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## Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

*Martin Hilpert: What makes a language... a language? | TED Talk*

[https://www.ted.com/talks/martin\\_hilpert\\_what\\_makes\\_a\\_language\\_a\\_language](https://www.ted.com/talks/martin_hilpert_what_makes_a_language_a_language)

### Advanced Words Only

#### IMPORTANT

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## Session 1: Word List

### dialect

*n.* a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics

*synonym* : accent, language, vernacular

(1) a local **dialect**, (2) minority **dialect**

The **dialect** spoken in the region differed from other parts of the country.

### germ

*n.* a very tiny living that causes the disease; a piece of something such as an organism, concept, etc., capable of growing into a new one or part of one

*synonym* : bacterium, microbe, pathogen

(1) antibiotic-resistant **germ**, (2) a **germ-free** environment

The **germ** of his idea came from watching birds flying in flocks.

### incomprehensible

*adj.* impossible to understand or explain; not able to be grasped or comprehended

*synonym* : unintelligible, unfathomable, inexplicable

(1) **incomprehensible** jargon, (2) **incomprehensible** math problem

The mathematical formula was **incomprehensible** to most of the students.

## mandarin

*n.* an influential and high-ranking official, notably in the civil service; the branch of Chinese, which is the official language of China

*synonym* : Chinese, Beijing dialect

(1) ancient **mandarin** house, (2) **Mandarin** Chinese  
**Mandarin** dialects typically have relatively few vowels.

## Cantonese

*n.* a dialect of Chinese spoken in and around the city of Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China, as well as by many overseas Chinese communities;

*synonym* : Chinese dialect, Guangdong dialect, Yue dialect

(1) **Cantonese-style** roast duck, (2) **Cantonese** dialect  
She took **Cantonese** classes to communicate better with her Chinese colleagues.

## dissimilar

*adj.* not alike or having little in common

*synonym* : unlike, different, distinct

(1) **dissimilar** cultures, (2) **dissimilar** backgrounds  
The two paintings were **dissimilar** in style and subject matter.

## dub

*v.* to give someone or something an unofficial name or nickname; to provide movies with a voice of a foreign language

*synonym* : name, designate, nickname

(1) **dub** the film in English, (2) **dub** data  
We **dubbed** him Ironman because of his toughness.

## subtitle

*n.* a secondary title or alternate title that is displayed below the primary title often used to provide additional information or translation for a movie or video; a text that appears at the bottom of a movie, TV show, or video to provide a written translation or transcription of the spoken dialogue in another language

*synonym* : caption, heading, inscription

(1) chart **subtitle**, (2) foreign-language **subtitle**  
Make sure to turn on **subtitles** so you can understand the

foreign film.

## intelligibility

*n.* the quality or state of being intelligible or easily understood; clarity of expression or communication

*synonym*: clarity, comprehensibility, understandability

(1) **intelligibility** test, (2) visual **intelligibility**

The teacher emphasized the importance of clear enunciation to increase her students' speech **intelligibility**.

## determinant

*n.* a factor, circumstance, or condition that contributes to the shaping, influencing, or determining of a particular outcome or result

*synonym*: cause, factor, element

(1) environmental **determinant**, (2) a **determinant** of crop yields

One **determinant** of success is having a positive attitude and a strong work ethic.

## pronounce

*v.* to say or speak (a word or words) correctly or in a particular way

*synonym*: articulate, enunciate, voice

(1) **pronounce** a judgment, (2) **pronounce** a name

She struggled to **pronounce** the word in a foreign language.

## coincident

*adj.* happening or operating in the same place or at the same time

*synonym*: concurrent, accompanying, coextensive

(1) **coincident** indicators, (2) a series of **coincident** events

**Coincident** with the negotiation, the bank was permitted to open a Beijing branch.

## deem

*v.* to consider or decide something in a particular way

*synonym*: believe, consider, suppose

(1) **deem** socially responsible, (2) **deem** wrong or inappropriate

Regarding earthquakes, some commercial buildings were

**deemed** unsafe.

## colonize

*v.* to establish a colony in or on a specific place; to settle or occupy in large numbers

*synonym*: settle, occupy, inhabit

(1) **colonize** planets, (2) **colonize** for cultivation

European powers **colonized** much of the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries.

