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Dan Finkel: Can you solve the Ragnarok riddle? |

TED Talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_finkel_can_you_solve_the_ragnarok_riddle

All Words

IMPORTANT

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Session 1: Word List

fable

n. a short story, often with animal characters, that teaches a general truth or a moral lesson

synonym : fantasy, story, legend

(1) classic **fable**, (2) moralize a **fable**

In his speech, he quoted a passage from a well-known **fable**.

giant

adj. enormous; much bigger or more important than similar items usually are

synonym : big, gigantic, huge

(1) **giant** trees, (2) **giant** tech company

The **giant** jets gradually dominate the world's airlines.

monster

n. an imaginary creature that is large and has various human and animal parts; someone or something large and powerful

synonym : giant, freak, behemoth

(1) horde of **monsters**, (2) **monster** film

This car has a **monster** engine.

handy

adj. valuable and convenient; easy or ready to reach or use

synonym : clever, accessible, available

(1) a **handy-sized** bag, (2) **handy** tool

They found a **handy** place to play catch.

serpent

n. a large snake

synonym: snake, viper, reptile

(1) the feathered **serpent** god, (2) **Serpent** Bearer

That mythical chimera has a lion's body, a bird's wings, and a **serpent's** tail.

emerge

v. to move out of or away from something and become visible

synonym: arise, occur, appear

(1) **emerge** as a butterfly, (2) **emerge** from poverty

During colonial eras, new migratory patterns **emerged**.

swallow

v. to make food, drink, pills, etc., pass down your throat into your stomach; (noun) small long-winged songbird noted for swift, graceful flight and the regularity of its migrations

synonym: consume, gulp, inhale

(1) **swallow** a handful of pills, (2) a **swallow** tail

I **swallowed** my anger and kept quiet.

contort

v. to (cause something to) twist and press out of its natural or normal shape

synonym: deform, disfigure, distort

(1) **contort** my limbs, (2) **contort** the face

He **contorted** his smile with anger coming from his gut.

merge

v. to combine or integrate things, or to cause this to happen

synonym: combine, join, coalesce

(1) **merge** into a new party, (2) **merge** those systems into a new one

This consulting firm decided to **merge** the two companies into one.

continuous

adj. occurring or existing without a pause or interruption

synonym: ceaseless, regular, repeated

(1) **continuous** improvement, (2) a **continuous** row of

warehouses

The heavy snow has been **continuous** since last morning.

digest

v. to transform food into absorbable substances; break down

synonym : absorb, condense

(1) **digest** information, (2) help **digest** food

Most babies can readily **digest** a wide variety of foods.

exhausted

adj. extremely tired

synonym : drowsy, depleted, fatigued

(1) the **exhausted** food sources, (2) **exhausted** parents

The **exhausted** runner fell to the ground and gasped.

strike

v. to wallop somebody or something with the hand, fist, or weapon; to have an emotional or cognitive impact upon

synonym : hit, impact, influence

(1) **strike** up a conversation, (2) **strike** a blow

We **strike** to achieve more wages and safer working conditions.

bolt

n. a metal bar that slides across to lock a door or window closed; a discharge of lightning accompanied by thunder; (verb) to move or jump suddenly

synonym : lock, fastener, thunderbolt

(1) **bolt** diameter, (2) **bolt** from my bed

The lightning **bolt** twiggged in several directions.

lightning

n. a flash, or several flashes, of light that accompanies an electric discharge in the atmosphere, or something resembling such a flash

synonym : bolt, electrical discharge

(1) streaks of **lightning**, (2) **lightning** air strike

The human eye is **lightning-fast** in recognizing objects.

magnify

v. to make something look bigger than it really is, especially by looking at it through a lens; to make

something bigger, stronger, or louder

synonym : enlarge, elaborate, intensify

(1) **magnify** the danger, (2) **magnify** the image for display
Terrorists often attempt to **magnify** the economic impact of their acts of destruction.

blast

n. explosion, or a strong current of air, usually caused by an explosion; a sudden, thunderous noise

synonym : blow, burst, explosion

(1) a **blast** of wind, (2) an icy **blast**

The **blast** shattered the laboratory equipment.

