

September, 2011

9/6

avarice

greed; desire for wealth

He became a doctor, not to save lives but to appease his avarice.

9/7

furtive

stealthy; secretive

Not wanting to be rude, Jean cast a furtive glance at the man's prominent scar.

9/8

extradite

to turn over or deliver to the legal jurisdiction of another authority

After two months of incarceration in Sacramento, the suspect was extradited to Florida.

9/9

copious

numerous; large in quantity

It is good to drink a copious amount of water before and after working out.

9/12

irascible

easily angered

We walk on eggshells around Marty because he is so irascible.

9/13

mercenary

a professional soldier hired by a foreign army

Though American by birth, the mercenary fought for France.

9/14

bastion

a strong defense or fort

The United States has been called the bastion of democracy.

9/15

jettison

to cast overboard; to discard

The passengers quickly jettisoned the heavy cargo from the damaged plane.

9/16

ostracize

to banish; to shut out from a group

The strict religious community ostracized Eli when he married a woman of another faith.

9/19

expunge

to erase or eliminate

If Moni can stay out of trouble for one year, her criminal record will be expunged.

9/20

candid

outspoken; blunt

He gave a candid speech about the time he had spent in prison.

9/21

negligence

careless neglect, often resulting in injury

Sara's negligence allowed her toddler to fall from the hotel balcony.

9/22

appease

to calm; to make satisfied

The small snack before dinner did nothing to appease Shane's appetite.

9/23

strident

harsh sounding; grating

Lisa's strident voice gave us all headaches

9/26

chaos

complete disorder (and the name of our school's literary magazine!)

The new teacher was expected to end the chaos and restore order in the classroom.

9/27

augment

to enlarge; to increase in amount or intensity

I had to take a second job to augment my income after buying the new SUV.

9/28

jingoism

extreme, chauvinistic patriotism, often favoring an aggressive foreign policy

Because of his jingoism, the candidate lost the support of voters.

9/29

rancor

extreme hatred or ill will

Whelan's double-dealing had Jack seething; he had never before felt so much rancor toward a lawyer.

9/30

inexorable

unrelenting; unavoidable

Decades of harsh weather caused the inexorable erosion of the tombstone.

October, 2011

10/3

extol

to praise highly

Emily extolled the virtues of her personal hero and mentor.

10/4

clement

merciful; lenient

Despite the abhorrent nature of the crime, the judge handed down a surprisingly clement sentence.

10/5

cliché

a worn-out idea or overused expression

The candidate promised new ideas, but spouted the same old clichés after her election.

10/6

adamant

unyielding; firm in opinion

Despite the protests of the entire city council, the mayor remained adamant.

10/11

diffident

lacking in self-confidence; shy

The diffident student hated to speak in front of class.

10/12

opus

a creative work, especially a numbered composition

My favorite composition by Antonin Dvorak is Opus 95.

10/13

ostensible

professed but not necessarily true

The ostensible reason for inviting her up to his room was to show her his bottle cap collection.

10/14

disparity

inequality; difference

My wife is twelve years older than I am, but we get along well despite the disparity in our ages.

10/17

august

marked by grandeur and awe

The coronation of the queen was an august occasion that was full of pomp and circumstance.

10/18

ancillary

subsidiary; providing assistance

The senior executive of the firm hired an ancillary worker to do his filing and typing

10/19

semblance

an outward likeness in form or appearance

The suspect's alibi was only a partial semblance of the truth

10/20

autodidact

a self-taught person

With accomplishments in law, politics, and literature, Abe Lincoln is perhaps the most famous autodidact in American history.

10/21

asinine

exhibiting poor judgment or intelligence

Jonah revealed his asinine tendencies when he rudely insulted the priest.

10/24

albeit

although; even though

It was rainy and miserable all summer, albeit good for the crops.

10/25

conduit

a means by which something is transmitted

The telephone wire must be plugged into the conduit for the computer to connect to the Internet.

10/26

philatelist

one who collects stamps

As a prominent philatelist, Dr. James has over ten thousand stamps in his collection.

10/27

Indefatigable

tireless; incapable of being fatigued

Dave was so passionate about his work that he seemed almost indefatigable to the rest of the group.

10/28

indiscretion

a minor misdeed

If it is scandalous enough, a single indiscretion can cost a politician his or her career.

10/31

osmosis

a gradual, often unconscious, process of absorption

Living in a foreign country allowed Jerry to learn its language by osmosis.

November, 2011

11/1

picayune

of very little value; trivial

Mike's picayune collection of toy trucks had more sentimental value than the few dollars it would get at auction.

11/2

dossier

a file of detailed information on a person or subject

The police had a large dossier on the man accused of theft.

11/3

behest

a command or urgent request

Tyler grudgingly obeyed his mother's behest to come home early after the school dance.

