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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Tim Harford: How frustration can make us more creative | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

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.

cologne

n. a perfumed liquid typically made from essential oils and alcohol and used to give a pleasant scent to the body or living space

synonym : perfume, scent, fragrance

(1) **cologne** smell, (2) **cologne** bottle

He brought back a bottle of **cologne** from France as a souvenir.

auditorium

n. a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances

synonym : hall, theater, amphitheater

(1) open-air **auditorium**, (2) **auditorium** annex

The **auditorium** seating was filled with people waiting for the concert to begin.

rehearsal

n. a practice session, usually for a performance or presentation, during which people prepare and fine-tune their performance, often with the help of feedback from others; the act of rehearsing

synonym : practice, run-through, drill

(1) dress **rehearsal**, (2) music **rehearsal**

The theater company had its final **rehearsal** before opening night.

wary

adj. cautious or distrustful, especially because of a previous bad experience

synonym : cautious, suspicious, leery

(1) a **wary** statesman, (2) **wary** of marriage

She was **wary** of meeting new people because of past experiences.

mutter

v. to speak or say something quietly and in a low voice; to make complaining remarks or noises under one's breath

synonym : grumble, mumble, complain

(1) **mutter** in a low voice, (2) **mutter** to myself

He **muttered** under his breath about the job relocation.

bedraggle

v. to make something or someone wet, dirty, and limp by dragging it through mud or water; to become soaked, dirty, and limp in this way

synonym : drench, soak, wet

(1) **bedraggle** the flowers, (2) **bedraggle** hair

I got caught in the rain, and my clothes were completely **bedraggled**.

drench

v. to completely soak or saturate with liquid, typically with the intent of making something thoroughly wet

synonym : soak, saturate, immerse

(1) **drench** with sweat, (2) **drench** the soil with fertilizer

The storm last night **drenched** everything in the yard, leaving puddles everywhere.

soothe

v. to calm or comfort someone or something; to make something less painful or uncomfortable

synonym: calm, relax, comfort

(1) **soothe** anxiety, (2) **soothe** a baby to sleep

She applied aloe vera to **soothe** her sunburn.

rumble

v. to make a low, heavy continuous sound

synonym: roar, growl, grumble

(1) **rumble** an order, (2) **rumble** down the dirt track

The thunder **rumbled** in the distance.

riff

v. to play a short, repeated, tuneful phrase, often used in jazz and rock; to improvise or go off on a humorous tangent; (noun) a short, repeated, tuneful phrase

(1) rock 'n' roll **riff**, (2) **riff** off the audience's reactions

She began to **riff** on the theme of love lost in her poetry.

electrify

v. to make a machine or system work by using electricity; to make someone extremely enthusiastic about or interested in something

synonym: wire, amaze, astonish

(1) **electrify** the audience, (2) **electrify** a manufacturing process

The product developed through years of research continues to **electrify** the market.

soar

v. to fly or rise very high or to a great height, often with great grace or ease

synonym: fly, rise, ascend

(1) **soar** in popularity, (2) **soar** to new heights

The bird **soared** through the sky, and its wings spread wide.

instinct

n. an inborn behavioral pattern that is often responsive to specific stimuli; an innate feeling that causes you to act or believe that something is true

synonym: intuition, aptitude, feeling

(1) **instinct** for self-preservation, (2) aggressive **instinct**

When faced with a dangerous situation, his initial **instinct** was to flee.

hurdle

n. a barrier or obstacle that must be overcome

synonym: obstacle, barrier, challenge

(1) overcome **hurdles**, (2) **hurdle** race

The company faced several **hurdles** in the development of its new product.

handout

n. giving money, food, or clothing to those who are poor or in need

synonym: contribution, aid, brochure

(1) plead for **handouts**, (2) three-page **handout**

All those eligible will receive financial **handouts**.

