

1

incontrovertible

that is true and cannot be disagreed with or denied

synonym **indisputable**

incontrovertible evidence/proof

The facts were incontrovertible.

There is one incontrovertible argument in favour of the changes

sardonic

showing that you think that you are better than other people and do not take them seriously

synonym **mocking**

a sardonic smile

He looked at her with sardonic amusement.

Her voice had a sardonic, mocking tone that frightened Connie.

discursive

(of a style of writing or speaking) moving from one point to another without any strict structure

the discursive style of the novel

Poetry is closer to music than to the more extended and discursive literary forms.

The meetings were informal, discursive, even gossipy.

sweeping

having an important effect on a large part of something

sweeping reforms/changes

Security forces were given sweeping powers to search homes.

a sweeping programme of reorganization

(**disapproving**) too general and failing to think about or understand particular examples

a sweeping generalization/statement

sweeping victory a victory by a large number of votes, etc.

[only before noun] forming a curved shape

a sweeping gesture (= with your hand or arm)

a sweeping staircase

intoxicate

under the influence of alcohol or drugs

*He was arrested for DWI (= driving while **intoxicated**).*

intoxicated (by/with something) very excited by something, so that you cannot think clearly

intoxicated with success

grandiose

seeming very impressive but too large, complicated, expensive, etc. to be practical or possible

The grandiose scheme for a journey across the desert came to nothing.

a grandiose opera house

He could no longer live the grandiose lifestyle to which he had become accustomed.

disdain

the feeling that somebody/something is not good enough to deserve your respect or attention

synonym **contempt**

*to treat somebody **with disdain***

He turned his head away in disdain.

disdain for somebody/something *a disdain for the law*

disdain somebody/something to think that somebody/something is not good enough to deserve your respect

She disdained his offer of help.

Immigrants accept the jobs disdained by the local workforce.

disdain to do something to refuse to do something because you think that you are too important to do it

He disdained to turn to his son for advice.

disdainful

disdainful (of somebody/something) showing **disdain**

synonym **contemptuous**, **dismissive**

She's always been disdainful of people who haven't been to college.

2

profess

to claim that something is true or correct, especially when it is not

profess something *She still professes her innocence.*

profess to be/have something *I don't profess to be an expert in this subject.*

to state openly that you have a particular belief, feeling, etc.

synonym **declare**

profess something *He professed his admiration for their work.*

profess yourself + adj. *She professed herself satisfied with the progress so far.*

profess something to belong to a particular religion

to profess Christianity/Islam/Judaism

professed

used to describe a belief or a position that somebody has publicly made known
a professed Christian/anarchist

used to describe a feeling or an attitude that somebody says they have but which may not be sincere

These, at least, were their professed reasons for pulling out of the deal.

3

cogent

strongly and clearly expressed in a way that influences what people believe
synonym **convincing**

She put forward some cogent reasons for abandoning the plan.

pernicious

having a very harmful effect on somebody/something, especially in a way that is gradual and not easily noticed

the pernicious influence of TV violence on children

Ageism is equally as offensive and pernicious as sexism.

cynical

believing that people only do things to help themselves rather than for good or honest reasons

Do you have to be so cynical about everything?

a cynical view/smile

not believing that something good will happen or that something is important

I'm a bit cynical about the benefits of the plan.

Her experiences with men have made her thoroughly cynical about love.

not caring that something might hurt other people, if there is some advantage for you

a cynical disregard for the safety of others

a deliberate and cynical foul

slander

slander somebody/something to make a false spoken statement about somebody that is intended to damage the good opinion that people have of them

He angrily accused the investigators of slandering both him and his family.

a vicious slander on the company's good name

He's suing them for slander.

libel

the act of printing a statement about somebody that is not true and that gives people a bad opinion of them

He sued the newspaper for libel.

a libel action (= a case in a court of law)

In a libel action a newspaper must prove that any comments it printed are true.

libel somebody to publish a written statement about somebody that is not true

He claimed he had been libelled in an article the magazine had published.

malign

v. malign somebody/something (*formal*) to say bad things about somebody/something publicly

synonym **slander**

*She feels she has been **much maligned** by the press.*

Those who malign him in this way are simply being dishonest.

adj. causing harm

*a **malign force/influence/effect***

4

steadfast

not changing in your attitudes or aims

synonym **firm**

steadfast loyalty

steadfast in something *He remained steadfast in his determination to bring the killers to justice.*

working

used as a basis for work, discussion, etc. but likely to be changed or improved in the future

a working theory

Have you decided on a working title for your thesis yet?

episodic

happening occasionally and not at regular intervals

her episodic acting career

Volcanic activity is highly episodic in nature.

(of a story, etc.) containing or consisting of many separate and different events

My memories of childhood are hazy and episodic.

The film is an episodic account of the effect of the war on a small community.

accord

a formal agreement between two organizations, countries, etc.

*The two sides signed a **peace accord** last July.*

torment

(*formal*) extreme suffering, especially mental suffering; a person or thing that causes this

synonym **anguish**

the cries of a man in torment

She suffered years of mental torment after her son's death.

The flies were a terrible torment.

torment somebody (*formal*) to make somebody suffer very much

synonym **plague**

He was tormented by feelings of insecurity.

torment somebody/something to annoy a person or an animal in a cruel way because you think it is amusing

synonym **torture**

monstrous

considered to be shocking and unacceptable because it is morally wrong or unfair

synonym **outrageous**

a monstrous lie/injustice

very large

synonym **gigantic**

a monstrous wave

very large, ugly and frightening

synonym **horrifying**

a monstrous figure/creature

summary

done immediately, without paying attention to the normal process that should be followed

summary justice/execution

a summary judgement

summarily /sə'merəli/

to be summarily dismissed/executed

5

annex /əˈneks/

annex something (*formal*) to take control of a country, region, etc., especially by force

synonym **occupy**

Germany annexed Austria in 1938.

The territory had been annexed to Poland.

a building that is added to, or is near, a larger one and that provides extra living or work space

Our rooms were in the annexe.

(*formal*) an extra section of a document

synonym **appendix**

6

expiate /ˈekspieɪt/

expiate something (*formal*) to accept punishment for something that you have done wrong in order to show that you are sorry

He had a chance to confess and expiate his guilt.

atone

[intransitive] **atone (for something)** (*formal*) to act in a way that shows you are sorry for doing something wrong in the past

synonym **make amends**

to atone for a crime

a desire to atone

make amends (to somebody) (for something/for doing something)

to do something for somebody in order to show that you are sorry for something wrong or unfair that you have done

synonym **make up for something**

She tried to make amends for what she had said to her mother by buying her some flowers.

The team is desperate to make amends for two successive defeats.

penance

(especially in particular religions) an act that you give yourself to do, or that a priest gives you to do in order to show that you are sorry for something you have done wrong

an act of penance

penance for something *to do penance for your sins*

[singular] something that you have to do even though you do not like doing it
She regards living in New York as a penance; she hates big cities.

adjure /ə'dʒʊr/

adjure somebody to do something (*formal*) to ask or to order somebody to do something

He adjured them to tell the truth.

feckless

lacking determination, and not achieving anything in your life

Her husband was a charming, but lazy and feckless man.

stigma

feelings of disapproval that people have about particular illnesses or ways of behaving

the social stigma of alcoholism

There is no longer any stigma attached to being divorced.

veracity

the quality of being true; the habit of telling the truth

synonym **truth, truthfulness**

They questioned the veracity of her story.

They had no reason to doubt his veracity.

contingency

an event that may or may not happen

synonym **possibility**

We must consider all possible contingencies.

*to make **contingency plans** (= plans for what to do if a particular event happens or does not happen)*

*a **contingency fund** (= to pay for something that might happen in the future)*

disparate

made up of parts or people that are very different from each other

a disparate group of individuals

(of two or more things) so different from each other that they cannot be compared or cannot work together

a critical study that aims to cover such disparate forms as Anglo-Saxon poetry and the modern novel.

acquiesce

acquiesce (in/to something) (*formal*) to accept something without arguing, even if you do not really agree with it

Senior government figures must have acquiesced in the cover-up.

She explained her plan and reluctantly he acquiesced.

prognosis/prɑːɡˈnoʊsɪs/

(*medical*) an opinion, based on medical experience, of the likely development of a disease or an illness

to make a prognosis

The prognosis is not good.

(*formal*) a judgement about how something is likely to develop in the future

synonym **forecast**

The prognosis is for more people to work part-time in the future.

forgo

forgo something (*formal*) to decide not to have or do something that you would like to have or do

No one was prepared to forgo their lunch hour to attend the meeting.

She would willingly forgo a birthday treat if only her warring parents would declare a truce.

Time to prepare was a luxury he would have to forgo.

encumber

encumber somebody/something (with something) to make it difficult for somebody to do something or for something to happen

The police operation was encumbered by crowds of reporters.

The business is encumbered with debt.

encumber somebody/something (with something) to be large and/or heavy and make it difficult for somebody to move

The frogmen were encumbered by their diving equipment.

inexorable

(of a process) that cannot be stopped or changed

synonym **relentless**

the inexorable rise of crime

This is where the inexorable logic of the theory breaks down.

the inexorable decline of Britain's manufacturing industry

scintillating /ˈsɪntɪlətɪŋ/

very clever, amusing and interesting

a scintillating performance

Statistics on unemployment levels hardly make for scintillating reading.

make for something

to move towards something

to help to make something possible

Constant arguing doesn't make for a happy marriage.

deference

behaviour that shows that you respect somebody/something

*The women wore veils **in deference to** the customs of the country.*

*The flags were lowered **out of deference to** the bereaved family.*

facetious /fə'si:ʃəs/

trying to appear amusing and intelligent at a time when other people do not think it is appropriate, and when it would be better to be serious

synonym **flippant**

a **facetious comment/remark**

Stop being facetious; this is serious.

lament

lament something | **lament that...** | + speech (*formal*) to feel or express great sadness or disappointment about somebody/something

synonym **bemoan**, **bewail**

In the poem he laments the destruction of the countryside.

She sat alone weeping, lamenting her fate.

7

luxuriant

(of plants or hair) growing thickly and strongly in a way that is attractive

luxuriant vegetation

thick, luxuriant hair

(especially of art or the atmosphere of a place) rich in something that is pleasant or beautiful

the poet's luxuriant imagery

tenuous

so weak or uncertain that it hardly exists

a tenuous hold on life

His links with the organization turned out to be, at best, tenuous.

extremely thin and easily broken

the tenuous threads of a spider's web

contrive

contrive to do something to manage to do something despite difficulties

She contrived to spend a couple of hours with him every Sunday evening.

Somehow they contrived to live on her tiny income.

contrive something to succeed in making something happen despite difficulties

I decided to contrive a meeting between the two of them.

contrive something to think of or make something, for example a plan or a machine, in a clever way

They contrived a plan to defraud the company.

underlying

important in a situation but not always easily noticed or stated clearly

The underlying assumption is that the amount of money available is limited.

Unemployment may be an underlying cause of the rising crime rate.

existing under the surface of something else

the underlying rock formation

polemic

[countable] a speech or a piece of writing that argues very strongly for or against something/somebody

[uncountable] (also **polemics** [plural]) the practice or skill of arguing strongly for or against something/somebody

Her speech was memorable for its polemic rather than its substance.

gall /gɔːl/

rude behaviour showing a lack of respect that is surprising because the person behaving badly is not embarrassed

synonym **impudence**

*Then they **had the gall to** complain!*

I almost admired the utter gall of the man.

(*formal*) a bitter feeling full of hatred

synonym **resentment**

words full of venom and gall

gall somebody | it galls somebody to do something | it galls somebody

that... to make somebody feel upset and angry, especially because something is unfair

It galls me to have to apologize to her.

concede

to admit that something is true, logical, etc.

+ **speech** *'Not bad,' she conceded grudgingly.*

concede (that)... *He was forced to concede (that) there might be difficulties.*

concede something *I had to concede the logic of this.*

concede something to somebody *He reluctantly **conceded the point** to me.*

concede somebody something *He reluctantly conceded me the point.*

it is conceded that... *It must be conceded that different judges have different approaches to these cases.*

to give something away, especially unwillingly; to allow somebody to have something

concede something (to somebody) *The President was obliged to concede power to the army.*

England conceded a goal immediately after half-time.

concede somebody something *Women were only conceded full voting rights in the 1950s.*

concede (defeat) to admit that you have lost a game, an election, etc.

After losing this decisive battle, the general was forced to concede.

Injury forced Hicks to concede defeat.

imperative

(*formal*) very important and needing immediate attention or action

synonym **vital**

imperative (that...) *It is absolutely imperative that we finish by next week.*

imperative (to do something) *It is imperative to continue the treatment for at least two months.*

expressing authority

an imperative tone

(*formal*) a thing that is very important and needs immediate attention or action

the economic imperative of quality education for all

myth

something that many people believe but that does not exist or is false

synonym **fallacy**

It is time to dispel the myth of a classless society (= to show that it does not exist).

*Contrary to **popular myth**, women are not worse drivers than men.*

8

mishandle

mishandle something to deal badly with a problem or situation

synonym **mismanage**

The entire campaign had been badly mishandled.

mishandle somebody/something to touch or treat somebody/something in a rough and careless way

The equipment could be dangerous if mishandled.

exhortation /ˌegzɔːr'teɪʃn/

an act of trying very hard to persuade somebody to do something

The play becomes a strong exhortation to enjoy life while you still can.

Experience shows that encouragement and exhortation have not produced change.

displace

displace somebody to force people to move away from their home to another place

Around 10 000 people have been displaced by the fighting.

If the dam is built it will displace 100 000 people.

displace something to move something from its usual position

Check for roof tiles that have been displaced by the wind.

displace somebody to remove somebody from a job or position

displaced workers

fastidious

being careful that every detail of something is correct

synonym **meticulous**

Everything was planned in fastidious detail.

He was fastidious in his preparation for the big day.

(sometimes disapproving) not liking things to be dirty or untidy

She wasn't very fastidious about personal hygiene.

punctilious

very careful to behave correctly or to perform your duties exactly as you should

a punctilious host

meddle

meddle (in/with something) to become involved in something that does not concern you

synonym **interfere**

He had no right to meddle in her affairs.

He's just a meddling old fool!

[intransitive] **meddle (with something)** to touch something in a careless way, especially when it is not yours or when you do not know how to use it correctly

Somebody had been meddling with her computer.

precipitate /prɪ'sɪpɪteɪt/

precipitate something to make something, especially something bad, happen suddenly or sooner than it should

synonym **bring on, spark (1)**

His resignation precipitated a leadership crisis.

precipitate somebody/something into something to suddenly force somebody/something into a particular state or condition

The assassination of the president precipitated the country into war.

(*formal*) (of an action or a decision) happening very quickly or suddenly and usually without enough care and thought

the precipitate resignation of the director

To force a decision now would be precipitate.

(*chemistry*) a solid substance that has been separated from a liquid in a chemical process

A yellow precipitate should form immediately.

discrete

independent of other things of the same type

synonym **separate**

The organisms can be divided into discrete categories.

disparate

made up of parts or people that are very different from each other

a disparate group of individuals

(of two or more things) so different from each other that they cannot be compared or cannot work together

a critical study that aims to cover such disparate forms as Anglo-Saxon poetry and the modern novel.

entice

to persuade somebody/something to go somewhere or to do something, usually by offering them something

synonym **persuade**

entice somebody/something (+ adv./prep.) *The bargain prices are expected to entice customers away from other stores.*

a plan to entice mothers back to work

The animal refused to be enticed from its hole.

entice somebody into doing something *He was not enticed into parting with his cash.*

entice somebody to do something *Try and entice the child to eat by offering small portions of their favourite food.*

part with something

to give something to somebody else, especially something that you would prefer to keep

Make sure you read the contract before parting with any money.

accountable

responsible for your decisions or actions and expected to explain them when you are asked

*The state spends taxpayers' money and should be **held accountable**.*

accountable to somebody *Politicians are ultimately accountable to the voters.*

accountable for something *Someone must be **held accountable** for the killings.*

ramble

[intransitive] + **adv./prep.** (**especially British English**) to walk for pleasure, especially in the countryside

We spent the summer rambling in Ireland.

You can ramble through some beautiful countryside in the area.

[intransitive] to talk about somebody/something in a confused way, especially for a long time

He had lost track of what he was saying and began to ramble.

ramble (on) (about somebody/something) *What is she rambling on about now?*

[intransitive] (+ **adv./prep.**) (of plants) to grow in many different directions, especially over other plants or objects

Climbing plants rambled over the front of the house.

plausible

(**disapproving**) (of a person) good at sounding honest and sincere, especially when trying to trick people

She was a plausible liar.

gallant

(**old-fashioned** or **literary**) brave, especially in a very difficult situation

synonym **heroic**

gallant soldiers

She made a gallant attempt to hide her tears.

(of a man) giving polite attention to women

'I left her standing in the rain.' *'That wasn't very gallant of you.'*

9

capitulate /kə'pɪtʃuleɪt/

capitulate (to somebody/something) to agree to do something that you have been refusing to do for a long time

synonym **give in (to somebody/something)**

synonym **yield**

They were finally forced to capitulate to the terrorists' demands.

[intransitive] **capitulate (to somebody/something)** to stop resisting an enemy and accept that you are defeated

synonym **surrender**

The town capitulated after a three-week siege.

burlesque

(of a performance or piece of writing) making something look ridiculous by representing it in a humorous way

The play was criticized for its burlesque treatment of serious issues.

supplement /'sʌplɪment/

to add something to something in order to improve it or make it more complete
supplement something with something *a diet supplemented with vitamin pills*
supplement something *He supplements his income by giving private lessons.*

10

pithy

(of a comment, piece of writing, etc.) short but expressed well and full of meaning
a pithy observation

The book is full of pithy observations about how we behave when we travel abroad.

a pithy advertising slogan

ramshackle /'ræmʃækl/

(of buildings, vehicles, furniture, etc.) in a very bad condition and needing repair

synonym **tumbledown**

a ramshackle house

(of an organization or a system) badly organized or designed and not likely to last very long

synonym **rickety**

The opposition criticized the government's ramshackle economic policies.

parley /'pɑ:rlɪ/

parley (with somebody) (old-fashioned) to discuss something with somebody in order to solve a disagreement

evince

evince something (formal) to show clearly that you have a feeling or quality
He evinced a strong desire to be reconciled with his family.

She evinced little enthusiasm for the outdoor life.

revolt

[intransitive] to take violent action against the people in power

synonym **rebel**, **rise** (12)

The peasants threatened to revolt.

revolt against somebody/something *Finally the people revolted against the military dictatorship.*

The peasants revolted against high taxes and the losses of the war.

revolt (against something) to behave in a way that is the opposite of what somebody expects of you, especially in protest

synonym **rebel**

Teenagers often revolt against parental discipline.

[transitive] **revolt somebody** to make you feel horror or disgust

synonym **disgust**

All the violence in the movie revolted me.

The way he ate his food revolted me.

She was revolted by the smell of stale beer and vomit in the room.

devolved

if power or authority is **devolved**, it has been passed to somebody who has less power

devolved responsibility

a system of devolved government

devolve on somebody | devolve on something | devolve upon somebody |

devolve upon something (formal)

1. *if property, money, etc. devolves on/upon you, you receive it after somebody else dies*

2. *if a duty, responsibility, etc. devolves on/upon you, it is given to you by somebody at a higher level of authority*

devolve something on somebody | devolve something to somebody |

devolve something upon somebody

to give a duty, responsibility, power, etc. to somebody who has less authority than you

The central government devolved most tax-raising powers to the regional authorities.

fluster

[often passive] **fluster somebody** to make somebody nervous and/or confused, especially by giving them a lot to do or by making them hurry

Don't fluster me or I'll never be ready.

He was flustered by all the attention.

She was clearly flustered by Marshall's unexpected arrival.

cachet /kæ'ʃeɪ/

if something has **cachet**, it has a special quality that people admire and approve of

synonym **prestige**

No other brand name has quite the same cachet.

the cachet of the elegant Right Bank hotel

11

annals /'ænlz/

an official record of events or activities year by year; historical records

*His deeds went down **in the annals of** British history.*

She was remembered in the annals of the war.