11/4

insouciant

not concerned; free from care

Jenna's insouciant attitude made her easy to befriend.

11/7

static

without force or movement; stationary

The old truck remained static in the front yard because it was out of gasoline.

11/8

stipulate

to specify a required part of an agreement

The developer stipulated that before construction could begin, the homeowners must first provide a down payment.

11/9

proliferate

to grow or reproduce rapidly

The plant food enabled Bob's flowers to proliferate throughout the garden.

11/10

tenet

a belief or principal held to be true

Belief in the Holy Trinity is one of the main tenets of Christianity.

11/11

ruminare

to think deeply or repeatedly

The great philosopher could often be found ruminating over the questions of humanity.

11/14

vigilant

alert at all times; watchful

The family's watchdog remained vigilant during the day, but he fell into a deep sleep at night.

11/15

dissident

someone who disagrees

The dissidents of the proposed welfare bill staged a protest.

11/16

petulant

rude in speech or behavior; peevish

Mike's petulant remarks toward his boss earned him a demotion and a cut in pay.

11/17

derivative

not the original; coming from another source

The modern English word "engine" is a derivative the Latin word "ingenium."

11/18

accolade

an award or honor

The reporter received accolades for her newest article that uncovered a serious money-laundering scandal.

11/21

demur

to disapprove or to take exception

Martin demurred when Sandy suggested that they spend Friday evening at the ballet.

11/22

limpid

transparent; clear

The warm, limpid waters of the Aegean Sea provide excellent snorkeling opportunities.

11/23

invidious

tending to cause discontent, harm or resentment; offensively unfair

The invidious book caused a huge controversy over implications that a leading presidential candidate committed a crime.

11/29

mellifluous

having a rich, smoothly flowing sound

The singer's mellifluous voice contributed to the relaxed atmosphere of the lounge.

11/30

epicurean

taking pleasure in food and drink

The epicurean chef taught his students not only how to cook food, but also how to enjoy it.

December, 2011

12/1

impregnable

not able to be conquered

The Greek warriors were unable to conquer the impregnable Trojan fortress.

12/2

inherent

essential

Exhaust and air-pollution are inherent features and drawbacks of the automobile.

12/5

irreverent

disrespectful

John's irreverent attitude toward his pastor embarrassed and angered his mother.

12/6

subjugate

to dominate, conquer, or bring under control

The army subjugated the peasants and forced them to do manual labor.

12/7

expedite

to increase the rate of progress

More construction workers were brought on to the project to help expedite the construction of the new bridge.

12/8

filibuster

to attempt to block a bill from becoming law by speaking at length against it

The Senator from Mississippi gave an eight-hour speech to filibuster the new tax bill.

12/9

pristine

pure; completely clean and uncontaminated

The vast, pristine wilderness of northern Alaska is too cold and remote for most people to inhabit.

12/12

pithy

full of meaning; concise

The pithy statements in greeting cards are often short and sweet.

12/13

invective

an insult or abuse in speech

Scott's invective, aimed at his teacher, resulted in an immediate trip to the principal's office.

12/14

prodigal

reckless, wasteful, and extravagant

The prodigal actor was notorious for his lavish, excessive, and unruly lifestyle.

12/15

pliable

easily bent or flexible

NASA had to devise a new, more pliable spacesuit for astronauts working on the space station.

12/16

torpid

losing motion, feeling, or power; lacking in energy

The sleeping gas caused the hero's mind to become torpid.

12/19

tenuous

not dense or thick; having little substance

Even though it was published, the dissertation put forth a very tenuous theory on intelligence.

12/20

discordant

being in disagreement

The angry and discordant voices echoed throughout the conference room.

January, 2012

1/3

circumspect

careful; heedful; attentive to all points

Although I tried to be circumspect when packing for camp, I never guessed that I should have packed an extra clock.

1/4

zephyr

a gentle breeze, sometimes specifically the West Wind

A sweet-smelling zephyr ruffled the laundry on the line.

1/5

renegade

one who deserts one side in favor of another; traitor; outlaw

The members of the old party called him a renegade; the members of the new party called him a patriot.

1/6

retribution

something justly deserved, especially a punishment

The boys had to spend the weekend picking up litter in retribution for having spray-painted graffiti on the bus.

1/9

hurtle

to move or to fling swiftly and with great force

The big fullback hurtled his way through the defensive line and scored the winning touchdown.

1/17

scourge

a person or thing that causes great trouble or misfortune

Cancer remains one of the worst scourges of mankind.

1/18

caustic

biting; stingingly sharp or sarcastic

Due to his caustic comments, his wife finally left him.

1/19

taciturn

not fond of talking; usually silent

We were amazed when the taciturn young man signed up for public speaking.

