

## **100 Words Every High School Graduate Should Know**

- |                       |                           |                           |
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| 2. <b>abrogate</b>    | 36. hubris                | 70. <b>plagiarize</b>     |
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## WORDS 1-10

**abjure** verb [ trans. ] formal

solemnly renounce (a belief, cause, or claim) : *his refusal to abjure the Catholic faith.*

**abrogate** verb [ trans. ] formal

repeal or do away with (a law, right, or formal agreement) : *a proposal to abrogate temporarily the right to strike.*

**abstemious** adjective

not self-indulgent, esp. when eating and drinking : *"We only had a bottle." "Very abstemious of you."*

**acumen** noun

the ability to make good judgments and quick decisions, typically in a particular domain : *business acumen.*

**antebellum** adjective [ attrib. ]

occurring or existing before a particular war, esp. the American Civil War : *the conventions of the antebellum South.*

**auspicious** adjective

conducive to success; favorable : *it was not the most auspicious moment to hold an election.*

- giving or being a sign of future success : *they said it was an auspicious moon—it was rising.*

- archaic characterized by success; prosperous : *he was respectful to his auspicious customers.*

**belie** verb ( **-lying** ) [ trans. ]

**1** (of an appearance) fail to give a true notion or impression of (something); disguise or contradict : *his lively alert manner belied his years.*

**2** fail to fulfill or justify (a claim or expectation); betray : *the notebooks belie Darwin's later recollection.*

**bellicose** adjective

demonstrating aggression and willingness to fight : *a group of bellicose patriots.*

**bowdlerize** verb [ trans. ]

remove material that is considered improper or offensive from (a text or account), esp. with the result that it becomes weaker or less effective : [as adj. ] (**bowdlerized**) *a bowdlerized version of the story.*

**chicanery** noun

the use of trickery to achieve a political, financial, or legal purpose : *an underhanded person who schemes corruption and political chicanery behind closed doors.*

## WORDS 11-20

**chromosome** noun Biology

a threadlike structure of nucleic acids and protein found in the nucleus of most living cells, carrying genetic information in the form of genes.

**churlish** adjective

rude in a mean-spirited and surly way : *it seems churlish to complain.*

**circumlocution** noun

the use of many words where fewer would do, esp. in a deliberate attempt to be vague or evasive : *his admission came after years of circumlocution*  
| *he used a number of poetic circumlocutions.*

**circumnavigate** verb [ trans. ]

sail all the way around (something, esp. the world).

- humorous go around or across (something) : *he helped her to circumnavigate a frozen puddle.*

**deciduous** adjective

(of a tree or shrub) shedding its leaves annually. Often contrasted with **evergreen**.

- informal (of a tree or shrub) broad-leaved.
- denoting the milk teeth of a mammal, which are shed after a time.

**deleterious** adjective

causing harm or damage : *divorce is assumed to have deleterious effects on children.*

**diffident** adjective

modest or shy because of a lack of self-confidence : *a diffident youth.*

**enervate** verb [ trans. ]

cause (someone) to feel drained of energy or vitality; weaken.

**enfranchise** verb [ trans. ]

give the right to vote to : *a proposal that foreigners should be enfranchised for local elections.*

- historical free (a slave).

**epiphany** noun ( pl. **-nies**)

the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12).

- the festival commemorating this on January 6.
- a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being.
- a moment of sudden revelation or insight.

## WORDS 21-30

**equinox** noun

the time or date (twice each year) at which the sun crosses the celestial equator, when day and night are of equal length (about September 22 and March 20).

**euro** noun ( pl. **euros** or **euro**) (also **Euro**)

the single European currency adopted in 1999 by eleven countries in the European Union (Belgium, Austria, Finland, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg) as an alternative currency in noncash transactions. In 2002 it replaced the national currencies of twelve member countries (the original eleven, plus Greece). (Symb.: **€**)

**evanescent** adjective chiefly poetic/literary

soon passing out of sight, memory, or existence; quickly fading or disappearing : *a shimmering evanescent bubble.*

- Physics denoting a field or wave that extends into a region where it cannot propagate and whose amplitude therefore decreases with distance.

**expurgate** verb [ trans. ] [often as adj. ] ( **expurgated**)

remove matter thought to be objectionable or unsuitable from (a book or account) : *the expurgated Arabian Nights.*

**facetious** adjective

treating serious issues with deliberately inappropriate humor; flippant.