pierce

v. to cut or make a way through with a sharp instrument

synonym : jab, penetrate, stab

(1) **pierce** the armored shells, (2) **pierce** a mystery

The extreme cold **pierced** our bones.

massive

adj. enormous amount; very heavy and solid

synonym : enormous, giant, immense

(1) **massive** amounts, (2) **massive** stars

The recent economic downturn has resulted in **massive** layoffs.

split

v. to divide, or to make something divide into two or more parts, especially along a particular line

synonym : break, divide, break apart

(1) **split** a bill, (2) **split** a reward equally

Companies often **split** their shares to lower the stock price and encourage investors to buy.

intersect

v. to meet or cross one another

synonym : cross, bisect, cut

(1) **intersect** at a point, (2) railways **intersect** the country

Her multidisciplinary works **intersect** music and picture with writing.

- zap**
- v. to strike, destroy, get rid of, or kill something or someone suddenly and with force
synonym: destroy, kill, exterminate
(1) **zap** a huge target, (2) **zap** bar code
They provided allies with powerful weapons that could **zap** the enemy from thousands of miles away.
- magic**
- n. beliefs and actions employed to influence supernatural beings and forces; any art or performance that invokes supernatural powers
synonym: fascination, illusion, wizardry
(1) a **magic** spell, (2) she is **magic**
He performed **magic** tricks with sophisticated moves.
- regenerate**
- v. to improve or renew an area, institution, system, etc., especially by making it more active or successful
synonym: renew, revive, improve
(1) **regenerate** bone tissue, (2) a **regenerate** sinner
The new CEO's primary mission is to **regenerate** the company on the verge of bankruptcy.
- pause**
- v. to take a short break from talking or doing something before continuing
synonym: halt, break, intermit
(1) **pause** a moment, (2) **pause** for a reaction
The man **paused** before opening the door.
- simplify**
- v. to make something more straightforward, more understandable, or easier to do
synonym: streamline, clarify, elucidate
(1) **simplify** my life, (2) **simplify** the process
Please **simplify** your explanation for the children.
- intersection**
- n. a point where two or more roads, lines, etc., cross each other
synonym: crossroad, junction, hub
(1) busy **intersection**, (2) the **intersection** of coordinate

axes

Take a right turn at the next **intersection**.

stretch

v. to make or be capable of making anything longer or broader without hurting or breaking

synonym: lengthen, prolong, extend

(1) **stretch** along the coast, (2) **stretch** a story

Some herds have been observed to **stretch** hundreds of kilometers.

graph

n. a picture consisting of a line, lines, points, etc., that shows how two or more sets of certain quantities are related to each other

synonym: chart, diagram, figure

(1) **graph** theory, (2) a **graph** sample

This bar **graph** shows sales over the past five years.

nod

v. to lower and raise one's head, sometimes several times, as to show approval, agreement, greeting, or confirmation

synonym: respond, acknowledge, greet

(1) **nod** at each other, (2) **nod** courteously

She **noded** quietly in response to the question.

ubiquitous

adj. being or existing everywhere at once

synonym: universal, omnipresent, everywhere

(1) **ubiquitous** computing, (2) **ubiquitous** across ecosystems

Sugar is **ubiquitous** in food.

mathematics

n. the science dealing with the logic of quantities, shapes, spaces, and arrangement

synonym: arithmetic, calculation, calculus

(1) a good grounding in **mathematics**, (2) **mathematics** competition

He has a flair for **mathematics**.

trace

v. to find or discover someone or something that was lost
synonym : seek, follow, depict

(1) **trace** a telephone call, (2) **trace** back to medieval times
Let's **trace** the origins of some familiar foreign words.

zoom

v. to move along very quickly; (noun) the act of rising upward into the air

synonym : move quickly, dive, buzz

(1) **zoom** in on a photo, (2) **zoom** lens

He **zoomed** back in time to the soccer game.

vice

n. wrongdoing or wicked behavior; (in the form of vice versa) with the order reversed; (as a prefix) someone with a job immediately below a particular person

synonym : corruption, depravity, evil

(1) virtue and **vice**, (2) **vice-chair** of the committee

Cats hate dogs and **vice** versa.

