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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Abigail Marsh: Why some people are more altruistic than others | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

freeway

n. a major highway designed for high-speed traffic, with no stoplights or grade crossings and having interchanges or access roads to other highways

synonym: highway, expressway, motorway

(1) **freeway** exit, (2) expanded **freeway**

We got stuck in a traffic jam on the **freeway** for over an hour.

gnaw

v. to bite or chew on something persistently or nervously; to wear away at something gradually

synonym: chew, bite, annoy

(1) **gnaw** a hole in a wall, (2) **gnaw** at the national sentiment

She couldn't stop **gnawing** on her nails.

altruism

n. the belief or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish devotion to the welfare of others often expressed as acts of kindness or charity

synonym: selflessness, philanthropy, generosity

(1) acts of **altruism**, (2) **altruism** in society

His act of volunteering at the homeless shelter was a clear example of practical **altruism**.

dart *n.* a small narrow pointed object, sometimes with feathers to help it fly, that is thrown or shot; (verb) to move along rapidly and lightly
synonym : arrow, (verb) dash
(1) blow **dart**, (2) **dart** here and there
A poison **dart** hit him.

swerve *v.* to change direction suddenly, often to avoid something or to turn sharply
synonym : veer, deviate, curve
(1) **swerve** off the road, (2) **swerve** from the topic
The driver had to **swerve** to avoid hitting the deer in the middle of the road.

oncoming *adj.* approaching or moving toward a particular person or place; relating to something that is coming toward the observer
synonym : approaching, incoming, imminent
(1) **oncoming** traffic, (2) **oncoming** disaster
The driver had to swerve to avoid an **oncoming** car that veered into his lane.

devote *v.* to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose
synonym : commit, dedicate, apply
(1) **devote** all of my energies, (2) **devote** my own life
He **devoted** himself to studying the history of ancient civilizations.

motto *n.* a phrase or slogan that expresses a guiding principle or goal
synonym : slogan, catchphrase, phrase
(1) the **motto** for safe traffic, (2) company **motto**
The company's **motto** is "Innovation and Service," which is reflected in its products and customer support.

selfless

adj. concerned more with the needs and desires of others than with one's own; unselfish; altruistic

synonym : unselfish, altruistic, generous

(1) **selfless** act, (2) **selfless** devotion

Her **selfless** dedication to the community earned her a prestigious award.

altruistic

adj. showing a selfless and disinterested concern for the happiness and well-being of other people

synonym : altruistic, philanthropic, generous

(1) **altruistic** behavior, (2) **altruistic** instincts in social animals

The company tried to build an **altruistic** image.

psychopath

n. a person with an extreme personality disorder characterized by a lack of empathy, remorse, and ethical values; often associated with manipulative and deceitful behavior, impulsivity, and risk-taking tendencies

synonym : sociopath, antisocial, monster

(1) **psychopath** tendencies, (2) violent **psychopath**

The detective identified the **psychopath** who had been terrorizing the city for months.

antisocial

adj. not wanting to be around or spend time with other people; unwilling or unable to conform to accepted social norms or standards

synonym : unsociable, withdrawn, reclusive

(1) **antisocial** tendencies, (2) **antisocial** personality disorder

The suspect's **antisocial** behavior and lack of remorse made the judge question their sanity.

psychopathic

adj. relating to or suffering from a serious, and often undiagnosed, mental disorder with extreme or violent social behavior

synonym : psychotic, crazy, insane

(1) high levels of **psychopathic** traits, (2) **psychopathic**

issues

He is going to play a **psychopathic** killer in this movie.

insensitive

adj. not showing or feeling concern for the needs and feelings of others

synonym: unfeeling, unaware, indifferent

(1) an **insensitive** heart, (2) **insensitive** behavior

His **insensitive** comments made her feel hurt and unimportant.

elicit

v. to obtain information or a reaction from someone, usually with difficulty

synonym: bring out, obtain, evoke

(1) **elicit** a confession, (2) **elicit** a solution

Have you **elicited** a response from them yet?

amygdala

n. one of two parts of the almond-shaped neural structure that are linked to emotions, especially fear and pleasure, memory, and the sense of smell

(1) the decline in **amygdala** activity, (2) **amygdala** damage

The **amygdala** has been associated with memories of past emotional events.

profoundly

adv. to a great or complete degree; deeply

synonym: deeply, greatly, completely

(1) **profoundly** insightful, (2) sleep **profoundly**

The novel affected her **profoundly**, causing her to question her beliefs and values.

