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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

John McWhorter: Txtng is killing language. JK!!! |

TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

scourge

n. a person or thing that causes great suffering or destruction; (verb) to punish someone severely

synonym: plague, disaster, curse

(1) **scourge** of AIDS, (2) bring a **scourge** under control

The plague was a **scourge** that killed millions of people.

miraculous

adj. very effective or lucky, or completely unexpected

synonym: amazing, astonishing, awesome

(1) a **miraculous** encounter, (2) go through a **miraculous** change

He made a **miraculous** recovery.

emergent

adj. starting to exist or view, or to become known

synonym: coming, appearing, developing

(1) **emergent** repair of an aorta, (2) an **emergent** republic

Extensive areas of **emergent** plants are usually called marsh.

gibbon

n. a type of small to medium-sized ape found in the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, known for their long arms, agile movement, and distinct vocalizations

synonym: ape, primate, monkey

(1) **gibbon** conservation, (2) hoolock **gibbon**

The **gibbons'** loud calls echo through the forest, announcing

their territories to rival groups.

sham

n. something that is not as good or true as it seems to be and is intended to deceive people; a person who pretends to be something they are not

synonym: bogus, counterfeit, fraudulent

(1) a **sham** battle, (2) turn out to be all **sham**

The data he prepared was completely **sham**.

linguist

n. a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics

synonym: grammarist, philologue, polyglot

(1) foreign **linguist**, (2) cognitive **linguist**

Though I love literature, I'm a bad **linguist**.

telegraph

n. a method of long-distance transmission of messages by electrical or radio signals

(1) answer by **telegraph**, (2) **telegraph** wires

The **telegraph** service was interrupted for a while.

shorthand

n. a system of rapid handwriting or abbreviation that uses symbols, abbreviations, or other devices to represent words or phrases; a short and simple way of expressing or describing something

synonym: stenography, speedwriting, tachygraphy

(1) learn **shorthand**, (2) write in **shorthand**

The secretary's **shorthand** was so good that she could type up meeting minutes within minutes.

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.

punctuate

v. to insert punctuation marks (= comma, period, colon, etc.) in the text; to interrupt periodically

synonym : emphasize, accent, mark

(1) **punctuate** a sentence, (2) **punctuate** his talk

Strikes had also **punctuated** the preceding weeks.

brute

n. a violent, wild, or feral animal; a person who is cruel, uncivilized, or lacking in intelligence or sensitivity; a physical force or power

synonym : beast, savage, animal

(1) **brute** beasts, (2) **brute** force

The **brute** behavior of the football players caused the game to be canceled.

baggy

adj. loose-fitting or puffed out in shape, typically about clothing

synonym : loose, roomy, oversized

(1) **baggy** sweater, (2) **baggy** sweatpants

I prefer **baggy** clothes to tight-fitting ones.

blackboard

n. a large board made of a smooth, usually dark-colored slate attached to a wall used by teachers in schools for writing on with chalk

synonym : chalkboard, slate

(1) chalk on a **blackboard**, (2) electronic **blackboard**

The teacher asked me to rub out the **blackboard**.

hiccup

n. an involuntary movement of the muscles of the diaphragm and chest that causes a sudden intake of breath with a sound similar to a "hiccup"

synonym : hiccough

(1) stop my **hiccup**, (2) the cause of **hiccups**

The **hiccups** lasted for hours and were driving him crazy.

guffaw

v. to laugh loudly and boisterously, often in a somewhat uncontrolled manner; (noun) a loud and boisterous laugh

synonym :

laugh, chuckle, gloat

(1) **guffaw** loudly, (2) bursting out **guffaws**

He **guffawed** with delight when he heard the news.

inconvenient

adj. causing trouble or difficulty; not convenient or suitable

synonym: troublesome, difficult, awkward

(1) face an **inconvenient** truth, (2) **inconvenient** for shopping

It was **inconvenient** for her to go out of her way to pick up the package.

