

Studyguide for the SAT Vocabulary: 192 Words You Need to Know

The Golden Dozen

1. **aesthetic** – appealing to the sense of beauty
*Some cell phones are designed more for their **aesthetic** appeal than for their functionality.*
2. **eclectic** – choosing from a variety of sources
*A person with **eclectic** taste in music would like Joss Stone, Alicia Keys, Shania Twain, and Mozart.*
3. **enigma** – a puzzle; a riddle
*Mona Lisa's **enigmatic** smile has puzzled art lovers for centuries.*
4. **anomalous** – deviating from a general rule; out of place; incongruous
*In the movie Legally Blonde, Elle originally stands out because she is an **anomaly** among the students enrolled at Harvard Law School.*
5. **caustic; vitriolic** – biting; stinging; cutting; scathing
*Simon is famous for his **caustic** and **vitriolic** criticism of “American Idol” contestants.*
6. **paradox** – a seemingly contradictory statement that nonetheless expresses a truth
*In their song “Tearin’ Up My Heart,” the boys from *NSYNC express a classic **paradox**: “It’s tearin’ up my heart when I’m with you. But when we are apart, I feel it too.”*
7. **reprimand; castigate** – to scold sharply
*In the movie Billy Madison, Ms. Vaughn **castigates** Billy for making fun of a third- grade student who was having trouble reading.*
8. **alleviate; mitigate; mollify; assuage** – to relieve; to lessen
*Do you ever take Aleve to **alleviate** a headache?*
9. **tirade; diatribe** –sharp criticism; bitter speech
*In the movie The Nutty Professor, Dean Richmond is livid and launches into a lengthy **diatribe** at Professor Klump for alienating the college’s wealthy donors.*
10. **insightful; discerning; perspicacious** – very perceptive; astute; penetrating
*In Star Wars: The Phantom Menace, Yoda is **perspicacious** when he perceives that young Anakin Skywalker has a dark side that could transform him into the villainous Darth Vader.*
11. **laud; extol; acclaim** – to praise
*“Everwood” is **lauded** by many as one of the top television shows.*
12. **brusque; curt** – blunt in manner or speech, often to the point of being rude
*On the show “The Apprentice,” Donald Trump is **curt** and even **brusque** when he tells each week’s losing apprentice, “YOU’RE FIRED!”*

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You Meet the Most Interesting People on the SAT

13. **stalwart** – a loyal follower or adherent
*A stalwart shows great loyalty. The Trojan armies were **stalwart** supporters of Prince Hector in Troy. But many female viewers preferred to be **stalwart** supporters of the Greek hero Achilles (Brad Pitt)!*
14. **connoisseur** – an expert; authority
*In the movie Legally Blonde, Elle is a **connoisseur** of high fashion.*
15. **sage** – a person who is known for his/her wisdom; a wise person
*In Star Wars Yoda is a perspicacious **sage** who is known for his wisdom.*
16. **anarchist** – a person who opposes laws and government
*An **anarchist** therefore opposes order. Sacco and Vanzetti were two very famous **anarchists** who were executed because of their alleged terrorist acts.*
17. **prodigy** – a person with great talent; a young genius
*Prince, Doogie Howser MD and U.S. swimming sensation Michael Phelps are all **prodigies**. Several of the fifth graders in the School of Rock were musical **prodigies**.*
18. **itinerant; vagabond** – both are people who wander
Do you remember these lyrics from The Lion King?

