



HUMSPELLING



In Education





15 to 17

AGE GROUP



A

15 to 17
age group

abaxial

adjective /æb'æksɪəl/

facing away from the stem of a plant

Typically, the stomata are more numerous over the abaxial leaf epidermis.

abbreviate

verb /ə'bri:vɪət/

to shorten

She does not like it when you abbreviate her name.

abdicate

verb /'æbdɪkeɪt/

to renounce one's throne

Edward VIII surprised the entire world when he decided to abdicate the British throne to marry Wallis Simpson.

abhor

verb /əb'hɔ:[r]/

to hate something very much, especially for moral reasons

I abhor the practice of child labour.

abiogenesis

noun /,ɛɪbəʊ'dʒenɪsɪs/

the supposed origin of living organisms from non-living matter

Abiogenesis proposes that life has arisen from non-life at some particular point in the ancient, unobservable past.

abiotic

adjective /,ɛɪbəɪ'ɒtɪk/

devoid of life

Soils are seldom completely abiotic.

abominable

adjective /ə'bɒmɪnəbəl/

extremely unpleasant and causing disgust

The abominable treatment of prisoners by the military caused international uproar.

abortive

adjective /ə'bɔ:tɪv/

failing to produce the intended result

After two abortive attempts at writing a novel, Ali decided to give up.

abrogate

verb /'æbrəgeɪt/

to cancel or abolish

The general tried to abrogate the constitution.

abscess

noun /'æbses/

a swollen area within body tissue, containing an accumulation of pus

Lancing an abscess drains the pus and relieves the pressure.

abstinence

noun /'æbstɪnəns/

the practice of not allowing yourself something, especially food or drink

The doctor recommended abstinence from fatty foods for the heart patient.

abulia

noun /ə'bu:lɪə/

an absence of willpower or an inability to act decisively

Abulia is a symptom of schizophrenia or other mental illness.

abysmal

adjective /ə'bɪzməl/

of a very low standard

The coach was very disappointed by his team's abysmal performance in the match.

abyss

noun /ə'bɪs/

a very deep hole that seems to have no bottom

Ahead of the divers was a gaping abyss.

acariasis**noun** /ˌækəˈraɪəsis/

an infestation, especially of the skin, with mites or ticks

*The neglected dog was suffering from acariasis.***acaricide****noun** /ˈækərɪsaɪd/

a substance poisonous to mites or ticks

*In case of severe infestation, spray any systemic insecticide and acaricide for mites along with neem oil.***accentuate****verb** /əkˈsentʃueɪt, əkˈsentʃueɪt/

to emphasise something or to make it more noticeable

*Girls use mascara to accentuate their eye lashes.***acciaccatura****noun** /əˌtʃækəˈtʃʊərə/

a grace note performed as quickly as possible before an essential note of a melody

*The acciaccatura is often confused with the appoggiatura.***accipiter****noun** /ækˈsɪpɪtəl/

a hawk having short, rounded wings and a long tail

accolade**noun** /ˈækələɪd/

an award of praise, approval, or honour

*To be chosen to represent their country is the highest accolade for most athletes.***accomplice****noun** /əˈkɒmplɪs/

a partner in crime

*The robber was caught, but his accomplice managed to escape.***accordance****noun** /əˈkɔːdəns/

conformity or agreement

*All students are expected to behave in accordance with the school's regulations.***accrue****verb** /əˈkruː/

to increase by growth or development, especially money

*Debts will accrue if regular payments are not made on time.***accusatory****adjective** /əˈkjuːzətəri, ækjuˈzeɪtəri/

indicating or suggesting that one believes a person has done something wrong

*The newspaper refused to publish the accusatory article.***acedia****noun** /əˈsiːdiəl/

laziness, sloth, or apathy

*R.R. Reno connects an overblown fear of suffering with acedia or spiritual apathy in 'Fighting the Noontday Devil'.***acerbic****adjective** /əˈsɜːbɪk/

critical in a direct and rather cruel way

*The letter was written in her usual acerbic style.***acesulfame****noun** /ˌæsɪˈsʌlfeɪm/

a white crystalline compound used as a low-calorie artificial sweetener

*Acesulfame is one of four artificial sweeteners approved for use in the United States.***acetabulum****noun** /ˌæsɪˈtæbjʊləm/

the socket of the hip bone, into which the head of the femur fits

*The articulation between the head of the femur and the acetabulum form the hip joint.***acetaminophen****noun** /əˈsɪtəˈmɪnəfen, əˈsetəˈmɪnəfen/

another name for the pain reliever paracetamol

The doctor prescribed him acetaminophen for his chronic pain.

A

15 to 17
age group

achlamydeous

adjective /ˌeɪklə'mɪdiəs/

having neither petals nor sepals

The flowers of the willow tree are achlamydeous.

achondrite

noun /eɪ'kɒndraɪt/

a stony meteorite containing no small mineral granules

I found an achondrite while walking in a field.

achondroplasia

noun /ə'kɒndrəʊ'pleɪzɪə, eɪ'kɒndrəʊ'pleɪzɪə/

a hereditary condition in which the bones fail to grow to normal size

Achondroplasia mainly affects cartilaginous bones in the arms and legs.

acquihere

noun /ækwi'həɪə/

an act or instance of buying out a company primarily for the skills and expertise of its staff, rather than for the products or services it supplies

This would be a straight acquihire to pickup an engineering and product design team.

acriflavine

noun /ˌækri'flɛvɪn/

a bright orange-red dye derived from acridine, used as an antiseptic

Some acriflavine has been added as a bacterial prophylactic.

acromegaly

noun /ˌækroʊ'megəli/

a chronic disease characterized by the enlargement of various bones and organs of the body

Her disease has been diagnosed as acromegaly.

acrostic

noun /ə'krɒstɪk/

a poem, word puzzle, or other composition in which certain letters in each line form a word or words

The acrostic verse spelt out the school motto.

acrylamide

noun /ə'krɪləmaɪd/

a colourless crystalline solid which readily forms water-soluble polymers

The gel is a thin slab of acrylamide polymerized between two glass plates.

acrylic

adjective /ə'krɪlɪk/

made from polymers of acrylic acid or acrylates

She wore a red acrylic jumper.

actinium

noun /æk'tɪniəm/

the chemical element of atomic number 89

Actinium is a highly radioactive element.

actinomorphic

adjective /ˌæktɪnəʊ'mɔːfɪk/

characterized by radial symmetry

Starfish are actinomorphic animals.

aculeate

adjective /ə'kjʊːliət/

having a sting, referring to an insect

Almost all adult aculeate wasps and bees drink nectar for their own nourishment.

adamantine

adjective /ˌædə'mɛntaɪn/

unable to be broken

Here is Prometheus, secured in the unyielding grip of adamantine chains.

addlepated

adjective /'ædəlˌpeɪtɪd/

mentally muddled or lacking in common sense

The patient was blabbering like an addlepated fool.

adenoids

plural noun /'ædɪnɔɪdz/

a mass of enlarged lymphatic tissue between the back of the nose and the throat

Swollen adenoids may interfere with breathing and affect speech.

adiabatic

adjective /ˌeɪdɪəˈbætɪk/

relating to or denoting a process or condition in which heat does not enter or leave the system concerned
A passive climate control system known as adiabatic cooling takes advantage of the hot arid climate.

adjutant

noun /ˈædʒʊtənt/

an army officer who does office work and helps other officers
The adjutant worked late, completing documents for the general.

adversary

noun /ˈædvəsəri/

one's opponent in a contest, conflict, or dispute
Batman struggled to save Gotham City from the schemes of his wicked adversary, the Joker.

aegis

noun /ˈiːdʒɪs/

with the protection or support of a particular organisation or person
The peacekeepers in Somalia work under the aegis of the UN.

aegrotat

noun /ˈaɪgrəʊˌtæt, ˈiːgrəʊˌtæt/

a certificate stating that a university student is too ill to attend an examination
The student was required to present an aegrotat verifying his illness.

aeolian

adjective /iːˈəʊliən/

relating to or arising from the action of the wind
The shallow soils are derived from fluvial gravel overlain by multiple ash deposits and aeolian dust.

aeon

noun /ˈiːɒn, ˈiːən/

an indefinite and very long period of time
It seemed that an aeon had passed before the results were finally released.

aerodrome

noun /ˈeərədrəʊm/

a small airport, used mainly for private planes
The millionaire keeps his private planes at a small aerodrome on his estate.

aerogramme

noun /ˈeərəgræm/

a pre-stamped, lightweight paper that folds into its own envelope
The aerogramme has often been considered more convenient than a separate letter and an envelope.

affable

adjective /ˈæfəbl/

pleasant and friendly
Her affable personality won her many friends.

affluent

adjective /ˈæfluənt/

having a lot of money and a good standard of living
One could tell from her clothes that she belonged to an affluent family.

afforest

verb /əˈfɒrɪst/

to convert land into forest, especially for commercial exploitation
A project was started to afforest the land.

aflatoxin

noun /ˌæfləˈtɒksɪn/

any of a class of toxic compounds produced by certain moulds found in food
Aflatoxin is the most potent human carcinogen known.

agglomeration

noun /əˌɡlɒməˈreɪʃn/

a group of things put together in no particular order or arrangement
It took two weeks to sort through the agglomeration of items she had collected on her trip.

A

15 to 17
age group

agrarian

adjective /ə'ɡreəriən/

connected to land or its cultivation

The developing nation is trying to move away from an agrarian economy.

agrimony

noun /'æɡrɪməni/

a plant of the rose family which bears slender flower spikes and hooked fruits

Agrimony is found in north temperate regions.

aileron

noun /'eɪləron/

a hinged surface in the trailing edge of an aeroplane wing

To bank to the left, the pilot must raise the left aileron.

alabaster

noun /'æləbəstə, ˌælə'bəːstə/

a translucent form of gypsum or calcite, typically white

The chess set was carved from black marble and white alabaster.

alacrity

noun /ə'ləkrɪti/

brisk and cheerful readiness

He accepted her offer with alacrity.

albino

noun /æl'biːnəʊ/

a person or animal having a congenital absence of pigment in the skin, hair, and eyes

Albino animals are rare and usually do not survive long.

algae

plural noun /'ældʒiː, 'ælgiː/

simple, non-flowering, and typically aquatic plants that lack true stems, roots, leaves, and vascular tissue

I noticed that the pond was covered with a thick, green blanket of algae.

alimony

noun /'ælɪməni/

the money paid regularly to a former wife or husband when the marriage is ended

Mrs Jones was awarded \$200 monthly alimony by the court when she divorced her husband.

aliquot

noun /'ælikwɒt/

a portion of a larger whole, especially a sample taken for chemical analysis or other treatment

An aliquot was examined daily for the appearance of cholesterol monohydrate crystals.

allegiance

noun /ə'liːdʒəns/

loyalty to a person or cause

The nobles all swore allegiance to their new king.

alleviate

verb /ə'liːviɪt/

to make suffering, a deficiency, or a problem less severe

The doctor prescribed a drug to alleviate his pain.

alliance

noun /ə'laɪəns/

an association of countries or groups who wish to support each other

An alliance was formed between two major charitable organisations to help the victims of the Iranian earthquake.

alliteration

noun /əˌlɪtə'reɪʃn/

the use of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words that are close together

"Wailing in the winter wind" is an example of alliteration.

allocation

noun /ælə'keɪʃən/

the action or process of allocating or sharing out something

The allocation of funds was not sufficient for building a shelter for the homeless.

allomorph**noun** /'æləməɹf/

any of the variant forms of a morpheme
The /z/ sound at the end of the word 'birds' is an allomorph of the plural ending in English.

allotrope**noun** /'ælətrəʊp/

each of two or more different physical forms in which an element can exist
Diamonds are an allotrope of carbon.

alopecia**noun** /,ælə'piːʃə/

the partial or complete absence of hair from areas of the body where it normally grows
Alopecia is a common side effect of chemotherapy.

alpaca**noun** /æl'pækə/

a South American animal that is related to the llama and has long woolly hair

altocumulus**noun** /,æltəʊ'kjumjʊləs/

Clouds forming a layer of rounded masses with a level base, occurring at medium altitude
A thick layer of altocumulus blocked the sun.

aludel**noun** /'æljʊdeɪ/

a pear-shaped glass pot, open at both ends to enable a series to be fitted one above another
The aludel used to be a common sight in chemistry labs.

alumnae**plural noun** /ə'lʌmniː/

former female pupils or students of a particular school, college, or university
Several alumnae of the class of 1970 were present at the college reunion.

alveolar**adjective** /æl'vɪələ/

pronounced with the tip of the tongue on or near the ridge behind the teeth
'N', 'S', 'D', and 'T' are examples of alveolar consonants.

amaryllis**noun** /,æmə'rɪlɪs/

a plant with large trumpet-shaped flowers
She bought an amaryllis for her garden.

ambiguity**noun** /,æmbɪ'ɡjuːti/

a double meaning
Please write clear definitions in order to avoid ambiguity.

ambisonics**noun** /,æmbɪ'sɒnɪks/

a high fidelity audio system that reproduces the directional and acoustic properties of recorded sound using two or more channels
Ambisonics offers advantages over other surround sound systems.

ambivalence**noun** /æm'bɪvələns/

the state of having contradictory or conflicting feelings about something or someone
There is much ambivalence in the minds of the public about our involvement in the war.

ambivert**noun** /'æmbɪvɜːt/

a person who has a balance of extrovert and introvert features in their personality
As an ambivert she enjoys social activities as well as being on her own.

ambulant**adjective** /'æmbjʊlənt/

able to walk about
The ambulant patient walked slowly in the corridor.

A

15 to 17
age group

ameliorate

verb /ə'mi:liəreɪt/

to make something bad or unsatisfactory better
Steps have been taken to ameliorate the situation.

amenable

adjective /ə'mi:nəbəl/

open and responsive to suggestion
He is a leader amenable to change.

ammunition

noun /ˌæmjʊ'nɪʃn/

a supply or quantity of bullets and shells
The battle was lost due to the lack of ammunition.

amnesty

noun /'æmnɪsti/

an official pardon
The president granted a general amnesty to all political prisoners.

amniocentesis

noun /ˌæmnɪəʊsen'ti:sis/

a medical test that involves taking liquid from the womb of a pregnant woman
The doctor did an amniocentesis to check the baby's health.

amok

adverb /ə'mʌk, ə'mɒk/

in an uncontrollable and disruptive manner
The crowd ran amok and set fire to government buildings.

amphora

noun /'æmfərə/

a tall ancient Greek or Roman jar or jug with two handles and a narrow neck
A decorative amphora has been recovered from the ruins.

amygdaloid

adjective /ə'mɪgdələɪd/

shaped like an almond
The amygdaloid nucleus in the brain is involved in the processing of emotions such as fear and anger.

amylaceous

adjective /ˌæmɪ'leɪʃəs/

of or resembling starch
She was avoiding amylaceous foods such as potatoes because she was dieting.

anabolism

noun /ə'næbəlaɪzəm/

the synthesis of complex molecules in living organisms from simpler ones
Testosterone is able to stimulate muscle protein anabolism and motor neuron size.

analemma

noun /ˌænə'lemə/

a graduated scale shaped like a figure eight that indicates the daily declination of the sun
Katrina consulted the sundial's analemma to calculate the correct time.

analgesia

noun /ˌænəl'dʒi:ziə/

medication that acts to relieve pain
A mild analgesia will usually relieve a headache.

anarchy

noun /'ænəki/

a state of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of authority or other controlling systems
The country was in a state of anarchy after the king's abdication.

anchovy

noun /'æntʃəvi, æn'tʃəʊvi/

a small shoaling fish of commercial importance as a food fish and as bait

anemone

noun /ə'neməni/

a plant of the buttercup family which typically has brightly coloured flowers and deeply divided leaves
The anemone was the showpiece of her garden.

angostura

noun /ˌæŋgə'stʃʊərə/

an aromatic bitter bark from certain South American trees, used as a flavouring
Angostura is widely used in Trinidad to flavour some of its popular drinks.

angstrom

noun /'æŋstrəm/

a unit of length, equal to one tenth of a millimicron, used to express electromagnetic wavelengths
An angstrom is about 500,000 times smaller than the thickness of a human hair.

anhedonia

noun /ˌænhɪ'dəʊniə/

the inability to feel pleasure in normally pleasurable activities
Anhedonia may be a symptom of depression.

anlage

noun /'ænla:gəl/

the rudimentary basis of a particular organ or other part, especially in an embryo
Isolation of an ovarian anlage results in normal follicle-bearing ovarian tissue.

antecedent

noun /ˌæntɪ'si:dənt/

a thing that existed before or logically precedes another
The telegraph was the antecedent of the telephone.

antediluvian

adjective /ˌæntɪdɪ'lʊviən/

of or belonging to the time before the biblical flood
The archaeologist hoped to find evidence of an antediluvian settlement.

antepenult

noun /ˌæntɪpɪ'nʌlt/

the third to last syllable in a word
The poet used assonance in the antepenult of each word.

anthropoid

noun /'ænthrəpɔɪd/

a higher primate, especially an ape or apeman
The discovery of a new anthropoid fossil has added to the debate over human predecessors.

anticoagulant

noun /ˌæntɪkəʊ'ægjələnt/

having the effect of retarding or inhibiting the coagulation of the blood
The saliva contains an anticoagulant that prevents blood clotting.

antimetabole

noun /ˌæntɪmə'tæbəli/

the repetition of words in reverse order for emphasis
Antimetabole: not effective because it is popular, but popular because it is effective.

antipathy

noun /æn'tɪpəθi/

a feeling of strong dislike
She made no attempt to hide her antipathy towards her boss.

antipodean

adjective /ˌæntɪpə'di:ən/

things that come from Australia and New Zealand
This New Zealand factory produces some of the best antipodean drinks.

aphaeretic

adjective /æ'fɪərɪtɪk/

relating to the omission of the initial sound of a word
An example of an aphaeretic word is 'cause for because.

aphelion

noun /æp'hɪ:lɪən, ə'fɪ:lɪən/

the point at which an orbiting body is furthest from the sun
The planet receives less solar energy when it is at aphelion.