emerging

adj. starting to exist, mature, or become well-known

synonym : arising, occurring, state-of-the-art

(1) **emerging** country, (2) **emerging** technologies

Emerging technologies have dramatically improved productivity in various industries.

odd

adj. strange or unexpected; not divisible by two

synonym : strange, bizarre, abnormal

(1) in an **odd** way, (2) **odd** behavior

His grandfather was an **odd** man.

spot

n. a particular location or place; a small round or roundish area, differing in color or feels from the surface around it

synonym : dot, mark, place

(1) beauty **spot**, (2) a **spot** on his honor

This remote **spot** is rarely visited.

zigzag

adj. having short sharp turns or angles

synonym :

bent, crinkled, crooked

(1) **zigzag** sewing machine, (2) a **zigzag** line

We had to go through a **zigzag** course.

systematic

adj. done or acting according to a determined set of systems or plans:

synonym : periodic, frequent, organized

(1) a **systematic** reformation, (2) **systematic** botany

Science is based on the **systematic** classification of experience.

opportune

adj. suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose

synonym : suitable, timely, practical

(1) **opportune** occasion, (2) an **opportune** remark

The phone rang at the most **opportune** time.

surge

n. a sudden and great increase of something, such as a feeling, the amount or number, etc.

synonym : rush, spate, deluge

(1) a **surge** of shoppers, (2) the **surge** in foreign tourism

She drowned her **surge** of anger through her creative work.

slouch

v. to stand, sit, or walk in a lazy, drooping way, often with the shoulders hanging forward and the head bent forward

synonym : slump, crouch, droop

(1) **slouch** along the street, (2) **slouch** down in a chair

After hearing the results, he **slouched** against a wall.

Session 2: Spelling

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. si____fy the process | <i>v.</i> to make something more straightforward, more understandable, or easier to do |
| 2. me__e into a new party | <i>v.</i> to combine or integrate things, or to cause this to happen |
| 3. a reg_____te sinner | <i>v.</i> to improve or renew an area, institution, system, etc., especially by making it more active or successful |
| 4. b__t from my bed | <i>n.</i> a metal bar that slides across to lock a door or window closed; a discharge of lightning accompanied by thunder; <i>(verb)</i> to move or jump suddenly |
| 5. di____t information | <i>v.</i> to transform food into absorbable substances; break down |
| 6. sl____h along the street | <i>v.</i> to stand, sit, or walk in a lazy, drooping way, often with the shoulders hanging forward and the head bent forward |
| 7. the ex_____ed food sources | <i>adj.</i> extremely tired |
| 8. em____e from poverty | <i>v.</i> to move out of or away from something and become visible |
| 9. pi____e the armored shells | <i>v.</i> to cut or make a way through with a sharp instrument |
| 10. pa__e a moment | <i>v.</i> to take a short break from talking or doing something before continuing |
| 11. the int_____ion of coordinate axes | <i>n.</i> a point where two or more roads, lines, etc., cross each other |

ANSWERS: 1. simplify, 2. merge, 3. regenerate, 4. bolt, 5. digest, 6. slouch, 7. exhausted, 8. emerge, 9. pierce, 10. pause, 11. intersection

12. st___e up a conversation *v.* to wallop somebody or something with the hand, fist, or weapon; to have an emotional or cognitive impact upon
13. mat_____cs competition *n.* the science dealing with the logic of quantities, shapes, spaces, and arrangement
14. z_p a huge target *v.* to strike, destroy, get rid of, or kill something or someone suddenly and with force
15. a good grounding in mat_____cs *n.* the science dealing with the logic of quantities, shapes, spaces, and arrangement
16. z_p bar code *v.* to strike, destroy, get rid of, or kill something or someone suddenly and with force
17. pa__e for a reaction *v.* to take a short break from talking or doing something before continuing
18. an op_____ne remark *adj.* suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose
19. b__t diameter *n.* a metal bar that slides across to lock a door or window closed; a discharge of lightning accompanied by thunder; (verb) to move or jump suddenly
20. sys_____ic botany *adj.* done or acting according to a determined set of systems or plans:
21. reg_____te bone tissue *v.* to improve or renew an area, institution, system, etc., especially by making it more active or successful

