



WORDS FREQUENTLY APPEARING ON THE GMAT

In your preparation for the GMAT, it is important that you become familiar with the meanings of as many words as possible. This is especially true for success on the Verbal Ability section of the test, but it is also necessary for better comprehension of Reading Comprehension, Reading recall, and Practical Judgment passage, where a few key words may hold the meaning of an entire paragraph.

The vocabulary list presented here contains words that frequently appear on the GMAT and many terms that you may encounter in the course of the exam. Study it carefully to familiarize yourself with these words. Refer to it to check the meaning of any difficult words you may encounter in other parts of this Guide.

Abase – to humiliate, degrade

Abash – to bewilder, confound

Abate – to remove, lessen

Abdicate - to forsake, give up

Aberration – deviation

Abeyance – inactivity

Abhor – to detest, hate

Abject – degraded, miserable

Abjure – to recant, revoke

Abnegate – to deny, denounce

Abominate – to dislike

Abort – to be unsuccessful, fail to develop

Abrade – to scrape out

Abrogate – to abolish



Abscond – to bolt, decamp, flee
Absolve – to pardon
Abstemious – eating or drinking sparingly
Abstract – summary
Abstruse – profound, hidden, hard to under-stand
Accede - to consent
Accessory – accomplice
Acclivity – incline rising slope
Accolade – honor, award
Accord – to grant, allow
Accost – to greet aggressively
Accretion – adhesion, concretion
Accrue – to accumulate
Acerbity – sharpness, bitterness
Acme – summit, peak
Acolyte – attendant, helper
Acrimonious – sharp, acrid
Actuate – to put into action
Adamant – immovable
Adduce – to give as proof
Adjudicate – to decide (a case)
Adjunct – auxiliary, appendage
Adjure – to state on oath
Admonish – to caution, warn
Adroit – skillful, clever
Adulation – flattery
Adulterate – to corrupt, contaminate
Advent – coming



Adventitious – accidental
Advocate – counsel, defender
Aegis – protection
Aesthetic – pertaining to beauty
Affability – politeness, courtesy
Affinity – relation, alliance
Affluence – wealth
Aggrandize – to increase in power
Agnostic – one who doubts the existence of God
Agrarian – relating to farming
Alacrity – willingness, agility
Albeit – although
Alchemy – chemistry of the middle ages
Alimentary – supplying food
Allay – to soothe, calm
Allegory – parable, fable
Allocate – to distribute
Allude – to insinuate, refer
Altercation – quarrel
Alternation - recurrence, succession
Altruism – unselfish devotion
Amalgamate – to combine, unite
Ambidextrous – using both hands equally well
Ameliorate - to amend, improve
Amenable – responsible, liable
Amenity – pleasantness
Amiable – pleasing, loving
Amorphous – shapeless



Anachronism – something misplaced in time
Analogy – similarity, affinity
Anarchy – absence of government
Anathema – ban, curse
Anchorite – hermit
Ancillary – subordinate
Anecdote – tale, story
Animate – to inspire, encourage
Animosity – enmity, hatred
Annals – historical accounts
Anneal – to heat glass, metal, etc.
Annotator – commentator
Anomaly – abnormality, deviation
Antagonist – opponent
Antecede – to come before (in time or place)
Antedate – to assign a date earlier than the actual one
Anterior - front
Antimacassar – cover used to protect furniture
Antipathy – aversion, dislike
Antithesis – contrast, direct opposite
Aperture – opening
Apex – highest point
Aphorism – saying, adage
Apiary – place where bees are kept
Aplomb – self-confidence
Apochryphal – of questionable authenticity
Apogee – farthest orbit point from the earth
Apoplexy – sudden loss of consciousness



Apostasy – abandoning of faith
Apothecary – druggist
Apothegm – short, pithy statement
Appall – to terrify, shock
Appellation – name, title
Apposite – suitable, appropriate
Apprise – to inform
Approbation – approval, consent
Arbiter – arbitrator, judge
Archaic – no longer used
Archipelago – chain of island
Archives – place where records are kept
Arduous – difficult
Argot – slang
Array – rank, order, finery
Arrears – in debt
Articulate – to speak or write clearly
Artifice – mastery, trickery
Asperity – acrimony, harshness
Aspersions – slander, false accusation
Assay – to analyze chemically
Asseverate – to state positively
Assiduity – care, diligence
Assimilate – to absorb
Assuage – to pacify, calm
Astral – starry
Astringent – contracting (tissues), severe
Astute – shrewd



Atheist – one who denies the existence of God

Atrophy – to waste away, deteriorate

Attenuate – to weaken

Attrition – a wearing away, weakening

Audacious – bold

Augment – to increase

Augur – to predict

August – majestic, noble

Auspice – protection

Auspicious – fortunate, favorable

Austere – rigid, severe

Authoritative – powerful, commanding

Autocratic – arrogant, dictatorial

Autonomy – self-government

Auxiliary – assistant, helping

Avarice – greed, cupidity

Aver – assert

Averse – unwilling

Aviary – place where birds are kept

Avidity – eagerness

Avoirdupois – weight

Avow – declare

Awry – crooked, bent

Axiomatic – principle accepted as self-evident

Badger – to harass, nag

Badinage – banter

Baleful – harmful, evil



Balm – something that soothes
Banal – meaningless, commonplace
Bandy – to exchange (word)
Band – cause of harm
Barrister – court lawyer
Bedizen – to dress in a gaudy, vulgar manner
Beguile – to deceive
Belabor – to attack verbally, drag out
Bellicose – warlike
Beneficient – liberal, kind
Benign – gentle, mild
Berate – to scold
Bereft – bereaved, deprived of
Bestial – savage
Bestride – to mount
Bicameral – having two legislative chambers
Biennial - every two years
Bilious – bad-tempered
Biped – two-footed animal
Bivouac – encampment
Bland – mild
Blasé – indifferent
Blasphemy – profane abuse of anything sacred
Blatant – noisy, vociferous
Blazon – to adorn, proclaim
Bluster – to swagger, boast
Bogus – counterfeit
Boisterous – violent, furious