A

15 to 17
age group

aphid

noun /'eɪfɪd/

a very small insect that is harmful to plants

apoapsis

noun /ˌæpəʊ'æpsɪs/

the point in an orbit farthest from the body being orbited

Kepler's law of planetary motion states that an object is at its lowest velocity at the apoapsis.

apocope

noun /ə'pɒkəpi/

the omission of the final sound of a word

In literature apocope is confined to poetry, but in prose inscriptions of dialects it is frequent.

aposiopesis

noun /ˌæpəʊ'saɪə'piːsɪs/

the rhetorical device of suddenly breaking off in speech

In coping with the unsaid and unsayable, oral history is impelled towards aposiopesis.

apothecary

noun /ə'pɒθɪkəri/

a person who made and sold medicines in the past

A famous apothecary once had his shop in the house where we now live.

appoggiatura

noun /ə'pɒdʒə'tʃuərə/

in music, a grace note which delays the next note of the melody, taking half or more of its written time value

The appoggiatura is always on a strong beat and should be emphasized.

approbation

noun /ˌæprə'beɪʃn/

approval or agreement

She looked for some sign of approbation from her parents.

apterous

adjective /'æptərəs/

having no wings

Silverfish are apterous insects that cannot fly.

aquanaut

noun /'ækwənɔ:t/

a person who swims under water using an aqua-lung

Aquanaut explorers conduct oceanographic research.

archaeopteryx

noun /ˌɑːkɪ'ɒptərɪks/

the oldest known fossil bird, with feathers, wings, and hollow bones

archaic

adjective /ɑː'keɪɪk/

old and no longer used

"Thou art" is an archaic form of "you are".

armamentarium

noun /ˌɑːməment'eəriəm/

the equipment, pharmaceuticals, and methods used in medicine

The armamentarium for the treatment of multiple sclerosis is fast increasing.

armistice

noun /'ɑːmɪstɪs/

an agreement made by opposing sides in a war to stop fighting for a certain time

An armistice agreement was signed for two years.

arpeggio

noun /ɑː'pedʒɪəʊ/

the notes of a chord played in rapid succession

He played each scale followed by an arpeggio.

arrhythmia

noun /ə'ɪθmiə/

an alteration in rhythm of the heartbeat

The doctor told the patient that her discomfort was caused by arrhythmia.

arteriosclerosis

noun /ɑːtəriəʊsklɪˈrəʊsɪs/

the thickening and hardening of the walls of the arteries

A common virus may contribute to arteriosclerosis, according to new research.

artesian

adjective /ɑːˈtiːziən, ɑːˈtiːzən/

relating to or denoting a well bored perpendicularly into water-bearing strata lying at an angle, so that natural pressure produces a constant supply of water with little or no pumping

An artesian well is drilled through hard rock to reach water.

asbestos

noun /æzˈbestɒs, æzˈbestəs/

a fibrous mineral formerly used for making incombustible or fireproof articles

As asbestos has been shown to cause lung cancer, it is not used for insulation or as a fire proof material any longer.

asphyxiate

verb /æsˈfɪksɪeɪt/

to suffocate

The smoke in the burning house might asphyxiate the residents.

asphyxiation

noun /æsˈfɪksɪˈeɪʃn/

the state or process of being deprived of oxygen

A post mortem examination found that she died from asphyxiation.

assonance

noun /ˈæsənəns/

the resemblance of sounds in words that are close together

Assonance is more a feature of verse than prose.

asteroid

noun /ˈæstəroɪd/

a small rocky body orbiting the sun

The movie Armageddon was about an asteroid hitting the Earth.

astigmatism

noun /əˈstɪgmətɪzəm/

a fault in the shape of a person's eye that prevents them from seeing clearly

The optician told me that I suffer from astigmatism and require corrective glasses.

astrakhan

noun /ˌæstrəˈkæn, ˌæstrəˈkɑːn/

the dark curly fleece of young karakul lambs from central Asia

Astrakhan is also a wool fabric made from the pelt of lambs.

asymptomatic

adjective /eɪˌsɪmptəˈmætɪk/

producing or showing no symptoms

The disease was transmitted by the asymptomatic mother.

atmolysis

noun /ætˈmɒlɪsɪs/

a process of separating gases or vapours of different molecular weights

The students have been asked to carry out an atmolysis experiment in the next hour.

attitudinal

adjective /ætɪˈtjuːdɪnəl/

relating to attitudes

Unless there are certain attitudinal changes, women will continue to get a raw deal.

Australopithecus

noun /ˌɒstrələʊˈpɪθɪkəs/

a fossil bipedal primate with both apelike and human characteristics

Australopithecus is thought to have lived over a million years ago.

autecology

noun /ˌɔːtrɪˈkɒlədʒi/

the branch of ecology that deals with the individual organism or species in relation to its environment

The chapter dealing with autecology was the first one in the book.

A

15 to 17
age group

autochthon

noun /ɔ:'tɒkθən/

the earliest inhabitant of a place

A Maori is an autochthon, indigenous to New Zealand.

autoecious

adjective /ɔ:'ti:ʃəs/

inhabiting the same host throughout the life of a parasitic fungi

An autoecious rust fungus is found on wild Himalayan blackberries.

autonomous

adjective /ɔ:'tɒnəməs/

self-governing

They proudly declared themselves part of a new autonomous province.

autopsy

noun /'ɔ:tɒpsi/

an official examination of a dead body by a doctor in order to discover the cause of death

The medical examiner ordered an autopsy to determine the cause of her death.

autoschediastic

adjective /ɔ:təʊskedɪ'æstɪk/

written or composed on the spur of the moment

The poet recited an autoschediastic poem after being urged on by the audience.

avenaceous

adjective /,ævə'neɪʃəs/

resembling the oat grasses

The roof was thatched with avenaceous reeds.

avoirduois

noun /,ævwɑ:dʒu'pwa:/

a system of weights used in many English-speaking countries

Avoirduois is based on the pound which contains 16 ounces or 7,000 grains.

avuncular

adjective /ə'vʌŋkjʊlə[r]/

like an uncle in being friendly towards a younger person

My father's friend dotes on us with avuncular affection.

axiomatic

adjective /,æksɪə'mætɪk/

self-evident

It is axiomatic that life is not always easy.

azure

adjective /'æzə[r], 'æzjʊə[r]/

bright blue in colour like the sky

The artist had painted an angel in the azure sky.

baccalaureate

noun /ˌbækəˈlə:riət/

an examination intended to qualify successful candidates for higher education

After his failure to pass the baccalaureate for the third time, he finally gave up his ambition to attend college.

baccarat

noun /ˈbækərə:/

a card game in which two or more punters gamble against the banker

He frequented the casino to play baccarat.

bagasse

noun /bəˈgæs/

the dry pulpy residue left after the extraction of juice from sugar cane

Sugar cane bagasse is used as fuel.

balaclava

noun /ˌbæləˈklɑ:vəl/

a cap that is close-fitting and woollen and covers all of the head but the face

I put on my balaclava to avoid the cold.

balafon

noun /ˈbæləfɒn/

a large xylophone with hollow gourds as resonators, used in West African music

In Malinke traditional music, men drum and play the balafon.

balalaika

noun /ˌbæləˈlaɪkə/

a Russian musical instrument like a guitar

The band had a trumpet player, a tuba player, and a boy who played the balalaika.

balbutient

adjective /ˌbælˈbjʊ:fənt/

stammering

His balbutient speech made it difficult for us to understand him.

balmy

adjective /ˈbɑ:mi/

characterized by pleasantly warm weather

Hawaii is known for its year-round balmy climate.

bamboozle

verb /bæmˈbu:zl/

to confuse somebody, especially by tricking them

He tried to bamboozle the bank into investing in an almost bankrupt company.

barracuda

noun /ˌbærəˈku:də/

a large predatory tropical marine fish with a slender body and large jaws and teeth

barricade

verb /ˌbærɪˈkeɪd/

to stop people from getting past or entering

They decided to barricade all the doors and windows.

basalt

noun /ˈbæsɔ:lt/

a dark fine-grained volcanic rock

In striped shadow they were perched side by side on an outcrop of black basalt like an overturned boat.

basilisk

noun /ˈbæzɪlɪsk/

a mythical reptile with a lethal gaze or breath

bathyscaphe

noun /ˈbæθɪskæf/

a free-diving deep-sea vessel

Augustus Piccard was the first to use a bathyscaphe in deep sea exploration.

Bauhaus

noun /ˈbaʊhaus/

a school of applied arts in Germany in the early 20th century

She came from Vienna and brought with her an urban aesthetic influenced by the Bauhaus.

B

15 to 17
age group

bauxite

noun /'bɔːksaɪt/

an amorphous clayey rock that is the chief commercial ore of aluminium
Bauxite deposits are found in the mountains.

bavardage

noun /,bævɑː'dɑːʒ/

idle chattering, prattle
It is a common notion among men that women engage in bavardage all the time.

bazooka

noun /bæ'zuːkə/

a short-range tubular rocket launcher used against tanks
Rebels launched a bazooka attack to ward off the tanks.

beauteous

adjective /'bjʊːtiəs/

beautiful
The prince fell in love with the beauteous maiden.

bœchamel

noun /'beɪʃəməɪ/

a rich white sauce made with milk infused with herbs and other flavourings
We think of béchamel as an all-purpose white sauce made of scalded milk, roux, and flavorings.

becquerel

noun /'bekərəɪ/

a unit for measuring radioactivity
The becquerel is named after the French physicist Antoine-Henri Becquerel.

beguile

verb /bɪ'gaɪl/

to charm or enchant someone, often in a deceptive way
The witness saw the woman beguile the elderly man into giving her his savings.

belch

verb /bɛltʃ/

to let air come up noisily from your stomach and out through your mouth
In some cultures it is not considered rude to belch after a good meal.

belie

verb /bɪ'laɪ/

to give a false impression of somebody or something
Her energy and youthfulness belie her age.

bellicose

adjective /'belɪkəʊs/

demonstrating aggression and willingness to fight
The police stood their ground in front of the bellicose protesters.

belligerent

adjective /bə'ɪdʒərənt/

unfriendly and aggressive
Her belligerent attitude earned her a bad reputation.

benefactor

noun /'benɪfæktə[r]/

a person who gives money or other help to an organisation such as a school or charity
Edhi has become the benefactor of thousands of destitute people.

bergschrund

noun /'bɜːɡʃruːnd, 'bɜːkʃrʌnt/

a crevasse at the head of a glacier
The Austrian team hoisted a flag at the edge of the bergschrund.

beryllium

noun /bɛ'rɪlɪəm/

the chemical element of atomic number 4, a hard grey metal
Her history included a relatively short period of exposure to a mixture of silica, hard metal, and beryllium.

betrothed

noun /bɪ'trəʊðd/

the person to whom one is engaged
Mariam was Yusuf's betrothed and was due to be married next month.

bibliophile

noun /'bɪblɪə[ʊ]faɪl/

a person who loves or collects books
My father, a keen bibliophile, spent a year looking for a rare anthology of poetry.

bifurcate

verb /'bɪfəkeɪt/

to divide into two branches or forks
Does the river bifurcate when it reaches the plains?

bijou

adjective /'bi:ʒu:/

small and elegant
They lived in a bijou apartment in the centre of the city.

Bildungsroman

noun /'bɪldʊŋzrəʊ,mɑ:n/

a novel concerned with a person's formative years and development
The book is a Bildungsroman of sorts, as Tull overcomes his abused childhood and learns about love.

billiards

plural noun /'bɪljədz/

a game for two people, played on a billiard table
Billiards is similar to snooker.

bivouac

noun /'bɪvʊæk, 'bɪvwæk/

temporary camp without tents or cover, used especially by soldiers or mountaineers
The soldiers had to camp in a bivouac on the mountainside.

blitzkrieg

noun /'blɪts,kri:ɡ/

an intense military campaign intended to bring about a swift victory
The outpost was overrun by the enemy's blitzkrieg.

bodhran

noun /'bɑʊrɑ:n, bɑʊ'rɑ:n/

a shallow one-sided Irish drum typically played using a short stick with knobbed ends
Stephen kept time on the bodhran while Mark played a reel on the fiddle.

bolus

noun /'bəʊləs/

a single dose of a drug or other medicinal preparation given all at once
The drug bolus was followed by continuous infusion until the treatment ended.

Bonapartism

noun /'bəʊnəpɑ:tɪzəm/

the political movement in France that aimed to restore the French empire under the house of Bonaparte
He revived Bonapartism as both a political and a dynastic formula.

bonhomie

noun /'bɒnəmi:, 'bɒnə'mi:/

cheerful friendliness
He exuded good humour and bonhomie.

borzoi

noun /'bɔ:zɔɪ/

a large Russian wolfhound of a breed with a narrow head and silky, typically white, coat

bouillabaisse

noun /'bu:ʒəbeɪs/

a rich, spicy fish stew, originally from Provence in France
Recipes for bouillabaisse vary from family to family.

B

15 to 17
age group

bouillon

noun /'bu:ʒɔ̃/

a thin soup or stock made by stewing meat, fish, or vegetables in water

Bouillon is used as a base for numerous dishes.

bourgeois

adjective /'buʒwa:z/

belonging to or characteristic of the middle class

They were a traditional bourgeois family.

bourguignon

noun /'bɜ:ɡɪnʒɒn, ˌbɜ:ɡɪn'ʒɒn/

a sauce made with red wine, onions and seasoning

I took my mother out to a restaurant because she loved its beef bourguignon.

bourrée

noun /'buəreɪ/

a traditional French dance in fast duple time

The bourrée has been utilized as a form by a number of pop and rock music bands.

boutonniere

noun /ˌbu:tɒn'jeə/

a spray of flowers worn in a buttonhole

A groom's boutonniere should complement the flowers and colours of the bride's bouquet.

branchiae

plural noun /'bræŋki:z/

the gills of fish and some invertebrate animals

During this time branchiae, which resemble gills, develop.

brassage

noun /'bræsɪdʒ/

a charge to cover the costs of coining money

The brassage for the new currency was very high.

brattice

noun /'brætɪs/

a wooden partition or shaft lining in a coal mine

Some of the miners received injuries when the brattice suddenly collapsed.

breathalyser

noun /'breθəlaɪzə/

a device used by police for measuring the amount of alcohol in a driver's breath

A breathalyser test proved negative.

brevity

noun /'brevɪti/

the quality of using few words when speaking or writing

Brevity is the soul of wit.

brucellosis

noun /ˌbru:seɪ'ləʊsɪs/

an infectious bacterial disease of humans transmitted by contact with infected animals

The farmer contracted brucellosis from the sick cattle and was very ill.

brusque

adjective /brʊsk, bru:sk, brʌsk/

abrupt or offhand in speech or manner

The sergeant spoke in an extremely brusque manner.

buccaneer

noun /ˌbʌkə'niə/

a pirate

My nephew loves to dress up as a buccaneer.

buddleia

noun /'bʌdlɪə/

a widely cultivated shrub with clusters of fragrant lilac, white, or yellow flowers

The buddleia is just coming into flower and mid-summer clematis are covered in fat buds that will soon bloom.

bumptious

adjective /'bʌm[p]jəs/

offensively conceited

His bumptious attitude irritates his colleagues.

buoyancy

noun /'bɔɪənsɪ/

the ability or tendency of something to float in water or other fluid

Buoyancy allows a boat to float on water.

burgher

noun /'bɜː[r]gə[r]/

a citizen of a particular town

James had a steady job and is a respected burgher in the town committee.

burnous

noun /bɜː'nuːs/

a long, loose hooded cloak worn by Arabs

It was so cold that he had to put on a burnous and sit in the mosque.

C

15 to 17
age group**cabbalistic****adjective** /kæbə'listɪk/

relating to or associated with mystical interpretation or esoteric doctrine

*The first cabbalistic tradition arose from ancient Judaism.***caboose****noun** /kə'bu:s/a railway wagon with accommodation for the train crew, typically attached to the end of the train
*We saw a caboose in the train museum.***cachinnate****verb** /'kæki,neɪt/

to laugh loudly

*His joke made us all cachinnate.***cadaverous****adjective** /kə'dævərəs/

very pale, thin, or bony

*Ali was a tall man with a long, cadaverous face.***cadence****noun** /'keɪdnsl/

the rise and fall of the voice in speaking

*The cadence of her mother's voice lulls the baby to sleep.***cadge****verb** /kædʒ/

to beg for food or money

*He managed to cadge some money from his friend.***cadre****noun** /'kɑ:də[r], 'kɑ:drə/

a small group of people who are specially chosen and trained for a particular purpose

*The general trained a secret cadre in desert warfare.***caecilian****noun** /si:'silɪən/

a burrowing worm-like amphibian of a tropical order distinguished by poorly developed eyes and the lack of limbs

caesura**noun** /sɪ'zjʊərə/

a break or pause in a line of verse

*Our teacher pointed out the use of a caesura in the poem.***cagoule****noun** /kə'gu:l/a lightweight, hooded, thigh-length waterproof jacket
*I have packed a cagoule in case the weather gets bad.***cajole****verb** /kə'dʒəʊl/

to persuade someone to do something by flattering them

*She knows she can cajole her father into doing anything for her.***calaboose****noun** /'kælə'bu:s/

a local jail or prison

*The suspected robber was locked in the calaboose before he was shifted to the city jail.***calamander****noun** /'kæləmændə[r]/

a fine-grained, greyish-brown ebony streaked with black, used in furniture

*The decorative chest was made of calamander with brass inlay.***caldera****noun** /kəl'deərə, kəl'dɪərə/

a large volcanic crater, especially one formed by a major eruption leading to the collapse of the mouth of the volcano

*A caldera can be up to 60 kilometers in diameter.***calibre****noun** /'kælɪbə[r]/

the quality of something, especially a person's ability

The firm needs more people of your calibre.

callisthenics**plural noun** /ˌkælɪs'thenɪks/

gymnastic exercises to achieve bodily fitness and grace of movement

*The physical instructor recommended callisthenics to his students.***callous****adjective** /'kæləs/

showing or having an insensitive and cruel disregard for others

*I abhor terrorists' callous disregard for human life.***calotte****noun** /kə'lɒt/

a skullcap worn by Roman Catholic clergy

*The calotte offered an air of authority to the Roman clergy.***calque****noun** /kælk/

an expression adopted by one language from another in a more or less literally translated form

*The English expression 'Long time no see' is a calque from Chinese.***camaraderie****noun** /ˌkæmə'rædəri, ˌkæmə'rædəri/

a mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together

*What he loved about his job was the camaraderie amongst his colleagues.***Camembert****noun** /'kæməmbɛə[r]/

a rich, soft, creamy cheese with a whitish rind, originally made near Camembert in Normandy, France

*She will serve the Camembert cheese with fruits.***Canaanite****noun** /'keɪnənaɪt/

relating to or characteristic of the biblical area of ancient Palestine west of the River Jordan

*Much of our knowledge about the Canaanite civilization stems from excavations.***carabao****noun** /ˌkærə'beɪəʊ/

water buffalo

carioca**noun** /ˌkærɪ'əʊkə/

a Brazilian dance similar to the samba

*The audience applauded the young girl's performance of a carioca.***cariogenic****adjective** /ˌkærɪəʊ'dʒenɪk, ˌkeərɪəʊ'dʒenɪk/

causing tooth decay

*Several food items, such as sugars, can be cariogenic.***carminative****adjective** /'kɑːmɪnətɪv, kɑː'mɪnətɪv/

relieving flatulence

*Carminative herbs are used for indigestion.***carnage****noun** /'kɑːnɪdʒ/

the violent killing of a large number of people

*He could not forget the carnage which he had witnessed as a boy.***carrion****noun** /'kærɪən/

the decaying flesh of dead animals

*The crows were feeding on carrion at the side of the road.***cartouche****noun** /kɑː'tuːʃ/

a carved tablet or drawing representing a scroll with rolled-up ends, used ornamentally or bearing an inscription

*On the cartouche were written the names of the brave soldiers who had given their lives for their country.***cassiterite****noun** /kə'sɪtərəɪt/

a reddish, brownish, or yellowish mineral consisting of tin dioxide

Cassiterite is also called tinstone.