ANSWERS: 12. strike, 13. mathematics, 14. zap, 15. mathematics, 16. zap, 17. pause, 18. opportune, 19. bolt, 20. systematic, 21. regenerate

22. zi___g sewing machine *adj.* having short sharp turns or angles
23. classic fa__e *n.* a short story, often with animal characters, that teaches a general truth or a moral lesson
24. a bl__t of wind *n.* explosion, or a strong current of air, usually caused by an explosion; a sudden, thunderous noise
25. ma_____y the danger *v.* to make something look bigger than it really is, especially by looking at it through a lens; to make something bigger, stronger, or louder
26. sp__t a bill *v.* to divide, or to make something divide into two or more parts, especially along a particular line
27. gi__t trees *adj.* enormous; much bigger or more important than similar items usually are
28. tr__e a telephone call *v.* to find or discover someone or something that was lost
29. a ma__c spell *n.* beliefs and actions employed to influence supernatural beings and forces; any art or performance that invokes supernatural powers
30. ha__y tool *adj.* valuable and convenient; easy or ready to reach or use
31. a s__t on his honor *n.* a particular location or place; a small round or roundish area, differing in color or feels from the surface around it
32. the feathered se_____t god *n.* a large snake

ANSWERS: 22. zigzag, 23. fable, 24. blast, 25. magnify, 26. split, 27. giant, 28. trace, 29. magic, 30. handy, 31. spot, 32. serpent

33. a gr__h sample *n.* a picture consisting of a line, lines, points, etc., that shows how two or more sets of certain quantities are related to each other
34. v__e-chair of the committee *n.* wrongdoing or wicked behavior; (in the form of vice versa) with the order reversed; (as a prefix) someone with a job immediately below a particular person
35. ma____y the image for display *v.* to make something look bigger than it really is, especially by looking at it through a lens; to make something bigger, stronger, or louder
36. ma____e stars *adj.* enormous amount; very heavy and solid
37. pi___e a mystery *v.* to cut or make a way through with a sharp instrument
38. ubi____us across ecosystems *adj.* being or existing everywhere at once
39. me__e those systems into a new one *v.* to combine or integrate things, or to cause this to happen
40. n_d at each other *v.* to lower and raise one's head, sometimes several times, as to show approval, agreement, greeting, or confirmation
41. z__m lens *v.* to move along very quickly; (noun) the act of rising upward into the air
42. in an o_d way *adj.* strange or unexpected; not divisible by two
43. sw____w a handful of pills *v.* to make food, drink, pills, etc., pass down your throat into your stomach; (noun) small long-winged songbird noted for swift, graceful flight and the regularity of its migrations

ANSWERS: 33. graph, 34. vice, 35. magnify, 36. massive, 37. pierce, 38. ubiquitous, 39. merge, 40. nod, 41. zoom, 42. odd, 43. swallow

44. sl___h down in a chair *v.* to stand, sit, or walk in a lazy, drooping way, often with the shoulders hanging forward and the head bent forward
45. horde of mo____rs *n.* an imaginary creature that is large and has various human and animal parts; someone or something large and powerful
46. mo____r film *n.* an imaginary creature that is large and has various human and animal parts; someone or something large and powerful
47. help di___t food *v.* to transform food into absorbable substances; break down
48. z__m in on a photo *v.* to move along very quickly; (noun) the act of rising upward into the air
49. st____h a story *v.* to make or be capable of making anything longer or broader without hurting or breaking
50. Se____t Bearer *n.* a large snake
51. virtue and v__e *n.* wrongdoing or wicked behavior; (in the form of vice versa) with the order reversed; (as a prefix) someone with a job immediately below a particular person
52. railways in____ct the country *v.* to meet or cross one another
53. moralize a fa__e *n.* a short story, often with animal characters, that teaches a general truth or a moral lesson

ANSWERS: 44. slouch, 45. monster, 46. monster, 47. digest, 48. zoom, 49. stretch, 50. serpent, 51. vice, 52. intersect, 53. fable

