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Saki Mafundikwa: Ingenuity and elegance in ancient African alphabets | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

interrogate

v. to examine someone with questions over a lengthy period, especially in an aggressive manner

synonym: question, examine, probe

(1) **interrogate** an enemy soldier, (2) **interrogated** by police

The lawyer spent considerable time to adequately **interrogate** the witness.

typography

n. the art or process of printing with type; the design, layout, and arrangement of printed material, including text and images

synonym: printing, typesetting, font design

(1) **typography** skills, (2) **typography** layout

I love the bold **typography** used in this book's chapter heading.

inward

adj. directed or facing towards the inside; inside or inward-looking

synonym: internal, introspective, interior

(1) **inward** peace, (2) **inward** cargo

The **inward** motion of the tide was gradually slowing down.

proverb

n. a short saying that expresses a truth or gives advice based on practical experience

synonym : adage, saying, maxim

(1) a hackneyed **proverb**, (2) ancient **proverb**

The famous **proverb** "actions speak louder than words" reminds us to focus on deeds instead of words.

pictograph

n. a symbol or picture that represents a word, phrase, or concept; a form of communication that uses pictures or symbols to convey information

synonym : symbol, glyph, icon

(1) hand-drawn **pictograph**, (2) **pictograph** symbols

The cave paintings are ancient **pictographs** that tell stories of the past.

intricate

adj. having many different parts and small details that all work together

synonym : complicated, convoluted, complex

(1) **intricate** details, (2) **intricate** lacework

The politician managed to deal with that **intricate** issue.

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.

interweave

v. to combine or blend substantive parts or elements; to interlace; to mix or intermingle

synonym : intertwine, intertwist, interlace

(1) **interweave** threads, (2) **interweave** ideas

The author expertly tried to **interweave** the story's plot and characters.

polyphony

n. music consisting of two or more independent melodies or voices sounding together

synonym : multi-part, harmonization, counterpoint

(1) a beautiful **polyphony**, (2) the **polyphony** of the music

The composer wrote a complex **polyphony** for the orchestra, featuring multiple layers of sound.

weave

v. to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them

synonym: braid, unite, contrive

(1) **weave** on a loom, (2) **weave** a story

The girl **weaves** a garland for her friend.

syllable

n. a single unit of spoken language more significant than a phoneme containing a vowel sound and usually one or more consonants

(1) **syllable** structure, (2) single **syllable**

Emphasize the second **syllable** when pronouncing it.

well-defined

adj. having clear and precise boundaries or characteristics; distinctly outlined or delimited; easily understood or recognizable

synonym: clear, distinct, precise

(1) **well-defined** terms, (2) **well-defined** objectives

The **well-defined** set of instructions made it easy to assemble the furniture.

fractal

n. a complex geometric pattern or shape that repeats itself on smaller and smaller scales, often occurring in nature or mathematical equations

synonym: pattern, design, geometry

(1) **fractal** pattern, (2) **fractal** art

The coastline of Norway is one of the most famous examples of **fractal** geometry in nature.

antiquity

n. the ancient past, especially the period of classical civilization

synonym: ancientness, oldness, hoariness

(1) remote **antiquity**, (2) unrecorded **antiquity**

The study of **antiquity** is important for understanding the

history, culture, and civilization of the past and their influence on the present.

cuneiform

adj. of or relating to a form of writing consisting of pressing a reed stylus into clay to create wedge-shaped marks used in ancient Mesopotamia

synonym : wedge-shaped, triangular, pyramidal

(1) **cuneiform** writing, (2) external **cuneiform** bone

The **cuneiform** tablets contain some of the oldest known examples of literature.

hieroglyph

n. a writing system using picture symbols, such as the one used in ancient Egypt

synonym : character, cipher, figure

(1) Egyptian **hieroglyph**, (2) the **hieroglyph** of the bird

Each beautiful **hieroglyph** represents either an idea or a sound.

inscription

n. a message or design that is written or engraved on a surface of something, such as stone or metal

synonym : engraving, writing, script

(1) **inscription** on a plaque, (2) funerary **inscriptions**

The ancient coin had an **inscription** in Latin and a picture of the emperor on the other side.

limestone

n. a sedimentary rock that is composed mainly of calcium carbonate, which is the mineral calcite

synonym : calcareous rock, chalk

(1) sheer **limestone** cliffs, (2) **limestone** pavement

The Great Pyramid of Giza was built using blocks of **limestone**.

decipher

v. to read or understand something that is written in code or in a difficult or obscure way

synonym : interpret, decode, translate

(1) **decipher** code, (2) **decipher** message

He spent hours trying to **decipher** the ancient text.

paleography

n. the study of ancient handwriting and scripts, particularly those used before the advent of printing, which involves deciphering and interpreting historical documents and manuscripts

synonym : calligraphy, script

(1) **paleography** study, (2) ancient **paleography**

By employing **paleography** techniques, researchers could determine the approximate age of the old manuscript.

seminal

adj. highly original, influential, or innovative; containing the seeds or beginnings of future development or growth; (of medicine) of or relating to semen or the male reproductive system

synonym : influential, groundbreaking, original

(1) **seminal** research, (2) **seminal** duct

The book was a **seminal** work in psychology, influencing generations of researchers.

vindicate

v. to clear someone or something of blame, suspicion, or doubt; to show or prove that someone or something is right or justified

synonym : justify, absolve, exonerate

(1) **vindicate** innocence, (2) **vindicate** his reputation

The athlete's exceptional performance **vindicated** their coach's training methods and strategies.