Bombast – pompous speech
Botch – to ruin
Bounty – generosity
Bourgeois – middle class
Bovine – ox or cow
Brandish – to wave menacingly
Bravado – pretense of bravery
Breech – lower part of the body
Brigand – robber, bandit
Broach – to start a discussion
Browbeat – to intimidate
Brusque – abrupt in manner
Bucolic – rustic
Buffoon – clown
Buoyancy – lightness, animation
Bureaucracy – government of specialized functions and hierarchy of officials
Burgeon – bud, sprout
Burnish – to polish
Butte – hill
Buttress – prop, protuberance

Cabal – intrigue, faction
Cache – hiding place
Cacophony – harsh sound
Cadence – measured movement
Cajole – to coax, flatter
Caldron – kettle
Calligraphy – penmanship



Callous – hard, obdurate
Callow – unfledged
Calumny – slander, defamation
Canard – hoax
Canker – ulcer
Cant – tilt, whining speech
Cantilever – supporting bracket
Canvass – to make a survey, solicit
Capacious – roomy, ample
Caper – frolic, mischievous act
Capitulate – to surrender
Caprice – whim, fancy
Captious – touchy, cross
Captivate – to charm, fascinate
Carnage – slaughter, massacre
Carnivorous – flesh-eating
Carom – rebound
Carp – to complain constantly
Carrion – decaying flesh
Castigate – to punish
Casuistry – false reasoning
Cataclysm – violent change or upheaval
Catalyst – agent of change
Cathartic – purifying
Catholic – universal
Caustic – sarcastic, corrosive
Cavil – to quibble
Celerity – rapidity, velocity



Censorious – fault-finding
Censure – to criticize sharply
Centrifugal – moving away from center
Cephalic – of the head
Cerebration – thought process
Chafe – fret, irritate
Chaff – worthless material
Chagrin – embarrassment
Charlatan – faker
Charnel – place where corpses are deposited
Chary – discreetly cautious
Chastise – to castigate, correct
Chattel – slave
Chauvinism – fanatical patriotism
Chicanery – deception
Chimerical – imaginary
Choleric – irascible, easily angered
Chronic – always present
Churlish – ill-bred
Circuitous – roundabout, tortuous
Circumlocution – evasion in speech
Circumspect – watchful, cautious
Circumvent – to avoid
Citadel – fortress
Civility – politeness, affability
Clairvoyant – able to perceive something not readily apparent
Clandestine – secret, hidden
Cloy – to overindulge with an initially pleasing thing



Coagulate – to thicken, clot
Coalesce – to unite, join forces
Coda – ending section distinct from the main body of a work
Coerce – to force
Cogent – forcible, convincing
Cogitate – to think seriously
Cognate – related
Cognizant – aware
Cohesion – a sticking together
Collate to put together in proper order
Colligate – to group together
Collocate – to arrange in position
Colloquy – conversation, dialogue
Collusion – secret agreement to defraud
Colophon – inscription in a book
Colorable – plausible, ostensible
Comestible – edible
Commensurate - proportionate
Commodious – spacious
Commute – alter, exchange
Compatible – consistent
Compendious – spacious
Compendium – abridgment, abstract
Compunction – uneasiness, remorse
Conclave – secret meeting
Concomitant – accompanying
Concupiscence – strong desire
Condign – appropriate



Condone – to overlook as unimportant
Conduce – to lead toward a desired end
Configuration – shape, arrangement
Confiscatory – seized by authority
Conflagration – destructive fire
Confute – to disprove, refute
Congeal – to change to a solid state
Congenital – existing from birth
Congruous – appropriate, in agreement
Coniferous – cone-bearing
Conjecture – guess, conclusion
Conjure – to summon solemnly
Connive – cooperate secretly
Connoisseur – expert, critic
Connote – suggest, imply
Conscript – to force into service, draft
Consecrate – to sanctify, dedicate
Consonance – harmony
Consort – associate, companion
Constellation – group of stars
Consternation – sudden confusion, panic
Constituency – voters in a district
Constrain – to restrict movement, limit
Constrict – to shrink
Consummate – to complete
Contemn – to despise, scorn
Contemptuous – scornful, insolent
Contentious – argumentative



Contiguous – adjacent, touching
Contingency – casualty, occurrence
Contravene – to contradict
Contrition – remorse, repentance
Contrivance – plan, scheme
Controvert – to debate, dispute
Contumely – rudeness
Contusion - bruise
Conundrum – riddle
Conversant – familiar with
Convivial – joyous, festal
Convoke – to assemble
Convulse – to shake violently, agitate
Copious – abundant
Corollary – inference, result
Corona – crown, luminous circle
Corporeal – pertaining to the body
Corpulent – fat, stout
Correlate – to be in mutual relation
Corrigible – amenable, tractable
Corroborate – to strengthen, confirm
Coterie – group
Countenance – facial expression, composure
Countermand – to cancel with a contrary order
Covenant – contract
Covert – clandestine, secret
Covet – to desire, aspire to
Cower – to cringe in fear



Cozen – to trick
Crag – steep projecting rock
Crass – grossly stupid
Credence – belief, faith
Credible – believable
Credulity – simplicity, gullibility
Crimp – to bend into shape, pinch together
Cruciate – cross-shaped
Crux – vital point
Cryptic – mysterious
Cudgel – club
Culmination – highest point, climax
Culpable – deserving blame
Cumbrous – unwieldy
Cupidity – avarice, greed
Curry – to seek favor by flattery
Cursory – hasty, superficial
Cynical – sarcastic, sneering
Cynosure – center of attraction

Dalliance – dawdling
Dank – chilly and wet
Dastard – coward
Dauntless – valiant, intrepid
Dearth – scarcity
Debacle – complete failure, fiasco
Debase – to degrade, lower
Debauch – to corrupt