C

15 to 17
age group**cassowary****noun** /'kæsəˌweəri/

a very large flightless bird related to the emu, with a bare head and neck, a tall horny crest, and one or two coloured wattles

castanets**plural noun** /'kæstəˈnets/

a musical instrument, used by Spanish dancers, consisting of two small round pieces of wood which are held in the hand and hit together with the fingers to make a noise

The dancers were performing to the rhythm of castanets.

casuarina**noun** /'kæsjʊəˈri:nə/

a tree with slender, jointed, drooping twigs native to Australia and South East Asia

Some birds feed on the casuarina tree.

casuistry**noun** /'kæzjuɪstri, 'kæʒjuɪstri/

reasoning that is very subtle and designed to mislead people

Many people were fooled by his casuistry.

catachresis**noun** /'kætəˈkriːsɪs/

the improper use of a word

The newspaper printed a correction for the previous day's catachresis.

catacombs**plural noun** /'kætəkəʊmz, 'kætəkʊmz/

an underground cemetery as constructed by the ancient Romans

There are at least forty catacombs in Rome.

catadromous**noun** /kæˈtædrəməs/

migrating down rivers to the sea to spawn

The catadromous eels travel from freshwater to the ocean to reproduce.

catafalque**noun** /'kætəfælk/

a raised structure on which the body of a dead person lies

The catafalque built for the president's body was the most elaborate I have ever seen.

catalyst**noun** /'kætəlist/

a substance that makes a chemical reaction happen faster without itself being changed

Iron is used as a catalyst in many chemical reactions.

catarrh**noun** /kəˈtɑː[r]/

excessive mucus in the nose or throat

The high altitude aggravated her catarrh and caused her discomfort.

cationic**adjective** /kætaˈɒnɪk/

having positively charged molecules

The development of both cationic and anionic exchange materials did not occur until 1935.

caucus**noun** /'kɔːkəs/

a meeting of the members or leaders of a political party to choose candidates or decide a common policy

A caucus will be held on Tuesday to choose delegates to the party's national convention.

cemetery**noun** /'semitri/

a place set apart for graves or tombs

He was told that there was a large cemetery behind the hill.

centripetal**adjective** /senˈtrɪpɪtəl/

moving or tending to move towards a centre

When you swing an object in a circle at the end of a rope, the rope supplies the centripetal force acting on the object.

centurion

noun /sen'tjʊəriən/

an army officer in ancient Rome who commanded 100 soldiers

The centurion marched his men to the furthest point of the Roman Empire.

cerebral

adjective /'serɪbrəl, sə'ri:brəl/

relating to the mind rather than the feelings

He writes extremely cerebral poetry and does not emphasise emotions enough.

cerebration

noun /serɪ'breɪʃn/

thought

Mathematical problems frequently require much cerebration.

chalcedony

noun /kæl'sedəni/

a microcrystalline type of quartz occurring in several different forms

My grandmother has an antique pendant made with chalcedony.

chameleon

noun /kə'mɪliən/

a small lizard that can change its colour to that of its surroundings

chamois

noun /'ʃæmwɑ:/

a species of goat antelope that lives in mountainous areas

chandler

noun /'tʃɑ:ndlə/

a dealer in a specified trade or merchandise

A boat chandler will supply the necessary tow ropes.

chaos

noun /'keɪɒs/

a state of great confusion and disorder

The heavy snow has caused chaos on the roads.

chaparral

noun /ʃæpə'ræl, ˌtʃæpə'ræl/

vegetation consisting chiefly of tangled shrubs and thorny bushes

The police brought sniffer dogs to search for the criminal in the chaparral.

charabanc

noun /'ʃærəbæŋ/

an early type of bus

The old ladies went to the seaside on the charabanc.

charcuterie

noun /ʃɑ:'kʊ:təri/

cold cooked meats

We had a plate of cheese and charcuterie as an appetizer.

charnel

adjective /tʃɑ:nəl/

gruesomely indicative of death or the dead

A charnel smell came from the area where the bones were piled.

charred

adjective /'tʃɑ:d/

burnt and black

He sat staring at the charred remains of his first attempt at a barbeque.

chartreuse

noun /ʃɑ:'trɜ:z/

a pale green or yellow liquor made from brandy and aromatic herbs

The guests enjoyed the chartreuse at the party.

chassis

noun /'ʃæsi/

the frame that a vehicle is built on

The body of the car had been destroyed in the accident, but the chassis was undamaged.

C

15 to 17
age group

chasten

verb /ˈtʃeɪsn/

to make somebody feel sorry for something they have done

The teacher was quick to chasten the students for being tardy.

chastise

verb /tʃæˈstaɪz/

to scold

The coach began to chastise the team for their lack of commitment.

chattel

noun /ˈtʃætəl/

a personal possession

People do not like to be treated like chattel.

chauffeur

noun /ˈʃəʊfə[r]/

a person employed to drive a car

They are looking for a chauffeur to drive their son to school.

chayote

noun /ˈtʃeɪəʊti/

a succulent green pear-shaped tropical fruit which resembles cucumber in flavour

The chayote belongs to the same family as zucchini and other summer squash.

chiaroscuro

noun /kɪˌɑːrəˈskuərəʊ/

the treatment of light and shade in painting

Rembrandt is a master of chiaroscuro.

chiasmus

noun /kaiˈæzməs/

a rhetorical or literary figure in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order

“Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country” is an example of a chiasmus.

chibouk

noun /tʃɪˈbuːk/

a long Turkish tobacco pipe

It is rare to see a chibouk these days.

chicane

noun /ʃɪˈkeɪn/

a sharp double bend on a car racing track

He drove the car skilfully round the chicane.

chicanery

noun /ʃɪˈkeɪnəri/

the use of deception or subterfuge to achieve one's purpose

The director was guilty of corruption and chicanery.

chicha

noun /ˈtʃɪtʃə/

a South American drink made from fermented maize or fruit

They prepared chicha which sustained them during the icy winters.

chickadee

noun /ˈtʃɪkədiː/

a small songbird that searches acrobatically for insects among foliage and branches

chiffonier

noun /ˌʃɪfəˈniə/

a low cupboard either used as a sideboard or with a raised bookshelf on top

We moved the chiffonier to the study.

chihuahua

noun /tʃɪˈwɑːwə/

a very small dog of a smooth-haired large-eyed breed originating in Mexico

chinook

noun /tʃɪˈnuːk, ʃɪˈnʊk/

a large North Pacific salmon which is an important food fish

chitin**noun** /'kɑːtɪn/

a fibrous substance that is the principal component of the exoskeletons of arthropods and the cell walls of fungi

Chitin has proven to be useful for several medical and industrial purposes.

chlorinate**verb** /'klɔːrɪneɪt/

to impregnate or treat with chlorine

Health authorities chlorinate tap water to make it safe for drinking.

chondrule**noun** /'kɒndruːl/

a spheroidal mineral grain present in large numbers in some stony meteorites

The scientist examined the chondrule under a microscope.

chorea**noun** /kə'riə/

a neurological disorder characterized by jerky involuntary movements affecting especially the shoulders, hips, and face

Chorea is one of the hallmarks of rheumatic fever.

chrysalis**noun** /'krisəlis/

the case around a caterpillar that is changing into a butterfly or moth

The butterfly emerged from its chrysalis and fluttered its wings.

cicada**noun** /sɪ'kɑːdə/

a large homopterous insect with long transparent wings, found chiefly in warm countries

cinereous**adjective** /sɪ'nɪəriəs/

ash-grey, usually referring to hair or feathers

The bird's cinereous plumage blended with the grey skies.

cingulate**adjective** /'sɪŋɡjʊˌleɪt/

having curved nerve fibres in the brain

The cingulate sulcus is a brain fold on the medial wall of the cerebral cortex.

circumlocution**noun** /ˌsɜːkəmlə'kjuːʃn/

indirect or roundabout verbal expression

Because he couldn't muster the courage to be blunt, he used circumlocution.

cirrocumulus**noun** /ˌsɪrəʊ'kjuːmjʊləs/

a high altitude cloud form consisting of small white rounded masses in regular groupings

Karachi's skies are usually covered with cirrocumulus during the summer evenings.

cirrostratus**noun** /ˌsɪrəʊ'straːtəs, ˌsɪrəʊ'streɪtəs/

a cloud forming a thin, more or less uniform semi-translucent layer at high altitude

Cirrostratus clouds are a common feature in winter.

civet**noun** /'sɪvɪt/

a carnivorous catlike mammal of Africa and Asia

clairaudient**noun** /kleə'rɔːdiənt/

a person with the supposed power to hear things outside the range of normal hearing.

The clairaudient claimed to hear the whispering of the trees.

clairvoyant**noun** /kleə'vɔɪənt/

a person believed to be able to see future events or to communicate with people who are dead or far away

You don't have to be a clairvoyant to predict the outcome of the election.

C

15 to 17
age group

claque

noun /klæk, klɑ:k/

a group of sycophantic followers

The movie star was surrounded by a claque of fans.

clerihew

noun /'klerɪhju:/

a short comic or nonsensical verse, typically in two rhyming couplets with lines of unequal length and referring to a famous person

My favourite poem in the collection was a clerihew about David Beckham.

clickbait

noun /'klɪkbet/

Internet content whose main purpose is to attract attention and encourage visitors to click on a link to a particular web page

The recent reports of the show's imminent demise are hyperbolic clickbait.

clientele

noun /'kli:ntel, klaiəntel/

the customers of a business

The new restaurant attracted a young and trendy clientele.

clincher

noun /'klɪntʃəl/

a fact, argument, or event that settles a matter conclusively

That point proved to be the final clincher in the debate.

cloche

noun /kləʊʃ, klɒʃ/

a small translucent cover for protecting or forcing outdoor plants

Use a cloche to protect the plant from a late frost.

clump

noun /'klʌmp/

a small group of trees or plants growing closely together

We found shelter under a thick clump of trees.

coalesce

verb /ˌkəʊəˈles/

to come together to form one larger body

I watched the rain drops on my window coalesce into streams as they neared the bottom of the frame.

coaxial

adjective /kəʊˈæksɪəl/

having a common axis

Coaxial digital cables are the most common type of connection cable used for digital audio.

coccyx

noun /'kɒksɪks/

a small triangular bone ending the spinal column in humans and some apes

The coccyx is informally known as the tail bone.

cochlea

noun /'kɒklɪə/

the spiral cavity of the inner ear which produces nerve impulses in response to sound vibrations

Implants to supplement a malfunctioning cochlea have greatly improved.

coefficient

noun /ˌkəʊɪˈfɪʃənt/

a numerical or constant quantity placed before and multiplying the variable in an algebraic expression

In a linear equation, the coefficient of 'x' determines the slope of the line.

coelenterate

noun /si:'lentə'reɪt, si:'lentərət/

a member of a phylum of invertebrate sea animals

The sea cucumber is a coelenterate.

cognizance

noun /'kɒgnɪzəns/

knowledge or awareness

He was deputed to bring the affair to the cognizance of the court.

cognoscenti

plural noun /ˌkɒɡnəˈʃenti/
people who are especially well informed about a particular subject
It's worth taking a tip from the fashion cognoscenti.

coherently

adverb /kəʊˈhɪərəntli/
in a logical and consistent way
He coherently and clearly explained the theory.

colectomy

noun /kə[ʊ]ˈlektəmi/
the surgical removal of all or part of the colon
There are 10 very competent surgeons in the hospital capable of performing a colectomy.

collimate

verb /ˈkɒlɪmeɪt/
to make rays of light or particles accurately parallel
The first and second lenses operate jointly to concentrate and collimate the incident light beam.

coloratura

noun /ˌkɒləreɪˈtʊərə/
complicated passages for a singer
The opera singer was an expert in coloratura.

columbarium

noun /ˌkɒləmˈbeəriəm/
a vault having niches for funeral urns
We took the urn to the columbarium.

comeuppance

noun /kəmˈʌpəns/
a punishment or fate that one deserves
I was glad to see that the bad guy got his comeuppance at the end of the film.

commiserate

verb /kəˈmɪzəreɪt/
to show sympathy
They went to commiserate with their cousin on having lost the election.

communiqué

noun /kəˈmjʊːnɪkeɪ/
an official announcement or statement, especially one made to the media
An official communiqué was issued in the news bulletin.

compendium

noun /kəmˈpendiəm/
a collection of facts, drawings, and photographs on a particular subject, especially in a book
You will find a compendium on the subject in the library.

complaisance

noun /kəmˈpleɪzəns/
willingness to accept what others say or do without protest
Sometimes his complaisance was seen as a weakness.

concomitant

adjective /kənˈkɒmɪtənt/
naturally accompanying or associated
She loved travel, with all its concomitant worries.

condiment

noun /ˈkɒndɪmənt/
a substance such as salt, mustard, or pickle that is used to add flavour to food
Everyone has a favourite condiment to put on a hot dog.

confluence

noun /ˈkɒnflʊəns/
the place where two rivers flow together and become one
They built the city at the confluence of two rivers.

conformity

noun /kənˈfɔːmɪti/
behaviour or actions that follow the accepted rules of society
In conformity with the rules and regulations, she requested the chairman to preside over their annual meeting.

C

15 to 17
age group**congenital****adjective** /kən'dʒenɪtəl/

referring to a disease or physical abnormality present from birth

*The child has a congenital heart defect.***connivance****noun** /kə'naɪvəns/

help in doing something wrong

*With the connivance of his friends, he made a plan to scare the teacher.***conservatoire****noun** /kən'sɜ:vətwaɪ/

a college for the study of classical music or other arts

*She studied at the Paris Conservatoire.***consonance****noun** /'kɒnsənəns/

agreement or compatibility between opinions or actions

*The policy is popular because of its consonance with traditional party doctrine.***construe****verb** /kən'struː/

to interpret

*He decided to construe her remark as an apology and took the matter no further.***consummate****adjective** /'kɒnsjəmət, kən'sʌmət/

showing great skill and flair

*He gave a consummate performance as a troubled teenager in his latest film.***contiguous****adjective** /kən'tɪɡjʊəs/

sharing a common border

*There are four geographically contiguous provinces.***continuum****noun** /kən'tɪnjʊəm/

a continuous sequence in which adjacent elements are not perceptibly different from each other, but the extremes are quite distinct

*Political beliefs form a continuum and cannot be neatly divided into left and right.***contraflow****noun** /'kɒntrəfləʊ/

redirected traffic sharing the road with traffic coming in the other direction

*The traffic police had to create a contraflow due to the reconstruction of the parallel road.***contrapuntal****adjective** /'kɒntrə'pʌntəl/

of or relating to the musical technique of writing or playing a melody or melodies in conjunction with another, according to fixed rules

*Bach was the master of writing contrapuntal music.***contrariety****noun** /'kɒntrə'raɪəti/

opposition or inconsistency between two things

*Their contrariety made it impossible for them to ever be allies.***contravene****verb** /'kɒntrə'vi:n/

to offend against the prohibition or order of a law

*He was careful not to contravene the law.***contretemps****noun** /'kɒntrətɒ/

a minor dispute or disagreement

*A misunderstanding led to a contretemps with the teacher.***conversant****adjective** /kən'vɜ:snt/

familiar with something

Tourists are not always conversant with the customs of the countries they visit.

conveyance

noun /kən'veɪəns/

the action or process of carrying someone or something from one place to another

The conveyance of harvested timber to the lumber mill by river is more economical than by land.

cordillera

noun /ˌkɔːdɪ'ljəərə/

a system or group of parallel mountain ranges

The Andean cordillera extends through seven South American countries.

cornice

noun /'kɔːnɪs/

an ornamental moulding round the wall of a room just below the ceiling

We added a cornice when we remodeled our living room.

corollary

noun /kə'rɒləri/

a proposition that follows from, and is often appended to, one already proved

For these angles, the contradiction used to prove the corollary does not arise.

coronagraph

noun /kə'reʊnəgrɑːf/

a telescope for observation of the sun's corona

The coronagraph enables us to view the Sun's corona.

corroborate

verb /kə'rɒbəreɪt/

to provide supporting evidence

Finding a witness to corroborate his client's story proved impossible.

corymb

noun /'kɒrɪmb/

a flat-topped cluster of flowers

The stem by which the flower is supported unites at the head of the primary branches into thick, short, irregular bundles, in the form of a corymb.

cosmos

noun /'kɒzmos/

the universe seen as a well-ordered whole

Astronauts are required to have basic knowledge of the cosmos.

cotillion

noun /kəʊ'tɪljən/

an elaborate 18th century French dance based on the contredanse

They danced the first cotillion mechanically.

cotyledon

noun /ˌkɒtɪ'liːdən/

an embryonic leaf in seed-bearing plants

Most mature legume seeds are starchy and require cooking in water to soften the cell walls of the cotyledon.

couquette

noun /ku:'ʃet/

a railway carriage with seats convertible into sleeping berths

The story begins with him settling happily into a lower berth in a couquette and falling asleep.

countermand

verb /ˌkaʊntə'mɑːnd/

to cancel an order that has been given

The new chairman wanted to countermand the last directive given by his predecessor.

counterpoise

noun /'kaʊntəpɔɪz/

a factor or force that balances or neutralizes another

His wife's rational thinking was a counterpoise to his daydreaming.

courante

noun /ko'raːnt/

an old dance in quick triple time

Let me have the honour to dance one courante with her upon the heath.

C

15 to 17
age group**courgette****noun** /kʊə'ʒet/

the immature fruit of a vegetable marrow

*She was shaving thin slices off a courgette with a potato peeler.***covenant****noun** /'kʌvənənt/

an agreement

*We must comply with the terms of the covenant.***coxswain****noun** /'kɒks[ə]n/

the person who steers a boat

*The coxswain steered a skilful course along the river.***crèche****noun** /kreɪʃ, kreʃ/

a day nursery for very young children

*Every morning she drove her twin toddlers to the crèche.***credence****noun** /'kri:dns/belief in or acceptance of something as the truth
*I have little credence in his promises.***credulous****adjective** /'kredjʊləs/

having or showing too great a readiness to believe things

*Where would he find one man so credulous as to believe him?***crepuscule****noun** /'krepəskju:l/

twilight

*As our ship moved the island slowly faded away from sight in the golden crepuscule of a beautiful Caribbean day.***cretaceous****adjective** /kri'teɪʃəs/

relating to or denoting the period from 146-65 million years ago

*The end of the cretaceous period was a time of mass extinction for many groups of animals.***crimplene****noun** /'krɪmpli:n/

a thick yarn used to make a fabric

*Her jacket was made from crimplene and did not crease easily.***crocus****noun** /'krəʊkəs/

a small yellow, purple or white flower that appears in early spring

*She plucked a crocus from her garden.***croquet****noun** /'krəʊkeɪ, 'krəʊki/

a game played on a lawn, in which wooden balls are driven through a series of hoops by means of mallets

*They enjoyed a pleasant game of croquet at the picnic.***crotchet****noun** /'krɒtʃɪt/

the British term for a quarter note, represented by a solid dot with a plain stem

*A crotchet has the time value of half a minim.***croupier****noun** /'kru:piə, 'kru:piɪ/

a person in charge of a gambling table

*He worked as a croupier at the casino for 30 years.***cryptosporidium****noun** /'kriptəʊspɔː'ɪdɪəm/

a parasite found in water that causes infection

culottes

noun /kju:'lɒts/

women's flared trousers cut to look like a skirt
She found it difficult to dance in her culottes due to its immense flare.

cumbersome

adjective /'kʌmbəsəm/

large or heavy and therefore difficult to carry or use
The cumbersome diving suit slowed him down on land.

cumbia

noun /'kʊmbiə/

a kind of dance music of Colombian origin
The Costa Rican radio station played a mix of cumbia, salsa, and merengue.

curmudgeonly

adjective /kɜ:'mʌdʒənli/

bad-tempered or miserly
Because of his curmudgeonly behaviour, he received very few invitations.

cygnet

noun /'sɪɡnət/

a young swan

cymbal

noun /'sɪmbəl/

a musical instrument consisting of a slightly concave round brass plate
The drummer hit the cymbal as an ending to the rock song.

D

15 to 17
age group

daguerreotype

noun /də'gerətaɪp/

a photograph taken using an early process that used a silver plate and mercury gas

The daguerrotype has almost become obsolete.

daikon

noun /'daɪkɒn, 'daɪkən/

another name for mooli

She placed the daikon into a large bowl with the remaining salad ingredients.

dais

noun /'deɪs, 'deɪs/

a low platform for a lectern or throne

When he approached the dais, he was greeted with cheers from the audience.