*And can you feel the love tonight?
It is where we are
It's enough for this wide-eyed wanderer
That we got this far*

*And can you feel the love tonight
How it's laid to rest?
It's enough to make kings and **vagabonds**
Believe the very best*
19. **automaton** – a person who is devoid of feeling or acts in a mechanical way
*Many of the Nazis who committed genocide during the Holocaust behaved like unthinking **automatons**.*
20. **swindler** – a person who elicits trust and then betrays that trust; a con man or con woman; someone who defrauds
*In the movie Thelma and Louise, Brad Pitt plays the character of **swindler** J.D., who befriends the women and then steals their money.*
21. **mentor** – an advisor; teacher; guide
*Obi-Wan Kenobi was Luke Skywalker's mentor as Luke became a Jedi knight. In Mean Girls, Regina George was supposedly a **mentor** who showed Cady how to dress and act like a Plastic.*

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22. **virtuoso** – a person with great artistic talent
*A **virtuoso** is very skilled. Everyone agrees that Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling is the work of a **virtuoso**.*
23. **devotee** – an ardent follower, supporter, or enthusiast
*In School of Rock, Dewey Finn was an ardent, passionate **devotee** of rock music.*
24. **boor** – a person who is rude and insensitive
*A **boor** lacks refinement and civility. In the movie Animal House Bluto was such a **boor** that one person described him as a P-I-G pig!*
25. **recluse** – a person who leads a secluded or solitary life; a hermit
*Shrek was a **recluse** who preferred to live alone.*
26. **pragmatist** – a person who is practical and thus not given to flights of fancy
*A **pragmatic** senior should always have a “safety school” when applying to college.*
27. **neophyte; novice; greenhorn** – a beginner
*Cody Banks was a **neophyte** secret agent. Patch Adams was a **neophyte** intern when he began using humor as a way to help his patients.*
28. **skeptic** – a person who has doubts
*A **skeptic** asks questions and lacks faith. In the movie Men in Black, Edwards was originally a **skeptic**, who did not believe that aliens were living in New York City. In the movie Bruce Almighty, Bruce was originally **skeptical** that the man he met really was God.*
29. **iconoclast** – literally someone who smashes icons or established images
*An **iconoclast** opposes tradition. Eminem's fans argue that he is an **iconoclast** who has made fun of pop icons such as Carson Daly, Britney Spears, and Moby.*
30. **charlatan** – a fake; fraud; cheat
*In The Wizard of Oz, the Wizard turns out to be a **charlatan**, not a real wizard.*
31. **pundit** – an authority who expresses his/her opinions on topics
*Political **pundits** are already making their predictions about the next presidential election.*
32. **sycophant** – a person who tries to win favor by flattery
*In "The Simpsons" Smithers is a **sycophant** who uses flattery to gain influence with Mr. Burns.*

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“Lack of” Words

33. **ambivalent** – lacking conviction (strong belief) because of mixed feelings
*In the movie Gladiator, Emperor Commodus is **ambivalent** about giving the order to kill Maximus in the Coliseum. He wants to eliminate a rival, but he also wants to please the crowd.*
34. **paltry** – of little value; trifling, and therefore lacking significance
*The convicted criminal’s **paltry** apology did little to lessen his victim’s pain.*
35. **ambiguous** – unclear; not certain
*The meaning of Juliet’s line “Wherefore art thou Romeo?” is **ambiguous** to students who do not know that “wherefore” means “why.” She is asking, “Why are you Romeo?” (enemy of her family), not “Where are you, Romeo?”*
36. **incoherent** – lacking organization
*Remember Cher’s **incoherent** speech at the beginning of the movie Clueless? She starts out talking about Haitian immigrants and then abruptly changes the topic to her father’s birthday party.*
37. **disinterested** – neutral and thus lacking a bias
*Although Judge Judy often becomes irritated with the guests on her show, she remains **disinterested** when it comes to looking at the facts and handing down a judgment.*
38. **merciless; ruthless** – cruel and therefore lacking in compassion
*In the movie Shrek, Lord Farquaad is a **merciless** tyrant who threatens to eat the Gingerbread Man’s gumball buttons.*
39. **callous** – lacking sensitivity, concern and solicitude
*Dennis Hopper plays **callous** bomber Howard Payne in the movie Speed.*
40. **lethargic; anemic; languid; slothful** – lacking in energy, vitality, and vigor
*Video games such as Dance Dance Revolution are a good way to get **lethargic** individuals off the couch and exercising while having fun at the same time.*
41. **disdain** – lack of respect; contempt
*Napoleon Dynamite feels **disdain** for his lazy Uncle Rico and threatens to call the police to have him arrested. Uncle Rico tells him, “Well then do it! Go on!” Napoleon replies, “Maybe I will. GOSH!”*
42. **impulsive; impetuous; precipitous** – acting in a rash, hasty manner without fully considering the consequences
*In the movie Pirates of the Caribbean, Captain Jack Sparrow repeatedly urges Will to stop being so **impulsive** and wait for the opportune moment. In the movie Finding Nemo, Nemo **impulsively** swims out into the ocean toward the diving ship.*
43. **intrepid; dauntless** – brave and therefore lacking fear
*In Pirates of the Caribbean: the Curse of the Black Pearl, the British ship is named the **Dauntless**. Spider-Man is **intrepid** in Spider-Man 2 when he places himself between an out-of-control train and the end of the tracks.*