## unify

*v.* to bring or join something together so that they form a single unit

*synonym*: bring together, consolidate, merge

(1) **unify** the system, (2) **unify** the party

The people believe that they can **unify** the country.

## fascist

*adj.* relating to or supporting fascism, which is a political ideology that emphasizes authoritarian government, nationalism, and suppression of political opposition and individual liberties

*synonym*: authoritarian, dictatorial, totalitarian

(1) **fascist** propaganda, (2) **fascist** policies

The regime was accused of being **fascist** for their oppressive tactics.

## dictator

*n.* a political leader who has complete power over a country, especially one who has obtained control by force

*synonym*: autocrat, tyrant, despot

(1) military **dictator**, (2) a **dictator** with enormous powers

A popular uprising led to the overthrow of the **dictator**.

## unsophisticated

*adj.* lacking refinement, education, or worldly experience; simple or straightforward in nature or style; not complex or sophisticated

*synonym*: naive, simple, inexperienced

(1) **unsophisticated** taste, (2) **unsophisticated** argument

The product's **unsophisticated** design made it difficult for

experienced users.

## gatekeeper

*n.* a person, organization, or system that controls or monitors access to something, often a website, database, or institution; a person or group that controls or regulates access to information, especially for a particular perspective or interest

*synonym* : guardian, watchman, custodian

(1) **gatekeeper** role, (2) information **gatekeeper**

The company's **gatekeeper** screened all incoming phone calls and emails to ensure only important ones reached the boss.

## vernacular

*n.* a language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region

*synonym* : dialect, idiom, lingo

(1) **vernacular** language, (2) native **vernacular**

The poet wrote in the **vernacular** of ordinary people.

## posit

*v.* to suggest or accept something as fact or as a basis for argument or consideration

*synonym* : assert, declare, assume

(1) **posit** the existence of life after death, (2) **posit** the premise

We should **posit** several hypotheses to discuss the matter.

## linguist

*n.* a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics

*synonym* : grammatist, philologue, polyglot

(1) foreign **linguist**, (2) cognitive **linguist**

Though I love literature, I'm a bad **linguist**.

## murky

*adj.* dark and gloomy or difficult to see through

*synonym* : dim, fuzzy, foggy

(1) **murky** waters, (2) a **murky** dungeon

Prospects for the suspect's conviction are **murky** due to a lack of helpful evidence.

## pollinate

v. to transfer pollen from the male part of a flower to the female part, thereby fertilizing the plant and allowing it to produce fruit or seeds; to spread or disseminate an idea or influence to others

*synonym*: fertilize, propagate

(1) **pollinate** plants, (2) **pollinate** fruit trees

Without bees to **pollinate** the flowers, many crops would not exist.

## confound

v. to confuse or perplex; to mix up or throw into disorder; to prove to be false or illogical

*synonym*: confuse, mix up, perplex

(1) **confound** right and wrong, (2) **confound** the problem

The unexpected events **confounded** the scientists, who had to rethink their hypothesis.

## dazzling

*adj.* shining brightly; highly attractive or exciting

*synonym*: astonishing, breathtaking, flashy

(1) **dazzling** debut, (2) **dazzling** views

Last night, the team delivered a **dazzling** performance.

