reelection campaign.

retaliation N. repayment in kind (usually for bad treatment). Because everyone knew the Princeton Band had stolen Brown's mascot, the whole Princeton student body expected some sort of *retaliation* from Brown. retaliate, V.

retentive ADJ. able to retain or keep; able to remember. Priding herself on her *retentive* memory, she claimed she never forgot a face.

■ **reticence** N. reserve; uncommunicativeness; inclination to silence. Fearing his competitors might get advance word about his plans from talkative staff members, Hughes preferred *reticence* from his employees to loquacity. reticent, ADJ.

retinue N. following; attendants. The queen's *retinue* followed her down the aisle.

retiring ADJ. modest; shy. Given Susan's *retiring* personality, no one expected her to take up public speaking; surprisingly enough, she became a star of the school debate team.

retort N. quick sharp reply. Even when it was advisable for her to keep her mouth shut, she was always ready with a quick *retort*. also V.

■ **retract** V. withdraw; take back. When I saw how Fred and his fraternity brothers had trashed the frat house, I decided to *retract* my offer to let them use our summer cottage for the weekend. retraction, N.

retrench V. cut down; economize. In order to be able to afford to send their children to college, they would have to *retrench*. retrenchment, N.

retribution N. vengeance; compensation; punishment for offenses. The evangelist maintained that an angry deity would exact *retribution* from the sinners.

retrieve V. recover; find and bring in. The dog was intelligent and quickly learned to *retrieve* the game killed by the hunter.

retroactive ADJ. taking effect before its enactment (as a law) or imposition (as a tax). Because the new pension law was *retroactive* to the first of the year, even though Martha had retired in February she was eligible for the pension.

retrograde V. go backwards; degenerate. instead of advancing, our civilization seems to have *retrograded* in ethics and culture. also ADJ.

retrospective ADJ. looking back on the past. The Museum of Graphic Arts is holding a *retrospective* showing of the paintings of Michael Whelan over the past two decades.

revelry N. boisterous merrymaking. New Year's Eve is a night of *revelry*

■ **reverent** ADJ. respectful; worshipful. Though I bow my head in church and recite the prayers, sometimes I don't feel properly *reverent*. revere, V.

reverie N. daydream; musing. He was awakened from his *reverie* by the teacher's question.

revert V. relapse; backslide; turn back to. Most of the time Andy seemed sensitive and mature, but occasionally he would *revert* to his smart-alecky, macho, adolescent self.

revile V. attack with abusive language; vilify. Though most of his contemporaries *reviled* Captain Kidd as a notorious, bloody-handed pirate, some of his fellow merchant-captains believed him innocent of his alleged crimes.

revoke V. cancel; retract. Repeat offenders who continue to drive under the influence of alcohol face having their driver's licenses permanently *revoked*.

revulsion N. sudden violent change of feeling; reaction. Many people in this country who admired dictatorships underwent a *revulsion* when they realized what Hitler and Mussolini were trying to do.

rhapsodize V. to speak or write in an exaggeratedly enthusiastic manner. She greatly enjoyed her Hawaiian vacation and *rhapsodized* about it for weeks.

rhetoric N. art of effective communication; insincere language. All writers, by necessity, must be skilled in *rhetoric*.

■ **rhetorical** ADJ. pertaining to effective communication; insincere in language. To win his audience, the speaker used every *rhetorical* trick in the book.

ribald ADJ. wanton; profane. He sang a *ribald* song that offended many of the more prudish listeners.

riddle V. pierce with holes; permeate or spread throughout. With his machine gun, Tracy *riddled* the car with bullets till it looked like a slice of Swiss cheese. During the proofreaders' strike, the newspaper was *riddled* with typos.

rider N. amendment or clause added to a legislative bill. Senator Foghorn said he would support Senator Filibuster's tax reform bill only if Filibuster agreed to add an antipollution *rider* to the bill.

rife ADJ. abundant; current. Discontent was *rife* among the early settlers, who had not foreseen the harshness of life in the New World.

rift N. opening; break. The plane was lost in the stormy sky until the pilot saw the city through a *rift* in the clouds.

rig V. fix or manipulate. The ward boss was able to *rig* the election by bribing people to stuff the ballot boxes with ballots marked in his candidate's favor.

rigid ADJ. stiff and unyielding; strict; hard and unbending. By living with a man to whom she was not married, George Eliot broke Victorian society's most *rigid* rule of respectable behavior.

■ **rigor** N. severity. Many settlers could not stand the *rigors* of the New England winters.

rigorous ADJ. severe; harsh; demanding; exact. Disliked by his superiors, the officer candidate in *An Officer and a Gentleman* endured an extremely *rigorous* training program.

rile V. vex; irritate; muddy. Red had a hair-trigger temper: he was an easy man to *rile*.

riveting ADJ. absorbing; engrossing. The reviewer described Byatt's novel *Possession* as a *riveting* tale, one so absorbing that he had finished it in a single night.

rivulet N. small stream. As the rains continued, the small trickle of water running down the hillside grew into a *rivulet* that threatened to wash away a portion of the slope.

■ **robust** ADJ. vigorous; strong. After pumping iron and taking karate for six months, the little old lady was so *robust* that she could break a plank with her fist.

roil V. to make liquids murky by stirring up sediment. Be careful when you pour not to *roil* the wine; if you stir up the sediment you'll destroy the flavor.

roster N. list. They print the *roster* of players in the season's program.

rostrum N. platform for speech-making; pulpit. The crowd murmured angrily and indicated that they did not care to listen to the speaker who was approaching the *rostrum*.

rote N. repetition. He recited the passage by *rote* and gave no indication he understood what he was saying.

rotundity N. roundness; sonorousness of speech. Short, squat, and round as a bowling ball, he was the very model of *rotundity*.

rousing ADJ. lively; stirring. "And now, let's have a *rousing* welcome for TV's own Roseanne Barr, who'll lead us in a *rousing* rendition of 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'"

rout V. stampede; drive out. The reinforcements were able to *rout* the enemy. also N.

rubble N. broken fragments. Ten years after World War II, some of the *rubble* left by enemy bombings could still be seen.

ruddy ADJ. reddish; healthy-looking. Santa Claus's *ruddy* cheeks nicely complement Rudolph the Reindeer's bright red nose.

rudimentary ADJ. not developed; elementary; crude. Although my grandmother's English vocabulary was limited to a few *rudimentary* phrases, she always could make herself understood.

rue V. regret; lament; mourn. Tina *rued* the night she met Tony and wondered how she ever fell for such a jerk. rueful, ADJ.

ruffian N. bully; scoundrel. The *ruffians* threw stones at the police.

ruminate V. chew over and over (mentally, or, like cows, physically); mull over; ponder. Unable to digest quickly the baffling events of the day, Reuben *ruminated* about them till four in the morning.

rummage V. ransack; thoroughly search. When we *rummaged* through the trunks in the attic, we found many souvenirs of our childhood days. also N.

ruse N. trick; stratagem. You will not be able to fool your friends with such an obvious *ruse*.

rustic ADJ. pertaining to country people; uncouth. The backwoodsman looked out of place in his *rustic* attire.

ruthless ADJ. pitiless; cruel. Captain Hook was a dangerous, *ruthless* villain who would stop at nothing to destroy Peter Pan.

saboteur N. one who commits sabotage; destroyer of property. Members of the Resistance acted as *saboteurs*, blowing up train lines to prevent supplies from reaching the Nazi army.

saccharine ADJ. cloyingly sweet. She tried to ingratiate herself, speaking sweetly and smiling a *saccharine* smile.

sacrilegious ADJ. desecrating; profane. His stealing of the altar cloth was a very *sacrilegious* act.

sacrosanct ADJ. most sacred; inviolable. The brash insurance salesman invaded the *sacrosanct* privacy of the office of the president of the company.

Word List 42 sadistic-sentinel

sadistic ADJ. inclined to cruelty. If we are to improve conditions in this prison, we must first get rid of the *sadistic* warden.

saga N. Scandinavian myth; any legend. This is a *saga* of the sea and the men who risk their lives on it.

sagacious ADJ. perceptive; shrewd; having insight. My father was a *sagacious* judge of character: he could spot a phony a mile away. sagacity, N.

■ **sage** N. person celebrated for wisdom. Hearing tales of a mysterious Master of All Knowledge who lived in the hills of Tibet, Sandy was possessed with a burning desire to consult the legendary *sage*. also ADJ.

salacious ADJ. lascivious; lustful. Chaucer's monk is not pious but *salacious*, a teller of lewd tales and ribald jests.

salient ADJ. protruding; strikingly conspicuous; jumping. Good readers quickly grasp the *salient* and significant points of a passage; indeed, the ideas almost leap out at them, demanding their attention.

salubrious ADJ. promoting good health; healthful. The health resort advertised the *salubrious* properties of the waters of its famous hot springs.

salutary ADJ. tending to improve; beneficial; wholesome. The punishment had a *salutary* effect on the boy, as he became a model student.

salvage V. rescue from loss. All attempts to *salvage* the wrecked ship failed. also N.

salvo N. discharge of firearms; military salute. The boom of the enemy's opening *salvo* made the petrified private jump.

sanctimonious ADJ. falsely holy; feigning piety. Mark Twain mocked pious hypocrites, calling one a *sanctimonious* old iceberg who looked like he was waiting for a vacancy in the Trinity.

■ **sanction** V. approve; ratify. Nothing will convince me to *sanction* the engagement of my daughter to such a worthless young man.

sanctuary N. refuge; shelter; shrine; holy place. The tiny attic was Helen's *sanctuary* to which she fled when she had to get away from the rest of her family.

sanguine ADJ. cheerful; hopeful. Let's not be too *sanguine* about the outcome of the election; we may still lose.

sap V. diminish; undermine. The element kryptonite has an unhealthy effect on Superman: it *saps* his strength.

sarcasm N. scornful remarks; stinging rebuke. Though Ralph pretended to ignore the mocking comments of his supposed friends, their *sarcasm* wounded him deeply.

sardonic ADJ. cynically mocking; sarcastic. Dorothy Parker's wry couplet, "Men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses," epitomizes her *sardonic* wit.

sartorial ADJ. pertaining to tailors. *GQ Magazine* provides *sartorial* advice for the not-so-well-dressed man.

sate V. satisfy to the full; cloy. Its hunger *sated,* the lion dozed.

satellite N. small body revolving around a larger one. During the first few years of the Space Age, hundreds of *satellites* were launched by Russia and the United States.

satiate v. satisfy fully. Having stuffed themselves until they were *satiated*, the guests were so full they were ready for a nap.

satire N. form of literature in which irony, sarcasm, and ridicule are employed to attack vice and folly. *Gulliver's Travels*, which is regarded by many as a tale for children, is actually a bitter *satire* attacking man's folly.

■ **satirical** ADJ. mocking. The humor of cartoonist Gary Trudeau often is *satirical;* through the comments of the Doonesbury characters, Trudeau ridicules political corruption and folly.

■ **saturate** V. soak thoroughly. *Saturate* your sponge with water until it can't hold any more.

saturnine ADJ. gloomy. Do not be misled by his *saturnine* countenance; he is not as gloomy as he looks.

saunter V. stroll slowly. As we *sauntered* through the park, we stopped frequently to admire the spring flowers.

savant N. learned scholar. Despite all her academic honors, Dr. Diamond disliked being classed as a *savant*: considering herself a simple researcher, she refused to describe herself in such grandiose terms.

savor V. enjoy; have a distinctive flavor, smell, or quality. Relishing his triumph, the actor especially *savored* the chagrin of the critics who had predicted his failure.

● **savory** ADJ. tasty; pleasing, attractive, or agreeable. Julia Child's recipes enable amateur chefs to create *savory* delicacies for their guests.

scabbard N. case for a sword blade; sheath. The drill master told the recruit to wipe the blood from his sword before slipping it back into the *scabbard*.

scad N. a great quantity. Refusing Dave's offer to lend him a shirt, Phil replied, "No, thanks, I've got *scads* of clothes."

scaffold N. temporary platform for workers; bracing framework; platform for execution. Before painting the house, the workers put up a *scaffold* to allow them to work on the second story.

scale V. climb up; ascend. In order to locate a book on the top shelf of the stacks, Lee had to *scale* an exceptionally rickety ladder.

scamp N. rascal. Despite his mischievous behavior, Malcolm was such an engaging *scamp* that his mother almost lacked the heart to punish him.

■ **scanty** ADJ. meager; insufficient. Thinking his helping of food was *scanty,* Oliver Twist asked for more.

scapegoat N. someone who bears the blame for others. After the *Challenger* disaster, NASA searched for *scapegoats* on whom they could cast the blame.

scavenge V. hunt through discarded materials for usable items; search, especially for food. If you need car parts that the dealers no longer stock, try *scavenging* for odd bits and pieces at the auto wreckers' yards. scavenger, N.

scenario N. plot outline; screenplay; opera libretto. Scaramouche startled the other actors in the commedia troupe when he suddenly departed from their customary *scenario* and began to improvise.

schematic ADJ. relating to an outline or diagram; using a system of symbols. In working out the solution to this logic puzzle, you may find it helpful to construct a simple *schematic* diagram outlining the order of events.

schism N. division; split. His reforms led to a *schism* in the church and the establishment of a new sect opposing the old order.

scintillate V. sparkle; flash. I enjoy her dinner parties because the food is excellent and the conversation *scintillates*.

scoff V. mock; ridicule. He *scoffed* at dentists until he had his first toothache.

scourge N. cause of widespread devastation; severe punishment; whip. Abraham Lincoln wrote, "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty *scourge* of war speedily may pass away." also V.

scruple V. fret about; hesitate, for ethical reasons. Fearing that her husband had become involved in an affair, she did not *scruple* to read his diary. also N.

■ **scrupulous** ADJ. conscientious; extremely thorough. Though Alfred is *scrupulous* in fulfilling his duties at work, he is less conscientious about his obligations to his family and friends.

■ **scrutinize** V. examine closely and critically. Searching for flaws, the sergeant *scrutinized* every detail of the private's uniform.

scuffle V. struggle confusedly; move off in a confused hurry. The twins briefly *scuffled*, wrestling to see which of them would get the toy. When their big brother yelled, "Let go of my Gameboy!" they *scuffled* off down the hall.

scurrilous ADJ. vulgar; coarse; foul-mouthed; obscene. Politicians often face *scurrilous* attacks from angry constituents.

scurry V. move briskly. The White Rabbit had to *scurry* to get to his appointment on time.

scurvy ADJ. despicable; contemptible. Peter Pan sneered at Captain Hook and his *scurvy* crew.

scuttle V. scurry; run with short, rapid steps. The bug *scuttled* rapidly across the floor.

scuttle V. sink. The sailors decided to *scuttle* their vessel rather than surrender it to the enemy.

seamy ADJ. sordid; unwholesome. In *The Godfather*, Michael Corleone is unwilling to expose his wife and children to the *seamy* side of his life as the son of a Mafia don.

sear V. char or burn; brand. Accidentally brushing against the hot grill, she *seared* her hand badly.

seasoned ADJ. experienced. Though pleased with her new batch of rookies, the basketball coach wished she had a few more *seasoned* players on the team.

secession N. withdrawal. The *secession* of the Southern states provided Lincoln with his first major problem after his inauguration. secede, V.