Damascene

adjective /'dæməsiːn/

relating to or denoting a process of inlaying a metal object with gold or silver decoration

This box is a fine example of Damascene work.

danseuse

noun /dɑː'sɜːz/

a female ballet dancer

The danseuse was considered to be exceptionally talented.

dashiki

noun /dɑː'ʃɪːki/

a loose brightly coloured shirt or tunic, originally from West Africa

She wore a dashiki at the halloween party.

deaeration

noun /,diːəər'eɪʃən/

the act of extracting a gas from a liquid

It is essential that sufficient venting is provided at all times, or deaeration will be incomplete.

debouch

verb /dɪ'baʊtʃ, dɪ'buːʃ/

to emerge from a confined space into a wide, open area

The small stream will debouch into an open field.

decollement

noun /deɪ'kɒlmə/

a geological process in which some strata become partly detached from those underneath and slide over them

A decollement results in various types of deformation in the layers of rock above.

decorticate

verb /diː'kɔːtɪkeɪt/

to remove the bark, husk, or outer covering of something

He would decorticate trees and then sell the bark for money.

decoupage

noun /,deɪkuː'pɑːʒ/

the art or process of decorating a surface with shapes or illustrations cut from paper

She used decoupage to beautify the plain glass vase.

decrepitude

noun /dɪ'kreɪtjuːd, dɪ'kreɪtʃuːd/

the state of being old and in poor condition or health

The house had a forlorn air of decrepitude.

defalcation

noun /'diːfælkeɪʃən/

the act of misusing or misappropriating property or funds entrusted to one

Defalcation is a technical term for embezzlement.

defection

noun /dɪ'fekʃən/

the desertion of one's country or cause in favour of an opposing one

There has been a defection from the ruling party.

deference

noun /'defərəns/

polite submission and respect

She showed deference to the wishes of her parents in planning her wedding.

delicatessen**noun** /ˌdelɪkəˈtesn/

a shop selling cooked meats, cheeses, and unusual or foreign prepared foods

Her brother is the owner of a delicatessen.

deliquescence**noun** /ˌdelɪˈkwesəns/

the liquification of salts by absorption of moisture from the atmosphere

Some of the salt specimens in the lab melted due to deliquescence.

delphinium**noun** /ˌdelˈfɪniəm/

a popular garden plant of the buttercup family, which bears tall spikes of blue flowers

I had to stake each delphinium to keep it from falling over.

demeanour**noun** /dɪˈmiːnə[r]/

outward behavior or bearing

We were greatly impressed by his gentlemanly demeanour.

demesne**noun** /dɪˈmeɪn, dɪˈmiːn/

territory over which rule or control is exercised

The demesne of the King extended into Europe.

Demogorgon**noun** /ˌdiːməʊˈɡɔːɡən/

a powerful and terrible mythological god or demon, associated with hell or the underworld

Demogorgon has been portrayed in a variety of ways and contexts since the 4th century.

denouement**noun** /ˌdeɪˈnuːmənt/

the end of a play or book in which everything is explained or settled

I enjoyed the unexpected denouement in the film we watched last night.

dentifrice**noun** /ˈdentrɪfɪs/

any substance, especially a paste or powder, for use in cleaning the teeth

She used baking soda as a dentifrice.

denuclearize**verb** /diːˈnjuːkləraɪz/

to remove nuclear weapons from

There is a proposal to denuclearize Europe.

deoxyribose**noun** /diːˈɒksiˈraɪbəʊs/

a sugar derived from ribose by replacement of a hydroxyl group by hydrogen

Ribose and deoxyribose are essential for the formation of the backbone of RNA and DNA.

derision**noun** /dɪˈrɪʒən/

contemptuous ridicule or mockery

The proposal was held in derision by members of the board.

derivative**noun** /dɪˈrɪvətɪv/

something developed or produced from something else

Petrol is a derivative of crude oil.

desuetude**noun** /ˈdeswɪˌtjuːd, dəˈsjuːətjuːd/

a state of disuse

People find it difficult to understand words that have fallen into desuetude.

dexterity**noun** /dekˈstɛrɪti/

skill in performing tasks, especially with the hands

A child's dexterity is tested by getting him to place blocks on top of each other.

dhole**noun** /dəʊl/

an Asian wild dog with a sandy coat and a black bushy tail, living in packs

D

15 to 17
age group

diagnosis

noun /ˌdaɪəɡˈnəʊsɪs/

the identification of the nature of an illness or other problem by examination of the symptoms
To make an accurate diagnosis of the illness, a scan must be done.

diaphanous

adjective /daɪˈæfənəs/

light, delicate, and translucent
The veil was made of diaphanous white silk.

diathermy

noun /ˈdaɪəθɜːmi/

local heating of the body tissues with an electric current for medical or surgical purposes
The doctors performed diathermy on her before the surgery.

diatribe

noun /ˈdaɪətraɪb/

a forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone or something
The union launched a diatribe against the company.

diegesis

noun /daɪəˈdʒɪːsɪs/

a narrative or plot, typically in a film
The diegesis of his new film was so complicated that even the director had trouble understanding it.

dilettante

noun /ˌdɪlɪˈtænti, ˌdɪlɪˈtæntɪ/

a person who cultivates an area of interest, such as the arts, without real commitment or knowledge
I am looking for a serious painter, not a dilettante.

diminuendo

noun /dɪˌmɪnjʊˈendəʊ/

a gradual decrease in how loudly a piece of music is played or sung
The movement ended with a diminuendo into silence.

diocese

noun /ˈdaɪəsɪs/

a district under the care of a bishop
The diocese raised money to help alleviate poverty in the city.

Dionysian

adjective /ˌdaɪəˈnɪzɪən/

relating to the sensual, spontaneous, and emotional aspects of human nature
Dance clubs are popular for their Dionysian atmosphere.

diptych

noun /ˈdɪptɪk/

a painting on two hinged wooden panels which may be closed like a book
The Wilton diptych is very famous.

dirge

noun /dɜːdʒ/

a lament for the dead
The burial was accompanied by the singing of a dirge.

dirndl

noun /ˈdɜːndəl/

a full, wide skirt with a tight waistband
The dirndl originated from Tyrolean peasant wear.

discarnate

adjective /dɪsˈkɑːnət/

not having a physical body, referring to a person or being
Some believe that ghosts are discarnate spirits unable to pass into the next world.

discern

verb /dɪˈsɜːn/

to know, recognize, or understand something, especially something that is not obvious
His father was unable to discern whether or not his son was telling the truth.

disconsolate

adjective /dɪs'kɒnsələt/
very unhappy and disappointed
The disconsolate players left for home without a trophy.

discrepancy

noun /dɪs'kreɪpənsi/
inconsistency
The teacher noticed a marked discrepancy between the quality of Maya's homework and her class work.

discursive

adjective /dɪs'kɜːsɪv/
digressing from subject to subject
They were irritated and bored by his discursive comments.

disputatious

adjective /dɪspju'teɪʃəs/
fond of having heated arguments
People avoided discussing contemporary issues with him because of his disputatious nature.

disquisition

noun /dɪskwɪ'zɪʃn/
a long complicated speech or written report on a particular subject
In his disquisition, he outlined the steps he had taken to reach his conclusion.

dissident

noun /dɪsɪdənt/
a person who disagrees, especially someone who opposes his government
He was a political dissident in his youth.

distract

adjective /dɪ'streɪt/
inattentive or preoccupied
The distract student was unable to deliver his speech.

divergent

adjective /daɪ'vɜːdʒənt, dɪ'vɜːdʒənt/
differing in character, form, or opinion
The two witnesses presented the jury with remarkably divergent accounts of the same incident.

doctrinaire

adjective /ˌdɒktrɪ'neə[r]/
strictly following a theory in all circumstances, even if there are practical problems or disagreements
The repressive response of the doctrinaire hard-liners crushed Weng's dreams of democracy.

dominion

noun /də'mɪnjən/
sovereignty or control
England exercised dominion over many nations.

dormouse

noun /ˈdɔːmaʊs/
a small animal like a mouse, with a tail covered in fur

dossier

noun /ˈdɒsɪɪ, ˈdɒsɪə/
a collection of documents
The detective pulled out a thick dossier on the wanted fugitive.

dromedary

noun /ˈdrɒmədəri/
a one-humped domesticated camel widely used as a beast of burden in northern Africa and western Asia

drosophila

noun /drɒ'sɒfɪlə/
a small fly that is used in scientific studies

duathlon

noun /djuː'æθlɒn/
an athletic contest in which each athlete competes in running and cycling events
This year's race kicked off with the kids' duathlon where 13-year-olds got a little taste of the race.

ductile

adjective /ˈdʌktail/
able to be drawn out into a thin wire
Copper is a ductile metal.

D

15 to 17
age group

duplicity

noun /djuːˈplɪsɪti/

dishonest behaviour that is intended to make somebody believe something that is not true
People were shocked when they found out about his duplicity.

durian

noun /ˈdʊəriən/

an edible fruit with an unpleasant smell
She made a fruit salad with durian and melon.

dyke

noun /daɪk/

a long thick wall constructed to prevent flooding, especially from the sea
To prevent the village being flooded, a temporary dyke was created around the lake.

dyne

noun /daɪn/

a unit of force
The surface tension of distilled water is measured in dyne.

dysphagia

noun /dɪsˈfɛɪdʒɪə/

difficulty in swallowing, as a symptom of disease
Dysphagia often accompanies a sore throat.

dyspnoea

noun /dɪspˈniːə/

difficult or laboured breathing
Dyspnoea is a normal symptom of heavy exertion but becomes pathological if it occurs in unexpected situations.

ebullience

noun /ɪˈbʌlɪəns/

the quality of being cheerful and full of energy
Her ebullience brightened the mood of everyone in the office.

ecclesiastical

adjective /ɪˌkliːzɪˈæstɪkl/

relating to the Christian church or its clergy
The Pope has the final say on ecclesiastical doctrine.

ecclesiology

noun /ɪˌkliːzɪˈɒlədʒi/

the study of churches, especially church building and decoration
The priest is a noted scholar of ecclesiology.

eclectic

adjective /ɪˈklektɪk/

not following one style or set of ideas but choosing from a wide variety
The exhibition contained an eclectic collection of paintings and photographs.

edelweiss

noun /ˈeɪdəlˌvaɪs/

a European mountain plant with small white flowers
From her bedroom balcony she could see the lovely edelweiss growing on the hill.

effervescence

noun /ɪˈfɛəˈvesns/

bubbles in a liquid
The effervescence of soda water is its primary appeal.

effleurage

noun /ɪˈflɜːˈrɑːʒ/

a form of massage involving a repeated circular stroking movement made with the palm of the hand
The masseuse utilised different techniques including effleurage.

effrontery

noun /ɪˈfrʌntəri/

bold, rude or shameless behaviour
He had the effrontery to borrow my car without asking.

einkorn

noun /ˈaɪnkɔːn/

an old kind of wheat, used as a fodder in prehistoric times but now rarely grown
He had ample einkorn to last his horses all summer.

einsteinium

noun /aɪnˈstainɪəm/

the chemical element of atomic number 99, a radioactive metal of the actinide series
Einsteinium was first isolated in the explosion site of a hydrogen bomb.

eldritch

adjective /ˈeldrɪtʃ/

strange and frightening
The owl's eldritch screech caused me many sleepless nights.

electrophoresis

noun /ɪˌlektroʊfəˈriːsɪs/

the movement of charged particles in a fluid or gel under the influence of an electric field
The purity of enzyme preparations was analysed by gel electrophoresis and spectral analysis.

elliptical

adjective /ɪˈlɪptɪkl/

very condensed or concise, often so as to be obscure or ambiguous
His elliptical remark did not really clarify his position on the issue.

emancipate

verb /ɪˈmænsɪpeɪt/

to free somebody, especially from legal, political, or social restrictions
Attempts to emancipate slaves were unpopular in Mississippi.

E

15 to 17
age group

embouchure

noun /ˌɒmbʊˈʃʊə/

the shape of the mouth when playing a wind instrument

Among the finest musicians there is a difference of opinion on the best embouchure for the clarinet.

embryonic

adjective /ˌembriˈɒnɪk/

in an early stage of development

The plan, as yet, only exists in embryonic form.

emendation

noun /ˌiːmenˈdeɪʃn/

a change or correction in a text

A minor emendation was made to the minister's speech.

emeritus

adjective /iːˈmerɪtəs, ɪˈmerɪtəs/

retired but retained in an honorary capacity

He is an emeritus professor of biology.

empirical

adjective /emˈpɪrɪkl, ɪmˈpɪrɪkl/

based on experiments or experiences rather than ideas or theories

He distrusted hunches and relied entirely on empirical data.

empyrean

adjective /ˌempaɪˈriːən, emˈpɪriən/

of or relating to heaven

Charity is thought to provide empyrean benefits to the giver.

enamoured

adjective /eˈnæməd, ɪˈnæməd/

liking a lot

Sara was quite enamoured of the fashion industry.

enantiodromia

noun /ɪˌnæntɪəʊˈdrəʊmiə, eˌnæntɪəʊˈdrəʊmiə/

the tendency of things to change into their opposites

The gambler rued the remorseless enantiodromia between good luck and bad.

enantiomorphic

adjective /ɪnæntɪəʊˈmɔːfɪk, enæntɪəʊˈmɔːfɪk/

describing two crystalline or other geometrical forms which are mirror images of each other

An object and its mirror image are enantiomorphic.

encephalitis

noun /enˌsefəˈlaɪtəs/

an infection which causes the brain to become swollen

David is suffering from encephalitis.

encephalopathy

noun /enˌsefəˈlɒpəθi/

a disease in which the functioning of the brain is affected by some agent or condition

The toxins in the blood resulted in encephalopathy.

encomiastic

adjective /enkəʊmɪˈæstɪk/

publicly praising or flattering

Some critics believe that his encomiastic statements about Napoleon were inspired by his desire for material advancement.

encumber

verb /enˈkʌmbə[r]/

to restrict or impede someone or something in such a way that free action or movement is difficult

Try not to encumber yourself with too much gear on this trek.

endothelium

noun /ˌendəʊˈθiːliəm/

the tissue which forms a single layer of cells lining various organs and cavities of the body

A single layer of cells called the endothelium lines the walls of every blood vessel in the body.

enigmatic

adjective /ˌenɪɡˈmætɪk/

mysterious and difficult to understand

Da Vinci's Mona Lisa is famous for her enigmatic smile.

ennead

noun /'eniæd/
a group or set of nine
She was presented an ennead of books on her birthday.

ennui

noun /ɒn'wi:/
boredom
The endless lecture produced an unbearable ennui.

entomologist

noun /,entə'mɒlədʒɪst/
a person who studies insects
An entomologist can help create insecticides for various crops.

envision

verb /en'vɪʒn/
to imagine a future situation
They envision a prosperous future for the country.

enzyme

noun /'enzaim/
a substance produced by a living organism which acts as a catalyst to bring about a specific biochemical reaction
The new detergent formula had a special enzyme that cleaned clothes better.

eocene

adjective /'i:ə[ʊ]si:n/
relating to, or denoting, the 2nd epoch of the Tertiary period, which occurred 40 million years ago
The Himalayas were formed during the eocene period.

epexegesis

noun /e,peksɪ'dʒi:sis/
the addition of words to clarify meaning
The author frequently resorted to epexegesis to clarify the technical language.

ephemeris

noun /'feməris, i'fi:məris/
a table or data file giving the calculated positions of a celestial object at regular intervals throughout a period
You can compute an ephemeris for any comet that is discovered and plot an accurate finder chart.

epicycloid

noun /,epɪ'saɪklɔɪd/
a curve traced by a point on a circle that rolls on the outside of a fixed circle
A practical use envisioned for the epicycloid was in the working of mechanical gears.

epiglottis

noun /,epɪ'glɒtɪs/
a flap of cartilage behind the root of the tongue
The epiglottis covers the windpipe while swallowing.

epilepsy

noun /'epilepsɪ/
a neurological disorder marked by sudden recurrent episodes of sensory disturbance, loss of consciousness, or convulsions
Epilepsy is a serious condition, but the sufferer may show no symptoms between attacks.

epiphany

noun /e'pɪfəni/
a moment of sudden and great revelation
I experienced an epiphany that changed the way I viewed myself.

epitaph

noun /'epɪtə:f, 'epɪtæf/
words that are written or said about a person, especially on a gravestone
In his will, he dictated the epitaph he wanted on his tombstone.

equanimity

noun /,ekwə'nɪmɪti, ,i:kwə'nɪmɪti/
calmness and composure, especially in a difficult situation
She accepted the prospect of her operation with equanimity.

E

15 to 17
age group

equerry

noun /'ekwəri/
an officer of the British royal household who attends or assists members of the royal family
The prince was accompanied by his equerry throughout the visit.

equinox

noun /'i:kwɪnɒks, 'ekwɪnɒks/
the time of year when day and night are equal in length
The autumnal equinox is on or around the 22nd of September.

ermine

noun /'ɜ:[r]mɪn/
a stoat, especially when in its white winter coat

ersatz

adjective /'ɛəsəts, 'ɜ:səts/
made or used as a substitute, typically an inferior one, for something else
During the war they drank ersatz coffee.

erysipelas

noun /,erɪ'sɪpələs/
an acute, sometimes recurrent bacterial disease of the skin
Many patients suffering from erysipelas were admitted to hospital.

escabeche

noun /'eskəbeʃ/
a dish of fish that is fried then marinated in vinegar and spices
Escabeche has also given its name to the marinade of pickled vegetables that is used to make it.

escritoire

noun /,eskri:'twɑ:/
a writing table
My aunt bought a large mahogany escritoire from an auction house.

escutcheon

noun /e'skʌtʃn/
a shield or emblem bearing a coat of arms
The knight carried his escutcheon with great pride.

espalier

noun /e'spæljə[r], r'spæljə[r]/
a fruit tree or ornamental shrub whose branches are trained to grow flat against a wall, supported on a lattice
I explained to the gardener that I wanted an espalier on the wall, where it would get the sun.

estranged

adjective /e'streɪndʒd/
no longer living with your husband, wife, or family
He did not want to go to the party where his estranged wife was expected to be.

eudaemonic

adjective /,ju:drɪ'mɒnɪk/
conducive to happiness and well being
She wanted a eudaemonic home for her children so that they grow up to be stable human beings.

eukaryotes

plural noun /ju:'kæriəʊts/
organisms consisting of a cell or cells in which the genetic material is DNA in the form of chromosomes contained within a distinct nucleus
The condensin complex plays an essential role in chromosome condensation in all eukaryotes studied so far.

eureka

interjection /,ju:'ri:kəl/
a cry of joy or satisfaction when one finds or discovers something
No one shouted eureka, but I was proud of my discovery all the same.

Europa

noun /ju:'rəʊpəl/
One of the Galilean moons of Jupiter
There has been speculation that life might exist underneath the icy crust of Europa.

eutectic

adjective /ju:'tektɪk/

denoting a mixture of substances in fixed proportions that melts and freezes at a single temperature
Eutectic solder is comprised of 63% tin and 37% lead.

eutrophic

adjective /ju:'trəʊfɪk/

describing a condition in which nutrient rich water supports a dense plant population, the decomposition of which kills animal life by depriving it of oxygen
The algae bloom resulted in a eutrophic condition which killed all the fish.

evacuation

noun /ɪˌvækju'eɪʃən/

the action of moving someone from a place of danger to a safer place
A hurricane alert led to an evacuation of the coastal area.

evanescent

adjective /ɪˌvəˈnesnt/

disappearing quickly from sight or memory
I love to search the night sky for the fleeting, evanescent beauty of a shooting star.

eviscerate

verb /ɪˈvɪsəreɪt/

to disembowel
I witnessed two vultures eviscerate the carcass of a buffalo near my village.

evocation

noun /ɪvəˈkeɪʃən, ɪˌvəˈkeɪʃən/

the act of recalling something to the conscious mind
The lawyer was successful in winning the case through his evocation of some of the forgotten details.

exculpate

verb /ˈɛkskʌlpeɪt/

to show or declare that somebody is not guilty of wrongdoing
We felt that we had to exculpate the innocent man as soon as we could.

executive

adjective /egˈzɛkjʊtɪv/

relating to or having the power to put plans or actions into effect
The chief executive officer finalised the deal.

exemplum

noun /egˈzempləm/

an example or model, especially a story told to illustrate a moral point
The story of his feats in the war became an exemplum of heroism to new recruits.

exhort

verb /egˈzɔ:t/

to try hard to persuade somebody to do something
The teacher decided to exhort the students to work harder for their final exams.

exocytosis

noun /ɪˌeksəʊsaɪˈtəʊsɪs/

a process by which the contents of a cell vacuole are released to the exterior through fusion of the vacuole membrane with the cell membrane
In the studies cited, only the intensity of fluorescence was used to observe the metabolism, exocytosis and phagocytosis of cells.

exorbitant

adjective /ɪgˈzɔ:bɪtənt/

much too high
The exorbitant airfare means that I can only visit my mother once a year.

expatiate

verb /ɛkˈspeɪʃeɪt/

to write or speak in detail about a subject
I sat with the architect and listened to him expatiate on his vision of a new city.

extemporaneous

adjective /ɛkˌstempəˈreɪniəs/

carried out or performed with little or no preparation
They gave a delightful, extemporaneous performance as an encore.

