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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Michele Wucker: Why we ignore obvious problems -- and how to act on them | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

tumble

v. to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance

synonym : fall, stumble, plummet

(1) **tumble** down the hill, (2) confidence **tumbles** as unemployment rates rose

The value of the currency **tumbled** against major international currencies.

postmortem

adj. relating to or occurring after death; a postmortem examination is a medical examination of a body after death to determine the cause of death or to study the effects of a disease or medical treatment

synonym : autopsied, deceased, dead

(1) **postmortem** findings, (2) **postmortem** analysis

The medical examiner performed a **postmortem** examination to determine the cause of death.

swan

n. a large waterbird with a long neck, bill, and webbed feet; known for their elegant and graceful appearance

synonym : cygnet, waterfowl, bird

(1) **swan** song, (2) black **swan**

The **swan's** feathers glistened in the sunlight.

unimaginable

adj. beyond what can be imagined or conceived; impossible to comprehend or envision

synonym : unthinkable, inconceivable, incredulous

(1) **unimaginable** horror, (2) **unimaginable** depths

The complexity of scientific theories was **unimaginable** for most people.

foresee

v. to perceive or predict; to anticipate or expect something to happen in the future

synonym : predict, anticipate, forecast

(1) **foresee** the consequences, (2) **foresee** challenges

I **foresee** a problem arising if we don't address this issue now.

improbable

adj. not likely to happen or be true; unlikely; having a low probability or chance of occurring

synonym : unlikely, doubtful, implausible

(1) **improbable** story, (2) **improbable** event

It is **improbable** that we will find a solution to this problem overnight.

rhinoceros

n. (also rhino) a large, thick-skinned mammal with one or two horns on the nose, typically found in Africa and Asia.

synonym : rhino, horned beast, pachyderm

(1) **rhinoceros** habitat, (2) white **rhinoceros**

The baby **rhinoceros** at the wildlife sanctuary was recently born and is very cute.

downplay

v. to present or represent as less important or severe; to minimize the significance of something

synonym : minimize, downsize, play down

(1) **downplay** my ability, (2) **downplay** mistakes

The company tried to **downplay** the significance of the issue.

tame

v. to make wild animals domesticated or controlled, especially through specific training; (adjective) not dangerous or afraid of people, either naturally or

because of specific training

synonym: domesticate, soften, (adjective) harmless

(1) **tame** a wild beast, (2) a **tame** animal

We have to **tame** substantial financial deficits at first.

shoddy

adj. of poor quality or artistry; badly made or constructed; inferior or substandard

synonym: inferior, poor quality, substandard

(1) **shoddy** construction, (2) **shoddy** products

The **shoddy** craftsmanship of the new building caused it to start falling apart in just a few months.

grandparent

n. a parent of one's father or mother

(1) great- **grandparent**, (2) person of **grandparent** age

She was close to her paternal **grandparents** and often spent summers with them.

eulogy

n. a speech or writing in praise of someone who has died, typically given at a funeral or memorial service

synonym: tribute, praise, commendation

(1) **eulogy** speech, (2) deliver **eulogy**

The pastor's **eulogy** touched everyone's heart and brought many to tears.

chisel

n. a tool with a sharpened edge at one end used for shaping wood, stone, or metal; (verb) to engage in deceitful behavior

synonym: gouge, bevel, plane

(1) sharpen **chisel**, (2) **chisel** some money

The archaeologist used a small **chisel** to excavate the ancient artifact.

hoard

v. to collect money, valuables, etc., for future use secretly; (noun) a secret store or collection of money, valuables, etc., for future use

synonym: stockpile, accumulation, stash

(1) **hoard** my possessions, (2) plutonium **hoard**
They **hoarded** a common secret instead of sharing it.

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.

individualism

n. the habit or principle of being independent and self-reliant

synonym: self-reliance, autonomy, self-sufficiency

(1) rampant **individualism**, (2) nation of **individualism**
An ethic of **individualism** encourages people to make choices based on their values and beliefs rather than the values and beliefs of the group or society.

paradoxical

adj. seemingly contradictory or absurd because of having two opposite features or facts, though it is probably true

synonym: contradictory, conflicting, perplexing

(1) a **paradoxical** anecdote, (2) apparently **paradoxical**
it is **paradoxical** that the French, who prefer animal foods, live longer than people in other countries.

wile

n. a trick or cunning stratagem used to deceive or manipulate someone; cleverness or ingenuity used to achieve a goal or advantage

synonym: trickery, deceit, cunning

(1) cunning **wiles**, (2) deceptive **wile**

The criminal used his **wiles** to escape from the police several times.

helpless

adj. unable to take care of oneself or to do things without help

synonym: defenseless, powerless, susceptible

(1) **helpless** baby, (2) **helpless** victims

I feel so **helpless** without you.

trample

v. to step heavily on something or someone, causing damage or injury

synonym: tread, stomp, crush

(1) **trample** down his feelings, (2) **trample** on the rights

The plants in this garden are precious, so you must not **trample** them.