Debility – weakness
Debonair – affable, jaunty
Decamp – to break camp, depart suddenly
Decant – to pour
Deciduous – shedding (leaves) annually
Declaim – speak, debate
Declaration – announcement
Declivity – descent, slop
Decorous – proper in good taste
Decrepit – run-down, worn-out
Decry – to censure
Deference – honor, respect
Definitive – explicit, conclusive
Defunct – no longer existing
Deign – to condescend
Deleterious – harmful
Delineate – to describe
Demean – to behave properly
Denigrate – to describe
Demean – to behave properly
Denigrate – to define, belittle
Denizen – inhabitant
Denote – to stand for, mean
Denude – to strip, divest
Deposition – removal (from office), testimony
Depraved – sinful
Deprecate – to disapprove of
Depreciate – to lessen the value of



Depute – to appoint, entrust
Derogatory – disparaging
Descry – to discover, make known
Desecrate – to profane, abuse
Desiccate – to dry up
Desist – to cease, stop
Despicable – contemptible
Desultory – loose, rambling
Deterrent – constraint, preventative
Detritus – product of disintegration
Devious – rambling, errant, tricky
Diametric – opposite
Diaphanous – extremely delicate, insubstantial
Dichotomy – division into two parts
Dictum – positive statement
Didactic – instructive
Diffident – lacking confidence, reserved
Diffuse – to spread without restraint
Dilate – to stretch, widen
Dilatory – tardy, lagging
Dilettante – one who dabbles superficially
Diligent – industrious, assiduous
Diluvial – pertaining to floods
Discern – to observe, perceive
Discompose – to upset the order of
Disconcert – to confound, disturb
Disconsolate – sad, forlorn
Discord – disagreement



Discountenance – disapproval
Discursive – rambling
Disdain – to scorn
Disingenuous – without candor
Disparage – to belittle
Disparate – distinct in quality
Disputation – debate
Disseminate – to spread widely
Dissident – disagreeing
Dissimulate – to put on a false appearance
Dissipate – to scatter or use wastefully
Dissolute – morally loose
Dissonant – lacking harmony
Dissuade – to advise against
Distend – to stretch out
Distract – absentminded, distracted
Distraught – mentally upset
Diverge – to branch off, deviate
Divers – various
Divest – to deprive, strip off
Doctrinate – impractical theorist
Dogmatic – arrogant stating of opinion
Doldrums – low spirits
Dole – something given sparingly
Doleful – dismal
Dolorous – mournful
Dolt – stupid person
Dotage – senility



Dour – stern, gloomy

Dowdy – shabby, styleless

Dreg – undesirable leftovers

Drivel – silly talk

Droll – funny, amusing

Dross – refuse, waste

Dubious – uncertain

Dubitable – open to doubt

Dupe – to deceive

Duplicity – deception

Duress – restraint, force

Ebony – hard durable wood, black

Ebullient – enthusiastic

Ecclesiastical – pertaining to the church

Echelon – formation of units or troops

Eclectic – made up of elements from a variety of source

Ecology – study of the relationships in an environment

Ecumenical – general, worldwide

Edict – public announcement, decree

Edifice – large building

Edify – to enlighten

Educe – to bring forth

Effable – capable of being expressed

Efface – to wipe out, erase

Efficacious – effective

Effigy – image, crud likeness

Effluence – flowing out



Effrontery – impudence
Effulgent – illuminated
Effusive – highly emotional
Egocentric – self-centered
Egregious – flagrant
Egression – emergence
Electorate – voting body
Elicit – to cause a response
Elision – omission
Eloquent – pleasingly expressive
Elucidate – to make clear
Elusive – hard to grasp
Emaciate – to make thin
Emanate – to come out from
Embellish – to ornament
Embody – to make perceptible, personify
Embroider – to involve in an argument
Emend – to correct or alter (as in a literary work)
Emissary – messenger
Emollient – soothing substance
Emolument – salary, compensation
Emulate – to rival or try to equal
Enclave – distinct unit surrounded by foreign territory
Encomium – glowing praise
Encroach – trespass
Encyclopedia – compendium of knowledge
Endemic – restricted to a given locality
Endogenous – originating from within



Enervate – to lessen the vitality of
Enfranchise – to give the right to vote
Engender – to bring into being
Engross – to take the entire attention of
Engulf – to swallow up
Enigmatic – hard to understand, puzzling
Enjoin – to impose by order, prohibit
Enmesh – to entangle
Enmity – hostility
Enormity – outrageous act
Ensconce – to conceal, settle snugly
Entity – something that exists independently
Entomology – study of insects
Entreat – to implore
Enunciate – to announce, pronounce clearly
Ephemeral – short-lived
Epic – long, narrative poem
Epicure – one who has discriminating tastes for foods and liquors
Epigram – terse, witty saying
Epilogue – closed section of a literary work
Epistle – letter
Epitaph – inscription
Epithet – word or phrase characterizing a person or thing
Epitome – ideal example, embodiment
Epoch – event or time that marks the start of a new period
Equable – uniform, even
Equanimity – composure
Equivocal – purposely deceive



Era – period of time marked by certain events

Ergo – therefore

Ersatz – artificial, substitute

Erudite – learned

Escapement – notched device regulating movement in a mechanism

Escarpment – steep slope between level areas

Eschew – to shun

Esculent – edible

Escutcheon – shield containing a coat of arms

Esoteric – limited to a chosen few

Esthetic – beautiful

Estival – pertaining to summer

Ethereal – airy

Etude – musical composition used for practice

Eulogy – speech in praise of a dead person

Euphemism – substitution of a less offensive word

Euphony – agreeable sounds

Euphoria – feeling of well-being

Evanescent – fading from sight

Evasion – avoidance

Evince – to show plainly

Evoke – to call force, produce

Evolve – to develop gradually

Exacerbate – to aggravate

Exacting – making severe demands

Exclude – to bar

Excoriate – to strip the skin off

Exculpate – to free from blame



Execrable – detestable

Execrate – to curse

Exemplary – serving as a model

Exempt – to excuse from responsibility others are subject to

Exhort – to entreat, appeal urgently

Exhume – to dig up

Exigency – situation making extremely urgent demands

Exigent – urgent

Exiguous – scanty, meager

Exogenous – originating from outside

Exonerate – to clear from blame

Exorcise – to expel (an evil spirit)