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44. **precarious** – lacking stability
*In the movie Dirty Dancing, Baby balances **precariously** on a log as she learns how to dance.*
45. **superficial** – shallow and therefore lacking in depth
*The movie Shallow Hal could have been called “**Superficial Hal**” because at first he judged people solely on physical appearance.*
46. **diffident** – lacking self-confidence
*Both Alex (Flashdance) and Sarah (Save the Last Dance) were originally **diffident** about their dancing abilities.*
47. **sophomoric; callow** – immature and therefore lacking maturity or sophistication
*In the movie Billy Madison, Adam Sandler plays a character who is initially very **sophomoric** and **callow**. And in Mall Rats, Holden’s girlfriend calls him “**callow**” in a letter breaking their relationship. But Holden thinks “**callow**” is a compliment until a friend tells him “Dude, **callow** is not good!”*
48. **extravagant** – excessive and therefore lacking restraint
*In Home Alone 2, Kevin’s father thinks Kevin’s \$967 hotel room service bill is **extravagant**.*
49. **apathetic** – showing little or no feeling or emotion; spiritless; lacking emotion
*In the movie The Wizard of Oz, the **apathetic** Tin Man joins Dorothy and the Scarecrow in hopes that the Wizard will give him a heart.*
50. **erratic** - lacking consistency
*Be sure to give plenty of space to drivers who are driving **erratically** and not paying attention to the road.*
51. **trite, cliché** – commonplace; ordinary and therefore lacking originality; humdrum
*Students should use fresh, original sentences in their writing instead of **trite** expressions such as “as pretty as a picture.”*

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The Mighty Prefix De- (De is going down!)

52. **denounce** – to put down by condemning or criticizing
*The student council **denounced** the decision to close the campus at lunchtime.*
53. **decry** – to criticize; denounce; condemn
*The mayor **decried** the deplorable living conditions of the citizens on the outskirts of town.*
54. **depreciate** – to go down in value
*In a bear market, stocks **depreciate**.*
55. **despondent; dejected; depressed** – all mean feeling very down and discouraged
*In the movie The Lion King, Simba is **despondent** when he is unable to save his father.*
56. **deleterious** – things are going down in the sense of being harmful, hurtful and detrimental
*Smoking cigarettes is **deleterious** to your health.*

Be- (Really Important Prefix)

57. **belittle** – to make someone feel really little; to put someone down; to disparage
*Simon often **belittles** contestants on “American Idol” if they sing poorly.*
58. **belie** – to lie in the sense of contradicting
*In the movie 10 Things I Hate About You, the words in Kat's poem actually **belie** her true feelings about Patrick.*