1/20

agnostic

one who believes that the existence of God can neither be proved nor disproved

Although he did not officially believe in God, the agnostic sometimes prayed "just in case."

1/23

terse

brief and to the point

Julia didn't give me any details about her break-up, just a terse, "it's over."

1/24

uncanny

weird; strange; so keen or acute as to seem bizarre

Tess had an uncanny memory for details; she knew exactly what she had worn on any given day in the past eleven years.

1/25

exodus

a mass departure or emigration

The many defeated tribes made a speedy exodus from the war-torn valley.

1/26

penitent

remorseful; sorry for having done wrong

Seeing the boy's penitent expression, the judge was easier on him than he might otherwise have been.

1/27

vindicate

to clear of suspicion or accusations

Darren sue for libel in order to vindicate his reputation.

1/30

raillery

good-humored ridicule or teasing

James much prefers Carson's raillery to the cynical slurs of other comedians.

1/31

pique

to cause resentment; to provoke

The old gentleman was piqued because he was not given a seat at the head of the table.

February, 2012

2/1

linguistics

the scientific study of the structure, sounds, and meaning of language

The professor of linguistics explained how English evolved from a number of other languages.

2/2

plebeian

a commoner; one from the lower class

Seniors treated the freshmen as though they were plebians.

2/3

noxious

harmful to the health

We opened a window to remove the noxious fumes of the paint thinner.

2/6

liege

a lord, master, or sovereign

While the servants pledged their loyalty to the liege, they did not always like or respect him.

2/7

odium

hatred

The rebels had only odium for the ruling party.

2/8

crass

coarse; tasteless

Ben made a crass comment about the length of a waitress's skirt.

2/9

hypercritical

overcritical; too severe in judgment

In the inspection of the barracks, the sergeant was so hypercritical that no one passed.

2/10

fallacy

a mistaken notion; a misconception

My grandmother still clings to the fallacy that the world is flat.

2/13

complacent

self-satisfied; smug

The former heavyweight champion became complacent after easily defeating several amateur boxers.

2/14

befuddle

to confuse; to perplex

Street maps always befuddle me, so my girlfriend navigates when we take road trips.

2/15

pandemonium

a wild disorder, noise, or confusion

Feeding time at the zoo could be pandemonium if not done slowly and carefully.

2/16

verbose

using more words than are needed; wordy

Some find Charles Dickens so verbose that they swear he must have been paid by the word.

2/17

parsimonious

excessively thrifty; stingy

Ebenezer Scrooge was a parsimonious old man.

2/21

laudable

worthy of praise; commendable

The city has made laudable efforts to reduce crime by introducing after-school programs.

2/22

indiscreet

not wise or judicious; imprudent, as in speech or action

Ron was fired shortly after his indiscreet actions at the office party.

2/23

levity

lightness of disposition; lack of seriousness

Kent brought an air of levity to the otherwise somber proceedings by cracking a few jokes.

2/24

hoax

a practical joke; a trick

The sighting of Elvis at the Bowl-O-Rama turned out to be a hoax.

2/27

amicable

friendly; peaceable

Commerce will suffer until the two nations establish amicable relations.

2/28

obstreperous

aggressively boisterous; stubborn and defiant

The obstreperous mob of looters was finally subdued by an icy blast from the fire hose.

2/29

enraptured

delighted beyond measure

Sasha was enraptured by the performance of the visiting ballet troupe.

March, 2012

3/1

bask

to expose oneself to pleasant warmth

During the Florida vacation, all she did was bask in the sun.

3/2

genial

friendly; amiable

Our new neighbors were so genial that we felt we had known them for years.

3/5

charlatan

one who pretends to have knowledge in order to swindle others

The supposed doctor endorsing the fat-burning "miracle drug" was actually a charlatan.

3/6

mundane

commonplace; earthly and not spiritual

Virginia thought herself too good an artist to be expected to deal with mundane things like earning a living.

3/7

fickle

likely to change on a whim or without apparent reason

Since she never kept one boyfriend for long, her friends said Keisha was fickle.

3/8

juggernaut

a terrible destructive or irresistible force

The Nazi juggernaut swept through Belgium and into France.

3/9

naïve

simple in outlook; not affected or worldly; especially innocent

Old movies usually portray country girls in the city as naïve and vulnerable.

3/12

nocturnal

having to do with the night; occurring at night

Owls are nocturnal creatures; they sleep during the day.

3/13

novice

a beginner; one who is inexperienced

The older lawyer took the novice under her wing and showed him the ropes.

3/14

inert

unable to act or move; inactive; sluggish

All dangerous components have been removed from the inert missile on display at the science museum

3/15

circumvent

to get around; to bypass

Though she did not lie, the defendant circumvented the question by claiming she could not remember where she was at the time.

3/16

clandestine

secret

Romeo and Juliet were forced to hold clandestine meetings because of their parents' feuding.