Expatriate – to speak or write at length, wander

Expedite – speed up

Expeditious – prompt

Expiate – to make amends

Expound – to state in detail

Expunge – to erase

Expurgate – to remove passages (from a book)

Exquisite – very beautiful, perfected

Extant – still existing

Extemporaneous – impromptu

Extemporize – to improvise

Extenuate – to lessen the seriousness of

Extirpate – to destroy completely

Extol – to laud

Extraneous – not pertinent to the whole

Extricate – to set free



Extrinsic – to force out

Exude – to discharge

Exult – to rejoice

Fabricate – to manufacture, invent

Fabulous – fictitious

Façade – front or main face of a building

Facetious – lightly joking

Facile – easily done

Facilitate – to make easier

Facsimile – reproduction

Faction – producing dissension

Factitious – artificially produced

Factotum – general worker

Fallacious – tending to mislead

Fallible – capable of erring

Fallow – cultivated land not in use

Fastidious – hard to please, meticulous

Fatuous – foolish

Fawn – to court favor, grovel

Fealty – intense faithfulness

Feasible – possible

Feculent – impure

Fecund – fertile

Fein – to simulate, pretend

Felicitous – appropriate, pleasant

Fell – dangerous, cruel

Ferret – to search out



Fervid – ardent
Fervor – ardor, zeal
Festoon – decorative chain
Fetid – stinking
Fetish – an object believe to have magical powers
Fettle – condition, state of fitness
Fiasco – complete failure
Fickle – capricious
Figment – fine thread
Filch – to pilfer
Finesse – skill
Fissure – cleft or crack
Flaccid – soft and limp
Flagitious – wicked
Flagrant – outrageous
Flail – implement for threshing grain
Flair – aptitude, attractive quality
Flamboyant – showy
Flaunt – to show off
Flex – to bend
Flinch – to draw back
Flippant – lacking proper respect
Florescence – flowering
Floriculture – care of ornamental plants
Flout – to mock or scoff
Fluctuate – to vary
Foible – minor weakness
Foment – to stir up



Foray – to plunder

Forensic – relating to court or public debate

Forerunner – predecessor, sign warning of something to follow

Forlorn – miserable

Formidable – dreadful, awesome

Fortitude – courage

Fortnight – two weeks

Fortuitous – by chance

Fractious – unruly

Fraught – laden

Fray – fight

Frenetic – wildly excited

Frugal – thrifty

Fruition – accomplishment

Fulminate – to explode, denounce

Fulsome – disgusting

Furtive – stealthy

Gainsay – to contradict

Gambol – to frolic

Gamut – entire range

Garble – to distort

Garish – showy, gaudy

Garrulous – talkative

Gastronomy – art of good eating

Gauntlet – glove (medieval), ordeal

Gelid – frozen

Genial – cordial



Genre – sort or type, category
Genus – class, group with similar characteristics
Germane – fitting
Germinate – to develop, sprout
Gestation – development, pregnancy
Gibber – to speak rapidly, chatter
Gibe – to scoff, deride
Gird – to encircle
Glib – superficial, unconvincing
Glut – to oversupply
Glutton – one who overindulges
Goad – spur
Gourmet – expert on good food and drink
Gradient – slope
Grandeur – splendor
Gratuitous – free of charge
Gratuity – tip
Gregarious – sociable
Grimace – expression of pain
Grommet – metal ring
Grueling – very tiring
Guild – organization of persons with common interests
Guile – deceitful behavior
Guise – false pretense
Gyrate – to move in a circular fashion

Hackneyed – overused, trite
Haphazard – not planned, random



Harangue – long speech
Harass – to torment
Harbinger – forerunner
Haughty – extremely proud
Hauteur – disdainful pride
Havoc – great destruction
Hawser – strong rope
Heady – impetuous
Hearth – fireplace floor
Hegemony – dominance of authority
Heinous – hateful, evil
Heptagon – seven-sided polygon
Heresy – anti-religious thought
Hermetic – airtight
Heterodox – differing from the accepted standard
Heterogeneous – differing in structure, mixed
Hexapod – something with six legs
Hiatus – gap
Hibernal – pertaining to winter
Hierarchy – an ordering by rank of grade
Hinder – to thwart, impede
Histrionic – theatrical
Hoax – practical joke, trick
Holocaust – complete destruction
Homily – sermon
Homogeneous – uniform in structure
Homologous – corresponding in structure
Horology – science of measuring time



Hortative – exhorting, pleading
Horticulture – the art of growing flowers, plants, fruits
Huddle – to crowd together
Humus – fertilizer, organic part of soil
Hurtle – to speed
Husbandry – cultivation and care of plants and animals
Hybrid – of mixed origin
Hydrophobia – fear of water
Hyperbole – exaggeration
Hypothesis – assumption

Idiosyncrasy – peculiar mannerism
Idyllic – pleasing, simple, pastoral
Ignoble – mean, base
Ignominious – shameful, degrading
Illicit – unlawful
Illimitable – boundless
Illusory – deceptive
Imbibe – to absorb or drink
Imbroglia – confused situation
Imbue – to permeate
Immolate – to offer in sacrifice
Immutable – unchangeable
Impale – to pierce through
Impalpable – not understood, vague
Impasse – deadlock
Impassioned – ardent, fervent
Impeach – to accuse



