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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Steven Johnson: The playful wonderland behind great inventions | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

mammoth

adj. exceedingly large or extensive; (noun) any of numerous extinct elephants widely distributed in the Pleistocene

synonym : huge, large

(1) woolly **mammoth**, (2) a **mammoth** ship

The minister decided to review its **mammoth** public works projects.

vulture

n. a large bird of prey with a bald head, sharp beak, and keen eyesight, feeding mainly on carrion (the flesh of dead animals)

synonym : buzzard, scavenger, carrion bird

(1) **vulture** colony, (2) scavenging **vulture**

The **vulture's** sharp eyesight allows it to spot carrion from great distances.

disperse

v. to spread out or distribute over a broad region, or to cause something to do so

synonym : dissipate, spread, scatter

(1) **disperse** false information, (2) **disperse** the protesters

Before authorities **dispersed** the protesters, they yelled slogans.

preposterous

adj. absurd, ridiculous, or contrary to reason or common sense

synonym : ridiculous, absurd, nonsensical

(1) **preposterous** claim, (2) **preposterous** price

The idea that aliens built the pyramids is **preposterous**.

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.

conquer

v. to bring under control by force or authority

synonym : defeat, overpower, subdue

(1) **conquer** fatal disease, (2) **conquer** the world

You must **conquer** your anxiety about driving.

frivolous

adj. not serious or sensible; silly or unimportant

synonym : silly, foolish, unimportant

(1) **frivolous** lawsuits, (2) engage in **frivolous** conversation

He was accused of being **frivolous** and not taking his responsibilities seriously.

descend

v. to move downward and lower; to come from, or to be connected by a relationship of blood

synonym : dip, drop, come down

(1) **descend** a steep hill, (2) **descend** by elevator

She was **descended** from an old Italian noble family.

trajectory

n. the curved path followed by an object moving through space

synonym : course, curve, orbit

(1) career **trajectory**, (2) a **trajectory** missile

The company has shown an excellent growth **trajectory** over the years.

clavichord

n. a keyboard instrument of the stringed family, popular in the 16th to 18th centuries, with a rectangular shape and strings that are sounded by brass tangents when the keys are depressed

(1) antique **clavichord**, (2) **clavichord** performance

I enjoy playing classical music on the **clavichord**, a keyboard instrument from the Baroque era.

harpsichord

n. a keyboard instrument with strings plucked by plectra rather than struck by hammers like a piano. It is known for its distinctive and bright sound; it was a common instrument in the Baroque and classical music periods

synonym: clavichord, spinet, virginal

(1) electric **harpsichord**, (2) **harpsichord** player

She was playing a beautiful piece of music on the **harpsichord**.

typewriter

n. a mechanical device used for writing, consisting of type keys that, when pressed, imprint ink onto paper or other writing material, mainly used before modern computers, printers, and word processors took over

(1) **typewriter** keys, (2) electronic **typewriter**

I found an old **typewriter** at a thrift store and used it to write my novel.

Renaissance

n. a new growth in activity or enthusiasm in anything, particularly art, literature, or music

synonym: rebirth, golden age

(1) artistic **renaissance**, (2) industrial **renaissance**

Folk music is now experiencing a **renaissance**.

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**.

conquest

n. the act or process of taking control of a country, area, or situation

synonym: subjugation, domination, mastery

(1) imperial **conquest**, (2) make a **conquest**

He continued to grow his empire through **conquest**.

parisian

adj. of or from Paris, France; characteristic of Paris or its inhabitants

(1) **Parisian** celebrity, (2) **parisian** accent

The **Parisian** café had a charming atmosphere.

automaton

n. a machine or mechanism, often in the form of a human figure that is designed to move and behave in a pre-programmed or automatic way; someone who behaves in a mechanical or robot-like manner without independent thought or feeling

synonym: robot, android, cyborg

(1) **automaton** voice, (2) a lifeless **automaton**

The factory worker felt like an **automaton**, performing the same task repeatedly.

weave

v. to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them

synonym: braid, unite, contrive

(1) **weave** on a loom, (2) **weave** a story

The girl **weaves** a garland for her friend.

loom

v. to appear or take shape as a large, especially in a frightening way

synonym: appear, come on, overshadow

(1) **loom** over the global economy, (2) **loom** on the horizon

The issue of divorce **loomed** large in his mind.

time-consuming

adj. requiring a significant amount of time or effort to complete

synonym: lengthy, prolonged, protracted

(1) **time-consuming** project, (2) **time-consuming** process
Writing a research paper can be a **time-consuming** task.

probabilistic

adj. characterized by the influence of chance or probability;
involving the use of statistical models or methods to
estimate likelihoods or risks

synonym: probable, statistical, likely

(1) **probabilistic** model, (2) **probabilistic** approach

In a **probabilistic** system, the outcome is uncertain and can
vary based on chance.

workspace

n. a designated area or physical setting where work is
performed, often in a business or office setting

synonym: office, studio, workplace

(1) **workspace** design, (2) shared **workspace**

I need a quiet **workspace** to concentrate on my project.