Session 2: Spelling

1. white rhi_____os
n. (also rhino) a large, thick-skinned mammal with one or two horns on the nose, typically found in Africa and Asia.
2. apparently par_____al
adj. seemingly contradictory or absurd because of having two opposite features or facts, though it is probably true
3. he_____ss victims
adj. unable to take care of oneself or to do things without help
4. imp_____le story
adj. not likely to happen or be true; unlikely; having a low probability or chance of occurring
5. pos_____em findings
adj. relating to or occurring after death; a postmortem examination is a medical examination of a body after death to determine the cause of death or to study the effects of a disease or medical treatment
6. fo_____e challenges
v. to perceive or predict; to anticipate or expect something to happen in the future
7. uni_____ble depths
adj. beyond what can be imagined or conceived; impossible to comprehend or envision
8. nation of ind_____ism
n. the habit or principle of being independent and self-reliant
9. deceptive w__e
n. a trick or cunning stratagem used to deceive or manipulate someone; cleverness or ingenuity used to achieve a goal or advantage

ANSWERS: 1. rhinoceros, 2. paradoxical, 3. helpless, 4. improbable, 5. postmortem, 6. foresee, 7. unimaginable, 8. individualism, 9. wile

10. a par_____al anecdote *adj.* seemingly contradictory or absurd because of having two opposite features or facts, though it is probably true
11. a t__e animal *v.* to make wild animals domesticated or controlled, especially through specific training; (adjective) not dangerous or afraid of people, either naturally or because of specific training
12. deliver eu___y *n.* a speech or writing in praise of someone who has died, typically given at a funeral or memorial service
13. an op_____ne remark *adj.* suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose
14. t__e a wild beast *v.* to make wild animals domesticated or controlled, especially through specific training; (adjective) not dangerous or afraid of people, either naturally or because of specific training
15. cunning w__es *n.* a trick or cunning stratagem used to deceive or manipulate someone; cleverness or ingenuity used to achieve a goal or advantage
16. uni_____ble horror *adj.* beyond what can be imagined or conceived; impossible to comprehend or envision
17. black s__n *n.* a large waterbird with a long neck, bill, and webbed feet; known for their elegant and graceful appearance

ANSWERS: 10. paradoxical, 11. tame, 12. eulogy, 13. opportune, 14. tame, 15. wile, 16. unimaginable, 17. swan

18. ch___l some money *n.* a tool with a sharpened edge at one end used for shaping wood, stone, or metal; (verb) to engage in deceitful behavior
19. he_____ss baby *adj.* unable to take care of oneself or to do things without help
20. great-gra_____nt *n.* a parent of one's father or mother
21. tr_____e on the rights *v.* to step heavily on something or someone, causing damage or injury
22. confidence tu___es as unemployment rates rose *v.* to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance
23. ho__d my possessions *v.* to collect money, valuables, etc., for future use secretly; (noun) a secret store or collection of money, valuables, etc., for future use
24. do_____ay mistakes *v.* to present or represent as less important or severe; to minimize the significance of something
25. tu___e down the hill *v.* to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance
26. tr_____e down his feelings *v.* to step heavily on something or someone, causing damage or injury
27. fo_____e the consequences *v.* to perceive or predict; to anticipate or expect something to happen in the future

ANSWERS: 18. chisel, 19. helpless, 20. grandparent, 21. trample, 22. tumble, 23. hoard, 24. downplay, 25. tumble, 26. trample, 27. foresee