Session 2: Spelling

1. ancient pal_____hy
n. the study of ancient handwriting and scripts, particularly those used before the advent of printing, which involves deciphering and interpreting historical documents and manuscripts
2. vi_____te innocence
v. to clear someone or something of blame, suspicion, or doubt; to show or prove that someone or something is right or justified
3. external cu_____rm bone
adj. of or relating to a form of writing consisting of pressing a reed stylus into clay to create wedge-shaped marks used in ancient Mesopotamia
4. remote an_____ty
n. the ancient past, especially the period of classical civilization
5. typ_____hy layout
n. the art or process of printing with type; the design, layout, and arrangement of printed material, including text and images
6. a beautiful po_____ny
n. music consisting of two or more independent melodies or voices sounding together
7. hand-drawn pic_____ph
n. a symbol or picture that represents a word, phrase, or concept; a form of communication that uses pictures or symbols to convey information
8. ins_____on on a plaque
n. a message or design that is written or engraved on a surface of something, such as stone or metal

ANSWERS: 1. paleography, 2. vindicate, 3. cuneiform, 4. antiquity, 5. typography, 6. polyphony, 7. pictograph, 8. inscription

9. Egyptian hieroglyph *n.* a writing system using picture symbols, such as the one used in ancient Egypt
10. unrecorded antiquity *n.* the ancient past, especially the period of classical civilization
11. decipher message *v.* to read or understand something that is written in code or in a difficult or obscure way
12. seminal research *adj.* highly original, influential, or innovative; containing the seeds or beginnings of future development or growth; (of medicine) of or relating to semen or the male reproductive system
13. inward cargo *adj.* directed or facing towards the inside; inside or inward-looking
14. seminal duct *adj.* highly original, influential, or innovative; containing the seeds or beginnings of future development or growth; (of medicine) of or relating to semen or the male reproductive system
15. rainforest destruction *n.* a forest rich in biodiversity that is generally found in tropical settings with heavy annual rainfall
16. well-defined terms *adj.* having clear and precise boundaries or characteristics; distinctly outlined or delimited; easily understood or recognizable
17. syllable structure *n.* a single unit of spoken language more significant than a phoneme containing a vowel sound and usually one or more consonants

ANSWERS: 9. hieroglyph, 10. antiquity, 11. decipher, 12. seminal, 13. inward, 14. seminal, 15. rainforest, 16. well-defined, 17. syllable

18. vi_____te his reputation *v.* to clear someone or something of blame, suspicion, or doubt; to show or prove that someone or something is right or justified
19. int_____ve ideas *v.* to combine or blend substantive parts or elements; to interlace; to mix or intermingle
20. we__e on a loom *v.* to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them
21. the hie_____ph of the bird *n.* a writing system using picture symbols, such as the one used in ancient Egypt
22. we__e a story *v.* to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them
23. wel_____ned objectives *adj.* having clear and precise boundaries or characteristics; distinctly outlined or delimited; easily understood or recognizable
24. li_____ne pavement *n.* a sedimentary rock that is composed mainly of calcium carbonate, which is the mineral calcite
25. int_____te an enemy soldier *v.* to examine someone with questions over a lengthy period, especially in an aggressive manner
26. cu_____rm writing *adj.* of or relating to a form of writing consisting of pressing a reed stylus into clay to create wedge-shaped marks used in ancient Mesopotamia

ANSWERS: 18. vindicate, 19. interweave, 20. weave, 21. hieroglyph, 22. weave, 23. well-defined, 24. limestone, 25. interrogate, 26. cuneiform

27. in_____te details *adj.* having many different parts and small details that all work together
28. pal_____hy study *n.* the study of ancient handwriting and scripts, particularly those used before the advent of printing, which involves deciphering and interpreting historical documents and manuscripts
29. sheer li_____ne cliffs *n.* a sedimentary rock that is composed mainly of calcium carbonate, which is the mineral calcite
30. int_____ve threads *v.* to combine or blend substantive parts or elements; to interlace; to mix or intermingle
31. pic_____ph symbols *n.* a symbol or picture that represents a word, phrase, or concept; a form of communication that uses pictures or symbols to convey information
32. de_____er code *v.* to read or understand something that is written in code or in a difficult or obscure way
33. in___d peace *adj.* directed or facing towards the inside; inside or inward-looking
34. fr_____l art *n.* a complex geometric pattern or shape that repeats itself on smaller and smaller scales, often occurring in nature or mathematical equations
35. int_____ted by police *v.* to examine someone with questions over a lengthy period, especially in an aggressive manner