E

15 to 17
age group

extenuate

verb /ek'stenjuət/

acting in mitigation to lessen the seriousness of guilt or an offence

It is possible your selfless motive could extenuate your crime.

extradition

noun /ek'strə'dɪʃən/

the surrender of an alleged offender or fugitive to the state in whose territory the alleged offence was committed

He is being imprisoned while awaiting extradition.

extraordinaire

adjective /ek'strɔːdɪ'neə/

outstanding in a particular capacity

He is a jazz singer extraordinaire.

eyrie

noun /'ɪəri, 'eəri, 'aɪri/

a large nest of an eagle or other bird of prey

The bald eagle's eyrie was inaccessible to humans.

facetious

adjective /fə'siːʃəs/

treating serious issues with deliberately inappropriate humour

Anna's facetious comments made everyone at the dining table angry.

facsimile

noun /fæk'sɪmɪli/

an exact copy, especially of written or printed material
This is a facsimile of the first edition.

factitious

adjective /fæk'tɪʃəs/

not genuine but created deliberately and made to appear to be true

I could see right through his factitious enthusiasm.

faeces

noun /'fiːsiːz/

solid waste matter that leaves the body

The faeces of most aquatic animals are enclosed in a membrane.

fallacious

adjective /fə'leɪʃəs/

based on a mistaken belief

I could not listen to his fallacious arguments any longer.

fanfaronade

noun /ˌfænfərə'neɪd/

arrogant or boastful talk

The man's talk was all bluster and fanfaronade.

farouche

adjective /fə'ruːʃ/

sullen or shy in company

The artist was withdrawn and farouche.

farraginous

adjective /fə'rædʒɪnəs/

mixed

The author presented a farraginous collection of random ideas through his work.

fascicle

noun /'fæsɪkəl/

a separately published instalment of a book or other printed work

Charles Dickens published the first fascicle of his novel, A Tale of Two Cities, to great acclaim.

fastidious

adjective /fæ'stɪdɪəs/

carefully selective

Everything was planned in fastidious detail.

featurette

noun /fiːtʃə'ret/

a short feature film or programme

A wildlife featurette highlighted the plight of the apes.

feigned

adjective /feɪnd/

simulated or pretended

His eyes widened with feigned shock.

felicity

noun /frɪ'lɪsɪti/

intense happiness

They announced the birth of their son with joy and felicity.

ferrule

noun /'feruːl, 'ferəl/

a ring or cap, typically a metal one, which strengthens the end of a handle, stick, or tube and prevents it from splitting or wearing

The old lady's walking-stick slipped because the ferrule had come off.

filch

verb /fɪltʃ/

to steal something in a casual way, especially an item of small value

He tried to filch my pencils.

F

15 to 17
age group

fillip

noun /'fɪlɪp/

something which acts as a stimulus or boost to an activity

A drop in interest rates gave a welcome fillip to the housing market.

firmament

noun /'fɜːməmənt/

the heavens or sky

He wondered at the firmament of stars above him.

fission

noun /'fɪʃən/

the division or splitting into two or more parts of something

The fission of the company will benefit the investors.

fissiparous

adjective /fɪ'sɪpərəs/

inclined to cause or undergo division into separate parts or groups

She was unsuccessful in holding a fissiparous membership together.

fitch

noun /fɪtʃ/

a weasel-like Eurasian mammal with mainly dark brown fur and a darker mask across the eyes, also called a polecat

flabbergast

verb /'flæbəɡəːst/

to astonish

This news will flabbergast all those who had given up hope.

flagellate

verb /'flædʒəleɪt/

to whip yourself or somebody else, especially as a religious punishment

Some people believe that if they flagellate themselves they will earn many spiritual rewards.

flagellum

noun /flə'dʒeləm/

a slender thread-like structure, especially a whip-like appendage which enables many microscopic organisms to swim

A bacterial flagellum rotates in a motion similar to that of a propeller.

flageolet

noun /flædʒə'let/

a very small flute-like instrument

The flageolet is usually played with one hand.

flagrantly

adverb /'fleɪgrənθli/

conspicuously or obviously offensive

The player has flagrantly broken the rules of the game.

flechette

noun /fleɪ'ʃet, fle'ʃet/

a steel dart or missile dropped from an aircraft

His great grandfather was killed by a flechette in World War I.

flibbertigibbet

noun /,flɪbətɪ'dʒɪbɪt/

a frivolous, flighty, or excessively talkative person

She is a flibbertigibbet who is incapable of handling any form of responsibility.

florilegium

noun /,flɒrɪ'liːdʒɪəm/

a collection of literary extracts

The publisher published a florilegium of the work of new poets.

flotsam

noun /'flɒtsəm/

parts of boats, pieces of wood, or rubbish that is found floating on the sea or along the shore

He took home an interesting piece of flotsam that he found on the beach.

flurry

noun /'flʌrɪ/

a sudden commotion or burst of activity
She was awoken by the flurry of activity outside her door.

fluvial

adjective /'flu:vɪəl/

of, relating to, or living in a stream of river
Fluvial sediment is deposited as the water slows down.

fluxion

noun /'flʌkʃən/

a function corresponding to the rate of change of a variable quantity
Newton used the word fluxion to refer to the derivative of a continuous function.

forensic

adjective /fə'rensɪk/

connected with the scientific tests used by the police when trying to solve a crime
Fifty years after the murder, forensic scientists were able to solve the crime.

forestall

verb /fə'stɔ:l/

to prevent or obstruct an anticipated event or action by taking advance action
He decided to resign from his job to forestall being fired.

formaldehyde

noun /fɔ:'mældɪhaɪd/

a colourless pungent gas in solution made by oxidizing methanol
Formaldehyde is used in the manufacture of resins and fertilisers.

forsythia

noun /fɔ:'saɪθɪə, fə'saɪθɪəl/

a shrub native to Asia and widely cultivated for its early-blooming yellow flowers
When spring comes, forsythia bursts into yellow blossoms spreading from the ground to the tip of each branch.

forthright

adjective /'fɔ:θraɪt/

direct and honest in manner and speech
He has a reputation for being a forthright critic.

fortissimo

adjective /fɔ:'tɪsɪməʊ/

very loud or loudly
The fortissimo climax of the musical score was ear shattering.

fortuitous

adjective /fɔ:'tju:ntəs/

happening by chance, especially a lucky chance that brings a good result
His success was due to fortuitous circumstances.

fracas

noun /'frækɑ:/

a noisy disturbance or quarrel
We didn't want to get involved in the fracas happening on the street.

Francophile

noun /'fræŋkəʊfaɪl/

a person who is fond of or greatly admires France or the French
As a Francophile she is interested in French language, culture and food.

frangipani

noun /,frændʒɪ'pɑ:nɪ/

a tropical American tree or shrub with clusters of fragrant white, pink, or yellow flowers
Frangipani flowers are used to make a perfume.

franglais

noun /'frɒŋgleɪ/

a blend of French and English
I tried speaking franglais while in Paris.

frankincense

noun /'fræŋkɪnsens/

a substance that is burnt to give a pleasant smell
The Romans burned frankincense on their altars and at cremations.

F

15 to 17
age group

fratricide

noun /'frætrɪsaɪd/

the crime of killing one's brother

The risk of fratricide has always been a consequence of civil warfare.

fraxinella

noun /'fræksɪ'nɛlə/

an aromatic Eurasian plant of the rue family, with showy white flowers and fragrant leaves that emit a flammable vapour

Fraxinella is sometime called a burning bush because it is possible to ignite the vapour from the leaves without harming the plant.

frenetic

adjective /'frɛ'nɛtɪk/

involving a lot of energy and activity in a way that is not organised

His frenetic activities convinced us that he had no action plan prepared.

friction

noun /'frɪkʃən/

conflict or disagreement

The constant friction between them caused tension in the house.

fritillary

noun /'frɪ'tɪləri/

a butterfly with orange-brown wings that are chequered with black

frizzy

adjective /'frɪzi/

formed of a mass of small, tight curls

Annie had frizzy red hair.

froufrou

noun /'fruːfruː/

frills or other ornamentation, particularly of women's clothes

She didn't like the froufrou on the dress.

fugacious

adjective /'fjuːgeɪʃəs/

tending to disappear

Some flowers are fugacious, dying just as quickly as they bloom.

fugue

noun /'fjuːg/

a musical form consisting of a repeated theme

Bach is considered a master of the art of fugue.

fusillade

noun /'fjuːzɪ'leɪd, 'fjuːzɪ'lɑːd/

a rapid series of shots fired from one or more guns

The gangster was caught in a fusillade of bullets fired from all sides.

gaffe

noun /gæf/

a mistake that a person makes in public or in a social situation, especially something embarrassing
He blushed when he realised what a gaffe he had made.

gaillardia

noun /geɪ'lɑːdiə/

an American plant of the daisy family
Gaillardia can grow under very harsh and dry conditions.

gaiters

plural noun /'geɪtəz/

protective coverings of cloth or leather for the ankles and lower legs
The stonemason presented himself for work wearing a pair of strong leather gaiters.

galleon

noun /'gæliən/

a sailing ship in use from the 15th to the 18th centuries, originally as a warship, later for trade
The Spanish galleon was carrying a cargo of silk and gold.

galliard

noun /'gæliəd/

a lively dance in triple time for two people, including complicated turns and steps
Queen Elizabeth I is said to have practiced the galliard as her morning exercise.

gallimaufry

noun /ˌgæli'mɔːfri/

a confused jumble or medley of things
Beneath the uniformity of standard American English is a rich gallimaufry of exotic and native stuffs.

galvanotropism

noun /ˌgælvə'nɒtrəˌpɪzəm/

the directional growth of an organism in response to an electrical stimulus
They conducted an experiment in class to demonstrate galvanotropism.

garret

noun /'gærət, 'gærit/

a room, often dark and unpleasant, at the top of the house especially in the roof
There is some old furniture in the garret that I'm giving away.

gastrectomy

noun /gæ'strektəmi/

the surgical removal of a part or the whole of the stomach
The surgeon performed a gastrectomy on the patient with stomach cancer.

gastropod

noun /'gæstrəpɒd/

a mollusc of the class Gastropoda, such as the snail, slug, or whelk
The gastropod left a shiny trail wherever it went.

gavotte

noun /gə'vɒt/

a dance of French peasant origin marked by the raising rather than sliding of the feet
It was common to include a gavotte in a suite of dance music in the 18th century.

gecko

noun /'gekəʊ/

a small tropical and subtropical lizard with adhesive pads on its feet that enable it to climb on vertical surfaces

gelignite

noun /'dʒelɪɡnaɪt/

a high explosive made from a gel of nitroglycerine and nitrocellulose
The engineers used gelignite to blast a tunnel through the mountain.

gemmiparous

adjective /dʒe'mɪpərəs/

asexual reproduction by the production of buds
Gemmiparous fungi reproduce asexually by forming buds.

G

15 to 17
age group

genial

adjective /'dʒiːniəl/

friendly and cheerful

He is liked by everyone because of his genial manner.

genteel

adjective /dʒen'tiːl/

behaving in a very polite way, often in order to make people think that you are from a high social class
Her genteel speech occasionally lapsed into her original cockney accent.

genuflect

verb /'dʒenjʊflekt/

to bend the knee, as in worship

He did not genuflect when the leader entered the room.

geosphere

noun /'dʒiːəʊsfɪəl/

any of the almost spherical concentric regions of the earth and its atmosphere
The term geosphere is usually used to refer to the crust and upper mantle of the Earth.

gerontocracy

noun /,dʒerən'tɒkrəsi/

a state, society, or group governed by old people
Some tribal cultures were governed by their elders, a gerontocracy.

gesticulate

verb /dʒe'stɪkjʊleɪt/

to use expressive movements of the hands or body with or instead of speech

He would often gesticulate during his lectures.

gesundheit

exclamation /ge'zʊndhart, ge'zɒnthart/

used to wish good health to a person who has just sneezed
Gesundheit means good health in German.

gherkin

noun /'gɜːkɪn/

a small cucumber that has been preserved in vinegar before being eaten

I always eat a gherkin with my cheese sandwich.

ghetto

noun /'getəʊ/

a part of a city, especially a slum area, occupied by a minority group or groups
The pop star reminisced about his childhood in the ghetto.

gibberish

noun /'dʒɪbəɪʃ/

words that have no meaning or are impossible to understand

You were talking gibberish in your sleep.

gibbet

noun /'dʒɪbɪt/

an upright wooden structure on which criminals used to be hanged

We saw a gibbet in the Tower of London from the seventeenth century.

gigue

noun /ʒiːg/

a lively piece of music in the style of a dance, typically of the Renaissance or baroque period
The baroque suite ended with a lively gigue.

gingivitis

noun /,dʒɪndʒɪ'vaɪtɪs/

a condition in which the gums around the teeth become painful, red and swollen

Gingivitis is often caused by bad oral hygiene.

ginormous

adjective /dʒaɪ'nɔːməs/

extremely large

My 5-year-old cousin wouldn't stop talking about my ginormous backyard.

glacial

adjective /'gleɪʃl/

caused or made by glaciers
The deep valley had a glacial origin.

gladiolus

noun /ˌglædɪ'əʊləs/

an Old World plant of the iris family, with sword-shaped leaves and spikes of brightly coloured flowers
Gladiolus is also called sword lily.

glaucescence

noun /glɔː'sesəns/

the state of having bluish green coloration
The cause of the stone's glaucescence fascinated me.

glaucoma

noun /glɔː'kəʊmə/

a condition of increased pressure within the eyeball, causing gradual loss of sight
Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in the world.

globule

noun /'glɒbjʊːl/

a small particle of matter of a spherical form
A globule of fat dripped from the meat.

glockenspiel

noun /'glɒkənspiːl, 'glɒkənʃpiːl/

a musical percussion instrument having a set of tuned metal bars mounted in a frame and struck with small hammers
The bars on a glockenspiel are arranged like the keys on a piano.

glossator

noun /glɒ'setə/

a person who writes glosses, especially a scholarly commentator on the texts of classical, civil, or canon law
Nicander is a gifted Homeric glossator, but he is neither zoologist nor toxicologist.

glossopharyngeal

adjective /ˌglɒsəʊfə'rɪn[dʒ]iəl, ˌglɒsəʊfærən'dʒiːəl/

relating to the tongue and pharynx
Problems with the glossopharyngeal nerve can result in trouble swallowing.

gluttonous

adjective /'glʌtənəs/

eating and drinking too much
The boy's gluttonous appetite will cause him health problems in the future.

gnaw

verb /nɔː/

to keep on biting or chewing something hard, so that it gradually disappears
My dog will gnaw on a juicy bone for hours.

gneiss

noun /naɪs/

a metamorphic rock with a banded or foliated structure
The oldest gneiss ever found is about 4 billion years old.

gobbledygook

noun /'gɒbəldɪˌɡuːk/

language that is meaningless or is made unintelligible by excessive use of technical terms
This computer terminology is gobbledygook to me.

goitre

noun /'ɡɔɪtə/

a swelling of the neck resulting from enlargement of the thyroid gland
Goitre is more common in females than in males.

Gorgonzola

noun /ˌɡɔːɡən'zəʊlə/

a strong-flavoured Italian cheese with bluish-green veins
Gorgonzola is a type of blue cheese.

G

15 to 17
age group

gouache

noun /ɡuːʃ, ɡwaːʃ/

a method of painting using colours that are mixed with water and made thick with a type of glue
As compared to water colour, gouache is heavier and more opaque.

gouge

verb /ɡaʊdʒ, ɡuːdʒ/

to make a groove, hole, or indentation in something
He used a trowel to gouge a small ditch around the flower bed.

gourmand

noun /ˈɡʊəmənd, ˈɡɔːmənd/

a person who enjoys eating and often eats too much
A gourmand would know the best restaurants in the city.

grapnel

noun /ˈɡræpnəl/

a device with iron claws, attached to a rope and used for dragging or grasping
They hurled a grapnel onto the boat to keep it from getting away.

gratuitous

adjective /ɡrəˈtʃuːtəs/

done without any good reason or purpose and often having harmful effects
The increase of gratuitous violence on television is of great concern to sociologists and parents alike.

grisaille

noun /ɡrɪˈzeɪl, ɡrɪˈzai[l]/

a method of painting in grey monochrome, typically to imitate sculpture
In the 17th century, grisaille was used for interior decoration.

griseofulvin

noun /ˌɡrɪziə[ʊ]ˈfʊlvɪn/

an antibiotic used against fungal infections of the hair and skin
Griseofulvin is used to treat ringworm.

grosgrain

noun /ˈɡrəʊɡreɪn/

a heavy ribbed fabric, typically of silk or rayon
Grosgrain ribbon adds a nice finishing touch.

grotesque

adjective /ɡrəʊˈtesk/

comically or repulsively ugly or distorted
The cave walls were decorated with paintings of grotesque creatures.

guacamole

noun /ˌɡwɑːkəˈməʊli/

a dish of mashed avocado
She made guacamole for the picnic.

guesstimate

noun /ˈɡestɪmət/

an estimate based on a mixture of guesswork and calculation
My guesstimate is that the house will be built in two years.

guile

noun /ɡaɪl/

the use of clever but dishonest behaviour
She achieved her high position by guile.

guillemot

noun /ˈɡɪlmɒt/

a seabird with a narrow pointed bill

guinea

noun /ˈɡɪni/

an old British coin or unit of money worth 21 shillings
The antique shop sold me a beautiful golden guinea which I gave to my son for his graduation.

gumption

noun /ˈɡʌm[p]ʃən/

shrewd or spirited initiative and resourcefulness
You must show some gumption in dealing with the senior students.

gurney

noun /'gɜːni/

a metal stretcher with wheels

The injured player was taken off the pitch on a gurney.

gusset

noun /'gʌsɪt/

an extra piece of cloth sewn into a piece of clothing to make it wider, stronger or more comfortable

The tailor inserted the gusset into the dress.

gustatory

adjective /gʌ'steɪtəri, 'gʌstətəri/

concerned with tasting or the sense of taste

The restaurant offered many gustatory delights.

gyrate

verb /dʒaɪ'reɪt, dʒɪ'reɪt/

to move or cause to move rapidly in a circle or spiral

According to the prediction, the stock prices will gyrate around last week's high.