amuse

v. to entertain or divert the mind; to make someone laugh

synonym: entertain, delight, divert

(1) **amuse** a baby with a rattle, (2) **amuse** guests

He **amused** himself by playing video games during his free time.

empathy

n. the ability to share another person's feelings or experiences by imagining that person's situation

synonym: compassion, sympathy, tenderness

(1) full of **empathy**, (2) **empathy** for patients

Empathy is also necessary to understand history.

pragmatic

adj. practical rather than idealistic

synonym: practical, realistic, down-to-earth

(1) **pragmatic** approach, (2) **pragmatic** politics

He was a **pragmatic** leader who made decisions based on what was practical rather than ideal.

sally

n. a sudden, impulsive outing or excursion; a witty or clever remark

synonym: sortie, charge, wisecrack

(1) **sally** of wit, (2) **sally** port

The protesters made a sudden **sally** into the town square, surprising everyone.

mundane

adj. very ordinary and therefore lacking interest or excitement

synonym : ordinary, everyday, prosaic

(1) **mundane** affairs, (2) **mundane** objects

After returning from the war, he had a pretty **mundane** life.

thigh

n. the part of the human leg between the hip and the knee; in animals, the corresponding upper part of the hind leg

synonym : thigh-bone, femur, upper leg

(1) **thigh** muscle, (2) chicken **thigh**

The marathon runner felt a cramp in her **thigh** at the 20th mile.

wistful

adj. expressing a feeling of vague, sad, or inconsolable longing

synonym : longing, nostalgic, pensive

(1) in a **wistful** mood, (2) **wistful** feeling

He had a **wistful** look in his eyes as he remembered the past.

abbey

n. a monastery or convent, especially for monks or nuns

synonym : monastery, convent

(1) ruined **abbey**, (2) **abbey** church

The venerable **abbey** was founded in the 12th century.

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.

dialect

n. a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics

synonym : accent, language, vernacular

(1) a local **dialect**, (2) minority **dialect**

The **dialect** spoken in the region differed from other parts of the country.

consciously

adv. with awareness; in a deliberate manner

synonym : intentionally, deliberately, knowingly

(1) **consciously** aware of a problem, (2) act **consciously**

He **consciously** criticizes her in the publicity.

repertoire

n. the range or variety of skills, abilities, performances, or works that a person or group is capable of producing or performing; the entire body of works that is available to an individual or group to choose from when performing or producing something

synonym : collection, range, reservoir

(1) musical **repertoire**, (2) cooking **repertoire**

The chef's **repertoire** of dishes includes both classic and innovative recipes.

dormitory

n. a large room or building that provides sleeping quarters for multiple people, typically students or workers, often in separate beds or cubicles

synonym : dorm, residence hall, hostel

(1) college **dormitory**, (2) shared **dormitory**

The girls' **dormitory** had a strict curfew of 11 p.m.

slang

n. informal or non-standard language that is often used within a specific group or culture and may not be considered appropriate in a professional or formal context

synonym : lingo, jargon, vernacular

(1) **slang** phrases, (2) Internet **slang**

A lot of **slang** words and phrases were popularized by hip-hop music.

sheaf

n. a bundle or stack of objects, typically tied together, in particular, a bundle of cut stalks of grain or other plants

synonym: bundle, stack, pile

(1) **sheaf** of papers, (2) **sheaf** of wheat

The farmer took a **sheaf** of hay from the barn.