Impeccable – flawless
Impecunious – having no money, poor
Imperceptible – slight, subtle
Imperious – domineering
Impertinent – rude
Impervious – not influenced
Impetuous – impulsive
Impious – lacking reverence
Implicit – implied, not apparent
Imply – to indicate by indirect statement
Importune – to urge persistently
Impromptu – insolence
Impugn – to challenge as false
Impunity – freedom from harm
Impute – to attribute (something bad) to another
Inadvertence – negligence, oversight
Inalienable – unable to be taken away
Inane – lacking sense
Inarticulate – unable to speak clearly
Incendiary – one who excites or agitates
Inception – beginning
Incessant – never ceasing
Inchoative – just begun, initial
Incipient – beginning to appear
Inclement – stormy
Inclusive – taking all factors into account
Incognito – disguised
Incongruous – unconforming, inconsistent



Inconsiderable – trivial, small
Inconspicuous – not readily apparent
Incorrigible – not able to be corrected, delinquent
Incredulous – not readily apparent
Incorrigible – not able to be corrected, delinquent
Incredulous – skeptical
Increment – increase, addition
Inculcate – to incriminate
Incumbent – officeholder, obligatory
Indefatigable – tireless
Indigenous – native to
Indigent – poor
Indolent – lazy
Indurate – hardened
Ineffable – unspeakable, indescribable
Inert – without power to move or resist
Inexorable – unrelenting
Infamy – unrelenting
Infamy – bad reputation
Inference – conclusion
Infernal – hellish, fiendish
Infinitesimal – immeasurable small
Infrastructure – basic framework of an organization
Infringe – to encroach upon
Ingenious – resourceful, inventive
Ingenuous – frank, naïve
Ingratiate – to seek someone's favor
Inherent – belonging by nature



Inimical – hostile
Iniquitous – unjust
Injunction – court order, command
Innate – natural, existing from birth
Innocuous – harmless
Innuendo – hint, allusion
Inscrutable – enigmatic, mysterious
Insidious – treacherous
Insinuate – to suggest, hint at artfully
Insipid – dull, tasteless
Insolvent – bankrupt
Instigator – one who incites action
Insular – narrow-minded, limited
Insurgent – one who revolts against established authority
Intangible – incorporeal, vague
Intemperance – excessive indulgence
Interdict – to prohibit
Interment – burial
Interminable – endless
Internment – confinement (of enemies)
Interpolate – to change by inserting new material
Interstice – space, interval
Intractable – unruly, stubborn
Intransigent – refusing to compromise
Intrepid – fearless
Intrinsic – inherent
Introvert – to turn inward
Intuition – insight



Inundate – to overflow overwhelm

Inure – habituate

Invective – denunciation

Inveigh – to complain bitterly

Inveigle – to trick, entice

Investiture – installation in office

Inveterate – firmly established

Invidious – offensive

Invincible – unconquerable

Inviolate – sacred

Irascible – contrary to what was expected, sarcastic

Isthmus – narrow strip of land

Iterate – to repeat over and over

Itinerant – traveling from place to place

Jaundice – yellow pigmentation of the skin

Jaunty – lively

Jettison – to throw overboard, discard as superfluous

Jocose – humorous

Jocund – cheerful

Jocular – playful, jolly

Jostle - to elbow, agitate

Judicious – showing sound judgment

Juggernaut – massive destructive force

Juridical – pertaining to law

Juxtapose – to put side by side

Kaleidoscopic – changing

Kindred – family relationship



Kinetic – active
Kismet – fate
Kith – friends
Knave – credit for an achievement, praise
Labyrinth – maze
Lacerate – to mangle, tear
Laconic – concise
Lambaste – to scold, censure
Lampoon – satirical attack
Languid – weak, dull
Languish – to become weak
Languor – lack of vitality
Larcenous – thievish
Largess – generous giving
Lascivious – lustful
Lassitude – fatigue
Latent – hidden
Laudatory – expressing praise
Lethal – deadly
Lethargic – sluggish
Levity – lightness, frivolity
Lexicon – dictionary
Libation – ceremonial drinking
Licentious – morally unrestrained
Limpid – clear, transparent
Lineament – a distinctive feature
Lissome – nimble
Litany – prayer, chant



Lithe – flexible

Litigation – lawsuit

Livid – discolored by a bruise, enraged

Location – style of speech

Loquacious – talkative

Lucid – shining, readily understood

Ludicrous – absurd

Lugubrious – affectedly mournful

Luminary – outstanding person

Lurid – sensational

Macabre – gruesome

Machination – evil plot

Macrocosm – entity representing on a larger scale, one of its smaller units

Madrigal – song, ballad

Magistrate – official who administers laws

Magnanimous – generous

Maladroit – awkward

Malefactor – evildoer

Malevolent – arising from an evil will

Malfeasance – wrongdoing

Malign – to slander

Malingering – to feign illness

Malleable – flexible, adaptable

Martinet – very strict disciplinarian

Masticate – to chew up

Maudlin – foolishly sentimental

Megalomania – illusions of grandeur



- Meliorate – to make or become better
- Mellifluous – flowing sweetly, smoothly
- Ménage – household
- Mendacious – untruthful
- Mendicant – beggar
- Menial – servile
- Mercurial – changeable, fickle
- Meretricious – falsely alluring, gaudy
- Meritorious – deserving honor
- Mesmerize – hypnotize
- Metamorphosis – change of form
- Metaphor – figure of speech using one idea in place of another to denote a likeness between the two
- Mete – to allot
- Meticulous – careful with details
- Mettle – spirit, courage
- Miasma – pervading corruptive atmosphere
- Microcosm – a small unit that is the epitome of a larger entity
- Mien – manner, appearance
- Militate – to work (for or against)
- Millennium – 1000 years
- Minion – favored person
- Miscreant – villain
- Misgiving – doubt
- Misnomer – name wrongly applied
- Missive – letter
- Mitigate – to ease
- Mnemonic – memory aid



