

## Words List 15

### **1) Abstruse (ab·struse) adjective; something that is difficult to explain or comprehend, obscure.**

The calculations of mathematicians and astronomers who try to explain the universe must be pretty **abstruse**.

To Charles, the many writing rules of his MLA style manual seemed **abstruse**.

**Synonyms:** perplexing, obscure, complex, bewildering, mysterious

**Antonyms:** understandable, explicable, logical, comprehensible.

### **2) Aesthetic (es·thet·ic) adjective; pertaining to art or beauty.**

Although the square building was energy efficient, it was greatly lacking in **aesthetics**; in short, it was ugly.

The surgeon's goal was to **aesthetically** hide the large scar and make it less visible.

An **aesthete** (noun) is one who appreciates or judges beauty in art. The **aesthete** regarded the statue with great appreciation.

**Synonyms:** artistic, visual, beauty

**Antonyms:** plain, uninspired

### **3) Attrition (at·tri·tion) noun; a gradual wearing away by friction or reduction in membership.**

The club dissolved due to **attrition**; fewer people came every time until there was no one left to meet.

The shoreline slowly wore away due to **attrition** from the sea tide.

**Synonyms:** erosion, wearing away

**Antonyms:** building up, supplement

### **4) Bathos ba·thos noun; insincere or grossly sentimental, especially in the ending**

Celia was riveted to the thrilling book until the end, which was full of **bathos** and very disappointing.

The audience booed the **bathos** at the end of the play; the ending was so awful it was laughable.

**Synonyms:** anticlimax, nadir, letdown, disappointment, banality, triteness, bathos

### **5) Bilious (bil·ious) adjective; easy to irritate, sickly**

**Bilious** comes from the word, **bile**, which refers to stomach acid.

The witch's green skin was an indication of her **biliousness**. (noun)

The patient **biliously** turned down every offer of help he received.

**Synonyms:** dyspeptic, peevish, ill-humored

**Antonyms:** well, healthy, good-natured

### **6) Cursory (cur·so·ry) adjective; done in haste with little attention**

Unfortunately, Cathy only gave her English paper a **cursory** glance before she turned it in; she got a "D" due to numerous small errors in her paper.

As he was late Brian performed his morning ritual in a **cursory** manner; he was surprised to return home later that day and find his back door wide open!

**Synonyms:** superficial, hasty, perfunctory, rapid, brief, careless

**Antonyms:** careful, attentive, conscientious, meticulous, assiduous, peruse

**7) Craven (cra·ven) adjective; to be afraid,**

Our **craven** dog ran under the bed each time he heard an unfamiliar noise.

Instead of standing up for his beliefs, Ned **cravenly** cowered to popular opinion. (adverb)

**Synonyms:** cowardly, gutless, spineless, timorous, pusillanimous

**Antonyms:** brave, courageous, valiant

**8) Disconcert (dis·con·cert) verb; to distress, to embarrass**

Evelyn was **disconcerted** to hear her name associated with a vicious untrue rumor.

It was **disconcerting** to realize that the family's home was not safe in a tornado.

**Synonyms:** embarrass, distress, offend, displease, disturb

**Antonyms:** comfort, soothe, console, reassure

**9) Disdain (dis·dain) noun; to regard or treat with haughty contempt; to despise.**

Farrah was **disdainful** towards fast food; she looked down on it with derision.

Ed looked upon cleaning his room with **disdain**; he left his mother to do it instead.

Andrew felt great **disdain** for peas; he simply could not stand them.

**Synonyms:** scorn, contempt, derision, condescension, disparage, reject, spurn

**Antonyms:** admire, respect, esteem

**10) Empirical (em·pir·i·cal) adjective; based on observation or experience, capable of being proved or disproved through experiment**

Science and medicine progress through **empirical** experimentation and observation.

**Empirically**-based results are more accurate than theory as the empirical results have been confirmed through experiment.

**Synonyms:** confirmable, experimental

**Antonyms:** theoretical,

**11) Eminent (em·i·nent) adjective; of high respect, high rank in authority**

The **eminent** Renaissance historian was asked his opinion for all subsequent publications on the Renaissance; his knowledge and authority was useful for evaluation.

The wise woman was considered an **eminent** authority in her village.

**Synonyms:** well-known, reputed, distinguished, renowned

**Antonyms:** infamous, notorious, iniquitous, villainous

**12) Futile (fu·tile) adjective; useless, without useful result.**

Sometimes it is said that education is **futilely** wasted on the young; we often don't possess the maturity to take advantage of education until we are older.

It was **futile** for the soldiers to fight; they were outnumbered ten to one; after considering their futile options, they decided to surrender.