Session 2: Spelling

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1. an____or language | <i>n.</i> a person from whom one is descended; a forefather |
| 2. Pa____an celebrity | <i>adj.</i> of or from Paris, France; characteristic of Paris or its inhabitants |
| 3. pro____tic model | <i>adj.</i> characterized by the influence of chance or probability; involving the use of statistical models or methods to estimate likelihoods or risks |
| 4. pre____ous price | <i>adj.</i> absurd, ridiculous, or contrary to reason or common sense |
| 5. earliest human an____or | <i>n.</i> a person from whom one is descended; a forefather |
| 6. pro____tic approach | <i>adj.</i> characterized by the influence of chance or probability; involving the use of statistical models or methods to estimate likelihoods or risks |
| 7. au____on voice | <i>n.</i> a machine or mechanism, often in the form of a human figure that is designed to move and behave in a pre-programmed or automatic way; someone who behaves in a mechanical or robot-like manner without independent thought or feeling |
| 8. pre____ous claim | <i>adj.</i> absurd, ridiculous, or contrary to reason or common sense |
| 9. l__m on the horizon | <i>v.</i> to appear or take shape as a large, especially in a frightening way |

ANSWERS: 1. ancestor, 2. parisian, 3. probabilistic, 4. preposterous, 5. ancestor, 6. probabilistic, 7. automaton, 8. preposterous, 9. loom

10. wo_____ce design *n.* a designated area or physical setting where work is performed, often in a business or office setting
11. de_____d by elevator *v.* to move downward and lower; to come from, or to be connected by a relationship of blood
12. career tra_____ry *n.* the curved path followed by an object moving through space
13. typ_____er keys *n.* a mechanical device used for writing, consisting of type keys that, when pressed, imprint ink onto paper or other writing material, mainly used before modern computers, printers, and word processors took over
14. electronic typ_____er *n.* a mechanical device used for writing, consisting of type keys that, when pressed, imprint ink onto paper or other writing material, mainly used before modern computers, printers, and word processors took over
15. co_____r fatal disease *v.* to bring under control by force or authority
16. fr_____us lawsuits *adj.* not serious or sensible; silly or unimportant
17. woolly ma_____h *adj.* exceedingly large or extensive; (noun) any of numerous extinct elephants widely distributed in the Pleistocene
18. a tra_____ry missile *n.* the curved path followed by an object moving through space

ANSWERS: 10. workspace, 11. descend, 12. trajectory, 13. typewriter, 14. typewriter, 15. conquer, 16. frivolous, 17. mammoth, 18. trajectory

19. imperial co____st *n.* the act or process of taking control of a country, area, or situation
20. a ma____h ship *adj.* exceedingly large or extensive; (noun) any of numerous extinct elephants widely distributed in the Pleistocene
21. tim_____ing process *adj.* requiring a significant amount of time or effort to complete
22. electric har_____rd *n.* a keyboard instrument with strings plucked by plectra rather than struck by hammers like a piano. It is known for its distinctive and bright sound; it was a common instrument in the Baroque and classical music periods
23. scavenging vu____e *n.* a large bird of prey with a bald head, sharp beak, and keen eyesight, feeding mainly on carrion (the flesh of dead animals)
24. cla_____rd performance *n.* a keyboard instrument of the stringed family, popular in the 16th to 18th centuries, with a rectangular shape and strings that are sounded by brass tangents when the keys are depressed
25. har_____rd player *n.* a keyboard instrument with strings plucked by plectra rather than struck by hammers like a piano. It is known for its distinctive and bright sound; it was a common instrument in the Baroque and classical music periods
26. de____d a steep hill *v.* to move downward and lower; to come from, or to be connected by a relationship of blood

ANSWERS: 19. conquest, 20. mammoth, 21. time-consuming, 22. harpsichord, 23. vulture, 24. clavichord, 25. harpsichord, 26. descend

27. di_____se false information *v.* to spread out or distribute over a broad region, or to cause something to do so
28. co_____r the world *v.* to bring under control by force or authority
29. industrial ren_____ce *n.* a new growth in activity or enthusiasm in anything, particularly art, literature, or music
30. engage in fr_____us conversation *adj.* not serious or sensible; silly or unimportant
31. we__e a story *v.* to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them
32. shared wo_____ce *n.* a designated area or physical setting where work is performed, often in a business or office setting
33. antique cla_____rd *n.* a keyboard instrument of the stringed family, popular in the 16th to 18th centuries, with a rectangular shape and strings that are sounded by brass tangents when the keys are depressed
34. a lifeless au_____on *n.* a machine or mechanism, often in the form of a human figure that is designed to move and behave in a pre-programmed or automatic way; someone who behaves in a mechanical or robot-like manner without independent thought or feeling
35. make a co_____st *n.* the act or process of taking control of a country, area, or situation

