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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Greg Asner: Ecology from the air | TED Talk

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Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

savannah

n. a mixed forest and grassland ecosystem where the trees are far enough apart that the canopy doesn't close

synonym : grassland, plain

(1) **savannah** region, (2) tropical **savannah**

The birds live in tropical forests, **savannahs**, and arid semi-desert environments.

airborne

adj. moved or conveyed by or through the air; in the air

synonym : flying, aerial, floating

(1) **airborne** troop, (2) **airborne** particles

The amount of **airborne** pollen this year is higher than usual.

impala

n. a medium-sized, fast-running antelope native to Africa, known for its reddish-brown coat, slender body, and long, spiral horns

synonym : antelope, gazelle, deer

(1) grazing **impala**, (2) male **impala**

We saw a beautiful herd of **impala** grazing in the African savannah.

obstruct

v. to block or interfere with the passage, movement, or action of something or someone

synonym : block, impede, hinder

(1) **obstruct** an airway, (2) **obstruct** a bill

The road was blocked by a fallen tree, **obstructing** the path for all vehicles.

ambush

n. the act of hiding and waiting for someone before the sudden attack

synonym: trap, surprise, lure

(1) attacking from **ambush**, (2) **ambush** marketing

Armed police officers lay in **ambush** in front of the criminal's house.

spook

v. to frighten or scare, and often provoke into violent action; (noun) someone unpleasantly strange or eccentric; ghost

synonym: frighten, scare, discomfort

(1) **spook** the fish, (2) **spook** the children

The bankruptcy of that company **spooked** markets.

ironic

adj. using words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal or usual meaning, often for humorous or rhetorical effect

synonym: sarcastic, wry, sardonic

(1) **ironic** result, (2) an **ironic** turn of events

It was **ironic** that the heavy rain started just as they set up for an outdoor picnic.

ecologist

n. a person who studies the relationships between living organisms and their environment; the state of being outside or directed toward or relating to the outside or exterior

synonym: conservationist, naturalist

(1) behavioral **ecologist**, (2) forestry **ecologist**

The forestry **ecologist** studied the interactions between the different species in the forest's ecosystem.

obsess

v. to fill the mind of someone continually so that one can't think of anything else

synonym: torment, beset, engross

(1) **obsess** over her weight, (2) he is **obsessed** with the fear

He's utterly **obsessed** with his promotion.

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.

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.

spectrometer

n. a scientific device used to measure the properties of light or other radiation, often used in chemistry and physics to analyze the composition of materials

synonym: spectroscope, analyzer, detector

(1) **spectrometer** measurement, (2) optical **spectrometer**

The infrared **spectrometer** helped identify the chemical composition of the sample.

rainforest

n. a forest rich in biodiversity that is generally found in tropical settings with heavy annual rainfall

(1) **rainforest** destruction, (2) tropical **rainforest**

The destruction of the **rainforest** is a ticking time bomb for the Earth.

kaleidoscope

n. a toy or optical instrument made up of mirrors and pieces of colored glass or plastic, which produce changing patterns and images when rotated; a constantly changing succession of different things or events

(1) **kaleidoscope** of cultures, (2) **kaleidoscope** pattern

The **kaleidoscope** of colors in the sunset was breathtaking.

vantage

n. a position or place that provides a commanding or advantageous view or perspective; a favorable position or advantage

synonym: advantage, benefit, edge

(1) strategic **vantage**, (2) gain a **vantage**

From our **vantage** point, we could see the whole city skyline.

deforest

v. to clear an area of forest or trees

synonym: clear-cut, strip, denude

(1) **deforest** a mountain, (2) **deforest** millions of acres

The company planned to **deforest** a large rainforest area to make way for a new plantation.

faraway

adj. located at a geographically distant place; remote or separated by distance; distant or not easily accessible

synonym: distant, remote, far-off

(1) **faraway** land, (2) **faraway** dream

The view from the **faraway** hilltop was breathtakingly beautiful.

cathedral

n. the main Christian church of a bishop's diocese, which is often the largest and most important church in the area

synonym: church, basilica, temple

(1) **cathedral** school, (2) **cathedral** choir

The **cathedral's** stained glass windows depicted scenes from the Bible.

floodplain

n. an area of flat land adjacent to a river or stream that is subject to periodic flooding

synonym: lowland, swamp, delta

(1) **floodplain** area, (2) **floodplain** management

The town was built on a **floodplain**, making it vulnerable to natural disasters.

