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Phil Plait: How to defend Earth from asteroids | TED Talk

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

Advanced Words Only

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Session 1: Word List

dinosaur

n. a large extinct reptile, often with an armored back, long neck, tail, and bony plates on the skin

synonym : reptile, beast, monster

(1) hulking **dinosaur**, (2) **dinosaur** fossil

The discovery of a new **dinosaur** species made headlines in the scientific community.

slam

v. to shut a door or window noisily; to strike something violently or noisily

synonym : bang, crash, shut

(1) **slam** the door, (2) **slam** the book against a wall

She **slammed** the door shut, angry at the person on the other side.

numb

adj. unable to feel physical sensation and movement; not showing human feeling or sensitivity

synonym : dazed, insensitive, emotionless

(1) **numb** with cold, (2) a **numb** mind

My left arm became **numb**.

boulder

n. a large, smooth rock, typically one that has been worn away from a cliff or mountain by erosion

synonym : rock, stone, clump

(1) **boulder** field, (2) lava **boulder**

The hikers had to climb over a **boulder** that was blocking their path.

crater

n. a huge bowl-shaped cavity in the earth or an object in space, usually created by an explosion or the impact of a meteorite

synonym : cavity, hole, pit

(1) **crater** lake, (2) lunar **crater**

An enormous **crater** marks the area where the vast volcanic explosion occurred.

gulf

n. a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land

synonym : chasm, divide, abyss

(1) **gulf** war, (2) **gulf** stream

The **Gulf** of Mexico is a body of water in the southern United States.

peninsula

n. a long piece of land that is almost surrounded by water but is linked to a larger part of the land

synonym : cape, foreland

(1) the tip of the **peninsula**, (2) the Arab **peninsula**

That **peninsula** was an essential base for the country's defense.

excavate

v. to dig or remove earth, rocks, or other materials from the ground or a site, often to uncover or discover something

synonym : dig, unearth, extract

(1) **excavate** a deep hole, (2) **excavate** soil

The archaeologists **excavated** the ruins of an ancient city buried under the desert sands.

asteroid

n. a small rocky body orbiting the sun, typically in the region between Mars and Jupiter

synonym : minor planet, planetoid, rocky planetesimal

(1) **asteroid** mining, (2) **asteroid** explorer

Scientists are studying the composition and origins of the **asteroid** belt to understand the early solar system better.

crumble

v. to break or fall apart into small pieces or fragments, especially due to age, decay, or lack of support

synonym: disintegrate, collapse, deteriorate

(1) **crumble** to dust, (2) began to **crumble** under financial pressure

The old building was starting to **crumble** due to years of neglect and lack of maintenance.

meteor

n. (commonly known as a shooting star) a small celestial body or particle that enters the Earth's atmosphere, often producing a bright streak of light as it burns up due to friction with the atmosphere

synonym: meteoroid, shooting star, comet

(1) **meteor** shower, (2) **meteor** impact

A bright **meteor** streaked across the night sky, captivating everyone who observed it.

auditorium

n. a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances

synonym: hall, theater, amphitheater

(1) open-air **auditorium**, (2) **auditorium** annex

The **auditorium** seating was filled with people waiting for the concert to begin.

explode

v. to burst or break open violently and noisily; to cause something to burst or break open

synonym: detonate, blast, rupture

(1) **explode** in anger, (2) **explode** in popularity

The old building **exploded** in a fiery inferno.

hefty

adj. large, bulky, and heavy; impressively large, substantial, or powerful; large in amount, extent, or significance

synonym: weighty, substantial, sizeable

(1) **hefty** price, (2) **hefty** breakfast

The **hefty** box of books was too heavy to lift on my own.

antelope

n. a large, swift-running, African or Asian mammal with horns and hooves, especially one of the gazelle family

synonym : gazelle, deer, buck

(1) long-horned **antelope**, (2) **antelope** hunt

The herd of **antelope** bounded across the plain, chased by a pack of wolves.