■ **seclusion** N. isolation; solitude. One moment she loved crowds; the next, she sought *seclusion*. seclude, V.

secrete V. hide away; produce and release a substance into an organism. The pack rat *secretes* odds and ends in its nest; the pancreas *secretes* insulin in the islets of Langerhans.

sect N. separate religious body; faction. As university chaplain, she sought to address universal religious issues and not limit herself to concerns of any one *sect*.

sectarian ADJ. relating to a religious faction or subgroup; narrow-minded; limited. Far from being broad-minded, the religious leader was intolerant of new ideas, paying attention only to purely *sectarian* interests. sect. N.

secular ADJ. worldly; not pertaining to church matters; temporal. The church leaders decided not to interfere in *secular* matters.

sedate ADJ. calm and composed; dignified. To calm the agitated pony, we teamed him with a *sedate* mare who easily accepted the harness.

● **sedentary** ADJ. requiring sitting. Sitting all day at the computer, Sharon grew to resent the *sedentary* nature of her job.

sedition N. resistance to authority; insubordination. His words, though not treasonous in themselves, were calculated to arouse thoughts of *sedition.*

sedulous ADJ. diligent; hardworking. After weeks of patient and *sedulous* labor, we completed our detailed analysis of every published SAT examination.

seedy ADJ. run-down; decrepit; disreputable. I would rather stay in dormitory lodgings in a decent youth hostel than have a room of my own in a *seedy* downtown hotel.

seemly ADJ. proper; appropriate. Lady Bracknell did not think it was *seemly* for Ernest to lack a proper family: no baby abandoned on a doorstep could grow up to be a fit match for *her* daughter.

seep V. ooze; trickle. During the rainstorm, water *seeped* through the crack in the basement wall and damaged the floor boards. seepage, N.

seethe V. be disturbed; boil. The nation was *seething* with discontent as the noblemen continued their arrogant ways.

seismic ADJ. pertaining to earthquakes. The Richter scale is a measurement of *seismic* disturbances.

seminary N. school for training future ministers; academy for young women. Sure of his priestly vocation, Terrence planned to pursue his theological training at the local Roman Catholic *seminary*.

sensual ADJ. devoted to the pleasures of the senses; carnal; voluptuous. Giving in to his *sensual* appetites, he sampled the carnal delights of the fleshpots.

sententious ADJ. terse; concise; aphoristic. After reading so many redundant speeches, I find his *sententious* style particularly pleasing.

sentinel N. sentry; lookout. Though camped in enemy territory, Bledsoe ignored the elementary precaution of posting *sentinels* around the encampment.

Word List 43 sequester-solvent

sequester V. isolate; retire from public life; segregate; seclude. Banished from his kingdom, the wizard Prospero *sequestered* himself on a desert island. To prevent the jurors from hearing news broadcasts about the case, the judge decided to *sequester* the jury.

serendipity N. gift for finding valuable or desirable things by accident; accidental good fortune or luck. Many scientific discoveries are a matter of *serendipity*: Newton was not sitting under a tree thinking about gravity when the apple dropped on his head.

serenity N. calmness; placidity. The sound of air raid sirens pierced the *serenity* of the quiet village of Pearl Harbor.

serpentine ADJ. winding; twisting. The car swerved at every curve in the *serpentine* road.

serrated ADJ. having a sawtoothed edge. I cut my finger on the *serrated* edge of the bread knife.

■ **servile** ADJ. slavish; cringing. Constantly fawning on his employer, humble Uriah Heap was a *servile* creature.

servitude N. slavery; compulsory labor. Born a slave, Frederick Douglass resented his life of *servitude* and plotted to escape to the North.

sever V. cut; separate. The released prisoner wanted to begin a new life and *sever* all connections with his criminal past. Dr. Guillotin invented a machine that could neatly *sever* an aristocratic head from its equally aristocratic body. Unfortunately, he couldn't collect any *severance* pay. severance, N.

severity N. harshness; intensity; sternness; austerity. The *severity* of Jane's migraine attack was so great that she took to her bed for a week.

shackle V. chain; fetter. In a chain gang, convicts are *shackled* together to prevent their escape. also N.

sham V. pretend. He *shammed* sickness to get out of going to school. also N.

shambles N. wreck; mess. After the hurricane, the Carolina coast was a *shambles*. After the New Year's Eve party, the apartment was a *shambles*.

shard N. fragment, generally of pottery. The archaeologist assigned several students the task of reassembling earthenware vessels from the *shards* he had brought back from the expedition.

sheaf N. bundle of stalks of grain; any bundle of things tied together. The lawyer picked up a *sheaf* of papers as he rose to question the witness.

shear V. cut or clip (hair, fleece); strip of something. You may not care to cut a sheep's hair, but Sarah *shears* sheep for Little Bo Peep.

sheathe V. place into a case. As soon as he recognized the approaching men, he *sheathed* his dagger and hailed them as friends.

sheer ADJ. very thin or transparent; very steep; absolute. Wearing nothing but an almost *sheer* robe, Delilah draped herself against the *sheer* temple wall. Beholding her, Samson was overcome by her *sheer* beauty. Then she sheared his hair.

shimmer V. glimmer intermittently. The moonlight *shimmered* on the water as the moon broke through the clouds for a moment. also N.

shirk V. avoid (responsibility, work, etc.); malinger. Brian has a strong sense of duty; he would never *shirk* any responsibility.

shoddy ADJ. inferior; trashy; cheap. Grumbling, "They don't make things the way they used to," Grandpa complained about the *shoddy* workmanship nowadays.

shrewd ADJ. clever; astute. A *shrewd* investor, he took clever advantage of the fluctuations of the stock market.

shroud V. hide from view; wrap for burial. Fog *shrouded* Dracula's castle, hiding the ruined tower beneath sheets of mist.

shun V. keep away from. Cherishing his solitude, the recluse *shunned* the company of other human beings.

shyster N. lawyer using questionable methods. On *L.A. Law*, Brackman was horrified to learn that his newly-discovered half brother was nothing but a cheap *shyster*.

sibling N. brother or sister. We may not enjoy being *siblings,* but we cannot forget that we still belong to the same family.

simian ADJ. monkeylike. Lemurs are nocturnal mammals and have many *simian* characteristics, although they are less intelligent than monkeys.

simile N. comparison of one thing with another, using the word *like* or *as*. "My love is like a red, red rose" is a *simile*.

simper V. smirk; smile affectedly. Complimented on her appearance, Stella self-consciously *simpered*.

simplistic ADJ. oversimplified. Though Jack's solution dealt adequately with one aspect of the problem, it was *simplistic* in failing to consider various complications that might arise.

simulate V. feign. He *simulated* insanity in order to avoid punishment for his crime.

sinecure N. well-paid position with little responsibility. My job is no *sinecure*; I work long hours and have much responsibility.

sinewy ADJ. tough; strong and firm. The steak was too *sinewy* to chew.

singular ADJ. unique; extraordinary; odd. Though the young man tried to understand Father William's *singular* behavior, he still found it odd that the old man incessantly stood on his head. singularity, N.

sinister ADJ. evil; conveying a sense of ill omen. Aware of the Penguin's *sinister* purpose, Batman wondered how he could save Gotham City from the ravages of his evil enemy.

sinuous ADJ. winding; bending in and out; not morally honest. The snake moved in a *sinuous* manner.

■ **skeptic** N. doubter; person who suspends judgment until the evidence supporting a point of view has been examined. I am a *skeptic* about the new health plan; I want some proof that it can work. skepticism, N.

skiff N. small, light sailboat or rowboat. Tom dreamed of owning an ocean-going yacht but had to settle for a *skiff* he could sail in the bay.

skimp V. provide scantily; live very economically. They were forced to *skimp* on necessities in order to make their limited supplies last the winter.

skinflint N. stingy person; miser. Scrooge was an ungenerous old *skinflint* until he reformed his ways and became a notable philanthropist.

skirmish N. minor fight. Custer's troops expected they might run into a *skirmish* or two on maneuvers; they did not expect to face a major battle. also V.

skulk V. move furtively and secretly. He *skulked* through the less fashionable sections of the city in order to avoid meeting any of his former friends.

slacken V. slow up; loosen. As they passed the finish line, the runners *slackened* their pace.

slag N. residue from smelting metal; dross; waste matter. The blast furnace had a special opening at the bottom to allow the workers to remove the worthless *slag*.

slake V. quench; sate. When we reached the oasis, we were able to *slake* our thirst.

slander N. defamation; utterance of false and malicious statements. Considering the negative comments politicians make about each other, it's a wonder that more of them aren't sued for *slander*. also V.

slapdash ADJ. haphazard; careless; sloppy. From the number of typos and misspellings I've found in it, it's clear that Mario proofread the report in a remarkably *slapdash* fashion.

sleeper N. something originally of little value or importance that in time becomes very valuable. Unnoticed by the critics at its publication, the eventual Pulitzer Prize winner was a classic *sleeper.*

sleight N. dexterity. The magician amazed the audience with his *sleight* of hand.

slight N. insult to one's dignity; snub. Hypersensitive and ready to take offense at any discourtesy, Bertha was always on the lookout for real or imaginary *slights*. also V.

slipshod ADJ. untidy or slovenly; shabby. As a master craftsman, the carpenter prided himself on not doing *slipshod* work.

slither V. slip or slide. During the recent ice storm, many people *slithered* down this hill as they walked to the station.

slothful ADJ. lazy. Lying idly on the sofa while others worked, Reggie denied he was *slothful*: "I just supervise better lying down."

slough V. cast off. Each spring, the snake *sloughs* off its skin.

slovenly ADJ. untidy; careless in work habits. Unshaven, sitting around in his bathrobe all afternoon, Gus didn't seem to care about the *slovenly* appearance he presented. The dark ring around the bathtub and the spider webs hanging from the beams proved what a *slovenly* housekeeper she was.

sluggard N. lazy person. Someone who leaps happily out of bed first thing in the morning and cheerfully sets off to work is no *sluggard*.

■ **sluggish** ADJ. slow; lazy; lethargic. After two nights without sleep, she felt *sluggish* and incapable of exertion.

slur V. speak indistinctly; mumble. When Sol has too much to drink, he starts to *slur* his words: "Washamatter? Cansh you undershtand what I shay?"

slur N. insult to one's character or reputation; slander. Polls revealed that the front-runner's standing had been badly damaged by the *slurs* and innuendoes circulated by his opponent's staff. also V. (secondary meaning)

smelt V. melt or blend ores, changing their chemical composition. The furnaceman *smelts* tin with copper to create a special alloy used in making bells.

smirk N. conceited smile. Wipe that *smirk* off your face! also V.

smolder V. burn without flame; be liable to break out at any moment. The rags *smoldered* for hours before they burst into flame.

snicker N. half-stifled laugh. The boy could not suppress a *snicker* when the teacher sat on the tack. also V.

snivel V. run at the nose; snuffle; whine. Don't you come *sniveling* to me complaining about your big brother.

sobriety N. moderation (especially regarding indulgence in alcohol); seriousness. Neither falling-down drunks nor stand-up comics are noted for *sobriety*. sober, ADJ.

sodden ADJ. soaked; dull, as if from drink. He set his *sodden* overcoat near the radiator to dry.

sojourn N. temporary stay. After his *sojourn* in Florida, he began to long for the colder climate of his native New England home.

solace N. comfort in trouble. I hope you will find *solace* in the thought that all of us share your loss.

solder V. repair or make whole by using a metal alloy. The plumber fixed the leak in the pipes by *soldering* a couple of joints from which water had been oozing.

solecism N. construction that is flagrantly incorrect grammatically. I must give this paper a failing mark because it contains many *solecisms*.

solemnity N. seriousness; gravity. The minister was concerned that nothing should disturb the *solemnity* of the marriage service. solemn, ADJ.

solicit V. request earnestly; seek. Knowing she needed to have a solid majority for the budget to pass, the mayor telephoned all the members of the city council to *solicit* their votes.

solicitous ADJ. worried; concerned. Dora was delicate, David knew, and he was very *solicitous* about her health during her pregnancy.

soliloquy N. talking to oneself. Dramatists use the *soliloquy* as a device to reveal a character's innermost thoughts and emotions.

solitude N. state of being alone; seclusion. Much depends on how much you like your own company. What to one person seems fearful isolation to another is blessed *solitude*.

soluble ADJ. able to be dissolved; able to be explained. Sugar is *soluble* in water; put a sugar cube in water and it will quickly dissolve.

solvent ADJ. able to pay all debts. By dint of very frugal living, he was finally able to become *solvent* and avoid bankruptcy proceedings.

solvent N. substance that dissolves another. Dip a cube of sugar into a cup of water; note how the water acts as a *solvent*, causing the cube to break down.

Word List 44 somber-sublime

■ **somber** ADJ. gloomy; depressing; dark; drab. From the doctor's grim expression, I could tell he had *somber* news. Dull brown and charcoal gray are pretty *somber* colors; can't you wear something bright?

somnambulist N. sleepwalker. The most famous *somnambulist* in literature is Lady Macbeth; her monologue in the sleepwalking scene is one of the highlights of Shakespeare's play.

somnolent ADJ. half asleep. The heavy meal and the overheated room made us all *somnolent* and indifferent to the speaker.

sonorous ADJ. resonant. His *sonorous* voice resounded through the hall.

sophisticated ADJ. worldly-wise and urbane; complex. When Sophie makes wisecracks, she thinks she sounds *sophisticated*, but instead she sounds sophomoric. A few years ago the new IBM laptop with the butterfly keyboard and the built-in quadspeed fax modem seemed the height of computer *sophistication*.

sophistry N. seemingly plausible but fallacious reasoning. Instead of advancing valid arguments, he tried to overwhelm his audience with a flood of *sophistries*.

sophomoric ADJ. immature; half-baked, like a sophomore. Even if you're only a freshman, it's no compliment to be told your humor is *sophomoric*. The humor in *Dumb and Dumber* is *sophomoric* at best.