devastation

n. the act of causing great destruction or damage, often on a large scale

synonym : destruction, ruin, havoc

(1) financial **devastation**, (2) **devastation** to life

The economic recession caused **devastation** in the housing market, with many people losing their homes.

swamp

n. an area of low-lying land that is flooded or saturated with water, often having a growth of natural vegetation

synonym : marsh, mire, bog

(1) muddy **swamp**, (2) **swamp** tour

The lowland **swamp** was full of dangerous animals and poisonous plants.

watery

adj. full of or containing water; wet

synonym : liquid, wet, damp

(1) a **watery** fluid, (2) go to a **watery** grave

The soup was too **watery** and needed more flavor.

akin

adj. similar or related in nature, character, or origin

synonym : similar, related, alike

(1) **akin** to anger, (2) **akin** to the prior experiences

Her interests are **akin** to mine.

lowland

n. low-lying country or region

synonym : marshland

(1) **lowland** crop, (2) **lowland** swamp

Much of our territory is located in the **lowland**.

unexplored

adj. not yet examined, investigated, or studied; lacking in knowledge or information; unknown or undiscovered

synonym : uncharted, undiscovered, untapped

(1) **unexplored** ideas, (2) **unexplored** cave

There are many **unexplored** regions of the ocean that scientists hope to study soon.

gash

n. a deep cut or wound, especially in the skin
synonym: cut, wound, laceration

(1) **gash** wound, (2) straight **gash**

He received a deep **gash** on his leg from the accident.

specie

n. coins or notes in a currency, as distinct from paper money; a chemical substance or group made up of identical molecules

synonym: coinage, mintage

(1) **specie** reserve, (2) ground-state **specie**

The store only accepts payment in cash, no credit or debit cards, only **specie**.

pockmark

n. a small pit or indentation on the surface of something, particularly on the skin or on a surface that has been scarred or damaged

synonym: blemish, scar, pit

(1) **pockmark** scars, (2) acne **pockmarks**

The small **pockmark** on her face was hardly noticeable.

spectroscope

n. an optical instrument used for spectrographic analysis (= measurement of properties of light over a specific portion of the electromagnetic spectrum)

(1) infrared **spectroscope**, (2) Fourier **spectroscope**

An X-ray **spectroscope** can determine the composition of the elements in a sample.

pivotal

adj. relating to or acting as a pivot or central point; crucial or essential to the success or outcome of something

synonym: crucial, essential, important

(1) **pivotal** moment, (2) **pivotal** role

The CEO's decision was **pivotal** in the success of the company's expansion plans.

foreground

n. the part of a view, picture, etc., that is nearest to the viewer

(1) **foreground** segmentation, (2) **foreground** galaxy

A happy group of friends occupies the **foreground** of the picture.

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.

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.

nuanced

adj. characterized by subtle differences in appearance, meaning, sound, etc.

synonym: fine, subtle, slight

(1) **nuanced** view, (2) the common but **nuanced** opinion

The sommelier can distinguish **nuanced** variance in the flavor of the wine.

apex

n. the highest point or tip of something

synonym: summit, peak, zenith

(1) **apex** predator, (2) **apex** position

The company reached the **apex** of success in the market.

predator

n. an animal whose natural behavior is to prey on others

synonym: vulture, bloodsucker

(1) apex **predator**, (2) sexual **predators**

The native South American animals were in danger because of the **predator's** arrival.

Session 2: Spelling

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. s__r to new heights | <i>v.</i> to fly or rise very high or to a great height, often with great grace or ease |
| 2. muddy sw__p | <i>n.</i> an area of low-lying land that is flooded or saturated with water, often having a growth of natural vegetation |
| 3. apex pr____or | <i>n.</i> an animal whose natural behavior is to prey on others |
| 4. ob____ct a bill | <i>v.</i> to block or interfere with the passage, movement, or action of something or someone |
| 5. he is ob__sed with the fear | <i>v.</i> to fill the mind of someone continually so that one can't think of anything else |
| 6. a__n to the prior experiences | <i>adj.</i> similar or related in nature, character, or origin |
| 7. gain a va____e | <i>n.</i> a position or place that provides a commanding or advantageous view or perspective; a favorable position or advantage |
| 8. forestry ec____st | <i>n.</i> a person who studies the relationships between living organisms and their environment; the state of being outside or directed toward or relating to the outside or exterior |
| 9. une____ed ideas | <i>adj.</i> not yet examined, investigated, or studied; lacking in knowledge or information; unknown or undiscovered |

