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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Tierney Thys and Christian Sardet: Meet the microbes that could eat your trash | TED Talk
https://www.ted.com/talks/tierney_thys_and_christian_sardet_meet_the_microbes_that_could_eat_your_trash

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

microbe

n. a tiny living thing that can only be seen with a microscope and that may cause disease

synonym : germ, microorganism, bacterium

(1) pathogenic **microbe**, (2) **microbes** sterilizer

Microbes thrive on the surface of the human skin.

swarm

n. a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground

synonym : horde, hive, throng

(1) a **swarm** of mosquitoes, (2) locust **swarm**

A **swarm** of angry bees attacked because we had approached the hive.

archaea

n. a group of single-celled microorganisms distinguished from bacteria by their unique cell wall structure and biochemical characteristics, which are found in extreme environments such as hot springs and salt flats

synonym : microbe, microorganism

(1) **archaea** microorganism, (2) thermophile **archaea**

The study of **archaea** is important for understanding the origins of life on Earth

fungus

n. a type of organism that includes yeasts, molds, and mushrooms, which are heterotrophic, meaning they do not produce their food and must consume organic matter to survive

synonym: mold, mildew, yeast

(1) **fungus** infection, (2) symbiotic **fungus**

Certain types of **fungus** can be toxic to humans, causing severe illness if ingested.

biodegrade

v. to decay naturally by microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi

(1) **biodegrade** by the microorganism, (2) bioplastic designed to **biodegrade**

The company's plastic products are easily **biodegraded** thanks to a unique manufacturing process.

human-made

adj. created or produced by humans; artificial

synonym: artificial, unnatural, manufactured

(1) **human-made** climate change, (2) the worst **human-made** disaster

The bridge is a **human-made** structure and was built to span the river.

degrade

v. to make something worse, especially in quality; to show or treat someone in a way that makes them seem no value and do not have the respect or reasonable opinion of others

synonym: demean, disgrace, impair

(1) **degrade** his public image, (2) **degrade** environmental quality

You should not **degrade** yourself by allowing them to use you.

indigestible

adj. not easily digested or broken down by the body; difficult or impossible to understand or comprehend

synonym: unpalatable, inedible, unsavory

(1) **indigestible** food, (2) **indigestible** substance

The dish was filled with so much spice that it became **indigestible** for me.

recycle

v. to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again

synonym: reclaim, reuse, reprocess

(1) **recycle** the cardboard boxes, (2) **recycle** milk packaging into new paper

We largely **recycle** the circuit board of cell phones because they contain a lot of valuable metals.

incinerate

v. to burn something, especially waste material completely
synonym: burn

(1) **incinerate** waste, (2) the power to **incinerate** nations

For safety reasons, we must completely **incinerate** contaminated protective clothing.

pollute

v. to make an area or substance, such as land, air, water, etc., dirty or harmful to living things by adding waste matter or harmful chemicals

synonym: contaminate, corrupt, degrade

(1) **pollute** the air, (2) **pollute** the thread

We should do our best not to **pollute** the environment.

microplastic

n. tiny plastic fragments in the environment originating from consumer products and industrial waste

(1) **microplastic** particle, (2) **microplastic** pollution in the sea

Several scholars have pointed out that inhalation of **microplastics** may have adverse effects on the human body.

sludge

n. a thick, wet mixture of liquid and solid matter, typically one that is unpleasant or harmful

synonym: muck, ooze, mire

(1) **sludge** treatment, (2) **sludge** removal

The **sludge** at the bottom of the river was a toxic hazard for

marine life.

bioengineering

n. the application of engineering principles to the design and production of biological systems and products

synonym: biomedical engineering, genetic engineering, biotechnology

(1) **bioengineering** field, (2) **bioengineering** techniques

The **bioengineering** lab has state-of-the-art equipment and software for analyzing biological systems and designing new solutions.