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Law and Order

59. **plausible** – believable; credible
*Although the plot of Jurassic Park may seem unlikely at first, author Michael Crichton makes the story sound **plausible** by explaining how dinosaur DNA could be extracted from amber.*
60. **incorrigible** – incapable of being reformed
*Bart Simpson is an **incorrigible** rascal.*
61. **defamation** – an abusive attack on a person’s reputation
*Hollywood stars sue for **defamation** not as a means of making money but to clear their names in the press and punish the tabloids that print the incorrect information.*
62. **innuendo** – a veiled hint or insinuation, especially a negative reflection on a person’s character or reputation
*The gossip column was filled with **innuendo** about famous actors.*
63. **travesty** – a miscarriage of justice; a distortion of proper procedure
*When the judge dismissed the case against the obviously guilty defendant, the townspeople called it a **travesty**.*
64. **exculpate; exonerate** -- both mean to free from blame; to declare innocent
*In the movie My Cousin Vinny, Marisa Tomei’s character, Lisa, uses her expert automotive knowledge on the witness stand to **exonerate** the two youths.*
65. **fabricate** – to make up or invent a story
*Dr. Doolittle’s family thought he had **fabricated** the story about being able to talk to animals.*
66. **unprecedented** – without previous example
*Lance Armstrong has won the Tour de France an **unprecedented** seven times.*
67. **immaterial** – of no importance; irrelevant and therefore lacking significance
*Her testimony was **immaterial** and was, therefore, not admitted into evidence.*
68. **incontrovertible** – not open to question; indisputable
*The videotape of the robbery provided **incontrovertible** evidence against the suspect—he was obviously guilty.*

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Degree

69. **adept** – very skillful; adroit
*Coach Bombay's innovative teaching techniques helped the Mighty Ducks become more **adept** at playing hockey.*
70. **arduous** – very difficult to accomplish
*Harry Potter has the **arduous** task of defeating a dragon in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.*
71. **empathetic** – very compassionate; very sympathetic
*In the movie Freaky Friday, Tess and Anna learn to be **empathetic** when they are forced to walk in one another's shoes, ultimately gaining respect and understanding for the other's point of view.*
72. **assiduous** – very diligent; very persistent
*You should **assiduously** study each word on this list.*
73. **furtive; clandestine** – very secretive; very stealthy
*On "Survivor," contestants make **clandestine** plans to sabotage one another in order to get others voted off the show.*
74. **contemplative** – very thoughtful; meditative; pensive
*Hamlet is **contemplative** as he tries to decide if his life is worth living.*
75. **trepidation** – great fear
*Dorothy and her friends are filled with **trepidation** as they approach the Wizard of Oz.*
76. **destitute** – very poor; indigent
*In the movie Trading Places, Eddie Murphy plays a character who is originally **destitute** but becomes wealthy.*
77. **distraught; inconsolable** – very distressed; very worried
*Marlin is **distraught** when Nemo is captured by a diver.*
78. **despicable** – vile; very contemptible
*The Green Goblin is a **despicable** villain who commits horrible crimes.*
79. **exasperated** – very irritated; very annoyed
*Avril Lavigne is **exasperated** with her boyfriend when she demands to know why he is making things so complicated.*
80. **ecstatic; exuberant; elated; euphoric** – feeling great happiness
*Contestants are usually **ecstatic** when they see the results of their extreme home makeover.*
81. **garish** – excessively vivid in color
*Television home makeover shows do an excellent job of turning **garish**, tacky rooms into tastefully decorated living spaces.*