This is a historic day in the annals of the team.

used in the title of academic **journals**

Annals of Science, vol. viii

segregate

segregate somebody (from somebody) to separate people of different races, religions or sexes and treat them in a different way

a culture in which women are segregated from men

Whites and blacks were segregated into different parts of town.

a racially segregated community

a segregated school (= one for students of one race or religion only)

segregate something (from something) to keep one thing separate from another

In all our restaurants, smoking and non-smoking areas are segregated from each other.

sentimental

connected with your emotions, rather than reason

He has a strong sentimental attachment to the place.

She kept the letters for sentimental reasons.

*The ring wasn't worth very much but it had great **sentimental value**.*

(often disapproving) producing emotions such as pity, romantic love or sadness, which may be too strong or not appropriate; feeling these emotions too much

a slushy, sentimental love story

Her book is honest without being sentimental.

*He's not the sort of man who gets **sentimental about** old friendships.*

straggle

[intransitive] (+ **adv./prep.**) to grow, spread or move in an untidy way in different directions

Her hair was straggling over her eyes.

The town straggled to an end and the fields began.

[intransitive] (+ **adv./prep.**) to move slowly behind a group of people that you are with so that you become separated from them

On the way the kids straggled behind us.

quintessence

the perfect example of something

It was the quintessence of an English manor house.

the most important features of something

synonym **essence**

a painting that captures the quintessence of Viennese elegance

impinge

impinge (on/upon something/somebody) (formal) to have a noticeable effect on something/somebody, especially a bad one

synonym **encroach**

He never allowed his work to impinge on his private life.

The preparations for war were beginning to impinge.

milieu /mi:'ljʊ:/

the social environment that you live or work in

synonym **background**

The findings of the report refer to a particular social and cultural milieu.

paradoxical

(of a person, thing or situation) having two opposite features and therefore seeming strange

It is paradoxical that some of the poorest people live in some of the richest areas of the country.

(of a statement) containing two opposite ideas that make it seem impossible or unlikely, although it is probably true

These seemingly paradoxical statements need to be looked at a little further to get the true picture.

iterate /'itəreɪt/

to repeat a **mathematical** or **computing** process or set of instructions again and again, each time applying it to the result of the previous stage

12

banish

[usually passive] **banish somebody (from...) (to...)** to order somebody to leave a place, especially a country, as a punishment

synonym **exile**

He was banished to Australia, where he died five years later.

The children were banished from the dining room.

banish somebody/something (from something) to make somebody/something go away; to get rid of somebody/something

The sight of food banished all other thoughts from my mind.

meander /mi'ændər/

(of a river, road, etc.) to curve a lot rather than being in a straight line

The stream meanders slowly down to the sea.

S

[intransitive] **(+ adv./prep.)** to walk slowly and change direction often, especially without a particular aim

synonym **wander**

They meandered around the old town admiring the architecture.

[intransitive] **(+ adv./prep.)** (of a conversation, discussion, etc.) to develop slowly and change subject often, in a way that makes it boring or difficult to understand

scorn

a strong feeling that somebody/something is stupid or not good enough, usually shown by the way you speak

synonym **contempt**

*Her fellow teachers **greeted** her proposal **with scorn**.*

She was unable to hide the scorn in her voice.

scorn for somebody/something *They had nothing but scorn for his political views.*

scorn somebody/something to feel or show that you think somebody/something is stupid and you do not respect them or it

synonym **dismiss**

She scorned their views as old-fashioned.

Such methods are scorned by reputable practitioners.

His brother had always scorned him.

(formal) to refuse to have or do something because you are too proud

scorn something *to scorn an invitation*

scorn to do something *She would have scorned to stoop to such tactics.*

undo

undo something to open something that is fastened, tied or wrapped
to **undo a button/knot/zip, etc.**

to **undo a jacket/shirt, etc.**

I undid the package and took out the books.

opposite **do something...up**

undo something to cancel the effect of something

He undid most of the good work of the previous manager.

*It's not too late to try and **undo** some of **the damage**.*

UNDO (= a command on a computer that cancels the previous action)

[usually passive] **undo somebody/something (formal)** to make somebody/something fail

The team was undone by the speed and strength of their opponents.

13

Incense /'ɪnsens/

a substance that produces a pleasant smell when you burn it, used particularly in religious ceremonies

Incense burned in a corner of the room.

incense somebody to make somebody very angry

The decision incensed the workforce.

mortify

[usually passive] **mortify somebody (to do something) | it mortifies somebody that...** to make somebody feel very ashamed or embarrassed
synonym **humiliate**

*She **was mortified to** realize he had heard every word she said.*

I was mortified when I realized I had forgotten our lunch date.

doctrinaire

strictly following a theory in all circumstances, even if there are practical problems or disagreement

a doctrinaire conservative

doctrinaire attitudes/beliefs/policies

buoyant

(of prices, business activity, etc.) tending to increase or stay at a high level, usually showing financial success

*a **buoyant economy/market***

buoyant sales/prices

a buoyant demand for homes

The relatively buoyant housing market has kept consumers confident enough to spend.

cheerful and feeling sure that things will be successful
They were all in buoyant mood.

floating, able to float or able to keep things floating
The boat bobbed like a cork on the waves: light and buoyant.
Salt water is more buoyant than fresh water.

premonitory /prɪ'mɔːnɪtɔːri/

giving you the feeling that something is going to happen, especially something unpleasant
a premonitory dream

hidebound

having old-fashioned ideas, rather than accepting new ways of thinking
synonym **narrow-minded**
She wanted a life that was less hidebound by rules and conventions.

bungle

bungle (something) to do something badly or without skill; to fail at something
synonym **botch**
They bungled the job.
a bungled robbery/raid/attempt

obdurate /'ɑːbdəreɪt/

refusing to change your mind or your actions in any way
synonym **stubborn**
an obdurate attitude
to remain obdurate
Some members of the committee are likely to prove obdurate on this matter.

foresight /'fɔːrsaɪt/

the ability to predict what is likely to happen and to use this to prepare for the future
She had had the foresight to prepare herself financially in case of an accident.
The government's policies show a remarkable lack of foresight.

relegate

relegate somebody/something (to something) to give somebody a lower or less important position, rank, etc. than before
She was then relegated to the role of assistant.
He relegated the incident to the back of his mind.

apostle /ə'pɒsl/

apostle (of something) (*formal*) a person who strongly believes in a policy or an idea and tries to make other people believe in it

an apostle of free enterprise

foreground /'fɔːrgraʊnd/

an important position that is noticed by people

*Inflation and interest rates will be very much **in the foreground** of their election campaign.*

This issue is very much in the foreground.

foreground something to give particular importance to something

The play foregrounds the relationship between father and daughter.

pious hope something that you want to happen but is unlikely to be achieved

Such reforms seem likely to remain little more than pious hopes.

schism /'skɪzəm/

strong disagreement within an organization, especially a religious one, that makes its members divide into separate groups

the threat of a schism within the Church

By 1914 the party was dangerously close to schism.

The disagreement eventually led to a schism within the Church.

panache

the quality of being able to do things in a confident and elegant way that other people find attractive

synonym **flair**, **style**

She carried off the performance with panache.

gawky /'gɔːki/

(especially of a tall young person) awkward in the way they move or behave

a shy gawky teenager

flair

[singular, uncountable] **flair for something** a natural ability to do something well

synonym **talent** *He has a flair for languages.*

[uncountable] a quality showing the ability to do things in an interesting way that shows imagination

artistic flair

She dresses with real flair.

virulent /'vɪrələnt/

(of a disease or poison) extremely dangerous or harmful and quick to have an effect

a virulent form of influenza

a particularly virulent flu germ

(*formal*) showing strong negative and bitter feelings
virulent criticism
virulent nationalism

negligent

failing to give somebody/something enough care or attention, especially when this has serious results

The school had been negligent in not informing the child's parents about the incident.

The hospital was negligent in the way it cared for this young man.

manacle /'mænəkl/

[usually plural] one of two metal bands joined by a chain, used for fastening a prisoner's ankles or wrists together

[usually passive] **manacle somebody/something** to put **manacles** on somebody's wrists or ankles, to stop them from escaping

His hands were manacled behind his back.

The slaves were chained and manacled.

bridle

bridle (at something) (*literary*) to show that you are annoyed and/or offended at something, especially by moving your head up and backwards in a proud way
She bridled at the suggestion that she was lying.

humdrum

boring and always the same

synonym **dull**, **tedious**

a humdrum existence/job/life

the use of computers to perform humdrum tasks

the humdrum business of making money

overwrought /,oʊvər'ro:t/

very worried and upset; excited in a nervous way

synonym **distraught**

She was still a little overwrought.

The child is usually too emotionally overwrought to listen to reason.

prime

to prepare somebody for a situation so that they know what to do, especially by giving them special information

synonym **brief**

prime somebody (with something) *They had been primed with good advice.*

prime somebody (for something) *She was ready and primed for action.*

prime somebody to do something *He had primed his friends to give the journalists as little information as possible.*

prime something to make something ready for use or action

The bomb was primed, ready to explode.

prime something to prepare wood, metal, etc. for painting by covering it with a special paint that helps the next layer of paint to stay on

prime the pump

to encourage the growth of a new or weak business or industry by putting money into it

forge

[transitive] **forge something** to put a lot of effort into making something successful or strong so that it will last

a move to forge new links between management and workers

Strategic alliances are being forged with major European companies.

She forged a new career in the music business.

They forged a lead in the first 30 minutes of the game.

[transitive] **forge something** to make an illegal copy of something in order to cheat people

to forge a passport/banknote/cheque

He's getting good at forging his mother's signature.

New digital techniques can spot paintings that have been forged.

[transitive] **forge something (from something)** to shape metal by heating it in a fire and hitting it with a hammer; to make an object in this way

swords forged from steel

[intransitive] + **adv./prep.** (*formal*) to move forward in a steady but powerful way

He forged through the crowds to the front of the stage.

She forged into the lead (= in a competition, race, etc.).

vanquish

vanquish somebody/something (*literary*) to defeat somebody completely in a competition, war, etc.

synonym **conquer**

Government forces vanquished the rebels.

The stories are about saints vanquishing dragons and freeing captive maidens.

dismantle

dismantle something to take apart a machine or structure so that it is in separate pieces

I had to dismantle the engine in order to repair it.

The steel mill was dismantled piece by piece.

dismantle something to end an organization or a system gradually in an organized way

The government was in the process of dismantling the state-owned industries.

blight

blight something to spoil or damage something, especially by causing a lot of problems

His career has been blighted by injuries.

an area blighted by unemployment

pristine /'prɪstɪːn/

fresh and clean, as if new

synonym **immaculate**

*The car is **in pristine condition**.*

a pristine white tablecloth

See related entries: **How a building looks**

not developed or changed in any way; left in its original condition

synonym **unspoiled**

pristine, pollution-free beaches

immaculate /ɪ'mækjələt/

extremely clean and tidy

synonym **spotless**

She always looks immaculate. an immaculate uniform/room

The property is in immaculate condition.

The suit he was wearing was immaculate.

Though old, the books were in immaculate condition.

containing no mistakes

synonym **perfect**

an immaculate performance

The incident ruined an otherwise immaculate safety record.

His sense of timing was immaculate.

germane

germane (to something) (*formal*) (of ideas, remarks, etc.) connected with something in an important or appropriate way

synonym **relevant**

remarks that are germane to the discussion

The report contains matters that are germane to the case.

This issue may or may not be regarded as germane.

fitful

happening only for short periods; not continuous or regular

a fitful night's sleep

a fitful burst of energy

imperturbable /,ɪmpər'tɜːrbəbl/

not easily upset or worried by a difficult situation; calm
His normally imperturbable secretary burst into tears.

exigency /ɪg'zɪdʒənsi/, exigent

an urgent need or demand that you must deal with
synonym **demand**

the exigencies of war

financial exigencies

The political exigencies facing both leaders mean they must resume talks if violence is to be avoided.

surrogate /'sɜːrəɡət/

a person or thing that takes the place of, or is used instead of,
somebody/something else

As Tolkien noted some time ago, magic is often a surrogate for technology.

erstwhile /'ɜːrstwaɪl/

former; that until recently was the type of person or thing described but is not any more

an erstwhile opponent

His erstwhile friends turned against him.

one-time /'wʌn taɪm/

former

her one-time best friend, Anna

a one-time mayor of New York

not to be repeated

synonym **one-off**

a one-time fee of \$500

florid

(of a person's face) red

a florid complexion

(usually disapproving) having too much decoration or detail

florid language

a florid style of painting

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interminable

an interminable speech/wait/discussion

The drive seemed interminable.

posture

your attitude to a particular situation or the way in which you deal with it
The government has adopted an aggressive posture on immigration.

snare

1. a device used for catching small animals and birds, especially one that holds their leg so that they cannot escape

synonym **trap**

The rabbit's foot was caught in a snare.

2. (formal) a situation which seems attractive but is unpleasant and difficult to escape from

City life can be full of snares for young people.

snare something/somebody to catch something, especially an animal, in a snare

synonym **trap**

to snare a rabbit

(figurative) *Her one thought was to snare a rich husband.*

(figurative) *He found himself snared in a web of intrigue.*

There is to be a crackdown on the use of giant fishing nets that snare dolphins.

beholden

beholden to somebody (for something) (formal) owing something to somebody because of something that they have done for you

She didn't like to be beholden to anyone.

impute /ɪmˈpju:t/

impute something to somebody | impute something to something

(formal) to say, often unfairly, that somebody is responsible for something or has a particular quality

synonym **attribute**

I denied the motives that my employer was imputing to me.

brazen

(disapproving) open and without shame, usually about something that people find shocking

synonym **shameless**

She had become brazen about the whole affair.

his brazen admission that he was cheating

She's known for her own brand of brazen sexuality.

There were several instances of brazen cheating.

made of, or the colour of, brass

nettle

[usually passive] **nettle somebody** | **it nettles somebody that...** (*informal, especially British English*) to make somebody slightly angry

synonym **annoy**

My remarks clearly nettled her.

nascent

beginning to exist; not yet fully developed

a nascent industry

a nascent democracy

residual adj/rɪ'zɪdʒuəl/ n /'rezɪduː/

remaining at the end of a process

synonym **outstanding**

There are still a few residual problems with the computer program.

residual income (= money that is left from your income after you have paid tax and other costs)

a small amount of something that remains at the end of a process

pesticide residues in fruit and vegetables

(*law*) the part of the money, property, etc. of a person who has died that remains after all the debts, gifts, etc. have been paid

The residue of the estate was divided equally among his children.

eloquent

able to use language and express your opinions well, especially when you are speaking in public

an eloquent speech/speaker

(of a look or movement) able to express a feeling

His eyes were eloquent.

clearheaded

able to think in a clear and sensible way, especially in a difficult situation

In business Jane was clear-headed and decisive.

interweave

interweave (something) (with something) to twist together two or more pieces of thread, wool, etc.

The blue fabric was interwoven with red and gold thread.

(*figurative*) *The problems are inextricably interwoven* (= very closely connected).

prerogative

a right or advantage belonging to a particular person or group because of their importance or social position

In many countries education is still the prerogative of the rich.

the **royal prerogative** (= the special rights of a king or queen)

The Prime Minister exercised his prerogative to decide when to call an election.

implore

to ask somebody to do something in an anxious way because you want or need it very much

synonym **beseech, beg**

implore somebody to do something *She implored him to stay.*

implore (somebody) + speech *'Help me,' he implored.*

implore somebody *Tell me it's true. I implore you.*

entreat, entreaty

to ask somebody to do something in a serious and often emotional way

synonym **beg, implore**

entreat somebody to do something *She entreated him not to go.*

entreat (somebody) + speech *'Please don't go,' she entreated (him).*

entreat somebody *Please help me, I entreat you.*

a serious and often emotional request

Despite her entreaties, he left.

She held up her arms in entreaty.

notwithstanding

(*formal*) (also used following the noun it refers to) without being affected by something; despite something

Notwithstanding some major financial problems, the school has had a successful year.

The bad weather notwithstanding, the event was a great success.

salubrious /sə'lu:briəs/

(of a place) pleasant to live in; clean and healthy

We had to move to a house in a less salubrious area.

objectionable

unpleasant or offensive

objectionable people/odours

Why are you being so objectionable today?

I myself didn't find his behaviour objectionable.

slender

small in amount or size and hardly enough

*to win by a **slender margin/majority***

*people of **slender means** (= with little money)*

Australia held a slender 1–0 lead at half-time.

These claims are based on slender evidence.

garner

garner something (*formal*) to obtain or collect something such as information, support, etc.

synonym **gather**, **acquire**

All the information that we garnered has been kept on file.

provision

provision for somebody/something preparations that you make for something that might or will happen in the future

*He had already **made provisions for** (= planned for the financial future of) his wife and children before the accident.*

*You should **make provision for** things going wrong.*

Small businesses are advised to make adequate provisions against bad debts.

The plans for developing the area include provision for both water and field sports.

provisions [plural] supplies of food and drink, especially for a long journey

We have enough provisions to last us two weeks.

[countable] a condition or an arrangement in a legal document

Under the provisions of the lease, the tenant is responsible for repairs.

prompt

done without delay

synonym **immediate**

Prompt action was required as the fire spread.

Prompt payment of the invoice would be appreciated.

[not before noun] (of a person) acting without delay; arriving at the right time

synonym **punctual**

Please be prompt when attending these meetings.

endow

endow something to give a large sum of money to a school, a college or another institution to provide it with an income

In her will, she endowed a scholarship in the physics department.

endow somebody with something | endow something with something (*formal*)

to believe or imagine that somebody/something has a particular quality

She had endowed Marcus with the qualities she wanted him to possess.

My imagination endowed Constantinople with all the magic of the East.

to give something to somebody/something

to endow somebody with a responsibility

prosecute

[transitive, intransitive] **prosecute (somebody/something) (for something/doing something)** to officially charge somebody with a crime in court

The company was prosecuted for breaching the Health and Safety Act.

Trespassers will be prosecuted (= a notice telling people to keep out of a particular area).

The police decided not to prosecute.

prosecute (somebody) to be a lawyer in a court case for a person or an organization that is charging somebody with a crime

*the **prosecuting counsel/lawyer/attorney***

James Spencer, prosecuting, claimed that the witness was lying.

prosecute something (*formal*) to continue taking part in or doing something

They had overwhelming public support to prosecute the war.

bestow

bestow something (on/upon somebody) (*formal*) to give something to somebody, especially to show how much they are respected

It was a title bestowed upon him by the king.

requisite

[only before noun] (*formal*) necessary for a particular purpose

She lacks the requisite experience for the job.

They were not able to start the meeting until the requisite number of members were present.

invoke

invoke something (against somebody) to mention or use a law, rule, etc. as a reason for doing something

It is unlikely that libel laws will be invoked.

invoke somebody/something to mention a person, a theory, an example, etc. to support your opinions or ideas, or as a reason for something

She invoked several eminent scholars to back up her argument.

invoke something to mention somebody's name to make people feel a particular thing or act in a particular way

His name was invoked as a symbol of the revolution.

invoke somebody to make a request (for help) to somebody, especially a god

invoke something to make somebody have a particular feeling or imagine a particular scene

synonym **evoke**

The opening paragraph invokes a vision of England in the early Middle Ages.

strenuous

needing great effort and energy

synonym **arduous**

a strenuous climb

*Avoid **strenuous exercise** immediately after a meal.*

*How about a stroll in the park? **Nothing too strenuous.***

Avoid tasks which require strenuous physical activity.

See related entries: **Exercise**

showing great energy and determination

*The ship went down although **strenuous efforts** were made to save it.*

The plan has met with strenuous opposition.

wrench

[transitive, intransitive] (*formal*) to make somebody feel great pain or unhappiness, especially so that they make a sound or cry

wrench (something) (from somebody) *His words wrenched a sob from her.*

a wrenching experience

wrench at something *Her words wrenched at my heart.*

confiscate

confiscate something to officially take something away from somebody, especially as a punishment

Their land was confiscated after the war.

The teacher threatened to confiscate their phones if they kept using them in class.

Our belongings were temporarily confiscated.

velocity /və'li:səti/

the speed of something in a particular direction

the velocity of light

to **gain/lose velocity**

a **high-velocity** rifle

(*formal*) high speed

Jaguars can move with an astonishing velocity.

consign /kən'sain/

consign somebody/something to something to put somebody/something somewhere in order to get rid of them/it

I consigned her letter to the wastebasket.

