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Matthew Borths: Claws vs. nails | TED Talk

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Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

claw

n. a curved, pointed appendage found on the foot or leg of an animal, used for gripping or grasping; a human hand with long, narrow fingers that are curved like a claw; a machine or tool with a claw-like opening used for gripping or lifting objects

synonym : paw, talon, nail

(1) **claw** marks, (2) **claw** hammer

The bear used its **claw** to catch a fish in the river.

talon

n. a sharp, hooked claw, especially on a bird of prey or a mammal such as a lion or a wolf

synonym : claw, talus, nail

(1) wolf **talon**, (2) sharp **talon**

The eagle's **talon** was gripping tightly onto its prey.

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.

retract

v. to take back, withdraw, or revoke something that has been said or done; to disavow or repudiate a statement or assertion that one has previously made

synonym : withdraw, take back, revoke

(1) **retract** a promise, (2) **retract** a lawsuit

I need to **retract** my statement because I realized it was incorrect.

flick

v. to make a sudden sharp movement or hit something quickly with a sharp movement

synonym: snap, tap, flip

(1) **flicker** candle, (2) **flick** through pages

He **flicked** the light switch, and the room was illuminated.

ancestor

n. a person from whom one is descended; a forefather

synonym: forebear, forefather, progenitor

(1) **ancestor** language, (2) earliest human **ancestor**

My remote **ancestor** immigrated to the United States from Ireland in the 1800s.

primate

n. any mammal of the order Primates, which includes monkeys, apes, and humans

synonym: ape, monkey, lemur

(1) **primate** species, (2) **primate** sanctuary

Many scientists study **primate** behavior and intelligence.

wield

v. to possess and exercise power, authority, etc

synonym: exert, manage, handle

(1) **wield** her authority, (2) **wield** a bad influence

They **wielded** enormous power and influence.

appendage

n. a part attached to the main body or structure, often with a specific function or purpose; a limb or other body part that projects outward from the main body

synonym: extension, limb, attachment

(1) spiny **appendage**, (2) mechanical **appendage**

The spider's **appendage** allowed it to climb up the wall easily.

mammal

n. any animal of which the female gives birth to live young, not eggs, and feeds her young on milk from her own body

(1) a primitive **mammal**, (2) a sort of **mammal**

Marine **mammal** populations are declining worldwide due to ocean pollution.

reptile

n. a cold-blooded animal that has dry, scaly skin and lays eggs on land, such as snakes, lizards, and turtles

synonym: lizard, serpent, snake

(1) **reptile** exhibition, (2) fossil **reptile**

Alligators are a type of **reptile** that live in swamps and rivers.

gulf

n. a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land

synonym: chasm, divide, abyss

(1) **gulf** war, (2) **gulf** stream

The **Gulf** of Mexico is a body of water in the southern United States.

keratin

n. a fibrous protein that is the main structural component of hair, nails, and the outer layer of skin in mammals and birds; also found in horns, hooves, and feathers

synonym: ceratin

(1) **keratin** treatment, (2) **keratin** protein

Keratosis is a skin condition characterized by the formation of excess **keratin** on the skin's surface

hoof

n. the horny part of the foot of some mammals, such as horses, deer, and cattle

synonym: foot, paw

(1) **hoof** mark, (2) clean **hoof**

The horse's **hoof** was injured and needed to be treated by a veterinarian.

sheath

n. a close-fitting cover to protect something such as the blade of a knife, sword, or other sharp objects

synonym: covering, case

(1) a sword **sheath**, (2) peripheral nerve **sheath**

He had long suffered from inflammation of a tendon **sheath**.

radiate

v. to spread out or emit something, such as light or heat, in all directions

synonym: give off, scatter, beam

(1) **radiate** an aura, (2) **radiate** in all directions

Roads **radiate** from the famous building in the center of the city.

dexterous

adj. skilled or proficient in using the hands or body; nimble, clever, or deft

synonym: skillful, nimble, adept

(1) **dexterous** fingers, (2) **dexterous** movements

The **dexterous** musician played the piano with ease and precision.

expansive

adj. large or wide in extent or scope; friendly and open and willing to talk

synonym: large, extensive, vast

(1) with an **expansive** spirit, (2) **expansive** ocean views

The company has an **expansive** network of offices and locations around the world.