Session 2: Spelling

1. hoolock gi___n
n. a type of small to medium-sized ape found in the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, known for their long arms, agile movement, and distinct vocalizations
2. ruined ab__y
n. a monastery or convent, especially for monks or nuns
3. cognitive li_____st
n. a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics
4. answer by te_____ph
n. a method of long-distance transmission of messages by electrical or radio signals
5. pu_____te his talk
v. to insert punctuation marks (= comma, period, colon, etc.) in the text; to interrupt periodically
6. 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
7. gi___n conservation
n. a type of small to medium-sized ape found in the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, known for their long arms, agile movement, and distinct vocalizations

ANSWERS: 1. gibbon, 2. abbey, 3. linguist, 4. telegraph, 5. punctuate, 6. typewriter, 7. gibbon

8. am__e guests *v.* to entertain or divert the mind; to make someone laugh
9. musical rep_____re *n.* the range or variety of skills, abilities, performances, or works that a person or group is capable of producing or performing; the entire body of works that is available to an individual or group to choose from when performing or producing something
10. 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
11. ab__y church *n.* a monastery or convent, especially for monks or nuns
12. chicken th__h *n.* the part of the human leg between the hip and the knee; in animals, the corresponding upper part of the hind leg
13. mu_____e affairs *adj.* very ordinary and therefore lacking interest or excitement
14. a s__m battle *n.* something that is not as good or true as it seems to be and is intended to deceive people; a person who pretends to be something they are not
15. sl__g phrases *n.* informal or non-standard language that is often used within a specific group or culture and may not be considered appropriate in a professional or formal context

ANSWERS: 8. amuse, 9. repertoire, 10. typewriter, 11. abbey, 12. thigh, 13. mundane, 14. sham, 15. slang

16. cooking rep_____re *n.* the range or variety of skills, abilities, performances, or works that a person or group is capable of producing or performing; the entire body of works that is available to an individual or group to choose from when performing or producing something
17. sc_____e of AIDS *n.* a person or thing that causes great suffering or destruction; (verb) to punish someone severely
18. wi_____l feeling *adj.* expressing a feeling of vague, sad, or inconsolable longing
19. pr_____ic politics *adj.* practical rather than idealistic
20. inc_____ent for shopping *adj.* causing trouble or difficulty; not convenient or suitable
21. turn out to be all s__m *n.* something that is not as good or true as it seems to be and is intended to deceive people; a person who pretends to be something they are not
22. go through a mir_____us change *adj.* very effective or lucky, or completely unexpected
23. bursting out gu____ws *v.* to laugh loudly and boisterously, often in a somewhat uncontrolled manner; (noun) a loud and boisterous laugh
24. sh__f of papers *n.* a bundle or stack of objects, typically tied together, in particular, a bundle of cut stalks of grain or other plants
25. an em_____nt republic *adj.* starting to exist or view, or to become known

ANSWERS: 16. repertoire, 17. scourge, 18. wistful, 19. pragmatic, 20. inconvenient, 21. sham, 22. miraculous, 23. guffaw, 24. sheaf, 25. emergent

26. pr_____ic approach *adj.* practical rather than idealistic
27. electronic bla_____rd *n.* a large board made of a smooth, usually dark-colored slate attached to a wall used by teachers in schools for writing on with chalk
28. 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
29. em_____nt repair of an aorta *adj.* starting to exist or view, or to become known
30. 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
31. write in sh_____nd *n.* a system of rapid handwriting or abbreviation that uses symbols, abbreviations, or other devices to represent words or phrases; a short and simple way of expressing or describing something
32. college do_____ry *n.* a large room or building that provides sleeping quarters for multiple people, typically students or workers, often in separate beds or cubicles
33. a mir_____us encounter *adj.* very effective or lucky, or completely unexpected
34. ba__y sweatpants *adj.* loose-fitting or puffed out in shape, typically about clothing

ANSWERS: 26. pragmatic, 27. blackboard, 28. electrify, 29. emergent, 30. electrify, 31. shorthand, 32. dormitory, 33. miraculous, 34. baggy