What I didn't want was to see my mother consigned to an old people's home.

consign somebody/something to something to put somebody/something in an unpleasant situation

The decision to close the factory has **consigned** 6 000 people **to the scrapheap**.

A car accident consigned him to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

consign something to somebody to give or send something to somebody

grapple /'græpl/

to take a firm hold of somebody/something and struggle with them

grapple (with somebody/something) *Passers-by grappled with the man after the attack.*

grapple somebody/something (+ adv./prep.) *They managed to grapple him to the ground.*

[intransitive] to try hard to find a solution to a problem

grapple with something *The new government has yet to grapple with the problem of air pollution.*

a government trying to grapple with inflation

an attempt to grapple with this very difficult issue

grapple to do something *I was grappling to find an answer to his question.*

induce

induce somebody to do something (formal) to persuade or influence somebody to do something

Nothing would induce me to take the job.

induce something (formal) to cause something

drugs which induce sleep

a drug-induced coma

induce somebody/something (medical) to make a woman start giving birth to her baby by giving her special drugs

encroach

[intransitive] **encroach (on/upon something) (disapproving)** to begin to affect or use up too much of somebody's time, rights, personal life, etc.

I won't encroach on your time any longer.

He never allows work to encroach upon his family life.

Gradually the negative feelings encroached into her work.

[intransitive] **encroach (on/upon something)** to slowly begin to cover more and more of an area

The growing town soon encroached on the surrounding countryside.

the encroaching tide (= that is coming in)

coincide

[intransitive] (of two or more events) to take place at the same time

It's a pity our trips to New York don't coincide.

coincide with something *The strike was timed to coincide with the party conference.*

[intransitive] (*formal*) (of ideas, opinions, etc.) to be the same or very similar
The interests of employers and employees do not always coincide.

coincide with something *Her story coincided exactly with her brother's.*

[intransitive] (*formal*) (of objects or places) to meet; to share the same space
At this point the two paths coincide briefly.

coincide with something *The present position of the house coincides with that of an earlier dwelling.*

confer

[intransitive] **confer (with somebody) (on/about something)** to discuss something with somebody, in order to exchange opinions or get advice
He wanted to confer with his colleagues before reaching a decision.

[transitive] **confer something (on/upon somebody)** to give somebody an award, a university degree or a particular honour or right
An honorary degree was conferred on him by Oxford University in 2009.

subdue /səb'duː/

subdue somebody/something to bring somebody/something under control, especially by using force

synonym **defeat**

Troops were called in to subdue the rebels/'rebəl/.

The most serious charges relate to the regime's efforts to subdue insurgents in the northern provinces.

subdue something to calm or control your feelings

synonym **suppress**

Julia had to subdue an urge to stroke his hair.

dwell on

dwell on something | dwell upon something

to think or talk a lot about something, especially something it would be better to forget

So you made a mistake, but there's no need to dwell on it.

to look at something for a long time

vicinity

the area around a particular place

*Crowds gathered **in the vicinity of** Trafalgar Square.*

*There is no hospital **in the immediate vicinity**.*

tentative

(of an arrangement, agreement, etc.) not definite or certain because you may want to change it later

*We made a **tentative arrangement** to meet on Friday.*

tentative conclusions

not behaving or done with confidence

synonym **hesitant**

a tentative greeting

Her English is correct but tentative.

*I'm taking the first **tentative steps** towards fitness.*

pillage /'pɪlɪdʒ/

the act of stealing things from a place or region, especially in a war, using violence

They brought back horrific accounts of murder and pillage.

preoccupied

preoccupied (with something) thinking and/or worrying continuously about something so that you do not pay attention to other things

He was too preoccupied with his own thoughts to notice anything wrong.

She seemed preoccupied all the time I was talking to her.

He was too preoccupied with his own problems to worry about hers.

We live in a world preoccupied by sport.

hereditary /hə'redɪteri/

(especially of illnesses) given to a child by its parents before it is born

*a **hereditary illness/disease/condition/problem***

Epilepsy is hereditary in her family.

It's a hereditary disorder that can cause abnormal growth.

that is legally given to somebody's child, when that person dies

*a **hereditary title/monarchy***

holding a rank or title that is hereditary

hereditary peers/rulers

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deflect

[intransitive, transitive] to change direction or make something change direction, especially after hitting something

The ball deflected off Reid's body into the goal.

deflect something *He raised his arm to try to deflect the blow.*

The defender nearly deflected the ball into his own net.

[transitive] **deflect something** to succeed in preventing something from being directed towards you

synonym **divert**

*All attempts to **deflect attention** from his private life have failed.*

*She sought to **deflect criticism** by blaming her family.*

The government is seeking to deflect attention away from this problem.

[transitive] **deflect somebody (from something)** to prevent somebody from doing something that they are determined to do

The government will not be deflected from its commitments.

finesse /fɪˈnes/

[uncountable] great skill in dealing with people or situations, especially in a delicate way

Nigel lacked his father's elegance and finesse.

sheer

[only before noun] used to emphasize the size, degree or amount of something

The area is under threat from the sheer number of tourists using it.

We were impressed by the sheer size of the cathedral.

[only before noun] complete and not mixed with anything else

synonym **utter**

The concert was sheer delight.

sheer luck/chance/coincidence/joy/bliss/determination

I only agreed out of sheer desperation.

sheer terror/panic/exhaustion/hell

very steep

sheer cliffs/slopes

Outside there was a sheer drop down to the sea below.

(of cloth, etc.) thin, light and almost transparent

sheer nylon

levity

behaviour that shows a lack of respect for something serious and that treats it in an amusing way

synonym **frivolity**

The joke provided a moment of levity in an otherwise dreary meeting.

ostensible

seeming or stated to be real or true, when this is perhaps not the case

synonym **apparent**

The ostensible reason for his absence was illness.

somber /'sɑ:mber/

dark in colour; dull

synonym **drab**

dressed in sombre shades of grey and black

See related entries: **Describing art**

sad and serious

synonym **melancholy**

*Paul was in a **sombre mood**.*

The year ended on a sombre note.

sober

[not usually before noun] not drunk (= not affected by alcohol)

I promised him that I'd stay sober tonight.

*He was **as sober as a judge** (= completely **sober**).*

(of people and their behaviour) serious and sensible

a sober assessment of the situation

He is honest, sober and hard-working.

On sober reflection (= after some serious thought), *I don't think I really need a car after all.*

(of colours or clothes) plain and not bright

a sober grey suit

See related entries: **Describing clothes**

profound

very great; felt or experienced very strongly

profound changes in the earth's climate

My father's death had a profound effect on us all.

The news came as a profound shock.

The report has profound implications for schools.

Her sense of disappointment was profound.

corporeal /kɔ:r'pɔ:riəl/

that can be touched; physical rather than spiritual

his corporeal presence

of or for the body

corporeal needs

inoculation /ɪˌnɔ:kju'leɪʃn/

an act of protecting a person or an animal from catching a particular disease by **injecting** them with a mild form of the disease

Has the puppy had all its inoculations yet?

The disease can now be prevented by inoculation.

suffrage

the right to vote in political elections

universal suffrage (= the right of all adults to vote)

women's suffrage

oblique /ə'bli:k/

not expressed or done in a direct way

synonym **indirect**

an **oblique reference/approach/comment**

(of a line) sloping at an angle

oblique angle an angle that is not an angle of 90°

The extension was built at an oblique angle to the house.

bequeath /bɪ'kwi:ð/

to say in a **will** that you want somebody to have your property, money, etc. after you die

synonym **leave**

bequeath something (to somebody) *He bequeathed his entire estate (= all his money and property) to his daughter.*

bequeath somebody something *He bequeathed his daughter his entire estate.*

bequeath something (to somebody) | bequeath somebody something to leave the results of your work, knowledge, etc. for other people to use or deal with, especially after you have died

The previous government had bequeathed a legacy of problems.

prescribe

(of a person or an organization with authority) to say what should be done or how something should be done

synonym **stipulate**

prescribe something *The prescribed form must be completed and returned to this office.*

prescribe that... *Police regulations prescribe that an officer's number must be clearly visible.*

prescribe which, what, etc... *The syllabus prescribes precisely which books should be studied.*

patronize /'peɪtrənaɪz/

[transitive, intransitive] **patronize (somebody)** (*disapproving*) to treat somebody in a way that seems friendly, but which shows that you think that they are not very intelligent, experienced, etc.

Some television programmes tend to patronize children.

[transitive] **patronize something** (*formal*) to be a regular customer of a shop/store, restaurant, etc.

The club is patronized by students and locals alike.

See related entries: **Dining out**

[transitive] **patronize somebody/something** to help a particular person, organization or activity by giving them money

She patronizes many contemporary British artists.

overdue

not paid, done, returned, etc. by the required or expected time

an overdue payment/library book

The rent is now overdue.

Her baby is two weeks overdue.

This car is overdue for a service.

that should have happened or been done before now

overdue reforms

*A book like this is **long overdue**.*

brusque /brʌsk/

using very few words and sounding rude

The doctor spoke in a brusque tone.

touchstone

[usually singular] **touchstone (of/for something)** (*formal*) something that provides a standard against which other things are compared and/or judged
the touchstone for quality

decimate /'desɪmeɪt/

[usually passive] **decimate something** to kill large numbers of animals, plants or people in a particular area

The rabbit population was decimated by the disease.

decimate something (*informal*) to severely damage something or make something weaker

Cheap imports decimated the British cycle industry.

procure /prə'kjʊr/

[transitive] (*formal*) to obtain something, especially with difficulty

procure something (for somebody/something) *She managed to procure a ticket for the concert.*

They procured a copy of the report for us.

procure somebody something *They procured us a copy of the report.*

[transitive, intransitive] **procure (somebody)** to provide a **prostitute** for somebody

He was accused of procuring under-age girls.

hiatus /haɪ'eɪtəs/

a pause in activity when nothing happens

After a five-month hiatus, the talks resumed.

a space, especially in a piece of writing or in a speech, where something is missing

cantankerous

bad-tempered and always complaining

a cantankerous old man

escalate /'eskəleɪt/

to become or make something greater, worse, more serious, etc.

escalate (into something) *The fighting escalated into a full-scale war.*

the escalating costs of health care

escalate something (into something) *We do not want to escalate the war.*

bombard /bə:m'ba:rd/

bombard somebody/something (with something) to attack a place by firing large guns at it or dropping bombs on it continuously

London was heavily bombed for several months by Germans.

bombard somebody/something (with something) to attack somebody with a lot of questions, criticisms, etc. or by giving them too much information

We have been bombarded with letters of complaint.

We are bombarded daily with propaganda about what we should eat.

prevail

[intransitive] **prevail (in/among something)** to exist or be very common at a particular time or in a particular place

We were horrified at the conditions prevailing in local prisons.

Those beliefs still prevail among certain social groups.

[intransitive] **prevail (against/over something)** (of ideas, opinions, etc.) to be accepted, especially after a struggle or an argument

synonym **triumph**

Justice will prevail over tyranny.

Fortunately, common sense prevailed.

hitherto /'hɪðə'tu:/

until now; until the particular time you are talking about

a hitherto unknown species of moth

Her life hitherto had been devoid of adventure.

vertiginous /vɜːr'tɪdʒɪnəs/

so high that you feel sick and dizzy
a vertiginous drop to the valley below

oblivious

not aware of something

oblivious (of something) *He drove off, oblivious of the damage he had caused.*

oblivious (to something) *You eventually become oblivious to the noise.*

The couple seemed oblivious to what was going on around them.

resign yourself to something

to accept something unpleasant that cannot be changed or avoided

She resigned herself to her fate.

debonair /ˌdebəˈneɪr/

a man who is debonair is fashionable and confident

He is so charming and debonair - but he was still no match for the princess

a stylish, debonair young man

wistful

thinking sadly about something that you would like to have, especially something in the past that you can no longer have

a wistful smile

There was something rather wistful about the sad little tune.

concur

[intransitive, transitive] **concur (with somebody) (in something) | concur (with something) | concur (that...) | (+ speech) (formal)** to agree

Historians have concurred with each other in this view.

The coroner concurred with this assessment.

boast

boast about her past

[transitive] (not used in the progressive tenses) **boast something** to have something that is impressive and that you can be proud of

The hotel also boasts two swimming pools and a golf course.

Rhodes boasts 300 days of sunshine a year.

extrapolate /ɪk'stræpəleɪt/

to estimate something or form an opinion about something, using the facts that you have now and that are valid for one situation and supposing that they will be valid for the new one

extrapolate (from/to something) *The figures were obtained by extrapolating from past trends.*

Try not to extrapolate too much from your own experience.

extrapolate something (from/to something) *We have extrapolated these results from research done in other countries.*

The results cannot be extrapolated to other patient groups.

ordain

ordain somebody (as something) | ordain somebody + noun to make somebody a priest, minister or **rabbi**

He was ordained (as) a priest last year.

see also **ordination**

ordain something | ordain that... (*formal*) (of God, the law or **fate**) to order or command something; to decide something in advance

Fate had ordained that they would never meet again.

It was ordained that the property should be returned to the original owner.

You should keep to the law as ordained by God.

mirth

happiness, fun and the sound of people laughing

synonym **merriment**

The performance produced much mirth among the audience.

proscribe /prəʊˈskraɪb/, proscription

proscribe something (*formal*) to say officially that something is banned
proscribed organizations

Membership of any proscribed organization is a serious matter.

Officials promptly proscribed the procedure.

obstreperous /əbˈstreperəs/

noisy and refusing to do what someone asks

Some children placed on the drug became more subdued, less obstreperous.

volition /vəˈlɪʃn/

the power to choose something freely or to make your own decisions

synonym **free will**

*They left entirely **of their own volition** (= because they wanted to).*

gravitate to somebody | gravitate to something

to move towards somebody/something that you are attracted to

Many young people gravitate to the cities in search of work.

particularize

particularize (something) (*formal*) itemize, to give details of something, especially one by one; to give particular examples of something

albeit /,ə'l'bi:t/

although

He finally agreed, albeit reluctantly, to help us.

credulous /'kredʒələs/

too ready to believe things and therefore easy to trick

She swindled credulous investors out of millions of dollars

credulity /krɪ'du:ləti/

the ability or willingness to believe that something is real or true

The plot of the novel stretches credulity to the limit (= it is almost impossible to believe).

winnow /'wɪnəʊ/

to make a list, group, or quantity smaller by getting rid of the things that you do not need or want

SYN whittle down

We need to winnow the list of candidates to three.

indulgent

(usually disapproving) tending to allow somebody to have or do whatever they want

indulgent parents

an indulgent smile

Mothers tend to be less indulgent towards daughters.

see also **self-indulgent**

willing or too willing to ignore the weaknesses in somebody/something

synonym **patient**

to take an indulgent view of something

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snub

snub somebody to insult somebody, especially by ignoring them when you meet
synonym **cold-shoulder**

I tried to be friendly, but she snubbed me completely.

He was not invited to the party, and felt snubbed.

snub something to refuse to attend or accept something, for example as a protest

synonym **boycott**

All the country's leading players snubbed the tournament.

obliterate

[often passive] **obliterate something** to remove all signs of something, either by destroying or covering it completely

The building was completely obliterated by the bomb.

The snow had obliterated their footprints.

Everything that happened that night was obliterated from his memory.

seethe /si:ð/

to be extremely angry about something but try not to show other people how angry you are

synonym **fume**

She seethed silently in the corner.

seethe with something *He marched off, seething with frustration.*

seethe at something *Inwardly he was seething at this challenge to his authority.*

Inwardly she was seething, and vowed to get back at him.

She was seething at the insult.

seethe (with something) (*formal*) (of a place) to be full of a lot of people or animals, especially when they are all moving around

The resort is seething with tourists all year round.

*He became caught up in a **seething mass** of arms and legs.*

(*formal*) (of liquids) to move around quickly and violently

The grey ocean seethed beneath them.

morph

to develop a new appearance or change into something else, or to make something do this

morph into

The river flooded its banks and morphed into a giant sea that swamped the town.

subservient

subservient (to somebody/something) (*disapproving*) too willing to obey other people

The press was accused of being subservient to the government.

She did not wish to leave him, but she could not accept her subservient role.

subservient (to something) (*formal*) less important than something else

The needs of individuals were subservient to those of the group as a whole.

Every consideration was subservient to the overriding need to cut costs.

obtuse

slow or unwilling to understand something

Are you being deliberately obtuse?

Perhaps I'm being obtuse, but what has all this got to do with me?

*He was either completely ignorant or being wilfully obtuse.
She was the most obtuse person I'd ever met.*

trenchant

(of criticism, remarks, etc.) expressed strongly and effectively, in a clear way
synonym **incisive**

His trenchant views on the subject are well known.

incisive

showing clear thought and good understanding of what is important, and the ability to express this

incisive comments/criticism/analysis

an incisive mind

showing somebody's ability to take decisions and act with force

an incisive performance

compartment

one of the separate sections which a coach/car on a train is divided into

He found an empty first-class compartment.

I opened the door of the compartment.

one of the separate sections that something such as a piece of furniture or equipment has for keeping things in

The desk has a secret compartment.

There is a handy storage compartment beneath the oven.

maelstrom /'meɪlstrɑ:m/

(literary) a situation full of strong emotions or confusing events, that is hard to control and makes you feel frightened

a maelstrom of conflicting emotions

They were being sucked into the maelstrom of war.

a very strong current of water that moves in circles

ancillary /'ænsələri/

providing necessary support to the main work or activities of an organization

synonym **auxiliary**

ancillary staff/services/equipment

ancillary workers in the health service such as cooks and cleaners

in addition to something else but not as important

ancillary rights

budding

beginning to develop or become successful

a **budding artist/writer**

our budding romance

The budding young star is now hot property in Hollywood.

consummate /'kɒnsəmət/

extremely skilled; perfect

She was a consummate performer.

He played the shot with consummate skill.

(disapproving) a consummate liar

consummate something to make a marriage or a relationship complete by having sex

The marriage lasted only a week and was never consummated.

consummate something to make something complete or perfect
the deal/ agreement has been consummated

like-minded

having similar ideas and interests

The club offers an opportunity for like-minded people to get together.

self-regard

a good opinion of yourself, which is considered bad if you have too little or too much

He suffers from a lack of self-regard.

subterfuge

a secret, usually dishonest, way of behaving

Journalists often use subterfuge to obtain material for stories.

a political subterfuge

agglomerate /ə'glɑ:məreɪt/

to form into a mass or group; to collect things and form them into a mass or group

These small particles agglomerate together to form larger clusters.

agglomerate something *They agglomerated many small pieces of research into a single large study.*

goad /gəʊd/

to keep irritating or annoying somebody/something until they react

goad somebody/something *Goaded beyond endurance, she turned on him and hit out.*

goad somebody/something into something/into doing something *He finally goaded her into answering his question.*

goad somebody... on

to drive or encourage somebody to do something

The boxers were goaded on by the shrieking crowd.

She was goaded on by fierce ambition.

protracted /prə'træktɪd/

lasting longer than expected or longer than usual

synonym **prolonged**

protracted delays/disputes/negotiations

A protracted strike carries a high risk of violence.

There followed a protracted series of legal wrangles.

falsify

falsify something (*formal*) to change a written record or information so that it is no longer true

to falsify data/records/accounts

She was arrested for falsifying information and obstructing the course of justice.

beleaguered

(*formal*) experiencing a lot of criticism and difficulties

The beleaguered party leader was forced to resign.

surrounded by an enemy

supplies for the beleaguered city

incumbent

a person who has an official position

*the **present incumbent** of the White House*

[only before noun] having an official position

the incumbent president

[not before noun] **incumbent upon/on somebody** (*formal*) necessary as part of somebody's duties

It was incumbent on them to attend.

reprisal /rɪ'praɪzl/

a violent or aggressive act towards somebody because of something bad that they have done towards you

synonym **retaliation**

They did not want to give evidence for fear of reprisals.

*They shot ten hostages **in reprisal for** the assassination of their leader.*

sublime

of very high quality and causing great admiration

sublime beauty

a sublime combination of flavours

The location of the hotel is sublime.