Modicum – small portion

Modulate – to regulate

Mollify – to appease

Moot – debatable

Mordant – sarcastic

Mores – customs

Moribund – dying

Morose – gloomy

Motley – composed of many elements

Multifarious – diverse

Mundane – worldly

Munificent – generous, lavish

Myopia – nearsightedness

Myriad – very large number

Nadir – lowest point

Nape – back of the neck

Narcissism – self-love

Narrative – story, account

Nascent – coming into being

Nebulous – vague

Nefarious – very wicked

Nemesis – formidable rival, one who inflicts just punishment

Neology – use of an established word in a new way

Neophyte – beginner, convert

Nepotism – favoritism shown relatives

Nettle – irritate

Nexus – link, connection



Niggardly – stingy
Nocturnal – pertaining to night
Noisome – offensive, harmful to health
Nomenclature – system of names
Nonpareil – unequalled
Nonplussed – perplexed
Nostalgia – sentimental yearning for the past
Notorious – widely known
Noxious – harmful
Numismatic – monetary
Nuptial – pertaining to marriage
Nurture – train, rear

Obdurate – stubborn
Obeisance gesture of respect
Obesity – stoutness, fatness
Obfuscate – to obscure
Objurgate – to denounce
Oblation – solemn offering
Oblique – evasive
Obloquy – widespread censure
Obsequious – servile
Obsolescent – falling into disuse
Obstreperous – noisy, unruly
Obstruct – to stop, close
Obtrude – to push out
Obtuse – stupid, blunt
Obviate – to prevent



Occidental – Western
Odious – disgusting
Odoriferous – giving off a smell
Officious – meddling
Olfactory – pertaining to smell
Oligarchy – government by a small group often for corrupt purposes
Ominous – threatening
Omnipotent – having unlimited power
Omnivorous – eating all sorts of food
Onerous – burdensome
Onus – burden
Opaque – not translucent
Opprobrious – disgraceful, infamous
Opulent – wealthy
Opus – work, composition
Orbit – revolving path
Ordinance – statute
Ordnance – artillery
Ordure – excrement
Ornate – showy
Ornery – obstinate
Ornithology – study of birds
Oscillate – to fluctuate between two points
Ossify – to change to bone
Ostensible – apparent
Ostentatious – showy
Ostracize – to banish
Overt – done openly



Overweening – arrogant

Palatable – agreeable to the senses

Pall – to lose effectiveness

Palliate – to reduce the intensity of

Pallid – pale

Palpable – obvious, easily perceived

Paltry – pretty

Panacea – remedy for all maladies

Pandemic – widely spread

Parable – short story showing a moral

Paradigm – model, example

Paradox – statement that seems contradictory but may be true in fact

Paragon – model of excellence

Paramount – highest in rank

Paraphernalia – personal belongings

Pariah – outcast

Parity – equality in value

Parody – farcical imitation

Paroxysm – sudden outburst

Parsimony – stinginess, thrift

Parsonage – pastor's dwelling

Pastoral – of shepherds, rural

Patent – evident

Pathos – something which arouses pity

Patrimony – property inherited from ancestors

Paucity – scarcity

Peculate – to embezzle



Pecuniary – involving money
Pedant – one who emphasizes trivial points of learning
Pejorative – worsening
Pechant – strong liking
Pendant – ganging object
Penitence – sorrow for sins
Penology – study of prisons and prison reform
Pensile – hanging
Penurious – stingy
Perambulate – to walk
Perdition – damnation
Perennial – enduring
Perfidy – treachery
Perforce – of necessity
Perfunctory – routine, superficial
Perigee – point of an orbit nearest the earth
Peripatetic – itinerant
Periphery – outside boundary
Periphrasis – using long phrasing instead of shorter expressions
Permeable – passable, penetrable
Permutation – change, alteration
Pernicious – destructive, fatal
Peroration – end of a speech
Perpetrate – carry out, commit
Perpetuate – cause to continue
Perquisite – something in addition to regular pay, tip, bonus
Personage – important person
Perspective – sense of proportion



Perspicacity – keen judgment
Perspicuous – easily understood
Pert – bold, cocky
Pertinent – relevant
Perturb – to upset, agitate
Peruse – to read carefully
Pervade – to spread throughout
Perverse – deviating from what is considered normal
Petulance – impatience
Phalanx – massed group of individuals
Philander – to court with no intention of marriage
Philistine – one governed by material rather than intellectual values
Philology – study of linguistics
Phlegmatic – sluggish
Phobia – persistent irrational fear
Picayune – of little value, petty
Piebald – marked with splotches of color, heterogeneous
Pillory – to scorn publicly
Piquant – agreeably stimulating, pungent
Pique – to offend, provoke
Piscatorial – pertaining to fish
Pithy – terse
Pixilated – amusingly eccentric
Placate – to appease
Placid – calm
Plaintive – melancholy
Plait – to braid, pleat
Platitude – trite remark



Plaudit – expression of approval
Plausible – seemingly reasonable
Plebiscite – popular vote
Plenary – full, complete
Plethora – overabundance
Plicate – folded lengthwise
Plumb – straight down, vertically
Ply – to use or practice diligently
Poach – to trespass
Poignant – pungent, touching the emotions
Polemic – involving dispute
Politic – prudent, expedient
Polity – political organization
Ponderous – unwisely, dull
Pontificate – to orate, make dogmatic statements
Portend – to warn, foreshadow
Portentous – ominous
Posit – to postulate
Posterity – future generations
Postulate – hypothesis, axiom
Potable – suitable for drinking
Potpourri – mixture
Poultice – soft heated dressing applied to wounds
Pragmatic – practical, relating to fact
Prate – to chatter
Precarious – uncertain, risky
Precipitous – steep
Precipitate – hasty



Preclude – to shut out, prevent
Precursor – forerunner
Predacious – predatory
Predatory – tending to exploit others for one's own gain
Predicate – to affirm
Predilection – preconceived liking
Predispose – to make susceptible
Preeminent – outstanding, high-ranking
Preen – to dress up or adorn (oneself)
Premeditation – preplanning
Premise – statement forming the basis of an argument
Preponderate – to surpass in weight or power
Preposterous – absurd, ridiculous
Prerequisite – something needed for performing a function
Prescience - foreboding
Prescribe – to establish as a means of action
Presumptuous – too bold or forward
Pretentious – showy, making unjustified claims
Prevaricate – to evade the truth
Pristine – uncorrupted by society
Probity – integrity, honesty
Proclaim – to declare proudly
Proclivity – inclination
Prodigal – spendthrift
Prodigious – wonderful, enormous
Profane –irreligious
Proffer – to present for approval
Profligate – recklessly wasteful