● **soporific** ADJ. sleep-causing; marked by sleepiness. Professor Pringle's lectures were so *soporific* that even he fell asleep in class. also N.

sordid ADJ. vile; filthy; wretched; mean. Talk show hosts seem willing to discuss any topic, no matter how *sordid* and disgusting it may be.

sovereign ADJ. efficacious; supreme or paramount; self-governing. Professor Pennywhistle claimed his panacea was a *sovereign* cure for all chronic complaints. In medicine the *sovereign* task of the doctor is to do no harm. Rebelling against the mother country, the onetime colony now proclaimed itself a *sovereign* state. also N.

spangle N. small metallic piece sewn to clothing for ornamentation. The thousands of *spangles* on her dress sparkled in the glare of the stage lights.

sparse ADJ. not thick; thinly scattered; scanty. No matter how carefully Albert combed his hair to make it look as full as possible, it still looked *sparse*.

spartan ADJ. avoiding luxury and comfort; sternly disciplined. Looking over the bare, unheated room, with its hard cot, he wondered what he was doing in such *spartan* quarters. Only his *spartan* sense of duty kept him at his post.

spasmodic ADJ. fitful; periodic. The *spasmodic* coughing in the auditorium annoyed the performers.

spat N. squabble; minor dispute. What had started out as a mere *spat* escalated into a full-blown argument.

spate N. sudden flood or strong outburst; a large number or amount. After the *spate* of angry words that came pouring out of him, Mary was sure they would never be reconciled.

spatial ADJ. relating to space. NASA is engaged in an ongoing program of *spatial* exploration. Certain exercises test your sense of *spatial* relations by asking you to identify two views of an object seen from different points in space.

spatula N. broad-bladed instrument used for spreading or mixing. The manufacturers of this frying pan recommend the use of a rubber *spatula* to avoid scratching the specially treated surface.

spawn V. lay eggs. Fish ladders had to be built in the dams to assist the salmon returning to *spawn* in their native streams. also N.

specious ADJ. seemingly reasonable but incorrect; misleading (often intentionally). To claim that, because houses and birds both have wings, both can fly, is extremely *specious* reasoning.

spectrum N. colored band produced when beam of light passes through a prism. The visible portion of the *spectrum* includes red at one end and violet at the other.

spendthrift N. someone who wastes money. Easy access to credit encourages people to turn into *spendthrifts* who shop till they drop.

sphinx-like ADJ. enigmatic; mysterious. The Mona Lisa's *sphinx-like* expression has intrigued and mystified art lovers for centuries.

splice V. fasten together; unite. Before you *splice* two strips of tape together, be sure to line them up evenly. also N.

spontaneity N. lack of premeditation; naturalness; freedom from constraint. When Anne and Amy met, Amy impulsively hugged her new colleague, but Anne drew back, unprepared for such *spontaneity*. The cast over-rehearsed the play so much that the eventual performance lacked any *spontaneity*. spontaneous, ADJ.

■ **sporadic** ADJ. occurring irregularly. Although you can still hear *sporadic* outbursts of laughter and singing outside, the big Halloween parade has passed; the party's over till next year.

sportive ADJ. playful. Half man, half goat, the mischievous, *sportive* fauns gamboled on the green.

spry ADJ. vigorously active; nimble. She was eighty years old, yet still *spry* and alert.

● **spurious** ADJ. false; counterfeit; forged; illogical. The antique dealer hero of Jonathan Gash's mystery novels gives the reader tips on how to tell *spurious* antiques from the real thing. Natasha's claim to be the lost heir of the Romanoffs was *spurious*: the only thing Russian about her was the vodka she drank!

● **spurn** V. reject; scorn. The heroine *spurned* the villain's advances.

squabble N. minor quarrel; bickering. Children invariably get involved in petty *squabbles*; wise parents know when to interfere and when to let the children work things out on their own.

squalor N. filth; degradation; dirty, neglected state. Rusted, broken-down cars in its yard, trash piled up on the porch, tar paper peeling from the roof, the shack was the picture of *squalor*. squalid, ADJ.

■ **squander** V. waste. If you *squander* your allowance on candy and comic books, you won't have any money left to buy the new box of crayons you want.

squat ADJ. stocky; short and thick. Tolkien's hobbits are somewhat *squat*, sturdy little creatures, fond of good ale, good music, and good mushrooms.

staccato ADJ. played in an abrupt manner; marked by abrupt sharp sound. His *staccato* speech reminded one of the sound of a machine gun.

■ **stagnant** ADJ. motionless; stale; dull. Mosquitoes commonly breed in ponds of *stagnant* water. Mike's career was *stagnant*; it wasn't going anywhere, and neither was he! stagnate, V.

staid ADJ. sober; sedate. The wild parties at the fraternity house appealed to the jocks and slackers, but appalled the more *staid* and serious students on campus.

stalemate N. deadlock. Negotiations between the union and the employers have reached a *stalemate*; neither side is willing to budge from previously stated positions.

stalwart ADJ. strong and vigorous; unwaveringly dependable. We thought the congressman was a *stalwart* Republican until he voted against President Bush's Medicare reform bill. also N.

stamina N. strength; staying power. I doubt that she has the *stamina* to run the full distance of the marathon race.

stanch V. check flow of blood. It is imperative that we *stanch* the gushing wound before we attend to the other injuries.

stanza N. division of a poem. Do you know the last *stanza* of "The Star-Spangled Banner"?

■ **static** ADJ. unchanging; lacking development. Why watch chess on TV? I like watching a game with action, not something *static* where nothing seems to be going on.

statute N. law enacted by the legislature. The *statute* of limitations sets the limits on how long you have to take legal action in specific cases.

● **steadfast** ADJ. loyal; unswerving. Penelope was *steadfast* in her affections, faithfully waiting for Ulysses to return from his wanderings.

stealth N. slyness; sneakiness; secretiveness. Fearing detection by the sentries on duty, the scout inched his way toward the enemy camp with great *stealth*.

steep V. soak; saturate. Be sure to *steep* the fabric in the dyebath for the full time prescribed.

stellar ADJ. pertaining to the stars. He was the *stellar* attraction of the entire performance.

stem V. check the flow. The paramedic used a tourniquet to *stem* the bleeding from the slashed artery.

stem from V. arise from. Milton's problems in school *stemmed from* his poor study habits.

stereotype N. fixed and unvarying representation; standardized mental picture, often reflecting prejudice. Critics object to the character of Jim in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* because he seems to reflect the *stereotype* of the happy, ignorant slave.

stifle V. suppress; extinguish; inhibit. Halfway through the boring lecture, Laura gave up trying to *stifle* her yawns.

stigma N. token of disgrace; brand. I do not attach any *stigma* to the fact that you were accused of this crime; the fact that you were acquitted clears you completely.

stigmatize V. brand; mark as wicked. I do not want to *stigmatize* this young offender for life by sending her to prison.

stilted ADJ. bombastic; inflated. His *stilted* rhetoric did not impress the college audience; they were immune to bombastic utterances.

stint N. supply; allotted amount; assigned portion of work. He performed his daily *stint* cheerfully and willingly. also V.

stint V. be thrifty; set limits. "Spare no expense," the bride's father said, refusing to *stint* on the wedding arrangements.

stipend N. pay for services. There is a nominal *stipend* for this position.

stipulate V. make express conditions; specify. Before agreeing to reduce American military forces in Europe, the president *stipulated* that NATO inspection teams be allowed to inspect Soviet bases.

stodgy ADJ. stuffy; boringly conservative. For a young person, Winston seems remarkably *stodgy*: you'd expect someone his age to show a little more life.

stoic ADJ. impassive; unmoved by joy or grief. I wasn't particularly *stoic* when I had my flu shot; I squealed like a stuck pig. also N.

stoke V. stir up a fire; feed plentifully. As a Scout Marisa learned how to light a fire, how to *stoke* it if it started to die down, and how to extinguish it completely.

● **stolid** ADJ. unruffled; impassive; dull. Marianne wanted a romantic, passionate suitor like Willoughby, not a *stolid*, unimaginative one like Colonel Brandon.

stratagem N. deceptive scheme. Though Wellington's forces seemed in full retreat, in reality their withdrawal was a *stratagem* intended to lure the enemy away from its sheltered position.

stratify V. divide into classes; be arranged into strata. As the economic gap between the rich and the poor increased, Roman society grew increasingly *stratified*.

stratum N. layer of earth's surface; layer of society. Neither an elitist nor a reverse snob, Mitch had friends from every social *stratum*.

strew V. spread randomly; sprinkle; scatter. Preceding the bride to the altar, the flower girl will *strew* rose petals along the aisle.

striated ADJ. marked with parallel bands; grooved. The glacier left many *striated* rocks. striate, V.

stricture N. restriction; adverse criticism. Huck regularly disobeyed Miss Watson's rules and *strictures* upon his behavior: he wouldn't wear shoes, no matter what she said.

● **strident** ADJ. loud and harsh; insistent. Whenever Sue became angry, she tried not to raise her voice; she had no desire to appear *strident*.

stringent ADJ. severe; rigid; constricted. Fearing the rapid spread of the SARS virus, the Canadian government imposed *stringent* quarantine measures.

strut N. pompous walk; swagger. Looking at his self-important *strut* as he swaggered about the parade ground, I could tell Colonel Blimp thought highly of himself. also V.

strut N. supporting bar. The engineer calculated that the *strut* supporting the rafter needed to be reinforced. (secondary meaning)

studied ADJ. not spontaneous; deliberate; thoughtful. Given Jill's previous slights, Jack felt that the omission of his name from the guest list was a *studied* insult.

stultify V. cause to appear or become stupid or inconsistent; frustrate or hinder. His long hours in the blacking factory left young Dickens numb and incurious, as if the menial labor had *stultified* his brain.

● **stupefy** V. make numb; stun; amaze. Disapproving of drugs in general, Laura refused to take sleeping pills or any other medicine that might *stupefy* her. stupefaction, N.

stupor N. state of apathy; daze; lack of awareness. The paramedics shook the unconscious man but could not rouse him from his *stupor*.

stymie V. present an obstacle; stump. The detective was *stymied* by the contradictory evidence in the robbery investigation. also N.

suavity N. urbanity; polish. The elegant actor is particularly good in roles that require *suavity* and sophistication.

subdued ADJ. less intense; quieter. Bob liked the *subdued* lighting at the restaurant because he thought it was romantic. I just thought it was dimly lit.

subjective ADJ. occurring or taking place within the subject; unreal. Your analysis is highly *subjective;* you have permitted your emotions and your opinions to color your thinking.

subjugate V. conquer; bring under control. Alexander the Great conquered most of the known world of his time, first *subjugating* the Persians under Darius, then defeating the armies of India's King Porus.

sublime ADJ. exalted or noble and uplifting; utter. Lucy was in awe of Desi's *sublime* musicianship, while he was in awe of her *sublime* naiveté.

Word List 45 subliminal-tantamount

subliminal ADJ. below conscious awareness. The pulse of the music began to work on the crowd in a *subliminal* way: they rocked to the rhythm unconsciously.

■ **submissive** ADJ. yielding; timid. When he refused to permit Elizabeth to marry her poet, Mr. Barrett expected her to be properly *submissive*; instead, she eloped!

■ **subordinate** ADJ. occupying a lower rank; inferior; submissive. Bishop Proudie's wife expected all the *subordinate* clergy to behave with great deference to the wife of their superior.

suborn V. persuade to act unlawfully (especially to commit perjury). In *The Godfather*, the mobsters used bribery and threats to *suborn* the witnesses against Don Michael Corleone.

subpoena N. writ summoning a witness to appear. The prosecutor's office was ready to serve a *subpoena* on the reluctant witness. also V.

subsequent ADJ. following; later. In *subsequent* lessons, we shall take up more difficult problems.

subservient ADJ. behaving like a slave; servile; obsequious. He was proud and dignified; he refused to be *subservient* to anyone.

■ **subside** V. settle down; descend; grow quiet. The doctor assured us that the fever would eventually *subside.*

subsidiary N. something secondary in importance or subordinate; auxiliary. The Turner Broadcasting System is a wholly owned *subsidiary* of AOL Time Warner. First deal with the critical issues, then with the *subsidiary* ones. also ADJ.

subsidy N. direct financial aid by government, etc. Without this *subsidy,* American ship operators would not be able to compete in world markets.

subsistence N. means needed to support life; existence. Farming those barren, depleted fields, he raised barely enough food for his family's *subsistence*.

substantial ADJ. ample; solid; in essentials. The generous scholarship represented a *substantial* sum of money.

■ **substantiate** V. establish by evidence; verify; support. These endorsements from satisfied customers *substantiate* our claim that Barron's *How to Prepare for the SAT* is the best SAT-prep book on the market.

substantive ADJ. real, as opposed to imaginary; essential; solidly based; substantial. Bishop Tutu received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his *substantive* contributions to the peace movement in South Africa.

subterfuge N. deceitful stratagem; trick; pretense. Hiding from his pursuers, the fugitive used every *subterfuge* he could think of to get them off his track.

subtlety N. perceptiveness; ingenuity; delicacy. Never obvious, she expressed herself with such *subtlety* that her remarks went right over the heads of most of her audience. subtle, ADJ.

subversive ADJ. tending to overthrow; destructive. At first glance, the notion that styrofoam cups may actually be more ecologically sound than paper cups strikes most environmentalists as *subversive*.

■ **succinct** ADJ. brief; terse; compact. Don't bore your audience with excess verbiage: be *succinct*.

succor V. aid; assist; comfort. If you believe that con man has come here to *succor* you in your hour of need, you're an even bigger sucker than I thought. also N.

succulent ADJ. juicy; full of richness. To some people, Florida citrus fruits are more *succulent* than those from California. also N.

succumb V. yield; give in; die. I *succumb* to temptation whenever I see chocolate.

suffragist N. advocate of voting rights (for women). In recognition of her efforts to win the vote for women, Congress authorized coining a silver dollar honoring the *suffragist* Susan B. Anthony

sully V. tarnish; soil. He felt that it was beneath his dignity to *sully* his hands in such menial labor.

sultry ADJ. sweltering. He could not adjust himself to the *sultry* climate of the tropics.

summation N. act of finding the total; summary. In his *summation*, the lawyer emphasized the testimony given by the two witnesses.

summit N. utmost height or pinnacle; highest point (of a mountain, etc.) The *summit* of the amateur mountain climber's aspirations was someday to reach the *summit* of Mount Everest.

sumptuous ADJ. lavish; rich. I cannot recall when I have had such a *sumptuous* Thanksgiving feast.

sunder V. separate; part. Northern and southern Ireland are politically and religiously *sundered.*

supercilious ADJ. arrogant; condescending; patronizing. The *supercilious* headwaiter sneered at customers whom he thought did not fit in at a restaurant catering to an ultrafashionable crowd.

■ **superficial** ADJ. trivial; shallow. Since your report gave only a *superficial* analysis of the problem, I cannot give you more than a passing grade.

■ **superfluous** ADJ. unnecessary; excessive; overabundant. Betsy lacked the heart to tell June that the wedding present she brought was *superfluous*; she and Bob had already received five toasters. Please try not to include so many *superfluous* details in your report; just give me the facts. superfluity, N.

superimpose V. place over something else. The filmmakers *superimposed* the credits over the movie's opening scene.

supersede V. cause to be set aside; replace; make obsolete. The new bulk mailing postal regulation *supersedes* the old one. If you continue to follow the old regulation, your bulk mailing will be returned to you.