impair

v. to damage something or make it weaker or worse

synonym: degrade, mar, deface

(1) **impair** my health, (2) **impair** insulin sensitivity

The accident made his vision **impaired**.

altruist

n. a person who has an unselfish or selfless concern for the welfare of others; a person who values the well-being of others over their interests or desires

synonym : benefactor, philanthropist, donor

(1) charitable **altruist**, (2) an **altruistic** act

The wealthy philanthropist was known as an **altruistic** individual who donated generously to many charities.

compassionate

adj. feeling or showing sympathy and concern for the suffering or bad luck of others

synonym : empathetic, sympathetic, merciful

(1) a **compassionate** heart, (2) **compassionate** leave

My father has a serious and **compassionate** personality.

innermost

adj. situated or occurring at the deepest or most central part or point; relating to one's deepest or most private thoughts, feelings, or experiences

synonym : deepest, inner, intimate

(1) **innermost** secrets, (2) **innermost** longings

It took years of therapy before the patient could reveal their **innermost** thoughts and feelings.

acquaintance

n. a person one knows but who is not a close friend

synonym : friend, associate, contact

(1) **acquaintance** with a language, (2) business

acquaintance

I met him at a party, and we quickly became **acquaintances**.

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.

humility

n. the quality or condition of being humble; a low estimate of one's self

synonym : humbleness, modesty, unpretentiousness

(1) develop an attitude of **humility**, (2) lack of **humility**

We were filled with **humility** at the sight of the Queen.

societal

adj. relating to society or social relationships

synonym : social, communal, cultural

(1) **societal** norms, (2) **societal** expectations

The **societal** pressure to conform is strong in this community.

widen

v. to become or make something broader, wider, more extensive

synonym : broaden, enlarge, extend

(1) **widen** in excitement, (2) **widen** a narrowed heart valve

He **widened** his investigation into a medical clinic.

ludicrous

adj. so ridiculous, unreasonable, or out of place as to be amusing; absurd

synonym : absurd, ridiculous, farcical

(1) **ludicrous** idea, (2) **ludicrous** behavior

It's **ludicrous** to blame the teachers for the education system's failures.

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.

Session 2: Spelling

1. alt_____ic instincts in social animals
adj. showing a selfless and disinterested concern for the happiness and well-being of other people
2. a par_____al anecdote
adj. seemingly contradictory or absurd because of having two opposite features or facts, though it is probably true
3. pro_____ly insightful
adv. to a great or complete degree; deeply
4. com_____ate leave
adj. feeling or showing sympathy and concern for the suffering or bad luck of others
5. an ins_____ve heart
adj. not showing or feeling concern for the needs and feelings of others
6. de___e all of my energies
v. to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose
7. in_____st longings
adj. situated or occurring at the deepest or most central part or point; relating to one's deepest or most private thoughts, feelings, or experiences
8. se_____ss act
adj. concerned more with the needs and desires of others than with one's own; unselfish; altruistic
9. im___r insulin sensitivity
v. to damage something or make it weaker or worse
10. op_____ne occasion
adj. suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose

ANSWERS: 1. altruistic, 2. paradoxical, 3. profoundly, 4. compassionate, 5. insensitive, 6. devote, 7. innermost, 8. selfless, 9. impair, 10. opportune

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 11. expanded fr_____y | <i>n.</i> a major highway designed for high-speed traffic, with no stoplights or grade crossings and having interchanges or access roads to other highways |
| 12. im____r my health | <i>v.</i> to damage something or make it weaker or worse |
| 13. on_____ng traffic | <i>adj.</i> approaching or moving toward a particular person or place; relating to something that is coming toward the observer |
| 14. sleep pro_____ly | <i>adv.</i> to a great or complete degree; deeply |
| 15. wi__n in excitement | <i>v.</i> to become or make something broader, wider, more extensive |
| 16. psy_____th tendencies | <i>n.</i> a person with an extreme personality disorder characterized by a lack of empathy, remorse, and ethical values; often associated with manipulative and deceitful behavior, impulsivity, and risk-taking tendencies |
| 17. high levels of psy_____hic traits | <i>adj.</i> relating to or suffering from a serious, and often undiagnosed, mental disorder with extreme or violent social behavior |
| 18. psy_____hic issues | <i>adj.</i> relating to or suffering from a serious, and often undiagnosed, mental disorder with extreme or violent social behavior |
| 19. el____t a confession | <i>v.</i> to obtain information or a reaction from someone, usually with difficulty |
| 20. sw____e off the road | <i>v.</i> to change direction suddenly, often to avoid something or to turn sharply |