improvisation

n. the act of making something up on the spot or creating or performing something without preparation

synonym: spontaneity, ad-lib, extemporization

(1) **improvisation** on stage, (2) jazz **improvisation**

He created a beautiful piece of music using only **improvisation**.

splay

v. to spread out or apart, especially in a disorganized or uneven way; to cause or force something to spread out or expand

synonym: spread out, flare, fan out

(1) **splay** out in a graceful manner, (2) **splay** my hands across his back

The branches of the tree **splayed** outwards, providing a natural canopy.

dexterity

n. skill and speed in performing physical tasks, especially with the hands; mental skill or adroitness in dealing with situations or problems

synonym: skillfulness, agility, expertise

(1) **dexterity** with the pen, (2) manual **dexterity**

The surgeon's **dexterity** was impressive during the delicate surgery.

snatch

v. to take or grab something suddenly or quickly

synonym: grab, seize, capture

(1) **snatch** a hasty meal, (2) **snatch** up her purse

He **snatches** victory from the jaws of defeat in the game's final seconds.

opposable

adj. able to be placed opposite something else, especially to grip or hold it

synonym: flexible, adaptable, changeable

(1) **opposable** claw, (2) **opposable** fingers

His **opposable** thumb allowed him to grasp objects with great precision.

puncture

n. a small hole or wound made by piercing, such as with a needle, nail, or pointed object

synonym: piercing, prick, hole

(1) bicycle **puncture**, (2) needle **puncture**

The tire had a **puncture** and needed to be replaced.

toenail

n. the hard, flat covering on the end of a toe, made of layers of dead skin cells; often requires regular grooming and trimming to maintain proper hygiene and appearance

synonym: nail, claw, hoof

(1) **toenail** fungus, (2) ingrown **toenail**

I accidentally stubbed my toe and broke my **toenail**.

- aye** *adv.* an outdated word meaning "yes," used to indicate agreement or assent, particularly in official contexts such as voting or parliamentary procedures; forever or always; (noun) agreement or affirmation
synonym : yes, certainly, indeed
(1) **aye** vote, (2) **aye** claimed
The captain nodded in **aye**, showing his agreement with the plan.
- sect** *n.* a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream
synonym : group, faction, cult
(1) **sect** beliefs, (2) secret **sect**
The minority **sect** believed in a set of unconventional religious practices.
- burrow** *v.* to excavate a hole or make a tunnel in the ground by digging, typically for use as a dwelling of an animal
synonym : tunnel, dig, excavate
(1) **burrow** through the forest, (2) **burrow** into a mystery
You can't **burrow** through solid metal.
- skew** *v.* to turn or place at an angle; to make biased or distorted with the result that it is not accurate, fair, normal, etc.
synonym : slant, tilt, distort
(1) **skew** the message, (2) **skew** social values
The results of the poll are **skewed** because it only surveyed a small group of people.
- grub** *n.* the larval stage of an insect, particularly beetles, butterflies, or flies; food, especially in the form of unappetizing or unappealing cooked dishes; (verb) to dig or search diligently and laboriously
synonym : larva, food, chow
(1) cook up some **grubs**, (2) **grub** for potatoes
The garden was infested with beetle **grubs**, causing damage

to the plant roots.

Session 2: Spelling

1. jazz imp_____ion *n.* the act of making something up on the spot or creating or performing something without preparation
2. de_____us fingers *adj.* skilled or proficient in using the hands or body; nimble, clever, or deft
3. s__w the message *v.* to turn or place at an angle; to make biased or distorted with the result that it is not accurate, fair, normal, etc.
4. de_____ty with the pen *n.* skill and speed in performing physical tasks, especially with the hands; mental skill or adroitness in dealing with situations or problems
5. bu___w into a mystery *v.* to excavate a hole or make a tunnel in the ground by digging, typically for use as a dwelling of an animal
6. a primitive ma___l *n.* any animal of which the female gives birth to live young, not eggs, and feeds her young on milk from her own body
7. ra_____e an aura *v.* to spread out or emit something, such as light or heat, in all directions
8. re_____t a promise *v.* to take back, withdraw, or revoke something that has been said or done; to disavow or repudiate a statement or assertion that one has previously made
9. g__f stream *n.* a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land