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.

buster

n. a person or thing that breaks or causes something to be broken

synonym : breaker, destroyer, crusher

(1) crime- **buster**, (2) bug **buster**

The stress- **buster** meditation helped me relax and calm my nerves.

rift

n. a break or fissure in a relationship, organization, or physical structure; a large crack in the ground, rock, or other surfaces

synonym : split, break, gap

(1) **rift** between friends, (2) geological **rift**

Their disagreement caused a **rift** in their friendship.

crumb

n. a small particle or fragment of food or other substance, often one that has broken off from a larger piece; a very small amount or portion of something

synonym : fragment, particle, bit

(1) **crumb** of information, (2) bread **crumb**

My dog found a **crumb** on the floor and quickly ate it.

megaton

n. a unit of energy equivalent to one million tons of TNT

(1) **megaton** explosion, (2) **megaton** weapon

The power of a **megaton** bomb is equivalent to one million tons of TNT.

devote

v. to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose

synonym: commit, dedicate, apply

(1) **devote** all of my energies, (2) **devote** my own life

He **devoted** himself to studying the history of ancient civilizations.

apocalyptic

adj. describing severe damage and destruction in past or future events, or the end of the world

synonym: fateful, prophetic, ominous

(1) **apocalyptic** event, (2) have **apocalyptic** overtones

The **apocalyptic** landscape of burnt-out villages and bombed-out ruins spread out before them.

doomsday

n. the last day of the world when Christians believe that God will judge everyone; an unpleasant or disastrous event

synonym: Day of Judgment, Last Judgement

(1) **doomsday** scenario, (2) economic **doomsday**

This task is going to take me till **doomsday**.

disguise

v. to hide or alter someone's appearance to deceive or mislead others

synonym: mask, misinterpret, cloak

(1) **disguise** my feelings, (2) **disguise** his voice

Later it turned out that the politician **disguised** the fact from the public.

comet

n. a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun

synonym : meteor, asteroid, meteoroid

(1) the surface of the **comet**, (2) **comet** Halley

The **comet's** bright tail could be seen in the night sky.

aft

adj. (the opposite of "forward") located at or towards the rear or back of a ship, aircraft, or other vehicle

(1) **aft** cabin, (2) **aft** view

The **aft** section of the ship suffered significant damage after the collision with the reef.

macho

adj. characterized by a strong sense of masculinity or male dominance, often in a way that is perceived as arrogant or aggressive

synonym : masculine, aggressive, virile

(1) **macho** culture, (2) maintain a **macho** image

His **macho** posturing was just a cover for his insecurities and lack of confidence.

astronaut

n. a person trained by a space agency to travel outside the Earth's atmosphere

synonym : spaceman, cosmonaut

(1) **astronaut** mission, (2) **astronaut** in training

The shuttle **astronaut** trained for months before embarking on the space mission.

rusty

adj. covered with rust (= a reddish-brown coating or corrosion layer); deteriorated or corroded due to lack of use or exposure to the elements; affected by disuse or neglect

synonym : corroded, oxidized, weathered

(1) **rusty** metal, (2) **rusty** nail

The **rusty** gate creaked loudly as it opened.

walnut

n. a nut of a tall deciduous tree, commonly eaten as a snack or used in baking; the wood of this tree, used for furniture and other applications

synonym : pecan, hazelnut, almond

(1) **walnut** oil, (2) **walnut** tree

I love adding **walnuts** to my oatmeal in the morning for an extra crunch.

astronomer

n. a physicist who studies astronomy

synonym: stargazer, cosmologist, astrophysicist

(1) amateur **astronomer**, (2) solar **astronomer**

This question has fascinated solar **astronomers** for decades.

tumble

v. to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance

synonym: fall, stumble, plummet

(1) **tumble** down the hill, (2) confidence **tumbles** as unemployment rates rose

The value of the currency **tumbled** against major international currencies.

plume

n. a large feather or group of feathers worn as an ornament or a symbol of achievement or distinction, especially on a hat

synonym: feather, honor, token

(1) **plume** of smoke, (2) **plume** of feathers

The bird had a beautiful **plume** on its head.

finesse

n. skillful handling of a situation or problem with diplomacy, tact, or grace; subtle, artful maneuvering; refinement or delicacy in performance or execution; (verb) to handle a situation or problem with sensitivity, tact, and diplomacy

synonym: skill, dexterity, refinement

(1) creative **finesse**, (2) **finesse** a shot in golf

He displays great **finesse** when playing the guitar.

Session 2: Spelling

1. long-horned an____pe
n. a large, swift-running, African or Asian mammal with horns and hooves, especially one of the gazelle family
2. the surface of the co__t
n. a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun
3. ru__y nail
adj. covered with rust (= a reddish-brown coating or corrosion layer); deteriorated or corroded due to lack of use or exposure to the elements; affected by disuse or neglect
4. g__f stream
n. a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land
5. cr___r lake
n. a huge bowl-shaped cavity in the earth or an object in space, usually created by an explosion or the impact of a meteorite
6. as_____ut mission
n. a person trained by a space agency to travel outside the Earth's atmosphere
7. s__m the door
v. to shut a door or window noisily; to strike something violently or noisily
8. r__t between friends
n. a break or fissure in a relationship, organization, or physical structure; a large crack in the ground, rock, or other surfaces
9. creative fi_____e
n. skillful handling of a situation or problem with diplomacy, tact, or grace; subtle, artful maneuvering; refinement or delicacy in performance or execution; (verb) to handle a situation or problem with sensitivity, tact, and diplomacy