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82. **ostentatious** – fond of conspicuous display; pompous; pretentious
*Some **ostentatious** celebrities try to attract attention with their glittering jewels and flashy cars.*
83. **vigilant** – very watchful
*The officers aboard the Titanic were not **vigilant**.*
84. **prodigious** – very large; vast; huge
*The earthquake triggered a tsunami that sent **prodigious** waves across the island.*
85. **munificent** – very generous
*Oprah is known for bestowing **munificent** gifts on members of her studio audience.*
86. **parsimonious** – very stingy; miserly
*Microsoft founder Bill Gates and his wife Melinda are **NOT parsimonious**. They donate millions of dollars every year in an effort to improve health and education around the world.*
87. **convivial** – fond of social interaction
*In Renoir's famous painting Luncheon of the Boating Party, the **convivial** host and his guests are enjoying a pleasant afternoon lunch.*
88. **affable** – friendly
*The hostess was the life of the party because she was so **affable**.*
89. **sanguine** – very optimistic; hopeful
*President Reagan was renowned for his **sanguine** outlook on life.*
90. **unctuous** – too smooth; too suave and thus giving a false sense of earnestness
*In the movie School of Rock, the **unctuous** Dewey Finn tries to persuade his principal to give him permission to take his class on a "field trip."*
91. **sanctimonious** – making a show of being devout and thus giving a sense of false piousness
*A **sanctimonious** person comes across as being "holier than thou." In School of Rock, Patty (Ned's wife) is a **sanctimonious** busybody, who reveals Dewey's true identity.*
92. **lucrative** – very profitable
*Both the Spider-Man 2 and Shrek 2 franchises are **lucrative**.*
93. **scrutinize** – to very closely or very carefully examine a person or thing
*On Oscar night, the press loves to **scrutinize** outfits of stars such as Nicole Kidman, Halle Berry, and Jennifer Lopez as they walk the red carpet.*
94. **irate; livid** – showing great anger and rage
*In the movie Mean Girls, the junior girls at North Shore High School are **livid** when they read what the Plastics said about them in the "Burn Book."*

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95. **circumspect** – very cautious; very careful; prudent
A circumspect person looks before leaping.

History and Geography

96. **repudiate** – to reject; disavow
*The Hollywood couple **repudiated** claims in the press that their marriage was over; however, a month later they filed for divorce.*
97. **anachronism** – a person or event that is chronologically in the wrong time
*The Back to the Future movies contain a number of amusing **anachronisms**.*
98. **accord** – an agreement
*In the movie Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, Captain Jack Sparrow and Will reach an **accord**: Will agrees to free Sparrow and Sparrow will help Will find Elizabeth.*
99. **capitulate** – to surrender; to give up
*In her defiant song “White Flag,” Dido refuses to **capitulate**:*
- Well, I will go down with this ship
And I won't put my hands up and surrender
There will be no white flag above my door
I'm in love and always will be*
100. **enlighten** – to inform; instruct; illuminate and thus remove ignorance
*Writers such as Voltaire **enlightened** European society by urging people to use science and reason instead of blindly following their prejudices.*
101. **appeasement** – giving in to someone's demands
*Great Britain and France **appeased** Hitler at the Munich Conference.*
102. **stipulate** – to specify; set forth
*The contract with the decorator **stipulates** the maximum amount he can charge.*
103. **pretext** – an excuse; an alleged reason
*In Dr. Seuss' book The Cat in the Hat Comes Back, the Cat talks his way into the children's house under the **pretext** that he would like to come in to get out of the snow.*
104. **watershed** – a turning point; an event that is of critical import
*President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb was a **watershed** event in 20th century history.*
105. **autonomy** – self-rule; independence
*In the movie Men in Black, the MIB is an **autonomous** government organization.*

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106. **manifesto** – a public declaration of beliefs
*Published in 1848, the Communist **Manifesto** publicly declared the radical economic beliefs of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.*
107. **dovish** – favoring peace
*During the Vietnam War, America was divided between **Hawks** who supported the war and **Doves** who opposed it.*
108. **enfranchise** – to grant voting rights
*The Voting Rights Act of 1965 **enfranchised** African-Americans.*
109. **potentate** – any powerful ruler; sovereign
*Hitler was a brutal **potentate**.*

Science

110. **astral; celestial** – pertaining to the stars
*The Hubble Telescope enables astronomers to view **celestial** bodies over 12 billion light years away.*
111. **arboreal** – pertaining to trees
***Arbor** Day is tree appreciation day.*
112. **catalyst** – an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action
*Gasoline can act as a **catalyst** for spreading fire.*
113. **osmosis** – movement of a solvent through a semipermeable membrane
***Osmosis** is a process of gradual absorption. It would be easy if students could learn SAT vocabulary words through **osmosis** instead of diligent studying.*
114. **synthesis; amalgam; conglomeration** – combination or fusion of different elements
*The scientist **synthesized** the new medication in the laboratory.*
115. **hermetic** – airtight
*Be sure to create a **hermetic** seal when storing food in the freezer.*
116. **indigenous** – native to an area
*Cardinals are **indigenous** to the East Coast. The buffalo is **indigenous** to the Great Plains.*
117. **archipelago** – a chain of islands
*Hawaii is an **archipelago**.*
118. **rivulet** – a small stream
*Several **rivulets** feed into the Potomac River.*

