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Vocabulary Builder Reference from...

Randall Munroe: Comics that ask "what if?" | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

smashing

adj. very successful or impressive; causing something to be broken or destroyed

synonym : great, wonderful, breaking

(1) a **smashing** blow, (2) give **smashing** results

The band's new album was a **smashing** success, reaching the top of the charts.

mound

n. a raised area of ground or dirt, often used for burial, construction, or as a fortification; a large, rounded pile or heap

synonym : hill, knoll, rise

(1) **mound** of dirt, (2) burial **mound**

The team discovered a hidden **mound** in the desert.

nanosecond

n. one thousand millionth or billionth (= 0.000,000,001) of a second

(1) **nanosecond** response, (2) **nanosecond** laser pulse

The processor performs calculations on the **nanosecond** timescale.

batter

v. to hit something or someone repeatedly with much force; (noun, baseball) a ballplayer who is batting

synonym : beat, pound, strike

(1) **batter** the eggs, (2) the **batter's** box
He got so angry that he **battered** the door down.

engulf

v. to swallow up; to surround and cover completely
synonym: swallow, submerge, inundate

(1) **engulf** the politician, (2) **engulf** in water
The fire quickly **engulfed** the entire building.

umpire

n. a person, particularly in sports, who arbitrates or referee's a game, match, or competition; an impartial mediator or judge in a dispute or conflict
synonym: arbiter, referee, judge

(1) **umpire** decision, (2) fair **umpire**
The cricket **umpire** signaled a boundary by raising his arms.

disintegrate

v. break or cause to break into small fragments
synonym: shatter, crumble, break down

(1) **disintegrate** in an explosion, (2) **disintegrate** over time
The vase **disintegrated** into pieces when it fell to the ground.

backstop

n. a barrier or obstacle used to prevent something from proceeding past a certain point; a person or position that serves as protection or support in case of difficulty or failure
synonym: support, reinforcement, backup

(1) **backstop** agreement, (2) financial **backstop**
The new regulations serve as a **backstop** to prevent future environmental disasters.

shred

v. to tear or cut something into a small pieces; (noun) a tiny or scarcely detectable amount
synonym: rip up, tear up, cut

(1) **shred** paper into little pieces, (2) **shred** lettuce for a salad
There is not a **shred** of evidence that he is guilty.

mushroom

n. a type of fungus that grows on dead or decaying organic matter and typically has a stalk and an umbrella-shaped cap

synonym : fungus, toadstool

(1) **mushroom** spores, (2) **mushroom** cultivation

The **mushroom** risotto was delicious, but I couldn't identify all the mushrooms in it.

hazy

adj. not clear due to a lack of recollection, comprehension, or detail; unsure or perplexed about something

synonym : blurred, clouded, foggy

(1) **hazy** dream, (2) **hazy** atmosphere

My memories of the holiday were **hazy**.

rev

n. a measure of the rate at which an engine or motor rotates, often expressed in revolutions per minute (RPM); (verb) to increase the number of rotations per minute

synonym : revolution, RPM, speed

(1) low- **rev** engine, (2) **rev** up the crowd

He stepped on the gas pedal, and the engine released a loud **rev**.

sizable

adj. large in size or amount

synonym : large, significant, considerable

(1) **sizable** portion, (2) **sizable** audience

He has a **sizable** fortune and is one of the wealthiest people in the city.

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.

sudoku

n. a logic-based, combinatorial number-placement puzzle that typically consists of a 9x9 grid divided into nine 3x3 sub-grids and requires the solver to fill in each empty square with a number from 1-9, with the constraint that no number can appear more than once in a row, column, or sub-grid

synonym: number puzzle, logic game, brain teaser

(1) the difficulty level of **sudoku**, (2) solve a **sudoku**

I enjoy solving **sudoku** puzzles in my free time.

offline

adj. not connected to the internet

synonym: disconnected, not connected, unplugged

(1) **offline** course, (2) **offline** mode

The computer is **offline** and cannot be accessed at the moment.

contender

n. the contestant you hope to defeat

synonym: rival, competitor, challenger

(1) championship **contender**, (2) presidential **contender**

We were looking at a severe **contender** indeed.

glacier

n. a slowly moving mass of ice formed from snow on mountains or near the North Pole or the South Pole

synonym: iceberg, ice floe

(1) **glacier** retreat, (2) **glaciers** move tardily

The **glaciers** of the ice age have shaped Fjord.

impractical

adj. not sensible or useful for practical purposes; not likely to be effective in achieving an intended outcome

synonym: impracticable, unrealizable, unfeasible

(1) **impractical** idea, (2) **impractical** solution

It is **impractical** to expect everyone to work for free.

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.

Session 2: Spelling

1. solve a su___u
n. a logic-based, combinatorial number-placement puzzle that typically consists of a 9x9 grid divided into nine 3x3 sub-grids and requires the solver to fill in each empty square with a number from 1-9, with the constraint that no number can appear more than once in a row, column, or sub-grid
2. h__y dream
adj. not clear due to a lack of recollection, comprehension, or detail; unsure or perplexed about something
3. the difficulty level of su___u
n. a logic-based, combinatorial number-placement puzzle that typically consists of a 9x9 grid divided into nine 3x3 sub-grids and requires the solver to fill in each empty square with a number from 1-9, with the constraint that no number can appear more than once in a row, column, or sub-grid
4. gl_____rs move tardily
n. a slowly moving mass of ice formed from snow on mountains or near the North Pole or the South Pole
5. mu_____om cultivation
n. a type of fungus that grows on dead or decaying organic matter and typically has a stalk and an umbrella-shaped cap
6. imp_____al solution
adj. not sensible or useful for practical purposes; not likely to be effective in achieving an intended outcome

ANSWERS: 1. sudoku, 2. hazy, 3. sudoku, 4. glacier, 5. mushroom, 6. impractical

7. r_v up the crowd *n.* a measure of the rate at which an engine or motor rotates, often expressed in revolutions per minute (RPM); (verb) to increase the number of rotations per minute
8. en___f the politician *v.* to swallow up; to surround and cover completely
9. imp_____al idea *adj.* not sensible or useful for practical purposes; not likely to be effective in achieving an intended outcome
10. of_____e course *adj.* not connected to the internet
11. presidential co_____er *n.* the contestant you hope to defeat
12. si_____e portion *adj.* large in size or amount
13. burial mo__d *n.* a raised area of ground or dirt, often used for burial, construction, or as a fortification; a large, rounded pile or heap
14. nan_____nd laser pulse *n.* one thousand millionth or billionth (= 0.000,000,001) of a second
15. give sm_____ng results *adj.* very successful or impressive; causing something to be broken or destroyed
16. en_____p her in a bear hug *v.* to surround and cover completely; to encase
17. ba___r the eggs *v.* to hit something or someone repeatedly with much force; (noun, baseball) a ballplayer who is batting
18. sh__d lettuce for a salad *v.* to tear or cut something into a small pieces; (noun) a tiny or scarcely detectable amount

ANSWERS: 7. rev, 8. engulf, 9. impractical, 10. offline, 11. contender, 12. sizable, 13. mound, 14. nanosecond, 15. smashing, 16. envelop, 17. batter, 18. shred

19. en____p the whole world *v.* to surround and cover completely; to encase
20. mo__d of dirt *n.* a raised area of ground or dirt, often used for burial, construction, or as a fortification; a large, rounded pile or heap
21. um____e decision *n.* a person, particularly in sports, who arbitrates or referee's a game, match, or competition; an impartial mediator or judge in a dispute or conflict
22. fair um____e *n.* a person, particularly in sports, who arbitrates or referee's a game, match, or competition; an impartial mediator or judge in a dispute or conflict
23. en____f in water *v.* to swallow up; to surround and cover completely
24. sh__d paper into little pieces *v.* to tear or cut something into a small pieces; (noun) a tiny or scarcely detectable amount
25. si____e audience *adj.* large in size or amount
26. dis____ate over time *v.* break or cause to break into small fragments
27. gl____r retreat *n.* a slowly moving mass of ice formed from snow on mountains or near the North Pole or the South Pole
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

ANSWERS: 19. envelop, 20. mound, 21. umpire, 22. umpire, 23. engulf, 24. shred, 25. sizable, 26. disintegrate, 27. glacier, 28. electrify

29. 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
30. a sm_____ng blow *adj.* very successful or impressive; causing something to be broken or destroyed
31. nan_____nd response *n.* one thousand millionth or billionth (= 0.000,000,001) of a second
32. low-r_v engine *n.* a measure of the rate at which an engine or motor rotates, often expressed in revolutions per minute (RPM); (verb) to increase the number of rotations per minute
33. dis_____ate in an explosion *v.* break or cause to break into small fragments
34. championship co_____er *n.* the contestant you hope to defeat
35. ba_____op agreement *n.* a barrier or obstacle used to prevent something from proceeding past a certain point; a person or position that serves as protection or support in case of difficulty or failure
36. financial ba_____op *n.* a barrier or obstacle used to prevent something from proceeding past a certain point; a person or position that serves as protection or support in case of difficulty or failure
37. mu_____om spores *n.* a type of fungus that grows on dead or decaying organic matter and typically has a stalk and an umbrella-shaped cap

ANSWERS: 29. electrify, 30. smashing, 31. nanosecond, 32. rev, 33. disintegrate, 34. contender, 35. backstop, 36. backstop, 37. mushroom

38. h__y atmosphere

adj. not clear due to a lack of recollection, comprehension, or detail; unsure or perplexed about something

39. of ____e mode

adj. not connected to the internet

40. the ba___r's box

v. to hit something or someone repeatedly with much force; (noun, baseball) a ballplayer who is batting

ANSWERS: 38. hazy, 39. offline, 40. batter

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. The team discovered a hidden _____ in the desert.
 - n.* a raised area of ground or dirt, often used for burial, construction, or as a fortification; a large, rounded pile or heap

2. I enjoy solving _____ puzzles in my free time.
 - n.* a logic-based, combinatorial number-placement puzzle that typically consists of a 9x9 grid divided into nine 3x3 sub-grids and requires the solver to fill in each empty square with a number from 1-9, with the constraint that no number can appear more than once in a row, column, or sub-grid

3. 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

4. There is not a _____ of evidence that he is guilty.
 - v.* to tear or cut something into a small pieces; (noun) a tiny or scarcely detectable amount

5. The vase _____ into pieces when it fell to the ground.
 - v.* break or cause to break into small fragments

6. He stepped on the gas pedal, and the engine released a loud _____.
 - n.* a measure of the rate at which an engine or motor rotates, often expressed in revolutions per minute (RPM); (verb) to increase the number of rotations per minute

7. My memories of the holiday were _____.
 - adj.* not clear due to a lack of recollection, comprehension, or detail; unsure or perplexed about something

ANSWERS: 1. mound, 2. sudoku, 3. electrify, 4. shred, 5. disintegrated, 6. rev, 7. hazy

8. The computer is _____ and cannot be accessed at the moment.
adj. not connected to the internet
9. The band's new album was a _____ success, reaching the top of the charts.
adj. very successful or impressive; causing something to be broken or destroyed
10. The cricket _____ signaled a boundary by raising his arms.
n. a person, particularly in sports, who arbitrates or referee's a game, match, or competition; an impartial mediator or judge in a dispute or conflict
11. The _____ risotto was delicious, but I couldn't identify all the mushrooms in it.
n. a type of fungus that grows on dead or decaying organic matter and typically has a stalk and an umbrella-shaped cap
12. It is _____ to expect everyone to work for free.
adj. not sensible or useful for practical purposes; not likely to be effective in achieving an intended outcome
13. He has a _____ fortune and is one of the wealthiest people in the city.
adj. large in size or amount
14. The fog _____ the city, making it difficult to see.
v. to surround and cover completely; to encase
15. We were looking at a severe _____ indeed.
n. the contestant you hope to defeat
16. He got so angry that he _____ the door down.
v. to hit something or someone repeatedly with much force; (noun, baseball) a ballplayer who is batting

ANSWERS: 8. offline, 9. smashing, 10. umpire, 11. mushroom, 12. impractical, 13. sizable, 14. enveloped, 15. contender, 16. battered

17. The _____ of the ice age have shaped Fjord.
- n.* a slowly moving mass of ice formed from snow on mountains or near the North Pole or the South Pole
18. The processor performs calculations on the _____ timescale.
- n.* one thousand millionth or billionth (= 0.000,000,001) of a second
19. The fire quickly _____ the entire building.
- v.* to swallow up; to surround and cover completely
20. The new regulations serve as a _____ to prevent future environmental disasters.
- n.* a barrier or obstacle used to prevent something from proceeding past a certain point; a person or position that serves as protection or support in case of difficulty or failure

ANSWERS: 17. glaciers, 18. nanosecond, 19. engulfed, 20. backstop