(*formal, often disapproving*) (of a person's behaviour or attitudes) extreme, especially in a way that shows they are not aware of what they are doing or are not concerned about what happens because of it

the sublime confidence of youth

He battled on, in the sublime conviction that he was in the right.

the sublime [singular] something that is **sublime**

He transforms the most ordinary subject into the sublime.

*His paintings range **from the sublime to the ridiculous**.*

anneal /ə'ni:l/

anneal something (*specialist*) to heat metal or glass and allow it to cool slowly, in order to make it stronger or softer

vicissitude /vɪ'sɪsɪtu:d/

one of the many changes and problems in a situation or in your life, that you have to deal with

the vicissitudes of family life

piecemeal /'pi:smi:l/

done or happening gradually at different times and often in different ways, rather than carefully planned at the beginning

a piecemeal approach to dealing with the problem

piecemeal changes

Alterations have been carried out on a piecemeal basis.

The reforms were implemented piecemeal.

The companies were broken up and sold off piecemeal over several years.

discriminatory /dɪ'skrɪmɪnətɔ:ri/

unfair; treating somebody or one group of people worse than others

discriminatory practices/rules/measures

sexually/racially discriminatory laws

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shear

[transitive] **shear something** to cut the wool off a sheep

It was time for the sheep to be shorn.

sheep shearing

[transitive] **shear something** (*formal*) to cut off somebody's hair

shorn hair

The prisoners' hair was shorn.

[intransitive, transitive] **shear (something) (off)** (*specialist*) (especially of metal) to break under pressure; to cut through something and make it break

The bolts holding the wheel in place sheared off.

trumpet

trumpet something (as something) | + speech to talk about something publicly in a proud or enthusiastic way

to trumpet somebody's achievements

Their marriage was trumpeted as the wedding of the year.

muckrake, muckraking

the activity of looking for information about people's private lives that they do not wish to make public

the sort of journalism that specializes in political muckraking

predicate /'predɪkət/

[usually passive] **predicate something on/upon something** to base something on a particular belief, idea or principle

Democracy is predicated upon the rule of law.

predicate that... | predicate something to state that something is true

The article predicates that the market collapse was caused by weakness of the dollar.

imbibe

imbibe something (*formal*) to absorb something, especially information

He imbibed elements of oriental mysticism from the years he spent in India.

muddle

to put things in the wrong order or mix them up

muddle something *Don't do that—you're muddling my papers.*

muddle something up *Their letters were all muddled up together in a drawer.*

muddle somebody (up) to confuse somebody

Slow down a little—you're muddling me.

muddle somebody/something (up) | muddle A (up) with B to confuse one person or thing with another

synonym **mix something...up**

I muddled the dates and arrived a week early.

*He **got all muddled up** about what went where.
They look so alike, I always **get them muddled up**.*

supple

able to bend and move parts of your body easily into different positions
*her slim, supple body
These exercises will help to keep you supple.*

soft and able to bend easily without cracking
Moisturizing cream helps to keep your skin soft and supple.

divest

divest somebody/yourself of something to remove clothes
He divested himself of his jacket.

divest yourself of something to get rid of something
The company is divesting itself of some of its assets.

divest somebody/something of something to take something away from somebody/something
After her illness she was divested of much of her responsibility

Interloper /'ɪntəloʊpər/

a person who is present in a place or a situation where they do not belong
synonym **intruder**
She felt like an interloper in her own family.

coterie /'kɒtəri/

a small group of people who have the same interests and do things together but do not like to include others
*her little coterie of friends and advisers
a literary coterie
He surrounded himself with an elite coterie of political advisors.
His work attracted a coterie of admirers in the US.*

aplomb /ə'plɒ:m/

if somebody does something **with aplomb**, they do it in a confident and successful way, often in a difficult situation
*with **considerable/great/remarkable aplomb**
He delivered the speech with his **usual aplomb**.
She concealed the problem with remarkable aplomb.*

bemoan

to complain or say that you are disappointed about something
He was bemoaning the fact that lawyers charge so much.
bemoan the lack/absence/loss of something

an article bemoaning the lack of sports facilities in the area

subtle

(often approving) not very noticeable or obvious

subtle colours/flavours/smells, etc.

There are **subtle differences** between the two versions.

The fragrance is a subtle blend of jasmine and sandalwood.

She's been dropping subtle hints about what she'd like as a present.

(of a person or their behaviour) behaving in a clever way, and using indirect methods, in order to achieve something

I decided to try a more subtle approach.

organized in a clever way

a subtle plan

a subtle use of lighting in the play

good at noticing and understanding things

The job required a subtle mind.

spew /spju:/

to flow out quickly, or to make something flow out quickly, in large amounts

+ adv./prep. *Flames spewed from the aircraft's engine.*

spew something + adv./prep. *Massive chimneys were spewing out smoke.*

to **vomit** (= bring food from the stomach back out through the mouth)

spew (up) *He spewed up on the pavement.*

He makes me want to spew.

spew something (up) *She spewed up the entire meal.*

meld

if two things meld, or if you meld them, they combine into one thing

meld (something) with something

He melded country music with blues to create rock and roll.

meld into

The raindrops melded into a sheet of water.

extenuating

showing reasons why a wrong or illegal act, or a bad situation, should be judged less seriously or excused

There were **extenuating circumstances** and the defendant did not receive a prison sentence.

Cases of illness and other extenuating circumstances that may have affected a student's performance will be dealt with by a personal tutor.

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poise /pɔɪz/

a calm and confident manner with control of your feelings or behaviour

His performance was full of maturity and poise.

She seemed embarrassed for a moment but quickly recovered her poise.

the ability to move or stand in an elegant way with good control of your body

trickster

He sold the car to a trickster who paid with a worthless stolen cheque.

impassioned

showing strong feelings about something

synonym **fervent**

an impassioned plea/speech/defence

He made an impassioned plea for the rebels to lay down their arms.

She wrote an impassioned letter to her local newspaper to complain about the new road.

deduce /dɪ'du:s/

to form an opinion about something based on the information or evidence that is available

synonym **infer**

deduce something (from something) *We can deduce a lot from what people choose to buy.*

deduce (from something) that, what, how, etc... *Can we deduce from your silence that you do not approve?*

neutralize

neutralize something to stop something from having any effect

The latest figures should neutralize the fears of inflation.

This strategy effectively neutralized what the Conservatives had hoped would be a vote-winner.

neutralize something to make a country or an area **neutral (2)**

The treaty neutralized the Black Sea.

conspire

[intransitive] to secretly plan with other people to do something illegal or harmful

conspire (with somebody) (against somebody) *They were accused of conspiring against the king.*

conspire (together) (to do something) *They deny conspiring together to smuggle drugs.*

conspire (with somebody) (to do something) *She admitted conspiring with her lover to murder her husband.*

[intransitive] (of events) to seem to work together to make something bad happen
conspire against somebody/something *Circumstances had conspired against them.*

conspire to do something *Everything conspired to make her life a misery.*

paraphernalia /ˌpærəfəˈneɪliə/

a large number of objects or personal possessions, especially the equipment that you need for a particular activity

skiing paraphernalia

an electric kettle and all the paraphernalia for making tea and coffee

detritus /dɪˈtraɪtəs/

(*specialist*) natural waste material that is left after something has been used or broken up

organic detritus from fish and plants

(*formal*) any kind of rubbish/garbage that is left after an event or when something has been used

synonym **debris**

the detritus of everyday life

The kitchen table was still stacked with the detritus of the previous night.

halt

to stop; to make somebody/something stop

She walked towards him and then halted.

'Halt!' the Major ordered (= used as a command to soldiers).

halt somebody/something *The police were halting traffic on the parade route.*

The trial was halted after the first week.

stipulate

to state clearly and firmly that something must be done, or how it must be done

synonym **specify**

stipulate something *A delivery date is stipulated in the contract.*

stipulate that... *The job advertisement stipulates that the applicant must have three years' experience.*

stipulate what, how, etc... *The policy stipulates what form of consent is required.*

dispense

dispense something (to somebody) (*formal*) to give out something to people

The machine dispenses a range of drinks and snacks.

dispense something (to somebody) (*formal*) to provide something, especially a service, for people

The organization dispenses free health care to the poor.

to **dispense justice/advice**

dispense something to prepare medicine and give it to people, as a job

to dispense a prescription

(British English) to dispense medicine

(British English) a dispensing chemist

redolent

formal making you think of something *SYN reminiscent*

a style redolent of the sixties

iterary smelling strongly of something

redolent of/with

The bar was redolent with the smell of stale

reminiscent

reminiscent of somebody/something reminding you of somebody/something

The way he laughed was strongly reminiscent of his father.

She writes in a style reminiscent of both Proust and Faulkner.

[only before noun] (*formal*) showing that you are thinking about the past, especially in a way that causes you pleasure

a reminiscent smile

contingent

a group of people at a meeting or an event who have something in common, especially the place they come from, that is not shared by other people at the event

The largest contingent was from the United States.

A strong contingent of local residents were there to block the proposal.

a group of soldiers that are part of a larger force

the French contingent in the UN peacekeeping force

contingent (on/upon something) (*formal*) depending on something that may or may not happen

All payments are contingent upon satisfactory completion dates.

contingent worker/work/job (*business*) a person, or work done by a person, who does not have a permanent contract with a company

the spread of contingent work throughout the economy

the use of leased, temporary and other contingent workers

dire /'daɪər/

[usually before noun] (*formal*) very serious

living in dire poverty

dire warnings/threats

Such action may have **dire consequences**.

We're **in dire need of** your help.

The firm is **in dire straits** (= in a very difficult situation) and may go bankrupt.

accretion /ə'kri:ʃn/

[countable] a layer of a substance or a piece of matter that is slowly added to something

[uncountable] the process of new layers or matter being slowly added to something

the accretion of sand by wind action

adjunct

(*formal*) a thing that is added or attached to something larger or more important

The memory expansion cards are useful adjuncts to the computer.

heretofore /,hɪr'tʊ'fɔ:r/

In recent years, we have seen greater emphasis than heretofore on the voice of the consumer.

choke

to be unable to breathe because the passage to your lungs is blocked or you cannot get enough air; to make somebody unable to breathe

*She almost **choked to death** in the thick fumes.*

choke on something *He was choking on a piece of toast.*

choke somebody *Very small toys can choke a baby.*

choke somebody to make somebody stop breathing by squeezing their throat

synonym **strangle**

He may have been choked or poisoned.

to be unable to speak normally especially because of strong emotion; to make somebody feel too emotional to speak normally

choke (with something) *His voice was choking with rage.*

choke something *Despair choked her words.*

'I can't bear it,' he said in a choked voice.

to block or fill a passage, space, etc. so that movement is difficult

choke something (with something) *The pond was choked with rotten leaves.*

choke something up (with something) *The roads are choked up with traffic.*

uncompromising

unwilling to change your opinions or behaviour

an uncompromising attitude

He has a reputation for being tough and uncompromising.

He was quite uncompromising about high standards in art.

The government has remained uncompromising on this issue.

resume

if you **resume** an activity, or if it **resumes**, it begins again or continues after an interruption

resume (something) to resume talks/negotiations

She resumed her career after an interval of six years.

The noise resumed, louder than before.

There is no sign of the peace talks resuming.

resume doing something *He got back in the car and resumed driving.*

[transitive] **resume your seat/place/position** to go back to the seat or place that you had before

He resumed his seat opposite her.

stalemate /'steɪlmənt/

a disagreement or a situation in a competition in which neither side is able to win or make any progress

synonym **impasse**

The talks ended in (a) stalemate.

proposals aimed at breaking (= ending) the political stalemate

The strike has once again reached stalemate.

(in **chess**) a situation in which a player cannot successfully move any of their pieces and the game ends without a winner

The match ended in (a) stalemate

inextricable

Knowledge and economic power have become inextricable.

an inextricable connection between the past and the present

beset

(*formal*) to affect somebody/something in an unpleasant or harmful way

The team was beset by injury all season.

It's one of the most difficult problems besetting our modern way of life.

a life beset with financial worries

jockey

jockey (with somebody) (for something) | jockey (with somebody) (to do something) to try all possible ways of gaining an advantage over other people

*The runners **jockeyed for position** at the start.*

The bands are constantly jockeying with each other for the number one spot.

Several key figures are already jockeying to succeed the leader.

The firms often adopt quite different strategies as they jockey for position.

appreciative /ə'pri:ʃətɪv/

appreciative (of something) feeling or showing that you are grateful for something

The company was very appreciative of my efforts.

showing pleasure or enjoyment

an appreciative audience/smile

appreciative laughter/comments

She watched them with an appreciative smile.

The audience was highly appreciative.

temper

temper something (with something) (*formal*) to make something less severe by adding something that has the opposite effect

Justice must be tempered with mercy.

The hot sunny days were tempered by a light breeze.

His delight was tempered by regret.

temper something (*specialist*) to make metal as hard as it needs to be by heating and then cooling it

tempered steel

outstrip

outstrip something to become larger, more important, etc. than somebody/something

Demand is outstripping supply.

outstrip something to be faster, better or more successful than somebody you are competing against

synonym **surpass**

Their latest computer outstrips all its rivals.

outstrip somebody to run faster than somebody in a race so that you pass them

She soon outstripped the slower runners.

outdo

outdo somebody/something to do more or better than somebody else

synonym **beat**

Sometimes small firms can outdo big business when it comes to customer care.

Not to be outdone (= not wanting to let somebody else do better), *she tried again.*

The brothers tried to outdo each other in everything.

Impasse /'ɪmpæs/

a difficult situation in which no progress can be made because the people involved cannot agree what to do

synonym **deadlock**

to **break/end the impasse**

Negotiations have **reached an impasse**.

The Governor attempted to resolve Minnesota's current budget impasse.

The proposal offered both sides a way out of the diplomatic impasse.

extravagant

(of ideas, speech or behaviour) very extreme or impressive but not reasonable or practical

synonym **exaggerated**

the **extravagant claims/promises** of politicians

I was embarrassed by all the extravagant praise I was getting.

He had the extravagant gestures and loud voice of an actor.

vagary

changes in somebody/something that are difficult to predict or control

All farmers are exposed to the vagaries of the weather.

Their wealth fluctuates with the vagaries of the stock market.

evangelism /ɪˈvændʒəlɪzəm/, evangelist, televangelist

the practice of trying to persuade people to become Christians, especially by travelling around the country holding religious meetings or speaking on radio or television

pedigree /ˈpedɪɡriː/

knowledge of or an official record of the animals from which an animal has been bred

dogs with good pedigrees (= their **ancestors** are known and of the same breed)

a person's family history or the background of something, especially when this is impressive

She was proud of her long pedigree.

The product has a pedigree going back to the last century.

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enforce

enforce something (on/against somebody/something) to make sure that people obey a particular law or rule

It's the job of the police to enforce the law.

The legislation will be difficult to enforce.

United Nations troops enforced a ceasefire in the area.

enforce something (on somebody) to make something happen or force somebody to do something

You can't enforce cooperation between the players.

mince

mince something to cut food, especially meat, into very small pieces using a special machine (called a **mincer**)

minced beef

+ adv./prep. (*disapproving*) to walk with quick short steps, in a way that is not natural

He minced over to serve us.

not mince (your) words

to say something in a direct way even though it might offend other people

They were severely criticized by the chairman, who was not a man to mince his words.

Intact /In'tækt/

complete and not damaged

synonym **undamaged**

*Most of the house **remains intact** even after two hundred years.*

He emerged from the trial with his reputation intact.

covet

covet something (*formal*) to want something very much, especially something that belongs to somebody else

He had long coveted the chance to work with a famous musician.

They are this year's winners of the coveted trophy (= that everyone would like to win).

weary

very tired, especially after you have been working hard or doing something for a long time

a weary traveller

She suddenly felt old and weary.

a weary sigh

(*literary*) making you feel tired or bored

a weary journey

weary hours spent in negotiation

weary of something/of doing something (*formal*) no longer interested in or enthusiastic about something

Students soon grow weary of listening to a parade of historical facts.

perspicacious

able to understand somebody/something quickly and accurately; showing this

a perspicacious remark

He was perspicacious enough to realize that things were soon going to change.

sleazy

(of a place) dirty, unpleasant and not socially acceptable, especially because sex is involved

synonym **disreputable**

a sleazy bar

a sleazy neighbourhood

(of people) immoral and unpleasant

a sleazy reporter

See related entries: **Immoral**

Indemnify /ɪnˈdemnifaɪ/

indemnify somebody (against something) to promise to pay somebody an amount of money if they suffer any damage or loss

The contract indemnifies them against loss of earnings.

indemnify somebody (for something) to pay somebody an amount of money because of the damage or loss that they have suffered

The tenant is legally required to indemnify the landlord for any damage caused to the property.

accommodate

accommodate something (*formal*) to consider something, such as somebody's opinion or a fact, and be influenced by it when you are deciding what to do or explaining something

Our proposal tries to accommodate the special needs of minority groups.

She modified her views so as to accommodate the objections of American feminists.

accommodate somebody (with something) (*formal*) to help somebody by doing what they want

synonym **oblige**

I have accommodated the press a great deal, giving numerous interviews.

I'm sure the bank will be able to accommodate you.

accommodate (something/yourself) to something (*formal*) to change your behaviour so that you can deal with a new situation better

I needed to accommodate to the new schedule.

untoward /ʌnˈtɔːrd/

unusual and unexpected, and usually unpleasant

*That's the plan—unless **anything untoward** happens.*

*He had noticed **nothing untoward**.*

The dose can be increased slightly without any untoward effects.

impersonal

(usually *disapproving*) lacking friendly human feelings or atmosphere; making you feel unimportant

a vast impersonal organization

an impersonal hotel room

Business letters need not be formal and impersonal.

a cold impersonal stare

His touch was as impersonal as that of a doctor.

not referring to any particular person

Let's keep the criticism general and impersonal.

avert

avert something to prevent something bad or dangerous from happening

A disaster was narrowly averted.

He did his best to avert suspicion.

Talks are taking place in an attempt to avert a strike.

avert your eyes/gaze/face (from something) to turn your eyes, etc. away from something that you do not want to see

She averted her eyes from the terrible scene in front of her.

fad /fæd/

something that people are interested in for only a short period of time

synonym **craze**

*the **latest/current** fad*

a fad for physical fitness

*Rap music proved to be more than just a **passing** fad.*

ape /eɪp/

ape somebody/something (*British English, disapproving*) to do something in the same way as somebody else, especially when it is not done very well

synonym **imitate**

For years the British film industry merely aped Hollywood.

ape somebody/something (*especially North American English*) to copy the way somebody else behaves or talks, in order to make fun of them

synonym **mimic**

We used to ape the teacher's southern accent.

ebb

ebb (away) to become gradually weaker or less

synonym **decrease**

The pain was ebbing.

As night fell, our enthusiasm began to ebb away.

snag

(*informal*) a problem or difficulty, especially one that is small, hidden or unexpected

synonym **difficulty**

There is just one small snag—where is the money coming from?

Let me know if you run into any snags.

an object or a part of an object that is rough or sharp and may cut something

Check all surfaces for snags and rough edges.

bent

bent (for something) a natural skill or interest in something

She has a bent for mathematics.

people of a philosophical bent

bent on something/on doing something

determined to do something (usually something bad)

She seems bent on making life difficult for me.

hell-bent on something/on doing something determined to do something even though the results may be bad

He seems hell-bent on drinking himself to death.

quash

quash something (*law*) to officially say that a decision made by a court is no longer valid or correct

synonym **overturn**

His conviction was later quashed by the Court of Appeal.

quash something to take action to stop something from continuing

synonym **suppress**

The rumours were quickly quashed.

The government moved quickly to quash the revolt.

overturn

overturn something to officially decide that a legal decision, etc. is not correct, and to make it no longer valid

to overturn a decision/conviction/verdict

His sentence was overturned by the appeal court.

glib

using words that are clever, but are not sincere, and do not show much thought

a glib salesman

glib answers

He had assumed that his glib explanations would convince us.

It would be glib to suggest that she did it deliberately.

roil

(of a liquid, cloud, surface, etc.) to move quickly and violently in different directions; to make a liquid, cloud, surface, etc. move quickly and violently in different directions

The waves roiled and crashed up against the side of the ship.

The clouds roiled above in the dark sky.

roil something *Winds often roil the sea here.*

(figurative) The collapse of the mortgage sector has roiled markets.