**fatuous** adjective

silly and pointless : *a fatuous comment.*

**feckless** adjective

(of a person) lacking in efficiency or vitality : *a feckless mama's boy.*

- unthinking and irresponsible : *the feckless exploitation of the world's natural resources.*

**fiduciary** adjective Law

involving trust, esp. with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary : *the company has a fiduciary duty to shareholders.*

- archaic held or given in trust : *fiduciary estates.*
- Finance (of a paper currency) depending for its value on securities (as opposed to gold) or the reputation of the issuer.

**filibuster** noun

1 an action such as a prolonged speech that obstructs progress in a legislative assembly while not technically contravening the required procedures : *it was defeated by a Senate filibuster in June.*

2 historical a person engaging in unauthorized warfare against a foreign country.

**gamete** noun Biology

a mature haploid male or female germ cell that is able to unite with another of the opposite sex in sexual reproduction to form a zygote.

## WORDS 31-40

**gauche** adjective

lacking ease or grace; unsophisticated and socially awkward.

**gerrymander** verb [ trans. ] [often as n. ] (**gerrymandering**)

manipulate the boundaries of (an electoral constituency) so as to favor one party or class.

- achieve (a result) by such manipulation : *a total freedom to gerrymander the results they want.*

**hegemony** noun

leadership or dominance, esp. by one country or social group over others : *Germany was united under Prussian hegemony after 1871.*

**hemoglobin** noun Biochemistry

a red protein responsible for transporting oxygen in the blood of vertebrates. Its molecule comprises four subunits, each containing an iron atom bound to a heme group.

**homogeneous** adjective

of the same kind; alike : *timbermen prefer to deal with homogeneous woods.*

- consisting of parts all of the same kind : *culturally speaking the farmers constitute an extremely homogeneous group.*
- Mathematics containing terms all of the same degree.

**hubris** noun

excessive pride or self-confidence.

- (in Greek tragedy) excessive pride toward or defiance of the gods, leading to nemesis.

**hypotenuse** noun

the longest side of a right triangle, opposite the right angle.

**impeach** verb [ trans. ]

call into question the integrity or validity of (a practice) : *there is no basis to Searle's motion to impeach the verdict.*

• charge (the holder of a public office) with misconduct : *the governor served only one year before being impeached and convicted for fiscal fraud.*

**incognito** adjective & adverb

(of a person) having one's true identity concealed :

[as adj. ] *in order to observe you have to be incognito.*

[as adv. ] *he is now operating incognito.*

**incontrovertible** adjective

not able to be denied or disputed : *incontrovertible proof.*

## WORDS 41-50

**inculcate** verb [ trans. ]

instill (an attitude, idea, or habit) by persistent instruction : *the failures of the churches to inculcate a sense of moral responsibility.*

• teach (someone) an attitude, idea, or habit by such instruction : *they will try to **inculcate** you **with** a respect for culture.*

**infrastructure** noun

the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g., buildings, roads, and power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

**interpolate** verb [ trans. ]

insert (something) between fixed points : *illustrations were interpolated in the text.*

• insert (words) in a book or other text, esp. in order to give a false impression as to its date.

• make such insertions in (a book or text).

• interject (a remark) in a conversation : [with direct speech ] *"I dare say," interpolated her employer.*

• Mathematics insert (an intermediate value or term) into a series by estimating or calculating it from surrounding known values.

**irony** noun ( pl. **-nies**)

the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect : *"Don't go overboard with the gratitude," he rejoined with heavy irony.*

• a state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects and is often amusing as a result : [with clause ] *the irony is that I thought he could help me.*

• (also **dramatic** or **tragic irony**) a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions are clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.

**jejune** adjective

1 naive, simplistic, and superficial : *their entirely predictable and usually jejune opinions.*

2 (of ideas or writings) dry and uninteresting : *the poem seems to me rather jejune.*

**kinetic** adjective

of, relating to, or resulting from motion.

- (of a work of art) depending on movement for its effect.

**kowtow** verb [ intrans. ] historical

kneel and touch the ground with the forehead in worship or submission as part of Chinese custom.

- figurative act in an excessively subservient manner : *she didn't have to kowtow to a boss.*

**laissez faire** noun

a policy or attitude of letting things take their own course, without interfering.