ANSWERS: 1. improvisation, 2. dexterous, 3. skew, 4. dexterity, 5. burrow, 6. mammal, 7. radiate, 8. retract, 9. gulf

10. g__b for potatoes *n.* the larval stage of an insect, particularly beetles, butterflies, or flies; food, especially in the form of unappetizing or unappealing cooked dishes; (verb) to dig or search diligently and laboriously
11. ke_____n treatment *n.* a fibrous protein that is the main structural component of hair, nails, and the outer layer of skin in mammals and birds; also found in horns, hooves, and feathers
12. secret s__t *n.* a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream
13. re_____e exhibition *n.* a cold-blooded animal that has dry, scaly skin and lays eggs on land, such as snakes, lizards, and turtles
14. ex_____ve ocean views *adj.* large or wide in extent or scope; friendly and open and willing to talk
15. sharp ta__n *n.* a sharp, hooked claw, especially on a bird of prey or a mammal such as a lion or a wolf
16. an_____or language *n.* a person from whom one is descended; a forefather
17. manual de_____ty *n.* skill and speed in performing physical tasks, especially with the hands; mental skill or adroitness in dealing with situations or problems
18. sp__y my hands across his back *v.* to spread out or apart, especially in a disorganized or uneven way; to cause or force something to spread out or expand

ANSWERS: 10. grub, 11. keratin, 12. sect, 13. reptile, 14. expansive, 15. talon, 16. ancestor, 17. dexterity, 18. splay

19. fl__k through pages *v.* to make a sudden sharp movement or hit something quickly with a sharp movement
20. sn___h up her purse *v.* to take or grab something suddenly or quickly
21. pr____e sanctuary *n.* any mammal of the order Primates, which includes monkeys, apes, and humans
22. wi__d a bad influence *v.* to possess and exercise power, authority, etc
23. bu___w through the forest *v.* to excavate a hole or make a tunnel in the ground by digging, typically for use as a dwelling of an animal
24. spiny ap_____ge *n.* a part attached to the main body or structure, often with a specific function or purpose; a limb or other body part that projects outward from the main body
25. ke_____n protein *n.* a fibrous protein that is the main structural component of hair, nails, and the outer layer of skin in mammals and birds; also found in horns, hooves, and feathers
26. fl__ker candle *v.* to make a sudden sharp movement or hit something quickly with a sharp movement
27. re____t a lawsuit *v.* to take back, withdraw, or revoke something that has been said or done; to disavow or repudiate a statement or assertion that one has previously made

ANSWERS: 19. flick, 20. snatch, 21. primate, 22. wield, 23. burrow, 24. appendage, 25. keratin, 26. flick, 27. retract

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|--------------------------------|----|---|
| 28. sn___h a hasty meal | v. | to take or grab something suddenly or quickly |
| 29. wi__d her authority | v. | to possess and exercise power, authority, etc |
| 30. ra_____e in all directions | v. | to spread out or emit something, such as light or heat, in all directions |
| 31. pi___e the armored shells | v. | to cut or make a way through with a sharp instrument |
| 32. clean h__f | n. | the horny part of the foot of some mammals, such as horses, deer, and cattle |
| 33. s__t beliefs | n. | a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream |
| 34. c__w hammer | n. | a curved, pointed appendage found on the foot or leg of an animal, used for gripping or grasping; a human hand with long, narrow fingers that are curved like a claw; a machine or tool with a claw-like opening used for gripping or lifting objects |
| 35. peripheral nerve sh___h | n. | a close-fitting cover to protect something such as the blade of a knife, sword, or other sharp objects |
| 36. pi___e a mystery | v. | to cut or make a way through with a sharp instrument |
| 37. a sort of ma___l | n. | any animal of which the female gives birth to live young, not eggs, and feeds her young on milk from her own body |

ANSWERS: 28. snatch, 29. wield, 30. radiate, 31. pierce, 32. hoof, 33. sect, 34. claw, 35. sheath, 36. pierce, 37. mammal