Progeny – offspring
Prognosticate – to predict
Proliferate to increase in number
Prolific – producing abundantly
Prolix – prolonged unduly
Prominent – noticeable, well-known
Promontory – high peak that overlooks lower land or water
Promulgate – to announce openly
Propensity – natural tendency
Propinquity – neatness
Propitiate – to appease
Propitious – favorable
Proponent – one in favor of
Propound – to present for discussion
Prorate – to divide proportionately
Prosaic – commonplace, dull
Proscribe – to outlaw, prohibit
Proselytize – to convert from one belief to another
Protagonist – main character in novel
Prototype – standard example
Provincial – having a limited outlook
Prurient – lustful, lewd
Puerile – childish, silly
Pulchritude – beauty
Punctilious – very exact
Pundit – learned person
Pungent – sharp sensation of taste and smell
Pugnacious – belligerent



Purloin – to steal

Purport – to give an appearance of, intend

Pusillanimous – lacking courage and resolve

Putative – assumed to exist

Putrefy – to rot

Pythonic – monstrous

Quadrant – one-quarter of a plane

Quaint – unusual, old-fashioned

Qualm – misgiving

Quandary – perplexed state

Querulous – complaining

Query – inquiry

Quiescent – quite, still

Quintessence – perfect form

Quivering – shaking, trembling slightly

Quixotic – having high romantic or chivalrous ideals

Raillery – playful teasing

Raiment – clothing

Rambunctious – boisterous

Ramification – offshoot, consequence

Rampant – widespread, without restraint

Ramshackle – loosely made, dilapidated

Rancor – ill will

Rankle – to cause resentment

Rapacious – greedy

Rapine – plunder

Ratification – formal approval



Raucous – rough sounding, boisterous
Ravenous – extremely eager for gratification
Recalcitrant – disobedient
Recant – to renounce
Recidivist – confirmed criminal
Reciprocal – complementary, mutually responsive
Recluse – hermit
Recondite – beyond ordinary understanding, concealed
Reconnoiter – to survey
Recreant – cowardly
Recklessness – countercharge
Rectitude – integrity
Recumbent – lying down
Redact – to edit
Redolent – fragrant
Redoubt – temporary fortification
Redress – to remedy, compensate
Redundant – superfluous, wordy
Refectory – dining hall
Referendum – popular vote on a measure submitted by a legislative body
Refractory – obstinate, unresponsive
Refute – to prove wrong
Refurbish – to renovate
Regale – to entertain
Regent – one who rules
Regicide – killing of a king
Regimen – system of diet, ruling system
Regressive – going backward



Relegate – to exile, to assign to a lower position

Reliquary – container for sacred objects

Remission – pardon, forgiveness, abatement

Remonstrate – to protest

Remunerate – to pay for work done, compensate

Renascent – reborn

Renegade – deserter, outcast

Renege – to go back on a promise

Renunciation – repudiation

Repast – meal

Repine – to long for

Replete – well filled

Reprehend – to criticize

Repression – stopping by force

Reprisal – act of retaliation

Reproach – disgrace, cause of blame

Reprobate – depraved, unprincipled

Reproof – rebuke, criticism

Repudiate – to refuse, reject, disown

Repugnant – distasteful, disliked

Requisite – requirement

Requital – suitable repayment

Rescind – to repeal, take back

Resilient – able to spring back into shape

Resplendent – dazzling

Restitution – restoration, refund

Restive – impatient

Resurgent – rising again



Resuscitate – to revive

Retaliate – to get even

Reticence – silence, reserve

Retort – to get even

Retribution – just reward

Retroactive – extending to previous conditions

Retrograde – to go backward

Reverberate – to throw back, echo

Reville – to abuse verbally

Ribald – offensive, vulgar

Rife – widespread, abounding

Rift – opening, breach

Rigor – strictness

Risibility – laughter

Robust – healthy, strong

Rote – mechanical repetition or action

Rotund – rounded

Ruckus – noisy confusion

Rudiment – first principle, beginning of something

Ruminant – meditative

Ruminate – to meditate, ponder

Saccharine – overly sweet, affectedly agreeable

Sacrilege – desecration

Sagacious – shrewdly discerning

Salacious – lustful

Salient – conspicuous

Saline – salty



Sallow – dull greenish-yellow
Salubrious – wholesome
Salutary – curative
Salutatory – welcoming address
Sanctimony – pretended piety
Sanguine – confident, optimistic
Sapient – wise
Sardonic – scornful
Sartorial – pertaining to tailoring
Sate – to satisfy, glut
Saturate – to soak, fill completely
Saturnine – sullen, sluggish
Savor – to relish, enjoy
Scabbard – sword sheath
Scathing – searing, blasting
Schematic – diagrammatic
Schism – split, difference of opinion
Scintilla – particle, trace
Scion – descendent
Scoff – derision
Scourge – whip, devastation
Scruple – small quantity, principle
Scrutinize – to examine closely
Scurrilous – coarse, vulgar
Secular – worldly, not religious
Sedition – rebellion
Sedulous – diligent
Semblance – appearance