compost

n. a mixture of organic matter, such as food scraps, yard waste, and manure, that is allowed to decompose and is used as fertilizer for plants and garden soil

synonym: fertilizer, humus, manure

(1) organic **compost**, (2) **compost** pile

You can add coffee grounds and crushed eggshells to your **compost** to improve the pH balance.

rot

v. to decay, or cause something to decay, naturally and gradually

synonym: perish, decay, corrode

(1) begin to **rot**, (2) **rot** with age

Please refrigerate the meat, or it will **rot**.

microorganism

n. a very small living thing that may exist in its single-celled form or as a colony of cells and is too small to be seen without a microscope

synonym: germ, microbe, bacterium

(1) pathogenic **microorganism**, (2) **microorganisms** in his gut

This **microorganism** is a producer of respiratory disease.

die-hard

adj. (of a person) extremely loyal, dedicated, or enthusiastic; unwilling to give up

synonym: dedicated, committed, steadfast

(1) **die-hard** fanatic, (2) **die-hard** militarist

He was a **die-hard** football team fan and never missed a game.

plastivorous

adj. describes an organism that feeds on plastic or can survive on a diet that contains primarily plastic material
synonym: plastic-eating, plastic-consuming, plastic-devouring

(1) **plastivorous** organisms, (2) **plastivorous** bacteria

Plastivorous animals have adapted to consume plastic waste in their environment.

rethink

v. to consider again a plan, idea, etc., especially to change it

synonym: reexplore, review, reconsider

(1) **rethink** a marketing plan, (2) **rethink** the role of the manager

We have to **rethink** our company's product lineup for further growth.

urgently

adv. in a way that requires immediate action or attention, especially before anything else, because of being very important

synonym: promptly, immediately, swiftly

(1) tackle the problem **urgently**, (2) **urgently** required

I need to send this email **urgently**.

entourage

n. a group of people who attend or surround an important and influential person

synonym: retinue

(1) presidential **entourage**, (2) member of his **entourage**

The politician and his **entourage** arrived half an hour late.

Session 2: Spelling

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|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. di____rd fanatic | <i>adj.</i> (of a person) extremely loyal, dedicated, or enthusiastic; unwilling to give up |
| 2. bio_____ing field | <i>n.</i> the application of engineering principles to the design and production of biological systems and products |
| 3. mic_____tic particle | <i>n.</i> tiny plastic fragments in the environment originating from consumer products and industrial waste |
| 4. the worst hum_____de disaster | <i>adj.</i> created or produced by humans; artificial |
| 5. fu___s infection | <i>n.</i> a type of organism that includes yeasts, molds, and mushrooms, which are heterotrophic, meaning they do not produce their food and must consume organic matter to survive |
| 6. di____rd militarist | <i>adj.</i> (of a person) extremely loyal, dedicated, or enthusiastic; unwilling to give up |
| 7. a sw__m of mosquitoes | <i>n.</i> a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground |
| 8. po_____e the thread | <i>v.</i> to make an area or substance, such as land, air, water, etc., dirty or harmful to living things by adding waste matter or harmful chemicals |
| 9. begin to r_t | <i>v.</i> to decay, or cause something to decay, naturally and gradually |

ANSWERS: 1. die-hard, 2. bioengineering, 3. microplastic, 4. human-made, 5. fungus, 6. die-hard, 7. swarm, 8. pollute, 9. rot

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 10. bio_____ing techniques | <i>n.</i> the application of engineering principles to the design and production of biological systems and products |
| 11. pla_____ous organisms | <i>adj.</i> describes an organism that feeds on plastic or can survive on a diet that contains primarily plastic material |
| 12. symbiotic fu____s | <i>n.</i> a type of organism that includes yeasts, molds, and mushrooms, which are heterotrophic, meaning they do not produce their food and must consume organic matter to survive |
| 13. hum_____de climate change | <i>adj.</i> created or produced by humans; artificial |
| 14. organic co_____t | <i>n.</i> a mixture of organic matter, such as food scraps, yard waste, and manure, that is allowed to decompose and is used as fertilizer for plants and garden soil |
| 15. co_____t pile | <i>n.</i> a mixture of organic matter, such as food scraps, yard waste, and manure, that is allowed to decompose and is used as fertilizer for plants and garden soil |
| 16. the power to inc_____te nations | <i>v.</i> to burn something, especially waste material completely |
| 17. re_____k the role of the manager | <i>v.</i> to consider again a plan, idea, etc., especially to change it |
| 18. bio_____de by the microorganism | <i>v.</i> to decay naturally by microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi |

ANSWERS: 10. bioengineering, 11. plastivorous, 12. fungus, 13. human-made, 14. compost, 15. compost, 16. incinerate, 17. rethink, 18. biodegrade

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|--|---|
| 19. pathogenic mic_____ism | <i>n.</i> a very small living thing that may exist in its single-celled form or as a colony of cells and is too small to be seen without a microscope |
| 20. inc_____te waste | <i>v.</i> to burn something, especially waste material completely |
| 21. pla_____ous bacteria | <i>adj.</i> describes an organism that feeds on plastic or can survive on a diet that contains primarily plastic material |
| 22. sl___e treatment | <i>n.</i> a thick, wet mixture of liquid and solid matter, typically one that is unpleasant or harmful |
| 23. ur_____ly required | <i>adv.</i> in a way that requires immediate action or attention, especially before anything else, because of being very important |
| 24. re_____e the cardboard boxes | <i>v.</i> to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again |
| 25. r_t with age | <i>v.</i> to decay, or cause something to decay, naturally and gradually |
| 26. presidential en_____ge | <i>n.</i> a group of people who attend or surround an important and influential person |
| 27. de_____e environmental quality | <i>v.</i> to make something worse, especially in quality; to show or treat someone in a way that makes them seem no value and do not have the respect or reasonable opinion of others |
| 28. re_____e milk packaging into new paper | <i>v.</i> to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again |

ANSWERS: 19. microorganism, 20. incinerate, 21. plastivorous, 22. sludge, 23. urgently, 24. recycle, 25. rot, 26. entourage, 27. degrade, 28. recycle

29. mi____es sterilizer *n.* a tiny living thing that can only be seen with a microscope and that may cause disease
30. member of his en____ge *n.* a group of people who attend or surround an important and influential person
31. ind____ble substance *adj.* not easily digested or broken down by the body; difficult or impossible to understand or comprehend
32. locust sw__m *n.* a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground
33. thermophile ar____a *n.* a group of single-celled microorganisms distinguished from bacteria by their unique cell wall structure and biochemical characteristics, which are found in extreme environments such as hot springs and salt flats
34. ar____a microorganism *n.* a group of single-celled microorganisms distinguished from bacteria by their unique cell wall structure and biochemical characteristics, which are found in extreme environments such as hot springs and salt flats
35. bioplastic designed to bio____de *v.* to decay naturally by microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi
36. sl___e removal *n.* a thick, wet mixture of liquid and solid matter, typically one that is unpleasant or harmful
37. po____e the air *v.* to make an area or substance, such as land, air, water, etc., dirty or harmful to living things by adding waste matter or harmful chemicals

ANSWERS: 29. microbe, 30. entourage, 31. indigestible, 32. swarm, 33. archaea, 34. archaea, 35. biodegrade, 36. sludge, 37. pollute

38. mic_____tic pollution in the sea *n.* tiny plastic fragments in the environment originating from consumer products and industrial waste
39. re_____k a marketing plan *v.* to consider again a plan, idea, etc., especially to change it
40. ind_____ble food *adj.* not easily digested or broken down by the body; difficult or impossible to understand or comprehend
41. tackle the problem ur_____ly *adv.* in a way that requires immediate action or attention, especially before anything else, because of being very important
42. pathogenic mi_____e *n.* a tiny living thing that can only be seen with a microscope and that may cause disease
43. de_____e his public image *v.* to make something worse, especially in quality; to show or treat someone in a way that makes them seem no value and do not have the respect or reasonable opinion of others
44. mic_____isms in his gut *n.* a very small living thing that may exist in its single-celled form or as a colony of cells and is too small to be seen without a microscope