H

15 to 17
age group

haberdashery

noun /ˈhæbəˈdæʃəri/

small articles for sewing such as needles, pins, buttons and thread

They kept a good supply of haberdashery at the back of the shop.

hacienda

noun /ˈhæsiˈendə/

a large estate or plantation with a dwelling house in Spanish-speaking countries or regions

We stayed the night in a hacienda that had been converted into a hotel.

hackneyed

adjective /ˈhæknɪd/

used too often and therefore boring

The teacher advised her students to avoid hackneyed phrases in their essays.

hadrosaur

noun /ˈhædrəsɔː/

a large herbivorous mainly bipedal dinosaur of the late Cretaceous period

haematocrit

noun /ˈhi:mətəʊkrɪt/

the ratio of the volume of red blood cells to the total volume of blood

With modern lab equipment, the hematocrit is calculated by an automated analyzer.

haematozoon

noun /ˈhi:mətəʊˈzəʊn/

any parasitic organism that lives in the blood

hagiology

noun /ˈhæɡɪˈɒlədʒi/

literature concerned with the lives and legends of saints

The church library has a large collection of hagiology.

halcyon

adjective /ˈhælsɪən, ˈhælʃən/

peaceful and happy

He was remembering the halcyon days of his youth.

halophyte

noun /ˈhæləfaɪt ˈheɪləfaɪt/

a plant that thrives in saline soil

The salt marsh grass is a halophyte.

halothane

noun /ˈhæləʊθeɪn/

a potent inhalational anesthetic

The kidnappers used halothane to anesthetise her.

hamadryas

noun /ˈhæməˈdraɪəs/

a large Arabian and Northeast African baboon, the male of which has a silvery-grey cape of hair and a naked red face and rump

hamartia

noun /həˈmɑːtiə/

a fatal flaw leading to the downfall of a tragic hero or heroine

There's supposed to be an action that reveals the protagonist's hamartia.

happenstance

noun /ˈhæpənˌstæns/

coincidence

It was mere happenstance that we found each other.

harangue

verb /həˈræŋ/

to criticise loudly and angrily

He walked to the front of the stage and began to harangue the audience.

harrumph

verb /həˈrʌmf/

to clear or make the noise of clearing the throat

The teacher would harrumph every time he graded a paper.

haulage

noun /ˈhɔːlɪdʒ/

the business of transporting goods by road or railway

The freight charges for the haulage of cargo have been increased.

hauteur

noun /əʊ'tɜː[r]/
proud haughtiness of manner
His aristocratic hauteur belied his humble origin.

hawser

noun /'hɔːzə[r]/
a thick rope or steel cable used on a ship
The ship's hawser was secured to a bollard on the pier.

hebdomadal

adjective /heb'dɒmədl/
published weekly
He writes for the most prestigious hebdomadal magazine in the country.

heifer

noun /'hefə[r]/
a young female cow, especially one that has not yet given birth to a calf

heinous

adjective /'heɪnəs, 'hiːnəs/
utterly odious or wicked
He was sentenced to twelve years in prison for his heinous crime.

heldentenor

noun /'held[ə]n,tenɔː/
a powerful tenor voice suitable for heroic roles in opera
The heldentenor did full justice to Solomon's role in the opera.

helichrysum

noun /,helɪ'kraɪzəm/
an Old World plant of the daisy family
Some kinds of helichrysum are grown as everlasting, retaining their shape and colour when dried.

heliozoan

noun /,hiːlə'zəʊən/
a single-celled animal having numerous spindle-like pseudopods that radiate from a central cell mass

hemerocallis

noun /,hemərə[ʊ]'kælɪs/
a plant of a genus that comprises the daylilies
Beautiful daylilies or hemerocallis grew by the roadside.

hemimetabolous

adjective /,hemɪme'tæbələs/
having no pupal stage in the transition from larva to adult
The test required the students to list the characteristics of a hemimetabolous insect.

hemiplegia

noun /,hemɪ'pliːdʒɪə/
paralysis of one side of the body
Hemiplegia occurs as a result of a stroke or other injury to the brain.

hemipteran

noun /hɪ'mɪptərən/
an insect having sucking or piercing mouthparts specialized as a beak

henequen

noun /'henɪken/
a plant whose leaves yield a fibre suitable for making twine and rope
Henequen is the major plantation fiber of eastern Mexico.

herbarium

noun /'hɜːbeərɪəm/
a collection of dried specimens of plants systematically arranged
She has a large collection of plants in her herbarium.

heresiarch

noun /he'riːziɑːk, hɪ'riːziɑːk/
the leader of a heretical sect
The heresiarch and his followers were not allowed to perform the Hajj Pilgrimage.

hermaphrodite**noun** /hɜː'mæfrədait/

an animal or plant having both male and female reproductive organs

Most invertebrates are hermaphrodites.

hermeneutics**noun** /hɜːmɪ'njuːtiks/

the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts
German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer is best known for his important contribution to hermeneutics.

heterotrophic**adjective** /'hetərəʊtrəʊfɪk, 'hetərətrəfɪk/

deriving nutritional requirements from complex organic substances

Bacteria can be either heterotrophic or autotrophic.

hieroglyphics**plural noun** /haɪrə'glɪfɪks/

writing that uses pictures or symbols

The discovery of the Rosetta Stone enabled scholars to read the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

histamine**noun** /'hɪstəmiːn/

a chemical substance produced in the body in response to an allergy or injury

The sneezing in respiratory allergies is caused by the release of histamine.

histone**noun** /'hɪstəʊn/

any of a group of basic proteins found in chromatin
Chromatin is known to be rich not only in histones but also HMG protein.

histrionic**adjective** /'hɪstrɪ'ɒnɪk/

very emotional and attention seeking

We grew tired of her histrionic displays and ignored them.

hollandaise**noun** /'hɒlən'deɪz, 'hɒləŋdeɪz/

a creamy sauce of melted butter, egg yolks and vinegar, served especially with fish

At the restaurant, she ordered grilled fish with hollandaise.

hornblende**noun** /'hɔːnbled/

a dark brown, black, or green mineral consisting of a silicate of calcium, magnesium, and iron
Hornblende is found in metamorphic and igneous rocks.

horology**noun** /hɒ'rɒlədʒi/

the art or science of making timepieces or of measuring time

He was interested in studying the history of horology.

houbara**noun** /huː'bɑːrə/

a bustard of arid open country and semi-desert, found from the Canary Islands to central Asia and threatened by hunting.

howitzer**noun** /'haʊtsə[r]/

a short gun for firing shells on high trajectories at low velocities

The howitzer was aimed at the enemy.

hubbub**noun** /'hʌbʌb/

a chaotic din caused by a crowd of people
We left the hubbub of the city far behind us.

hubristic**adjective** /hjuː'brɪstɪk/

excessive pride or self-confidence

Their hubristic approach brought them nothing but failure.

hullabaloo

noun /ˌhʌləbəˈluː/

a lot of loud noise, especially made by people who are annoyed or excited about something
They looked out of the window to find out what the hullabaloo was about.

humidistat

noun /hjuˈmɪdɪstæt/

a machine or device which automatically regulates the humidity of the air in a room or building
Humidistat fans switch on and off automatically according to the dampness of the air.

hydrangea

noun /haɪˈdreɪndʒə/

a bush with white, pink or blue flowers that grow closely together in the shape of a ball
French hydrangea has either pink or blue flowers.

hygrodeik

noun /ˈhaɪgrəʊˌdaɪk/

a type of hygrometer with wet and dry bulb thermometers which show the percentage of moisture in the air
The hygrodeik had an adjustable index showing directly the humidity percentage.

hypnagogic

adjective /ˌhɪpnəˈɡɒdʒɪk/

relating to the state immediately before falling asleep
The strange images seen sometimes just before one falls asleep are called hypnagogic hallucinations.

hypoglycemia

noun /ˌhaɪpəʊglaiˈsiːmiə/

a deficiency of glucose in the bloodstream
She always carries sweets because she suffers from hypoglycemia.

hypothalamus

noun /ˌhaɪpəʊˈθæləməs/

a region of the forebrain below the thalamus
Feeding is controlled by a part of the brain called the hypothalamus.

hypoxia

noun /haɪˈpɒksɪə/

a deficiency in the amount of oxygen reaching the tissues
Tourniquets should only be applied when necessary due to the risk of hypoxia.

15 to 17 age group

iambic

adjective /aɪˈæmbɪk/

of or using a metrical foot consisting of one short syllable followed by one long syllable
The poem was written in iambic pentameter.

icicle

noun /ˈaɪsɪkl/

a pointed piece of ice that is formed when water freezes as it falls
An icicle was hanging from the roof.

iconoclastic

adjective /aɪˌkɒnəˈklæstɪk/

attacking cherished traditions
George Bernard Shaw's iconoclastic plays startled conventional people.

icosahedron

noun /aɪkɒsəˈhiːdrən/

a solid figure with twenty plane faces, especially equilateral triangular ones
The truncated icosahedron occurs in real life as a football.

idolatry

noun /aɪˈdɒlətri/

the worship of idols, images, or anything which is not God
He supports his local team with a fervour that borders on idolatry.

idyllic

adjective /ɪˈdɪlɪk/

extremely happy, peaceful, or picturesque
She dreams of a house set in idyllic surroundings.

ignominious

adjective /ɪˌɡnəˈmɪniəs/

humiliating
He made one disastrous mistake, and his career came to an ignominious end.

illicit

adjective /ɪˈlɪsɪt/

not permitted or allowed
His illicit business was being monitored by the police.

illiquid

adjective /ɪˈlɪkwɪd/

not easily converted into cash
Property is an illiquid asset due to the long time and costs involved in selling a property.

imbroglio

noun /ɪmˈbrəʊliəʊ/

a complicated situation that causes confusion or embarrassment, especially one that is political
He found himself in the middle of a political imbroglio.

imbrue

verb /ɪmˈbruː/

to stain something, especially one's hands or sword
They were unwilling to imbrue their hands with his blood.

imbue

verb /ɪmˈbjuː/

to fill somebody or something with strong feelings, opinions or values
I try to imbue my students with a sense of personal responsibility for their actions.

immaculate

adjective /ɪˈmækjʊlət/

perfectly clean
He wore an immaculate white suit on his wedding.

immiseration

noun /ɪˌmɪzəˈreɪʃən/

economic impoverishment
Timely measures must be taken to end urban immiseration.

impalpable

adjective /ɪmˈpælpəbəl/

unable to be felt by touch
There are many impalpable benefits of doing charity work.

impecunious

adjective /ˌɪmpɪˈkjʊːniəs/

without money

He contributed to funds to assist impecunious and disabled people.

imperium

noun /ɪmˈpɪəriəm/

absolute power

The country's economic imperium waned after the war.

impermeable

adjective /ɪmˈpɜːməbl/

not allowing a liquid or gas to pass through

The canoe is made from an impermeable wood.

impertinent

adjective /ɪmˈpɜːtɪnənt/

not showing respect or rude

The teacher was quite annoyed with Faisal for asking impertinent questions.

imperturbable

adjective /ɪmpəˈtɜːbəbl/

not excitable

He remained imperturbable and in full command of the situation, in spite of the panic surrounding him.

impetus

noun /ˈɪmpɪtəs/

something that encourages a process or activity to develop quickly

A new federal highway programme would create jobs and give added impetus to our economic recovery.

impinge

verb /ɪmˈpɪŋ[dʒ]/

to have a noticeable effect on somebody or something, especially a bad one

He never allowed his work to impinge on his private life.

implication

noun /ˌɪmplɪˈkeɪʃn/

a possible effect or result of an action or a decision

The development of the site will have a serious implication for the surrounding countryside.

imprescriptible

adjective /ˌɪmprɪˈskriptɪbəl/

not subject to being taken away by prescription or by lapse of time

The imprescriptible rights of man cannot be taken away.

imprimatur

noun /ˌɪmprɪˈmɑːtʊə[r], ˌɪmprɪˈmɛtə[r]/

a person's authoritative approval

This edition has the author's imprimatur.

impulsive

adjective /ɪmˈpʌlsɪv/

acting suddenly without thinking

She is an impulsive buyer.

impunity

noun /ɪmˈpjʊːnɪti/

exemption from punishment or freedom from the injurious consequences of an action

Drivers in Lahore seem to break traffic rules and regulations with impunity.

impute

verb /ɪmˈpjʊːt/

to say, often unfairly, that somebody is responsible for something

Her employers tried to impute the thefts to her.

incandescence

noun /ɪnkænˈdesəns/

the emission of visible light by a body, caused by its high temperature

The incandescence of the lava at the mouth of the volcano was visible from the valley below.

15 to 17 age group

incarcerate

verb /ɪn'kɑ:səreɪt/

to put somebody in prison or in another place from which they cannot escape
To incarcerate him would mean dealing with the anger of his tribe.

incendiary

adjective /ɪn'sendɪəri/

designed to cause fire
The explosion was caused by an incendiary device.

incense

verb /ɪn'sens/

to make somebody very angry
Very few things incense me more than intolerance.

inception

noun /ɪn'sepʃn/

the establishment or starting point of an institution or activity
She was involved with the project from its inception.

incessant

adjective /ɪn'sesnt/

continuing without pause or interruption
The incessant noise next door kept me up all night.

inclement

adjective /ɪn'klemənt/

unpleasantly cold or wet, referring to the weather
We were unable to go on the field trip due to inclement weather conditions.

incognito

adverb /ɪn'kɒɡ'nɪ:təʊ/

in a way that prevents other people from finding out who you are
Movie stars often prefer to travel incognito.

incoherence

noun /ɪn'kəʊ'hɪərəns/

a lack of ability to express yourself clearly, often because of emotion
His incoherence was due to his anger at missing the flight.

incommunicado

adverb /ɪn'kəmju:nɪ'kɑ:dəʊ/

without means of communication
The prisoner has been held incommunicado for more than a week.

incongruous

adjective /ɪn'kɒŋɡruəs/

not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings or other aspects of something
The incongruous antique chair stood out amongst the modern furniture.

indelible

adjective /ɪn'delɪbl/

impossible to forget or remove
The experience made an indelible impression on me.

indemnity

noun /ɪn'demntɪ/

security or protection against a loss or other financial burden
No indemnity will be given for loss of cash.

indigenize

verb /ɪn'dɪdʒɪnaɪz/

to bring something under the control, dominance, or influence of indigenous or local people
We plan to indigenize more products to empower the local people.

indignation

noun /ɪndɪg'neɪʃn/

anger resulting from perceived injustice
He felt indignation at the ill treatment of helpless animals.

Indology

noun /ɪn'dɒlədʒɪ/

the study of Indian history, literature, philosophy, and culture
Her interest in Indology was awakened after her trip to India.

ineffable

adjective /ɪn'efəbəl/

incapable of being expressed in words
An ineffable beauty descends upon the canyon as the sun begins to set.

inerrant

adjective /ɪn'erənt/

incapable of being wrong
His word was recognized as the inerrant truth.

inertia

noun /ɪ'nɜːʃə/

a tendency to do nothing or to remain unchanged
The populace suffers from an inertia which perpetuates the status quo.

infamous

adjective /ɪnfəməs/

well known for being bad or evil
Jesse James was an infamous outlaw.

infernal

adjective /ɪn'fɜːnəl/

relating to or characteristic of hell or the underworld
The infernal heat of the forge was capable of melting even the toughest metal.

infidel

noun /ɪnfɪdəl/

a person who has no religion or whose religion is not that of the majority
The radical cult leader called the non-believer an infidel.

ingenue

noun /ɪˌæŋʒer'njuː/

a female lead between the ages of sixteen and thirty
When she was younger, the actress was often typecast as the ingenue who was fondly pursued by young men.

inhalant

noun /ɪn'heɪlənt/

a medicinal preparation for inhaling
The medicine is now available as an inhalant.

inimitable

adjective /ɪ'nɪmɪtəbəl/

so good or unusual as to be impossible to copy
Moin was a brilliant comic with an inimitable sense of humour.

iniquity

noun /ɪ'nɪkwɪti/

immoral or grossly unfair behaviour
Her mother wouldn't let her join the film industry as she considered it a den of iniquity.

innocuous

adjective /ɪ'nɒkjʊəs/

not harmful or offensive
It seemed to be a perfectly innocuous remark.

innuendo

noun /ɪnˌjuː'endəʊ/

an allusive or oblique remark, typically a suggestive or disparaging one
Humour should not include sarcasm, innuendo, or any other form of cruelty.

inordinate

adjective /ɪn'ɔːdɪnət/

far more than is usual or expected
She had an inordinate amount of energy.

insouciance

noun /ɪn'suːʃɪəns/

a casual lack of concern
She approached the exam with an air of complete insouciance.

insuperable

adjective /ɪn'suːpərəbəl/

impossible to overcome
In the face of insuperable difficulties he maintained his equilibrium.

15 to 17 age group

integument

noun /ɪn'tegjʊmənt/

a tough outer protective layer, especially that of an animal or plant
The integument of the seed protects it until it sprouts.

intelligentsia

noun /ɪn'telɪ'dʒentsiə/

intellectuals or highly educated people as a group
The intelligentsia advocated a social change but not a revolution.

internecine

adjective /ɪntə'nɪːsɪn/

destructive to both sides in a conflict
During the war, internecine street fighting broke out between rival groups.

intransigent

adjective /ɪn'trænsɪdʒənt, ɪn'trɑːnsɪdʒənt/

refusing to behave differently or change one's attitude
They put pressure on the government to change its intransigent stance.

intratelluric

noun /ɪn'trətə'ljuərɪk/

formed or occurring below the surface of the earth
During the intratelluric period, igneous rocks crystallized prior to their eruption.

intuition

noun /ɪntjʊ'ɪʃn/

the ability to understand something instinctively
His intuition told him that the suspect wasn't telling the truth.

invalidate

verb /ɪn'vælɪdeɪt/

to prove that an idea, a story, or an argument is wrong
The relatives who had received nothing from their uncle sought to invalidate the will.

invariant

adjective /ɪn'veəriənt/

never changing
He has kept an invariant work schedule for the past two years.

invective

noun /ɪn'vektɪv/

insulting, abusive, or highly critical language
His racist invective against me left me speechless with rage.

irascible

adjective /ɪ'ræsɪbl/

becoming angered very easily
His irascible temperament used to frighten me.

irridenta

noun /ɪrɪ'dentə/

a region that is ethnically or historically tied to one country, but which is ruled by another
The Golan Heights was a part of Syria, but now it is an irridenta controlled by Israel.

isohyet

noun /aɪsəʊ'haɪt/

a line on a map connecting points having the same amount of rainfall in a given period
The isohyet showed the area that received the most rainfall during the storm.

isotope

noun /aɪsə'təʊp/

one of two or more forms of a chemical element with different physical properties
An isotope of carbon is used for carbon dating.

isthmus

noun /'ɪsθməs, 'ɪstməs, ɪsməs/

a narrow strip of land with sea on either side, forming a link between two larger areas of land
As we drove along the isthmus, we appreciated the beauty of the sea on either side of us.

iterate

verb /'ɪtəreɪt/

to perform or utter repeatedly

No matter how many times I iterate that this prank is a bad idea, no one listens.

itinerary

noun /aɪ'tɪnərəri, ɪ'tɪnərəri/

a plan of a journey, including the route and the places that you visit

Before leaving for France, we discussed the itinerary with the travel agent.

J

15 to 17
age group**jabberwocky****noun** /ˈdʒæbəˈwɒki/

meaningless speech or writing

*The salesman started spewing computer jabberwocky at me like an auctioneer.***jacaranda****noun** /ˌdʒækəˈrændə/a tropical American tree which has blue trumpet-shaped flowers, fern-like leaves, and fragrant timber
*The beautiful jacaranda tree is a native of Brazil.***jacquard****noun** /ˈdʒækɑːd, ˈdʒakəd/an apparatus with perforated cards, fitted to a loom to facilitate the weaving of figured and brocaded fabrics
*The jacquard loom simplifies the process of manufacturing textiles with intricate patterns like brocade.***jactitation****noun** /dʒæktɪˈteɪʃən/

the restless tossing of the body in illness

*The doctor assured us that the jactitation of the patient would begin to calm later in the day.***jaguarundi****noun** /ˌdʒæɡwəˈrændi/

a small American wild cat with a uniform red or grey coat, slender body, and short legs

janissary**noun** /ˈdʒænisəri/a member of the Turkish infantry forming the Sultan's guard between the 14th and 19th centuries
*The janissary was renowned for his swordsmanship.***jejunely****adverb** /dʒɪˈdʒuːnli/in a simple, naive, or unsophisticated manner
*The article was so jejunely written that it was immediately turned down by the editor.***jeremiad****noun** /ˌdʒeriˈmaɪəd/

a long, mournful complaint or lamentation

*The author bitterly lamented the state of society in his jeremiad.***jocund****adjective** /ˈdʒɒkənd, ˈdʒəʊkənd/

cheerful and light-hearted

*He was a jocund character, always full of fun.***jostle****verb** /ˈdʒɒsl/

to push roughly against somebody in a crowd

*Someone always happens to jostle me when I am standing with a cup of tea.***journalese****noun** /ˌdʒɜːnəlɪz/

a hackneyed style of writing supposedly characteristic of that in newspapers and magazines

*The article was full of journalese and grammatical errors.***Judaism****proper noun** /ˈdʒuːdeɪzəm/

the religion of the Jewish people

*Judaism is one of the world's oldest religions.***judicature****noun** /ˈdʒuːdɪkətʃə[r]/

the system and administration of justice in a country

*No society can be stable if it does not have an effective judicature.***juggernaut****noun** /ˈdʒʌɡənɔːt/

a huge, powerful, and overwhelming force

*The basketball team was a juggernaut consisting entirely of all-stars.***jugular****adjective** /ˈdʒʌɡjʊlə[r]/

of the neck or throat

The knife nicked his jugular vein, but he survived.