ANSWERS: 27. intricate, 28. paleography, 29. limestone, 30. interweave, 31. pictograph, 32. decipher, 33. inward, 34. fractal, 35. interrogate

36. in_____te lacework *adj.* having many different parts and small details that all work together
37. single sy_____le *n.* a single unit of spoken language more significant than a phoneme containing a vowel sound and usually one or more consonants
38. tropical rai_____st *n.* a forest rich in biodiversity that is generally found in tropical settings with heavy annual rainfall
39. a hackneyed pr_____b *n.* a short saying that expresses a truth or gives advice based on practical experience
40. the po_____ny of the music *n.* music consisting of two or more independent melodies or voices sounding together
41. fr_____l pattern *n.* a complex geometric pattern or shape that repeats itself on smaller and smaller scales, often occurring in nature or mathematical equations
42. ancient pr_____b *n.* a short saying that expresses a truth or gives advice based on practical experience
43. funerary ins_____ons *n.* a message or design that is written or engraved on a surface of something, such as stone or metal
44. typ_____hy skills *n.* the art or process of printing with type; the design, layout, and arrangement of printed material, including text and images

ANSWERS: 36. intricate, 37. syllable, 38. rainforest, 39. proverb, 40. polyphony, 41. fractal, 42. proverb, 43. inscription, 44. typography

ANSWERS:

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. Emphasize the second _____ when pronouncing it.
n. a single unit of spoken language more significant than a phoneme containing a vowel sound and usually one or more consonants
2. He spent hours trying to _____ the ancient text.
v. to read or understand something that is written in code or in a difficult or obscure way
3. The politician managed to deal with that _____ issue.
adj. having many different parts and small details that all work together
4. I love the bold _____ used in this book's chapter heading.
n. the art or process of printing with type; the design, layout, and arrangement of printed material, including text and images
5. The lawyer spent considerable time to adequately _____ the witness.
v. to examine someone with questions over a lengthy period, especially in an aggressive manner
6. The _____ tablets contain some of the oldest known examples of literature.
adj. of or relating to a form of writing consisting of pressing a reed stylus into clay to create wedge-shaped marks used in ancient Mesopotamia
7. The cave paintings are ancient _____ that tell stories of the past.
n. a symbol or picture that represents a word, phrase, or concept; a form of communication that uses pictures or symbols to convey information

ANSWERS: 1. syllable, 2. decipher, 3. intricate, 4. typography, 5. interrogate, 6. cuneiform, 7. pictographs

8. The composer wrote a complex _____ for the orchestra, featuring multiple layers of sound.
- n.* music consisting of two or more independent melodies or voices sounding together
9. By employing _____ techniques, researchers could determine the approximate age of the old manuscript.
- n.* the study of ancient handwriting and scripts, particularly those used before the advent of printing, which involves deciphering and interpreting historical documents and manuscripts
10. The athlete's exceptional performance _____ their coach's training methods and strategies.
- v.* to clear someone or something of blame, suspicion, or doubt; to show or prove that someone or something is right or justified
11. The famous _____ "actions speak louder than words" reminds us to focus on deeds instead of words.
- n.* a short saying that expresses a truth or gives advice based on practical experience
12. The author expertly tried to _____ the story's plot and characters.
- v.* to combine or blend substantive parts or elements; to interlace; to mix or intermingle
13. The book was a _____ work in psychology, influencing generations of researchers.
- adj.* highly original, influential, or innovative; containing the seeds or beginnings of future development or growth; (of medicine) of or relating to semen or the male reproductive system

ANSWERS: 8. polyphony, 9. paleography, 10. vindicated, 11. proverb, 12. interweave, 13. seminal

14. 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
15. The _____ set of instructions made it easy to assemble the furniture.
adj. having clear and precise boundaries or characteristics; distinctly outlined or delimited; easily understood or recognizable
16. The study of _____ is important for understanding the history, culture, and civilization of the past and their influence on the present.
n. the ancient past, especially the period of classical civilization
17. The ancient coin had an _____ in Latin and a picture of the emperor on the other side.
n. a message or design that is written or engraved on a surface of something, such as stone or metal
18. The _____ motion of the tide was gradually slowing down.
adj. directed or facing towards the inside; inside or inward-looking
19. The girl _____ a garland for her friend.
v. to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc., by repeatedly crossing a single thread through two sets of long threads at a right angle to them
20. The coastline of Norway is one of the most famous examples of _____ geometry in nature.
n. a complex geometric pattern or shape that repeats itself on smaller and smaller scales, often occurring in nature or mathematical equations
21. The Great Pyramid of Giza was built using blocks of _____.
n. a sedimentary rock that is composed mainly of calcium carbonate, which is the mineral calcite

ANSWERS: 14. rainforest, 15. well-defined, 16. antiquity, 17. inscription, 18. inward, 19. weaves, 20. fractal, 21. limestone

22. Each beautiful _____ represents either an idea or a sound.

n. a writing system using picture symbols, such as the one used in ancient Egypt

ANSWERS: 22. hieroglyph