zest

n. enthusiasm, energy, or excitement; a quality that makes something enjoyable or interesting; the outer layer of citrus fruit which can be used to flavor food

synonym: enthusiasm, liveliness, gusto

(1) **zest** for life, (2) lemon **zest**

He discovered a new **zest** for running after completing a 10k race.

distract

v. to draw someone's attention away from what they are trying to do

synonym: divert, preoccupy, confuse

(1) **distract** attention from the real issue, (2) **distract** public opinion

Please don't **distract** me while I'm studying.

grist

n. grain that has been ground into flour or meal; any useful material or information that can be processed or utilized

synonym: wheat, grain, corn

(1) **grist** for the debate, (2) grinding **grist**

The mill ground the wheat into a **grist** to make flour.

tweak

v. to pinch or squeeze something sharply; to adjust something finely

synonym : nip, pinch, fine-tune

(1) **tweak** his cheek, (2) **tweak** the economy

He didn't **tweak** the plan, even though he had time.

dossier

n. a collection or file of documents, information, or records compiled about a particular person, subject, or event, often used for investigative or background purposes

synonym : file, record, folder

(1) confidential **dossier**, (2) compile a **dossier** on the suspect

The detective examined the **dossier** of evidence, trying to piece together the case details.

alibi

n. a claim or piece of evidence that shows an individual was elsewhere at the time a crime or offense was committed and thus could not have been involved

synonym : excuse, defense, justification

(1) airtight **alibi**, (2) provide an **alibi**

The suspect claimed to have an **alibi** at the time of the crime, but the evidence proved otherwise.

complacent

adj. satisfied with the status quo and not wishing to make changes

synonym : content, satisfied, self-satisfied

(1) **complacent** attitude, (2) **complacent** with past successes

He became **complacent** in his job and stopped trying to improve.

exemplify

v. to serve as a typical example of something

synonym : illustrate, show, demonstrate

(1) **exemplify** the importance, (2) **exemplify** the solution

The example of a successful startup serves to **exemplify** the potential of the industry.

disrupt

v. to prevent or stop something, especially an event, activity, or process, from continuing in the usual way by causing a problem or disturbance

synonym : interrupt, disturb, break into

(1) **disrupt** a well-ordered condition, (2) **disrupt** sleep
I'm so sorry to **disrupt** you when you're pretty busy.

oblique

adj. not straightforward or direct in action or speech; having a slanting or sloping direction or position

synonym : slanted, angled, tilted

(1) **oblique** angle, (2) **oblique** reference

The painter used **oblique** lines to create a sense of depth in the artwork.

embarrass

v. to cause someone to feel awkward, worried, or ashamed

synonym : disconcert, unsettle, agitate

(1) **embarrass** political enemy, (2) **embarrass** my project
He looked for an opportunity to **embarrass** that actor in public.

amplify

v. to enhance something, particularly sound or brightness

synonym : intensify, boost, argument

(1) **amplify** a signal, (2) **amplify** the effect

You might need to **amplify** this point.

troublesome

adj. causing difficulty or annoyance for someone

synonym : disconcerting, unsettling, upsetting

(1) undertake a **troublesome** task, (2) **troublesome** behavior

He had to resolve a **troublesome** event that happened unexpectedly

willpower

n. the control exerted to do something or restrain impulses

synonym : determination, resolve, self-discipline

(1) demonstrate **willpower**, (2) lack of **willpower**

With strong **willpower** and determination, he could quit

smoking for good.

Session 2: Spelling

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|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| 1. di____t a well-ordered condition | v. | to prevent or stop something, especially an event, activity, or process, from continuing in the usual way by causing a problem or disturbance |
| 2. be_____le hair | v. | to make something or someone wet, dirty, and limp by dragging it through mud or water; to become soaked, dirty, and limp in this way |
| 3. di____ct public opinion | v. | to draw someone's attention away from what they are trying to do |
| 4. com_____nt with past successes | adj. | satisfied with the status quo and not wishing to make changes |
| 5. tw__k the economy | v. | to pinch or squeeze something sharply; to adjust something finely |
| 6. confidential do_____r | n. | a collection or file of documents, information, or records compiled about a particular person, subject, or event, often used for investigative or background purposes |
| 7. demonstrate wi_____er | n. | the control exerted to do something or restrain impulses |
| 8. s__r to new heights | v. | to fly or rise very high or to a great height, often with great grace or ease |
| 9. grinding gr__t | n. | grain that has been ground into flour or meal; any useful material or information that can be processed or utilized |