35. full of em____y *n.* the ability to share another person's feelings or experiences by imagining that person's situation
36. pu_____te a sentence *v.* to insert punctuation marks (= comma, period, colon, etc.) in the text; to interrupt periodically
37. con_____ly aware of a problem *adv.* with awareness; in a deliberate manner
38. learn sh_____nd *n.* a system of rapid handwriting or abbreviation that uses symbols, abbreviations, or other devices to represent words or phrases; a short and simple way of expressing or describing something
39. am__e a baby with a rattle *v.* to entertain or divert the mind; to make someone laugh
40. minority di_____t *n.* a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics
41. sa__y port *n.* a sudden, impulsive outing or excursion; a witty or clever remark
42. em____y for patients *n.* the ability to share another person's feelings or experiences by imagining that person's situation
43. mu_____e objects *adj.* very ordinary and therefore lacking interest or excitement
44. shared do_____ry *n.* a large room or building that provides sleeping quarters for multiple people, typically students or workers, often in separate beds or cubicles

ANSWERS: 35. empathy, 36. punctuate, 37. consciously, 38. shorthand, 39. amuse, 40. dialect, 41. sally, 42. empathy, 43. mundane, 44. dormitory

45. Internet sl__g *n.* informal or non-standard language that is often used within a specific group or culture and may not be considered appropriate in a professional or formal context
46. stop my hi___p *n.* an involuntary movement of the muscles of the diaphragm and chest that causes a sudden intake of breath with a sound similar to a "hiccup"
47. sa__y of wit *n.* a sudden, impulsive outing or excursion; a witty or clever remark
48. foreign li____st *n.* a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics
49. in a wi____l mood *adj.* expressing a feeling of vague, sad, or inconsolable longing
50. face an inc_____ent truth *adj.* causing trouble or difficulty; not convenient or suitable
51. br__e force *n.* a violent, wild, or feral animal; a person who is cruel, uncivilized, or lacking in intelligence or sensitivity; a physical force or power
52. ba__y sweater *adj.* loose-fitting or puffed out in shape, typically about clothing
53. br__e beasts *n.* a violent, wild, or feral animal; a person who is cruel, uncivilized, or lacking in intelligence or sensitivity; a physical force or power
54. sh__f of wheat *n.* a bundle or stack of objects, typically tied together, in particular, a bundle of cut stalks of grain or other plants

ANSWERS: 45. slang, 46. hiccup, 47. sally, 48. linguist, 49. wistful, 50. inconvenient, 51. brute, 52. baggy, 53. brute, 54. sheaf

55. gu___w loudly *v.* to laugh loudly and boisterously, often in a somewhat uncontrolled manner; (noun) a loud and boisterous laugh
56. th__h muscle *n.* the part of the human leg between the hip and the knee; in animals, the corresponding upper part of the hind leg
57. a local di____t *n.* a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics
58. bring a sc_____e under control *n.* a person or thing that causes great suffering or destruction; (verb) to punish someone severely
59. act con_____ly *adv.* with awareness; in a deliberate manner
60. te_____ph wires *n.* a method of long-distance transmission of messages by electrical or radio signals
61. chalk on a bla_____rd *n.* a large board made of a smooth, usually dark-colored slate attached to a wall used by teachers in schools for writing on with chalk
62. the cause of hi___ps *n.* an involuntary movement of the muscles of the diaphragm and chest that causes a sudden intake of breath with a sound similar to a "hiccup"

ANSWERS: 55. guffaw, 56. thigh, 57. dialect, 58. scourge, 59. consciously, 60. telegraph, 61. blackboard, 62. hiccup

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. Though I love literature, I'm a bad _____.
n. a person who speaks several foreign languages; a person who studies or teaches languages or linguistics

2. He was a _____ leader who made decisions based on what was practical rather than ideal.
adj. practical rather than idealistic

3. He _____ with delight when he heard the news.
v. to laugh loudly and boisterously, often in a somewhat uncontrolled manner;
(noun) a loud and boisterous laugh

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 data he prepared was completely _____.
n. something that is not as good or true as it seems to be and is intended to deceive people; a person who pretends to be something they are not

6. I prefer _____ clothes to tight-fitting ones.
adj. loose-fitting or puffed out in shape, typically about clothing

7. The _____ loud calls echo through the forest, announcing their territories to rival groups.
n. a type of small to medium-sized ape found in the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, known for their long arms, agile movement, and distinct vocalizations