● **supplant** V. replace; usurp. Bolingbroke, later to be known as King Henry IV, fought to *supplant* his cousin, Richard III, as King of England.

supple ADJ. flexible; pliant. Years of yoga exercises made Grace's body *supple*.

supplicate V. petition humbly; pray to grant a favor. We *supplicate* Your Majesty to grant him amnesty.

supposition N. hypothesis; the act of supposing. I based my decision to confide in him on the *supposition* that he would be discreet. suppose, V.

suppress V. stifle; overwhelm; subdue; inhibit. Too polite to laugh in anyone's face, Roy did his best to *suppress* his amusement at Ed's inane remark.

● **surfeit** V. satiate; stuff; indulge to excess in anything. Every Thanksgiving we are *surfeited* with an overabundance of holiday treats. also N.

surly ADJ. rude; cross. Because of his *surly* attitude, many people avoided his company.

surmise V. suspect; guess; imagine. I *surmise* that Suzanne will be late for this meeting; I've never known her to be on time. also N.

surmount V. overcome. Could Helen Keller, blind and deaf since childhood, *surmount* her physical disabilities and lead a productive life?

■ **surpass** V. exceed. Her SAT scores *surpassed* our expectations.

■ **surreptitious** ADJ. secret; furtive; sneaky; hidden. Hoping to discover where his mom had hidden the Christmas presents, Timmy took a *surreptitious* peek into the master bedroom closet.

surrogate N. substitute. For a fatherless child, a male teacher may become a father *surrogate*.

surveillance N. watching; guarding. The FBI kept the house under constant *surveillance* in the hope of capturing all the criminals at one time.

■ **susceptible** ADJ. impressionable; easily influenced; having little resistance, as to a disease; receptive to. Said the patent medicine man to his very *susceptible* customer: "Buy this new miracle drug, and you will no longer be *susceptible* to the common cold."

■ **sustain** V. experience; support; nourish. He *sustained* such a severe injury that the doctors feared he would be unable to work to *sustain* his growing family.

sustenance N. means of support, food, nourishment. In the tropics, the natives find *sustenance* easy to obtain, due to all the fruit trees.

suture N. stitches sewn to hold the cut edges of a wound or incision; material used in sewing. We will remove the *sutures* as soon as the wound heals. also V.

swagger V. behave arrogantly or pompously; strut or walk proudly. The conquering hero didn't simply stride down the street; he *swaggered*. also N.

swarm N. dense moving crowd; large group of honeybees. At the height of the city hall scandals, a constant *swarm* of reporters followed the mayor everywhere. also V.

swarthy ADJ. dark; dusky. Despite the stereotypes, not all Italians are *swarthy*; many are fair and blond.

swathe V. wrap around; bandage. When I visited him in the hospital, I found him *swathed* in bandages.

swelter V. be oppressed by heat. I am going to buy an air conditioning unit for my apartment as I do not intend to *swelter* through another hot and humid summer.

swerve V. deviate; turn aside sharply. The car *swerved* wildly as the driver struggled to regain control of the wheel.

swill V. drink greedily. Singing "Yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum," Long John Silver and his fellow pirates *swilled* their grog.

swindler N. cheat. She was gullible and trusting, an easy victim for the first *swindler* who came along.

sybarite N. lover of luxury. Rich people are not always *sybarites;* some of them have little taste for a life of luxury.

● **sycophant** N. servile flatterer; bootlicker; yes man. Fed up with the toadies and flunkies who made up his entourage, the star cried, "Get out, all of you! I'm sick of *sycophants*!" sycophancy, N.

symbiosis N. interdependent relationship (between groups, species), often mutually beneficial. Both the crocodile bird and the crocodile derive benefit from their *symbiosis*: pecking away at food particles embedded in the crocodile's teeth, the bird receives nourishment; the crocodile, meanwhile, receives proper dental hygiene. symbiotic, ADJ.

symmetry N. arrangement of parts so that balance is obtained; congruity. Something lopsided by definition lacks *symmetry*.

synoptic ADJ. providing a general overview; summary. The professor turned to the latest issue of *Dissertation Abstracts* for a *synoptic* account of what was new in the field. synopsis, N.

synthesis N. combining parts into a whole. Now that we have succeeded in isolating this drug, our next problem is to plan its *synthesis* in the laboratory. synthesize, V.

table V. set aside a resolution or proposal for future consideration. Because we seem unable to agree on this issue at the moment, let us *table* the motion for now and come back to it at a later date.

tacit ADJ. understood; not put into words. We have a *tacit* agreement based on only a handshake.

■ **taciturn** ADJ. habitually silent; talking little. The stereotypical cowboy is a *taciturn* soul, answering lengthy questions with "Yep" or "Nope."

tactile ADJ. pertaining to the organs or sense of touch. His callused hands had lost their *tactile* sensitivity.

taint V. contaminate; cause to lose purity; modify with a trace of something bad. One speck of dirt on your utensils may contain enough germs to *taint* an entire batch of preserves.

talisman N. charm to bring good luck and avert misfortune. Joe believed the carved pendant he found in Vietnam served him as a *talisman* and brought him safely through the war.

talon N. claw of bird. The falconer wore a leather gauntlet to avoid being clawed by the hawk's *talons.*

tangential ADJ. peripheral; only slightly connected; digressing. Despite Clark's attempts to distract her with *tangential* remarks, Lois kept on coming back to her main

question: why couldn't he come out to dinner with Superman and her?

tangible ADJ. able to be touched; real; palpable. Although Tom did not own a house, he had several *tangible* assets—a car, a television, a PC—that he could sell if he needed cash.

tanner N. person who turns animal hides into leather. Using a solution of tanbark, the *tanner* treated the cowhide, transforming it into supple leather.

tantalize V. tease; torture with disappointment. Tom *tantalized* his younger brother, holding the ball just too high for Jimmy to reach.

● **tantamount** ADJ. equivalent in effect or value. Because so few Southern blacks could afford to pay the poll tax, the imposition of this tax on prospective voters was *tantamount* to disenfranchisement for black voters.

Word List 46 tantrum-tonic

tantrum N. fit of petulance; caprice. The child learned that he could have almost anything if he had a *tantrum*.

tarantula N. venomous spider. We need an antitoxin to counteract the bite of the *tarantula*.

tarry V. delay; dawdle. We can't *tarry* if we want to get to the airport on time.

taut ADJ. tight; ready. The captain maintained that he ran a *taut* ship.

tautological ADJ. needlessly repetitious. In the sentence "It was visible to the eye," the phrase "to the eye" is *tautological*.

tautology N. unnecessary repetition. "Joyful happiness" is an illustration of *tautology*.

tawdry ADJ. cheap and gaudy. He won a few *tawdry* trinkets in Coney Island.

tedious ADJ. boring; tiring. The repetitious nature of work on the assembly line made Martin's job very *tedious*. tedium, N.

temerity N. boldness; rashness. Do you have the *temerity* to argue with me?

■ **temper** V. moderate; tone down or restrain; toughen (steel). Not even her supervisor's grumpiness could *temper* Nancy's enthusiasm for her new job.

temperament N. characteristic frame of mind; disposition; emotional excess. Although the twins look alike, they differ markedly in *temperament*: Todd is calm, but Rod is excitable.

temperate ADJ. restrained; self-controlled; moderate in respect to temperature. Try to be *temperate* in your eating this holiday season; if you control your appetite, you won't gain too much weight.

tempestuous ADJ. stormy; impassioned; violent. Racket-throwing tennis star John McEnroe was famed for his displays of *tempestuous* temperament.

tempo N. speed of music. I find the band's *tempo* too slow for such a lively dance.

temporal ADJ. not lasting forever; limited by time; secular. At one time in our history, *temporal* rulers assumed that they had been given their thrones by divine right.

temporize V. act evasively to gain time; avoid committing oneself. Ordered by King John to drive Robin Hood out of Sherwood Forest, the sheriff *temporized*, hoping to put off any confrontation with the outlaw band.

tenacious ADJ. holding fast. I had to struggle to break his *tenacious* hold on my arm.

● **tenacity** N. firmness; persistence. Jean Valjean could not believe the *tenacity* of Inspector Javert. Here all Valjean had done was to steal a loaf of bread, and the inspector had pursued him doggedly for twenty years!

tendentious ADJ. having an aim; biased; designed to further a cause. The editorials in this periodical are *tendentious* rather than truth-seeking.

tender V. offer; extend. Although no formal charges had been made against him, in the wake of the recent scandal the mayor felt he should *tender* his resignation.

tenet N. doctrine; dogma. The agnostic did not accept the *tenets* of their faith.

tensile ADJ. capable of being stretched. Mountain climbers must know the *tensile* strength of their ropes.

■ **tentative** ADJ. hesitant; not fully worked out or developed; experimental; not definite or positive. Unsure of his welcome at the Christmas party, Scrooge took a *tentative* step into his nephew's drawing room.

tenuous ADJ. thin; rare; slim. The allegiance of our allies is based on such *tenuous* ties that we have little hope they will remain loyal.

tenure N. holding of an office; time during which such an office is held. A special recall election put a sudden end to Gray Davis's *tenure* in office as governor of California.

tepid ADJ. lukewarm. To avoid scalding the baby, make sure the bath water is *tepid*, not hot.

termination N. end. Though the time for *termination* of the project was near, we still had a lot of work to finish before we shut up shop. terminate, V.

terminology N. terms used in a science or art. In talking to patients, doctors should either avoid medical *terminology* altogether or take time to explain the technical terms they use.

terminus N. last stop of railroad. After we reached the railroad *terminus*, we continued our journey into the wilderness on saddle horses.

● **terrestrial** ADJ. earthly (as opposed to celestial); pertaining to the land. In many science fiction films, alien invaders from outer space plan to destroy all *terrestrial* life.

■ **terse** ADJ. concise; abrupt; pithy. There is a fine line between speech that is *terse* and to the point and speech that is too abrupt.

testy ADJ. irritable; short-tempered. My advice is to avoid discussing this problem with him today as he is rather *testy* and may shout at you.

tether V. tie with a rope. Before we went to sleep, we *tethered* the horses to prevent their wandering off during the night.

thematic ADJ. relating to a unifying motif or idea. Those who think of *Moby Dick* as a simple adventure story about whaling miss its underlying *thematic* import.

theocracy N. government run by religious leaders. Though some Pilgrims aboard the *Mayflower* favored the establishment of a *theocracy* in New England, many of their fellow voyagers preferred a nonreligious form of government.

theoretical ADJ. not practical or applied; hypothetical. Bob was better at applied engineering and computer programming than he was at *theoretical* physics and math. While I can still think of some *theoretical* objections to your plan, you've convinced me of its basic soundness.

therapeutic ADJ. curative. Now better known for its racetrack, Saratoga Springs first gained attention for the *therapeutic* qualities of its famous "healing waters." therapy, N.

thermal ADJ. pertaining to heat. On cold, wintry days, Jack dresses for warmth, putting on his *thermal* underwear. also N.

thespian ADJ. pertaining to drama. Her success in the school play convinced her she was destined for a *thespian* career. also N.

● **threadbare** ADJ. worn through till the threads show; shabby and poor. The poor adjunct professor hid the *threadbare* spots on his jacket by sewing leather patches on his sleeves.

thrifty ADJ. careful about money; economical. A *thrifty* shopper compares prices before making major purchases.

■ **thrive** V. prosper; flourish. Despite the impact of the recession on the restaurant trade, Philip's cafe *thrived.*

throes N. violent anguish. The *throes* of despair can be as devastating as the spasms accompanying physical pain.

throng N. crowd. *Throngs* of shoppers jammed the aisles. also V.

thwart V. prevent; frustrate; oppose and defeat. Batman searched for a way to *thwart* the Joker's evil plan to destroy Gotham City.

tightwad N. excessively frugal person; miser. Jill called Jack a *tightwad* because he never picked up the check.

tiller N. handle used to move boat's rudder (to steer). Fearing the wind might shift suddenly and capsize the skiff, Tom kept one hand on the *tiller* at all times.

timidity N. lack of self-confidence or courage. If you are to succeed as a salesman, you must first lose your *timidity* and fear of failure.

timorous ADJ. fearful; demonstrating fear. His *timorous* manner betrayed the fear he felt at the moment.

● **tirade** N. extended scolding; denunciation; harangue. The cigar smoker went into a bitter *tirade,* denouncing the anti-smoking forces that had succeeded in banning smoking from most planes and restaurants.

titanic ADJ. gigantic. *Titanic* waves beat against the majestic S.S. *Titanic*, driving it against the concealed iceberg.

title N. right or claim to possession; mark of rank; name (of a book, film, etc.). Though the penniless Duke of Ragwort no longer held *title* to the family estate, he still retained his *title* as head of one of England's oldest families.

titter N. nervous laugh. Her aunt's constant *titter* nearly drove her mad. also V.

titular ADJ. nominal holding of title without obligations. Although he was the *titular* head of the company, the real decisions were made by his general manager.

toady N. servile flatterer; yes man. Never tell the boss anything he doesn't wish to hear: he doesn't want an independent adviser, he just wants a *toady*. also V.

tome N. large volume. He spent much time in the libraries poring over ancient *tomes*.

tonic ADJ. invigorating; refreshing. The tart homemade ginger ale had a *tonic* effect on Kit: she perked right up. also N.

Word List 47 topography-ubiquitous

topography N. physical features of a region. Before the generals gave the order to attack, they ordered a complete study of the *topography* of the region.

● **torpor** N. lethargy; sluggishness; dormancy. Throughout the winter, nothing aroused the bear from his *torpor*: he would not emerge from hibernation until spring. torpid, ADJ.

torrent N. rushing stream; flood. Day after day of heavy rain saturated the hillside until the water ran downhill in *torrents*. torrential, ADJ.

torrid ADJ. passionate; hot or scorching. Harlequin Romances publish *torrid* tales of love affairs, some set in *torrid* climates.

torso N. trunk of statue with head and limbs missing; human trunk. This *torso*, found in the ruins of Pompeii, is now on exhibition in the museum in Naples.

tortuous ADJ. winding; full of curves. Because this road is so *tortuous*, it is unwise to go faster than twenty miles an hour on it.

totter V. move unsteadily; sway, as if about to fall. On unsteady feet, the drunk *tottered* down the hill to the nearest bar.

touchstone N. stone used to test the fineness of gold alloys; criterion. What *touchstone* can be used to measure the character of a person?

touchy ADJ. sensitive; irascible. Do not mention his bald spot; he's very *touchy* about it.

tout V. publicize; praise excessively. I lost confidence in my broker after he *touted* some junk bonds to me that turned out to be a bad investment.

toxic ADJ. poisonous. We must seek an antidote for whatever *toxic* substance he has eaten. toxicity, N.

tract N. region of land (often imprecisely described); pamphlet. The king granted William Penn a *tract* of land in the New World. Penn then printed a *tract* in which he encouraged settlers to join his colony.

tractable ADJ. docile; easily managed. Although Susan seemed a *tractable* young woman, she had a stubborn streak of independence that occasionally led her to defy the powers-that-be when she felt they were in the wrong.

traduce V. expose to slander. His opponents tried to *traduce* the candidate's reputation by spreading rumors about his past.

trajectory N. path taken by a projectile. The police tried to locate the spot from which the assassin had fired the fatal shot by tracing the *trajectory* of the bullet.