ANSWERS: 1. disrupt, 2. bedraggle, 3. distract, 4. complacent, 5. tweak, 6. dossier, 7. willpower, 8. soar, 9. grist

- | | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| 10. ex_____fy the solution | <i>v.</i> | to serve as a typical example of something |
| 11. hu___e race | <i>n.</i> | a barrier or obstacle that must be overcome |
| 12. di_____ct attention from the real issue | <i>v.</i> | to draw someone's attention away from what they are trying to do |
| 13. ex_____fy the importance | <i>v.</i> | to serve as a typical example of something |
| 14. lack of wi_____er | <i>n.</i> | the control exerted to do something or restrain impulses |
| 15. plead for ha_____ts | <i>n.</i> | giving money, food, or clothing to those who are poor or in need |
| 16. music re_____al | <i>n.</i> | a practice session, usually for a performance or presentation, during which people prepare and fine-tune their performance, often with the help of feedback from others; the act of rehearsing |
| 17. em_____ss my project | <i>v.</i> | to cause someone to feel awkward, worried, or ashamed |
| 18. dr___h the soil with fertilizer | <i>v.</i> | to completely soak or saturate with liquid, typically with the intent of making something thoroughly wet |
| 19. ru___e an order | <i>v.</i> | to make a low, heavy continuous sound |
| 20. z__t for life | <i>n.</i> | enthusiasm, energy, or excitement; a quality that makes something enjoyable or interesting; the outer layer of citrus fruit which can be used to flavor food |

ANSWERS: 10. exemplify, 11. hurdle, 12. distract, 13. exemplify, 14. willpower, 15. handout, 16. rehearsal, 17. embarrass, 18. drench, 19. rumble, 20. zest

21. com_____nt attitude *adj.* satisfied with the status quo and not wishing to make changes
22. a w__y statesman *adj.* cautious or distrustful, especially because of a previous bad experience
23. am_____y a signal *v.* to enhance something, particularly sound or brightness
24. aggressive in_____ct *n.* an inborn behavioral pattern that is often responsive to specific stimuli; an innate feeling that causes you to act or believe that something is true
25. co_____e smell *n.* a perfumed liquid typically made from essential oils and alcohol and used to give a pleasant scent to the body or living space
26. rock 'n' roll r__f *v.* to play a short, repeated, tuneful phrase, often used in jazz and rock; to improvise or go off on a humorous tangent; (noun) a short, repeated, tuneful phrase
27. el_____fy the audience *v.* to make a machine or system work by using electricity; to make someone extremely enthusiastic about or interested in something
28. ob_____e angle *adj.* not straightforward or direct in action or speech; having a slanting or sloping direction or position
29. mu___r to myself *v.* to speak or say something quietly and in a low voice; to make complaining remarks or noises under one's breath

ANSWERS: 21. complacent, 22. wary, 23. amplify, 24. instinct, 25. cologne, 26. riff, 27. electrify, 28. oblique, 29. mutter