- Economics abstention by governments from interfering in the workings of the free market : [as adj. ] *laissez-faire capitalism.*

**lexicon** noun ( pl. **-cons** or **-ca**)

1 the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge : *the size of the English lexicon.*

- a dictionary, esp. of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, or Arabic : *a Greek-Latin lexicon.*

2 Linguistics the complete set of meaningful units in a language.

**loquacious** adjective

talkative.

## WORDS 51-60

**lugubrious** adjective

looking or sounding sad and dismal.

**metamorphosis** noun ( pl. **-phoses**) Zoology

(in an insect or amphibian) the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form in two or more distinct stages.

- a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one, by natural or supernatural means : *his metamorphosis from presidential candidate to talk-show host.*

**mitosis** noun ( pl. **-ses**) Biology

a type of cell division that results in two daughter cells each having the same number and kind of chromosomes as the parent nucleus, typical of ordinary tissue growth. Compare with **meiosis** .

**moiety** noun ( pl. **-ties**) formal or technical

each of two parts into which a thing is or can be divided.

- Anthropology each of two social or ritual groups into which a people is divided, esp. among Australian Aboriginals and some American Indians.
- a part or portion, esp. a lesser share.
- Chemistry a distinct part of a large molecule : *the enzyme removes the sulfate moiety.*

**nanotechnology** noun

the branch of technology that deals with dimensions and tolerances of less than 100 nanometers, esp. the manipulation of individual atoms and molecules.

**nihilism** noun

the rejection of all religious and moral principles, often in the belief that life is meaningless.

- Philosophy extreme skepticism maintaining that nothing in the world

has a real existence.

- historical the doctrine of an extreme Russian revolutionary party c. 1900, which found nothing to approve of in the established social order.

**nomenclature** the devising or choosing of names for things, esp. in a science or other discipline.

- the body or system of such names in a particular field : *the nomenclature of chemical compounds*.
- formal the term or terms applied to someone or something : *"customers" was preferred to the original nomenclature "passengers."*

**nonsectarian** adjective

not involving or relating to a specific religious sect or political group.

**notarize** verb [ trans. ]

have (a document) legalized by a notary.

**obsequious** adjective

obedient or attentive to an excessive or servile degree : *they were served by obsequious waiters*.

## WORDS 61-70

**oligarchy** noun ( pl. **-chies**)

a small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution : *the ruling oligarchy of military men around the president*.

- a state governed by such a group : *the English aristocratic oligarchy of the 19th century*.
- government by such a group.

**omnipotent** adjective

(of a deity) having unlimited power; able to do anything.

- having ultimate power and influence : *an omnipotent sovereign*.

**orthography** noun ( pl. **-phies**)

the conventional spelling system of a language.

- the study of spelling and how letters combine to represent sounds and form words.

**oxidize** verb

combine or become combined chemically with oxygen : [ trans. ] *when coal is burned any sulfur is oxidized to sulfur dioxide* | [ intrans. ] *the fats in the food will oxidize, turning it rancid*.

- Chemistry undergo or cause to undergo a reaction in which electrons are lost to another species. The opposite of **reduce**.

**parabola** noun ( pl. **-las** or **-lae**)

a symmetrical open plane curve formed by the intersection of a cone with a plane parallel to its side. The path of a projectile under the influence of gravity ideally follows a curve of this shape.

**paradigm** noun

**1** technical a typical example or pattern of something; a model : *there is a new paradigm for public art in this country*. See note at **model** .

- a worldview underlying the theories and methodology of a particular scientific subject : *the discovery of universal gravitation became the paradigm of successful science*.

**2** a set of linguistic items that form mutually exclusive choices in particular syntactic roles : *English determiners form a paradigm: we can say "a book" or "his book" but not "a his book."* Often contrasted with

**syntagm.**

- (in the traditional grammar of Latin, Greek, and other inflected languages) a table of all the inflected forms of a particular verb, noun, or adjective, serving as a model for other words of the same conjugation or declension.

**parameter** noun technical

a numerical or other measurable factor forming one of a set that defines a system or sets the conditions of its operation : *the transmission will not let you downshift unless your speed is within the lower gear's parameters.*

- Mathematics a quantity whose value is selected for the particular circumstances and in relation to which other variable quantities may be expressed.
- Statistics a numerical characteristic of a population, as distinct from a statistic of a sample.
- (in general use) a limit or boundary that defines the scope of a particular process or activity : *they set the parameters of the debate.*

**pecuniary** adjective formal

of, relating to, or consisting of money : *he admitted obtaining a pecuniary advantage by deception.*

**photosynthesis** noun

the process by which green plants and some other organisms use sunlight to synthesize foods from carbon dioxide and water. Photosynthesis in plants generally involves the green pigment chlorophyll and generates oxygen as a byproduct.

**plagiarize** verb [ trans. ]

take (the work or an idea of someone else) and pass it off as one's own.

- copy from (someone) in such a way.

## WORDS 71-80

**plasma** noun

**1** the colorless fluid part of blood, lymph, or milk, in which corpuscles or fat globules are suspended.

- this substance taken from donors or donated blood for administering in transfusions.

**2** an ionized gas consisting of positive ions and free electrons in proportions resulting in more or less no overall electric charge, typically at low pressures (as in the upper atmosphere and in fluorescent lamps) or at very high temperatures (as in stars and nuclear fusion reactors).

- an analogous substance consisting of mobile charged particles (such as a molten salt or the electrons within a metal).

**3** a dark green, translucent variety of quartz used in mosaic and for other decorative purposes.

**4** another term for **cytoplasm** or **protoplasm**.

**polymer** noun Chemistry

a substance that has a molecular structure consisting chiefly or entirely of a large number of similar units bonded together, e.g., many synthetic organic materials used as plastics and resins.

**precipitous** adjective

**1** dangerously high or steep : *the precipitous cliffs of the North Atlantic coast.*

- (of a change to a worse situation or condition) sudden and dramatic : *the end of the war led to a precipitous decline in exports.*



**2** (of an action) done suddenly and without careful consideration :  
*precipitous intervention.*

**quasar** noun Astronomy

a massive and extremely remote celestial object, emitting exceptionally large amounts of energy, and typically having a starlike image in a telescope. It has been suggested that quasars contain massive black holes and may represent a stage in the evolution of some galaxies.

**quotidian** adjective [ attrib. ]

of or occurring every day; daily : *the car sped noisily off through the quotidian traffic.*

- ordinary or everyday, esp. when mundane : *his story is an achingly human one, mired in quotidian details.*
- Medicine denoting the malignant form of malaria.

**recapitulate** verb [ trans. ]

summarize and state again the main points of : *he began to recapitulate his argument with care.*

- Biology repeat (an evolutionary or other process) during development and growth.

**reciprocal** adjective

**1** given, felt, or done in return : *she was hoping for some reciprocal comment or gesture.*

**2** (of an agreement or obligation) bearing on or binding each of two parties equally : *the treaty is a bilateral commitment with reciprocal rights and duties.*

- Grammar (of a pronoun or verb) expressing mutual action or relationship.

**3** (of a course or bearing) differing from a given course or bearing by 180 degrees.

**4** Mathematics (of a quantity or function) related to another so that their product is one.

noun

**1** technical a mathematical expression or function so related to another that their product is one; the quantity obtained by dividing the number one by a given quantity.

**2** Grammar a pronoun or verb expressing mutual action or relationship, e.g., *each other, fight.*

**reparation** noun

**1** the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged : *the courts required a convicted offender to **make financial reparation to** his victim.*

- ( **reparations**) the compensation for war damage paid by a defeated state.

**2** archaic the action of repairing something : *the old hall was pulled down to avoid the cost of reparation.*

**respiration** noun

the action of breathing : *opiates affect respiration.*

- chiefly Medicine a single breath.
- Biology a process in living organisms involving the production of energy, typically with the intake of oxygen and the release of carbon dioxide from the oxidation of complex organic substances.

**sanguine** adjective

**1** cheerfully optimistic : *they are not sanguine about the prospect.*

- (in medieval science and medicine) of or having the constitution

associated with the predominance of blood among the bodily humors, supposedly marked by a ruddy complexion and an optimistic disposition.

- archaic (of the complexion) florid; ruddy.
- archaic bloody or bloodthirsty.

2 poetic/literary & Heraldry blood-red.

## WORDS 81-90

**soliloquy** noun ( pl. **-quies**)

an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers, esp. by a character in a play.

- a part of a play involving such an act.

**subjugate** verb [ trans. ]

bring under domination or control, esp. by conquest : *the invaders had soon subjugated most of the native population.*

- ( **subjugate someone/something to**) make someone or something subordinate to : *the new ruler firmly subjugated the Church to the state.*

**suffragist** noun chiefly historical

a person advocating the extension of suffrage, esp. to women.