The minister was accused of roiling the political waters.

pithy

(of a comment, piece of writing, etc.) short but expressed well and full of meaning
a pithy observation

The book is full of pithy observations about how we behave when we travel abroad.

a pithy advertising slogan

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niche

a comfortable or suitable role, job, way of life, etc.

He eventually found his niche in sports journalism.

(business) an opportunity to sell a particular product to a particular group of people

They spotted a niche in the market, with no serious competition.

a niche market

*the development of **niche marketing** (= aiming products at particular groups)*

stoic

able to suffer pain or trouble without complaining or showing what you are feeling

her stoic endurance

his stoical acceptance of death

From the Stoics, a group of ancient Greek philosophers, who believed that wise people should not allow themselves to be affected by painful or pleasant experiences.

murky

(of a liquid) not clear; dark or dirty with mud or another substance

synonym **cloudy**

She gazed into the murky depths of the water.

(of air, light, etc.) dark and unpleasant because of smoke, fog, etc.
a murky night

(disapproving or humorous) (of people's actions or character) not clearly known and suspected of not being honest
He had a somewhat murky past.
the murky world of arms dealing

crass

very stupid and showing no sympathy or understanding
synonym **insensitive**
the crass questions all disabled people get asked
an act of crass (= great) stupidity
I thought his comments were somewhat crass.

apt

suitable or appropriate in the circumstances
*a particularly **apt description/name/comment***
The song would have been more apt for a bass voice.
It was a particularly apt name for someone with his skills.
That question seemed quite apt in the circumstances.

likely or having a natural tendency to do something
apt to be... *apt to be forgetful/careless*
apt to do something *Babies are apt to put objects into their mouths.*

apt pupil a person who has a natural ability to learn and understand

verge

on/to the verge of something/of doing something
very near to the moment when somebody does something or something happens
He was on the verge of tears.
They are on the verge of signing a new contract.
These measures brought the republic to the verge of economic collapse.

exalt

exalt somebody (to something) to make somebody rise to a higher rank or position, sometimes to one that they do not deserve
His son was exalted to a high position in the government through family connections.

exalt somebody/something to praise somebody/something very much
He was exalted as a pillar of the community.

tweak

tweak something to pull or twist something suddenly

She tweaked his ear playfully.

tweak something to make slight changes to a machine, system, etc. to improve it

I think you'll have to tweak these figures a little before you show them to the boss.

coy

shy or pretending to be shy and innocent, especially about love or sex, and sometimes in order to make people more interested in you

She gave me a coy smile.

He went all coy when I mentioned her name.

She gave him a rather coy look.

coy (about something) not willing to give information about something, or answer questions that tell people too much about you

synonym **reticent**

She was a little coy about how much her dress cost.

The company is coy about revealing its profits.

pine

to become very sad because somebody has died or gone away

She pined for months after he'd gone.

The Major's dog pined badly when her master died.

pine away

to become very sick and weak because you miss somebody/something very much

After his wife died, he just pined away.

pine for somebody | pine for something

to want or miss somebody/something very much

She was pining for the mountains of her native country.

belie

belie something to give a false impression of somebody/something

Her energy and youthful good looks belie her 65 years.

belie something to show that something cannot be true or correct

Government claims that there is no poverty are belied by the number of homeless people on the streets.

spike

spike somebody/something (on something) to push a sharp piece of metal, wood, etc. into somebody/something; to injure something on a sharp point

synonym **stab**

spike something (with something) to add alcohol, poison or a drug to somebody's drink or food without them knowing

He gave her a drink spiked with tranquillizers.

(figurative) Her words were spiked with malice.

She suspected that her drink had been spiked.

spike something to reject something that a person has written or said; to prevent something from happening or being made public

The article was spiked for fear of legal action against the newspaper.

spike (to something) (*especially North American English*) to rise quickly and reach a high value

The US dollar spiked to a three-month high.

hitch

a problem or difficulty that causes a short delay

*The ceremony went off **without a hitch**.*

a technical hitch

to get a free ride in a person's car; to travel around in this way, by standing at the side of the road and trying to get passing cars to stop

hitch something *They **hitched a ride** in a truck.*

hitch something (up) to pull up a piece of your clothing

synonym **hike something...up**

She hitched up her skirt and waded into the river.

hitch yourself (up, etc.) to lift yourself into a higher position, or the position mentioned

She hitched herself up.

He hitched himself onto the bar stool.

She hitched herself into a sitting position.

hitch something (to something) to fix something to something else with a rope, a hook, etc.

She hitched the pony to the gate.

emblematic

that represents or is a symbol of something

synonym **representative**

According to this interpretation, the most truly emblematic figure of the new Europe was Pope John Paul II.

that is considered typical of a situation, an area of work, etc.

synonym **typical**

The violence is emblematic of what is happening in our inner cities.

gauge /geɪdʒ/

to make a judgement about something, especially people's feelings or attitudes
gauge something *They interviewed employees to gauge their reaction to the changes.*

He tried to gauge her mood.

gauge whether, how, etc... *It was difficult to gauge whether she was angry or not.*

gauge something to measure something accurately using a special instrument
precision instruments that can gauge the diameter to a fraction of a millimetre

gauge something | gauge how, what, etc... to calculate something approximately

*We were able to gauge the strength of the wind from the movement of the trees.
It is impossible to gauge the extent of the damage.*

cloak /kloʊk/

cloak something (in something) [often passive] (*literary*) to cover or hide something

The hills were cloaked in thick mist.

*The meeting was **cloaked in mystery**.*

cloak-and-dagger activities are secret and mysterious, sometimes in a way that people think is unnecessary or ridiculous

Why can't we be open about it? Do we really need all this cloak-and-dagger stuff?

akin

akin to something (*formal*) similar to

What he felt was more akin to pity than love.

She was wearing something akin to a pineapple on her head.

This game is closely akin to hockey.

sullen

bad-tempered and not speaking, either on a particular occasion or because it is part of your character

Bob looked pale and sullen.

She gave him a sullen glare.

sullen teenagers

He lapsed into a sullen silence.

(*literary*) (of the sky or weather) dark and unpleasant
a sullen grey sky

gruff /grʌf/

(of a voice) deep and rough, and often sounding unfriendly

(of a person's behaviour) unfriendly and impatient

Beneath his gruff exterior, he's really very kind-hearted.

sap

the liquid in a plant or tree that carries food to all its parts

Maple syrup is made from sap extracted from the sugar maple tree.

a stupid person that you can easily trick, or treat unfairly

The poor sap never knew what was going on behind his back.

to make something/somebody weaker; to destroy something gradually

sap something *The hot sun sapped our energy.*

The fever slowly sapped her strength.

sap somebody (of something) *Years of failure have sapped him of his confidence.*

plod

to walk slowly with heavy steps, especially because you are tired

synonym **trudge**

+ adv./prep. *Our horses plodded down the muddy track.*

We plodded on through the rain.

plod your way + adv./prep. *I watched her plodding her way across the field.*

gloat

gloat (about/at/over something) to show that you are happy about your own success or somebody else's failure, in an unpleasant way

synonym **crow**

She was still gloating over her rival's disappointment.

Having lost a large percentage of the vote, they were in no position to gloat.

I hope you haven't just come here to gloat.

He won't stop crowing about his victory.

+ speech *'I've won, I've won!' she crowed.*

crow that... *He crowed that they had sold out in one day.*

oust

to force somebody out of a job or position of power, especially in order to take their place

oust somebody (as something) *He was ousted as chairman.*

oust somebody (from something) *The rebels finally managed to oust the government from power.*

She is a strong supporter of the recently ousted president.

sift

to examine something very carefully in order to decide what is important or useful or to find something important

sift something *We will sift every scrap of evidence.*

Computers are being used to sift the information.

sift through something *Crash investigators have been sifting through the wreckage of the aircraft.*

sift something (out) from something to separate something from a group of things

He sifted the relevant data from the rest.

She looked quickly through the papers, sifting out from the pile anything that looked interesting.

Put the flour through a sieve to sift out the lumps.

We need to sift out the applications that have no chance of succeeding.

lapse

a small mistake, especially one that is caused by forgetting something or by being careless

a lapse of concentration/memory

A momentary lapse in the final set cost her the match.

a period of time between two things that happen

synonym **interval**

After a lapse of six months we met up again.

He wrote to us after a considerable lapse of time.

[intransitive] (of a contract, an agreement, etc.) to be no longer valid because the period of time that it lasts has come to an end

She had allowed her membership to lapse.

The treaty lapsed in 1995.

The booking will automatically lapse if the deposit is not paid within two weeks.

[intransitive] to gradually become weaker or come to an end

synonym **expire**

His concentration lapsed after a few minutes.

This custom had lapsed over the years.

[intransitive] **lapse (from something)** to stop believing in or practising your religion

He lapsed from Judaism when he was a student.

lapse into something

to gradually pass into a worse or less active state or condition

to lapse into unconsciousness/a coma

She lapsed into silence again.

to start speaking or behaving in a different way, often one that is less acceptable
He soon lapsed back into his old ways.

pique /pi:k/

annoyed or bitter feelings that you have, usually because your pride has been hurt

When he realized nobody was listening to him, he left in a fit of pique.

hew

(*formal*) to make or shape something large by cutting

roughly hewn timber frames

The statues were hewn out of solid rock.

They hewed a path through the forest.

The cave has been hewn out of the hillside.

feat

an action or a piece of work that needs skill, strength or courage

The tunnel is a brilliant feat of engineering.

to **perform/attempt/achieve** astonishing **feats**

*That was **no mean feat** (= it was difficult to do).*

marvel

a wonderful and surprising person or thing

synonym **wonder**

*the **marvels of nature/technology***

marvels [plural] wonderful results or things that have been achieved

synonym **wonders**

The doctors have done marvels for her.

slur

slur something | **+ speech** to pronounce words in a way that is not clear so that they run into each other, usually because you are drunk or tired

She had drunk too much and her speech was slurred.

slur something (*music*) to play or sing a group of two or more musical notes so that each one runs smoothly into the next

slur somebody/something to harm somebody's reputation by making unfair or false statements about them

She accused the programme of slurring the company's name.

cede

cede something (to somebody) (*formal*) to give somebody control of something or give them power, a right, etc., especially unwillingly

Cuba was ceded by Spain to the US in 1898.

backwater

a part of a river away from the main part, where the water only moves slowly

(often disapproving) a place that is away from the places where most things happen, and is therefore not affected by events, progress, new ideas, etc.

a sleepy/quiet/rural backwater

The region became more and more of an economic backwater.

deadpan

without any expression or emotion; often pretending to be serious when you are joking

deadpan humour

She looked up, completely deadpan.

impressionable

(of a person, especially a young one) easily influenced or affected by somebody/something

children at an impressionable age

He is in a highly impressionable state.

He was a bad influence on the child, who was at an impressionable age.

personable

(of a person) attractive to other people because of having a pleasant appearance and character

The sales assistant was a very personable young man.

wholesale /'houlseɪl/

connected with goods that are bought and sold in large quantities, especially so they can be sold again to make a profit

wholesale prices

compare **retail**

(especially of something bad) happening or done to a very large number of people or things

the wholesale slaughter of innocent people

We buy the building materials wholesale.

These young people die wholesale from heroin overdoses.

defining

that describes or shows the essential meaning of something

Scotland's referendum is a defining moment for our nation.

Front porches are a defining characteristic of Garfield's architecture.

*He believed that liberty was a defining characteristic of civilized society.
Advertising is one of the defining features of our age.*

telling

having a strong or important effect; effective

a telling argument

Although he didn't score a goal, Tevez made a telling contribution to the game.

These are telling points, but the argument is by no means over.

showing effectively what somebody/something is really like, but often without intending to

The number of homeless people is a telling comment on the state of society.

dour /'daʊər/

(of a person) giving the impression of being unfriendly and severe

(of a thing, a place, or a situation) not pleasant; with no features that make it lively or interesting

The city, drab and dour by day, is transformed at night.

The game proved to be a dour struggle, with both men determined to win.

backbone

[singular] the most important part of a system, an organization, etc. that gives it support and strength

Agriculture forms the backbone of the rural economy.

[uncountable] the strength of character that you need to do something difficult

He doesn't have the backbone to face the truth.

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pronounced

very noticeable, obvious or strongly expressed

synonym **definite**

He walked with a pronounced limp.

She has very pronounced views on art.

She had a pronounced Scottish accent.

calculated

carefully planned to get what you want

a calculated insult

*He took a **calculated risk** (= a risk that you decide is worth taking even though you know it might have bad results).*

It was either a ridiculous mistake or a calculated insult.

This was clearly a calculated attempt to discredit the company.

be calculated to do something

to be intended to do something; to be likely to do something

Her latest play is calculated to shock.

This sort of life is not calculated to appeal to a young man of 20.

gridlock

a situation in which there are so many cars in the streets of a town that the traffic cannot move at all

It's gridlock between 6.30 and 9.00.

The protest march created gridlock.

(usually in politics) a situation in which people with different opinions are not able to agree with each other and so no action can be taken

Congress is in gridlock.

streamline

streamline something to give something a smooth even shape so that it can move quickly and easily through air or water

The cars all have a new streamlined design.

streamline something to make a system, an organization, etc. work better, especially in a way that saves money

The production process is to be streamlined.

grandstand

a large covered structure with rows of seats for people to watch sports events

The game was played to a packed grandstand.

*From her house, we had a **grandstand view** (= very good view) of the celebrations.*

rife /raɪf/

if something bad or unpleasant is **rife** in a place, it is very common there

synonym **widespread**

It is a country where corruption is rife.

Rumours are rife that he is going to resign.

rife (with something) full of something bad or unpleasant

Los Angeles is rife with gossip about the stars' private lives.

girth /gɜːrθ/

[uncountable, countable] the measurement around something, especially a person's waist

a man of enormous girth

a tree one metre in girth/with a girth of one metre

He rested his hands on his broad girth (= his large stomach).

hard-boiled

- a) not showing your emotions and not influenced by your feelings SYN tough
a hard-boiled marketing executive
- b) **hard-boiled film/thriller/fiction etc a film etc** that deals with people who do not show their emotions

forbear /fɔːr'ber/

(*formal*) to stop yourself from saying or doing something that you could or would like to say or do

forbear (from something/from doing something) *He wanted to answer back, but he forbore from doing so.*

forbear to do something *She forbore to ask any further questions.*

enjoin /ɪn'dʒɔɪn/

1.[*formal*] If you enjoin someone to do something, you order them to do it. If you enjoin an action or attitude, you order people to do it or have it.

She enjoined me strictly not to tell anyone else. [VERB noun to-infinitive]

It is true that Islam enjoins tolerance; there's no doubt about that. [VERB noun]

The organisation has been enjoined to end all restrictions.

2.If a judge enjoins someone from doing something, they order them not to do it. If a judge enjoins an action, they order people not to do it.

The judge enjoined Varityper from using the ad in any way. [VERB noun + from]

...a preliminary injunction enjoining the practice. [VERB noun]

cleave /kli:v/, clove /kloʊv/, cleft,

[*transitive*] **cleave something** (*old-fashioned or literary*) to split or cut something in two using something sharp and heavy

She cleaved his skull (in two) with an axe.

(*figurative*) *His skin was cleft with deep lines.*

[*intransitive, transitive*] (*old-fashioned or literary*) to move quickly through something

cleave through something *a ship cleaving through the water*

cleave something *The huge boat cleaved the darkness.*

to cleave a path through the traffic

[*intransitive*] **cleave to something/somebody** (*literary*) to stick close to something/somebody

Her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth.

[*intransitive*] **cleave to something** (*formal*) to continue to believe in or be loyal to something

to cleave to a belief/idea

undue

more than you think is reasonable or necessary

synonym **excessive**

They are taking undue advantage of the situation.

The work should be carried out without undue delay.

We did not want to put any undue pressure on them.

Repayments can be made over a long period, without putting undue strain on your finances.

misgiving /ˌmɪsˈɡɪvɪŋ/

misgiving about something/about doing something feelings of doubt or anxiety about what might happen, or about whether or not something is the right thing to do

I had grave misgivings about making the trip.

She decided to go despite her misgivings.

I read the letter with a sense of misgiving.

whisk

whisk somebody/something + adv./prep. to take somebody/something somewhere very quickly and suddenly

Jamie whisked her off to Paris for the weekend.

The waiter whisked away the plates before we had finished.

buoy

buoy somebody (up) to make somebody feel cheerful or confident

Buoyed by their win yesterday the team feel confident of further success.

Knowing that all her friends were there buoyed up her spirits.

buoy somebody/something (up) to keep somebody/something floating on water

The raft was buoyed (up) by empty petrol cans.

buoy something (up) to keep prices at a high or acceptable level

Trading on Wall Street was buoyed in part by rising bond prices.

makeshift

used temporarily for a particular purpose because the real thing is not available

synonym **provisional**, **improvised**

A few cushions formed a makeshift bed.

The hall had been turned into a makeshift hospital.

appreciable /əˈpriːjəbl/

large enough to be noticed or thought important

synonym **considerable**

The new regulations will not make an appreciable difference to most people.

an appreciable effect/increase/amount

The increase in salary will be appreciable.
There has been an appreciable increase in profits.

stonewall

stonewall (somebody/something) (especially in politics) to delay a discussion or decision by refusing to answer questions or by talking a lot
He stonewalled successfully on the Prime Minister's behalf.
She stonewalled questions about her personal life.

categorical

expressed clearly and in a way that shows that you are very sure about what you are saying
to make a categorical statement
to give a categorical assurance
They gave him a categorical assurance that he would not be hurt.

recollect

(not used in the progressive tenses) (*rather formal*) to remember something, especially by making an effort to remember it
synonym **recall**
recollect (something) *She could no longer recollect the details of the letter.*
As far as I can recollect, she wasn't there on that occasion.
recollect what, how, etc... *I don't recollect what he said.*
recollect that... *I recollect that we were all gathered in the kitchen.*
recollect (somebody/something) doing something *I recollect him/his saying that it was dangerous.*
+ speech *'It was just before the war,' she recollected.*

overrule

[often passive] **overrule somebody/something** to change a decision or reject an idea from a position of greater power
synonym **override**
to overrule a decision/an objection
The verdict was overruled by the Supreme Court.

override

override something to use your authority to reject somebody's decision, order, etc.
synonym **overrule**
The chairman overrode the committee's objections and signed the agreement.

override something to be more important than something
Considerations of safety override all other concerns.

override something to stop a process that happens automatically and control it yourself

A special code is needed to override the time lock.

overriding

more important than anything else in a particular situation

*the **overriding factor/consideration/concern***

Their overriding aim was to keep costs low.

Time was of overriding importance.

eventful

full of things that happen, especially exciting, important or dangerous things

an eventful day/life/journey

stunt

a dangerous and difficult action that somebody does to entertain people, especially as part of a film/movie

He did all his own stunts.

a stunt pilot

a stunt flying team

(sometimes disapproving) something that is done in order to attract people's attention

a publicity stunt

(informal) a stupid or dangerous act

I've had enough of her childish stunts.

*Don't you ever **pull a stunt** like that again!*

render

1. give help. *(formal)* to give somebody something, especially in return for something or because it is expected

render something to somebody/something *They rendered assistance to the disaster victims.*

to render a service to somebody

render somebody something *to render somebody a service*

render something *It was payment **for services rendered**.*

2. present something. *(formal)* to present something, especially when it is done officially

synonym **furnish**

The committee was asked to render a report on the housing situation.

3. express/perform. *(formal)* to express or perform something

He stood up and rendered a beautiful version of 'Summertime'.

The artist has rendered the stormy sea in dark greens and browns.

furnish

furnish somebody/something with something | furnish something (*formal*) to supply or provide somebody/something with something; to supply something to somebody

She furnished him with the facts surrounding the case.

Foreign investors furnished most of the capital for the project.

allocate

to give something officially to somebody/something for a particular purpose
allocate something (for something) *A large sum has been allocated for buying new books for the library.*

allocate something (to somebody/something) *They intend to allocate more places to mature students this year.*

More resources are being allocated to the project.

allocate somebody/something sth *The project is being allocated more resources.*

allocate something to do something *Millions have been allocated to improve students' performance.*

designate

to say officially that somebody/something has a particular character or name; to describe somebody/something in a particular way

designate somebody/something (as) something *This area has been designated (as) a National Park.*

This floor has been designated a no-smoking area.

designate somebody/something (as being/having something) *Several pupils were designated as having moderate or severe learning difficulties.*

a designated nature reserve

designated seats for the elderly

designate something (by something) to show something using a particular mark or sign

The different types are designated by the letters A, B and C.

downcast /'daʊnkæst/

(of eyes) looking down

Eyes downcast, she continued eating.