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Language Arts

119. **anthology** – a collection of poems and stories
*Your literature textbook is an **anthology**.*
120. **epilogue** – a closing section added to a novel or play
*A writer may use an **epilogue** to provide additional information about what happens to the characters after the end of the story.*
121. **prologue** – an introductory section added to a poem, novel, or story
*In the **prologue** to Romeo and Juliet, the chorus introduces the story of the star-crossed lovers.*
122. **satire** – a literary work that ridicules and derides human vices and weaknesses
*Authors use **satire** to make fun of situations they feel are unjust.*
123. **vignette; anecdote** – short story; brief sketch
*Earl Woods tells an **anecdote** about the time he unstrapped his ten-month-old son Tiger from his high chair. Tiger then toddled over to a putter, picked it up, and hit a ball into a net.*
124. **epic** – a lengthy story about the heroic deeds of a legendary hero
*Compared with Homer's **epic** poem The Iliad, Wolfgang Petersen's movie Troy seems to be more like a vignette.*
125. **farce** – a humorous, comical show; a comedy
*The Monty Python movies are excellent examples of **farce** because they use satire and improbable situations.*
126. **raconteur** – a person skilled at telling a story
*Homer was a blind poet who was a renowned **raconteur**.*
127. **memoir** – an autobiography; personal journal
*Bill Clinton's **memoir** has had record-breaking sales.*

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The Toughest Words on the SAT

128. **indefatigable; unflagging** – tireless
*You must be **indefatigable** and **unflagging** as you prepare for the upcoming SAT.*
129. **indomitable** – invincible; incapable of being conquered
*You must have an **indomitable** will as you take the SAT.*
130. **vacillate** – to waver; hesitate; swing back and forth; be indecisive
*Hamlet **vacillates** over which course of action to follow: "To be, or not to be."*
131. **hubris** – exaggerated pride; arrogance
*In Greek tragedy, **hubris** is often the hero's tragic flaw, which causes his downfall.*
132. **excoriate** – to denounce scathingly
*In the movie The Nutty Professor, Dean Richmond **excoriates** Professor Klump for alienating all of the college's wealthy donors.*
133. **innocuous** – harmless; inoffensive
*In The Wizard of Oz we learn that water is **innocuous** to scarecrows but toxic to wicked witches.*
134. **capricious; mercurial** – very changeable; fickle; constantly shifting moods
*Marie knew she could not depend on her **capricious** little sister because she constantly changed her mind.*
135. **supplant** – to take the place of
*Happy Gilmore **supplants** Shooter McGavin as the biggest star on the golf tour.*
136. **laconic; succinct** – very brief; concise
*In the poem "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe, the raven gives a **laconic** one-word answer, "Nevermore," to all of the narrator's questions.*
137. **ubiquitous** – present everywhere at once; omnipresent; prevalent; widespread
*The popularity of portable digital music has made the Pod **ubiquitous**.*
138. **archaic** – obsolete; old-fashioned; out-of-date and thus not "in," "with it," or contemporary
*The students felt that their school's dress code was **archaic** and outdated.*
139. **reciprocal** – shared and expressed by both sides; mutual
*In the movie Rush Hour, Carter shows Lee how to move with the music. Lee then **reciprocates** by showing Carter some new karate moves.*
140. **alacrity** – great speed; promptness
*In the movie The Waterboy, Bobby is eager to help the team and responds with **alacrity** to the coach's invitation to play.*