ANSWERS: 1. soar, 2. swamp, 3. predator, 4. obstruct, 5. obsess, 6. akin, 7. vantage, 8. ecologist, 9. unexplored

10. tropical sa____ah *n.* a mixed forest and grassland ecosystem where the trees are far enough apart that the canopy doesn't close
11. sp___e reserve *n.* coins or notes in a currency, as distinct from paper money; a chemical substance or group made up of identical molecules
12. grazing im___a *n.* a medium-sized, fast-running antelope native to Africa, known for its reddish-brown coat, slender body, and long, spiral horns
13. ai____ne troop *adj.* moved or conveyed by or through the air; in the air
14. space obs_____ry *n.* a building designed and equipped to observe the planets, the stars, the weather, etc.
15. a__x position *n.* the highest point or tip of something
16. fa____y land *adj.* located at a geographically distant place; remote or separated by distance; distant or not easily accessible
17. company mo__o *n.* a phrase or slogan that expresses a guiding principle or goal
18. straight g__h *n.* a deep cut or wound, especially in the skin
19. ca____al choir *n.* the main Christian church of a bishop's diocese, which is often the largest and most important church in the area
20. Fourier spe_____ope *n.* an optical instrument used for spectrographic analysis (= measurement of properties of light over a specific portion of the electromagnetic spectrum)

ANSWERS: 10. savannah, 11. specie, 12. impala, 13. airborne, 14. observatory, 15. apex, 16. faraway, 17. motto, 18. gash, 19. cathedral, 20. spectroscope

21. male im__a *n.* a medium-sized, fast-running antelope native to Africa, known for its reddish-brown coat, slender body, and long, spiral horns
22. lo___d crop *n.* low-lying country or region
23. une_____ed cave *adj.* not yet examined, investigated, or studied; lacking in knowledge or information; unknown or undiscovered
24. fa_____y dream *adj.* located at a geographically distant place; remote or separated by distance; distant or not easily accessible
25. de_____st a mountain *v.* to clear an area of forest or trees
26. the mo__o for safe traffic *n.* a phrase or slogan that expresses a guiding principle or goal
27. g__h wound *n.* a deep cut or wound, especially in the skin
28. ir___c result *adj.* using words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal or usual meaning, often for humorous or rhetorical effect
29. sw__p tour *n.* an area of low-lying land that is flooded or saturated with water, often having a growth of natural vegetation
30. a wa___y fluid *adj.* full of or containing water; wet
31. kal_____ope of cultures *n.* a toy or optical instrument made up of mirrors and pieces of colored glass or plastic, which produce changing patterns and images when rotated; a constantly changing succession of different things or events

ANSWERS: 21. impala, 22. lowland, 23. unexplored, 24. faraway, 25. deforest, 26. motto, 27. gash, 28. ironic, 29. swamp, 30. watery, 31. kaleidoscope

32. flo_____in area *n.* an area of flat land adjacent to a river or stream that is subject to periodic flooding
33. nu_____d view *adj.* characterized by subtle differences in appearance, meaning, sound, etc.
34. behavioral ec_____st *n.* a person who studies the relationships between living organisms and their environment; the state of being outside or directed toward or relating to the outside or exterior
35. tropical rai_____st *n.* a forest rich in biodiversity that is generally found in tropical settings with heavy annual rainfall
36. pi_____l moment *adj.* relating to or acting as a pivot or central point; crucial or essential to the success or outcome of something
37. kal_____ope pattern *n.* a toy or optical instrument made up of mirrors and pieces of colored glass or plastic, which produce changing patterns and images when rotated; a constantly changing succession of different things or events
38. attacking from am_____h *n.* the act of hiding and waiting for someone before the sudden attack
39. sp__k the fish *v.* to frighten or scare, and often provoke into violent action; (noun) someone unpleasantly strange or eccentric; ghost
40. de_____st millions of acres *v.* to clear an area of forest or trees
41. s__r in popularity *v.* to fly or rise very high or to a great height, often with great grace or ease

ANSWERS: 32. floodplain, 33. nuanced, 34. ecologist, 35. rainforest, 36. pivotal, 37. kaleidoscope, 38. ambush, 39. spook, 40. deforest, 41. soar

