

## Definitions

Note carefully the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the word in the blank space(s) in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms given at the end of each entry.

- 1. aberration**  
(ab ə rā' shən)
- (*n.*) a departure from what is proper, right, expected, or normal; a lapse from a sound mental state
- In an \_\_\_\_\_ of judgment, the coach chose not to call a critical time-out.
- SYNONYMS: deviation, anomaly, irregularity
- 2. ad hoc**  
(ad' hək')
- (*adj.*) for this specific purpose; improvised; (*adv.*) with respect to this
- An \_\_\_\_\_ committee was formed immediately.
- We met, \_\_\_\_\_, to consider the issue
- SYNONYM: (*adj.*) makeshift
- ANTONYMS: (*adj.*) permanent, long-standing
- 3. bane**  
(bān)
- (*n.*) the source or cause of fatal injury, death, destruction, or ruin; death or ruin itself; poison
- Rain, the \_\_\_\_\_ of picnics, was forecast for the day we had scheduled ours.
- SYNONYMS: spoiler, bête noire
- ANTONYMS: blessing, comfort, solace, balm
- 4. bathos**  
(bā' thos)
- (*n.*) the intrusion of commonplace or trite material into a context whose tone is lofty or elevated; grossly insincere or exaggerated sentimentality; the lowest phase, nadir; an anticlimax, comedown
- After wallowing in \_\_\_\_\_, the writer returned to her novel in earnest.
- SYNONYMS: mawkishness, mush, schmaltz
- 5. cantankerous**  
(kan taŋ' kə rəs)
- (*adj.*) ill-tempered, quarrelsome; difficult to get along or deal with
- The \_\_\_\_\_ machine befuddled the team of technicians assigned to repair it.
- SYNONYMS: cranky, testy, peevish, irascible, ornery
- ANTONYMS: good-natured, sweet-tempered, genial
- 6. casuistry**  
(kazh' ū is trē)
- (*n.*) the determination of right and wrong in questions of conduct or conscience by the application of general ethical principles; specious argument
- The professor's ideas, once highly regarded, now appear to be nothing more than ingenious \_\_\_\_\_.
- SYNONYMS: sophistry, quibbling

- 7. de facto**  
(dē fak' tō)  
(*adj.*) actually existing or in effect, although not legally required or sanctioned; (*adv.*) in reality, actually  
The dictator's wife is the \_\_\_\_\_ head of state.  
It appears that, \_\_\_\_\_, the information is true.  
SYNONYMS: in actuality, in point of fact  
ANTONYMS: de jure, by right
- 8. depredation**  
(dep rə dā' shən)  
(*n.*) the act of preying upon or plundering  
The \_\_\_\_\_ of the invaders left scars that will take years to heal.  
SYNONYMS: looting, pillage, outrage
- 9. empathy**  
(em' pə thē)  
(*n.*) a sympathetic understanding of or identification with the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of someone or something else  
The grandparents felt \_\_\_\_\_ for the aspirations of their grandchildren.  
SYNONYMS: sympathy, compassion  
ANTONYMS: insensitivity, callousness, detachment
- 10. harbinger**  
(här' bən jər)  
(*n.*) a forerunner, herald; (*v.*) to herald the approach of  
Daffodils in bloom are a \_\_\_\_\_ of spring.  
Crocuses, too, \_\_\_\_\_ the approach of spring.  
SYNONYMS: (*n.*) precursor; (*v.*) presage  
ANTONYMS: (*n.*) aftermath, epilogue, sequel
- 11. hedonism**  
(hē' də niz əm)  
(*n.*) the belief that the attainment of pleasure is life's chief aim; devotion to or pursuit of pleasure  
A beach bum's mindless \_\_\_\_\_ may appeal to all working people at one time or another.  
SYNONYMS: pleasure seeking, sensuality, sybaritism  
ANTONYMS: asceticism, puritanism, self-denial
- 12. lackluster**  
(lak' lus tər)  
(*adj.*) lacking brilliance or vitality; dull  
The weary soldier's \_\_\_\_\_ stare haunted the photographer, who captured it with her lens.  
SYNONYMS: vapid, insipid, drab, flat  
ANTONYMS: brilliant, radiant, dazzling
- 13. malcontent**  
(mal' kən tent)  
(*adj.*) discontented with or in open defiance of prevailing conditions; (*n.*) such a person  
The \_\_\_\_\_ transit workers went out on strike.  
The angry mayor referred to the strikers as a group of vocal, lazy \_\_\_\_\_.

SYNONYMS: (*adj.*) dissatisfied, disgruntled; (*n.*) grumbler  
ANTONYMS: (*adj.*) satisfied, contented, complacent, smug

**14. mellifluous**  
(mə lif' lū əs)

(*adj.*) flowing sweetly or smoothly; honeyed

The folk singer's \_\_\_\_\_ voice  
appealed to young and old the world over.

SYNONYMS: euphonious, musical  
ANTONYMS: shrill, strident, harsh, grating

**15. nepotism**  
(nep' ə tiz əm)

(*n.*) undue favoritism to or excessive patronage of one's relative:

To avoid any hint of \_\_\_\_\_, the  
owner of the team refused to hire any of his relatives.

**16. pander**  
(pan' dər)

(*v.*) to cater to or provide satisfaction for the low tastes or vices  
of others; (*n.*) a person who does this

The hosts proceeded to \_\_\_\_\_  
to the every whim of their delighted guests.

The friend acted as a \_\_\_\_\_,  
ferrying secret messages back and forth between them.

SYNONYMS: (*v.*) indulge; (*n.*) pimp, procurer

**17. peccadillo**  
(pek ə dil' ō)

(*n.*) a minor sin or offense; a trifling fault or shortcoming

If you will overlook my \_\_\_\_\_,  
I will ignore yours.

SYNONYM: indiscretion  
ANTONYMS: felony, mortal sin, enormity, atrocity

**18. pièce de  
résistance**  
(pē əs də rā zē  
stāns')

(*n.*) the principal dish of a meal; the principal event, incident, o  
item; an outstanding accomplishment

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the remarkable  
repast was the dessert, a ten-tiered cake adorned with  
spun sugar.

SYNONYMS: centerpiece, chef d'oeuvre  
ANTONYMS: preliminary, hors d'oeuvre

**19. remand**  
(ri mand')

(*v.*) to send or order back; in law, to send back to jail or to a  
lower court

The outlaw was \_\_\_\_\_ to the  
custody of the sheriff.

SYNONYMS: remit, return  
ANTONYMS: forward to, send on, release

**20. syndrome**  
(sin' drōm)

(*n.*) a group of symptoms or signs that collectively characterize  
or indicate a disease, disorder, abnormality, etc.

With ubiquitous computer use, carpal tunnel has become a  
decidedly modern \_\_\_\_\_.

SYNONYMS: complex, pattern