30. undertake a tro_____me task *adj.* causing difficulty or annoyance for someone
31. el_____fy a manufacturing process *v.* to make a machine or system work by using electricity; to make someone extremely enthusiastic about or interested in something
32. lemon z__t *n.* enthusiasm, energy, or excitement; a quality that makes something enjoyable or interesting; the outer layer of citrus fruit which can be used to flavor food
33. in_____ct for self-preservation *n.* an inborn behavioral pattern that is often responsive to specific stimuli; an innate feeling that causes you to act or believe that something is true
34. di_____t sleep *v.* to prevent or stop something, especially an event, activity, or process, from continuing in the usual way by causing a problem or disturbance
35. open-air aud_____um *n.* a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances
36. co_____e bottle *n.* a perfumed liquid typically made from essential oils and alcohol and used to give a pleasant scent to the body or living space
37. s__r in popularity *v.* to fly or rise very high or to a great height, often with great grace or ease
38. tw__k his cheek *v.* to pinch or squeeze something sharply; to adjust something finely
39. so___e a baby to sleep *v.* to calm or comfort someone or something; to make something less painful or uncomfortable

ANSWERS: 30. troublesome, 31. electrify, 32. zest, 33. instinct, 34. disrupt, 35. auditorium, 36. cologne, 37. soar, 38. tweak, 39. soothe

40. gr__t for the debate *n.* grain that has been ground into flour or meal; any useful material or information that can be processed or utilized
41. three-page ha____t *n.* giving money, food, or clothing to those who are poor or in need
42. mu___r in a low voice *v.* to speak or say something quietly and in a low voice; to make complaining remarks or noises under one's breath
43. overcome hu___es *n.* a barrier or obstacle that must be overcome
44. so___e anxiety *v.* to calm or comfort someone or something; to make something less painful or uncomfortable
45. am____y the effect *v.* to enhance something, particularly sound or brightness
46. em____ss political enemy *v.* to cause someone to feel awkward, worried, or ashamed
47. r__f off the audience's reactions *v.* to play a short, repeated, tuneful phrase, often used in jazz and rock; to improvise or go off on a humorous tangent; (noun) a short, repeated, tuneful phrase
48. provide an al__i *n.* a claim or piece of evidence that shows an individual was elsewhere at the time a crime or offense was committed and thus could not have been involved
49. 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

ANSWERS: 40. grist, 41. handout, 42. mutter, 43. hurdle, 44. soothe, 45. amplify, 46. embarrass, 47. riff, 48. alibi, 49. germ

50. dress re_____al *n.* a practice session, usually for a performance or presentation, during which people prepare and fine-tune their performance, often with the help of feedback from others; the act of rehearsing
51. dr___h with sweat *v.* to completely soak or saturate with liquid, typically with the intent of making something thoroughly wet
52. tro_____me behavior *adj.* causing difficulty or annoyance for someone
53. compile a do_____r on the suspect *n.* a collection or file of documents, information, or records compiled about a particular person, subject, or event, often used for investigative or background purposes
54. ru___e down the dirt track *v.* to make a low, heavy continuous sound
55. be_____le the flowers *v.* to make something or someone wet, dirty, and limp by dragging it through mud or water; to become soaked, dirty, and limp in this way
56. w___y of marriage *adj.* cautious or distrustful, especially because of a previous bad experience
57. airtight al___i *n.* a claim or piece of evidence that shows an individual was elsewhere at the time a crime or offense was committed and thus could not have been involved
58. ob_____e reference *adj.* not straightforward or direct in action or speech; having a slanting or sloping direction or position

ANSWERS: 50. rehearsal, 51. drench, 52. troublesome, 53. dossier, 54. rumble, 55. bedraggle, 56. wary, 57. alibi, 58. oblique

59. 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

60. aud_____um annex

n. a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances

ANSWERS: 59. germ, 60. auditorium

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. The suspect claimed to have an _____ at the time of the crime, but the evidence proved otherwise.
 - n.* a claim or piece of evidence that shows an individual was elsewhere at the time a crime or offense was committed and thus could not have been involved

2. The detective examined the _____ of evidence, trying to piece together the case details.
 - n.* a collection or file of documents, information, or records compiled about a particular person, subject, or event, often used for investigative or background purposes

3. The company faced several _____ in the development of its new product.
 - n.* a barrier or obstacle that must be overcome

4. The product developed through years of research continues to _____ the market.
 - v.* to make a machine or system work by using electricity; to make someone extremely enthusiastic about or interested in something