42. ob____ct an airway *v.* to block or interfere with the passage, movement, or action of something or someone
43. flo_____in management *n.* an area of flat land adjacent to a river or stream that is subject to periodic flooding
44. financial dev_____on *n.* the act of causing great destruction or damage, often on a large scale
45. lo____d swamp *n.* low-lying country or region
46. sa____ah region *n.* a mixed forest and grassland ecosystem where the trees are far enough apart that the canopy doesn't close
47. the common but nu____d opinion *adj.* characterized by subtle differences in appearance, meaning, sound, etc.
48. dev_____on to life *n.* the act of causing great destruction or damage, often on a large scale
49. optical spe_____ter *n.* a scientific device used to measure the properties of light or other radiation, often used in chemistry and physics to analyze the composition of materials
50. a__x predator *n.* the highest point or tip of something
51. a__n to anger *adj.* similar or related in nature, character, or origin
52. an op_____ne remark *adj.* suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose
53. ground-state sp____e *n.* coins or notes in a currency, as distinct from paper money; a chemical substance or group made up of identical molecules

ANSWERS: 42. obstruct, 43. floodplain, 44. devastation, 45. lowland, 46. savannah, 47. nuanced, 48. devastation, 49. spectrometer, 50. apex, 51. akin, 52. opportune, 53. specie

54. strategic va_____e *n.* a position or place that provides a commanding or advantageous view or perspective; a favorable position or advantage
55. sexual pr_____ors *n.* an animal whose natural behavior is to prey on others
56. rai_____st destruction *n.* a forest rich in biodiversity that is generally found in tropical settings with heavy annual rainfall
57. op_____ne occasion *adj.* suitable or happening at a time that is suitable or convenient for a particular purpose
58. an ir___c turn of events *adj.* using words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal or usual meaning, often for humorous or rhetorical effect
59. infrared spe_____ope *n.* an optical instrument used for spectrographic analysis (= measurement of properties of light over a specific portion of the electromagnetic spectrum)
60. for_____nd segmentation *n.* the part of a view, picture, etc., that is nearest to the viewer
61. am___h marketing *n.* the act of hiding and waiting for someone before the sudden attack
62. acne po_____rks *n.* a small pit or indentation on the surface of something, particularly on the skin or on a surface that has been scarred or damaged

ANSWERS: 54. vantage, 55. predator, 56. rainforest, 57. opportune, 58. ironic, 59. spectroscope, 60. foreground, 61. ambush, 62. pockmark

63. ca_____al school *n.* the main Christian church of a bishop's diocese, which is often the largest and most important church in the area
64. sp__k the children *v.* to frighten or scare, and often provoke into violent action; (noun) someone unpleasantly strange or eccentric; ghost
65. ob___s over her weight *v.* to fill the mind of someone continually so that one can't think of anything else
66. ai_____ne particles *adj.* moved or conveyed by or through the air; in the air
67. a meteorological obs_____ry *n.* a building designed and equipped to observe the planets, the stars, the weather, etc.
68. spe_____ter measurement *n.* a scientific device used to measure the properties of light or other radiation, often used in chemistry and physics to analyze the composition of materials
69. go to a wa___y grave *adj.* full of or containing water; wet
70. pi_____l role *adj.* relating to or acting as a pivot or central point; crucial or essential to the success or outcome of something
71. for_____nd galaxy *n.* the part of a view, picture, etc., that is nearest to the viewer
72. po_____rk scars *n.* a small pit or indentation on the surface of something, particularly on the skin or on a surface that has been scarred or damaged

ANSWERS: 63. cathedral, 64. spook, 65. obsess, 66. airborne, 67. observatory, 68. spectrometer, 69. watery, 70. pivotal, 71. foreground, 72. pockmark

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. The _____ stained glass windows depicted scenes from the Bible.
 - n.* the main Christian church of a bishop's diocese, which is often the largest and most important church in the area

2. The lowland _____ was full of dangerous animals and poisonous plants.
 - n.* an area of low-lying land that is flooded or saturated with water, often having a growth of natural vegetation

3. The _____ of colors in the sunset was breathtaking.
 - n.* a toy or optical instrument made up of mirrors and pieces of colored glass or plastic, which produce changing patterns and images when rotated; a constantly changing succession of different things or events

4. That astronomical _____ stands at the top of the mountain.
 - n.* a building designed and equipped to observe the planets, the stars, the weather, etc.

