

# Englist.me



## Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

David Kwong: Two nerdy obsessions meet -- and it's magic | TED Talk

[https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_kwong\\_two\\_nerdy\\_obsessions\\_meet\\_and\\_it\\_s\\_magic](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_kwong_two_nerdy_obsessions_meet_and_it_s_magic)

### 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

### magician

*n.* a person who performs magic tricks or illusions to entertain an audience; typically involves sleight of hand or deception to create seemingly impossible or supernatural effects

*synonym* : illusionist, conjurer, wizard

(1) **magician's** hat, (2) street **magician**

The children were delighted with the **magician's** clever tricks.

### crossword

*n.* a word puzzle consisting of a grid of black and white squares and blanks into which words crossing vertically and horizontally are written according to clues

(1) do a **crossword** puzzle, (2) good at **crossword** puzzles

He sat frowning over a **crossword** puzzle.

### nerd

*n.* a person who is very interested in and knowledgeable about a particular subject such as computers, mathematics, chess, etc.

*synonym* : geek, techie, wonk

(1) a computer **nerd**, (2) **nerd** neck

He was, by nature, a cyber **nerd**.

### scrabble

*v.* to scratch or scrape at something with one's hands or claws frantically or desperately; to arrange or rearrange

letter tiles to form words in a game of Scrabble (= a popular word game using a 15x15 square board and letter tiles) or a similar word game

*synonym* : scramble, jumble, mix

(1) **scrabble** through her purse, (2) **scrabble** words

The kids eagerly **scrabbled** to find the hidden Easter eggs in the garden.

## cafeteria

*n.* a restaurant where customers serve themselves from a counter and pay for what they have taken, often found in factories, colleges, hospitals, etc.

*synonym* : canteen, mess hall, restaurant

(1) **cafeteria** lunch, (2) office **cafeteria**

The university's **cafeteria** was busy with students and staff grabbing a quick lunch.

## solver

*n.* a thinker who finds an answer to a problem or a difficult situation; a piece of software or the algorithm that solves a mathematical problem

*synonym* : thinker

(1) puzzle- **solver**, (2) linear **solver**

The flow **solver** is validated against the experiment.

## primal

*adj.* of or relating to the earliest stage of development; fundamental; primitive

*synonym* : original, fundamental, basic

(1) **primal** eras, (2) **primal** fear

The **primal** instincts of the animal kicked in when it was threatened.

## disrupt

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

*synonym* : interrupt, disturb, break into

(1) **disrupt** a well-ordered condition, (2) **disrupt** sleep

I'm so sorry to **disrupt** you when you're pretty busy.

## infancy

*n.* the state or period of being a baby or very young child  
*synonym*: childhood, babyhood, juvenescence

(1) **infancy** stage, (2) in early **infancy**

The technology is still in its **infancy** and has much room for improvement.

## tangram

*n.* a Chinese puzzle made up of a square divided into seven pieces (five triangles, a square, and a parallelogram) that are used to create various shapes without overlapping

*synonym*: puzzle, dissection, silhouette game

(1) **tangram** shape, (2) geometric **tangram**

The teacher asked the students to create an animal using the **tangram** pieces.

## jumble

*v.* to mix or mingle various items, objects, or ideas together in a disordered or confused way, often resulting in a messy or chaotic situation; to create a disorderly or confusing arrangement of things

*synonym*: mix, scramble, mess up

(1) **jumble** in some herbs and spices, (2) **jumble** together different colors

The children **jumbled** up the puzzle pieces and had to start over.

## jigsaw

*n.* a tool with a fine-toothed blade used for cutting intricate curves and patterns in thin material such as wood or metal, typically with the blade being reciprocating; a type of puzzle that consists of irregularly shaped pieces that must be fitted together to form a complete picture

*synonym*: fretsaw, puzzle

(1) **jigsaw** puzzle, (2) **jigsaw** woodworking

The **jigsaw** blade needs to be changed before we can continue the project.