ANSWERS: 1. linguist, 2. pragmatic, 3. guffawed, 4. electrify, 5. sham, 6. baggy, 7. gibbons'

8. It was _____ for her to go out of her way to pick up the package.
adj. causing trouble or difficulty; not convenient or suitable
9. _____ is also necessary to understand history.
n. the ability to share another person's feelings or experiences by imagining that person's situation
10. The venerable _____ was founded in the 12th century.
n. a monastery or convent, especially for monks or nuns
11. The _____ behavior of the football players caused the game to be canceled.
n. a violent, wild, or feral animal; a person who is cruel, uncivilized, or lacking in intelligence or sensitivity; a physical force or power
12. He _____ himself by playing video games during his free time.
v. to entertain or divert the mind; to make someone laugh
13. The protesters made a sudden _____ into the town square, surprising everyone.
n. a sudden, impulsive outing or excursion; a witty or clever remark
14. Strikes had also _____ the preceding weeks.
v. to insert punctuation marks (= comma, period, colon, etc.) in the text; to interrupt periodically
15. The chef's _____ of dishes includes both classic and innovative recipes.
n. the range or variety of skills, abilities, performances, or works that a person or group is capable of producing or performing; the entire body of works that is available to an individual or group to choose from when performing or producing something

ANSWERS: 8. inconvenient, 9. Empathy, 10. abbey, 11. brute, 12. amused, 13. sally, 14. punctuated, 15. repertoire

16. The marathon runner felt a cramp in her _____ at the 20th mile.
n. the part of the human leg between the hip and the knee; in animals, the corresponding upper part of the hind leg
17. The _____ service was interrupted for a while.
n. a method of long-distance transmission of messages by electrical or radio signals
18. Extensive areas of _____ plants are usually called marsh.
adj. starting to exist or view, or to become known
19. The secretary's _____ was so good that she could type up meeting minutes within minutes.
n. a system of rapid handwriting or abbreviation that uses symbols, abbreviations, or other devices to represent words or phrases; a short and simple way of expressing or describing something
20. 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
21. After returning from the war, he had a pretty _____ life.
adj. very ordinary and therefore lacking interest or excitement
22. He made a _____ recovery.
adj. very effective or lucky, or completely unexpected
23. The girls' _____ had a strict curfew of 11 p.m.
n. a large room or building that provides sleeping quarters for multiple people, typically students or workers, often in separate beds or cubicles

ANSWERS: 16. thigh, 17. telegraph, 18. emergent, 19. shorthand, 20. typewriter, 21. mundane, 22. miraculous, 23. dormitory

24. The _____ spoken in the region differed from other parts of the country.
n. a form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area or by a particular group of people and has distinguishing characteristics
25. He _____ criticizes her in the publicity.
adv. with awareness; in a deliberate manner
26. The teacher asked me to rub out the _____.
n. a large board made of a smooth, usually dark-colored slate attached to a wall used by teachers in schools for writing on with chalk
27. He had a _____ look in his eyes as he remembered the past.
adj. expressing a feeling of vague, sad, or inconsolable longing
28. The _____ lasted for hours and were driving him crazy.
n. an involuntary movement of the muscles of the diaphragm and chest that causes a sudden intake of breath with a sound similar to a "hiccup"
29. The farmer took a _____ of hay from the barn.
n. a bundle or stack of objects, typically tied together, in particular, a bundle of cut stalks of grain or other plants
30. The plague was a _____ that killed millions of people.
n. a person or thing that causes great suffering or destruction; (verb) to punish someone severely
31. A lot of _____ words and phrases were popularized by hip-hop music.
n. informal or non-standard language that is often used within a specific group or culture and may not be considered appropriate in a professional or formal context

ANSWERS: 24. dialect, 25. consciously, 26. blackboard, 27. wistful, 28. hiccups, 29. sheaf, 30. scourge, 31. slang

ANSWERS: