

Englist.me



Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Tabetha Boyajian: The most mysterious star in the universe | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

IMPORTANT

This material is a commentary and does not contain any copyrighted material of the reference source. We strongly recommend accessing/buying the reference source at the same time.

Session 1: Word List

astronomer

n. a physicist who studies astronomy

synonym: stargazer, cosmologist, astrophysicist

(1) amateur **astronomer**, (2) solar **astronomer**

This question has fascinated solar **astronomers** for decades.

starlight

n. the light emitted or reflected by stars, often observed in the night sky; the radiant energy emitted by stars

synonym: twinkle, starshine, stardust

(1) **starlight** sky, (2) romantic **starlight**

The romantic couple had a picnic under the **starlight**.

skepticism

n. an attitude of doubting or questioning that claims or statements are true or valuable or that something will happen; the disbelief in any claims of ultimate knowledge

synonym: distrust, doubt, suspicion

(1) natural **skepticism**, (2) **skepticism** toward bureaucracy

This party expresses **skepticism** about the efficacy of the health insurance system.

gamble

v. to take risky action in the hope of being successful; to play or game for money or other stakes

synonym: bet, venture, wager

(1) **gamble** \$100 on the race, (2) **gamble** away my fortune
Will you **gamble** on the result of the fight?

enthusiast

n. a person having a strong liking for something
synonym: buff, aficionado, devotee

(1) classic car **enthusiasts**, (2) an **enthusiastic** response
The country's economic situation has improved markedly due to reform **enthusiasts**.

Jovian

adj. relating to Jupiter or its characteristics
synonym: Jupiter, giant planet

(1) **Jovian** satellites, (2) **Jovian** planet
The **Jovian** moon Europa is believed to have an ocean beneath its icy surface.

sift

v. to put flour, sugar, etc. through a sieve (= a utensil consisting of a wire or plastic mesh in a frame) to remove lumps or large particles
synonym: filter, go through, sieve

(1) **sift** the candidates, (2) **sift** sand
The search engine helps **sift** information.

asymmetric

adj. lacking symmetry or balance; not corresponding in size, shape, or degree; characterized by an uneven or unequal distribution or arrangement
synonym: uneven, lopsided, unbalanced

(1) **asymmetric** warfare, (2) **asymmetric** information
The **asymmetric** design of the building made it stand out in the city skyline.

superimpose

v. to place, layer, or overlay one thing on top of another, typically in such a way that both are still visible; to add or combine something additional into an existing structure, design, or system
synonym: overlay, impose, place over

(1) **superimpose** image, (2) **superimpose** text

The graphic designer will **superimpose** the logo over the image in the brochure.

astrophysics

n. the branch of physics concerned with the study of the properties and behavior of celestial objects and the physical processes that govern the behavior and evolution of the universe

(1) **astrophysics** research, (2) neutrino **astrophysics**

He was studying **astrophysics** in an attempt to understand the origins of the universe.

firsthand

adv. from the source; directly; (adjective) received directly from a source

synonym : direct

(1) hear customer's voices **firsthand**, (2) conduct **firsthand** research

The manager tried to hear customers' voices **firsthand**.

collide

v. to hit something violently when moving

synonym : clash, slam, contradict

(1) **collide** head-on, (2) **collide** in midair

The interests of the two countries **collide**.

swarm

n. a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground

synonym : horde, hive, throng

(1) a **swarm** of mosquitoes, (2) locust **swarm**

A **swarm** of angry bees attacked because we had approached the hive.

comet

n. a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun

synonym : meteor, asteroid, meteoroid

(1) the surface of the **comet**, (2) **comet** Halley

The **comet's** bright tail could be seen in the night sky.

elliptical

adj. having the shape of an oval (= a closed plane curve); using a word or expression that is ambiguous or vague, especially to mislead or avoid committing oneself

synonym : oval, egg-shaped, oblong

(1) an **elliptical** motion, (2) an **elliptical** galaxies

The satellite's **elliptical** orbit made it appear to change its distance from earth.

contrived

adj. created or arranged in an artificial, forced, or deliberate way; not natural or spontaneous

synonym : artificial, forced, fabricated

(1) **contrived** situation, (2) **contrived** laughter

The storyline of the movie seemed **contrived** and needed more authenticity.

catchy

adj. pleasing and easy to remember; likely to attract attention

synonym : captivating, haunting, memorable

(1) **catchy** nickname, (2) a **catchy** title for a movie

This track starts with a **catchy** guitar riff.

acronym

n. a word formed from the first letter of each word in a phrase, such as NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) or AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

synonym : abbreviation, initialism, shortcut

(1) **acronym** definition, (2) use an **acronym**

RADAR is an **acronym** for radio detection and ranging.

wright

n. a person who makes or repairs something, especially a craftsman or artisan who works with wood or metal

synonym : builder, constructor, craftsman

(1) a car- **wright**, (2) aircraft **wright**

She was a skilled **wright**, able to craft intricate pieces of furniture.

tabby

n. a type of domestic cat with a distinctive coat pattern of dark stripes or spots on a lighter background; (adjective)

describing someone who is short and fat, plump, or round in shape

synonym : stripe, brindle

(1) **tabby** kitten, (2) gray **tabby**

The little girl couldn't resist the **tabby's** purr as the cat curled up in her lap.

extraterrestrial

adj. relating to or existing outside of the Earth's atmosphere or planetary boundaries; pertaining to beings or phenomena that originate from beyond the Earth

synonym : alien, outer, otherworldly

(1) **extraterrestrial** planet, (2) **extraterrestrial** intelligence

Scientists are constantly searching for signs of **extraterrestrial** life in the universe.

observatory

n. a building designed and equipped to observe the planets, the stars, the weather, etc.

(1) space **observatory**, (2) a meteorological **observatory**

That astronomical **observatory** stands at the top of the mountain.

ginormous

adj. (combination of "gigantic" and "enormous") extremely large

synonym : huge, gigantic, mammoth

(1) **ginormous** elephant, (2) **ginormous** skyscraper

The construction site was filled with **ginormous** pieces of heavy machinery.

anomaly

n. something or someone that deviates from what is expected or normal, often in a way that is difficult to explain or understand

synonym : abnormality, irregularity, deviation

(1) **anomaly** detection, (2) global temperature **anomaly**

The sudden drop in the stock market was an **anomaly** that puzzled many investors.

uneven

adj. not level or flat; not balanced or symmetrical

synonym : irregular, rough, bumpy

(1) **uneven** numbers, (2) **uneven** coating

The road was **uneven**, causing the car to bounce up and down as it drove.

defy

v. to challenge or dare someone to do something; to resist or disobey a rule, decision, etc.

synonym : challenge, resist, disobey

(1) **defy** gravity, (2) **defy** authority

She tried to **defy** her parents by moving to the city against their wishes.

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.

interplanetary

adj. relating to or occurring between planets, particularly regarding space travel or communication

synonym : interstellar, planetary, celestial

(1) **interplanetary** debris, (2) **interplanetary** exploration

Scientists are working on developing **interplanetary** travel to explore other planets in our solar system.

catastrophic

adj. extremely harmful; causing physical or financial destruction

synonym : fatal, disastrous, destructive

(1) victim of **catastrophic** injuries, (2) **catastrophic** climate change

The extinction rate of aquatic animals was **catastrophic**.

recycle

v. to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again

synonym : reclaim, reuse, reprocess

(1) **recycle** the cardboard boxes, (2) **recycle** milk packaging into new paper

We largely **recycle** the circuit board of cell phones because they contain a lot of valuable metals.

unfold

v. to open up or spread out something that is folded or rolled up; to reveal or disclose something that was previously hidden or unknown

synonym: open, spread out, expose

(1) **unfold** the story, (2) **unfold** the stroller

The mystery **unfolded** as the detectives gathered more clues.

excite

v. to make someone feel suddenly enthusiastic or eager

synonym: thrill, exhilarate, animate

(1) **excite** the crowd, (2) **excite** rebellion

The news of her promotion **excited** her.

Session 2: Spelling

1. ac____m definition *n.* a word formed from the first letter of each word in a phrase, such as NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) or AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)
2. locust sw__m *n.* a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground
3. ra____e an aura *v.* to spread out or emit something, such as light or heat, in all directions
4. d__y authority *v.* to challenge or dare someone to do something; to resist or disobey a rule, decision, etc.
5. int_____ary debris *adj.* relating to or occurring between planets, particularly regarding space travel or communication
6. ske_____sm toward bureaucracy *n.* an attitude of doubting or questioning that claims or statements are true or valuable or that something will happen; the disbelief in any claims of ultimate knowledge
7. ga___e \$100 on the race *v.* to take risky action in the hope of being successful; to play or game for money or other stakes
8. co____e in midair *v.* to hit something violently when moving
9. co____e head-on *v.* to hit something violently when moving

ANSWERS: 1. acronym, 2. swarm, 3. radiate, 4. defy, 5. interplanetary, 6. skepticism, 7. gamble, 8. collide, 9. collide

10. re____e milk packaging into new paper
v. to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again
11. hear customer's voices fi_____nd
adv. from the source; directly; (adjective) received directly from a source
12. un___d the stroller
v. to open up or spread out something that is folded or rolled up; to reveal or disclose something that was previously hidden or unknown
13. classic car ent_____sts
n. a person having a strong liking for something
14. ex___e rebellion
v. to make someone feel suddenly enthusiastic or eager
15. asy_____ic information
adj. lacking symmetry or balance; not corresponding in size, shape, or degree; characterized by an uneven or unequal distribution or arrangement
16. use an ac_____m
n. a word formed from the first letter of each word in a phrase, such as NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) or AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)
17. ta__y kitten
n. a type of domestic cat with a distinctive coat pattern of dark stripes or spots on a lighter background; (adjective) describing someone who is short and fat, plump, or round in shape
18. s__t sand
v. to put flour, sugar, etc. through a sieve (= a utensil consisting of a wire or plastic mesh in a frame) to remove lumps or large particles

ANSWERS: 10. recycle, 11. firsthand, 12. unfold, 13. enthusiast, 14. excite, 15. asymmetric, 16. acronym, 17. tabby, 18. sift

19. sup_____se image *v.* to place, layer, or overlay one thing on top of another, typically in such a way that both are still visible; to add or combine something additional into an existing structure, design, or system
20. un____n numbers *adj.* not level or flat; not balanced or symmetrical
21. st_____ht sky *n.* the light emitted or reflected by stars, often observed in the night sky; the radiant energy emitted by stars
22. asy_____ic warfare *adj.* lacking symmetry or balance; not corresponding in size, shape, or degree; characterized by an uneven or unequal distribution or arrangement
23. re_____e the cardboard boxes *v.* to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again
24. gi_____us elephant *adj.* (combination of "gigantic" and "enormous") extremely large
25. victim of cat_____hic injuries *adj.* extremely harmful; causing physical or financial destruction
26. a meteorological obs_____ry *n.* a building designed and equipped to observe the planets, the stars, the weather, etc.
27. co_____ed laughter *adj.* created or arranged in an artificial, forced, or deliberate way; not natural or spontaneous
28. ex____e the crowd *v.* to make someone feel suddenly enthusiastic or eager

ANSWERS: 19. superimpose, 20. uneven, 21. starlight, 22. asymmetric, 23. recycle, 24. ginormous, 25. catastrophic, 26. observatory, 27. contrived, 28. excite

29. a ca___y title for a movie
adj. pleasing and easy to remember; likely to attract attention
30. conduct fi_____nd research
adv. from the source; directly; (adjective) received directly from a source
31. un___n coating
adj. not level or flat; not balanced or symmetrical
32. a car-wr___t
n. a person who makes or repairs something, especially a craftsman or artisan who works with wood or metal
33. ra_____e in all directions
v. to spread out or emit something, such as light or heat, in all directions
34. co__t Halley
n. a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun
35. solar ast_____er
n. a physicist who studies astronomy
36. an_____y detection
n. something or someone that deviates from what is expected or normal, often in a way that is difficult to explain or understand
37. ga___e away my fortune
v. to take risky action in the hope of being successful; to play or game for money or other stakes
38. cat_____hic climate change
adj. extremely harmful; causing physical or financial destruction
39. sup_____se text
v. to place, layer, or overlay one thing on top of another, typically in such a way that both are still visible; to add or combine something additional into an existing structure, design, or system

ANSWERS: 29. catchy, 30. firsthand, 31. uneven, 32. wright, 33. radiate, 34. comet, 35. astronomer, 36. anomaly, 37. gamble, 38. catastrophic, 39. superimpose

40. neutrino ast_____ics *n.* the branch of physics concerned with the study of the properties and behavior of celestial objects and the physical processes that govern the behavior and evolution of the universe
41. Jo___n satellites *adj.* relating to Jupiter or its characteristics
42. natural ske_____sm *n.* an attitude of doubting or questioning that claims or statements are true or valuable or that something will happen; the disbelief in any claims of ultimate knowledge
43. d__y gravity *v.* to challenge or dare someone to do something; to resist or disobey a rule, decision, etc.
44. an ell_____al galaxies *adj.* having the shape of an oval (= a closed plane curve); using a word or expression that is ambiguous or vague, especially to mislead or avoid committing oneself
45. an ell_____al motion *adj.* having the shape of an oval (= a closed plane curve); using a word or expression that is ambiguous or vague, especially to mislead or avoid committing oneself
46. an ent_____stic response *n.* a person having a strong liking for something
47. Jo___n planet *adj.* relating to Jupiter or its characteristics
48. ext_____ial planet *adj.* relating to or existing outside of the Earth's atmosphere or planetary boundaries; pertaining to beings or phenomena that originate from beyond the Earth

ANSWERS: 40. astrophysics, 41. Jovian, 42. skepticism, 43. defy, 44. elliptical, 45. elliptical, 46. enthusiast, 47. Jovian, 48. extraterrestrial

49. romantic st_____ht *n.* the light emitted or reflected by stars, often observed in the night sky; the radiant energy emitted by stars
50. the surface of the co__t *n.* a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun
51. ast_____ics research *n.* the branch of physics concerned with the study of the properties and behavior of celestial objects and the physical processes that govern the behavior and evolution of the universe
52. global temperature an____y *n.* something or someone that deviates from what is expected or normal, often in a way that is difficult to explain or understand
53. int_____ary exploration *adj.* relating to or occurring between planets, particularly regarding space travel or communication
54. space obs_____ry *n.* a building designed and equipped to observe the planets, the stars, the weather, etc.
55. amateur ast_____er *n.* a physicist who studies astronomy
56. ext_____ial intelligence *adj.* relating to or existing outside of the Earth's atmosphere or planetary boundaries; pertaining to beings or phenomena that originate from beyond the Earth
57. co_____ed situation *adj.* created or arranged in an artificial, forced, or deliberate way; not natural or spontaneous

ANSWERS: 49. starlight, 50. comet, 51. astrophysics, 52. anomaly, 53. interplanetary, 54. observatory, 55. astronomer, 56. extraterrestrial, 57. contrived

58. gi_____us skyscraper *adj.* (combination of "gigantic" and "enormous") extremely large
59. s__t the candidates *v.* to put flour, sugar, etc. through a sieve (= a utensil consisting of a wire or plastic mesh in a frame) to remove lumps or large particles
60. un___d the story *v.* to open up or spread out something that is folded or rolled up; to reveal or disclose something that was previously hidden or unknown
61. gray ta__y *n.* a type of domestic cat with a distinctive coat pattern of dark stripes or spots on a lighter background; (adjective) describing someone who is short and fat, plump, or round in shape
62. ca___y nickname *adj.* pleasing and easy to remember; likely to attract attention
63. a sw__m of mosquitoes *n.* a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground
64. aircraft wr___t *n.* a person who makes or repairs something, especially a craftsman or artisan who works with wood or metal

ANSWERS: 58. ginormous, 59. sift, 60. unfold, 61. tabby, 62. catchy, 63. swarm, 64. wright

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. The mystery _____ as the detectives gathered more clues.
v. to open up or spread out something that is folded or rolled up; to reveal or disclose something that was previously hidden or unknown
2. The search engine helps _____ information.
v. to put flour, sugar, etc. through a sieve (= a utensil consisting of a wire or plastic mesh in a frame) to remove lumps or large particles
3. The _____ moon Europa is believed to have an ocean beneath its icy surface.
adj. relating to Jupiter or its characteristics
4. This question has fascinated solar _____ for decades.
n. a physicist who studies astronomy
5. A _____ of angry bees attacked because we had approached the hive.
n. a group of many things, such as insects, fishes, etc., in the air or water or on the ground
6. The extinction rate of aquatic animals was _____.
adj. extremely harmful; causing physical or financial destruction
7. 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
8. This track starts with a _____ guitar riff.
adj. pleasing and easy to remember; likely to attract attention

ANSWERS: 1. unfolded, 2. sift, 3. Jovian, 4. astronomers, 5. swarm, 6. catastrophic, 7. radiate, 8. catchy

9. That astronomical _____ stands at the top of the mountain.
n. a building designed and equipped to observe the planets, the stars, the weather, etc.
10. She was a skilled _____ able to craft intricate pieces of furniture.
n. a person who makes or repairs something, especially a craftsman or artisan who works with wood or metal
11. We largely _____ the circuit board of cell phones because they contain a lot of valuable metals.
v. to sort and collect things to process them and produce valuable materials that can be used again
12. The romantic couple had a picnic under the _____.
n. the light emitted or reflected by stars, often observed in the night sky; the radiant energy emitted by stars
13. She tried to ____ her parents by moving to the city against their wishes.
v. to challenge or dare someone to do something; to resist or disobey a rule, decision, etc.
14. RADAR is an _____ for radio detection and ranging.
n. a word formed from the first letter of each word in a phrase, such as NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) or AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)
15. The construction site was filled with _____ pieces of heavy machinery.
adj. (combination of "gigantic" and "enormous") extremely large
16. The country's economic situation has improved markedly due to reform _____.
n. a person having a strong liking for something

ANSWERS: 9. observatory, 10. wright, 11. recycle, 12. starlight, 13. defy, 14. acronym, 15. ginormous, 16. enthusiasts

17. The _____ design of the building made it stand out in the city skyline.
adj. lacking symmetry or balance; not corresponding in size, shape, or degree; characterized by an uneven or unequal distribution or arrangement
18. The _____ bright tail could be seen in the night sky.
n. a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun
19. The news of her promotion _____ her.
v. to make someone feel suddenly enthusiastic or eager
20. This party expresses _____ about the efficacy of the health insurance system.
n. an attitude of doubting or questioning that claims or statements are true or valuable or that something will happen; the disbelief in any claims of ultimate knowledge
21. The interests of the two countries _____.
v. to hit something violently when moving
22. Scientists are constantly searching for signs of _____ life in the universe.
adj. relating to or existing outside of the Earth's atmosphere or planetary boundaries; pertaining to beings or phenomena that originate from beyond the Earth
23. The sudden drop in the stock market was an _____ that puzzled many investors.
n. something or someone that deviates from what is expected or normal, often in a way that is difficult to explain or understand

ANSWERS: 17. asymmetric, 18. comet's, 19. excited, 20. skepticism, 21. collide, 22. extraterrestrial, 23. anomaly

24. The satellite's _____ orbit made it appear to change its distance from earth.

adj. having the shape of an oval (= a closed plane curve); using a word or expression that is ambiguous or vague, especially to mislead or avoid committing oneself

25. The little girl couldn't resist the _____ purr as the cat curled up in her lap.

n. a type of domestic cat with a distinctive coat pattern of dark stripes or spots on a lighter background; (adjective) describing someone who is short and fat, plump, or round in shape

26. The storyline of the movie seemed _____ and needed more authenticity.

adj. created or arranged in an artificial, forced, or deliberate way; not natural or spontaneous

27. Will you _____ on the result of the fight?

v. to take risky action in the hope of being successful; to play or game for money or other stakes

28. He was studying _____ in an attempt to understand the origins of the universe.

n. the branch of physics concerned with the study of the properties and behavior of celestial objects and the physical processes that govern the behavior and evolution of the universe

29. The road was _____ causing the car to bounce up and down as it drove.

adj. not level or flat; not balanced or symmetrical

30. The graphic designer will _____ the logo over the image in the brochure.

v. to place, layer, or overlay one thing on top of another, typically in such a way that both are still visible; to add or combine something additional into an existing structure, design, or system

ANSWERS: 24. elliptical, 25. tabby's, 26. contrived, 27. gamble, 28. astrophysics, 29. uneven, 30. superimpose

31. The manager tried to hear customers' voices _____.

adv. from the source; directly; (adjective) received directly from a source

32. Scientists are working on developing _____ travel to explore other planets in our solar system.

adj. relating to or occurring between planets, particularly regarding space travel or communication

ANSWERS: 31. firsthand, 32. interplanetary