**Synonyms:** useless, pointless, fruitless, ineffective

**Antonyms:** useful, helpful, effective, valuable

**13) Grovel (grov·el) verb; to behave in a servile manner; to beg**

After his terrible behavior at prom, Greg **groveled** to his girlfriend for weeks; he was worried she'd break up with him.

It was painful to watch the skinny hungry dog **grovel** for scraps of food.

**Synonyms:** plead, beg, supplicate, implore, entreat, beseech

**14) Histrionic (his·tri·on·ic) adjective: excessively dramatic**

All of her friends were used to Heather's **histrionic** outbursts; she was the original drama queen.

The stage actor **histrionically** cried out for revenge; he was so overwrought that some in the audience actually laughed. (adverb)

**Synonyms:** theatrical, dramatic, exaggerated, melodramatic, insincere

**Antonyms:** genuine, authentic,

**15) Intrepid (in·trep·id) adjective; full of courage and spirit.**

The **intrepid** soldier forged into battle; he was unafraid to fight.

**Intrepid** is a popular name for cars and sports vehicles implying that the vehicles are unafraid to go anywhere.

**Synonyms:** fearless, brave, bold, gallant, resolute, daring, valiant, heroic, dauntless

**Antonyms:** cowardly, pusillanimous, craven, spineless

**16) Lament (la·ment) verb; to grieve, to express sorrow, to cry out**

The family **lamented** the death of their beloved daughter.

The boy let out a loud **lamentation** when his puppy died. (noun)

**Synonyms:** mourn, grieve

**Antonyms:** celebrate

**17) Mawkish (mawk·ish) adjective; overtly sentimental to the point of insincerity**

My girlfriend cherished the **mawkish** love story; I thought the movie was terrible.

Adria was known for her **mawkish** behavior; there was always a drama or crisis going on in her life.

**Synonyms:** maudlin, sappy, syrupy, bathetic (bathos)

**18) Nettle (net·tle) noun; an irritating prickly plant; to irritate**

Arthur stumbled through a patch of **nettles** and came out with scratches and welts on his legs. The sign on the zoo gate warned: "Please do not annoy, vex, irritate or nettle the animals."

**Synonyms:** annoy, irritate, vex, grate, exasperate

**19) Pejorative (pe·jor·a·tive) adjective; to put something down**

Carrie's **pejorative** comments let it be known that she did not respect her boss. Stephen

**Synonyms:** derogatory, uncomplimentary, depreciatory, negative

**Antonyms:** complimentary, flattering, admiring, gracious

**20) Probity (pro·bi·ty) noun; confirmed integrity, virtue**

Daniel was a good candidate for the political office as everyone who knew him confirmed his good character and **probity**.

In order to work in a bank around money, employees must prove absolute **probity** and respect for honesty; they can never have bounced a check.

**Synonyms:** integrity, virtue, uprightness

**21) Surmise (sur·mise) verb; to guess, to infer from evidence**

Given the empty cookie jar, the ring of crumbs around her brother's mouth, and his sticky hands, Caitlyn **surmised** he would not be hungry for dinner.

The detective **surmised** the culprit of the crime, but he needed more evidence to prove it.

**Synonyms:** guess, construe, deduce, conclude, assume

**22) Sycophant (syc·o·phant) noun; one who flatters for self-gain**

In Lord of the Rings, Gollum is a **sycophant**; he flatters Frodo in an attempt to deceive him and get the ring from him.

Ted's **sycophantic** tendencies earned the distrust of his colleagues; he was always buttering up his boss in hopes of a gain in raise or title. (adjective)

**Synonyms:** lackey, toady

**23) Tantalize (tan·ta·lize) verb; to tease or entice, to torment**

The tasty desserts **tantalized** the dieter.

In Greek mythology, **Tantalus** was a son of Zeus who regularly shared the food of the gods. However, he abused their trust and was punished by being "tantalized": He was immersed up to his neck in water, but when he bent to drink, it all drained away. Further, luscious fruit hung on trees above him, but when he reached for the fruit, the winds blew the branches beyond his reach.

**Synonyms:** entice, tease, excite, tempt, beguile, charm

**Antonyms:** hold back, repel, deter.

**24) Validate (val·i·date) verb; to declare valid and true**

The officer's badge **validated** his authority as a police officer.

The governor **validates** his correspondence with a state seal.

**Synonyms:** authenticate, legalize, authorize, confirm, corroborate, verify

**Antonyms:** invalid, false, null, specious, sophistic

**25) Writhe (writhe) verb; to twist or move with pain**

After he was shot the victim **writhed** on the ground moaning with pain.

The surgeon had to restrain the **writhing** patient so he could remove the bullet.

**Synonyms:** squirm, wiggle, twist, struggle