## Session 2: Spelling

1. da\_\_\_\_ng debut *adj.* shining brightly; highly attractive or exciting
2. environmental det\_\_\_\_\_\_nt *n.* a factor, circumstance, or condition that contributes to the shaping, influencing, or determining of a particular outcome or result
3. fa\_\_\_\_t propaganda *adj.* relating to or supporting fascism, which is a political ideology that emphasizes authoritarian government, nationalism, and suppression of political opposition and individual liberties
4. mu\_\_y waters *adj.* dark and gloomy or difficult to see through
5. ver\_\_\_\_ar language *n.* a language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region
6. native ver\_\_\_\_ar *n.* a language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region
7. fa\_\_\_\_t policies *adj.* relating to or supporting fascism, which is a political ideology that emphasizes authoritarian government, nationalism, and suppression of political opposition and individual liberties
8. dis\_\_\_\_ar backgrounds *adj.* not alike or having little in common
9. po\_\_\_\_te plants *v.* to transfer pollen from the male part of a flower to the female part, thereby fertilizing the plant and allowing it to produce fruit or seeds; to spread or disseminate an idea or influence to others

ANSWERS: 1. dazzling, 2. determinant, 3. fascist, 4. murky, 5. vernacular, 6. vernacular, 7. fascist, 8. dissimilar, 9. pollinate

10. da\_\_\_\_ng views *adj.* shining brightly; highly attractive or exciting
11. a di\_\_\_\_or with enormous powers *n.* a political leader who has complete power over a country, especially one who has obtained control by force
12. co\_\_\_\_nd right and wrong *v.* to confuse or perplex; to mix up or throw into disorder; to prove to be false or illogical
13. po\_\_t the premise *v.* to suggest or accept something as fact or as a basis for argument or consideration
14. foreign-language su\_\_\_\_le *n.* a secondary title or alternate title that is displayed below the primary title often used to provide additional information or translation for a movie or video; a text that appears at the bottom of a movie, TV show, or video to provide a written translation or transcription of the spoken dialogue in another language
15. po\_\_\_\_te fruit trees *v.* to transfer pollen from the male part of a flower to the female part, thereby fertilizing the plant and allowing it to produce fruit or seeds; to spread or disseminate an idea or influence to others
16. foreign li\_\_\_\_st *n.* a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics
17. co\_\_\_\_ze for cultivation *v.* to establish a colony in or on a specific place; to settle or occupy in large numbers

ANSWERS: 10. dazzling, 11. dictator, 12. confound, 13. posit, 14. subtitle, 15. pollinate, 16. linguist, 17. colonize



18. gat\_\_\_\_\_er role *n.* a person, organization, or system that controls or monitors access to something, often a website, database, or institution; a person or group that controls or regulates access to information, especially for a particular perspective or interest
19. d\_b data *v.* to give someone or something an unofficial name or nickname; to provide movies with a voice of a foreign language
20. inc\_\_\_\_\_ble jargon *adj.* impossible to understand or explain; not able to be grasped or comprehended
21. inc\_\_\_\_\_ble math problem *adj.* impossible to understand or explain; not able to be grasped or comprehended
22. chart su\_\_\_\_\_le *n.* a secondary title or alternate title that is displayed below the primary title often used to provide additional information or translation for a movie or video; a text that appears at the bottom of a movie, TV show, or video to provide a written translation or transcription of the spoken dialogue in another language
23. Ca\_\_\_\_\_se-style roast duck *n.* a dialect of Chinese spoken in and around the city of Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China, as well as by many overseas Chinese communities;
24. a series of coi\_\_\_\_\_nt events *adj.* happening or operating in the same place or at the same time
25. co\_\_\_\_\_ze planets *v.* to establish a colony in or on a specific place; to settle or occupy in large numbers

ANSWERS: 18. gatekeeper, 19. dub, 20. incomprehensible, 21. incomprehensible, 22. subtitle, 23. Cantonese, 24. coincident, 25. colonize