Senescent – growing old
Sententious – given to moralistic expression
Sequester – to isolate
Serrate – having sawlike notches
Shallop – small, open boat
Shamble – to walk clumsily
Shunt – to turn to one side
Sibling – brother or sister
Sidle – to move sidewise
Smile – figure of speech comparing two unlike things
Similitude – likeness
Simony – buying or selling of church pardons
Sinecure – easy job
Sinuous – bending, winding
Slothful – lazy
Sluice – artificial water channel
Sojourn – to remain somewhere temporarily
Solace – to comfort, console
Solicitous – showing care or concern
Soluble – able to be dissolved
Somatic – physical, of the body
Somnolent – sleepy, drowsy
Sonorous – full of sound, resonant
Sophistry – misleading but clever reasoning
Soporific – causing sleep
Sordid – dirty, ignoble
Spasmodic – intermittent
Spawn – to deposit egg, bring forth



Specious – deceptively appealing

Specter – ghost

Sporadic – occasional

Spurious – false, not genuine

Staid – sedate

Stigma – mark of disgrace

Stilted – pompous

Stint – restriction

Stoicism – impassiveness, indifference

Stolid – showing little emotion

Stratagem – trick, device

Strategy – careful plan

Stricture – adverse criticism

Strident – harsh-sounding

Stultify – to appear foolish, impair

Stupor – loss of sensibility

Suave – polite, urbane

Subjoin – to append

Subjugate – to force to submit

Sublimate – to direct actions into more socially acceptable forms

Subservient – inferior, submissive

Subterfuge – deception used to evade something difficult or unpleasant

Subversive – destructive

Succor – to help

Succulent – juicy

Suffuse – to overspread

Sully – to soil, stain

Sumptuous – lavish



Supercilious – haughty, contemptuous
Supernal – exalted celestial
Supersede – to replace
Supervene – to happen additionally or unexpectedly
Supine – indolent, prone
Supple – flexible
Supplicate – to ask for humbly
Suppress – to keep from public knowledge
Surfeit – overindulgence
Surreptitious – acting in a secret and stealthy way
Surrogate – deputy, substitute
Sustenance – nourishment
Sycophant – self-serving flatterer
Syllogism – conclusion based on two premises
Synchronous – occurring simultaneously
Synopsis – summary
Synthesis – combining of elements to make a whole
Synthetic – man-made

Tacit – silent
Taciturn – tending toward silence
Tactic – means of accomplishing a purpose
Tactile – perceived by the sense of touch
Tantamount – equal in value
Tautology – needless repetition of an idea
Tawdry – gaudy, cheap
Taxonomy – classification (of plants and animals)
Temerity – foolish boldness



Temperate – moderate
Temporize – to compromise
Tenacious – persistent, tough
Tenet – doctrine
Tenuous – unsubstantial, flimsy
Termagant – nagging woman
Terminus – end point
Terse – brief, to the point
Tertiary – third in order
Thespian – actor
Thrall – slave
Timorous – timid
Tirade – long, vehement speech or denunciation
Tithe – tenth part of something paid as a tax to a church
Titular – having a title without performing the functions involved
Tome – large book
Torpid – inactive, sluggish
Torrid – very hot
Toxic – pertaining to poison
Tractable – easily managed
Traduce – to slander
Tranquility – calmness, serenity
Transfuse – to transmit, imbue
Transgression – violation
Transitory – temporary
Translucent – permitting the passage of light
Transpire – to become known, happen
Transverse – placed crosswise



Travail – hard work

Travesty – ridiculous representation

Treble – to increase threefold

Tremulous – trembling

Trenchant – sharp, clear-cut

Trepidation – fear

Tribulation - misery, distress

Truculent – cruel, belligerent

Truncated – shortened, curtailed

Truncheon – club

Tumid – swollen, inflated

Tumultuous – violently turbulent

Turbid – muddy

Turgid – swollen

Turpitude – vileness

Tutelage – guardianship

Twit – to taunt

Ubiquitous – present everywhere simultaneously

Ulterior – lying beyond what is openly expressed

Umbrage – offense

Unctuous – oily, suave

Undaunted – determined in spite of adverse conditions

Undulate – to move in waves

Unerring – without fault

Ungainly – awkward, clumsy

Unmitigated – not lessened, absolute

Unobtrusive – not aggressive



Untenable – Unable to be occupied or defended

Untoward – unfavorable

Upbraid – to scold, reproach

Uproarious – boisterous

Urbane – refined

Usurp – to take by force

Uxorial – pertaining to a wife

Vacillate – to show indecision

Vacuous – empty, stupid

Vagary – eccentric idea or action

Valorous – courageous

Vanguard – front part of a movement

Vapid – tasteless, flat

Variegated – marked with different colors

Vaunt – display boastfully

Vegetate – to lead an inactive life

Vehement – impassioned

Venal – open to corruption

Vendetta – extended bitter feud

Venerate – to show deep respect

Venial – excusable

Veracious – honest

Verbosity – wordiness

Verdant – green in color

Verisimilitude – truth

Verity – truth

Vermillion – bright red pigment



Vernacular – native language of a region
Versatile – able to change easily
Versification – metrical structure
Vertex – highest point
Vestige – trace
Viable – capable of living or functioning
Vicarious – experienced through the activity of another person
Vicissitude – changeability
Vilify – to defame
Vindicate – to clear from blame
Vindictive – wanting revenge
Virago – domineering woman
Viridity – greenness, naiveness
Virility – masculinity
Virulent – deadly, hateful
Viscous – sticky, lacking easy movement
Vitiate – to debase
Vitreous – pertaining to glass
Vituperate – to berate
Vivacious – spirited, lively
Vivid – vigorous, clear
Vixen – female fox
Vociferous – noisy
Volatile – quickly evaporating, explosive
Volition – act of determining
Volatile – talkative
Voracious – greedy
Votary – zealous follower



Votive – expressing a wish or vow

Vouchsafe – to grant

Waft – odor or sound carried through the air

Wan – pale

Wanton – reckless, immoral

Weal – well-being

Welter – confusion, turmoil

Wheedle – to coax

Whet – to arouse, stimulate

Windfall – unexpected gain

Wizened – dried up, withered

Wraith – ghost, apparition

Wrangle – to quarrel

Wroth – angry

Wry – twisted

Zany – fool, clown

Zealot – fanatic

Zephyr – mild breeze