54. in_____ct at a point *v.* to meet or cross one another
55. a zi___g line *adj.* having short sharp turns or angles
56. a con_____us row of warehouses *adj.* occurring or existing without a pause or interruption
57. si_____fy my life *v.* to make something more straightforward, more understandable, or easier to do
58. em_____ng country *adj.* starting to exist, mature, or become well-known
59. ex_____ed parents *adj.* extremely tired
60. the su__e in foreign tourism *n.* a sudden and great increase of something, such as a feeling, the amount or number, etc.
61. she is ma__c *n.* beliefs and actions employed to influence supernatural beings and forces; any art or performance that invokes supernatural powers
62. ubi_____us computing *adj.* being or existing everywhere at once
63. em___e as a butterfly *v.* to move out of or away from something and become visible
64. st___e a blow *v.* to wallop somebody or something with the hand, fist, or weapon; to have an emotional or cognitive impact upon
65. o_d behavior *adj.* strange or unexpected; not divisible by two
66. li_____ng air strike *n.* a flash, or several flashes, of light that accompanies an electric discharge in the atmosphere, or something resembling such a flash

ANSWERS: 54. intersect, 55. zigzag, 56. continuous, 57. simplify, 58. emerging, 59. exhausted, 60. surge, 61. magic, 62. ubiquitous, 63. emerge, 64. strike, 65. odd, 66. lightning

67. a sw____w tail
v. to make food, drink, pills, etc., pass down your throat into your stomach; (noun) small long-winged songbird noted for swift, graceful flight and the regularity of its migrations
68. busy int_____ion
n. a point where two or more roads, lines, etc., cross each other
69. gr__h theory
n. a picture consisting of a line, lines, points, etc., that shows how two or more sets of certain quantities are related to each other
70. con_____us improvement
adj. occurring or existing without a pause or interruption
71. ma_____e amounts
adj. enormous amount; very heavy and solid
72. op_____ne occasion
adj. suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose
73. a sys_____ic reformation
adj. done or acting according to a determined set of systems or plans:
74. beauty s__t
n. a particular location or place; a small round or roundish area, differing in color or feels from the surface around it
75. a ha__y-sized bag
adj. valuable and convenient; easy or ready to reach or use
76. co_____t my limbs
v. to (cause something to) twist and press out of its natural or normal shape
77. st_____h along the coast
v. to make or be capable of making anything longer or broader without hurting or breaking

ANSWERS: 67. swallow, 68. intersection, 69. graph, 70. continuous, 71. massive, 72. opportune, 73. systematic, 74. spot, 75. handy, 76. contort, 77. stretch

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. The _____ jets gradually dominate the world's airlines.

adj. enormous; much bigger or more important than similar items usually are

2. After hearing the results, he _____ against a wall.

v. to stand, sit, or walk in a lazy, drooping way, often with the shoulders hanging forward and the head bent forward

3. Cats hate dogs and _____ versa.

n. wrongdoing or wicked behavior; (in the form of vice versa) with the order reversed; (as a prefix) someone with a job immediately below a particular person

4. Terrorists often attempt to _____ the economic impact of their acts of destruction.

v. to make something look bigger than it really is, especially by looking at it through a lens; to make something bigger, stronger, or louder

5. The _____ runner fell to the ground and gasped.

adj. extremely tired

6. The human eye is _____ in recognizing objects.

n. a flash, or several flashes, of light that accompanies an electric discharge in the atmosphere, or something resembling such a flash

7. In his speech, he quoted a passage from a well-known _____.

n. a short story, often with animal characters, that teaches a general truth or a moral lesson

ANSWERS: 1. giant, 2. slouched, 3. vice, 4. magnify, 5. exhausted, 6. lightning-fast, 7. fable

8. This remote _____ is rarely visited.

n. a particular location or place; a small round or roundish area, differing in color or feels from the surface around it

9. This consulting firm decided to _____ the two companies into one.

v. to combine or integrate things, or to cause this to happen

10. They found a _____ place to play catch.

adj. valuable and convenient; easy or ready to reach or use

11. Most babies can readily _____ a wide variety of foods.

v. to transform food into absorbable substances; break down

12. The extreme cold _____ our bones.

v. to cut or make a way through with a sharp instrument

13. They provided allies with powerful weapons that could _____ the enemy from thousands of miles away.

v. to strike, destroy, get rid of, or kill something or someone suddenly and with force