ANSWERS: 27. disperse, 28. conquer, 29. Renaissance, 30. frivolous, 31. weave, 32. workspace, 33. clavichord, 34. automaton, 35. conquest

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|----------------------------------|------|---|
| 36. begin to r_t | v. | to decay, or cause something to decay, naturally and gradually |
| 37. l__m over the global economy | v. | to appear or take shape as a large, especially in a frightening way |
| 38. artistic ren_____ce | n. | a new growth in activity or enthusiasm in anything, particularly art, literature, or music |
| 39. we__e on a loom | v. | to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them |
| 40. di_____se the protesters | v. | to spread out or distribute over a broad region, or to cause something to do so |
| 41. r_t with age | v. | to decay, or cause something to decay, naturally and gradually |
| 42. pa_____an accent | adj. | of or from Paris, France; characteristic of Paris or its inhabitants |
| 43. tim_____ing project | adj. | requiring a significant amount of time or effort to complete |
| 44. vu_____e colony | n. | a large bird of prey with a bald head, sharp beak, and keen eyesight, feeding mainly on carrion (the flesh of dead animals) |

ANSWERS: 36. rot, 37. loom, 38. Renaissance, 39. weave, 40. disperse, 41. rot, 42. parisian, 43. time-consuming, 44. vulture

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. Writing a research paper can be a _____ task.
adj. requiring a significant amount of time or effort to complete
2. You must _____ your anxiety about driving.
v. to bring under control by force or authority
3. Before authorities _____ the protesters, they yelled slogans.
v. to spread out or distribute over a broad region, or to cause something to do so
4. The girl _____ a garland for her friend.
v. to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them
5. My remote _____ immigrated to the United States from Ireland in the 1800s.
n. a person from whom one is descended; a forefather
6. The _____ sharp eyesight allows it to spot carrion from great distances.
n. a large bird of prey with a bald head, sharp beak, and keen eyesight, feeding mainly on carrion (the flesh of dead animals)
7. I enjoy playing classical music on the _____ a keyboard instrument from the Baroque era.
n. a keyboard instrument of the stringed family, popular in the 16th to 18th centuries, with a rectangular shape and strings that are sounded by brass tangents when the keys are depressed
8. She was playing a beautiful piece of music on the _____.
n. a keyboard instrument with strings plucked by plectra rather than struck by hammers like a piano. It is known for its distinctive and bright sound; it was a common instrument in the Baroque and classical music periods

ANSWERS: 1. time-consuming, 2. conquer, 3. dispersed, 4. weaves, 5. ancestor, 6. vulture's, 7. clavichord, 8. harpsichord

9. She was _____ from an old Italian noble family.

- v.* to move downward and lower; to come from, or to be connected by a relationship of blood

10. The idea that aliens built the pyramids is _____.

- adj.* absurd, ridiculous, or contrary to reason or common sense

11. Folk music is now experiencing a _____.

- n.* a new growth in activity or enthusiasm in anything, particularly art, literature, or music

12. Please refrigerate the meat, or it will ____.

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

13. The issue of divorce _____ large in his mind.

- v.* to appear or take shape as a large, especially in a frightening way

14. The _____ café had a charming atmosphere.

- adj.* of or from Paris, France; characteristic of Paris or its inhabitants

15. I need a quiet _____ to concentrate on my project.

- n.* a designated area or physical setting where work is performed, often in a business or office setting

16. I found an old _____ at a thrift store and used it to write my novel.

- n.* a mechanical device used for writing, consisting of type keys that, when pressed, imprint ink onto paper or other writing material, mainly used before modern computers, printers, and word processors took over

ANSWERS: 9. descended, 10. preposterous, 11. renaissance, 12. rot, 13. loomed, 14. Parisian, 15. workspace, 16. typewriter

17. The company has shown an excellent growth _____ over the years.
n. the curved path followed by an object moving through space
18. In a _____ system, the outcome is uncertain and can vary based on chance.
adj. characterized by the influence of chance or probability; involving the use of statistical models or methods to estimate likelihoods or risks
19. He continued to grow his empire through _____.
n. the act or process of taking control of a country, area, or situation
20. The factory worker felt like an _____ performing the same task repeatedly.
n. a machine or mechanism, often in the form of a human figure that is designed to move and behave in a pre-programmed or automatic way; someone who behaves in a mechanical or robot-like manner without independent thought or feeling
21. He was accused of being _____ and not taking his responsibilities seriously.
adj. not serious or sensible; silly or unimportant
22. The minister decided to review its _____ public works projects.
adj. exceedingly large or extensive; (noun) any of numerous extinct elephants widely distributed in the Pleistocene

ANSWERS: 17. trajectory, 18. probabilistic, 19. conquest, 20. automaton, 21. frivolous, 22. mammoth