ANSWERS: 1. antelope, 2. comet, 3. rusty, 4. gulf, 5. crater, 6. astronaut, 7. slam, 8. rift, 9. finesse

10. co__t Halley *n.* a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun
11. as____id mining *n.* a small rocky body orbiting the sun, typically in the region between Mars and Jupiter
12. pl__e of feathers *n.* a large feather or group of feathers worn as an ornament or a symbol of achievement or distinction, especially on a hat
13. maintain a ma__o image *adj.* characterized by a strong sense of masculinity or male dominance, often in a way that is perceived as arrogant or aggressive
14. open-air aud____um *n.* a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances
15. confidence tu__es as unemployment rates rose *v.* to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance
16. me____n weapon *n.* a unit of energy equivalent to one million tons of TNT
17. ru__y metal *adj.* covered with rust (= a reddish-brown coating or corrosion layer); deteriorated or corroded due to lack of use or exposure to the elements; affected by disuse or neglect
18. n__b with cold *adj.* unable to feel physical sensation and movement; not showing human feeling or sensitivity

ANSWERS: 10. comet, 11. asteroid, 12. plume, 13. macho, 14. auditorium, 15. tumble, 16. megaton, 17. rusty, 18. numb

19. he__y price *adj.* large, bulky, and heavy; impressively large, substantial, or powerful; large in amount, extent, or significance
20. crime-bu___r *n.* a person or thing that breaks or causes something to be broken
21. do_____ay scenario *n.* the last day of the world when Christians believe that God will judge everyone; an unpleasant or disastrous event
22. lunar cr___r *n.* a huge bowl-shaped cavity in the earth or an object in space, usually created by an explosion or the impact of a meteorite
23. as_____ut in training *n.* a person trained by a space agency to travel outside the Earth's atmosphere
24. geological r__t *n.* a break or fissure in a relationship, organization, or physical structure; a large crack in the ground, rock, or other surfaces
25. financial dev_____on *n.* the act of causing great destruction or damage, often on a large scale
26. fi_____e a shot in golf *n.* skillful handling of a situation or problem with diplomacy, tact, or grace; subtle, artful maneuvering; refinement or delicacy in performance or execution; (verb) to handle a situation or problem with sensitivity, tact, and diplomacy
27. pl__e of smoke *n.* a large feather or group of feathers worn as an ornament or a symbol of achievement or distinction, especially on a hat

ANSWERS: 19. hefty, 20. buster, 21. doomsday, 22. crater, 23. astronaut, 24. rift, 25. devastation, 26. finesse, 27. plume

28. de___e my own life *v.* to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose
29. amateur ast_____er *n.* a physicist who studies astronomy
30. di_____se his voice *v.* to hide or alter someone's appearance to deceive or mislead others
31. bread cr__b *n.* a small particle or fragment of food or other substance, often one that has broken off from a larger piece; a very small amount or portion of something
32. g__f war *n.* a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land
33. ex_____te soil *v.* to dig or remove earth, rocks, or other materials from the ground or a site, often to uncover or discover something
34. solar ast_____er *n.* a physicist who studies astronomy
35. di_____ur fossil *n.* a large extinct reptile, often with an armored back, long neck, tail, and bony plates on the skin
36. lava bo_____r *n.* a large, smooth rock, typically one that has been worn away from a cliff or mountain by erosion
37. apo_____ic event *adj.* describing severe damage and destruction in past or future events, or the end of the world
38. began to cr_____e under financial pressure *v.* to break or fall apart into small pieces or fragments, especially due to age, decay, or lack of support

ANSWERS: 28. devote, 29. astronomer, 30. disguise, 31. crumb, 32. gulf, 33. excavate, 34. astronomer, 35. dinosaur, 36. boulder, 37. apocalyptic, 38. crumble