## decode

*v.* to convert something, such as a message or piece of information, from a specific form into one that you can

understand

*synonym*: decipher, translate, interpret

(1) **decode** a message, (2) ability to **decode** the differences

The software could **decode** the encrypted data and reveal the hidden information.

## quixotic

*adj.* exceedingly idealistic or unrealistic; marked by extravagantly chivalrous pursuits and romantic ideals; impractical or unworkable

*synonym*: idealistic, impractical, unrealistic

(1) **quixotic** adventure, (2) **quixotic** dream

The politician's **quixotic** campaign promise to end all poverty was met with skepticism.

## nod

*v.* to lower and raise one's head, sometimes several times, as to show approval, agreement, greeting, or confirmation

*synonym*: respond, acknowledge, greet

(1) **nod** at each other, (2) **nod** courteously

She **noded** quietly in response to the question.

## applause

*n.* a demonstration of approval or praise by clapping the hands together

*synonym*: clapping, cheering, acclaim

(1) round of **applause**, (2) earn **applause**

The **applause** burst from the audience.

## 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.

## envelop

*v.* to surround and cover completely; to encase

*synonym*: wrap, cover, surround

(1) **envelop** the whole world, (2) **envelop** her in a bear hug

The fog **enveloped** the city, making it difficult to see.

- owl** *n.* a nocturnal bird of prey with large eyes, a facial disc, and typically a loud hooting call  
*synonym* : raptor, bird of prey, nocturnal bird  
(1) a night **owl**, (2) an **owl** hooted  
The snowy **owl** is a large, white bird often seen in the Arctic.
- donkey** *n.* a domesticated mammal related to the horse, similar in appearance but with longer ears and a shorter mane; a foolish or stupid person  
*synonym* : horse, burro, mule  
(1) male **donkey**, (2) **donkey** ride  
The little boy rode the **donkey** at the county fair.
- rooster** *n.* a male chicken, especially one that is adult; a bird that has a distinctive red comb, wattle, and crowing call  
*synonym* : cock, chicken, hen  
(1) bantam **rooster**, (2) **rooster** fight  
The **rooster's** crow woke up the farmer every morning at sunrise.
- ox** *n.* a large domesticated mammal, commonly used for draft purposes, with two broad horns and a heavyset body  
*synonym* : cow, bullock, steer  
(1) **ox** cart, (2) water **ox**  
The sacrifice of an **ox** was a common religious ritual in ancient cultures.
- cobalt** *n.* a lustrous, hard, silver-white element with the symbol Co that is often used in alloys, batteries, and pigments and is essential for certain biological processes in humans and other organisms  
*synonym* : Co  
(1) **cobalt** steel, (2) **cobalt** blue  
The blades of gas turbine engines are often coated with a **cobalt** layer to improve their durability.

## emerald

*adj.* having a deep, rich green color, like that of an emerald gemstone

*synonym* : green, verdant, jade

(1) an **emerald** gem, (2) **emerald** ring

The **emerald** green dress caught everyone's eye at the party.

## scribble

*v.* to write or draw carelessly and in a hurry

*synonym* : scabble, scrawl, jot

(1) **scribble** on paper, (2) **scribble** notes

The words were **scribbled** in pencil.

## recap

*v.* to repeat or summarize what has been said, decided, etc.

*synonym* : outline, summarize, abstract

(1) **recap** key points, (2) **recap** briefly

Let me quickly **recap** these results.

## indelible

*adj.* cannot be removed, erased, or forgot

*synonym* : enduring, lasting, unforgettable

(1) an **indelible** ink, (2) an **indelible** disgrace

She left an **indelible** mark on our country's literature.

## sect

*n.* a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream

*synonym* : group, faction, cult

(1) **sect** beliefs, (2) secret **sect**

The minority **sect** believed in a set of unconventional religious practices.

## corruptible

*adj.* capable of being made to do something dishonest or immoral

*synonym* : bribable, dishonest, venal

(1) **corruptible** officials, (2) **corruptible** judges

Bureaucracies are more **corruptible** than other systems or organizations.

## Session 2: Spelling

1. bantam ro\_\_\_\_r  
*n.* a male chicken, especially one that is adult; a bird that has a distinctive red comb, wattle, and crowing call
2. qu\_\_\_\_ic dream  
*adj.* exceedingly idealistic or unrealistic; marked by extravagantly chivalrous pursuits and romantic ideals; impractical or unworkable
3. an in\_\_\_\_le ink  
*adj.* cannot be removed, erased, or forgot
4. geometric ta\_\_\_\_m  
*n.* a Chinese puzzle made up of a square divided into seven pieces (five triangles, a square, and a parallelogram) that are used to create various shapes without overlapping
5. a night o\_l  
*n.* a nocturnal bird of prey with large eyes, a facial disc, and typically a loud hooting call
6. s\_\_t beliefs  
*n.* a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream
7. co\_\_\_\_t blue  
*n.* a lustrous, hard, silver-white element with the symbol Co that is often used in alloys, batteries, and pigments and is essential for certain biological processes in humans and other organisms

ANSWERS: 1. rooster, 2. quixotic, 3. indelible, 4. tangram, 5. owl, 6. sect, 7. cobalt

8. ju\_\_\_e together different colors      *v.* to mix or mingle various items, objects, or ideas together in a disordered or confused way, often resulting in a messy or chaotic situation; to create a disorderly or confusing arrangement of things
9. em\_\_\_\_d ring      *adj.* having a deep, rich green color, like that of an emerald gemstone
10. de\_\_\_e a message      *v.* to convert something, such as a message or piece of information, from a specific form into one that you can understand
11. n\_d at each other      *v.* to lower and raise one's head, sometimes several times, as to show approval, agreement, greeting, or confirmation
12. do a cr\_\_\_\_\_rd puzzle      *n.* a word puzzle consisting of a grid of black and white squares and blanks into which words crossing vertically and horizontally are written according to clues
13. qu\_\_\_\_ic adventure      *adj.* exceedingly idealistic or unrealistic; marked by extravagantly chivalrous pursuits and romantic ideals; impractical or unworkable
14. sc\_\_\_\_le through her purse      *v.* to scratch or scrape at something with one's hands or claws frantically or desperately; to arrange or rearrange letter tiles to form words in a game of Scrabble (= a popular word game using a 15x15 square board and letter tiles) or a similar word game

ANSWERS: 8. jumble, 9. emerald, 10. decode, 11. nod, 12. crossword, 13. quixotic, 14. scrabble



15. ox cart *n.* a large domesticated mammal, commonly used for draft purposes, with two broad horns and a heavyset body
16. ju\_\_\_e in some herbs and spices *v.* to mix or mingle various items, objects, or ideas together in a disordered or confused way, often resulting in a messy or chaotic situation; to create a disorderly or confusing arrangement of things
17. di\_\_\_\_\_t sleep *v.* to prevent or stop something, especially an event, activity, or process, from continuing in the usual way by causing a problem or disturbance
18. pr\_\_\_l eras *adj.* of or relating to the earliest stage of development; fundamental; primitive
19. a computer n\_\_d *n.* a person who is very interested in and knowledgeable about a particular subject such as computers, mathematics, chess, etc.
20. re\_\_p briefly *v.* to repeat or summarize what has been said, decided, etc.
21. sc\_\_\_\_\_le on paper *v.* to write or draw carelessly and in a hurry
22. en\_\_\_\_\_p the whole world *v.* to surround and cover completely; to encase
23. earn ap\_\_\_\_\_se *n.* a demonstration of approval or praise by clapping the hands together
24. ma\_\_\_\_\_an's hat *n.* a person who performs magic tricks or illusions to entertain an audience; typically involves sleight of hand or deception to create seemingly impossible or supernatural effects

ANSWERS: 15. ox, 16. jumble, 17. disrupt, 18. primal, 19. nerd, 20. recap, 21. scribble, 22. envelop, 23. applause, 24. magician

25. do\_\_\_y ride *n.* a domesticated mammal related to the horse, similar in appearance but with longer ears and a shorter mane; a foolish or stupid person
26. linear so\_\_\_r *n.* a thinker who finds an answer to a problem or a difficult situation; a piece of software or the algorithm that solves a mathematical problem
27. in early in\_\_\_\_y *n.* the state or period of being a baby or very young child
28. an em\_\_\_\_\_d gem *adj.* having a deep, rich green color, like that of an emerald gemstone
29. ability to de\_\_\_e the differences *v.* to convert something, such as a message or piece of information, from a specific form into one that you can understand
30. ji\_\_\_w puzzle *n.* a tool with a fine-toothed blade used for cutting intricate curves and patterns in thin material such as wood or metal, typically with the blade being reciprocating; a type of puzzle that consists of irregularly shaped pieces that must be fitted together to form a complete picture
31. ex\_\_\_e rebellion *v.* to make someone feel suddenly enthusiastic or eager
32. ro\_\_\_\_\_r fight *n.* a male chicken, especially one that is adult; a bird that has a distinctive red comb, wattle, and crowing call
33. water ox *n.* a large domesticated mammal, commonly used for draft purposes, with two broad horns and a heavyset body

ANSWERS: 25. donkey, 26. solver, 27. infancy, 28. emerald, 29. decode, 30. jigsaw, 31. excite, 32. rooster, 33. ox

34. office ca\_\_\_\_\_ia *n.* a restaurant where customers serve themselves from a counter and pay for what they have taken, often found in factories, colleges, hospitals, etc.
35. ta\_\_\_\_\_m shape *n.* a Chinese puzzle made up of a square divided into seven pieces (five triangles, a square, and a parallelogram) that are used to create various shapes without overlapping
36. cor\_\_\_\_\_le officials *adj.* capable of being made to do something dishonest or immoral
37. male do\_\_\_\_y *n.* a domesticated mammal related to the horse, similar in appearance but with longer ears and a shorter mane; a foolish or stupid person
38. sc\_\_\_\_\_le words *v.* to scratch or scrape at something with one's hands or claws frantically or desperately; to arrange or rearrange letter tiles to form words in a game of Scrabble (= a popular word game using a 15x15 square board and letter tiles) or a similar word game
39. secret s\_\_t *n.* a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream
40. ji\_\_\_\_w woodworking *n.* a tool with a fine-toothed blade used for cutting intricate curves and patterns in thin material such as wood or metal, typically with the blade being reciprocating; a type of puzzle that consists of irregularly shaped pieces that must be fitted together to form a complete picture

ANSWERS: 34. cafeteria, 35. tangram, 36. corruptible, 37. donkey, 38. scrabble, 39. sect, 40. jigsaw

41. n\_d courteously      *v.* to lower and raise one's head, sometimes several times, as to show approval, agreement, greeting, or confirmation
42. an o\_l hooted      *n.* a nocturnal bird of prey with large eyes, a facial disc, and typically a loud hooting call
43. cor\_\_\_\_\_le judges      *adj.* capable of being made to do something dishonest or immoral
44. street ma\_\_\_\_\_an      *n.* a person who performs magic tricks or illusions to entertain an audience; typically involves sleight of hand or deception to create seemingly impossible or supernatural effects
45. re\_\_p key points      *v.* to repeat or summarize what has been said, decided, etc.
46. di\_\_\_\_\_t a well-ordered condition      *v.* to prevent or stop something, especially an event, activity, or process, from continuing in the usual way by causing a problem or disturbance
47. n\_\_d neck      *n.* a person who is very interested in and knowledgeable about a particular subject such as computers, mathematics, chess, etc.
48. ex\_\_\_e the crowd      *v.* to make someone feel suddenly enthusiastic or eager
49. en\_\_\_\_\_p her in a bear hug      *v.* to surround and cover completely; to encase
50. ca\_\_\_\_\_ia lunch      *n.* a restaurant where customers serve themselves from a counter and pay for what they have taken, often found in factories, colleges, hospitals, etc.

ANSWERS: 41. nod, 42. owl, 43. corruptible, 44. magician, 45. recap, 46. disrupt, 47. nerd, 48. excite, 49. envelop, 50. cafeteria

51. in\_\_\_\_\_y stage *n.* the state or period of being a baby or very young child
52. pr\_\_\_\_l fear *adj.* of or relating to the earliest stage of development; fundamental; primitive
53. puzzle-so\_\_\_\_r *n.* a thinker who finds an answer to a problem or a difficult situation; a piece of software or the algorithm that solves a mathematical problem
54. an in\_\_\_\_\_le disgrace *adj.* cannot be removed, erased, or forgot
55. co\_\_\_\_t steel *n.* a lustrous, hard, silver-white element with the symbol Co that is often used in alloys, batteries, and pigments and is essential for certain biological processes in humans and other organisms
56. round of ap\_\_\_\_\_se *n.* a demonstration of approval or praise by clapping the hands together
57. sc\_\_\_\_\_le notes *v.* to write or draw carelessly and in a hurry
58. good at cr\_\_\_\_\_rd puzzles *n.* a word puzzle consisting of a grid of black and white squares and blanks into which words crossing vertically and horizontally are written according to clues

ANSWERS: 51. infancy, 52. primal, 53. solver, 54. indelible, 55. cobalt, 56. applause, 57. scribble, 58. crossword

## Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. The sacrifice of an \_\_\_ was a common religious ritual in ancient cultures.
  - n.* a large domesticated mammal, commonly used for draft purposes, with two broad horns and a heavysset body
  
2. The university's \_\_\_\_\_ was busy with students and staff grabbing a quick lunch.
  - n.* a restaurant where customers serve themselves from a counter and pay for what they have taken, often found in factories, colleges, hospitals, etc.
  
3. The news of her promotion \_\_\_\_\_ her.
  - v.* to make someone feel suddenly enthusiastic or eager
  
4. The minority \_\_\_\_ believed in a set of unconventional religious practices.
  - n.* a group of people who follow a particular religious or philosophical belief system, especially one that is regarded as outside the norm or mainstream
  
5. The children \_\_\_\_\_ up the puzzle pieces and had to start over.
  - v.* to mix or mingle various items, objects, or ideas together in a disordered or confused way, often resulting in a messy or chaotic situation; to create a disorderly or confusing arrangement of things
  
6. She left an \_\_\_\_\_ mark on our country's literature.
  - adj.* cannot be removed, erased, or forgot
  
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ instincts of the animal kicked in when it was threatened.
  - adj.* of or relating to the earliest stage of development; fundamental; primitive

ANSWERS: 1. ox, 2. cafeteria, 3. excited, 4. sect, 5. jumbled, 6. indelible, 7. primal

8. The snowy \_\_\_\_ is a large, white bird often seen in the Arctic.  
*n.* a nocturnal bird of prey with large eyes, a facial disc, and typically a loud hooting call
9. Bureaucracies are more \_\_\_\_\_ than other systems or organizations.  
*adj.* capable of being made to do something dishonest or immoral
10. She \_\_\_\_\_ quietly in response to the question.  
*v.* to lower and raise one's head, sometimes several times, as to show approval, agreement, greeting, or confirmation
11. The \_\_\_\_\_ green dress caught everyone's eye at the party.  
*adj.* having a deep, rich green color, like that of an emerald gemstone
12. He sat frowning over a \_\_\_\_\_ puzzle.  
*n.* a word puzzle consisting of a grid of black and white squares and blanks into which words crossing vertically and horizontally are written according to clues
13. The flow \_\_\_\_\_ is validated against the experiment.  
*n.* a thinker who finds an answer to a problem or a difficult situation; a piece of software or the algorithm that solves a mathematical problem
14. The \_\_\_\_\_ burst from the audience.  
*n.* a demonstration of approval or praise by clapping the hands together
15. The \_\_\_\_\_ blade needs to be changed before we can continue the project.  
*n.* a tool with a fine-toothed blade used for cutting intricate curves and patterns in thin material such as wood or metal, typically with the blade being reciprocating; a type of puzzle that consists of irregularly shaped pieces that must be fitted together to form a complete picture

ANSWERS: 8. owl, 9. corruptible, 10. nodded, 11. emerald, 12. crossword, 13. solver, 14. applause, 15. jigsaw

16. I'm so sorry to \_\_\_\_\_ you when you're pretty busy.
- v.* to prevent or stop something, especially an event, activity, or process, from continuing in the usual way by causing a problem or disturbance
17. Let me quickly \_\_\_\_\_ these results.
- v.* to repeat or summarize what has been said, decided, etc.
18. The blades of gas turbine engines are often coated with a \_\_\_\_\_ layer to improve their durability.
- n.* a lustrous, hard, silver-white element with the symbol Co that is often used in alloys, batteries, and pigments and is essential for certain biological processes in humans and other organisms
19. The teacher asked the students to create an animal using the \_\_\_\_\_ pieces.
- n.* a Chinese puzzle made up of a square divided into seven pieces (five triangles, a square, and a parallelogram) that are used to create various shapes without overlapping
20. The little boy rode the \_\_\_\_\_ at the county fair.
- n.* a domesticated mammal related to the horse, similar in appearance but with longer ears and a shorter mane; a foolish or stupid person
21. The politician's \_\_\_\_\_ campaign promise to end all poverty was met with skepticism.
- adj.* exceedingly idealistic or unrealistic; marked by extravagantly chivalrous pursuits and romantic ideals; impractical or unworkable
22. The \_\_\_\_\_ crow woke up the farmer every morning at sunrise.
- n.* a male chicken, especially one that is adult; a bird that has a distinctive red comb, wattle, and crowing call

ANSWERS: 16. disrupt, 17. recap, 18. cobalt, 19. tangram, 20. donkey, 21. quixotic, 22. rooster's



23. The fog \_\_\_\_\_ the city, making it difficult to see.

- v. to surround and cover completely; to encase

24. He was, by nature, a cyber \_\_\_\_\_.

- n. a person who is very interested in and knowledgeable about a particular subject such as computers, mathematics, chess, etc.

25. The technology is still in its \_\_\_\_\_ and has much room for improvement.

- n. the state or period of being a baby or very young child

26. The words were \_\_\_\_\_ in pencil.

- v. to write or draw carelessly and in a hurry

27. The children were delighted with the \_\_\_\_\_ clever tricks.

- n. a person who performs magic tricks or illusions to entertain an audience; typically involves sleight of hand or deception to create seemingly impossible or supernatural effects

28. The kids eagerly \_\_\_\_\_ to find the hidden Easter eggs in the garden.

- v. to scratch or scrape at something with one's hands or claws frantically or desperately; to arrange or rearrange letter tiles to form words in a game of Scrabble (= a popular word game using a 15x15 square board and letter tiles) or a similar word game

29. The software could \_\_\_\_\_ the encrypted data and reveal the hidden information.

- v. to convert something, such as a message or piece of information, from a specific form into one that you can understand

ANSWERS: 23. enveloped, 24. nerd, 25. infancy, 26. scribbled, 27. magician's, 28. scrabbled, 29. decode