3/19

acquit

to find not guilty of a fault or crime

The jury acquitted the man and he was free to go.

3/20

deprecate

to express strong disapproval of

Doug stopped offering new ideas after the other workers deprecated his first suggestion.

3/21

barrister

lawyer (British)

The barrister questioned the witness as to his familiarity with a certain London pub.

3/22

adulation

excessive praise or admiration

Kim despised the adulation heaped on rock stars by young fans.

3/23

culinary

having to do with the kitchen or cooking

The famous chef had been a life-long student of the culinary arts.

3/26

bawdy

indecent; humorously obscene

When some called the new sitcom bawdy, the toy company quickly withdrew its sponsorship.

3/27

chastise

to punish severely

Brother James chastised Archie for skipping Latin by grounding him for the semester.

3/28

jocose

joking; humorous

Gary's jocose manner often led people to say he should become a stand-up comedian.

3/29

myriad

a very large number

After my break-up, my mom fed me the old line about there being a myriad of fish in the sea.

3/30

latent

present, but not active; hidden

After retiring, Nat took up painting and found that he had had latent artistic talents all along.

April, 2012

4/2

pernicious

destructive; deadly

The pernicious plague wiped out half the country's population.

4/3

frugal

thrifty; economical in money matters

My frugal father buys only day-old bread and marked-down fruit.

4/16

acquiesce

to agree passively; comply; consent

Thankfully, the bank acquiesced to an extension of my loan.

4/17

badger

to tease; annoy; harass persistently

Louis told his daughter not to badger him; he would take her to the mall when he finished work.

4/18

cache

a hiding place, or the objects hidden in a hiding place

Treasure hunters have searched for Blackbeard's treasure but no one yet has found his cache.

4/29

debacle

a sudden collapse or failure

The bank declared bankruptcy as a result of the debacle created by the thieving board of directors.

4/20

eddy

a current of water or air running opposite to the main current; a whirlpool

The boys threw stones into the eddy and watched the fast whirlpool revolve in circles.

4/23

feasible

within reason, likely, able to be done

It is not feasible to drive to Charleston and return the same day.

4/24

gauche

unpolished; unsophisticated

Gerald's so gauche he even addressed the Mayor as "old buddy."

4/25

homage

an expression of great respect and honor

We paid homage to him for his achievements in medical research.

4/26

improvise

to invent something at the time it is needed without previous planning

We had very little furniture, but we improvised a mattress from a pile of blankets.

4/27

jilt

to reject

After Jane was jilted she found another boyfriend to soothe her feelings.

4/30

kindle

to cause to burn or ignite

Since Christine once had feelings for him, Joe thought sending flowers might again kindle her affections.

May, 2012

5/1

lassitude

weariness

After eating three servings of Thanksgiving dinner, George succumbed to a feeling of lassitude and fell asleep on the couch.

5/2

magnanimous

generous; noble in spirit

The mayoral candidate was magnanimous in defeat, telling his constituents to support his opponent.

5/3

nullify

to make useless; cancel; undo

The purchase contract was nullified because it was never signed by the buyer.

5/8

obdurate

callous, headstrong, stubborn, insensitive

Anita's spoiled child was obdurate in her refusal to eat vegetables.

5/9

palatable

delicious, appetizing

A great chef can cook a palatable meal without much effort.

5/10

querulous

complaining, grumbling, whining

The tired mother was exhausted by her querulous children's constant demands.

5/11

repercussion

effect or result of some event or action, often negative

Sam did not realize the repercussions of writing nasty letters until he received the threats.

5/14

scant

very little or not much

The water supply is scant during the summer months because there is hardly any rain.

5/15

tempestuous

marked by unrest, disturbance or stormy turbulence

The ship was endangered by the tempestuous roaring winds and high waves.

5/16

unassailable

not open to attack

The king built an unassailable fortress with walls a hundred feet high.

5/17

vendetta

any prolonged and bitter feud or rivalry

A vendetta between the Hatfields and the McCoy's went on for generations and caused many lives to be lost.

5/18

waft

to move gently on water or air

Leaves wafted down from the trees, landing softly on the ground like multi-colored feathers.

5/21

zealot

someone who is overly enthusiastic about a topic or a cause

My sister is a feminist zealot, always preaching women's rights.

5/22

aspire

to long for, aim, or seek

Tim studied hard because he aspired to be valedictorian of his class at graduation.

5/23

blight

anything that injures, destroys, or prevents growth

A blight of grasshoppers took over the land and destroyed all the crops

5/24

cacophony

harsh sounds

A cacophony in the classroom was created by everyone talking at once.

5/25

debunk

to expose the falseness or exaggerations of a claim

Ralph was determined to debunk his daughter's theory that he had a money tree in the backyard.