

Definitions

Note the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the word in the blank spaces in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms.

1. **abominate**
(ə bām' ə nāt)

(v.) to have an intense dislike or hatred for
I _____ cruelty yet do not always notice when I have said something inadvertently cruel.

SYNONYMS: loathe, abhor, despise, detest
ANTONYMS: relish, savor, esteem

2. **acculturation**
(ə kəl chə rā' shən)

(n.) the modification of the social patterns, traits, or structures of one group or society by contact with those of another; the resultant blend
Every immigrant group newly arrived in another country goes through a slow process of _____.

SYNONYM: adaptation

3. **adventitious**
(əd ven tish' əs)

(adj.) resulting from chance rather than from an inherent cause or character; accidental, not essential; (medicine) acquired, not congenital
It was no _____ meeting that led to their writing songs together, for in fact they were cousins.

SYNONYMS: extrinsic, incidental, fortuitous
ANTONYMS: essential, intrinsic, inherent, congenital

4. **ascribe**
(ə skrib')

(v.) to assign or refer to (as a cause or source), attribute
You may _____ these holes to gophers or elves, but I blame the dog from next door.

SYNONYMS: impute, credit

5. **circuitous**
(sər kyū' ə təs)

(adj.) roundabout, not direct
I followed a _____ path through the woods, not because I feared pursuit, but because I was lost.

SYNONYMS: indirect, meandering, winding
ANTONYMS: straight, direct, as the crow flies

6. **commiserate**
(kə miz' ə rāt)

(v.) to sympathize with, have pity or sorrow for, share a feeling of distress
The family _____ with her after the loss of her old and faithful dog.

SYNONYMS: feel sorry for, empathize
ANTONYM: feel no sympathy for

7. **enjoin**
(en join')

(v.) to direct or order; to prescribe a course of action in an authoritative way; to prohibit
I _____ them to stop spending so much money or to face the consequences.

SYNONYMS: bid, charge, adjure; ANTONYMS: allow, permit

8. **expedite**
(ek' spē dīt)

(v.) to make easy, cause to progress faster
The pleasant background music did not _____ my work but instead distracted me.

SYNONYMS: accelerate, facilitate, speed up
ANTONYMS: hinder, hamper, impede, obstruct

9. **expiate**
(ek' spē āt)

(v.) to make amends, make up for, to avert
They seemed more than willing to _____ their guilt by whatever means necessary.

SYNONYMS: redeem, make amends for, make reparation

10. **ferment**
(n, fər' ment;
v, fər ment')

(n.) a state of great excitement, agitation, or turbulence; (v.) to be in or work into such a state; to produce alcohol by chemical action
Caught in the _____ of revolution, the young men enlisted with the local militias.

If left for a time, cider will eventually _____.

SYNONYMS: (n.) commotion, turmoil, unrest
ANTONYMS: (n.) peace and quiet, tranquility, placidity

11. **inadvertent**
(in əd vər' tant)

(adj.) resulting from or marked by lack of attention; unintentional, accidental
The poor fellow was stronger than he realized, and the damage he did was _____.

SYNONYM: accidental; ANTONYMS: deliberate, intentional

12. **nominal**
(nəm' ə nəl)

(adj.) existing in name only, not real; too small to be considered or taken seriously
The new health clinic for lower-income residents charges only _____ fees.

SYNONYMS: titular, inconsequential; ANTONYMS: actual, exorbitant

13. **noncommittal**
(nən kə mīt' əl)

(adj.) not decisive or definite; unwilling to take a clear position
We questioned her quietly, carefully, and at length, but her answers remained _____.

SYNONYMS: cagey, uninformative, playing it safe, playing it close to the vest
ANTONYMS: positive, definite, committed

14. **peculate**
(pek' yú lát)

(v.) to steal something that has been given into one's trust; to take improperly for one's own use

Investigators discovered that the clerk came up with a scheme to _____ from the company.

SYNONYMS: defraud, misappropriate

15. **proclivity**
(pró kliv' ə té)

(n.) a natural or habitual inclination or tendency (especially of human character or behavior)

Curious, patient, and fond of long walks outdoors, she soon displayed a _____ for nature study.