26. un\_\_y the system      *v.* to bring or join something together so that they form a single unit
27. information gat\_\_\_\_\_er      *n.* a person, organization, or system that controls or monitors access to something, often a website, database, or institution; a person or group that controls or regulates access to information, especially for a particular perspective or interest
28. military di\_\_\_\_\_or      *n.* a political leader who has complete power over a country, especially one who has obtained control by force
29. uns\_\_\_\_\_ted taste      *adj.* lacking refinement, education, or worldly experience; simple or straightforward in nature or style; not complex or sophisticated
30. coi\_\_\_\_\_nt indicators      *adj.* happening or operating in the same place or at the same time
31. Ma\_\_\_\_\_in Chinese      *n.* an influential and high-ranking official, notably in the civil service; the branch of Chinese, which is the official language of China
32. visual int\_\_\_\_\_ity      *n.* the quality or state of being intelligible or easily understood; clarity of expression or communication
33. a det\_\_\_\_\_nt of crop yields      *n.* a factor, circumstance, or condition that contributes to the shaping, influencing, or determining of a particular outcome or result
34. uns\_\_\_\_\_ted argument      *adj.* lacking refinement, education, or worldly experience; simple or straightforward in nature or style; not complex or sophisticated

ANSWERS: 26. unify, 27. gatekeeper, 28. dictator, 29. unsophisticated, 30. coincident, 31. mandarin, 32. intelligibility, 33. determinant, 34. unsophisticated

35. antibiotic-resistant g\_\_m *n.* a very tiny living that causes the disease; a piece of something such as an organism, concept, etc., capable of growing into a new one or part of one
36. a local di\_\_\_\_\_t *n.* a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics
37. po\_\_t the existence of life after death *v.* to suggest or accept something as fact or as a basis for argument or consideration
38. pr\_\_\_\_\_ce a judgment *v.* to say or speak (a word or words) correctly or in a particular way
39. un\_\_y the party *v.* to bring or join something together so that they form a single unit
40. ancient ma\_\_\_\_\_in house *n.* an influential and high-ranking official, notably in the civil service; the branch of Chinese, which is the official language of China
41. cognitive li\_\_\_\_\_st *n.* a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics
42. d\_b the film in English *v.* to give someone or something an unofficial name or nickname; to provide movies with a voice of a foreign language
43. dis\_\_\_\_\_ar cultures *adj.* not alike or having little in common
44. Ca\_\_\_\_\_se dialect *n.* a dialect of Chinese spoken in and around the city of Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China, as well as by many overseas Chinese communities;

ANSWERS: 35. germ, 36. dialect, 37. posit, 38. pronounce, 39. unify, 40. mandarin, 41. linguist, 42. dub, 43. dissimilar, 44. Cantonese

45. d\_\_m wrong or inappropriate      *v.* to consider or decide something in a particular way
46. co\_\_\_\_nd the problem      *v.* to confuse or perplex; to mix up or throw into disorder; to prove to be false or illogical
47. pr\_\_\_\_ce a name      *v.* to say or speak (a word or words) correctly or in a particular way
48. minority di\_\_\_\_t      *n.* a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics
49. a mu\_\_y dungeon      *adj.* dark and gloomy or difficult to see through
50. a g\_\_m-free environment      *n.* a very tiny living that causes the disease; a piece of something such as an organism, concept, etc., capable of growing into a new one or part of one
51. int\_\_\_\_\_ity test      *n.* the quality or state of being intelligible or easily understood; clarity of expression or communication
52. d\_\_m socially responsible      *v.* to consider or decide something in a particular way

ANSWERS: 45. deem, 46. confound, 47. pronounce, 48. dialect, 49. murky, 50. germ, 51. intelligibility, 52. deem

## Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. European powers \_\_\_\_\_ much of the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries.
  - v. to establish a colony in or on a specific place; to settle or occupy in large numbers
  
2. Though I love literature, I'm a bad \_\_\_\_\_.
  - n. a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics
  
3. The \_\_\_\_ of his idea came from watching birds flying in flocks.
  - n. a very tiny living that causes the disease; a piece of something such as an organism, concept, etc., capable of growing into a new one or part of one
  
4. The teacher emphasized the importance of clear enunciation to increase her students' speech \_\_\_\_\_.
  - n. the quality or state of being intelligible or easily understood; clarity of expression or communication
  
5. Without bees to \_\_\_\_\_ the flowers, many crops would not exist.
  - v. to transfer pollen from the male part of a flower to the female part, thereby fertilizing the plant and allowing it to produce fruit or seeds; to spread or disseminate an idea or influence to others
  