39. the tip of the pe_____la
n. a long piece of land that is almost surrounded by water but is linked to a larger part of the land
40. economic do_____ay
n. the last day of the world when Christians believe that God will judge everyone; an unpleasant or disastrous event
41. me____r impact
n. (commonly known as a shooting star) a small celestial body or particle that enters the Earth's atmosphere, often producing a bright streak of light as it burns up due to friction with the atmosphere
42. a n__b mind
adj. unable to feel physical sensation and movement; not showing human feeling or sensitivity
43. have apo_____ic overtones
adj. describing severe damage and destruction in past or future events, or the end of the world
44. as_____id explorer
n. a small rocky body orbiting the sun, typically in the region between Mars and Jupiter
45. ex_____e in popularity
v. to burst or break open violently and noisily; to cause something to burst or break open
46. he__y breakfast
adj. large, bulky, and heavy; impressively large, substantial, or powerful; large in amount, extent, or significance
47. a_t cabin
adj. (the opposite of "forward") located at or towards the rear or back of a ship, aircraft, or other vehicle

ANSWERS: 39. peninsula, 40. doomsday, 41. meteor, 42. numb, 43. apocalyptic, 44. asteroid, 45. explode, 46. hefty, 47. aft

48. de___e all of my energies *v.* to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose
49. ex_____te a deep hole *v.* to dig or remove earth, rocks, or other materials from the ground or a site, often to uncover or discover something
50. cr__b of information *n.* a small particle or fragment of food or other substance, often one that has broken off from a larger piece; a very small amount or portion of something
51. di_____se my feelings *v.* to hide or alter someone's appearance to deceive or mislead others
52. ma__o culture *adj.* characterized by a strong sense of masculinity or male dominance, often in a way that is perceived as arrogant or aggressive
53. a_t view *adj.* (the opposite of "forward") located at or towards the rear or back of a ship, aircraft, or other vehicle
54. wa___t oil *n.* a nut of a tall deciduous tree, commonly eaten as a snack or used in baking; the wood of this tree, used for furniture and other applications
55. the Arab pe_____la *n.* a long piece of land that is almost surrounded by water but is linked to a larger part of the land
56. cr_____e to dust *v.* to break or fall apart into small pieces or fragments, especially due to age, decay, or lack of support

ANSWERS: 48. devote, 49. excavate, 50. crumb, 51. disguise, 52. macho, 53. aft, 54. walnut, 55. peninsula, 56. crumble

57. s__m the book against a wall *v.* to shut a door or window noisily; to strike something violently or noisily
58. ex_____e in anger *v.* to burst or break open violently and noisily; to cause something to burst or break open
59. me_____n explosion *n.* a unit of energy equivalent to one million tons of TNT
60. dev_____on to life *n.* the act of causing great destruction or damage, often on a large scale
61. tu___e down the hill *v.* to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance
62. hulking di_____ur *n.* a large extinct reptile, often with an armored back, long neck, tail, and bony plates on the skin
63. bo_____r field *n.* a large, smooth rock, typically one that has been worn away from a cliff or mountain by erosion
64. aud_____um annex *n.* a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances
65. an_____pe hunt *n.* a large, swift-running, African or Asian mammal with horns and hooves, especially one of the gazelle family
66. wa___t tree *n.* a nut of a tall deciduous tree, commonly eaten as a snack or used in baking; the wood of this tree, used for furniture and other applications
67. me___r shower *n.* (commonly known as a shooting star) a small celestial body or particle that enters the Earth's atmosphere, often producing a bright streak of light as it burns up due to friction with the atmosphere

ANSWERS: 57. slam, 58. explode, 59. megaton, 60. devastation, 61. tumble, 62. dinosaur, 63. boulder, 64. auditorium, 65. antelope, 66. walnut, 67. meteor

68. bug bu___r

n. a person or thing that breaks or causes something to be broken

ANSWERS: 68. buster

Session 3: Fill in the Blanks

1. Their disagreement caused a _____ in their friendship.
n. a break or fissure in a relationship, organization, or physical structure; a large crack in the ground, rock, or other surfaces
2. The discovery of a new _____ species made headlines in the scientific community.
n. a large extinct reptile, often with an armored back, long neck, tail, and bony plates on the skin
3. He _____ himself to studying the history of ancient civilizations.
v. to commit or dedicate oneself or one's time, effort, or energy to a particular task or purpose
4. This task is going to take me till _____.
n. the last day of the world when Christians believe that God will judge everyone; an unpleasant or disastrous event
5. The _____ gate creaked loudly as it opened.
adj. covered with rust (= a reddish-brown coating or corrosion layer); deteriorated or corroded due to lack of use or exposure to the elements; affected by disuse or neglect
6. The hikers had to climb over a _____ that was blocking their path.
n. a large, smooth rock, typically one that has been worn away from a cliff or mountain by erosion
7. The value of the currency _____ against major international currencies.
v. to fall suddenly, often uncontrollably; to topple or turn over; to decline sharply and quickly in value, quality, or performance