■ **tranquillity** N. calmness; peace. After the commotion and excitement of the city, I appreciate the *tranquillity* of these fields and forests.

transcendent ADJ. surpassing; exceeding ordinary limits; superior. For the amateur chef, dining at the four-star restaurant was a *transcendent* experience: the meal surpassed his wildest dreams.

transcribe V. copy. When you *transcribe* your notes, please send a copy to Mr. Smith and keep the original for our files. transcription, N.

transgression N. violation of a law; sin. Although Widow Douglass was willing to overlook Huck's *transgressions*, Miss Watson refused to forgive and forget.

■ **transient** ADJ. momentary; temporary; staying for a short time. Lexy's joy at finding the perfect Christmas gift for Phil was *transient*; she still had to find presents for the cousins and Uncle Bob. Located near the airport, this hotel caters to a largely *transient* trade. transience, N.

transition N. going from one state of action to another. During the period of *transition* from oil heat to gas heat, the furnace will have to be shut off.

transitory ADJ. impermanent; fleeting. Fame is *transitory*: today's rising star is all too soon tomorrow's washed-up has-been. transitoriness, N.

translucent ADJ. partly transparent. We could not recognize the people in the next room because of the *translucent* curtains that separated us.

transmute V. change; convert to something different. He was unable to *transmute* his dreams into actualities.

transparent ADJ. easily detected; permitting light to pass through freely. John's pride in his son is *transparent*; no one who sees the two of them together can miss it.

transport N. strong emotion. Margo was a creature of extremes, at one moment in *transports* of joy over a vivid sunset, at another moment in *transports* of grief over a dying bird. also V. (secondary meaning)

trappings N. outward decorations; ornaments. He loved the *trappings* of success: the limousines, the stock options, the company jet.

traumatic ADJ. pertaining to an injury caused by violence. In his nightmares, he kept on recalling the *traumatic* experience of being wounded in battle.

travail N. painful physical or mental labor; drudgery; torment. Like every other high school student she knew, Sherry hated the yearlong *travail* of cramming for the SAT. also V.

traverse V. go through or across. When you *traverse* this field, be careful of the bull.

travesty N. harshly distorted imitation; parody; debased likeness. Phillips's translation of *Don Quixote* is so inadequate and clumsy that it seems a *travesty* of the original.

treacly ADJ. sticky sweet; cloyingly sentimental. Irritatingly cheerful, always looking on the bright side, Pollyanna speaks nothing but *treacly* sentimentalities. treacle, N.

treatise N. article treating a subject systematically and thoroughly. He is preparing a *treatise* on the Elizabethan playwrights for his graduate degree.

trek N. travel; journey. The tribe made their *trek* farther north that summer in search of game. also V.

tremor N. trembling; slight quiver. She had a nervous *tremor* in her right hand.

tremulous ADJ. trembling; wavering. She was *tremulous* more from excitement than from fear.

trenchant ADJ. forceful and vigorous; cutting. With his *trenchant* wit, Rich cuts straight to the heart of the matter, panning a truly dreadful play.

● **trepidation** N. fear; nervous apprehension. As she entered the office of the dean of admissions, Sharon felt some *trepidation* about how she would do in her interview.

trespass V. unlawfully enter the boundaries of some else's property. The wicked baron flogged any poacher who *trespassed* on his private hunting grounds. also N.

tribute N. tax levied by a ruler; mark of respect. The colonists refused to pay *tribute* to a foreign despot.

● **trifling** ADJ. trivial; unimportant. Why bother going to see a doctor for such a *trifling*, everyday cold?

trigger V. set off. John is touchy today; say one word wrong and you'll *trigger* an explosion.

trinket N. knickknack; bauble. Whenever she traveled abroad, Ethel would pick up costume jewelry and other *trinkets* as souvenirs.

■ **trite** ADJ. hackneyed; commonplace. The *trite* and predictable situations in many television programs turn off many viewers, who, in turn, turn off their sets.

trivial ADJ. unimportant; trifling. Too many magazines ignore newsworthy subjects and feature *trivial* affairs. trivia, N.

trough N. container for feeding farm animals; lowest point (of a wave, business cycle, etc.) The hungry pigs struggled to get at the fresh swill in the *trough*. The surfer rode her board, coasting along in the *trough* between two waves.

truculence N. aggressiveness; ferocity. Tynan's reviews were noted for their caustic attacks and general tone of *truculence*. truculent, ADJ.

truism N. self-evident truth. Many a *truism* is summed up in a proverb; for example, "Marry in haste, repent at leisure."

● **truncate** V. cut the top off. The top of a cone that has been *truncated* in a plane parallel to its base is a circle.

tryst N. meeting. The lovers kept their *tryst* even though they realized their danger.

tumult N. commotion; riot; noise. She could not make herself heard over the *tumult* of the mob.

tundra N. rolling, treeless plain in Siberia and arctic North America. Despite the cold, many geologists are trying to discover valuable mineral deposits in the *tundra.*

turbid ADJ. muddy; having the sediment disturbed. The water was *turbid* after the children had waded through it.

■ **turbulence** N. state of violent agitation. Warned of approaching *turbulence* in the atmosphere, the pilot told the passengers to fasten their seat belts.

turgid ADJ. swollen; distended. The *turgid* river threatened to overflow the levees and flood the countryside.

■ **turmoil** N. great commotion and confusion. Lydia running off with a soldier! Mother fainting at the news! The Bennet household was in *turmoil*.

turncoat N. traitor. The British considered Benedict Arnold a loyalist; the Americans considered him a *turncoat*.

turpitude N. depravity. A visitor may be denied admittance to this country if she has been guilty of moral *turpitude.*

tutelage N. guardianship; training. Under the *tutelage* of such masters of the instrument, she made rapid progress as a virtuoso.

tycoon N. wealthy leader. John D. Rockefeller was a prominent *tycoon*.

typhoon N. tropical hurricane or cyclone. If you liked *Twister*, you'll love *Typhoon*!

tyranny N. oppression; cruel government. Frederick Douglass fought against the *tyranny* of slavery throughout his life.

tyro N. beginner; novice. For a mere *tyro,* you have produced some wonderfully expert results.

ubiquitous ADJ. being everywhere; omnipresent. That Christmas "The Little Drummer Boy" seemed *ubiquitous;* David heard the tune everywhere.

Word List 48 ulterior-vehement

ulterior ADJ. unstated; hidden; more remote. Suspicious of altruistic gestures, he looked for an *ulterior* motive behind every charitable deed.

ultimate ADJ. final; not susceptible to further analysis. Scientists are searching for *ultimate* truths.

unaccountable ADJ. inexplicable; unreasonable or mysterious. I have taken an *unaccountable* dislike to my doctor: "I do not love thee, Doctor Fell. The reason why, I cannot tell."

unanimity N. complete agreement. We were surprised by the *unanimity* with which members of both parties accepted our proposals. unanimous, ADJ.

unassailable ADJ. not subject to question; not open to attack. Penelope's virtue was *unassailable*; while she waited for her husband to come back from the war, no other man had a chance.

unassuming ADJ. modest. He is so *unassuming* that some people fail to realize how great a man he really is.

unbridled ADJ. violent. She had a sudden fit of *unbridled* rage.

uncanny ADJ. strange; mysterious. You have the *uncanny* knack of reading my innermost thoughts.

unconscionable ADJ. unscrupulous; excessive. She found the loan shark's demands *unconscionable* and impossible to meet.

uncouth ADJ. outlandish; clumsy; boorish. Most biographers portray Lincoln as an *uncouth* and ungainly young man.

unctuous ADJ. oily; bland; insincerely suave. Uriah Heep disguised his nefarious actions by *unctuous* protestations of his "humility."

underlying ADJ. fundamental; lying below. The *underlying* cause of the student riot was not the strict curfew rule but the moldy cafeteria food. Miss Marple seems a sweet little old lady at first, but there's an iron will *underlying* that soft and fluffy facade.

■ **undermine** V. weaken; sap. The recent corruption scandals have *undermined* many people's faith in the city government. The recent torrential rains have washed away much of the cliffside; the deluge threatens to *undermine* the pillars supporting several houses at the edge of the cliff.

underscore V. emphasize. Addressing the jogging class, Kim *underscored* the importance to runners of good nutrition.

undulating ADJ. moving with a wavelike motion. The Hilo Hula Festival was an *undulating* sea of grass skirts.

unearth V. dig up. When they *unearthed* the city, the archeologists found many relics of an ancient civilization.

unequivocal ADJ. plain; obvious; unmistakable. My answer to your proposal is an *unequivocal* and absolute "No."

unerringly ADJ. infallibly. My teacher *unerringly* pounced on the one typographical error in my essay.

unfathomable ADJ. incomprehensible; impenetrable. Unable to get to the bottom of the mystery, Watson declared it was *unfathomable*.

unfetter V. liberate; free from chains. Chained to the wall for months on end, the hostage despaired that he would ever be *unfettered*.

unfrock V. to strip a priest or minister of church authority. To disbar a lawyer, to *unfrock* a priest, to suspend a doctor's license to practice—these are extreme steps that the authorities should take only after careful consideration.

ungainly ADJ. awkward; clumsy; unwieldy. "If you want to know whether Nick's an *ungainly* dancer, check out my bruised feet," said Nora. Anyone who has ever tried to carry a bass fiddle knows it's an *ungainly* instrument.

■ **uniformity** N. sameness; monotony. At *Persons* magazine, we strive for *uniformity* of style; as a result, all our writers wind up sounding exactly alike.

unimpeachable ADJ. blameless and exemplary. Her conduct in office was *unimpeachable* and her record is spotless.

uninhibited ADJ. unrepressed. The congregation was shocked by her *uninhibited* laughter during the sermon.

unintimidating ADJ. unfrightening. Though Phil had expected to feel overawed when he met Steve Young, he found the famous quarterback friendly and *unintimidating*.

unique ADJ. without an equal; single in kind. You have the *unique* distinction of being the only student whom I have had to fail in this course.

universal ADJ. characterizing or affecting all; present everywhere. At first, no one shared Christopher's opinions; his theory that the world was round was met with *universal* disdain.

● **unkempt** ADJ. disheveled; uncared for in appearance. Jeremy hated his neighbor's *unkempt* lawn: he thought its neglected appearance had a detrimental effect on neighborhood property values.

unmitigated ADJ. unrelieved or immoderate; absolute. After four days of *unmitigated* heat, I was ready to collapse from heat prostration. The congresswoman's husband was an *unmitigated* jerk: not only did he abandon her, he took her campaign funds, too!

unobtrusive ADJ. inconspicuous; not blatant. Reluctant to attract notice, the governess took a chair in a far corner of the room and tried to be as *unobtrusive* as possible.

unpalatable ADJ. distasteful; disagreeable. "I refuse to swallow your conclusion," said she, finding his logic *unpalatable*.

● **unprecedented** ADJ. novel; unparalleled. For a first novel, Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* was an *unprecedented* success.

unprepossessing ADJ. unattractive. During adolescence many attractive young people somehow acquire the false notion that their appearance is *unprepossessing*.

unravel V. disentangle; solve. With equal ease Miss Marple *unraveled* tangled balls of yarn and baffling murder mysteries.

unrequited ADJ. not reciprocated. Suffering the pangs of *unrequited* love, Olivia rebukes Cesario for his hardheartedness.

unruly ADJ. disobedient; lawless. The only way to curb this *unruly* mob is to use tear gas.

unscathed ADJ. unharmed. They prayed he would come back from the war *unscathed.*

unseemly ADJ. unbecoming; indecent; in poor taste. When he put whoopie cushions on all the seats in the funeral parlor, his conduct was most *unseemly*.

unsightly ADJ. ugly. Although James was an experienced emergency room nurse, he occasionally became queasy when faced with a particularly *unsightly* injury.

unstinting ADJ. giving generously; not holding back. The dean praised the donor of the new science building for her *unstinting* generosity.

untenable ADJ. indefensible; not able to be maintained. Wayne is so contrary that, the more *untenable* a position is, the harder he'll try to defend it.

■ **unwarranted** ADJ. unjustified; groundless; undeserved. Your assumption that I would accept your proposal is *unwarranted*, sir; I do not want to marry you at all. We could not understand Martin's *unwarranted* rudeness to his mother's guests.

unwieldy ADJ. awkward; cumbersome; unmanageable. The large carton was so *unwieldy* that the movers had trouble getting it up the stairs.

unwitting ADJ. unintentional; not knowing. She was the *unwitting* tool of the swindlers.

upbraid V. severely scold; reprimand. Not only did Miss Minchin *upbraid* Ermengarde for her disobedience, but she hung her up by her braids from a coat rack in the classroom.

uproarious ADJ. marked by commotion; extremely funny; very noisy. The *uproarious* comedy hit *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* starred Jim Carrey, whose comic mugging provoked gales of *uproarious* laughter from audiences coast to coast.

upshot N. outcome. The *upshot* of the rematch was that the former champion proved that he still possessed all the skills of his youth.

urbane ADJ. suave; refined; elegant. The courtier was *urbane* and sophisticated. urbanity, N.

■ **usurp** V. seize another's power or rank. The revolution ended when the victorious rebel general succeeded in his attempt to *usurp* the throne.

utopia N. ideal place, state, or society. Fed up with this imperfect universe, Don would have liked to run off to Shangri-la or some other imaginary *utopia*. utopian, ADJ.

■ **vacillate** V. waver; fluctuate. Uncertain which suitor she ought to marry, the princess *vacillated*, saying now one, now the other. The big boss likes his people to be decisive: when he asks you for your opinion, whatever you do, don't *vacillate*. vacillation, N.

vacuous ADJ. empty; inane. The *vacuous* remarks of the politician annoyed the audience, who had hoped to hear more than empty platitudes.

vagabond N. wanderer; tramp. In summer, college students wander the roads of Europe like carefree *vagabonds.* also ADJ.

vagrant N. a homeless wanderer. Because he was a stranger in town with no visible means of support, Martin feared he would be jailed as a *vagrant*. vagrancy, N.

valedictory ADJ. pertaining to farewell. I found the *valedictory* address too long; leave-taking should be brief.

valid ADJ. logically convincing; sound; legally acceptable. You're going to have to come up with a better argument if you want to convince me that your reasoning is *valid.*

validate V. confirm; ratify. I will not publish my findings until I *validate* my results.

valor N. bravery. He received the Medal of Honor for his *valor* in battle.

vampire N. ghostly being that sucks the blood of the living. Children were afraid to go to sleep because of the many legends of *vampires* roaming at night.

vanguard N. advance guard of a military force; forefront of a movement. When no enemy was in sight, the Duke of Plaza Toro marched in the *vanguard* of his troops, but once the bullets flew above, he headed for the rear.

vantage N. position giving an advantage. They fired upon the enemy from behind trees, walls and any other point of *vantage* they could find.

vapid ADJ. dull and unimaginative; insipid and flavorless. "*Bor*-ing!" said Jessica, as she suffered through yet another *vapid* lecture about Dead White Male Poets.