ANSWERS: 11. freeway, 12. impair, 13. oncoming, 14. profoundly, 15. widen, 16. psychopath, 17. psychopathic, 18. psychopathic, 19. elicit, 20. swerve

21. company mo__o *n.* a phrase or slogan that expresses a guiding principle or goal
22. develop an attitude of hu____ty *n.* the quality or condition of being humble; a low estimate of one's self
23. an op_____ne remark *adj.* suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose
24. am_____la damage *n.* one of two parts of the almond-shaped neural structure that are linked to emotions, especially fear and pleasure, memory, and the sense of smell
25. d__t here and there *n.* a small narrow pointed object, sometimes with feathers to help it fly, that is thrown or shot; (verb) to move along rapidly and lightly
26. se_____ss devotion *adj.* concerned more with the needs and desires of others than with one's own; unselfish; altruistic
27. so_____al norms *adj.* relating to society or social relationships
28. g__w a hole in a wall *v.* to bite or chew on something persistently or nervously; to wear away at something gradually
29. ant_____al personality disorder *adj.* not wanting to be around or spend time with other people; unwilling or unable to conform to accepted social norms or standards
30. violent psy_____th *n.* a person with an extreme personality disorder characterized by a lack of empathy, remorse, and ethical values; often associated with manipulative and deceitful behavior, impulsivity, and risk-taking tendencies

ANSWERS: 21. motto, 22. humility, 23. opportune, 24. amygdala, 25. dart, 26. selfless, 27. societal, 28. gnaw, 29. antisocial, 30. psychopath

31. sw___e from the topic *v.* to change direction suddenly, often to avoid something or to turn sharply
32. on____ng disaster *adj.* approaching or moving toward a particular person or place; relating to something that is coming toward the observer
33. wi__n a narrowed heart valve *v.* to become or make something broader, wider, more extensive
34. an al____stic act *n.* a person who has an unselfish or selfless concern for the welfare of others; a person who values the well-being of others over their interests or desires
35. de___e my own life *v.* to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose
36. ins____ve behavior *adj.* not showing or feeling concern for the needs and feelings of others
37. blow d__t *n.* a small narrow pointed object, sometimes with feathers to help it fly, that is thrown or shot; (verb) to move along rapidly and lightly
38. so____al expectations *adj.* relating to society or social relationships
39. charitable al____st *n.* a person who has an unselfish or selfless concern for the welfare of others; a person who values the well-being of others over their interests or desires
40. g__w at the national sentiment *v.* to bite or chew on something persistently or nervously; to wear away at something gradually

ANSWERS: 31. swerve, 32. oncoming, 33. widen, 34. altruist, 35. devote, 36. insensitive, 37. dart, 38. societal, 39. altruist, 40. gnaw

41. acq_____nce with a language *n.* a person one knows but who is not a close friend
42. apparently par_____al *adj.* seemingly contradictory or absurd because of having two opposite features or facts, though it is probably true
43. acts of al_____sm *n.* the belief or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish devotion to the welfare of others often expressed as acts of kindness or charity
44. the decline in am_____la activity *n.* one of two parts of the almond-shaped neural structure that are linked to emotions, especially fear and pleasure, memory, and the sense of smell
45. ant_____al tendencies *adj.* not wanting to be around or spend time with other people; unwilling or unable to conform to accepted social norms or standards
46. a com_____ate heart *adj.* feeling or showing sympathy and concern for the suffering or bad luck of others
47. al_____sm in society *n.* the belief or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish devotion to the welfare of others often expressed as acts of kindness or charity
48. alt_____ic behavior *adj.* showing a selfless and disinterested concern for the happiness and well-being of other people

ANSWERS: 41. acquaintance, 42. paradoxical, 43. altruism, 44. amygdala, 45. antisocial, 46. compassionate, 47. altruism, 48. altruistic

49. lack of hu____ty *n.* the quality or condition of being humble; a low estimate of one's self
50. lu_____us behavior *adj.* so ridiculous, unreasonable, or out of place as to be amusing; absurd
51. fr_____y exit *n.* a major highway designed for high-speed traffic, with no stoplights or grade crossings and having interchanges or access roads to other highways
52. the mo__o for safe traffic *n.* a phrase or slogan that expresses a guiding principle or goal
53. el___t a solution *v.* to obtain information or a reaction from someone, usually with difficulty
54. in_____st secrets *adj.* situated or occurring at the deepest or most central part or point; relating to one's deepest or most private thoughts, feelings, or experiences
55. business acq_____nce *n.* a person one knows but who is not a close friend
56. lu_____us idea *adj.* so ridiculous, unreasonable, or out of place as to be amusing; absurd