ANSWERS: 38. microplastic, 39. rethink, 40. indigestible, 41. urgently, 42. microbe, 43. degrade, 44. microorganism

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. Please refrigerate the meat, or it will _____.
 - v. to decay, or cause something to decay, naturally and gradually

2. The _____ lab has state-of-the-art equipment and software for analyzing biological systems and designing new solutions.
 - n. the application of engineering principles to the design and production of biological systems and products

3. The _____ at the bottom of the river was a toxic hazard for marine life.
 - n. a thick, wet mixture of liquid and solid matter, typically one that is unpleasant or harmful

4. Several scholars have pointed out that inhalation of _____ may have adverse effects on the human body.
 - n. tiny plastic fragments in the environment originating from consumer products and industrial waste

5. The politician and his _____ arrived half an hour late.
 - n. a group of people who attend or surround an important and influential person

6. Certain types of _____ can be toxic to humans, causing severe illness if ingested.
 - n. a type of organism that includes yeasts, molds, and mushrooms, which are heterotrophic, meaning they do not produce their food and must consume organic matter to survive

7. You should not _____ yourself by allowing them to use you.
 - v. to make something worse, especially in quality; to show or treat someone in a way that makes them seem no value and do not have the respect or reasonable opinion of others

ANSWERS: 1. rot, 2. bioengineering, 3. sludge, 4. microplastics, 5. entourage, 6. fungus, 7. degrade

8. I need to send this email _____.

adv. in a way that requires immediate action or attention, especially before anything else, because of being very important

9. _____ thrive on the surface of the human skin.

n. a tiny living thing that can only be seen with a microscope and that may cause disease

10. We largely _____ the circuit board of cell phones because they contain a lot of valuable metals.

v. to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again

11. The study of _____ is important for understanding the origins of life on Earth

n. a group of single-celled microorganisms distinguished from bacteria by their unique cell wall structure and biochemical characteristics, which are found in extreme environments such as hot springs and salt flats

12. The dish was filled with so much spice that it became _____ for me.

adj. not easily digested or broken down by the body; difficult or impossible to understand or comprehend

13. The bridge is a _____ structure and was built to span the river.

adj. created or produced by humans; artificial

14. We should do our best not to _____ the environment.

v. to make an area or substance, such as land, air, water, etc., dirty or harmful to living things by adding waste matter or harmful chemicals

15. We have to _____ our company's product lineup for further growth.

v. to consider again a plan, idea, etc., especially to change it

ANSWERS: 8. urgently, 9. Microbes, 10. recycle, 11. archaea, 12. indigestible, 13. human-made, 14. pollute, 15. rethink

16. A _____ of angry bees attacked because we had approached the hive.
n. a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground
17. You can add coffee grounds and crushed eggshells to your _____ to improve the pH balance.
n. a mixture of organic matter, such as food scraps, yard waste, and manure, that is allowed to decompose and is used as fertilizer for plants and garden soil
18. For safety reasons, we must completely _____ contaminated protective clothing.
v. to burn something, especially waste material completely
19. _____ animals have adapted to consume plastic waste in their environment.
adj. describes an organism that feeds on plastic or can survive on a diet that contains primarily plastic material
20. The company's plastic products are easily _____ thanks to a unique manufacturing process.
v. to decay naturally by microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi
21. He was a _____ football team fan and never missed a game.
adj. (of a person) extremely loyal, dedicated, or enthusiastic; unwilling to give up
22. This _____ is a producer of respiratory disease.
n. a very small living thing that may exist in its single-celled form or as a colony of cells and is too small to be seen without a microscope

ANSWERS: 16. swarm, 17. compost, 18. incinerate, 19. Plastivorous, 20. biodegraded, 21. die-hard, 22. microorganism