38. wolf ta__n *n.* a sharp, hooked claw, especially on a bird of prey or a mammal such as a lion or a wolf
39. s__w social values *v.* to turn or place at an angle; to make biased or distorted with the result that it is not accurate, fair, normal, etc.
40. to____l fungus *n.* the hard, flat covering on the end of a toe, made of layers of dead skin cells; often requires regular grooming and trimming to maintain proper hygiene and appearance
41. a_e vote *adv.* an outdated word meaning "yes," used to indicate agreement or assent, particularly in official contexts such as voting or parliamentary procedures; forever or always; (noun) agreement or affirmation
42. imp_____ion on stage *n.* the act of making something up on the spot or creating or performing something without preparation
43. with an ex_____ve spirit *adj.* large or wide in extent or scope; friendly and open and willing to talk
44. fossil re_____e *n.* a cold-blooded animal that has dry, scaly skin and lays eggs on land, such as snakes, lizards, and turtles
45. h__f mark *n.* the horny part of the foot of some mammals, such as horses, deer, and cattle
46. earliest human an____or *n.* a person from whom one is descended; a forefather

ANSWERS: 38. talon, 39. skew, 40. toenail, 41. aye, 42. improvisation, 43. expansive, 44. reptile, 45. hoof, 46. ancestor

47. c__w marks
- n.* a curved, pointed appendage found on the foot or leg of an animal, used for gripping or grasping; a human hand with long, narrow fingers that are curved like a claw; a machine or tool with a claw-like opening used for gripping or lifting objects
48. a sword sh___h
- n.* a close-fitting cover to protect something such as the blade of a knife, sword, or other sharp objects
49. cook up some g__bs
- n.* the larval stage of an insect, particularly beetles, butterflies, or flies; food, especially in the form of unappetizing or unappealing cooked dishes; (verb) to dig or search diligently and laboriously
50. op_____le fingers
- adj.* able to be placed opposite something else, especially to grip or hold it
51. pr_____e species
- n.* any mammal of the order Primates, which includes monkeys, apes, and humans
52. op_____le claw
- adj.* able to be placed opposite something else, especially to grip or hold it
53. ingrown to_____l
- n.* the hard, flat covering on the end of a toe, made of layers of dead skin cells; often requires regular grooming and trimming to maintain proper hygiene and appearance
54. g__f war
- n.* a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land
55. a_e claimed
- adv.* an outdated word meaning "yes," used to indicate agreement or assent, particularly in official contexts such as voting or parliamentary procedures; forever or always; (noun) agreement or affirmation

ANSWERS: 47. claw, 48. sheath, 49. grub, 50. opposable, 51. primate, 52. opposable, 53. toenail, 54. gulf, 55. aye

56. mechanical ap_____ge *n.* a part attached to the main body or structure, often with a specific function or purpose; a limb or other body part that projects outward from the main body
57. de_____us movements *adj.* skilled or proficient in using the hands or body; nimble, clever, or deft
58. sp__y out in a graceful manner *v.* to spread out or apart, especially in a disorganized or uneven way; to cause or force something to spread out or expand
59. needle pu_____re *n.* a small hole or wound made by piercing, such as with a needle, nail, or pointed object
60. bicycle pu_____re *n.* a small hole or wound made by piercing, such as with a needle, nail, or pointed object

ANSWERS: 56. appendage, 57. dexterous, 58. splay, 59. puncture, 60. puncture

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. The horse's _____ was injured and needed to be treated by a veterinarian.
n. the horny part of the foot of some mammals, such as horses, deer, and cattle
2. The surgeon's _____ was impressive during the delicate surgery.
n. skill and speed in performing physical tasks, especially with the hands; mental skill or adroitness in dealing with situations or problems
3. Alligators are a type of _____ that live in swamps and rivers.
n. a cold-blooded animal that has dry, scaly skin and lays eggs on land, such as snakes, lizards, and turtles
4. The _____ of Mexico is a body of water in the southern United States.
n. a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land
5. I accidentally stubbed my toe and broke my _____.
n. the hard, flat covering on the end of a toe, made of layers of dead skin cells; often requires regular grooming and trimming to maintain proper hygiene and appearance
6. He _____ victory from the jaws of defeat in the game's final seconds.
v. to take or grab something suddenly or quickly
7. The eagle's _____ was gripping tightly onto its prey.
n. a sharp, hooked claw, especially on a bird of prey or a mammal such as a lion or a wolf
8. He _____ the light switch, and the room was illuminated.
v. to make a sudden sharp movement or hit something quickly with a sharp movement