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141. **implacable** – incapable of being appeased
*In the movie Rocky III, Rocky and Clubber Lang are **implacable** enemies.*
142. **grandiloquent** – using lofty, pompous language
*The Munchkin mayor made a **grandiloquent** speech when he welcomed Dorothy and thanked her for killing the Wicked Witch.*
143. **motley** – very different; very heterogeneous
*The variety of outfits worn by the Continental Army soldiers gave them a **motley** appearance compared with the British soldiers, who dressed uniformly.*
144. **juxtapose** – to place side by side
*In television makeover shows, before-and-after pictures are **juxtaposed** to highlight the dramatic changes.*
145. **arcane** – obscure; mysterious; esoteric
*Shania Twain sings about being unimpressed with men who bore her with **arcane** facts.*
146. **cosmopolitan** – very worldly; sophisticated
*Constantinople was a very **cosmopolitan** city as a result of its location at the crossroads of trade.*
147. **ineffable** – incapable of being put into words; indescribable
*In the movie Jerry McGuire, Rod's feelings are **ineffable** when he finds out that he has just been offered an \$11.2 million contract.*
148. **inundate** – to fill with water; flood
*The flood waters from Hurricane Katrina **inundated** many communities. (It can also mean to overwhelm or saturate.) The visiting astronaut was **inundated** with speaking invitations. The students were **inundated** with homework.*
149. **rudimentary** – basic; elementary
*Harry Potter learns that levitation is one of a wizard's **rudimentary** skills.*
150. **atone** – to make amends; make up for
*Patrick **atones** for hurting Kat in the movie 10 Things I Hate About You by buying her a guitar.*
151. **machinations** – crafty schemes
*In the movie The Lion King, Simba is at first unaware of Scar's evil **machinations** to get rid of Mufasa and make himself king.*
152. **quandary** – a dilemma; predicament
*Spider-Man finds himself in a **quandary**: should he save the woman he loves or the tram filled with innocent children?*
153. **pernicious** – very injurious; destructive; deadly
*Doctors were able to discover the cause of the **pernicious** disease.*

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154. **prevaricate** – to lie
*In the movie Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, Will thinks Jack is **prevaricating** when he tells him that Will's father was a pirate.*
155. **quagmire** – a difficult, precarious position; a predicament
*In the movie Orange County, Shaun finds himself in a **quagmire** when he isn't accepted at Stanford because his counselor sent in the wrong transcript and he has not applied to any "safety schools."*
156. **synergy** – the positive energy that results when two different elements are combined
*There was surprising **synergy** when Aerosmith and Run DMC combined to perform the song "Walk This Way."*
157. **eschew** – to abstain from; avoid; engage in abstinence
*People on the Atkins diet **eschew** foods high in carbohydrates.*
158. **scintillating** – sparkling; dazzling; brilliant
*Melissa Etheridge gave a **scintillating** rendition of Janis Joplin's classic "Piece of My Heart" at the Grammy Awards show.*
159. **pejorative** – belittling; disparaging; putting someone down
*Jay Leno often makes **pejorative** remarks about politicians in his opening monologue on "The Tonight Show."*
160. **maxim** – a short, concise wise saying
*The **maxim** "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today" is good advice for those studying for the SAT!*
161. **consensus** – a general agreement
*After much discussion, the members of the senior class advisory committee reached a **consensus** on the location of the Senior Ball.*
162. **contrite**; **penitent** – expressing remorse, regret, sorrow for misdeeds
*Although Denise said she was sorry, she did not act **contrite**.*
163. **heinous** – hatefully evil; abominable
*In the movie The Patriot, the British officer commits a **heinous** act when he burns down the church.*
164. **excise**; **expurgate** – to remove; delete; censure
*The producer **excised** three scenes from his movie in order to receive a PG-13 rating.*
165. **futile** – doomed to failure and therefore pointless
*In "Star Trek" the Borg always announced, "Resistance **s futile**" before conquering a new planet.*