Junoesque

adjective /ˌdʒuːnəʊˈesk/

imposingly tall and shapely

The dress complimented her Junoesque figure.

jussive

adjective /ˈdʒʌsɪv/

in grammar, a verb form expressing a command

Not all languages use a special verb form for the jussive mood.

juxtapose

verb /ˌdʒʌkstəˈpəʊz/

to place things side by side

In his exhibition he decided to juxtapose photographs of settled family life with those of refugees in camps.

K

15 to 17
age group

kaiser

noun /'kaɪzə/

the German Emperor, the Emperor of Austria, or the head of the Holy Roman Empire
Franz Joseph, the kaiser of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, ruled for more than 65 years.

karaoke

noun /,kæri'əʊki/

a form of entertainment, in which people take turns to sing popular songs into a microphone over pre-recorded backing tracks
Karaoke is a popular activity in the Philippines.

keeshond

noun /'keɪs,hɒnd/

a dog of a Dutch breed with long thick grey hair, resembling a large Pomeranian
Keeshond dogs tend to be very playful and are quick learners.

kefir

noun /'kefə[r]/

a drink made from fermented milk, traditional in the Caucasus and now popular as a health product
The tart and refreshing flavor of kefir is similar to a drinking-style yogurt.

keratectomy

noun /,kerə'tektəmi/

surgical removal of a section or layer of the cornea, usually performed using a laser to correct myopia
My uncle had a keratectomy recently and does not need to wear glasses now.

kermes

noun /'kɜː[r]mɪz/

a red dye derived from insects
Traditional red colourings include kermes and cochineal, both of which are pigments made by crushing masses of tiny insects.

kernicterus

noun /,kɜː'nɪktərəs/

a medical condition involving a build-up of bilirubin in the brain and neural damage
If severe jaundice is not treated promptly, kernicterus can occur.

kilojoule

noun /'kɪlədʒuːl/

1,000 joules, especially as a measure of the energy value of foods
She counts every kilojoule she consumes on her diet.

kinetic

adjective /kɪ'netɪk, kə'netɪk/

relating to or resulting from motion
Hybrid cars convert kinetic energy into electrical energy when the brakes are applied.

kiosk

noun /'kiːɒsk/

a small shop, open at the front, where newspapers and drinks are sold
I buy my newspaper from the kiosk at the station.

kitsch

adjective /kɪtʃ/

popular but considered to have no artistic value and to be lacking in good taste
There were a couple of kitsch plastic dogs on the mantelpiece.

knapsack

noun /'næpsæk/

a soldier's or hiker's bag
He filled his knapsack with water and food for his camping trip.

knave

noun /neɪv/

a dishonest man or boy
The role of the knave in the play was quite insignificant.

kohlrabi

noun /kəʊl'ra:bi/

a cultivated variety of cabbage, whose thickened stem is eaten as a vegetable

She put fresh kohlrabi from her kitchen garden in the salad.

kosher

adjective /'kəʊʃə[r]/

prepared according to the rules of Jewish law
The man demanded kosher food.

kriegspiel

noun /'kri:ɡspi:l/

a war game in which blocks representing armies or other military units are moved about on maps

Kriegspiel was a wargame developed in Prussia to train officers in the army.

krummholz

noun /'krʊm,həʊlts/

stunted wind-blown trees growing near the tree line on mountains

We saw an animal move through the krummholz.

kuchen

noun /'ku:xən/

a breadlike cake containing apple, nuts, and sugar, originating from Germany

The kuchen was baked to perfection.

kudos

noun /'kju:dɒs/

the admiration and respect that goes with a particular achievement or position

She did most of the work, but all the kudos went to her partner.

kumquat

noun /'kʌmkwɒt/

an orange-like fruit related to the citrus, with an edible sweet rind and acid pulp

I have never eaten a kumquat.

kurbash

noun /'kʊəbəʃ/

a hide whip, used as an instrument of punishment in the past in Egypt and Turkey

The kurbash is made of hippopotamus or rhinoceros hide.

kyphosis

noun /kai'fəʊsɪs/

excessive outward curvature of the spine, causing hunching of the back

The lamb was born with kyphosis.



15 to 17 age group

lachrymose

adjective /'lækriməʊs, 'lækriməʊz/
tearful or given to weeping
She was pink-eyed and lachrymose.

lackadaisical

adjective /'lækə'deɪzɪkəl/
lacking enthusiasm and determination
Her lackadaisical attitude towards work will get her in trouble.

laconic

adjective /lə'kɒnɪk/
using very few words
His laconic reply suggested a lack of interest in the topic.

lacquer

noun /'lækə[r]/
a liquid made of shellac dissolved in alcohol that dries to form a hard protective layer
The student learnt how to lacquer the paintings she had done on wood.

lactulose

noun /'læktjʊləʊz/
a synthetic sugar with laxative properties
Uncle Yusuf has been taking lactulose for many years.

lacustrine

adjective /lə'kʌstreɪn, lə'kʌstrɪn/
relating to or associated with lakes
He was studying lacustrine aquaculture.

laggard

noun /'læɡəd/
a slow and lazy person
At boarding school you were labelled a laggard if you were not out of bed by the second bell.

lagniappe

noun /læn'jæp/
something given as a bonus or gratuity
Diners will be pleasantly surprised to have caviar served with the special holiday menu as a lagniappe.

lambaste

verb /læm'beɪst/
to criticize harshly
They could only lambaste the report as a gross distortion of the truth.

lamellibranch

noun /lə'melɪbræŋk/
another term for bivalve
A scallop is an example of a lamellibranch.

laminated

adjective /'læmɪneɪtɪd/
covered with a layer of plastic or some other protective material
All the delegates were given laminated identity cards at the conference.

langlauf

noun /'lɑːŋˌlaʊf, 'læŋˌlaʊf/
the sport of cross country skiing
He went to St. Moritz during winters to participate in langlauf.

languor

noun /'læŋɡə[r]/
tiredness or inactivity, especially when pleasurable
The languor of the summer was replaced by the frenzy of the school year.

lapilli

plural noun /lə'pɪlaɪ/
rock fragments ejected from a volcano
Lapilli usually range in size from 2mm to 64 mm in diameter.

largesse

noun /lɑː'[d]ʒes/
generosity in bestowing money or gifts upon others
The philanthropist was known for his largesse.

largetto

noun /lɑː'getəʊ/
a music passage or movement marked to be performed in a fairly slow tempo
I thought the largetto was performed too quickly.



laryngotomy

noun /ˌlærɪŋˈɡɒtəmi/

a surgical incision into the larynx, typically to provide an air passage when breathing is obstructed
The doctor had to perform a laryngotomy to allow the patient to breathe.

larynx

noun /ˈlærɪŋks/

the area at the top of the throat that contains the vocal cords
I could hardly speak when I had an infection in my larynx.

lasagna

noun /ləˈzɑːnjə, ləˈzænjə, ləˈsɑːnjə/

pasta in the form of sheets or wide strips
Sara is compiling a book of lasagna recipes.

lattice

noun /ˈlætɪs/

a structure made of strips of wood or metal that cross over each other with spaces between them, used as a fence or support for climbing plants
Last year I put up a lattice in the garden and had a fine show of sweet peas.

laureate

noun /ˈləʊrɪət, ˈlɒrɪət/

a person who has been given an official honour or prize for something important they have achieved
The Nobel Laureate was given a state reception when he returned from Sweden.

layette

noun /leɪˈjet/

a set of clothes and other things for a new baby
They went to London to buy a layette for their baby.

leachate

noun /ˈliːtʃət/

water that has percolated through a solid and leached out some of the constituents
All landfills, including those not in use, produce landfill gases and leachate.

Lebensraum

noun /ˈleɪbənzˌraʊm/

the territory which a group, state, or nation believes is needed for its natural development
The concept of Lebensraum in Nazi ideology included the assumption that war was inevitable.

lecithin

noun /ˈlesɪθɪn/

a substance widely distributed in animal tissues, egg yolk, and some higher plants
Since lecithin acts as an emulsifier, it will make whatever you mix it with smoother and creamier.

lederhosen

noun /ˈleɪdəˌhəʊzən/

leather shorts with H-shaped braces, worn by Austrian men
He is wearing lederhosen and a pale shirt.

leeway

noun /ˈliːweɪ/

the amount of freedom that you have to change something or to do it in the way you want to
The new government has given the council greater leeway to introduce and carry out reforms.

legacy

noun /ˈlegəsi/

money or property that is left to you by somebody when they die
They each received a legacy of 50,000 rupees from their grandfather.

legerdemain

noun /ˈledʒədəmeɪn/

the skilful use of your hands when performing tricks or conjuring
We were fascinated by the legerdemain of the magician, as he conjured various items out of thin air.

legion

noun /ˈliːdʒən/

a large group of soldiers that forms part of an army
To serve in a Roman legion was a great honour.



15 to 17 age group

legionnaire

noun /ˌliːdʒəˈneə[r]/

a member of a legion, in particular an ancient Roman legion or the French Foreign Legion
A Roman legionnaire was a feared opponent in battle.

legitimate

adjective /lɪˈdʒɪtɪmət/

conforming to the law or to rules
Only a legitimate heir could assume the title of his father.

leisurely

adjective /ˈleɪʒəli/

without hurrying
After a leisurely breakfast at the hotel, we went to the beach.

lemming

noun /ˈlemɪŋ/

a small, short-tailed, thickset rodent found in the Arctic tundra

leniency

noun /ˈliːniənsi/

the quality of being less strict than expected
Considering the gravity of the offence, we were surprised at the leniency of the sentence.

leonine

adjective /ˈliːənəɪn/

of or resembling a lion or lions
My cat has a handsome, leonine profile.

lepidopterist

noun /ˌlepiˈdɒptərɪst/

a person who studies or collects butterflies and moths
The lepidopterist found a rare butterfly deep in the forest of Sumatra.

lessor

noun /leˈsɔː[r]/

a person who allows somebody the use of a building or area on lease
The lessor offered a five-year lease on the office.

leukocyte

noun /ˈluːkəʊsaɪt/

a white blood cell
In biology we learned how a leukocyte can destroy a bacterium.

leverage

noun /ˈliːvərɪdʒ, ˈlevərɪdʒ/

the exertion of force by means of a lever
It will take a lot of leverage to lift such a heavy load.

leviathan

noun /lɪˈvaɪəθən/

a sea monster
The film is about a hideous leviathan that lives underwater and kills people.

liaison

noun /lɪˈeɪzən, lɪˈeɪzən/

communication or cooperation which facilitates a close working relationship between people or organizations
There is an excellent liaison between our two departments.

libretto

noun /lɪˈbretəʊ/

the text of an opera or other long vocal work
The libretto of Strauss's opera Salome is based on a biblical story.

ligneous

adjective /ˈlɪɡniəs/

made, consisting of, or resembling wood
Ligneous materials are a popular choice for flooring.

lineaments

plural noun /ˈlɪniəmənts/

distinctive features or characteristics, especially of the face
I recognized those haggard lineaments even after all those years.

linoleum

noun /lɪˈnəʊliəm/

a type of strong material with a hard, shiny surface, used for covering floors
The architect advised the workers to cover the floor with linoleum.

litotes

noun /laɪˈtəʊtiːz/

an ironical understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary
It is a litotes to say "I won't be sorry" instead of "I will be glad".

loess

noun /ˈləʊɪs, lɜːs/

a light-coloured, fine-grained accumulation of clay and silt particles that have been deposited by the wind
When irrigated, loess can be very fertile.

logy

adjective /ˈləʊɡi/

dull or listless
It was cold outside, and the logy brown wasp staggered across the window sill.

loquacious

adjective /ləˈkweɪʃəs/

talkative
I find her loquacious nature very annoying.

luau

noun /ˈluːaʊ/

a Hawaiian party or feast, especially one accompanied by entertainment
There is more to do on the island than the stereotypical luau that's often marketed to tourists.

lucid

adjective /ˈluːsɪd/

expressed clearly
Ellen has a lucid writing style.

lucifugous

adjective /luːˈsɪfjʊɡəs/

shunning the light
The lucifugous mole burrowed his tunnel under our lawn.

lumpenproletariat

noun /ˌlʌmpənˈprəʊlɪˈteəriət/

the unorganized and unpolitical lower orders of society who are not interested in revolutionary advancement
Marx thought of the lumpenproletariat as a counterrevolutionary threat to the idea of Marxist revolution.

lunacy

noun /ˈluːnəsi/

behaviour that is stupid or crazy
It is sheer lunacy to drive in bad weather.

lurid

adjective /ˈlʊərɪd/

too bright in colour, in a way that is not attractive
She was wearing a lurid orange and green blouse.

luxé

adjective /lʌks, lʊks/

expensive and of high quality
She spent seven days exploring deep-sea life on a luxé live-aboard yacht.

lymphadenopathy

noun /lɪmfædɪˈnɒpəθi/

a disease affecting the lymph nodes
The medical examination revealed that he was suffering from lymphadenopathy.

M

15 to 17
age group

macabre

adjective /mə'kɑ:br[ə]/

disturbing as a result of being concerned with or causing a fear of death

The city morgue is a macabre place to visit.

macaque

noun /mə'kɑ:k/

a medium-sized, chiefly forest-dwelling Old World monkey which has a long face and cheek pouches for holding food

machete

noun /mə'ʃeti/

a broad heavy knife used as a cutting tool and as a weapon

The farmer cut open a coconut with a single blow from his machete.

Machiavellian

adjective /ˌmækiə'veliən/

cunning, scheming, and unscrupulous, especially in politics

The people were tired of the government's Machiavellian tactics.

macrocephalic

adjective /ˌmækrəʊsɪ'fælik/

having an unusually large head

The audience enjoyed the macrocephalic puppets used in the show.

macrocosm

noun /ˌmækrəʊkɒzəm/

the whole of a complex structure, especially the world or the universe, contrasted with a small or representative part of it

The foundation of Hindu astrology is based on the connection between the microcosm and macrocosm.

maelstrom

noun /ˈmeɪlstrəm/

a situation or state of confused movement or violent turmoil

My home usually seemed more like a maelstrom of chaos and disorder.

maestro

noun /ˈmaɪstrəʊ/

a master in any art, especially in music

The opera was composed by the maestro himself.

maisonette

noun /ˌmeɪzə'net/

a flat with rooms on two floors within a building, usually with a separate entrance

She lives in a rented maisonette.

malacostracan

noun /ˌmælə'kɒstrəkən/

a crustacean of the large class Malacostraca, such as a crab, shrimp, or lobster

A malacostracan exhibits the hard outer covering typical of crabs.

malaise

noun /mə'leɪz/

a general feeling of discomfort, illness, or unease whose exact cause is difficult to identify

After the weekend there was a general air of malaise in the office.

malcontent

noun /ˈmælkəntent/

a person who is not satisfied with a situation

A malcontent was leading the conspiracy.

malign

verb /mə'laɪn/

to speak about someone in a spitefully critical manner

The press took every opportunity to malign the unpopular politician.

malleability

noun /mæliə'bɪlɪti/

the ability of a metal to be hammered into a thin sheet

The malleability of gold and silver make them ideal for jewellery.

manacle

verb /'mænəkl/

to fasten metal bands to a person's hands or feet to stop them from escaping

The police had to manacle the prisoner so he could not escape.

manageable

adjective /'mænidʒəbl/

able to be controlled or dealt with without difficulty

The debt has been reduced to a manageable level.

manganese

noun /'mæŋɡəniːz/

a brittle greyish-white metallic element used in making steel and ferromagnetic alloys

The black dioxide of manganese is used as an industrial raw material or additive, especially in glass-making.

maniacal

adjective /mə'niækəl/

exhibiting extremely wild or violent behaviour

His maniacal driving scared the passengers in his car.

mansuetude

noun /'mænsʍɪtjuːd/

gentleness

Ali's kitten gives off an air of mansuetude.

mantelletta

noun /,mæntɪ'letə/

a knee-length, sleeveless vestment worn by cardinals, bishops, and other high-ranking Catholics

Nowadays the mantelletta is reserved for the higher functionaries of the Vatican.

Maori

proper noun /'maɔri/

a member of the aboriginal people of New Zealand

The language of the Maori is officially recognised in New Zealand.

maquiladora

noun /,mæki'lə'dɔːrə/

a factory in Mexico run by a foreign company and exporting its products to that company's country of origin

The maquiladora industry in Mexico faces competition from other countries like China.

maquillage

noun /,mæki'ʃɑːʒ/

cosmetics

The maquillage transformed the young artist into an old woman.

marionette

noun /,mæriə'net/

a puppet manipulated from above by strings

The toddlers watched in amazement as the marionette danced.

marjoram

noun /'mɑːdʒ[ə]rəm/

an aromatic Mediterranean plant, used for seasoning food and in salads

Austrian braised steaks, flavoured with marjoram and cooked with tomatoes, are a pleasure to eat.

markhor

noun /'mɑːkɔː/

a large wild goat with very long twisted horns, native to central Asia

masquerade

noun /,mæskə'reɪd/

a false show or pretence

Her sympathy is just a masquerade to hide her jealousy.

masseur

noun /mæ'sɜː[r]/

a male whose job is giving people massages

She wanted to employ the best masseur in the city.