ANSWERS: 1. hoof, 2. dexterity, 3. reptile, 4. Gulf, 5. toenail, 6. snatches, 7. talon, 8. flicked

9. My remote _____ immigrated to the United States from Ireland in the 1800s.
n. a person from whom one is descended; a forefather
10. The captain nodded in _____ showing his agreement with the plan.
adv. an outdated word meaning "yes," used to indicate agreement or assent, particularly in official contexts such as voting or parliamentary procedures; forever or always; (noun) agreement or affirmation
11. His _____ thumb allowed him to grasp objects with great precision.
adj. able to be placed opposite something else, especially to grip or hold it
12. The spider's _____ allowed it to climb up the wall easily.
n. a part attached to the main body or structure, often with a specific function or purpose; a limb or other body part that projects outward from the main body
13. You can't _____ through solid metal.
v. to excavate a hole or make a tunnel in the ground by digging, typically for use as a dwelling of an animal
14. The extreme cold _____ our bones.
v. to cut or make a way through with a sharp instrument
15. The garden was infested with beetle _____ causing damage to the plant roots.
n. the larval stage of an insect, particularly beetles, butterflies, or flies; food, especially in the form of unappetizing or unappealing cooked dishes; (verb) to dig or search diligently and laboriously
16. He created a beautiful piece of music using only _____.
n. the act of making something up on the spot or creating or performing something without preparation

ANSWERS: 9. ancestor, 10. aye, 11. opposable, 12. appendage, 13. burrow, 14. pierced, 15. grubs, 16. improvisation

17. The minority _____ believed in a set of unconventional religious practices.
n. a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream
18. The results of the poll are _____ because it only surveyed a small group of people.
v. to turn or place at an angle; to make biased or distorted with the result that it is not accurate, fair, normal, etc.
19. The tire had a _____ and needed to be replaced.
n. a small hole or wound made by piercing, such as with a needle, nail, or pointed object
20. The _____ musician played the piano with ease and precision.
adj. skilled or proficient in using the hands or body; nimble, clever, or deft
21. The bear used its _____ to catch a fish in the river.
n. a curved, pointed appendage found on the foot or leg of an animal, used for gripping or grasping; a human hand with long, narrow fingers that are curved like a claw; a machine or tool with a claw-like opening used for gripping or lifting objects
22. The branches of the tree _____ outwards, providing a natural canopy.
v. to spread out or apart, especially in a disorganized or uneven way; to cause or force something to spread out or expand
23. Roads _____ from the famous building in the center of the city.
v. to spread out or emit something, such as light or heat, in all directions
24. They _____ enormous power and influence.
v. to possess and exercise power, authority, etc

ANSWERS: 17. sect, 18. skewed, 19. puncture, 20. dexterous, 21. claw, 22. splayed, 23. radiate, 24. wielded

25. Keratosis is a skin condition characterized by the formation of excess _____ on the skin's surface
- n.* a fibrous protein that is the main structural component of hair, nails, and the outer layer of skin in mammals and birds; also found in horns, hooves, and feathers
26. I need to _____ my statement because I realized it was incorrect.
- v.* to take back, withdraw, or revoke something that has been said or done; to disavow or repudiate a statement or assertion that one has previously made
27. The company has an _____ network of offices and locations around the world.
- adj.* large or wide in extent or scope; friendly and open and willing to talk
28. Marine _____ populations are declining worldwide due to ocean pollution.
- n.* any animal of which the female gives birth to live young, not eggs, and feeds her young on milk from her own body
29. He had long suffered from inflammation of a tendon _____.
- n.* a close-fitting cover to protect something such as the blade of a knife, sword, or other sharp objects
30. Many scientists study _____ behavior and intelligence.
- n.* any mammal of the order Primates, which includes monkeys, apes, and humans

ANSWERS: 25. keratin, 26. retract, 27. expansive, 28. mammal, 29. sheath, 30. primate