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166. **aplomb** – poise; confidence; self-assurance
*Kelly, Reuben, and Clay all became American Idols because they had talent and performed with **aplomb**.*
167. **paradigm** – a model of thought
*In the geocentric **paradigm**, the earth is the center of the solar system. But in the heliocentric **paradigm**, the sun is the center of the solar system.*
168. **innate** – inborn; present at birth
*Linguists believe that humans have an **innate** ability to learn language.*
169. **penchant** – a preference or liking
*The people of Belgium have a **penchant** for chocolate.*
170. **inured** – to become accustomed to accept something undesirable
*The pioneers became **inured** to the hardships of living on the frontier.*
171. **venerate; revere** – to hold in high esteem; respect; honor
*In the movie Hitch, Albert **venerates** Will Smith’s character, Alex, because Alex teaches him how to win the affection of the rich and beautiful Allegra.*
172. **enthralled** – fascinated; spellbound
*The audience was **enthralled** with the special effects in the movie The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.*
173. **subtle** – slight; delicate; elusive
*There is a big difference between a drastic change which most people will oppose and a **subtle** change which most people will barely notice.*
174. **sumptuous; ornate** – very splendid; luxurious; magnificent
*Shrek and Fiona eat a **sumptuous** meal at her parents’ royal palace. The Hall of Mirrors is the most **ornate** room in the Versailles Palace.*
175. **cathartic** – emotionally cleansing
*In the movie Mean Girls, the teachers encouraged the junior girls to do a **cathartic** exercise to release their negative feelings toward one another.*
176. **chicanery; disingenuousness** – trickery; fraud; deception
*Napoleon Dynamite’s dishonest Uncle Rico uses **chicanery** to sell his defective products.*
177. **premonition** – a forewarning; hunch; feeling ahead of an event
*In the movie Star Wars, Leia has a **premonition** that Luke is in danger.*
178. **provocative** – thought provoking
*The teacher wrote the senator’s **provocative** statement on the board in order to start a class discussion.*
179. **vilify** – to denounce; defame; turn into a villain
*Darth Vader is **vilified** by the Rebel Alliance in the Star Wars movies.*

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180. **magisterial** – learned and authoritative
*In the Harry Potter books, Dumbledore serves as the **magisterial** headmaster of Hogwarts.*
181. **oblivious** – unaware
*In the movie Freaky Friday, Ryan is **oblivious** to the fact that mom Tess and daughter Anna have switched bodies.*
182. **obstinate; adamant; obdurate** – very stubborn
*In the movie 10 Things I Hate About You, a remake of Shakespeare’s play The Taming of the Shrew, Julia Stiles plays the bitter, **obstinate** Katarina.*
183. **incessant** – constant; continuous; unceasing
*On road trips young children often drive their parents crazy by **incessantly** asking, “Are we there yet?”*
184. **cajole; coerce** – to coax or entice someone into doing something
*SpongeBob always tries to **cajole** Squidward into going jellyfishing.*
185. **pedestrian** – commonplace; ordinary
*Critics blasted the new play, calling it **pedestrian** and undistinguished.*
186. **improvised; impromptu** – done on the spur of the moment without preparation
*In the beginning of School of Rock, Dewey’s lessons were all **improvised**; they lacked preparation.*
187. **palpable; tangible** – capable of being perceived
*There was a **palpable** air of excitement as Olympic swimming fans awaited the showdown between Michael “The Shark” Phelps and the Australian “Thorpedo” Ian Thorpe.*
188. **vituperation; invective** – verbal abuse; a tongue-lashing; severe scolding
*Her simple mistake hardly merited such **vituperation**.*
189. **tenet** – an article of faith; a belief
*Charity is a **tenet** of many religions.*
190. **inexorable** – relentless; unstoppable
*Gollum has an **inexorable** desire to regain the ring in The Lord of the Rings trilogy.*
191. **equanimity** – evenness of mind, especially under stress
*Driving instructors must handle their jobs with **equanimity** if they are to survive the stress of teaching young people to drive.*
192. **ameliorate** – to make better; improve
*In the movie Remember the Titans, Denzel Washington’s character, Coach Boone, works hard to **ameliorate** the poor relationship that exists between the players on his football team.*