● **vaporize** V. turn into vapor (steam, gas, fog, etc.). "Zap!" went Super Mario's atomic ray gun as he *vaporized* another deadly foe.

variegated ADJ. many-colored. Without her glasses, Gretchen saw the fields of tulips as a *variegated* blur.

veer V. change in direction. After what seemed an eternity, the wind *veered* to the east and the storm abated.

vehement ADJ. forceful; intensely emotional; with marked vigor. Alfred became so *vehement* in describing what was wrong with the Internal Revenue Service that he began jumping up and down and frothing at the mouth. vehemence, N.

Word List 49 velocity-vogue

velocity N. speed. The train went by at considerable *velocity*.

venal ADJ. capable of being bribed. The *venal* policeman cheerfully accepted the bribe offered him by the speeding motorist whom he had stopped.

vendetta N. blood feud. Hoping to stop the street warfare disrupting his city, the Duke ordered the Capulet and Montague families to end their bitter *vendetta*.

vendor N. seller. The fruit *vendor* sold her wares from a stall on the sidewalk.

veneer N. thin layer; cover. Casual acquaintances were deceived by his *veneer* of sophistication and failed to recognize his fundamental shallowness.

venerable ADJ. deserving high respect. We do not mean to be disrespectful when we refuse to follow the advice of our *venerable* leader.

■ **venerate** V. revere. In Tibet today, the common people still *venerate* their traditional spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

venial ADJ. forgivable; trivial. When Jean Valjean stole a loaf of bread to feed his starving sister, he committed a *venial* offense.

venom N. poison; hatred. Bitten by a rattlesnake on his ankle, the cowboy contortionist curled up like a pretzel and sucked the *venom* out of the wound.

vent N. a small opening; outlet. The wine did not flow because the air *vent* in the barrel was clogged.

vent V. express; utter. The angry teacher *vented* his wrath on his class.

ventriloquist N. someone who can make his or her voice seem to come from another person or thing. In the classic movie *Dead of Night,* the *ventriloquist* is possessed by his wooden dummy, which torments its master, driving him to madness and murder.

venturesome ADJ. bold. A group of *venturesome* women were the first to scale Mt. Annapurna.

veracity N. truthfulness. Asserting his *veracity*, young George Washington proclaimed, "Father, I cannot tell a lie!"

verbalize V. put into words. I know you don't like to talk about these things, but please try to *verbalize* your feelings.

verbatim ADV. word for word. Blessed with a retentive memory, he could repeat lengthy messages *verbatim*. also ADJ.

verbiage N. pompous array of words. After we had waded through all the *verbiage,* we discovered that the writer had said very little.

■ **verbose** ADJ. wordy. Someone mute can't talk; someone *verbose* can hardly stop talking.

verdant ADJ. green; lush in vegetation. Monet's paintings of the *verdant* meadows were symphonies in green.

verge N. border; edge. Madame Curie knew she was on the *verge* of discovering the secrets of radioactive elements. also V.

verisimilitude N. appearance of truth; likelihood. Critics praised her for the *verisimilitude* of her performance as Lady Macbeth. She was completely believable.

verity N. quality of being true; lasting truth or principle. Did you question the *verity* of Kato Kaelin's testimony about what he heard the night Nicole Brown Simpson was slain? To the skeptic, everything was relative: there were no eternal *verities* in which one could believe.

vernacular N. living language; natural style. Cut out those old-fashioned thee's and thou's and write in the *vernacular*. also ADJ.

versatile ADJ. having many talents; capable of working in many fields. She was a *versatile* athlete, earning varsity letters in basketball, hockey, and track.

vertex N. summit. Let us drop a perpendicular line from the *vertex* of the triangle to the base.

vertigo N. severe dizziness. When you test potential airplane pilots for susceptibility to spells of *vertigo*, be sure to hand out air-sickness bags.

verve N. energy in expressing ideas, especially artistically; liveliness. In his rhymes, Seuss writes with such *verve* and good humor that adults as well as children delight in the adventures of *The Cat in the Hat.*

vestige N. trace; remains. We discovered *vestiges* of early Indian life in the cave. vestigial, ADJ.

vex N. annoy; distress. Please try not to *vex* your mother; she is doing the best she can.

● **viable** ADJ. practical or workable; capable of maintaining life. That idea won't work. Let me see whether I can come up with a *viable* alternative.

vicarious ADJ. acting as a substitute; done by a deputy. Though Violet was too meek to talk back to anybody, she got a *vicarious* kick out of Rita's sharp retorts.

vicissitude N. change of fortune. Humbled by life's *vicissitudes*, the last emperor of China worked as a lowly gardener in the palace over which he had once ruled.

vie V. contend; compete. Politicians *vie* with one another, competing for donations and votes.

vigilance N. watchfulness. Eternal *vigilance* is the price of liberty.

vignette N. picture; short literary sketch. The *New Yorker* published her latest *vignette.*

■ **vigor** N. active strength. Although he was over seventy years old, Jack had the *vigor* of a man in his prime. vigorous, ADJ.

■ **vilify** V. slander. Waging a highly negative campaign, the candidate attempted to *vilify* his opponent's reputation. vilification, N.

■ **vindicate** V. clear from blame; exonerate; justify or support. The lawyer's goal was to *vindicate* her client and prove him innocent on all charges. The critics' extremely favorable reviews *vindicate* my opinion that *The Madness of King George* is a brilliant movie.

vindictive ADJ. out for revenge; malicious. I think it's unworthy of Martha to be so *vindictive*; she shouldn't stoop to such petty acts of revenge.

viper N. poisonous snake. The habitat of the horned *viper,* a particularly venomous snake, is in sandy regions like the Sahara or the Sinai peninsula.

virile ADJ. manly. I do not accept the premise that a man proves he's *virile* by being belligerent.

virtual ADJ. in essence; for practical purposes. She is a *virtual* financial wizard when it comes to money matters.

virtue N. goodness, moral excellence; good quality. *Virtue* carried to extremes can turn into vice: humility, for example, can degenerate into servility and spinelessness.

■ **virtuoso** N. highly skilled artist. The promising young cellist Yo-Yo Ma grew into a *virtuoso* whose performances thrilled audiences throughout the world. virtuosity, N.

● **virulent** ADJ. extremely poisonous; hostile; bitter. Laid up with a *virulent* case of measles, Vera blamed her doctors because her recovery took so long. In fact, she became quite *virulent* on the subject of the quality of modern medical care.

virus N. disease communicator. The doctors are looking for a specific medicine to control this *virus.*

visceral ADJ. felt in one's inner organs. She disliked the *visceral* sensations she had whenever she rode the roller coaster.

viscid ADJ. adhesive; gluey. The trunk of the maple tree was *viscid* with sap.

viscous ADJ. sticky; gluey. Melted tar is a *viscous* substance. viscosity, N.

vise N. tool for holding work in place. Before filing its edges, the locksmith took the blank key and fixed it firmly between the jaws of a *vise.*

visionary ADJ. produced by imagination; fanciful; mystical. She was given to *visionary* schemes that never materialized. also N.

vital ADJ. vibrant and lively; critical; living, breathing. The *vital,* highly energetic first aid instructor stressed that it was *vital* in examining accident victims to note their *vital* signs.

vitriolic ADJ. corrosive; sarcastic. Oil of *vitriol,* or sulfuric acid, leaves scars on the flesh; *vitriolic* criticism leaves scars on the soul.

vituperative ADJ. abusive; scolding. He became more *vituperative* as he realized that we were not going to grant him his wish.

vivacious ADJ. animated; lively. She had always been *vivacious* and sparkling.

vociferous ADJ. clamorous; noisy. The crowd grew *vociferous* in its anger and threatened to take the law into its own hands.

vogue N. popular fashion. Jeans are the *vogue* on college campuses.

Word List 50 volatile-zephyr

■ **volatile** ADJ. changeable; explosive; evaporating rapidly. The political climate today is extremely *volatile*: no one can predict what the electorate will do next. Maria Callas's temper was extremely *volatile*: the only thing you could predict was that she was sure to blow up. Acetone is an extremely *volatile* liquid: it evaporates instantly.

volition N. act of making a conscious choice. She selected this dress of her own *volition.*

● **voluble** ADJ. fluent; glib; talkative. The excessively *voluble* speaker suffers from logorrhea: he runs off at the mouth a lot!

voluminous ADJ. bulky; large. A caftan is a *voluminous* garment; most people wearing one look as if they're draped in a small tent.

voluptuous ADJ. suggesting sensual delights; sensuously pleasing. Renoir's paintings of nude women accent his subjects' rosy-tinted flesh and full, *voluptuous* figures.

voracious ADJ. ravenous. The wolf is a *voracious* animal, its hunger never satisfied.

vortex N. whirlwind; whirlpool; center of turbulence; predicament into which one is inexorably plunged. Sucked

into the *vortex* of the tornado, Dorothy and Toto were carried from Kansas to Oz.

vouchsafe V. grant; choose to give in reply; permit. Occasionally the rock star would drift out onto the balcony and *vouchsafe* the crowd below a glimpse of her celebrated features. The professor *vouchsafed* not a word to the students' questions about what would be covered on the test.

voyeur N. Peeping Tom. Nancy called her brother a *voyeur* when she caught him aiming his binoculars at an upstairs window of the house of the newlyweds next door.

vulnerable ADJ. susceptible to wounds. His opponents could not harm Achilles, who was *vulnerable* only in his heel.

waffle V. speak equivocally about an issue. When asked directly about the governor's involvement in the savings and loan scandal, the press secretary *waffled*, talking all around the issue.

waft V. moved gently by wind or waves. Daydreaming, he gazed at the leaves that *wafted* past his window.

waggish ADJ. mischievous; humorous; tricky. He was a prankster who, unfortunately, often overlooked the damage he could cause with his *waggish* tricks. wag, N.

waif N. homeless child or animal. Although he already had eight cats, he could not resist adopting yet another feline *waif.*

waive V. give up a claim or right voluntarily; refrain from enforcing; postpone considering. Although, technically, prospective students had to live in Piedmont to attend high school there, occasionally the school *waived* the residence requirement in order to enroll promising athletes.

wake N. trail of ship or other object through water; path of something that has gone before. The *wake* of the swan gliding through the water glistened in the moonlight. Reporters and photographers converged on South Carolina in the *wake* of the hurricane that devastated much of the eastern seaboard.

wallow V. roll in; indulge in; become helpless. The hippopotamus loves to *wallow* in the mud.

wan ADJ. having a pale or sickly color; pallid. The convalescent looked frail and *wan*, her skin almost as white as the sheets on her sickbed.

wane V. decrease in size or strength; draw gradually to an end. The verb *wax*, which means to grow in size, is an antonym for *wane*. As it burns, does a wax candle *wane*?

wanton ADJ. unrestrained; willfully malicious; unchaste. Pointing to the stack of bills, Sheldon criticized Sarah for her *wanton* expenditures. In response, Sarah accused Sheldon of making an unfounded, *wanton* attack.

warble V. sing; babble. Every morning the birds *warbled* outside her window. also N.

warrant V. justify; authorize. Before the judge issues the injunction, you must convince her this action is *warranted.*

warranty N. guarantee; assurance by seller. The purchaser of this automobile is protected by the manufacturer's *warranty* that the company will replace any defective part for five years or 50,000 miles.

wary ADJ. very cautious. The spies grew *wary* as they approached the sentry.

wastrel N. profligate. His neighbors denounced him as a *wastrel* who had dissipated his inheritance.

watershed N. crucial dividing point. The invention of the personal computer proved a historic *watershed,* for it opened the way to today's Information Age.

wax V. increase; grow. With proper handling, his fortunes *waxed* and he became rich.

waylay V. ambush; lie in wait. They agreed to *waylay* their victim as he passed through the dark alley going home.

wean V. accustom a baby to not nurse; give up a cherished activity. He decided he would *wean* himself away from eating junk food and stick to fruits and vegetables.

weather V. endure the effects of weather or other forces. Reporters wondered whether Governor Gray Davis would *weather* his latest political challenge and remain in office, or whether he would be California's first governor to be recalled.

welter N. turmoil; bewildering jumble. The existing *welter* of overlapping federal and state programs cries out for immediate reform.

wheedle V. cajole; coax; deceive by flattery. She knows she can *wheedle* almost anything she wants from her father.

whelp N. young wolf, dog, tiger, etc. This collie *whelp* won't do for breeding, but he'd make a fine pet.

whet V. sharpen; stimulate. The odors from the kitchen are *whetting* my appetite; I will be ravenous by the time the meal is served.

whiff N. puff or gust (of air, scent, etc.); hint. The slightest *whiff* of Old Spice cologne brought memories of George to her mind.

■ **whimsical** ADJ. capricious; fanciful. In *Mrs. Doubtfire*, the hero is a playful, *whimsical* man who takes a notion to dress up as a woman so that he can look after his children, who are in the custody of his ex-wife. whimsy, N.

whinny V. neigh like a horse. When he laughed through his nose, it sounded as if he *whinnied.*

whittle V. pare; cut off bits. As a present for Aunt Polly, Tom *whittled* some clothespins out of a chunk of wood.

willful ADJ. intentional; headstrong. Donald had planned to kill his wife for months; clearly, her death was a case of deliberate, *willful* murder, not a crime of passion committed by a hasty, *willful* youth unable to foresee the consequences of his deeds.

wily ADJ. cunning; artful. If coyotes are supposed to be such sneaky, *wily* creatures, how does Road Runner always manage to outwit Wile E. Coyote?

wince V. shrink back; flinch. The screech of the chalk on the blackboard made her *wince.*

windfall N. unexpected lucky event. This huge tax refund is quite a *windfall.*

winnow V. sift; separate good parts from bad. This test will *winnow* out the students who study from those who don't bother.

winsome ADJ. agreeable; gracious; engaging. By her *winsome* manner, she made herself liked by everyone who met her.

wispy ADJ. thin; slight; barely discernible. Worried about preserving his few *wispy* tufts of hair, Walter carefully massaged his scalp and applied hair restorer every night.

wistful ADJ. vaguely longing; sadly thoughtful. With a last *wistful* glance at the happy couples dancing in the hall, Sue headed back to her room to study for her exam.

withdrawn ADJ. introverted; remote. Rebuffed by his colleagues, the initially outgoing young researcher became increasingly *withdrawn*.

wither V. shrivel; decay. Cut flowers are beautiful for a day, but all too soon they *wither*.

withhold V. refuse to give; hold back. The tenants decided to *withhold* a portion of the rent until the landlord kept his promise to renovate the building.

withstand V. stand up against; successfully resist. If you can *withstand* all the peer pressure in high school to cut classes and goof off, you should survive college just fine.

witless ADJ. foolish; idiotic. If Beavis is a half-wit, then Butthead is totally *witless*.