ANSWERS: 1. rift, 2. dinosaur, 3. devoted, 4. doomsday, 5. rusty, 6. boulder, 7. tumbled

8. The old building was starting to _____ due to years of neglect and lack of maintenance.
- v.* to break or fall apart into small pieces or fragments, especially due to age, decay, or lack of support
9. My dog found a _____ on the floor and quickly ate it.
- n.* a small particle or fragment of food or other substance, often one that has broken off from a larger piece; a very small amount or portion of something
10. 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
11. I love adding _____ to my oatmeal in the morning for an extra crunch.
- n.* a nut of a tall deciduous tree, commonly eaten as a snack or used in baking; the wood of this tree, used for furniture and other applications
12. The power of a _____ bomb is equivalent to one million tons of TNT.
- n.* a unit of energy equivalent to one million tons of TNT
13. The shuttle _____ trained for months before embarking on the space mission.
- n.* a person trained by a space agency to travel outside the Earth's atmosphere
14. The old building _____ in a fiery inferno.
- v.* to burst or break open violently and noisily; to cause something to burst or break open
15. He displays great _____ when playing the guitar.
- n.* skillful handling of a situation or problem with diplomacy, tact, or grace; subtle, artful maneuvering; refinement or delicacy in performance or execution; (verb) to handle a situation or problem with sensitivity, tact, and diplomacy

ANSWERS: 8. crumble, 9. crumb, 10. devastation, 11. walnuts, 12. megaton, 13. astronaut, 14. exploded, 15. finesse

16. The _____ of Mexico is a body of water in the southern United States.
n. a large ocean inlet or deep bay that is partially enclosed by land
17. My left arm became _____.
adj. unable to feel physical sensation and movement; not showing human feeling or sensitivity
18. The stress-_____ meditation helped me relax and calm my nerves.
n. a person or thing that breaks or causes something to be broken
19. An enormous _____ marks the area where the vast volcanic explosion occurred.
n. a huge bowl-shaped cavity in the earth or an object in space, usually created by an explosion or the impact of a meteorite
20. The _____ bright tail could be seen in the night sky.
n. a celestial object consisting of a nucleus of ice and dust that goes around the sun
21. The herd of _____ bounded across the plain, chased by a pack of wolves.
n. a large, swift-running, African or Asian mammal with horns and hooves, especially one of the gazelle family
22. The _____ seating was filled with people waiting for the concert to begin.
n. a room or building used for concerts, plays, or other public performances
23. The _____ landscape of burnt-out villages and bombed-out ruins spread out before them.
adj. describing severe damage and destruction in past or future events, or the end of the world

ANSWERS: 16. Gulf, 17. numb, 18. buster, 19. crater, 20. comet's, 21. antelope, 22. auditorium, 23. apocalyptic

24. The bird had a beautiful _____ on its head.

n. a large feather or group of feathers worn as an ornament or a symbol of achievement or distinction, especially on a hat

25. The archaeologists _____ the ruins of an ancient city buried under the desert sands.

v. to dig or remove earth, rocks, or other materials from the ground or a site, often to uncover or discover something

26. This question has fascinated solar _____ for decades.

n. a physicist who studies astronomy

27. Later it turned out that the politician _____ the fact from the public.

v. to hide or alter someone's appearance to deceive or mislead others

28. Scientists are studying the composition and origins of the _____ belt to understand the early solar system better.

n. a small rocky body orbiting the sun, typically in the region between Mars and Jupiter

29. His _____ posturing was just a cover for his insecurities and lack of confidence.

adj. characterized by a strong sense of masculinity or male dominance, often in a way that is perceived as arrogant or aggressive

30. The _____ section of the ship suffered significant damage after the collision with the reef.

adj. (the opposite of "forward") located at or towards the rear or back of a ship, aircraft, or other vehicle

31. The _____ box of books was too heavy to lift on my own.

adj. large, bulky, and heavy; impressively large, substantial, or powerful; large in amount, extent, or significance

ANSWERS: 24. plume, 25. excavated, 26. astronomers, 27. disguised, 28. asteroid, 29. macho, 30. aft, 31. hefty

32. She _____ the door shut, angry at the person on the other side.

v. to shut a door or window noisily; to strike something violently or noisily

33. A bright _____ streaked across the night sky, captivating everyone who observed it.

n. (commonly known as a shooting star) a small celestial body or particle that enters the Earth's atmosphere, often producing a bright streak of light as it burns up due to friction with the atmosphere

34. That _____ was an essential base for the country's defense.

n. a long piece of land that is almost surrounded by water but is linked to a larger part of the land

ANSWERS: 32. slammed, 33. meteor, 34. peninsula