6. The unexpected events \_\_\_\_\_ the scientists, who had to rethink their hypothesis.
  - v. to confuse or perplex; to mix up or throw into disorder; to prove to be false or illogical

ANSWERS: 1. colonized, 2. linguist, 3. germ, 4. intelligibility, 5. pollinate, 6. confounded

7. One \_\_\_\_\_ of success is having a positive attitude and a strong work ethic.
- n.* a factor, circumstance, or condition that contributes to the shaping, influencing, or determining of a particular outcome or result
8. Last night, the team delivered a \_\_\_\_\_ performance.
- adj.* shining brightly; highly attractive or exciting
9. The two paintings were \_\_\_\_\_ in style and subject matter.
- adj.* not alike or having little in common
10. The people believe that they can \_\_\_\_\_ the country.
- v.* to bring or join something together so that they form a single unit
11. She struggled to \_\_\_\_\_ the word in a foreign language.
- v.* to say or speak (a word or words) correctly or in a particular way
12. The company's \_\_\_\_\_ all incoming phone calls and emails to ensure only important ones reached the boss.
- n.* a person, organization, or system that controls or monitors access to something, often a website, database, or institution; a person or group that controls or regulates access to information, especially for a particular perspective or interest
13. We should \_\_\_\_\_ several hypotheses to discuss the matter.
- v.* to suggest or accept something as fact or as a basis for argument or consideration
14. Regarding earthquakes, some commercial buildings were \_\_\_\_\_ unsafe.
- v.* to consider or decide something in a particular way

ANSWERS: 7. determinant, 8. dazzling, 9. dissimilar, 10. unify, 11. pronounce, 12. gatekeeper screened, 13. posit, 14. deemed

15. Prospects for the suspect's conviction are \_\_\_\_\_ due to a lack of helpful evidence.

*adj.* dark and gloomy or difficult to see through

16. Make sure to turn on \_\_\_\_\_ so you can understand the foreign film.

*n.* a secondary title or alternate title that is displayed below the primary title often used to provide additional information or translation for a movie or video; a text that appears at the bottom of a movie, TV show, or video to provide a written translation or transcription of the spoken dialogue in another language

17. The mathematical formula was \_\_\_\_\_ to most of the students.

*adj.* impossible to understand or explain; not able to be grasped or comprehended

18. The \_\_\_\_\_ spoken in the region differed from other parts of the country.

*n.* a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics

19. The product's \_\_\_\_\_ design made it difficult for experienced users.

*adj.* lacking refinement, education, or worldly experience; simple or straightforward in nature or style; not complex or sophisticated

20. \_\_\_\_\_ dialects typically have relatively few vowels.

*n.* an influential and high-ranking official, notably in the civil service; the branch of Chinese, which is the official language of China

21. \_\_\_\_\_ with the negotiation, the bank was permitted to open a Beijing branch.

*adj.* happening or operating in the same place or at the same time

22. The poet wrote in the \_\_\_\_\_ of ordinary people.

*n.* a language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region

ANSWERS: 15. murky, 16. subtitles, 17. incomprehensible, 18. dialect, 19. unsophisticated, 20. Mandarin, 21. Coincident, 22. vernacular

23. She took \_\_\_\_\_ classes to communicate better with her Chinese colleagues.
- n.* a dialect of Chinese spoken in and around the city of Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China, as well as by many overseas Chinese communities;
24. A popular uprising led to the overthrow of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- n.* a political leader who has complete power over a country, especially one who has obtained control by force
25. We \_\_\_\_\_ him Ironman because of his toughness.
- v.* to give someone or something an unofficial name or nickname; to provide movies with a voice of a foreign language
26. The regime was accused of being \_\_\_\_\_ for their oppressive tactics.
- adj.* relating to or supporting fascism, which is a political ideology that emphasizes authoritarian government, nationalism, and suppression of political opposition and individual liberties

ANSWERS: 23. Cantonese, 24. dictator, 25. dubbed, 26. fascist