● **witticism** N. witty saying; wisecrack. I don't mean any criticism, but that last *witticism* totally hurt my feelings.

wizardry N. sorcery; magic. Merlin the Magician amazed the knights with his *wizardry*.

woe N. deep, inconsolable grief; affliction; suffering. Pale and wan with grief, Wanda was bowed down beneath the burden of her *woes*.

worldly ADJ. engrossed in matters of this earth; not spiritual. You must leave your *worldly* goods behind you when you go to meet your Maker.

wrath N. anger; fury. She turned to him, full of *wrath,* and said, "What makes you think I'll accept lower pay for this job than you get?"

wrench V. pull; strain; twist. She *wrenched* free of her attacker and landed a powerful kick to his kneecap.

writhe V. twist in coils; contort in pain. In *Dances with Snakes*, the snake dancer wriggled sinuously as her boa constrictor *writhed* around her torso.

wry ADJ. twisted; with a humorous twist. We enjoy Dorothy Parker's verse for its *wry* wit.

xenophobia N. fear or hatred of foreigners. *Xenophobia* is directed against foreign people, not necessarily against foreign products: even *xenophobes* patronize Chinese restaurants and buy Japanese TVs.

yen N. longing; urge. She had a *yen* to get away and live on her own for a while.

yield V. give in; surrender. The wounded knight refused to *yield* to his foe.

yield N. amount produced; crop; income on investment. An experienced farmer can estimate the annual *yield* of his acres with surprising accuracy. also V.

yoke V. join together, unite. I don't wish to be *yoked* to him in marriage, as if we were cattle pulling a plow. also N.

yore N. time past. He dreamed of the elegant homes of *yore,* but gave no thought to their inelegant plumbing.

zany ADJ. crazy; comic. I can watch the Marx brothers' *zany* antics for hours.

zeal N. eager enthusiasm. Katya's *zeal* was contagious; soon all her fellow students were busily making posters, inspired by her ardent enthusiasm for the cause. zealous, ADJ.

■ **zealot** N. fanatic; person who shows excessive zeal. Though Glenn was devout, he was no *zealot*; he never tried to force his beliefs on his friends.

zenith N. point directly overhead in the sky; summit. When the sun was at its *zenith,* the glare was not as strong as at sunrise and sunset.

zephyr N. gentle breeze; west wind. When these *zephyrs* blow, it is good to be in an open boat under a full sail.

Basic Word Parts

In addition to reviewing the SAT High-Frequency Word List, what other quick vocabulary-building tactics can you follow when you face an SAT deadline?

One good approach is to learn how to build up (and tear apart) words. You know that words are made up of other words: the *room* in which you *store* things is the *storeroom;* the person whose job is to *keep* the *books* is the *bookkeeper.*

Just as words are made up of other words, words are also made up of word parts: prefixes, suffixes, and roots. A knowledge of these word parts and their meanings can help you determine the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Most modern English words are derived from Anglo-Saxon (Old English), Latin, and Greek. Because few students nowadays study Latin and Greek (and even fewer study Anglo-Saxon!), the majority of high school juniors and seniors lack a vital tool for unlocking the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Build your vocabulary by mastering basic word parts. Learning thirty key word parts can help you unlock the meaning of over 10,000 words. Learning fifty key word parts can help you unlock the meaning of over 100,000!

Common Prefixes

Prefixes are syllables that precede the root or stem of a word and change or refine its meaning.

Prefix	Meaning	Illustration
ab, abs	from, away from	*abduct* lead away, kidnap *abjure* renounce *abject* degraded, cast down
ad, ac, af, ag, an, ap, ar, as, at	to, forward	*adit* entrance *adjure* request earnestly *admit* allow entrance *accord* agreement, harmony *affliction* distress *aggregation* collection *annexation* add to *apparition* ghost *arraignment* indictment *assumption* arrogance, the taking for granted *attendance* presence, the persons present
ambi	both	*ambidextrous* skilled with both hands *ambiguous* of double meaning *ambivalent* having two conflicting emotions
an, a	without	*anarchy* lack of government *anemia* lack of blood *amoral* without moral sense
ante	before	*antecedent* preceding event or word *antediluvian* ancient (before the flood) *ante-nuptial* before the wedding
anti	against, opposite	*antipathy* hatred *antiseptic* against infection *antithetical* exactly opposite

Prefix	Meaning	Illustration
arch	chief, first	*archetype* original *archbishop* chief bishop *archeology* study of first or ancient times
be	over, thoroughly	*bedaub* smear over *befuddle* confuse thoroughly *beguile* deceive, charm thoroughly
bi	two	*bicameral* composed of two houses (Congress) *biennial* every two years *bicycle* two-wheeled vehicle
cata	down	*catastrophe* disaster *cataract* waterfall *catapult* hurl (throw down)
circum	around	*circumnavigate* sail around (the globe) *circumspect* cautious (looking around) *circumscribe* limit (place a circle around)
com, co, col, con, cor	with, together	*combine* merge with *commerce* trade with *communicate* correspond with *coeditor* joint editor *collateral* subordinate, connected *conference* meeting *corroborate* confirm
contra, contro	against	*contravene* conflict with *controversy* dispute
de	down, away	*debase* lower in value *decadence* deterioration *decant* pour off
demi	partly, half	*demigod* partly divine being
di	two	*dichotomy* division into two parts *dilemma* choice between two bad alternatives
dia	across	*diagonal* across a figure *diameter* distance across a circle *diagram* outline drawing
dis, dif	not, apart	*discord* lack of harmony *differ* disagree (carry apart) *disparity* condition of inequality; difference
dys	faulty, bad	*dyslexia* faulty ability to read *dyspepsia* indigestion
ex, e	out	*expel* drive out *extirpate* root out *eject* throw out

Prefix	Meaning	Illustration
extra, extro	beyond, outside	*extracurricular* beyond the curriculum *extraterritorial* beyond a nation's bounds *extrovert* person interested chiefly in external *objects* and actions
hyper	above; excessively	*hyperbole* exaggeration *hyperventilate* breathe at an excessive rate
hypo	beneath; lower	*hypoglycemia* low blood sugar
in, il, im, ir	not	*inefficient* not efficient *inarticulate* not clear or distinct *illegible* not readable *impeccable* not capable of sinning; flawless *irrevocable* not able to be called back
in, il, im, ir	in, on, upon	*invite* call in *illustration* something that makes clear *impression* effect upon mind or feelings *irradiate* shine upon
inter	between, among	*intervene* come between *international* between nations *interjection* a statement thrown in
intra, intro	within	*intramural* within a school *introvert* person who turns within himself
macro	large, long	*macrobiotic* tending to prolong life *macrocosm* the great world (the entire universe)
mega	great, million	*megalomania* delusions of grandeur *megaton* explosive force of a million tons of TNT
meta	involving change	*metamorphosis* change of form
micro	small	*microcosm* miniature universe *microbe* minute organism *microscopic* extremely small
mis	bad, improper	*misdemeanor* minor crime; bad conduct *mischance* unfortunate accident *misnomer* wrong name
mis	hatred	*misanthrope* person who hates mankind *misogynist* woman-hater
mono	one	*monarchy* government by one ruler *monotheism* belief in one god
multi	many	*multifarious* having many parts *multitudinous* numerous
neo	new	*neologism* newly coined word *neophyte* beginner; novice

Prefix	Meaning	Illustration
non	not	*noncommittal* undecided *nonentity* person of no importance
ob, oc, of, op	against	*obloquy* infamy; disgrace *obtrude* push into prominence *occlude* close; block out *offend* insult *opponent* someone who struggles against; foe
olig	few	*oligarchy* government by a few
pan	all, every	*panacea* cure-all *panorama* unobstructed view in all directions
para	beyond, related	*parallel* similar *paraphrase* restate; translate
per	through, completely	*permeable* allowing passage through *pervade* spread throughout
peri	around, near	*perimeter* outer boundary *periphery* edge *periphrastic* stated in a roundabout way
poly	many	*polygamist* person with several spouses *polyglot* speaking several languages
post	after	*postpone* delay *posterity* generations that follow *posthumous* after death
pre	before	*preamble* introductory statement *prefix* word part placed before a root/stem *premonition* forewarning
prim	first	*primordial* existing at the dawn of time *primogeniture* state of being the first born
pro	forward, in favor of	*propulsive* driving forward *proponent* supporter
proto	first	*prototype* first of its kind
pseudo	false	*pseudonym* pen name
re	again, back	*reiterate* repeat *reimburse* pay back
retro	backward	*retrospect* looking back *retroactive* effective as of a past date
se	away, aside	*secede* withdraw *seclude* shut away *seduce* lead astray

Prefix	Meaning	Illustration
semi	half, partly	*semiannual* every six months *semiconscious* partly conscious
sub, suc, suf, sug, sup, sus	under, less	*subway* underground road *subjugate* bring under control *succumb* yield; cease to resist *suffuse* spread through *suggest* hint *suppress* put down by force *suspend* delay
super, sur	over, above	*supernatural* above natural things *supervise* oversee *surtax* additional tax
syn, sym, syl, sys	with, together	*synchronize* time together *synthesize* combine together *sympathize* pity; identify with *syllogism* explanation of how ideas relate *system* network
tele	far	*telemetry* measurement from a distance *telegraphic* communicated over a distance
trans	across	*transport* carry across *transpose* reverse, move across
ultra	beyond, excessive	*ultramodern* excessively modern *ultracritical* exceedingly critical
un	not	*unfeigned* not pretended; real *unkempt* not combed; disheveled *unwitting* not knowing; unintentional
under	below	*undergird* strengthen underneath *underling* someone inferior
uni	one	*unison* oneness of pitch; complete accord *unicycle* one-wheeled vehicle
vice	in place of	*vicarious* acting as a substitute *viceroy* governor acting in place of a king
with	away, against	*withhold* hold back; keep *withstand* stand up against; resist

Common Roots and Stems

Roots are basic word elements that have been carried over into English. *Stems* are variations of roots brought about by changes in declension or conjugation.

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
ac, acr	sharp	*acrimonious* bitter; caustic *acerbity* bitterness of temper *acidulate* to make somewhat acid or sour
aev, ev	age, era	*primeval* of the first age *coeval* of the same age or era *medieval* or *mediaeval* of the middle ages
ag, act	do	*act* deed *agent* doer
agog	leader	*demagogue* false leader of people *pedagogue* teacher (leader of children)
agri, agrari	field	*agrarian* one who works in the field *agriculture* cultivation of fields *peregrination* wandering (through fields)
ali	another	*alias* assumed (another) name *alienate* estrange (turn away from another)
alt	high	*altitude* height *altimeter* instrument for measuring height
alter	other	*altruistic* unselfish, considering others *alter ego* a second self
am	love	*amorous* loving, especially sexually *amity* friendship *amicable* friendly
anim	mind, soul	*animadvert* cast criticism upon *unanimous* of one mind *magnanimity* greatness of mind or spirit
ann, enn	year	*annuity* yearly remittance *biennial* every two years *perennial* present all year; persisting for several years
anthrop	man	*anthropology* study of man *misanthrope* hater of mankind *philanthropy* love of mankind; charity
apt	fit	*aptitude* skill *adapt* make suitable or fit

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
aqua	water	*aqueduct* passageway for conducting water *aquatic* living in water *aqua fortis* nitric acid (strong water)
arch	ruler, first	*archaeology* study of antiquities (study of first things) *monarch* sole ruler *anarchy* lack of government
aster	star	*astronomy* study of the stars *asterisk* star-like type character (*) *disaster* catastrophe (contrary star)
aud, audit	hear	*audible* able to be heard *auditorium* place where people may be heard *audience* hearers
auto	self	*autocracy* rule by one person (self) *automobile* vehicle that moves by itself *autobiography* story of one's own life
belli	war	*bellicose* inclined to fight *belligerent* inclined to wage war *rebellious* resisting authority
ben, bon	good	*benefactor* one who does good deeds *benevolence* charity (wishing good) *bonus* something extra above regular pay
biblio	book	*bibliography* list of books *bibliophile* lover of books *Bible* The Book
bio	life	*biography* writing about a person's life *biology* study of living things *biochemist* student of the chemistry of living things
breve	short	*brevity* briefness *abbreviate* shorten *breviloquent* marked by brevity of speech
cad, cas	to fall	*decadent* deteriorating *cadence* intonation, musical movement *cascade* waterfall
cap, capt, cept, cip	to take	*capture* seize *participate* take part *precept* wise saying (originally a command)
capit, capt	head	*decapitate* remove (cut off) someone's head *captain* chief
carn	flesh	*carnivorous* flesh-eating *carnage* destruction of life *carnal* fleshly

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
ced, cess	to yield, to go	*recede* go back, withdraw *antecedent* that which goes before *process* go forward
celer	swift	*celerity* swiftness *decelerate* reduce swiftness *accelerate* increase swiftness
cent	one hundred	*century* one hundred years *centennial* hundredth anniversary *centipede* many-footed, wingless animal
chron	time	*chronology* timetable of events *anachronism* a thing out of time sequence *chronicle* register events in order of time
cid, cis	to cut, to kill	*incision* a cut (surgical) *homicide* killing of a man *fratricide* killing of a brother
cit, citat	to call, to start	*incite* stir up, start up *excite* stir up *recitation* a recalling (or repeating) aloud
civi	citizen	*civilization* society of citizens, culture *civilian* member of community *civil* courteous
clam, clamat	to cry out	*clamorous* loud *declamation* speech *acclamation* shouted approval
claud, claus, clos,clud	to close	*claustrophobia* fear of close places *enclose* close in *conclude* finish
cognosc, cognit	to learn	*agnostic* lacking knowledge, skeptical *incognito* traveling under assumed name *cognition* knowledge
compl	to fill	*complete* filled out *complement* that which completes something *comply* fulfill
cord	heart	*accord* agreement (from the heart) *cordial* friendly *discord* lack of harmony
corpor	body	*incorporate* organize into a body *corporeal* pertaining to the body, fleshly *corpse* dead body
cred, credit	to believe	*incredulous* not believing, skeptical *credulity* gullibility *credence* belief