5. The mill ground the wheat into a _____ to make flour.
 - n.* grain that has been ground into flour or meal; any useful material or information that can be processed or utilized

6. The theater company had its final _____ before opening night.
 - n.* a practice session, usually for a performance or presentation, during which people prepare and fine-tune their performance, often with the help of feedback from others; the act of rehearsing

ANSWERS: 1. alibi, 2. dossier, 3. hurdles, 4. electrify, 5. grist, 6. rehearsal

7. The _____ seating was filled with people waiting for the concert to begin.
n. a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances
8. The thunder _____ in the distance.
v. to make a low, heavy continuous sound
9. He brought back a bottle of _____ from France as a souvenir.
n. a perfumed liquid typically made from essential oils and alcohol and used to give a pleasant scent to the body or living space
10. 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
11. He became _____ in his job and stopped trying to improve.
adj. satisfied with the status quo and not wishing to make changes
12. When faced with a dangerous situation, his initial _____ was to flee.
n. an inborn behavioral pattern that is often responsive to specific stimuli; an innate feeling that causes you to act or believe that something is true
13. All those eligible will receive financial _____.
n. giving money, food, or clothing to those who are poor or in need
14. He discovered a new _____ for running after completing a 10k race.
n. enthusiasm, energy, or excitement; a quality that makes something enjoyable or interesting; the outer layer of citrus fruit which can be used to flavor food
15. With strong _____ and determination, he could quit smoking for good.
n. the control exerted to do something or restrain impulses

ANSWERS: 7. auditorium, 8. rumbled, 9. cologne, 10. germ, 11. complacent, 12. instinct, 13. handouts, 14. zest, 15. willpower

16. I got caught in the rain, and my clothes were completely _____.
- v. to make something or someone wet, dirty, and limp by dragging it through mud or water; to become soaked, dirty, and limp in this way
17. He had to resolve a _____ event that happened unexpectedly
- adj. causing difficulty or annoyance for someone
18. The example of a successful startup serves to _____ the potential of the industry.
- v. to serve as a typical example of something
19. He didn't _____ the plan, even though he had time.
- v. to pinch or squeeze something sharply; to adjust something finely
20. She applied aloe vera to _____ her sunburn.
- v. to calm or comfort someone or something; to make something less painful or uncomfortable
21. She began to _____ on the theme of love lost in her poetry.
- v. to play a short, repeated, tuneful phrase, often used in jazz and rock; to improvise or go off on a humorous tangent; (noun) a short, repeated, tuneful phrase
22. He _____ under his breath about the job relocation.
- v. to speak or say something quietly and in a low voice; to make complaining remarks or noises under one's breath
23. Please don't _____ me while I'm studying.
- v. to draw someone's attention away from what they are trying to do

ANSWERS: 16. bedraggled, 17. troublesome, 18. exemplify, 19. tweak, 20. soothe, 21. riff, 22. muttered, 23. distract

24. I'm so sorry to _____ you when you're pretty busy.

- v. to prevent or stop something, especially an event, activity, or process, from continuing in the usual way by causing a problem or disturbance

25. She was _____ of meeting new people because of past experiences.

- adj. cautious or distrustful, especially because of a previous bad experience

26. You might need to _____ this point.

- v. to enhance something, particularly sound or brightness

27. The painter used _____ lines to create a sense of depth in the artwork.

- adj. not straightforward or direct in action or speech; having a slanting or sloping direction or position

28. The storm last night _____ everything in the yard, leaving puddles everywhere.

- v. to completely soak or saturate with liquid, typically with the intent of making something thoroughly wet

29. He looked for an opportunity to _____ that actor in public.

- v. to cause someone to feel awkward, worried, or ashamed

30. The bird _____ through the sky, and its wings spread wide.

- v. to fly or rise very high or to a great height, often with great grace or ease

ANSWERS: 24. disrupt, 25. wary, 26. amplify, 27. oblique, 28. drenched, 29. embarrass, 30. soared