She kept her eyes slightly downcast to avoid looking into their faces.

(of a person or an expression) sad or depressed

synonym **dejected**

A group of downcast men stood waiting for food.

moody

having moods that change quickly and often

Moody people are very difficult to deal with.

She's a bit moody and never the same two days in a row.
Teenagers tend to get a bad name for being moody, rude and irresponsible.

bad-tempered or upset, often for no particular reason

synonym **grumpy**

Why are you so moody today?

See related entries: **Unhappiness**

(of a film/movie, piece of music or place) suggesting particular emotions,
especially sad ones

indiscriminate

an **indiscriminate** action is done without thought about what the result may be,
especially when it causes people to be harmed

indiscriminate attacks on motorists by youths throwing stones

the indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons

Doctors have been criticized for their indiscriminate use of antibiotics.

acting without careful judgement

antonym **discriminating**

She's always been indiscriminate in her choice of friends.

collected

[not before noun] very calm and in control of yourself

*She always stays **cool, calm and collected** in a crisis.*

collected works, papers, poems, etc. all the books, etc. written by one author,
published in one book or in a set

the collected works of Edgar Allan Poe

dog

dog somebody/something (of a problem or bad luck) to cause you trouble for a
long time

He had been dogged by ill health all his life.

Her career was dogged by misfortune.

dog somebody/something to follow somebody closely

She had the impression that someone was dogging her steps.

agreeable

pleasant and easy to like

We spent a most agreeable day together.

He seemed extremely agreeable.

[not before noun] **agreeable (to something)** willing to do something or allow
something

Do you think they will be agreeable to our proposal?

agreeable (to somebody) able to be accepted by somebody

The deal must be agreeable to both sides.

prohibitive

(of a price or a cost) so high that it prevents people from buying something or doing something

synonym **exorbitant**

prohibitive costs

a prohibitive tax on imported cars

The price of property in the city is prohibitive.

preventing people from doing something by law

prohibitive legislation

amiss

[not before noun] wrong; not as it should be

She sensed something was amiss and called the police.

He shone a light inside and saw nothing amiss.

They had noticed something amiss with the engines.

musty

smelling damp and unpleasant because of a lack of fresh air

synonym **dank**

a musty room

a musty smell of old books

These clothes smell musty.

locale /lou'kæl/

a place where something happens

the employment structure of the two locales

The majority of people in this locale work in agriculture.

We choose our tour guides mainly on their knowledge of the locale.

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escapade /,eskə'peɪd/

an exciting adventure (often one that people think is dangerous or stupid)

Isabel's latest romantic escapade

The people who planned the escapade did not realize what they were getting involved in.

madcap

(of people, plans, etc.) crazy and not caring about danger; not sensible

synonym **reckless**

madcap schemes/escapades

Stories began circulating about her madcap lifestyle.

gainsay

gainsay something (*formal*) (often used in negative sentences) to say that something is not true; to disagree with or deny something

synonym **deny**

Nobody can gainsay his claims.

There is no gainsaying these facts.

appraise, appraisal

appraise somebody/something (*formal*) to consider or examine somebody/something and form an opinion about them or it

an **appraising glance/look**

His eyes coolly appraised the young woman before him.

She stepped back to appraise her workmanship.

The architect gave the exterior an appraising glance.

appraise somebody to make a formal judgement about the value of a person's work, usually after a discussion with them about it

Managers must appraise all staff.

tome /təʊm/

a large heavy book, especially one dealing with a serious topic

a weighty tome

disown

disown somebody/something to decide that you no longer want to be connected with or responsible for somebody/something

Her family disowned her for marrying a foreigner.

Later he publicly disowned the rebellion.

They have never disowned their humble roots.

unearth

unearth something to find or discover something by chance or after searching for it

synonym **dig something...up**

I unearthed my old diaries when we moved house.

The newspaper has unearthed some disturbing facts.

uptake

[singular] the number of people who use a service or accept something that is offered

The uptake of some vaccinations fell as the media stirred up fears of possible side effects.

the rate at which a substance is taken into the body, a system etc
the uptake of sugars by the blood

be quick/slow on the uptake

(*informal*) to be quick/slow to understand something
Is he always this slow on the uptake?

vindication

proof that something is true or that you were right, especially when other people had a different opinion
Anti-nuclear protesters regarded the Chernobyl accident as a clear vindication of their campaign.

vindicate

vindicate something to prove that something is true or that you were right to do something, especially when other people had a different opinion
synonym **justify**
I have every confidence that this decision will be fully vindicated.

vindicate somebody to prove that somebody is not guilty when they have been accused of doing something wrong or illegal
New evidence emerged, vindicating him completely.

pretext

pretext (for something/for doing something) | pretext (to do something) a false reason that you give for doing something, usually something bad, in order to hide the real reason; an excuse
The incident was used as a pretext for intervention in the area.
*He left the party early **on the pretext of** having work to do.*
Be careful not to give him a pretext to report you.
People were being arrested on the flimsiest of pretexts.

grounds

[countable, usually plural] **ground for something/for doing something** a good or true reason for saying, doing or believing something
You have no grounds for complaint.
What were his grounds for wanting a divorce?
*The case was dismissed **on the grounds that** there was not enough evidence.*
*He retired from the job **on health grounds**.*
*Employers cannot discriminate **on grounds of** age.*

alibi /'æləbaɪ/

evidence that proves that a person was in another place at the time of a crime and so could not have committed it
The suspects all had alibis for the day of the robbery.

standstill

a situation in which all activity or movement has stopped

synonym **halt**

*The security alert **brought** the airport **to a standstill**.*

*Traffic in the northbound lane is **at a complete standstill**.*

northbound

travelling or leading towards the north

northbound traffic

the northbound carriageway of the motorway

level-headed

calm and sensible; able to make good decisions even in difficult situations

This position requires a level-headed person with experience in managing risk.

byword

a byword for something a person or thing that is a well-known or typical example of a particular quality

The name Chanel became a byword for elegance.

(especially North American English) a word or phrase that is well known or often used

Andy Warhol's provocative slogan, 'Everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes', became a sixties byword.

rosy /'rouzi/

seeming to offer hope of success or happiness

a company that sees a rosy future for itself

Letters to relatives in Europe painted a rosy picture of life in the United States.

becoming

1 a piece of clothing, a hairstyle etc that is becoming makes you look attractive

Her short hairstyle is very becoming.

2 words or actions that are becoming are suitable for you or for the situation you are in

She received the praise with becoming modesty.

It was not very becoming behaviour for a teacher.

flattering

making somebody look more attractive

a flattering dress

The photo is not very flattering.

A computer will help you select the most flattering shade of make-up.

making somebody feel pleased and special

I found it flattering that he still recognized me after all these years.

distance

to become, or to make somebody/something become, less involved or connected with somebody/something

When he retired, he tried to distance himself from politics.

It's not always easy for nurses to distance themselves emotionally.

The company has tried to distance itself from the remarks made by some of its employees.

faculty

[countable, usually plural] any of the physical or mental abilities that a person is born with

the faculty of sight

She retained her mental faculties (= the ability to think and understand) until the day she died.

*to be **in full possession of your faculties** (= be able to speak, hear, see, understand, etc.)*

intellectual/critical/artistic faculties

function

a social event or official ceremony

The hall provided a venue for weddings and other functions.

There are numerous functions in aid of charity.

liberal

1 willing to understand and respect other people's behaviour, opinions, etc., especially when they are different from your own; believing people should be able to choose how they behave

liberal attitudes/views/opinions

2 wanting or allowing a lot of political and economic freedom and supporting gradual social, political or religious change

Some politicians want more liberal trade relations with Europe.

liberal democracy

liberal theories

a liberal politician

3 **liberal (with something)** generous; given in large amounts

synonym **lavish**

She is very liberal with her money.

I think Sam is too liberal with his criticism (= he criticizes people too much).

Divorced fathers should have liberal access to their children.

We ate cake with liberal amounts of whipped cream.

4 concerned with increasing somebody's general knowledge and experience rather than particular skills
a liberal education

5 not completely accurate or exact
synonym **free**
a liberal translation of the text
*a **liberal interpretation** of the law*

artistic/poetic licence

the freedom of artists or writers to change facts in order to make a story, painting, etc. more interesting or beautiful

a licence to print money

(*disapproving*) used to describe a business which makes a lot of money with little effort

under licence

(of a product) made with the permission of a company or an organization

latitude

formal freedom to choose what you do or say

considerable/greater latitude in/for sth, to do sth (=a lot of freedom to choose)

Pupils enjoy considerable latitude in deciding what they want to study.

Having his own show gives Williams wide latitude to discuss controversial topics.

Employees should have some latitude in organizing their work.

court

court somebody to try to please somebody in order to get something you want, especially the support of a person, an organization, etc.

synonym **cultivate**

Both candidates have spent the last month courting the media.

court something (*formal*) to try to obtain something

He has never courted popularity.

court something (*formal*) to do something that might result in something unpleasant happening

*to **court danger/death/disaster***

As a politician he has often courted controversy.

court somebody (*old-fashioned*) if a man **courts** a woman, he spends time with her and tries to make her love him, so that they can get married

He had been courting Jane for six months.

contract

contract something (*formal or medical*) to get an illness
to contract AIDS/a virus/a disease

stomach

stomach something to approve of something and be able to enjoy it; to enjoy being with a person

*I **can't stomach** violent films.*

*I find him very **hard to stomach**.*

stomach something to be able to eat something without feeling ill/sick

*She **couldn't stomach** any breakfast.*

resolve

to make a firm decision to do something

resolve to do something *He resolved not to tell her the truth.*

resolve (that)... *She resolved (that) she would never see him again.*

resolve on something/on doing something *We had resolved on making an early start.*

[transitive] (of a committee, meeting, etc.) to reach a decision by means of a formal vote

it is resolved that... *It was resolved that the matter be referred to a higher authority.*

resolve that... *They resolved that the matter be referred to a higher authority.*

resolve to do something *The Supreme Council resolved to resume control over the national press.*

refer

to send somebody/something to somebody/something for help, advice or a decision

My doctor referred me to a specialist.

The case was referred to the Court of Appeal.

(formal) May I refer you to my letter of 14 May?

arrest

arrest something (*formal*) to stop a process or a development

They failed to arrest the company's decline.

[transitive] **arrest something** (*formal*) to make somebody notice something and pay attention to it

*An unusual noise **arrested his attention**.*

[intransitive] (*medical*) if somebody **arrests**, their heart stops beating

He arrested on the way to the hospital.

nexus /'neksəs/

a complicated series of connections between different things

the nexus between industry and political power

a nexus of interests

kindle

to start burning; to make a fire start burning

We watched as the fire slowly kindled.

kindle something to kindle a fire/flame

kindle (something) to make something such as an interest, emotion, etc. start to grow in somebody; to start to be felt by somebody

It was her teacher who kindled her interest in music.

Suspicion kindled within her.

waffle /'wɒ:fl/

language that uses a lot of words but does not say anything important or interesting

The report is just full of waffle.

You have to sit through a lot of waffle about procedures.

waffle (on) (about something) to talk or write using a lot of words but without saying anything interesting or important

The principal waffled on about exam results but no one was listening.

If you want to sound professional—don't waffle.

waffle (on/over something) to be unable to decide what to do about something or what you think about something

The senator was accused of waffling on major issues.

contain

to keep your feelings under control

synonym **restrain**

contain something *She was unable to contain her excitement.*

contain yourself *I was so furious I just couldn't **contain myself** (= I had to express my feelings).*

contain something to prevent something harmful from spreading or getting worse

to contain an epidemic

Government forces have failed to contain the rebellion.

stem

stem something to stop something that is flowing from spreading or increasing

The cut was bandaged to stem the bleeding.

They discussed ways of **stemming the flow** of smuggled drugs.
The government had failed to **stem the tide** of factory closures.
The reforms failed to stem social discontent.

check

check something to control something; to stop something from increasing or getting worse

*The government is determined to check the growth of public spending.
She tied some strips of cloth around the wound to check the bleeding.*

to stop yourself from saying or doing something or from showing a particular emotion

check something to check your anger/laughter/tears

check yourself *She wanted to tell him the whole truth but she checked herself—it wasn't the right moment.*

clinical

cold and calm and without feeling or sympathy

He watched her suffering with clinical detachment.

How can you be so cold and clinical about your son's accident?

(of a room, building, etc.) very plain; without decoration

Everything in the nursery was white and clinical and there were no pictures on the walls.

flag

flag something to put a special mark next to information that you think is important

I've flagged the paragraphs that we need to look at in more detail.

to become tired, weaker or less enthusiastic

It had been a long day and the children were beginning to flag.

Her confidence had never flagged.

flagging support/enthusiasm

slate

to criticize somebody/something, especially in a newspaper

to slate a book/play/writer

The critics slated his latest production.

She was universally slated for her much-publicized views on marriage.

to plan that something will happen at a particular time in the future

slate something for something *The next conference is slated for July.*

The houses were first slated for demolition five years ago.

slate something to do something *The new store is slated to open in spring.*

to suggest or choose somebody for a job, position, etc.

slate somebody for something *I was told that I was being slated for promotion.*

slate somebody to do something *He is slated to play the lead in the new musical.*

pan

pan something (*informal*) to severely criticize something such as a play or a film/movie

synonym **slate**

The television series was panned by critics and viewers alike.

if a television or video camera **pans** somewhere, or a person **pans** or **pans a camera**, the camera moves in a particular direction, to follow an object or to film a wide area

+ **adv./prep.** *The camera panned back to the audience.*

pan something + adv./prep. *He panned the camera along the row of faces.*

pan (for) something to wash soil or small stones in a pan to find gold or other valuable minerals

panning for gold

pan out

(*informal*) (of events or a situation) to develop in a particular way

I'm happy with the way things have panned out.

compromise

to do something that is against your principles or does not reach standards that you have set

compromise something *I refuse to compromise my principles.*

compromise (on something) *We are not prepared to compromise on safety standards.*

compromise somebody/something/yourself to bring

somebody/something/yourself into danger or under suspicion, especially by acting in a way that is not very sensible

She had already compromised herself by accepting his invitation.

*Defeat at this stage would **compromise their chances** (= reduce their chances) of reaching the finals of the competition.*

founder

founder (on something) (of a plan, etc.) to fail because of a particular problem or difficulty

The project foundered after problems with funding.

The peace talks foundered on a basic lack of trust.

The venture might easily founder for want of capital to finance expansion.

[intransitive] **founder (on something)** (of a ship) to fill with water and sink
Our boat foundered on a reef.

august /ɔ:ˈɡʌst/

impressive, making you feel respect

an august group of statesmen

He had dared to challenge the views of an august body of imperial historians.

assume /əˈsu:m/

assume something (*formal*) to pretend to have a particular feeling or quality

synonym **affect**

He assumed an air of concern.

weather

to change, or make something change, colour or shape because of the effect of the sun, rain or wind

This brick weathers to a warm pinkish-brown colour.

weather something *Her face was weathered by the sun.*

weather something to come safely through a difficult period or experience

The company just managed to weather the recession.

*She refuses to resign, intending to **weather the storm** (= wait until the situation improves again).*

document

document something to record the details of something

Causes of the disease have been well documented.

The results are documented in Chapter 3.

document something to prove or support something with documents

documented evidence

contest /kənˈtest/

1 to say formally that you do not accept something or do not agree with it

His brothers are contesting the will.

2 to compete for something or to try to win it

His wife is contesting a seat on the council.

intrigue

the activity of making secret plans in order to achieve an aim, often by tricking people

political intrigue

The young heroine steps into a web of intrigue (=complicated set of secret plans) in the academic world.

occasion

(*formal*) to cause something

occasion something *The flight delay was occasioned by the need for a further security check.*

The injury was believed to have occasioned his death.

occasion somebody something *The decision occasioned us much anxiety.*

effect

effect something (*formal*) to make something happen

to effect a cure/change/recovery

The negotiators hoped to effect a smooth transition to an interim administration.

These drugs can sometimes effect miraculous cures.

Interim /'ɪntərɪm/

intended to last for only a short time until somebody/something more permanent is found

an interim government/measure/report

*The vice-president took power in **the interim period** before the election.*

He only holds the post on an interim basis.

(*finance*) calculated before the final results of something are known

synonym **provisional**

interim figures/profits/results

spell

a short period of time during which something lasts

a spell of warm weather

*a **cold/hot/wet/bright, etc. spell***

*There will be rain at first, with **sunny spells** later.*

*She went to the doctor complaining of **dizzy spells**.*

[countable] a period of time doing something or working somewhere

She had a spell as a singer before becoming an actress.

*I spent a **brief spell** on the Washington Post.*

[singular] a quality that a person or thing has that makes them so attractive or interesting that they have a strong influence on you

synonym **charm**

*I completely **fell under her spell**.*

Since last century the spell of the pyramids has drawn tourists to Egypt.

husband

husband something (*formal*) to use something very carefully and make sure that you do not waste it

Times are hard and we have to husband our resources.

She waited, husbanding her strength for her next visitors.

demonstrative /dɪ'mɑːnstrətɪv/

showing feelings openly, especially feelings of affection

Some people are more demonstrative than others.

a demonstrative greeting

pursuit

something that you give your time and energy to, that you do as a hobby

synonym **hobby**, **pastime**

outdoor/leisure/artistic pursuits

inform

inform something (*formal*) to have an influence on something

Religion informs every aspect of their lives.

These guidelines will be used to inform any future decisions.

appropriate

appropriate something to take something, somebody's ideas, etc. for your own use, especially illegally or without permission

He was accused of appropriating club funds.

Some of the opposition party's policies have been appropriated by the government.

appropriate something (for something) to take or give something, especially money for a particular purpose

Five million dollars have been appropriated for research into the disease.

circumstantial

1 law based on something that appears to be true but is not proven

circumstantial evidence/case

The case against McCarthy is based largely on circumstantial evidence.

2 *formal* including all the details

The book includes a long and circumstantial account of Empson's conversation with the Queen.

subject /səb'dʒekt/

subject something (to something) (*formal*) to bring a country or group of people under your control, especially by using force

The Roman Empire subjected most of Europe to its rule.

subject somebody to something | subject something to something

[often passive] to make somebody/something experience, suffer or be affected by something, usually something unpleasant

to be subjected to ridicule

The city was subjected to heavy bombing.

The defence lawyers claimed that the prisoners had been subjected to cruel and degrading treatment.

score

to succeed; to have an advantage

score (something) *The army continued to score successes in the south.
She's scored again with her latest blockbuster.*

score over something *Bicycles score over other forms of transport in towns.*

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intimate

to let somebody know what you think or mean in an indirect way

intimate something (to somebody) *He has already intimated to us his intention to retire.*

intimate (that)... *He has already intimated (that) he intends to retire.*

portentous

(*literary*) important as a sign or a warning of something that is going to happen in the future, especially when it is something unpleasant
a portentous sign

(*formal, disapproving*) very serious and intended to impress people

synonym **pompous**

a portentous remark

precaution /prɪ'kɔːʃn/

precaution (against something) something that is done in advance in order to prevent problems or to avoid danger

safety precautions

precautions against fire

*You must **take all reasonable precautions** to protect yourself and your family.
I'll keep the letter **as a precaution**.*

precautions [plural] a way of referring to **contraception**

*We didn't **take any precautions** and I got pregnant.*

Indecent /ɪn'diːsnt/

1 something that is indecent is shocking and offensive, usually because it involves sex or shows parts of the body that are usually covered

He was found guilty of possessing indecent photographs.

You can't go out in that dress – it's positively indecent!

an indecently short skirt

2 completely unacceptable

The prices they charge for this food are indecent.

indefensible

1 too bad to be excused or defended

The law is morally indefensible and in need of reform.

2 impossible or very difficult to defend from military attack

sermon

moral advice that a person tries to give you in a long talk

We had to listen to a long sermon on the evils of wasting time.

sensational

causing great surprise, excitement, or interest

synonym **thrilling**

The result was a sensational 4–1 victory.

