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

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 M.D. 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.
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.
“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 gumdrop 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.
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.”
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.
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.
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; 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 82.  | ostentatious | fond of conspicuous display; pompous; pretentious  
Some ostentatious celebrities try to attract attention with their glittering jewels and flash 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.”  


95. circumspect - very cautious; very careful; prudent
    A circumpect 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,” Did 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.
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

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 semi-permeable 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; conglomerate – 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.
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.
Studyguide for the SAT Vocabulary: 192 Words You Need to Know

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

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.
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 is **futile**” before conquering a new planet.
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; spell bound
   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.
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.