SYNONYMS: penchant, propensity; ANTONYMS: incapacity

16. **sangfroid**
(sāj frwä')

(n.) composure or coolness, especially in trying circumstances
Even when they forget their lines, experienced actors can usually perform with _____.

SYNONYMS: poise, self-assurance, equanimity
ANTONYMS: excitability, hysteria, flappability

17. **seditious**
(se dish' əs)

(adj.) resistant to lawful authority; having the purpose of overthrowing an established government

Dictators usually begin their reigns by searching out and silencing _____ opinion.

SYNONYMS: mutinous, rebellious, subversive
ANTONYMS: supportive, faithful, allegiant

18. **tenuous**
(ten' yú əs)

(adj.) thin, slender, not dense; lacking clarity or sharpness; of slight importance; lacking a sound basis, poorly supported

My grasp of trigonometry was _____ until I attended the remedial study sessions.

SYNONYMS: flimsy, insubstantial, vague, hazy
ANTONYMS: strong, solid, substantial, valid

19. **vitriolic**
(ví tré ä' ik)

(adj.) bitter, sarcastic; highly caustic or biting (like a strong acid)

Though hurt by his _____ language, I had to admit that some of his points were valid.

SYNONYMS: withering, acerbic, mordant
ANTONYMS: bland, saccharine, honeyed, sugary

20. **wheedle**
(whéd' əl)

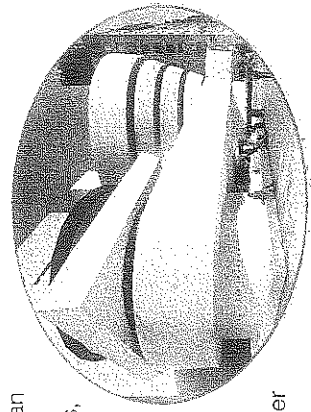
(v.) to use coaxing or flattery to gain some desired end
The spy used charm and flattery in order to _____ the information from the diplomat.

SYNONYMS: inveigle, soft-soap, sweet-talk
ANTONYMS: coerce, browbeat, intimidate, strong-arm

Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence. You might refer to the selection on pages 32-33 to see how most of these words are used in context.

1. It may be an exaggeration to say that American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (**abominated**, **enjoined**) classical European building designs, but he certainly deviated from them.
2. Peace negotiations between the two countries were already (**circuitous**, **tenuous**) when the border dispute broke out.
3. Although the Queen or King is the (**nominal**, **adventitious**) head of state, the Prime Minister is the real leader of the British government.
4. You are following an all too familiar pattern in (**ascribing**, **expediting**) your failures to everyone except yourself.



The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

5. An experienced politician always tries to avoid making (**fermented**, **inadvertent**) remarks that may offend some voters.
6. It is only in my fantasies that I display the (**ferment**, **sangfroid**) associated with movie heroes who are "as cool as a cucumber."
7. I learned that I would have to make a choice between my strong aversion to hard work and my equally strong (**proclivity**, **wheedle**) for expensive living.
8. Our military is prepared to deal with external aggression, but our best defense against (**sedition**, **peculation**) at home is the loyalty of the American people.
9. (**Peculation**, **Sedition**) was a common offense among Roman provincial governors, who, when asked how they made their fortunes, often replied, "In the provinces."
10. The sordid and (**nominal**, **vitriolic**) language from both candidates is offensive and takes the focus away from the issues.
11. His investments proved to be profitable, but they were (**adventitious**, **nominal**) rather than the result of knowledge and planning.
12. Modern American society can justly be said to be the end point of the (**commiseration**, **acculturation**) of diverse groups of immigrants.
13. Although that critic is feared for (**noncommittal**, **vitriolic**) reviews, I have learned that there is usually a sound basis for her unfavorable judgments.
14. (**Commiseration**, **Proclivity**) is a noble human emotion, but in itself it is no substitute for vigorous efforts to help other people.
15. Experienced lawyers know that the line between literal truth and slight but significant distortion of the facts is often a (**seditious**, **tenuous**) one.