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
cur	to care	*curator* person who has the care of something *sinecure* position without responsibility *secure* safe
curr, curs	to run	*excursion* journey *cursory* brief *precursor* forerunner
da, dat	to give	*data* facts, statistics *mandate* command *date* given time
deb, debit	to owe	*debt* something owed *indebtedness* debt *debenture* bond
dem	people	*democracy* rule of the people *demagogue* (false) leader of the people *epidemic* widespread (among the people)
derm	skin	*epidermis* skin *pachyderm* thick-skinned quadruped *dermatology* study of skin and its disorders
di, diurn	day	*diary* a daily record of activities, feelings, etc. *diurnal* pertaining to daytime
dic, dict	to say	*abdicate* renounce *diction* speech *verdict* statement of jury
doc, doct	to teach	*docile* obedient; easily taught *document* something that provides evidence *doctor* learned person (originally, teacher)
domin	to rule	*dominate* have power over *domain* land under rule *dominant* prevailing
duc, duct	to lead	*viaduct* arched roadway *aqueduct* artificial waterway
dynam	power, strength	*dynamic* powerful *dynamite* powerful explosive *dynamo* engine making electrical power
ego	I	*egoist* person who is self-interested *egotist* selfish person *egocentric* revolving about self
erg, urg	work	*energy* power *ergatocracy* rule of the workers *metallurgy* science and technology of metals

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
err	to wander	*error* mistake *erratic* not reliable, wandering *knight-errant* wandering knight
eu	good, well, beautiful	*eupeptic* having good digestion *eulogize* praise *euphemism* substitution of pleasant way of saying something blunt
fac, fic, fec, fect	to make, to do	*factory* place where things are made *fiction* manufactured story *affect* cause to change
fall, fals	to deceive	*fallacious* misleading *infallible* not prone to error, perfect *falsify* lie
fer, lat	to bring, to bear	*transfer* bring from one place to another *translate* bring from one language to another *conifer* bearing cones, as pine trees
fid	belief, faith	*infidel* nonbeliever, heathen *confidence* assurance, belief
fin	end, limit	*confine* keep within limits *finite* having definite limits
flect, flex	bend	*flexible* able to bend *deflect* bend away, turn aside
fort	luck, chance	*fortuitous* accidental, occurring by chance *fortunate* lucky
fort	strong	*fortitude* strength, firmness of mind *fortification* strengthening *fortress* stronghold
frag, fract	break	*fragile* easily broken *infraction* breaking of a rule *fractious* unruly, tending to break rules
fug	flee	*fugitive* someone who flees *refuge* shelter, home for someone fleeing
fus	pour	*effusive* gushing, pouring out *diffuse* widespread (poured in many directions)
gam	marriage	*monogamy* marriage to one person *bigamy* marriage to two people at the same time *polygamy* having many wives or husbands at the same time
gen, gener	class, race	*genus* group of animals with similar traits *generic* characteristic of a class *gender* class organized by sex

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
grad, gress	go, step	*digress* go astray (from the main point) *regress* go backwards *gradual* step by step, by degrees
graph, gram	writing	*epigram* pithy statement *telegram* instantaneous message over great distance *stenography* shorthand (writing narrowly)
greg	flock, herd	*gregarious* tending to group together as in a herd *aggregate* group, total *egregious* conspicuously bad; shocking
helio	sun	*heliotrope* flower that faces the sun *heliograph* instrument that uses the sun's rays to send signals
it, itiner	journey, road	*exit* way out *itinerary* plan of journey
jac, ject, jec	to throw	*projectile* missile; something thrown forward *trajectory* path taken by thrown object *ejaculatory* casting or throwing out
jur, jurat	to swear	*perjure* testify falsely *jury* group of men and women sworn to seek the truth *adjuration* solemn urging
labor, laborat	to work	*laboratory* place where work is done *collaborate* work together with others *laborious* difficult
leg, lect, lig	to choose, to read	*election* choice *legible* able to be read *eligible* able to be selected
leg	law	*legislature* law-making body *legitimate* lawful *legal* lawful
liber, libr	book	*library* collection of books *libretto* the "book" of a musical play *libel* slander (originally found in a little book)
liber	free	*liberation* the fact of setting free *liberal* generous (giving freely); tolerant
log	word, study	*entomology* study of insects *etymology* study of word parts and derivations *monologue* speech by one person
loqu, locut	to talk	*soliloquy* speech by one individual *loquacious* talkative *elocution* speech

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
luc	light	*elucidate* enlighten *lucid* clear *translucent* allowing some light to pass through
magn	great	*magnify* enlarge *magnanimity* generosity, greatness of soul *magnitude* greatness, extent
mal	bad	*malevolent* wishing evil *malediction* curse *malefactor* evil-doer
man	hand	*manufacture* create (make by hand) *manuscript* written by hand *emancipate* free (let go from the hand)
mar	sea	*maritime* connected with seafaring *submarine* undersea craft *mariner* seaman
mater, matr	mother	*maternal* pertaining to motherhood *matriarch* female ruler of a family, group, or state *matrilineal* descended on the mother's side
mit, miss	to send	*missile* projectile *dismiss* send away *transmit* send across
mob, mot, mov	move	*mobilize* cause to move *motility* ability to move *immovable* not able to be moved
mon, monit	to warn	*admonish* warn *premonition* foreboding *monitor* watcher (warner)
mori, mort	to die	*mortuary* funeral parlor *moribund* dying *immortal* not dying
morph	shape, form	*amorphous* formless, lacking shape *metamorphosis* change of shape *anthropomorphic* in the shape of man
mut	change	*immutable* not able to be changed *mutate* undergo a great change *mutability* changeableness, inconstancy
nat	born	*innate* from birth *prenatal* before birth *nativity* birth
nav	ship	*navigate* sail a ship *circumnavigate* sail around the world *naval* pertaining to ships

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
neg	deny	*negation* denial *renege* deny, go back on one's word *renegade* turncoat, traitor
nomen	name	*nomenclature* act of naming, terminology *nominal* in name only (as opposed to actual) *cognomen* surname, distinguishing nickname
nov	new	*novice* beginner *renovate* make new again *novelty* newness
omni	all	*omniscient* all knowing *omnipotent* all powerful *omnivorous* eating everything
oper	to work	*operate* work *cooperation* working together
pac	peace	*pacify* make peaceful *pacific* peaceful *pacifist* person opposed to war
pass	feel	*dispassionate* free of emotion *impassioned* emotion-filled *impassive* showing no feeling
pater, patr	father	*patriotism* love of one's country (fatherland) *patriarch* male ruler of a family, group, or state *paternity* fatherhood
path	disease, feeling	*pathology* study of diseased tissue *apathetic* lacking feeling; indifferent *antipathy* hostile feeling
ped, pod	foot	*impediment* stumbling-block; hindrance *tripod* three-footed stand *quadruped* four-footed animal
ped	child	*pedagogue* teacher of children *pediatrician* children's doctor
pel, puls	to drive	*compulsion* a forcing to do *repel* drive back *expel* drive out, banish
pet, petit	to seek	*petition* request *appetite* craving, desire *compete* vie with others
phil	love	*philanthropist* benefactor, lover of humanity *Anglophile* lover of everything English *philanderer* one involved in brief love affairs

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
pon, posit	to place	*postpone* place after *positive* definite, unquestioned (definitely placed)
port, portat	to carry	*portable* able to be carried *transport* carry across *export* carry out (of country)
poten	able, powerful	*omnipotent* all-powerful *potentate* powerful person *impotent* powerless
psych	mind	*psychology* study of the mind *psychosis* mental disorder *psychopath* mentally ill person
put, putat	to trim, to calculate	*putative* supposed (calculated) *computation* calculation *amputate* cut off
quer, ques, quir, quis	to ask	*inquiry* investigation *inquisitive* questioning *query* question
reg, rect	rule	*regicide* murder of a ruler *regent* ruler *insurrection* rebellion; overthrow of a ruler
rid, ris	to laugh	*derision* scorn *risibility* inclination to laughter *ridiculous* deserving to be laughed at
rog, rogat	to ask	*interrogate* question *prerogative* privilege
rupt	to break	*interrupt* break into *bankrupt* insolvent *rupture* a break
sacr	holy	*sacred* holy *sacrilegious* impious, violating something holy *sacrament* religious act
sci	to know	*science* knowledge *omniscient* knowing all *conscious* aware
scop	watch, see	*periscope* device for seeing around corners *microscope* device for seeing small objects
scrib, script	to write	*transcribe* make a written copy *script* written text *circumscribe* write around, limit
sect	cut	*dissect* cut apart *bisect* cut into two pieces

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
sed, sess	to sit	*sedentary* inactive (sitting) *session* meeting
sent, sens	to think, to feel	*consent* agree *resent* show indignation *sensitive* showing feeling
sequi, secut, seque	to follow	*consecutive* following in order *sequence* arrangement *sequel* that which follows *non sequitur* something that does not follow logically
solv, solut	to loosen	*absolve* free from blame *dissolute* morally lax *absolute* complete (not loosened)
somn	sleep	*insomnia* inability to sleep *somnolent* sleepy *somnambulist* sleepwalker
soph	wisdom	*philosopher* lover of wisdom *sophisticated* worldly wise
spec, spect	to look at	*spectator* observer *aspect* appearance *circumspect* cautious (looking around)
spir	breathe	*respiratory* pertaining to breathing *spirited* full of life (breath)
string, strict	bind	*stringent* strict *constrict* become tight *stricture* limit, something that restrains
stru, struct	build	*constructive* helping to build *construe* analyze (how something is built)
tang, tact, ting	to touch	*tangent* touching *contact* touching with, meeting *contingent* depending upon
tempor	time	*contemporary* at same time *extemporaneous* impromptu *temporize* delay
ten, tent	to hold	*tenable* able to be held *tenure* holding of office *retentive* holding; having a good memory
term	end	*interminable* endless *terminate* end
terr	land	*terrestrial* pertaining to earth *subterranean* underground

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
therm	heat	*thermostat* instrument that regulates heat *diathermy* sending heat through body tissues
tors, tort	twist	*distort* twist out of true shape or meaning *torsion* act of twisting *tortuous* twisting
tract	drag, pull	*distract* pull (one's attention) away *intractable* stubborn, unable to be dragged *attraction* pull, drawing quality
trud, trus	push, shove	*intrude* push one's way in *protrusion* something sticking out
urb	city	*urban* pertaining to a city *urbane* polished, sophisticated (pertaining to a city dweller) *suburban* outside of a city
vac	empty	*vacuous* lacking content, empty-headed *evacuate* compel to empty an area
vad, vas	go	*invade* enter in a hostile fashion *evasive* not frank; eluding
veni, vent, ven	to come	*intervene* come between *prevent* stop *convention* meeting
ver	true	*veracious* truthful *verify* check the truth *verisimilitude* appearance of truth
verb	word	*verbose* wordy *verbiage* excessive use of words *verbatim* word for word
vers, vert	turn	*vertigo* turning dizzy *revert* turn back (to an earlier state) *diversion* something causing one to turn aside
via	way	*deviation* departure from the way *viaduct* roadway (arched) *trivial* trifling (small talk at crossroads)
vid, vis	to see	*vision* sight *evidence* things seen *vista* view
vinc, vict, vanq	to conquer	*invincible* unconquerable *victory* winning *vanquish* defeat

Root or Stem	Meaning	Illustration
viv, vit	alive	*vivisection* operating on living animals *vivacious* full of life *vitality* liveliness
voc, vocat	to call	*avocation* calling, minor occupation *provocation* calling or rousing the anger of *invocation* calling in prayer
vol	wish	*malevolent* wishing someone ill *voluntary* of one's own will
volv, volut	to roll	*revolve* roll around *evolve* roll out, develop *convolution* coiled state

Common Suffixes

Suffixes are syllables that are added to a word. Occasionally, they change the meaning of the word; more frequently, they serve to change the grammatical form of the word (noun to adjective, adjective to noun, noun to verb).

Suffix	Meaning	Illustration
able, ible	capable of (adjective suffix)	*portable* able to be carried *interminable* not able to be limited *legible* able to be read
ac, ic	like, pertaining to (adjective suffix)	*cardiac* pertaining to the heart *aquatic* pertaining to the water *dramatic* pertaining to the drama
acious, icious	full of (adjective suffix)	*audacious* full of daring *perspicacious* full of mental perception *avaricious* full of greed
al	pertaining to (adjective or noun suffix)	*maniacal* insane *final* pertaining to the end *logical* pertaining to logic
ant, ent	full of (adjective or noun suffix)	*eloquent* pertaining to fluid, effective speech *suppliant* pleader (person full of requests) *verdant* green
ary	like, connected with (adjective or noun suffix)	*dictionary* book connected with words *honorary* with honor *luminary* celestial body
ate	to make (verb suffix)	*consecrate* to make holy *enervate* to make weary *mitigate* to make less severe

Suffix	Meaning	Illustration
ation	that which is (noun suffix)	*exasperation* irritation *irritation* annoyance
cy	state of being (noun suffix)	*democracy* government ruled by the people *obstinacy* stubbornness *accuracy* correctness
eer, er, or	person who (noun suffix)	*mutineer* person who rebels *lecher* person who lusts *censor* person who deletes improper remarks
escent	becoming (adjective suffix)	*evanescent* tending to vanish *pubescent* arriving at puberty
fic	making, doing (adjective suffix)	*terrific* arousing great fear *soporific* causing sleep
fy	to make (verb suffix)	*magnify* enlarge *petrify* turn to stone *beautify* make beautiful
iferous	producing, bearing (adjective suffix)	*pestiferous* carrying disease *vociferous* bearing a loud voice
il, ile	pertaining to, capable of (adjective suffix)	*puerile* pertaining to a boy or child *ductile* capable of being hammered or drawn *civil* polite
ism	doctrine, belief (noun suffix)	*monotheism* belief in one god *fanaticism* excessive zeal; extreme belief
ist	dealer, doer (noun suffix)	*fascist* one who believes in a fascist state *realist* one who is realistic *artist* one who deals with art
ity	state of being (noun suffix)	*annuity* yearly grant *credulity* state of being unduly willing to believe *sagacity* wisdom
ive	like (adjective suffix)	*expensive* costly *quantitative* concerned with quantity *effusive* gushing
ize, ise	make (verb suffix)	*victimize* make a victim of *rationalize* make rational *harmonize* make harmonious *enfranchise* make free or set free
oid	resembling, like (adjective suffix)	*ovoid* like an egg *anthropoid* resembling man *spheroid* resembling a sphere
ose	full of (adjective suffix)	*verbose* full of words *lachrymose* full of tears

Suffix	Meaning	Illustration
osis	condition (noun suffix)	*psychosis* diseased mental condition *neurosis* nervous condition *hypnosis* condition of induced sleep
ous	full of (adjective suffix)	*nauseous* full of nausea *ludicrous* foolish
tude	state of (noun suffix)	*fortitude* state of strength *beatitude* state of blessedness *certitude* state of sureness