ANSWERS: 49. humility, 50. ludicrous, 51. freeway, 52. motto, 53. elicit, 54. innermost, 55. acquaintance, 56. ludicrous

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. It's _____ to blame the teachers for the education system's failures.
adj. so ridiculous, unreasonable, or out of place as to be amusing; absurd
2. The driver had to _____ to avoid hitting the deer in the middle of the road.
v. to change direction suddenly, often to avoid something or to turn sharply
3. We got stuck in a traffic jam on the _____ for over an hour.
n. a major highway designed for high-speed traffic, with no stoplights or grade crossings and having interchanges or access roads to other highways
4. His act of volunteering at the homeless shelter was a clear example of practical _____.
n. the belief or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish devotion to the welfare of others often expressed as acts of kindness or charity
5. 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
6. The novel affected her _____ causing her to question her beliefs and values.
adv. to a great or complete degree; deeply
7. The suspect's _____ behavior and lack of remorse made the judge question their sanity.
adj. not wanting to be around or spend time with other people; unwilling or unable to conform to accepted social norms or standards

ANSWERS: 1. ludicrous, 2. swerve, 3. freeway, 4. altruism, 5. paradoxical, 6. profoundly, 7. antisocial

8. The detective identified the _____ who had been terrorizing the city for months.
- n.* a person with an extreme personality disorder characterized by a lack of empathy, remorse, and ethical values; often associated with manipulative and deceitful behavior, impulsivity, and risk-taking tendencies
9. He _____ his investigation into a medical clinic.
- v.* to become or make something broader, wider, more extensive
10. Have you _____ a response from them yet?
- v.* to obtain information or a reaction from someone, usually with difficulty
11. The driver had to swerve to avoid an _____ car that veered into his lane.
- adj.* approaching or moving toward a particular person or place; relating to something that is coming toward the observer
12. I met him at a party, and we quickly became _____.
- n.* a person one knows but who is not a close friend
13. He is going to play a _____ killer in this movie.
- adj.* relating to or suffering from a serious, and often undiagnosed, mental disorder with extreme or violent social behavior
14. We were filled with _____ at the sight of the Queen.
- n.* the quality or condition of being humble; a low estimate of one's self
15. The company tried to build an _____ image.
- adj.* showing a selfless and disinterested concern for the happiness and well-being of other people

ANSWERS: 8. psychopath, 9. widened, 10. elicited, 11. oncoming, 12. acquaintances, 13. psychopathic, 14. humility, 15. altruistic

16. The _____ pressure to conform is strong in this community.

adj. relating to society or social relationships

17. The accident made his vision _____.

v. to damage something or make it weaker or worse

18. The _____ has been associated with memories of past emotional events.

n. one of two parts of the almond-shaped neural structure that are linked to emotions, especially fear and pleasure, memory, and the sense of smell

19. His _____ comments made her feel hurt and unimportant.

adj. not showing or feeling concern for the needs and feelings of others

20. My father has a serious and _____ personality.

adj. feeling or showing sympathy and concern for the suffering or bad luck of others

21. The company's _____ is "Innovation and Service," which is reflected in its products and customer support.

n. a phrase or slogan that expresses a guiding principle or goal

22. The phone rang at the most _____ time.

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

23. Her _____ dedication to the community earned her a prestigious award.

adj. concerned more with the needs and desires of others than with one's own; unselfish; altruistic

24. It took years of therapy before the patient could reveal their _____ thoughts and feelings.

adj. situated or occurring at the deepest or most central part or point; relating to one's deepest or most private thoughts, feelings, or experiences

ANSWERS: 16. societal, 17. impaired, 18. amygdala, 19. insensitive, 20. compassionate, 21. motto, 22. opportune, 23. selfless, 24. innermost

25. A poison _____ hit him.

- n.* a small narrow pointed object, sometimes with feathers to help it fly, that is thrown or shot; (verb) to move along rapidly and lightly

26. He _____ himself to studying the history of ancient civilizations.

- v.* to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose

27. She couldn't stop _____ on her nails.

- v.* to bite or chew on something persistently or nervously; to wear away at something gradually

28. The wealthy philanthropist was known as an _____ individual who donated generously to many charities.

- n.* a person who has an unselfish or selfless concern for the welfare of others; a person who values the well-being of others over their interests or desires

ANSWERS: 25. dart, 26. devoted, 27. gnawing, 28. altruistic