28. eu___y speech *n.* a speech or writing in praise of someone who has died, typically given at a funeral or memorial service
29. person of gra_____nt age *n.* a parent of one's father or mother
30. sh___y construction *adj.* of poor quality or artistry; badly made or constructed; inferior or substandard
31. sharpen ch___l *n.* a tool with a sharpened edge at one end used for shaping wood, stone, or metal; (verb) to engage in deceitful behavior
32. pos_____em analysis *adj.* relating to or occurring after death; a postmortem examination is a medical examination of a body after death to determine the cause of death or to study the effects of a disease or medical treatment
33. plutonium ho___d *v.* to collect money, valuables, etc., for future use secretly; (noun) a secret store or collection of money, valuables, etc., for future use
34. rhi_____os habitat *n.* (also rhino) a large, thick-skinned mammal with one or two horns on the nose, typically found in Africa and Asia.
35. imp_____le event *adj.* not likely to happen or be true; unlikely; having a low probability or chance of occurring
36. do_____ay my ability *v.* to present or represent as less important or severe; to minimize the significance of something

ANSWERS: 28. eulogy, 29. grandparent, 30. shoddy, 31. chisel, 32. postmortem, 33. hoard, 34. rhinoceros, 35. improbable, 36. downplay

37. rampant ind_____ism *n.* the habit or principle of being independent and self-reliant
38. op_____ne occasion *adj.* suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose
39. sh____y products *adj.* of poor quality or artistry; badly made or constructed; inferior or substandard
40. s__n song *n.* a large waterbird with a long neck, bill, and webbed feet; known for their elegant and graceful appearance

ANSWERS: 37. individualism, 38. opportune, 39. shoddy, 40. swan

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. We have to _____ substantial financial deficits at first.
 - v. to make wild animals domesticated or controlled, especially through specific training; (adjective) not dangerous or afraid of people, either naturally or because of specific training

2. The company tried to _____ the significance of the issue.
 - v. to present or represent as less important or severe; to minimize the significance of something

3. The complexity of scientific theories was _____ for most people.
 - adj. beyond what can be imagined or conceived; impossible to comprehend or envision

4. The plants in this garden are precious, so you must not _____ them.
 - v. to step heavily on something or someone, causing damage or injury

5. The medical examiner performed a _____ examination to determine the cause of death.
 - adj. relating to or occurring after death; a postmortem examination is a medical examination of a body after death to determine the cause of death or to study the effects of a disease or medical treatment

6. They _____ a common secret instead of sharing it.
 - v. to collect money, valuables, etc., for future use secretly; (noun) a secret store or collection of money, valuables, etc., for future use

7. The archaeologist used a small _____ to excavate the ancient artifact.
 - n. a tool with a sharpened edge at one end used for shaping wood, stone, or metal; (verb) to engage in deceitful behavior

ANSWERS: 1. tame, 2. downplay, 3. unimaginable, 4. trample, 5. postmortem, 6. hoarded, 7. chisel

8. I feel so _____ without you.

adj. unable to take care of oneself or to do things without help

9. it is _____ that the French, who prefer animal foods, live longer than people in other countries.

adj. seemingly contradictory or absurd because of having two opposite features or facts, though it is probably true

10. The pastor's _____ touched everyone's heart and brought many to tears.

n. a speech or writing in praise of someone who has died, typically given at a funeral or memorial service

11. She was close to her paternal _____ and often spent summers with them.

n. a parent of one's father or mother

12. The value of the currency _____ against major international currencies.

v. to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance

13. It is _____ that we will find a solution to this problem overnight.

adj. not likely to happen or be true; unlikely; having a low probability or chance of occurring

14. An ethic of _____ encourages people to make choices based on their values and beliefs rather than the values and beliefs of the group or society.

n. the habit or principle of being independent and self-reliant

15. The baby _____ at the wildlife sanctuary was recently born and is very cute.

n. (also rhino) a large, thick-skinned mammal with one or two horns on the nose, typically found in Africa and Asia.

ANSWERS: 8. helpless, 9. paradoxical, 10. eulogy, 11. grandparents, 12. tumbled, 13. improbable, 14. individualism, 15. rhinoceros

16. The _____ feathers glistened in the sunlight.

n. a large waterbird with a long neck, bill, and webbed feet; known for their elegant and graceful appearance

17. The _____ craftsmanship of the new building caused it to start falling apart in just a few months.

adj. of poor quality or artistry; badly made or constructed; inferior or substandard

18. The phone rang at the most _____ time.

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

19. The criminal used his _____ to escape from the police several times.

n. a trick or cunning stratagem used to deceive or manipulate someone; cleverness or ingenuity used to achieve a goal or advantage

20. I _____ a problem arising if we don't address this issue now.

v. to perceive or predict; to anticipate or expect something to happen in the future

ANSWERS: 16. swan's, 17. shoddy, 18. opportune, 19. wiles, 20. foresee