The affair was the most sensational political sex scandal of the century.

(*informal*) extremely good; wonderful

synonym **fantastic**

You look sensational in that dress!(*disapproving*) (of a newspaper, etc.) trying to get your interest by presenting facts or events as worse or more shocking than they really are

sensational news stories

course

course of something the way something develops or should develop

*an event that changed the **course of history***

*The unexpected **course of events** aroused considerable alarm.*

mount

mount something to organize and begin something

synonym **arrange**

*to **mount a protest/campaign/an exhibition***

insulate

1 to cover or protect something with a material that stops electricity, sound, heat etc from getting in or out

insulate something from/against something

Pipes may need insulating against the cold.

an insulated attic

2 to keep someone apart from particular experiences or influences, especially unpleasant ones

insulate somebody from something

The royal family tried to insulate him from the prying eyes of the media.

row /raʊ/

to have a noisy argument

Mike and Sue are always rowing.

row (with somebody) (about somebody/something) *She had rowed with her parents about her boyfriend.*

jaded

tired and bored, usually because you have had too much of something

I felt terribly jaded after working all weekend.

It was a meal to tempt even the most jaded palate.

comb /kəʊm/

to search something carefully in order to find somebody/something

synonym **scour**

comb something *I combed the shops looking for something to wear.*

comb something for somebody/something *The police combed the area for clues.*

comb through something (for somebody/something) *They combed through the files for evidence of fraud.*

scour /'skauə/

scour something (for somebody/something) to search a place or thing thoroughly in order to find somebody/something

synonym **comb**

We scoured the area for somewhere to pitch our tent.

He had been scouring the papers for weeks, looking for a job.

scour something (out) to clean something by rubbing its surface hard with rough material

I had to scour out the pans.

scour something (away/out) | scour something (from/out of something) to make a passage, hole, or mark in the ground, rocks, etc. as the result of movement, especially over a long period

The water had raced down the slope and scoured out the bed of a stream.

We could see where the cart wheels had scoured the ground.

jealous

jealous (of something) wanting to keep or protect something that you have because it makes you feel proud

They are very jealous of their good reputation (= they do not want to lose it).

usher

usher somebody + adv./prep. to take or show somebody where they should go

The secretary ushered me into his office.

We were asked to leave and ushered out of the door.

usher something in

(*formal*) to be the beginning of something new or to make something new begin
The change of management ushered in fresh ideas and policies.

cow /kaʊ/

cow somebody to frighten somebody in order to make them obey you

synonym **intimidate**

She was easily cowed by people in authority.

hedge

to avoid giving a direct answer to a question or promising to support a particular idea, etc.

Just answer 'yes' or 'no'—and stop hedging.

hedge somebody/something (about/around) (with something) (*formal*) to surround or limit somebody/something

His religious belief was always hedged with doubt.

Their offer was hedged around with all sorts of conditions.

hedge your bets

to reduce the risk of losing or making a mistake by supporting more than one side in a competition, an argument, etc., or by having several choices available to you

She hedged her bets by applying for various other jobs as well.

hedge in somebody | hedge in something | hedge somebody in | hedge something in

to surround somebody/something with something

synonym **hem somebody/something in**

The cathedral is now hedged in by other buildings.

(*figurative*) *Married life made him feel hedged in and restless.*

hedge against something a way of protecting yourself against the loss of something, especially money

to buy gold as a hedge against inflation

yield to something

(*formal*) to be replaced by something

Barges yielded to road vehicles for transporting goods.

skirt

to be or go around the edge of something

skirt something *They followed the road that skirted the lake.*

They skirted the forest and emerged on to a path.

skirt around/round something *I skirted around the field and crossed the bridge.*

to avoid talking about a subject, especially because it is difficult or embarrassing
skirt something *He carefully skirted the issue of where they would live.*
skirt around/round something *She tactfully skirted around the subject of money.*

liability

liability (for something) | liability (to do something) the state of being legally responsible for something
The company cannot accept liability for any damage caused by natural disasters.

a person or thing that causes you a lot of problems
Since his injury, Jones has become more of a liability than an asset to the team.
The debate on Europe is proving to be something of a liability for the Prime Minister.

[countable, usually plural] the amount of money that a person or company owes
The company is reported to have liabilities of nearly \$90 000.
Our financial advisers will concentrate on minimizing your tax liabilities and maximizing your income.

frown

to make a serious, angry or worried expression by bringing your **eyebrows** closer together so that lines appear on your **forehead**
frown (at somebody/something) *What are you frowning at me for?*
She frowned with concentration.
+ speech *'I don't understand,' she frowned.*

fawn /fɔ:n/

fawn (on/over somebody) (*disapproving*) to try to please somebody by praising them or paying them too much attention
He seemed unaware of the girl's fawning admiration.
Why is everybody fawning over him as if he were a national hero?

light yellowish-brown in colour
a fawn coat

confound

confound somebody to confuse and surprise somebody
synonym **baffle**
The sudden rise in share prices has confounded economists.

confound somebody/something to prove somebody/something wrong
to confound expectations
She confounded her critics and proved she could do the job.
The rise in share prices confounded expectations.

promise

to make something seem likely to happen; to show signs of something
it promises to be something *It promises to be an exciting few days.*
promise something *There were dark clouds overhead promising rain.*

acknowledge

acknowledge somebody/something to show that you have noticed somebody/something by smiling, waving, etc.
I was standing right next to her, but she didn't even acknowledge me.
He waved, acknowledging the applause.

acknowledge something to publicly express thanks for help you have been given
I gratefully acknowledge financial support from several local businesses.
He is always ready to acknowledge his debt to his teachers.

discharge

discharge somebody (from something) to give somebody official permission to leave a place or job; to make somebody leave a job
Patients were being discharged from the hospital too early.
She had discharged herself against medical advice.
He was discharged from the army following his injury.
She was discharged from the police force for bad conduct.

discharge somebody to allow somebody to leave prison or court
*He was **conditionally discharged** after admitting the theft.*

discharge (something) (*specialist*) to release force or power
Lightning is caused by clouds discharging electricity.

discharge something to do everything that is necessary to perform and complete a particular duty
*to **discharge your duties/responsibilities/obligations***
*to **discharge a debt** (= to pay it)*

apology

information that you cannot go to a meeting or must leave early
The meeting started with apologies (= the names of people who said they could not go to the meeting).
*(formal) She **made her apologies** and left early.*

patent

used to emphasize that something bad is very clear and obvious
synonym **blatant**
It was a patent lie.

fell

fell something to cut down a tree

Trees were felled and floated downstream.

illegally felled timber

fell somebody (*literary*) to make somebody fall to the ground

He felled his opponent with a single blow.

appreciate

to be grateful for something that somebody has done; to welcome something

appreciate something *I'd appreciate some help.*

Your support is greatly appreciated.

*Thanks for coming. I **appreciate it**.*

I would appreciate any comments you might have.

***I would appreciate it if** you paid in cash.*

appreciate doing something *I don't appreciate being treated like a second-class citizen.*

appreciate somebody doing something *We would appreciate you letting us know of any problems.*

to understand that something is true

synonym **realize**

appreciate something *What I failed to appreciate was the distance between the two cities.*

appreciate how, what, etc... *I don't think you appreciate how expensive it will be.*

appreciate that... *We didn't **fully appreciate** that he was seriously ill.*

to increase in value over a period of time

Their investments have appreciated over the years.

abandon

abandon yourself to something (*literary*) to feel an emotion so strongly that you can feel nothing else

He abandoned himself to despair.

harry

harry somebody to annoy or upset somebody by continuously asking them questions or for something

synonym **harass**

She has been harried by the press all week.

The superintendent sent him to harry the forensic lab over the blood tests.

harry somebody/something to make repeated attacks on an enemy

synonym **harass**

They harried the retreating army.

experimental

based on new ideas, forms or methods that are used to find out what effect they have

experimental teaching methods

experimental theatre/art/music

The equipment is still at the experimental stage.

Doctors stress that this kind of treatment is still experimental.

connected with scientific experiments

experimental conditions/data/evidence

second

second/ 'sekənd/ something to state officially at a meeting that you support another person's idea, suggestion, etc. so that it can be discussed and/or voted on

Any proposal must be seconded by two other members of the committee.

(informal) 'Thank God that's finished.' 'I'll second that! (= I agree)'

Davis seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

second/ sɪ 'kɑ:nd/ somebody (from something) (to something) (*especially British English*) to send an employee to another department, office, etc. in order to do a different job for a short period of time

Each year two teachers are seconded to industry for six months

measured

slow and careful; controlled

She replied in a measured tone to his threat.

He walked down the corridor with measured steps.

entrance

entrance somebody (*formal*) to make somebody feel great pleasure and admiration so that they give somebody/something all their attention

synonym **enthral**

He listened to her, entranced.

I was entranced by the bird's beauty.

color

colour something to affect something, especially in a negative way

This incident coloured her whole life.

Don't let your judgement be coloured by personal feelings.

economy

the use of the time, money, etc. that is available in a way that avoids waste

We need to make substantial economies.

It's a **false economy** to buy cheap clothes (= it seems cheaper but it is not really since they do not last very long).

She writes with a great **economy of words** (= using only the necessary words).

(British English) We're on an **economy drive** at home (= trying to avoid waste and spend as little money as possible).

Buy the large **economy pack** (= the one that gives you better value for money).

to fly **economy (class)** (= by the cheapest class of air travel)

an **economy fare** (= the cheapest)

humor

(*formal*) the state of your feelings or mind at a particular time

to be in the best of **humours**

The meeting dissolved in **ill humour**.

to be **out of humour** (= in a bad mood)

tender v.

[*transitive*] formal to formally offer or show something to someone

As company secretary, you must **tender** the proposal.

tender something to somebody

The seller has the right to keep the goods until payment is **tendered** to him.

Minton **tendered** her resignation on Friday.

2 [*intransitive*] British English to make a formal offer to do a job or provide goods or services for a particular price SYN bid American English

tender for

We are unable to **tender competitively** for the contract.

anticipate

to see what might happen in the future and take action to prepare for it

anticipate something We need someone who can **anticipate** and respond to changes in the fashion industry.

anticipate what, how, that, etc... Try and **anticipate** what the interviewers will ask.

anticipate (doing) something | anticipate (something doing) something to

think with pleasure and excitement about something that is going to happen

We **eagerly anticipated** the day we would leave school.

The more I **anticipated** arriving somewhere, the more disappointed I was.

anticipate somebody (doing something) (*formal*) to do something before it can be done by somebody else

synonym **forestall**

When Scott reached the South Pole he found that Amundsen had **anticipated** him.

hail

to describe somebody/something as being very good or special, especially in newspapers, etc.

hail somebody/something as something *The conference was hailed as a great success.*

The expedition was widely hailed as a success.

Union leaders hailed the socialists' victory as a huge step forward.

hail somebody/something + noun *Teenager Matt Brown is being hailed a hero for saving a young child from drowning.*

hail somebody (*literary*) to call to somebody in order to say hello to them or attract their attention

A voice hailed us from the other side of the street.

*We soon came **within hailing distance of** (= fairly close to) the others.*

anonymous

without any unusual or interesting features

long stretches of dull and anonymous countryside

new housing estates with their anonymous tower blocks and large barren spaces

tend

to care for somebody/something

tend somebody/something *a shepherd tending his sheep*

Doctors and nurses tended the injured.

well-tended gardens

tend to somebody/something *Ambulance crews were tending to the injured.*

abstraction /æb'strækʃn/

the state of thinking deeply about something and not paying attention to what is around you

She was gazing in abstraction at the far corner of the room.

the action of removing something from something else; the process of being removed from something else

water abstraction from rivers

mirror

mirror something to have features that are similar to something else and which show what it is like

synonym **reflect**

The music of the time mirrored the feeling of optimism in the country.

mirror somebody/something to show the image of somebody/something on the surface of water, glass, etc.

synonym **reflect**

She saw herself mirrored in the window.

enterprise

a large project, especially one that is difficult

synonym **venture**

his latest business enterprise

a **joint enterprise**

The music festival is a new enterprise which we hope will become an annual event.

the development of businesses by the people of a country rather than by the government

grants to encourage enterprise in the region

an enterprise culture (= in which people are encouraged to develop small businesses)

the ability to think of new projects and make them successful

synonym **initiative**

a job in which enterprise is rewarded

a man of enterprise

Many hotels are showing enterprise and imagination by staging special events.

One enterprising farmer opened up his field as a car park and charged people £10 to park there.

an enterprising young woman

initiative

the ability to decide and act on your own without waiting for somebody to tell you what to do

*You won't get much help. You'll have to **use your initiative**.*

Too much bureaucracy represses creativity and initiative.

*She did it **on her own initiative*** (= without anyone telling her to do it).

the initiative [singular] the power or opportunity to act and gain an advantage before other people do

to **seize/lose the initiative**

*It was up to the US to **take the initiative** in repairing relations.*

brag

brag (to somebody) (about/of something) | brag that... | + speech

(*disapproving*) to talk too proudly about something you own or something you have done

synonym **boast**

He bragged to his friends about the crime.

I'm not bragging but I think I did very well in the interview.

They repeatedly bragged that one of their men was responsible for the shooting.

boast

to talk with too much pride about something that you have or can do

I don't want to boast, but I can actually speak six languages.

boast about something *She is always boasting about how wonderful her children are.*

boast of something *He openly boasted of his skill as a burglar.*

boast that... *Sam boasted that she could beat anyone at poker.*

+ speech *'I won!' she boasted.*

(not used in the progressive tenses) **boast something** to have something that is impressive and that you can be proud of

The hotel also boasts two swimming pools and a golf course.

Rhodes boasts 300 days of sunshine a year.

progenitor /prɒv'dʒenɪtər/

a person or thing from the past that a person, animal or plant that is alive now is related to

synonym **ancestor**

He was the progenitor of a family of distinguished actors.

a person who starts an idea or a development

the progenitors of modern art

vanguard

the leaders of a movement in society, for example in politics, art, industry, etc.

*The company is proud to be **in the vanguard of** scientific progress.*

The party claimed to be the vanguard of the world revolutionary movement.

the part of an army, etc. that is at the front when moving forward to attack the enemy

The army was advancing steadily and the vanguard was already at the border.

opposite rearguard

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mogul /'mɒʊgl/

very rich, important and powerful person

synonym **magnate**

a movie mogul

magnate

a person who is rich, powerful and successful, especially in business

*a **media/property/shipping magnate***

The company was owned by shipping magnate Fred Olsen.

tycoon

a person who is successful in business or industry and has become rich and powerful

a *business/property/media tycoon*

Tapie, business tycoon and football club owner, was appointed Minister for Cities.

the disgraced/fallen/discredited media tycoon

guru

a person who is an expert on a particular subject or who is very good at doing something

a *management/health/fashion, etc. guru*

Jean-Paul Sartre was the guru of post-war French philosophy.

Libby Purves meets the woman who's become the guru of children's television.

Most management gurus base their appeal on one big theme.

bellwether

something that is used as a sign of what will happen in the future

University campuses are often the bellwether of change.

Ohio is seen as a bellwether state in this election.

diehard /'daɪhɑːrd/

a person who strongly opposes change and new ideas

A few diehards are trying to stop the reforms.

mastermind

an intelligent person who plans and directs a complicated project or activity (often one that involves a crime)

The mastermind behind the robbery was never caught.

There's a criminal mastermind behind all this.

connoisseur /ˌkɒːnə'sɜːr/

an expert on matters involving the judgement of beauty, quality or skill in art, food or music

a connoisseur of Italian painting

a wine connoisseur

The exhibition will be a delight for the collector and connoisseur of silver ornaments.

despot /'despɑːt/

a ruler with great power, especially one who uses it in a cruel way

an enlightened despot (= one who tries to use his/her power in a good way)

It is the story of a military coup which brings a brutal despot to power.

despotic /dɪˈspɑːtɪk/

connected with or typical of a ruler with great power, especially one who uses it in a cruel way

despotic power/rule

autocrat

a ruler who has complete power

synonym **despot**

He governed as an autocrat.

a person who expects to be obeyed by other people and does not care about their opinions or feelings

The article painted her as an autocrat, angry with her husband and out of touch with her family.

apologist

apologist (for somebody/something) a person who tries to explain and defend something, especially a political system or religious ideas

apologists for nuclear power

He became known as the chief apologist hardline government policies.

He is sometimes seen as a mere Catholic apologist, rather than a serious philosopher.

wastrel /ˈweɪstrəl/

a lazy person who spends their time and/or money in a careless and stupid way

precursor

precursor (of/to something) (*formal*) a person or thing that comes before somebody/something similar and that leads to or influences its development

synonym **forerunner**

a stringed instrument that was the precursor of the guitar

events that were precursors to revolution

forerunner

forerunner (of somebody/something) a person or thing that came before and influenced somebody/something else that is similar; a sign of what is going to happen

Country music was undoubtedly one of the forerunners of rock and roll.

He is recognized as the forerunner of all modern-day British Prime Ministers.

An early penalty goal proved the forerunner of a disastrous performance by Scotland.

the avant-garde /ˌævɑːŋ ˈɡɑːrd/

new and very modern ideas in art, music or literature that are sometimes surprising or shocking

an avant-garde play

[singular + singular or plural verb] a group of artists, etc. who introduce new and very modern ideas

beneficent

helping people, or resulting in something good
the beneficent properties of natural remedies

stoicism

the fact of not complaining or showing what you are feeling when you are suffering
She endured her long illness with stoicism.
She showed great stoicism through all the pain.

eclecticism /ɪˈklektɪsɪzəm/

not following one style or set of ideas but choosing from or using a wide variety
She has very eclectic tastes in literature.
His house is an eclectic mixture of the antique and the modern.

anthropomorphism /ˌænθrəpəˈmɔːrfɪzəm/

the practice of treating gods, animals or objects as if they had human qualities

gore /ɡɔːr/

thick blood that has flowed from a wound, especially in a violent situation
*The movie is not just **blood and gore** (= scenes of violence); it has a thrilling story.*

fallow

not used for growing crops, especially so that the quality of the land will improve
*Farmers are now paid to let their land **lie fallow**.*

(of a period of time) when nothing is created or produced; not successful
Contemporary dance is coming onto the arts scene again after a long fallow period.

conviction

conviction (for something) the act of finding somebody guilty of a crime in court; the fact of having been found guilty
She has six previous convictions for theft.
He plans to appeal against his conviction.
an offence which carries, on conviction, a sentence of not more than five years' imprisonment
opposite **acquittal**

conviction (that...) a strong opinion or belief
*strong **political/moral convictions***
She was motivated by deep religious conviction.

a conviction that all would be well in the end

the feeling or appearance of believing something strongly and of being sure about it

'Not true!' she said with conviction.

He said he agreed but his voice lacked conviction.

*The leader's speech in defence of the policy didn't **carry much conviction**.*

acquittal /ə'kwɪtl/

an official decision in court that a person is not guilty of a crime

The case resulted in an acquittal.

The jury voted for acquittal.

patrimony /'pætrɪməʊni/

property that is given to somebody when their father dies

synonym **inheritance**

He feared that his patrimony would not be enough to cover the debts.

the works of art and **treasures** of a nation, church, etc.

synonym **heritage**

The agency is responsible for conserving the country's cultural patrimony.

headstrong

a **headstrong** person is determined to do things their own way and refuses to listen to advice

She is too wild and headstrong to be guided by me.

errant /'erənt/

doing something that is wrong; not behaving in an acceptable way

errant fathers who refuse to pay maintenance for their children

(figurative) *She brushed an errant curl from her forehead.*

(of a husband or wife) not sexually faithful

cannibalize /'kænbəlaɪz/

cannibalize something to take the parts of a machine, vehicle, etc. and use them to repair or build another

cannibalize something (business) (of a company) to reduce the sales of one of its products by introducing a similar new product

We believe the two perfumes appeal to different buyers and won't cannibalize one another's sales.

discordant

[usually before noun] **(formal)** not in agreement; combining with other things in a way that is strange or unpleasant

discordant views

The functional modernity of the computer struck a discordant note amid the elegant eighteenth-century furniture.