5. The bankruptcy of that company _____ markets.
 - v.* to frighten or scare, and often provoke into violent action; (noun) someone unpleasantly strange or eccentric; ghost

6. From our _____ point, we could see the whole city skyline.
 - n.* a position or place that provides a commanding or advantageous view or perspective; a favorable position or advantage

7. The infrared _____ helped identify the chemical composition of the sample.
 - n.* a scientific device used to measure the properties of light or other radiation, often used in chemistry and physics to analyze the composition of materials

ANSWERS: 1. cathedral's, 2. swamp, 3. kaleidoscope, 4. observatory, 5. spooked, 6. vantage, 7. spectrometer

8. The company planned to _____ a large rainforest area to make way for a new plantation.
- v.* to clear an area of forest or trees
9. 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
10. The small _____ on her face was hardly noticeable.
- n.* a small pit or indentation on the surface of something, particularly on the skin or on a surface that has been scarred or damaged
11. The company reached the _____ of success in the market.
- n.* the highest point or tip of something
12. There are many _____ regions of the ocean that scientists hope to study soon.
- adj.* not yet examined, investigated, or studied; lacking in knowledge or information; unknown or undiscovered
13. 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
14. We saw a beautiful herd of _____ grazing in the African savannah.
- n.* a medium-sized, fast-running antelope native to Africa, known for its reddish-brown coat, slender body, and long, spiral horns
15. Armed police officers lay in _____ in front of the criminal's house.
- n.* the act of hiding and waiting for someone before the sudden attack

ANSWERS: 8. deforest, 9. motto, 10. pockmark, 11. apex, 12. unexplored, 13. soared, 14. impala, 15. ambush

16. The economic recession caused _____ in the housing market, with many people losing their homes.
n. the act of causing great destruction or damage, often on a large scale
17. The native South American animals were in danger because of the _____ arrival.
n. an animal whose natural behavior is to prey on others
18. Her interests are _____ to mine.
adj. similar or related in nature, character, or origin
19. Much of our territory is located in the _____.
n. low-lying country or region
20. The birds live in tropical forests, _____ and arid semi-desert environments.
n. a mixed forest and grassland ecosystem where the trees are far enough apart that the canopy doesn't close
21. The destruction of the _____ is a ticking time bomb for the Earth.
n. a forest rich in biodiversity that is generally found in tropical settings with heavy annual rainfall
22. An X-ray _____ can determine the composition of the elements in a sample.
n. an optical instrument used for spectrographic analysis (= measurement of properties of light over a specific portion of the electromagnetic spectrum)
23. He received a deep _____ on his leg from the accident.
n. a deep cut or wound, especially in the skin

ANSWERS: 16. devastation, 17. predator's, 18. akin, 19. lowland, 20. savannahs, 21. rainforest, 22. spectroscope, 23. gash

24. The amount of _____ pollen this year is higher than usual.

adj. moved or conveyed by or through the air; in the air

25. The soup was too _____ and needed more flavor.

adj. full of or containing water; wet

26. A happy group of friends occupies the _____ of the picture.

n. the part of a view, picture, etc., that is nearest to the viewer

27. The town was built on a _____ making it vulnerable to natural disasters.

n. an area of flat land adjacent to a river or stream that is subject to periodic flooding

28. The phone rang at the most _____ time.

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

29. The CEO's decision was _____ in the success of the company's expansion plans.

adj. relating to or acting as a pivot or central point; crucial or essential to the success or outcome of something

30. The sommelier can distinguish _____ variance in the flavor of the wine.

adj. characterized by subtle differences in appearance, meaning, sound, etc.

31. It was _____ that the heavy rain started just as they set up for an outdoor picnic.

adj. using words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal or usual meaning, often for humorous or rhetorical effect

ANSWERS: 24. airborne, 25. watery, 26. foreground, 27. floodplain, 28. opportune, 29. pivotal, 30. nuanced, 31. ironic

32. The road was blocked by a fallen tree, _____ the path for all vehicles.
v. to block or interfere with the passage, movement, or action of something or someone
33. He's utterly _____ with his promotion.
v. to fill the mind of someone continually so that one can't think of anything else
34. The view from the _____ hilltop was breathtakingly beautiful.
adj. located at a geographically distant place; remote or separated by distance; distant or not easily accessible
35. The forestry _____ studied the interactions between the different species in the forest's ecosystem.
n. a person who studies the relationships between living organisms and their environment; the state of being outside or directed toward or relating to the outside or exterior
36. The store only accepts payment in cash, no credit or debit cards, only _____.
n. coins or notes in a currency, as distinct from paper money; a chemical substance or group made up of identical molecules

ANSWERS: 32. obstructing, 33. obsessed, 34. faraway, 35. ecologist, 36. specie