

1. **brevity** ✓
(brév' ə tē)

(n.) shortness

The speech was notable more for its brevity than for its clarity.

SYNONYMS: conciseness, terseness, pithiness
ANTONYMS: verbosity, long-windedness, prolixity

2. **comport** ✓
(kəm pòrt')

(v.) to conduct or bear oneself, behave; to be in agreement

As the students left the building, the principal reminded them to comport themselves as emissaries of the school.

SYNONYMS: deport oneself, agree, concur

3. **concise** ✓
(kən sīs')

(adj.) expressing much in a few words

As a rule of thumb, editors and readers appreciate writing that is concise and forceful.

SYNONYMS: brief, succinct, terse, pithy, to the point
ANTONYMS: wordy, verbose, long-winded, prolix

4. **demure** ✓
(di myūr')

(adj.) sober or serious in manner, modest

Despite her demure appearance, she is a competitive speed skater, always ready for a challenge on ice.

SYNONYMS: shy, diffident, sedate, seemly, decorous
ANTONYMS: bold, forward, assertive, immodest

5. **depreciation** ✓
(di prē shē ā' shən)

(n.) a lessening in value; a belittling

The accountant calculated the depreciation of the computer over a period of five years.

SYNONYMS: cheapening, lowering, devaluation
ANTONYMS: increase, appreciation, enhancement

6. **deteriorate** ✓
(di tir' ē ə rāt)

(v.) to lower in quality or value; to wear away

It is painful for anyone, particularly a doctor, to watch someone's health deteriorate.

SYNONYMS: worsen, decline, degenerate, debase
ANTONYMS: improve, fix up, enhance

7. **divulge** ✓
(di vəl'j')

(v.) to tell, reveal; to make public

On some occasions, scrupulous reporters cannot divulge their sources of information.

SYNONYMS: disclose, impart, spill the beans, "leak"
ANTONYMS: hide, conceal, cover up, secrete, keep under wraps

8. **enlightened** ✓
(en līt' ənd)

(adj.) free from ignorance and false ideas; possessing sound understanding

An enlightened society is ruled by knowledge and reason rather than superstition and prejudice.

SYNONYMS: knowing, informed, aware, cultivated
ANTONYMS: ignorant, unaware, untaught, benighted

9. **forestall** ✓
(fōr stōl')

(v.) to prevent by acting first

Sometimes it is possible to forestall a cold by taking Vitamin C.

SYNONYMS: hinder, thwart, preclude, ward off
ANTONYMS: welcome, accept, allow, submit, abide by

10. **garble** ✓
(gār' bəl)

(v.) to distort in such a way as to make unintelligible

If you've played "telephone," you know how easy it is to inadvertently garble a message.

SYNONYMS: jumble, scramble, confuse, misrepresent
ANTONYMS: clarify, elucidate, articulate

11. **proponent**
(prō pō' nānt)

(n.) one who puts forward a proposal; one who supports a cause or belief

Lucretia Coffin Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were among the first proponent of women's suffrage in the United States.

SYNONYMS: supporter, advocate, exponent
ANTONYMS: opponent, critic, foe, adversary

12. **quaver**
(kwā' vər)

(v.) to shake, tremble; to trill

My voice quavers whenever I try to reach the high notes.

SYNONYMS: quiver, vibrate, shiver, quake, palpitate

13. **recoil**
(v., ri kōil';
n., rē' kōil)

(v.) to spring back, shrink; (n.) the act of springing back

In *The Speckled Band*, sleuth Sherlock Holmes points out that "violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent."

When the engineer accidentally released the giant spring, its powerful _____ sent him sprawling.

SYNONYMS: (v.) flinch; (n.) kickback
ANTONYMS: (v.) advance, proceed, gain ground

14. **recoup**
(ri kŭp')

(v.) to make up for, regain

I plan to recoup my family's lost fortune by working hard, earning extra money, and investing wisely.

SYNONYMS: recover, retrieve
ANTONYMS: lose, default, forfeit, kiss goodbye

15. **reek**
(rēk)

(n.) an unpleasant smell; (v.) to give off unpleasant smells; to give a strong impression

The unmistakable reek of spoiled food greeted us as we entered the long-abandoned cabin.

In *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), Jacob Riis describes tenements in urban neighborhoods that reek of poverty.

SYNONYMS: (n.) stench; (v.) stink, smell
ANTONYMS: (n.) perfume, fragrance, bouquet

16. **relentless**
(ri lent' lās)

(adj.) unyielding, harsh, without pity

The novel *Les Misérables* recounts ex-convict Jean Valjean's lifelong flight from a relentless police inspector.

SYNONYMS: stern, merciless, persistent, unremitting
ANTONYMS: merciful, accommodating, indulgent

17. **rivulet**
(riv' yū lət)

(n.) a small stream

While we could hear the running water, dense vegetation hid the rivulet from view.

SYNONYMS: brook, creek, rill

18. **squander**
(skwān' dər)

(v.) to spend foolishly, waste

I think that it is criminal to squander our natural resources.

SYNONYMS: misspend, dissipate
ANTONYMS: save, economize, hoard, squirrel away

19. **staccato**
(stə kăt' ō)

(adj.) detached or disconnected in sound or style

We strained to listen, and we heard staccato hoofbeats striking the pavement.

SYNONYMS: abrupt, disjointed
ANTONYMS: continuous, flowing, unbroken

20. **statute**
(stach' üt)

(n.) a law

The student body is governed by the statutes of the university.

SYNONYMS: rule, ordinance, enactment