(of sounds) not sounding pleasant together

insinuate /In'sɪnjuet/

to suggest indirectly that something unpleasant is true

synonym [imply](#)

insinuate that... *The article insinuated that he was having an affair with his friend's wife.*

insinuate something *What are you trying to insinuate?
an insinuating smile*

insinuate yourself into something (formal, disapproving) to succeed in gaining somebody's respect, affection, etc. so that you can use the situation to your own advantage

In the first act, the villain insinuates himself into the household of the man he intends to kill.

insinuate yourself/something + adv./prep. (formal) to slowly move yourself or a part of your body into a particular position or place

She insinuated her right hand under his arm.

slinky /'slɪŋki/

(of a woman's clothes) fitting closely to the body in a sexually attractive way
a slinky black dress

(of movement or sound) smooth and slow, often in a way that is sexually attractive

a slinky voice

depraved /dɪ'preɪvd/

morally bad

synonym [wicked](#), [evil](#)

This is the work of a depraved mind.

wanton /'wɒ:ntən/

[usually before noun] causing harm or damage deliberately and for no acceptable reason

wanton destruction

a wanton disregard for human life

the wanton killing of innocent creatures

(old-fashioned, disapproving) (usually of a woman) behaving in a very immoral way; having many sexual partners

bluster

talk that is aggressive and threatening, but has little effect
I wasn't frightened by what he said—it was all bluster.

bluster (something) | + speech to talk in an aggressive or threatening way, but with little effect
'I don't know what you're talking about,' he blustered.
a blustering bully

[intransitive] (of the wind) to blow violently
Outside the wind was blustering.

nonsensical /nɑːnˈsensɪkl/

ridiculous; with no meaning
synonym **absurd**
a nonsensical theory
That's a nonsensical argument.
What he said sounded completely nonsensical.

menial

(usually disapproving) (of work) not skilled or important, and often boring or badly paid
menial jobs/work
menial tasks like cleaning the floor

a millstone around/round your neck

a difficult problem or responsibility that it seems impossible to solve or get rid of
My debts are a millstone around my neck.
Unemployment was an economic millstone around the country's neck.

look to your laurels

to be careful that you do not lose the success or advantage that you have over other people
With so many good new actors around the older ones are having to look to their laurels.

rest/sit on your laurels

(usually disapproving) to feel so satisfied with what you have already achieved that you do not try to do any more

square something with something | square with something

to make two ideas, facts or situations agree or combine well with each other; to agree or be consistent with another idea, fact or situation
The interests of farmers need to be squared with those of consumers.
*How can you **square this with your conscience?***

Your theory does not square with the facts.
What she was being asked to do did not square with her political beliefs.

square something with somebody

to ask permission or check with somebody that they approve of what you want to do

I think I'll be able to come, but I'll square it with my parents first.

考满分GRE机经

in abeyance

(*formal*) not being used, or being stopped for a period of time

Legal proceedings are in abeyance, while further enquiries are made.

abstinence /'æbstɪnəns/

abstinence (from something) (*formal*) the practice of not allowing yourself something, especially food, alcoholic drinks or sex, for moral, religious or health reasons

total abstinence from strong drink

accession

accession (to something) the act of becoming a ruler of a country

the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne

Charles I's accession to the throne

on her accession to the leadership

see also [accede](#)

accession (to something) the act of becoming part of an international organization

the accession of new member states to the EU

*the new **accession states** of the EU*

[countable] (*specialist*) a thing that is added to a collection of objects, paintings, etc. in a library or museum

affirm

to state firmly or publicly that something is true or that you support something strongly

synonym [confirm](#)

affirm something *Both sides affirmed their commitment to the ceasefire.*

The decision was affirmed by the Court of Appeal.

affirm that... *I can affirm that no one will lose their job.*

anchor

a person or thing that gives somebody a feeling of safety
the anchor of the family

belabour the point

(*formal*) to repeat an idea, argument, etc. many times to emphasize it, especially when it has already been mentioned or understood
I don't want to belabour the point, but it's vital you understand how important this is.

bland

showing no strong emotions or excitement; not saying anything very interesting
a bland smile
After the meeting, a bland statement was issued.

alacrity

great willingness or enthusiasm
They accepted the offer with alacrity.

cerebral /sə'ri:brəl/

relating to the brain
a cerebral haemorrhage
(*formal*) relating to the mind rather than the feelings
synonym [intellectual](#)
His poetry is very cerebral.

condign

(of a punishment) appropriate to the crime

constrain

constrain somebody to do something to force somebody to do something or behave in a particular way

*The evidence was so compelling that he **felt constrained to** accept it.*
The company said that it was constrained to raise prices.

[often passive] to restrict or limit somebody/something

constrain something *Research has been constrained by a lack of funds.*

constrain somebody (from doing something) *She felt constrained from continuing by the threat of losing her job.*

Men and women are becoming less constrained by stereotyped roles.

cumbersome

slow and complicated
cumbersome legal procedures

(of words or phrases) long or complicated

The organization changed its cumbersome title to something easier to remember.

decouple

decouple something (from something) (*formal*) to end the connection or relationship between two things

Gasoline prices have been decoupled from crude oil prices.

deliberate

done on purpose rather than by accident

synonym [intentional](#), [planned](#)

a deliberate act of vandalism

The speech was a deliberate attempt to embarrass the government.

opposite [unintentional](#)

(of a movement or an action) done slowly and carefully

She spoke in a slow and deliberate way.

(*formal*) to think very carefully about something, usually before making a decision

The jury deliberated for five days before finding him guilty.

The sergeant deliberated for a moment and then agreed to unlock the door.

deliberate (on) whether, what, etc... *They deliberated (on) whether to continue with the talks.*

deplorable

very bad and unacceptable, often in a way that shocks people

synonym [appalling](#)

a deplorable incident

They were living in the most deplorable conditions.

The acting was deplorable.

We tried to forget the whole deplorable episode.

appalling

shocking; extremely bad

The prisoners were living in appalling conditions.

(*informal*) very bad

The bus service is appalling now.

It was one of the most appalling atrocities of the war.

The regime has an appalling record on human rights.

design

a plan or an intention

*It happened—whether **by accident or design**—that the two of them were left alone after all the others had gone.*

It is all part of his **grand design**.

have designs on somebody

(*formal* or *humorous*) to want to start a sexual relationship with somebody
He was quite aware of her marital designs on him.

have designs on something

(*formal*) to be planning to get something for yourself, often in a way that other people do not approve of
Rumours spread that the Duke had designs on the crown (= wanted to make himself king).

differential

showing or depending on a difference; not equal
the differential treatment of prisoners based on sex and social class
differential rates of pay

disinclination

a lack of willingness to do something; a lack of enthusiasm for something
There was a general disinclination to return to the office after lunch.

disregard something

(*formal*) to not consider something; to treat something as unimportant
synonym [ignore](#)
The board completely disregarded my recommendations.
Safety rules were disregarded.
He totally disregarded all the advice he was given.
You cannot disregard the fact that heart disease is the biggest killer in the western world.

divert

divert somebody (*formal*) to entertain people
Children are easily diverted.

a diverting book/program/film/game/play...

elegiac /ˌelɪˈdʒaɪæk/

expressing sadness, especially about the past or people who have died
Her poetry has an elegiac quality.

element

wild and powerful; like the forces of nature
the elemental fury of the storm

basic and important

an elemental truth

embody something

(*formal*) to include or contain something
This model embodies many new features.

entrench something

(*sometimes disapproving*) to establish something very firmly so that it is very difficult to change

*Sexism is **deeply entrenched** in our society.*

entrenched attitudes/interests/opposition

This idea had firmly entrenched itself in his consciousness.

erratic

not happening at regular times; not following any plan or regular pattern; that you cannot rely on

synonym [unpredictable](#)

The electricity supply here is quite erratic.

She had learnt to live with his sudden changes of mood and erratic behaviour.

Mary is a gifted but erratic player (= she does not always play well).

Irrigation measures will be necessary in areas of erratic rainfall.

their increasingly erratic policy decisions

eulogize somebody/something (as something)

(*formal*) to praise somebody/something very highly
He was eulogized as a hero.

exuberant

full of energy, excitement and happiness

She gave an exuberant performance.

an exuberant personality/imagination

a picture painted in exuberant reds and yellows

A noisy bunch of exuberant youngsters were gathered outside.

He was exuberant as a child.

(of plants, etc.) strong and healthy; growing quickly and well
the exuberant growth of high summer

effusive

showing much or too much emotion

an effusive welcome

He was effusive in his praise.

facile /'fæsl/

produced without effort or careful thought

synonym [glib](#)

a facile remark/generalization

It seems too facile to blame everything on his mishandling of the crisis.

[only before noun] (*formal*) obtained too easily and having little value

a facile victory

fealty /'fi:əlti/

a promise to be loyal to somebody, especially a king or queen

flummox /'flʌmɒks/

flummox somebody (*informal*) to confuse somebody so that they do not know what to say or do

I was flummoxed by her question.

gaffe /gæf/

a mistake that a person makes in public or in a social situation, especially something embarrassing

synonym [faux pas](#) /,fou 'pɑ:/

a social gaffe

He made some real gaffes early in his career.

Most people will politely look the other way if you commit some social gaffe.

helter-skelter

in a hurry and in a way that lacks organization

People ran helter-skelter. There were bodies on the ground and the injured were crying.

immaterial /,ɪmə'tɪriəl/

not important in a particular situation

synonym [irrelevant](#)

The cost is immaterial.

immaterial to somebody/something *It is immaterial to me whether he stays or goes.*

These facts are immaterial to the problem.

Import /'ɪmpɔ:rt/

(*formal*) importance

matters of great import

the import (of something)

[singular] (*formal*) the meaning of something, especially when it is not immediately clear

It is difficult to understand the full import of this statement.

impugn

impugn something (*formal*) to express doubts about whether something is right, honest, etc.

synonym [challenge](#)

There were no real grounds for impugning the decision.

Impunity /ɪmˈpjuːnəti/

if a person does something bad **with impunity**, they do not get punished for what they have done

They continue to break the law with impunity.

inception

the start of an institution, an organization, etc.

The club has grown rapidly since its inception in 2007.

onset

the beginning of something, especially something unpleasant

the onset of disease/old age/winter

indubitable

that cannot be doubted

indubitable proof

induce

induce somebody to do something (*formal*) to persuade or influence somebody to do something

Nothing would induce me to take the job.

induce something

(*formal*) to cause something

drugs which induce sleep

a drug-induced coma

induce somebody/something

(*medical*) to make a woman start giving birth to her baby by giving her special drugs

lowly

low in status or importance

synonym [humble](#), [obscure](#)

a lowly government clerk

How should I know? I'm just a lowly employee.

lull

lull (in something) a quiet period between times of activity

a lull in the conversation/fighting

*Just before an attack everything would go quiet but we knew it was just **the lull before the storm** (= before a time of noise or trouble).*

lull somebody to make somebody relaxed and calm

synonym [soothe](#)

*The vibration of the engine **lulled** the children **to sleep**.*

He was lulled by the peaceful sound of the rain.

lull (something) to make something, or to become, less strong

His father's arrival lulled the boy's anxiety.

lull somebody into something

to make somebody feel confident and relaxed, especially so that they do not expect it when somebody does something bad or dishonest

*His friendly manner **lulled her into a false sense of security** (= made her feel safe with him when she should not have).*

maudlin /'mɔːdlɪn/

talking in a silly, emotional way, often full of pity for yourself, especially when drunk

synonym [sentimental](#)

He gets very maudlin after a few drinks.

(of a book, film/movie, or song) expressing or causing exaggerated emotions, especially in way that is not sincere

meld

meld (A) with B | meld (A and B) (together) (*formal*) to combine with something else; to make something combine with something else

mimic

mimic somebody/something | + speech to copy the way somebody speaks, moves, behaves, etc., especially in order to make other people laugh

She's always mimicking the teachers.

He mimicked her southern accent.

mimic something (*specialist or formal*) to look or behave like something else

synonym [imitate](#)

The robot was programmed to mimic a series of human movements.

the creation of a vaccine that mimics the virus

modulate /'mɔːdʒəleɪt/

modulate something (*formal*) to change the quality of your voice in order to create a particular effect by making it louder, softer, lower, etc.

[transitive] **modulate something** (*specialist*) to affect something so that it becomes more regular, slower, etc.
drugs that effectively modulate the disease process

nonconformist /ˌnɒːnkənˈfɔːrmɪst/

not following normal ways of thinking or behaving
his nonconformist attitude

obtain

(not used in the progressive tenses) (of rules, systems, customs, etc.) to exist
synonym [apply](#)
These conditions no longer obtain.

oppressive

making you feel unhappy and anxious
synonym [stifling](#)
an oppressive relationship
The silence between them started to grow oppressive.

(of the weather) extremely hot and unpleasant and lacking fresh air
synonym [stifling](#)
oppressive heat

overlook

overlook something to fail to see or notice something
synonym [miss](#)
He seems to have overlooked one important fact.
In my hurry to finish the exam I had overlooked part of one of the questions.

overlook something to see something wrong or bad but decide to ignore it
synonym [turn a blind eye](#)
We could not afford to overlook such a serious offence.
He's so friendly people are prepared to overlook his faults.

overlook something if a building, etc. **overlooks** a place, you can see that place from the building
a restaurant overlooking the lake
Our back yard is overlooked by several houses.

overlook somebody (for something) to not consider somebody for a job or position, even though they might be suitable
synonym [pass over](#)
She's been overlooked for promotion several times.

oversell

oversell somebody/something/yourself to say that somebody/something is better than they really are

He has a tendency to oversell himself.

oversell something (*business*) to sell too much or more of something than is available

The seats on the plane were oversold.

palliative

(*medical*) (of a medicine or medical treatment) reducing pain without curing its cause

palliative treatment

(*formal, usually disapproving*) (of an action, a decision, etc.) designed to make a difficult situation seem better without actually solving the cause of the problems

short-term palliative measures

paltry

(of an amount) too small to be considered as important or useful

synonym [meagre](#)

This account offers a paltry 1% return on your investment.

a paltry sum

They worked long hours for paltry wages.

having no value or useful qualities

a paltry gesture

peer

[intransitive] (+ **adv./prep.**) to look closely or carefully at something, especially when you cannot see it clearly

We peered into the shadows.

He went to the window and peered out.

She kept peering over her shoulder.

He peered closely at the photograph.

penalty (of something)

a disadvantage suffered as a result of something

One of the penalties of fame is loss of privacy.

pertain

to exist or to apply in a particular situation or at a particular time

Living conditions are vastly different from those pertaining in their country of origin.

Those laws no longer pertain.

plummet /'plʌmɪt/

to fall suddenly and quickly from a high level or position

synonym [plunge](#)

Share prices plummeted to an all-time low.

Her spirits plummeted at the thought of meeting him again.

The jet plummeted into a row of houses.

polymath /'pɑ:limæθ/

a person who knows a lot about many different subjects

preconception /,pri:kən'sepʃn/

an idea or opinion that is formed before you have enough information or experience

synonym [assumption](#)

a book that will challenge your preconceptions about rural life

prescriptive /pri'skriptɪv/

(*formal*) telling people what should be done

prescriptive methods of teaching

(*linguistics*) telling people how a language should be used, rather than describing how it is used

a prescriptive grammar of English

opposite [descriptive](#)

(*specialist*) (of rights and institutions) made legal or acceptable because they have existed for a long time

prescriptive powers

probity

the quality of being completely honest

financial probity

It should not be necessary to emphasize the need for probity among the legal profession.

proclaim

to show something clearly; to be a sign of something

proclaim something *This building, more than any other, proclaims the character of the town.*

proclaim somebody/something + noun *His accent proclaimed him a Scot.*

proclaim somebody/something to be/have something *His accent proclaimed him to be a Scot.*

lay/put something to rest

to stop something by showing it is not true

The announcement finally laid all the speculation about their future to rest.

query /'kwɪrɪ/

a question, especially one asking for information or expressing a doubt about something

Our assistants will be happy to answer your queries.

If you have a query about your insurance policy, contact our helpline.

a question mark to show that something has not been finished or decided

Put a query against Jack's name—I'm not sure if he's coming.

radical

concerning the most basic and important parts of something; thorough and complete

synonym [far-reaching](#)

*the need for **radical changes** in education*

demands for radical reform of the law

radical differences between the sexes

new, different and likely to have a great effect

radical ideas

a radical solution to the problem

radical proposals

rattle

[transitive] **rattle somebody** to make somebody nervous or frightened

synonym [unnerve](#)

He was clearly rattled by the question.

reactivate

reactivate something to make something start working or happening again after a period of time

rebuff

to refuse a friendly offer, request or suggestion in an unkind way

synonym [reject \(1\)](#)

They rebuffed her request for help.

recast

recast something (as something) to change something by organizing or presenting it in a different way

She recast her lecture as a radio talk.

recast somebody (as something) to change the actors or the role of a particular actor in a play, etc.

resonate with something

(literary) to be full of a particular quality or feeling

She makes a simple story resonate with complex themes and emotions.

restorative /rɪ'stɔːrətɪv/

(*formal*) making you feel strong and healthy again
the restorative power of fresh air

(*medical*) connected with treatment that repairs the body or a part of it
restorative dentistry/surgery

ring true/hollow/false

to give the impression of being sincere/true or not sincere/true
It may seem a strange story but it rings true to me.

risible

deserving to be laughed at rather than taken seriously

sanity

the state of having a normal healthy mind
His behaviour was so strange that I began to doubt his sanity.
to **keep/preserve your sanity**

the state of being sensible and reasonable
After a series of road accidents the police pleaded for sanity among drivers.

self-effacing /ˌself ɪˈfeɪsɪŋ/

not wanting to attract attention to yourself or your abilities
synonym **modest**
He was a shy, self-effacing man.

shy away (from something)

to avoid doing something because you are nervous or frightened
Hugh never shied away from his responsibilities.
The newspapers have shied away from investigating the story.

singular

(*formal*) very great or obvious
synonym **outstanding**
landscape of singular beauty
He shows a singular lack of concern for other people's feelings.

(*literary*) unusual; strange
synonym **eccentric**
a singular style of dress

slumber

(*literary*) sleep; a time when somebody is asleep

*She fell into a deep and peaceful slumber.
The phone suddenly roused her from slumber.
I don't want to wake him from his slumbers.
We could hear the breathing of someone in a deep slumber.*

stave something off (staved, staved)

to prevent something bad from affecting you for a period of time; to delay something
to stave off hunger
The company managed to stave off bankruptcy for another few months.

stingy

not given or giving willingly; not generous, especially with money
synonym [mean](#)
You're stingy! (= not willing to spend money)
Don't be so stingy with the cream!
It was a stingy offer and he turned it down.

strip /strip/ something away

to remove a layer from something
First, you need to strip away all the old plaster.
to remove anything that is not true or necessary
The movie aims to strip away the lies surrounding Kennedy's life.

surly

bad-tempered and rude
a surly youth

taciturn /'tæsɪtɜːrn/

(*formal*) tending not to say very much, in a way that seems unfriendly
a taciturn and serious young man

exiguous /eg'zɪgjuəs/

very small in size or amount; hardly enough
an exiguous salary

topple

to become unsteady and fall down; to make something do this
+ adv./prep. *The pile of books toppled over.*
He toppled backwards into the river.
topple somebody/something + adv./prep. *He brushed past, toppling her from her stool.*

topple somebody/something to make somebody lose their position of power or authority
synonym [overthrow](#)

a plot to topple the President

upend /ʌp'end/

upend somebody/something to turn somebody/something upside down

The bicycle lay upended in a ditch.

They sat on upended wooden boxes.

unfeeling

not showing care or sympathy for other people

an unfeeling attitude

Her eyes were cold and unfeeling.

unflagging

remaining strong; not becoming weak or tired

synonym [tireless](#)

unflagging energy

She had shown unflagging support for the cause.

vaporize

vaporize (something) (*specialist*) to turn into gas; to make something turn into gas

vitriol /'vɪtriəl/

very cruel and bitter comments or criticism

wayward

difficult to control

synonym [headstrong](#)

a wayward child

wayward emotions

welter of something

(*formal*) a large and confusing amount of something

a welter of information

the wherewithal /'werwiðɔ:l/

[singular] **wherewithal (to do something)** the money, things or skill that you need in order to be able to do something

They lacked the wherewithal to pay for the repairs.

whimsical

unusual and not serious in a way that is either amusing or annoying

to have a whimsical sense of humour

Much of his writing has a whimsical quality.