14. Please _____ your explanation for the children.

v. to make something more straightforward, more understandable, or easier to do

15. That mythical chimera has a lion's body, a bird's wings, and a _____ tail.

n. a large snake

16. The _____ shattered the laboratory equipment.

n. explosion, or a strong current of air, usually caused by an explosion; a sudden, thunderous noise

ANSWERS: 8. spot, 9. merge, 10. handy, 11. digest, 12. pierced, 13. zap, 14. simplify, 15. serpent's, 16. blast

17. She _____ quietly in response to the question.

- v.* to lower and raise one's head, sometimes several times, as to show approval, agreement, greeting, or confirmation

18. Her multidisciplinary works _____ music and picture with writing.

- v.* to meet or cross one another

19. His grandfather was an ____ man.

- adj.* strange or unexpected; not divisible by two

20. During colonial eras, new migratory patterns _____.

- v.* to move out of or away from something and become visible

21. Let's _____ the origins of some familiar foreign words.

- v.* to find or discover someone or something that was lost

22. _____ technologies have dramatically improved productivity in various industries.

- adj.* starting to exist, mature, or become well-known

23. We had to go through a _____ course.

- adj.* having short sharp turns or angles

24. He has a flair for _____.

- n.* the science dealing with the logic of quantities, shapes, spaces, and arrangement

25. He _____ his smile with anger coming from his gut.

- v.* to (cause something to) twist and press out of its natural or normal shape

ANSWERS: 17. nodded, 18. intersect, 19. odd, 20. emerged, 21. trace, 22. Emerging, 23. zigzag, 24. mathematics, 25. contorted

26. I _____ my anger and kept quiet.

- v. to make food, drink, pills, etc., pass down your throat into your stomach; (noun) small long-winged songbird noted for swift, graceful flight and the regularity of its migrations

27. Science is based on the _____ classification of experience.

- adj. done or acting according to a determined set of systems or plans:

28. The phone rang at the most _____ time.

- adj. suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose

29. The recent economic downturn has resulted in _____ layoffs.

- adj. enormous amount; very heavy and solid

30. Companies often _____ their shares to lower the stock price and encourage investors to buy.

- v. to divide, or to make something divide into two or more parts, especially along a particular line

31. He _____ back in time to the soccer game.

- v. to move along very quickly; (noun) the act of rising upward into the air

32. This car has a _____ engine.

- n. an imaginary creature that is large and has various human and animal parts; someone or something large and powerful

33. She drowned her _____ of anger through her creative work.

- n. a sudden and great increase of something, such as a feeling, the amount or number, etc.

ANSWERS: 26. swallowed, 27. systematic, 28. opportune, 29. massive, 30. split, 31. zoomed, 32. monster, 33. surge

34. Some herds have been observed to _____ hundreds of kilometers.
- v. to make or be capable of making anything longer or broader without hurting or breaking
35. The new CEO's primary mission is to _____ the company on the verge of bankruptcy.
- v. to improve or renew an area, institution, system, etc., especially by making it more active or successful
36. The man _____ before opening the door.
- v. to take a short break from talking or doing something before continuing
37. Take a right turn at the next _____.
- n. a point where two or more roads, lines, etc., cross each other
38. The heavy snow has been _____ since last morning.
- adj. occurring or existing without a pause or interruption
39. He performed _____ tricks with sophisticated moves.
- n. beliefs and actions employed to influence supernatural beings and forces; any art or performance that invokes supernatural powers
40. We _____ to achieve more wages and safer working conditions.
- v. to wallop somebody or something with the hand, fist, or weapon; to have an emotional or cognitive impact upon
41. This bar _____ shows sales over the past five years.
- n. a picture consisting of a line, lines, points, etc., that shows how two or more sets of certain quantities are related to each other

ANSWERS: 34. stretch, 35. regenerate, 36. paused, 37. intersection, 38. continuous, 39. magic, 40. strike, 41. graph

42. Sugar is _____ in food.

adj. being or existing everywhere at once

43. The lightning _____ twiggged in several directions.

n. a metal bar that slides across to lock a door or window closed; a discharge of lightning accompanied by thunder; (verb) to move or jump suddenly

ANSWERS: 42. ubiquitous, 43. bolt