**supercilious** adjective

behaving or looking as though one thinks one is superior to others : *a supercilious lady's maid.*

**tautology** noun ( pl. **-gies**)

the saying of the same thing twice in different words, generally considered to be a fault of style (e.g., *they arrived one after the other in succession*).

- a phrase or expression in which the same thing is said twice in different words.
- Logic a statement that is true by necessity or by virtue of its logical form.

**taxonomy** noun chiefly Biology

the branch of science concerned with classification, esp. of organisms; systematics.

- the classification of something, esp. organisms : *the taxonomy of these fossils.*
- a scheme of classification : a **taxonomy of** smells.

**tectonic** adjective

1 Geology of or relating to the structure of the earth's crust and the large-scale processes that take place within it.

2 of or relating to building or construction.

**tempestuous** adjective

1 characterized by strong and turbulent or conflicting emotion : *he had a reckless and tempestuous streak.*

2 very stormy : *a tempestuous wind.*

**thermodynamics** plural noun [treated as sing. ]

the branch of physical science that deals with the relations between heat and other forms of energy (such as mechanical, electrical, or chemical energy), and, by extension, of the relationships and interconvertibility of all forms of energy.

**totalitarian** adjective

of or relating to a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state : a *totalitarian regime*.

noun

a person advocating such a system of government.

## WORDS 91-100

**unctuous** adjective

1 (of a person) excessively or ingratiatingly flattering; oily : *he seemed anxious to please but not in an unctuous way*.

2 (chiefly of minerals) having a greasy or soapy feel.

**usurp** verb [ trans. ]

take (a position of power or importance) illegally or by force : *Richard usurped the throne*.

• take the place of (someone in a position of power) illegally:

supplant : *the Hanoverian dynasty had usurped the Stuarts*.

• [ intrans. ] ( **usurp on/upon**) archaic encroach or infringe upon (someone's rights) : *the Church had usurped upon the domain of the state*.

**vacuous** adjective

having or showing a lack of thought or intelligence; mindless : a *vacuous smile* | *vacuous slogans*.

• archaic empty.

**vehement** adjective

showing strong feeling; forceful, passionate, or intense : *her voice was low but vehement* | *vehement criticism*.

**vortex** noun ( pl. **-texes** or **-tices**)

a mass of whirling fluid or air, esp. a whirlpool or whirlwind.

• figurative something regarded as a whirling mass : *the vortex of existence*.

**winnow** verb

1 [ trans. ] blow a current of air through (grain) in order to remove the chaff.

• remove (chaff) from grain : *women winnow the chaff from piles of unhusked rice*.

• reduce the number in a set of (people or things) gradually until only the best ones are left : *the contenders had been winnowed to five*.

• find or identify (a valuable or useful part of something) : *amidst this welter of confusing signals, it's difficult to winnow out the truth*.

• identify and remove (the least valuable or useful people or things) : *guidelines that would help winnow out those not fit to be soldiers*.

2 [ intrans. ] poetic/literary (of the wind) blow : *the autumn wind winnowing its way through the grass*.

• [ trans. ] (of a bird) fan (the air) with wings.

**wrought** wrought

archaic past and past participle of **work**.

adjective

(of metals) beaten out or shaped by hammering.

**xenophobia** noun

intense or irrational dislike or fear of people from other countries :  
*racism and xenophobia are steadily growing in Europe.*

**yeoman** noun ( pl. **-men**)

**1** historical a man holding and cultivating a small landed estate; a freeholder.

- a person qualified for certain duties and rights, such as to serve on juries and vote for the knight of the shire, by virtue of possessing free land of an annual value of 40 shillings.

**2** historical a servant in a royal or noble household, ranking between a sergeant and a groom or a squire and a page.

**3** Brit. a member of the yeomanry force.

**4** a petty officer in the U.S. Navy or Coast Guard performing clerical duties on board ship.

- (also **yeoman of signals**) (in the British Royal Navy and other Commonwealth navies) a petty officer concerned with signaling.

**ziggurat** noun

(in ancient Mesopotamia) a rectangular stepped tower, sometimes surmounted by a temple. Ziggurats are first attested in the late 3rd millennium BC and probably inspired the biblical story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9).