M

15 to 17
age group

mastoiditis

noun /ˌmæstɔɪˈdaɪtɪs/

inflammation of the mastoid process
With the development of antibiotics, mastoiditis has become quite rare in developed countries.

maternity

adjective /məˈtɜːnɪti/

related to being a mother
She applied for maternity leave.

matinee

noun /ˈmætiːni/

an afternoon performance of a play or film
They all enjoyed the matinee.

matriarchal

adjective /ˌmeɪtrɪˈɑːkl/

relating to or denoting a form of social organization in which a woman is the head
Some animals live in matriarchal groups.

maul

verb /mɔːl/

to wound by scratching and tearing
It is rare for a lion to maul its keeper.

maverick

noun /ˈmævərɪk/

a person with independent or unusual views
Politically, she is a real maverick.

mawkish

adjective /ˈmɔːkɪʃ/

sentimental in an exaggerated or false way
The young man wrote mawkish poems about her.

mayhem

noun /ˈmeɪhem/

confusion and fear
There was absolute mayhem when everyone tried to get out of the burning cinema at once.

mayonnaise

noun /meɪəˈneɪz/

a thick creamy dressing consisting of egg yolks beaten with oil and vinegar and seasoned
Make the tuna sandwich with plenty of mayonnaise.

mazurka

noun /məˈzɜːkə/

a lively Polish dance in triple time
Chopin made the mazurka famous with his music.

meander

verb /mɪˈændə[r]/

to take a winding, crooked, or involved course
Streams tend to meander through level ground.

mediate

verb /ˈmiːdiət/

to intervene in a dispute in order to bring about an agreement or reconciliation
The secretary general was asked to mediate in the dispute.

mediocrity

noun /ˌmiːdrɪˈɒkrɪti/

the quality of being average or not very good
His novels seldom rise above mediocrity.

meiosis

noun /maɪˈəʊsɪs/

a type of cell division that results in four daughter cells each with half the number of chromosomes of the parent cell, as in the production of gametes and plant spores
The sporophytes of green algae form spores only by meiosis.

meitnerium

noun /maɪtˈnɪəriəm/

chemical element number 109, a very unstable element made by atomic collisions
Meitnerium does not occur naturally.

melancholy**noun** /ˈmeləŋkəli/

a deep feeling of sadness

*He had an air of sorrow and melancholy about him.***melange****noun** /meɪˈlɑːnz/

a mixture or variety of different things

*This salad is a melange of fruits.***Melpomene****noun** /melˈpɒmɪni/

the Muse of tragedy in Greek Mythology

*In Roman and Greek poetry, it was traditional to invoke the goddess Melpomene so that one might create beautiful lyrical phrases.***mendacious****adjective** /menˈdeɪʃəs/

not telling the truth

*His friends learnt to discount his mendacious stories when they found out that he was a habitual liar.***meningococcus****noun** /mɪˌnɪŋɡəʊˈkɒkəs/

a bacterium involved in some forms of meningitis and cerebrospinal infection

*The meningococcus bacteria has been responsible for epidemics in Asia and Africa.***meritorious****adjective** /ˌmerɪˈtɔːriəs/

deserving reward or praise

*She deserves a medal for her meritorious conduct.***mesmerize****verb** /ˈmezməraɪz/

to capture the complete attention of someone

*The critic watched the singer mesmerize the audience with her voice.***meson****noun** /ˈmiːzən, ˈmezən/

a subatomic particle with a mass between that of an electron and a proton

*A meson is made up of quarks that are bound together.***messianic****adjective** /ˌmesiˈænik/

relating to the Messiah

*There are prophecies about the messianic era in the Torah.***methane****noun** /ˈmiːθeɪn, ˈmeθeɪn/

a colourless odourless flammable gas

*They used methane for the experiment in the science project.***Methuselah****noun** /mɪˈθjuːzələ/

a patriarch, the grandfather of Noah, who is said to have lived for 969 years

*My grandfather would complain about how he felt older than Methuselah.***metropolis****noun** /mɪˈtrɒpəlɪs/

the capital or chief city of a country or region

*He preferred the peaceful life of the countryside to the bustle of the metropolis.***mezzotint****noun** /ˈmetʃəʊtɪnt/

a print made from an engraved copper or steel plate

*Mezzotint portraits lined the walls of the atrium.***microcosm****noun** /ˈmaɪkrəʊkɒzəm/

a thing, a place or a group that has all the features and qualities of something much larger

*Our small village is a microcosm of the larger world.***mingle****verb** /ˈmɪŋɡl/

to mix or cause to mix

*I listened as the sounds of the city began to mingle together.***minutiae****plural noun** /mɪˈnjuːʃiː, maɪˈnjuːʃiː/

the small, precise, or trivial details of something

Before signing a contract one should always study the minutiae.

M

15 to 17
age group

misanthrope

noun /'mɪzənθrəʊp/

one who avoids human society
He was labelled a misanthrope because he preferred to remain secluded in his studio.

misogynist

noun /mɪ'sɒdʒɪnɪst/

a man who hates women
The misogynist refused to work with a female secretary.

Mixolydian

adjective /ˌmɪksə'liːdiən/

of or relating to the musical scale equivalent to a major scale with a lowered seventh scale degree
Fred likes to compose songs in the Mixolydian mode.

mnemonic

noun /nɪ'mɒnɪk/

a word or sentence that helps you remember something
He made up a mnemonic to remember the theorem.

module

noun /'mɒdjuːl/

a self-contained unit or item
Each module of the course addresses a different topic.

monarchist

noun /'mɒnəkɪst/

a person who believes that a country should be ruled by a king or a queen
He has always been a monarchist and enjoys watching the Queen's speech on television.

monocoque

noun /'mɒnəʊkəʊk/

an aircraft or vehicle structure in which the chassis is integral with the body
The technique of monocoque was first used in the automobile industry.

monocyte

noun /'mɒnəʊsaɪt/

one of the main types of white blood cells
A monocyte changes into a macrophage when it enters the tissue spaces.

monotheism

noun /'mɒnəʊθiːzəm/

the doctrine or belief that there is only one God
In many cultures monotheism replaced polytheism as the primary belief system.

morbid

adjective /'mɔːbɪd/

having an unusual interest in death or unpleasant events
Her morbid outlook on life made me suspect she was depressed.

morose

adjective /mə'reʊs/

gloomy and unsocial
My brother wears a habitually morose expression.

mortician

noun /mɔː'tɪʃn/

a person whose job is to prepare bodies for funerals
The mortician prepared the corpse for burial.

muffle

verb /'mʌfl/

to try to deaden a noise
She tried to muffle her laughter in class.

mukluks

plural noun /'mʌklʌks/

a high, soft boot that is worn in the American Arctic and is traditionally made from sealskin
The girl's mukluks were brown and very worn out.

mulch

noun /mʌltʃ/

material spread around or over a plant to enrich or insulate the soil
Shredded tree bark is sometimes used as a decorative mulch.

mulligatawny

noun /ˌmʌlɪgəˈtɔːni/

a spicy meat soup originally made in India
I asked my mother for her mulligatawny soup recipe.

munificent

adjective /mjuˈnɪfɪsnt/

characterized by or displaying great generosity
The munificent benefactor preferred to remain anonymous.

murk

noun /mɜːk/

darkness caused by smoke or fog
The murk which hung over the house and garden was depressing.

musculature

noun /ˈmʌskjʊlətʃəl/

the system or arrangement of muscles in a body, part of the body, or an organ
Some speech impediments are caused by problems in the speech musculature.

musculoskeletal

adjective /ˌmʌskjʊləʊˈskeɪtəl/

relating to or denoting the musculature and skeleton together
The musculoskeletal system provides form, support, stability, and movement to the body.

mutilate

verb /ˈmjuːtɪleɪt/

to damage very severely, especially by cutting or tearing off part of it
The torturer threatened to mutilate his victim.

mutinous

adjective /ˈmjuːtɪnəs/

refusing to obey the orders of somebody in authority
The captain had to use force to subdue his mutinous crew.

muzzle

noun /ˈmʌzl/

the projecting part of the face, usually the jaws and nose, of animals such as a dog or horse
I gently stroked the horse's muzzle to soothe him.

Mycenaean

adjective /ˌmaɪsɪˈniːən/

relating to or denoting a late Bronze Age civilization in Greece
The Mycenaean civilization flourished on mainland Greece.

myopic

adjective /maɪˈɒpɪk/

lacking foresight or intellectual insight
He is very inexperienced and has a rather myopic outlook on life.

myotome

noun /ˈmaɪətəʊm/

the segment in a vertebrate embryo that differentiates into skeletal muscle
An amphibian's skeletal muscles arise from its myotome.

mythopoeic

adjective /ˌmɪθəʊˈpiːɪk/

of or relating to the composition of myths
The mythopoeic awards are given to authors of outstanding works in the genres of myth and fantasy.

myxomatosis

noun /ˌmɪksəməˈtəʊsɪs/

an infectious disease of rabbits that usually causes death
Her rabbits died of myxomatosis.

N

15 to 17
age group

nacelle

noun /nə'sel/

the outer casing of an aircraft engine
The nacelle was damaged in the hailstorm.

naiad

noun /'naɪəd/

a water nymph said to inhabit a river, spring, or waterfall
As a child, my favourite story was about a naiad who lived in a secret spring.

narcissism

noun /'nɑːsɪsɪzəm/

the habit of admiring yourself too much, especially your appearance
A superiority complex sometimes leads to narcissism.

narcolepsy

noun /'nɑːkə[ʊ]lepsi/

a condition of frequent and uncontrollable desire for sleep
Narcolepsy is rare, although many people suffering from a lack of sleep have similar symptoms.

nascence

noun /'næsəns, 'neɪsəns/

the act of being born or coming into existence
The nascence of a business idea is very exciting for an entrepreneur.

nasturtium

noun /nə'stɜːʃəm/

a garden plant with round flat leaves and red, orange or yellow flowers that are sometimes eaten in salads
As an experiment, mother decided to put nasturtium leaves and flowers in the salad.

natation

noun /nə'teɪʃn/

swimming
Natation is a therapeutic exercise because it is low impact and works all the major muscle groups.

nautilus

noun /'nɔːtɪləs/

a cephalopod mollusk with a light external spiral shell and numerous short tentacles around the mouth

naysayer

noun /'neɪ,seɪə[r]/

one who denies, refuses, opposes, or is skeptical or cynical about something
Never let a naysayer prevent you from following a dream.

Neanderthal

adjective /nɪ'ændəθɑːl/

used to describe an extinct species of human who used stone tools and lived in Europe during the early period of human history
The remains of a Neanderthal man were found in Germany.

nebula

noun /'nebjʊlə/

a cloud of gas and dust in outer space
We saw the Crab Nebula through the observatory telescope.

necromancer

noun /'nekrəʊmænsə[r]/

a person who claims to communicate by magic with people who are dead
The village people used to visit the necromancer to communicate with their deceased loved ones.

necropolis

noun /ne'krɒpəlɪs/

a cemetery, especially a large one belonging to an ancient city
The necropolis at Makli is considered to be one of the largest in the world.

nefarious

adjective /nɪ'feəriəs/

wicked or criminal
He was ostracised because of his past nefarious activities.

neigh

verb /neɪ/

a characteristic high-pitched sound uttered by a horse
She heard her horse neigh amongst all the other horses at the show.

Neolithic

adjective /ˌniːəʊˈliθɪk/

relating to or denoting the later part of the Stone Age, when ground or polished stone weapons and implements prevailed
Distinctive styles of local pottery appear around 2500 BC along with Neolithic polished stone axes.

neonatal

adjective /ˌniːəʊˈneɪtəl/

of or relating to a child that has just been born
The hospital's neonatal unit had many patients.

nescient

adjective /ˈnesɪənt/

lacking knowledge
This report is a product of nescient minds.

netiquette

noun /ˈnetɪket/

the correct or acceptable way of using the Internet
Netiquette is meant to keep online social interactions civilized.

neurology

noun /ˈnjʊəˈrɒlədʒi/

the scientific study of nerves and their diseases
The teaching hospital is now offering a graduate program in neurology.

neurosis

noun /ˈnjʊəˈrəʊsɪs/

a mental illness in which a person suffers strong feelings of fear and worry
Due to my neurosis, I am unable to enjoy a carefree life.

neutralize

verb /ˈnjuːtrəlaɪz/

to stop something from having any effect
In order to neutralize an acidic solution, an alkali must be added to it.

niche

noun /niːʃ/

a comfortable or suitable role, job, or way of life
He eventually found his niche in sports journalism.

nicotine

noun /ˈnɪkətiːn/

a toxic colourless or yellowish oily liquid which is the chief active constituent of tobacco
In large amounts, nicotine blocks the action of autonomic nerve and skeletal muscle cells.

nirvana

noun /ˈnɪəˈvɑːnə, nɜːˈvɑːnə/

a transcendent state in which there is neither suffering, desire, nor sense of self, and the subject is released from the effects of karma and the cycle of death and rebirth
Nirvana is the central concept of Buddhism and is the only state of eternal happiness.

nodule

noun /ˈnɒdjuːl/

a small round lump or swelling, especially on a plant
The plant had a strange nodule on its stem.

Noel

noun /ˈnəʊˈel/

Christmas, especially as a refrain in carols and on Christmas cards
The Christmas card had Noel printed on the front.

nomadic

adjective /ˈnəʊˈmædɪk/

moving from place to place for subsistence
He lived a nomadic lifestyle.

N

15 to 17
age group

nominal

adjective /'nɒmɪnəl/

very small

She charged only a nominal fee for her work.

nonchalance

noun /'nɒnʃələns/

cool indifference

You had to admire his air of nonchalance as he faced difficulties both at work and at home.

nonentity

noun /'nɒn'entɪti/

a person without any special qualities, who has not achieved anything important

Mariam sincerely apologised to Tariq for calling him a nonentity in a moment of anger.

nougat

noun /'nuːɡɑː, 'nʌɡət/

a sweet made from sugar or honey, nuts, and egg white

Bits of nougat got stuck between her teeth.

nouveau

adjective /'nuːvəʊ/

modern or up to date.

I don't care much for nouveau punk music.

noxious

adjective /'nɒksjəs/

poisonous or harmful

Containers that hold noxious gases must be handled with great care.

nuance

noun /'njuːɑːns/

a very slight difference that is not usually very obvious

He watched her face intently to catch every nuance of expression.

nucleotide

noun /'njuːklɪətaɪd/

any of a group of molecules that, when linked together, form the building blocks of DNA

Nucleotides are the basic building blocks of nucleic acids.

nucleus

noun /'njuːklɪəs/

the central part of something around which other parts are situated

The fortress was the nucleus of the ancient city.

nugatory

adjective /'njuːɡətəri/

having no purpose or value

His contribution to the discussion was nugatory.

numismatic

adjective /'njuːmɪz'mætɪk/

relating to or consisting of coins or medals

The numismatic museum has a large collection of ancient gold coins.



oaf

noun /əʊf/
a stupid, awkward person
He called the unfortunate waiter a clumsy oaf.

oaken

adjective /'əʊkən/
made or consisting of the wood of the oak tree
The old couple could not buy the oaken table as it was very expensive.

obdurate

adjective /'ɒbdjʊrət/
stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or course of action
His obdurate refusal to listen to our complaints infuriated us.

obeisance

noun /əʊ'beɪsəns, əʊ'bi:səns/
the act of bending your head or the upper part of your body in order to show respect for somebody or something
He made an obeisance as the king and queen entered the room.

obelisk

noun /'ɒbəlɪsk/
a tall pointed stone column with four sides, put up in memory of a person or event
We saw an obelisk in the square as a memorial of the war.

obfuscate

verb /'ɒbfʌskeɪt/
to make something more difficult to understand
Do not obfuscate the issues by dragging in irrelevant arguments.

objurgation

noun /'ɒbdʒəgeɪʃn/
a severe rebuke
The threat of an objurgation did not deter the students from carrying out their end of term pranks.

obloquy

noun /'ɒbləkwɪ/
strong public criticism
I have endured years of contempt and obloquy.

obnoxious

adjective /əb'ɒksjəs/
very unpleasant or offensive
He has the most obnoxious manners.

oboe

noun /'əʊbəʊ/
a high-pitched woodwind instrument
He plays the oboe very well.

obsequies

plural noun /'ɒbsɪkwɪz/
funeral or burial rites
The murder victim's father was the chief mourner at the obsequies.

obsequious

adjective /əb'sɪ:kwɪəs/
trying too hard to please somebody
The waiter in the expensive hotel greeted us with an obsequious smile.

obsession

noun /əb'seʃn/
the state in which a person's mind is completely filled with thoughts of one particular thing or person in a way that is not normal
His obsession with computers began six months ago.

obtrude

verb /əb'tru:d/
to become noticeable in an unwelcome or intrusive way
The sound of his alarm began to obtrude into his dream.

obviate

verb /'ɒbvɪeɪt/
to remove a need or difficulty
The new evidence will obviate the need for any further enquiries.



15 to 17 age group

occipital

adjective /ɒk'sɪpɪtəl/

of or relating to the back of the head or skull
The occipital artery supplies blood to the back of the scalp.

occlusion

noun /ə'kluːʒən/

the blockage or closing of a blood vessel or hollow organ
Occlusion is relatively common in the retina, and can cause partial or total loss of vision.

ochre

noun /'əʊkə[r]/

a type of red or yellow earth used in some paints and dyes
He has painted the walls of his room yellow ochre.

octennial

adjective /ɒk'teniəl/

recurring every eight years
He gave a speech at the octennial gathering of chancellors.

octogenarian

noun /ɒktəʊdʒɪ'neəriən/

a person between 80 and 89 years of age
My grandfather is an octogenarian.

odalisque

noun /'əʊdəlɪsk/

a female slave or concubine in a harem
So gaudy a style made her look like a pampered odalisque rather than the mother of the future king.

odorous

adjective /'əʊdəərəs/

having or emitting a scent
The odorous rubbish heap was a blight on the neighborhood.

oeillade

noun /ɜː'jɑːd/

an amorous or suggestive glance
Oscar perfected his oeillade in the mirror before going out.

oesophagus

noun /ɪ'sɒfəɡəs/

the tube through which food passes from the mouth to the stomach
He was diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus after years of smoking cigarettes.

oeuvre

noun /'ɜːvrə/

the body of work of a painter, composer, or author
The many self-portraits by Vincent van Gogh were an important part of his oeuvre as a painter.

offensive

adjective /ə'fensɪv/

causing someone to feel resentful, upset, or annoyed
The media replayed his offensive statements for days.

officious

adjective /ə'fɪʃəs/

too ready or willing to give orders
I am tired of being pushed around by officious civil servants.

oleaginous

adjective /əʊlɪ'ædʒɪnəs/

rich in, covered with, or producing oil
Some organic substances have oleaginous properties.

olfactory

adjective /ɒl'fæktəri/

of or connected with the sense of smell
Dogs are known for having highly sensitive olfactory organs.

ombre

adjective /'ɒmbəl/

a trick-taking card game for three people using a pack of forty cards, popular in Europe in the 17th-18th centuries
Ombre is one of the earliest card games known in Europe.



omnifarious

adjective /ˌɒmnɪˈfeəriəs/
comprising or relating to all sorts or varieties
The zoo's omnifarious animal collection was the largest in the world.

omniscient

adjective /ɒmˈnɪʃɪənt/
knowing everything
The story was told from the perspective of a third-person omniscient narrator.

oneirocritic

noun /əʊˈnaɪrəˈkrɪtɪk/
an interpreter of dreams
My brother went to the oneirocritic to get his dreams analysed.

onerous

adjective /ˈəʊnərəs/
involving a great deal of effort, trouble, or difficulty
To chaperone the three active children was an onerous task.

onomatopoeia

noun /ˌɒnəʊməˈtiːpiə/
the formation of words in imitation of sounds
Children are natural masters of onomatopoeia.

onslaught

noun /ˈɒnslɔːt/
a strong or violent attack
The town survives the onslaught of tourists every summer.

opalescent

adjective /ˌɒpəˈlesnt/
changing colour like an opal
The sailor was fascinated by the opalescent ocean.

ophicleide

noun /ˈɒfɪklaɪd/
an obsolete bass brass instrument with keys
Modern performances use the tuba in place of the ophicleide.

ophthalmology

noun /ˌɒfθælˈmɒlədʒi, ˌɒpθælˈmɒlədʒi/
the branch of medicine concerned with the study and treatment of disorders and diseases of the eye
He is specialising in ophthalmology.

opprobrious

adjective /əˈprɒbrɪəs/
expressing scorn or criticism
Her opprobrious remark about the president was uncalled for.

optimism

noun /ˈɒptɪmɪzəm/
a feeling that good things will happen
There is a new feeling of optimism in the country.

opulent

adjective /ˈɒpjʊlənt/
ostentatiously costly and luxurious
They enjoyed an opulent life style.

oratorio

noun /ˌɒrəˈtɔːrɪəʊ/
a large-scale piece of music for singers and an orchestra, typically on a sacred theme, performed without costume, scenery, or action
Handel's 'Messiah' is probably the best known oratorio.

orgulous

adjective /ˈɔːgjʊləs/
haughty
He just enjoyed playing golf and had no desire to be an orgulous member of some elitist country club.

oscillate

verb /ˈɒsɪleɪt/
to move or swing back and forth in a regular rhythm
He watched the pendulum oscillate inside the grandfather clock.

Osmanli

adjective & noun /ɒzˈmænli/
an old-fashioned term for Ottoman
The new hotel blends Osmanli style with comfortable surroundings in a tranquil location.



15 to 17 age group

osmosis

noun /ɒz'məʊsɪs/

The process of gradual or unconscious assimilation of ideas or knowledge

She seems to learn foreign languages by osmosis.

ossify

verb /'ɒsɪfaɪ/

to cause to become hard and bony

The disease will ossify the tissue.

ossuary

noun /'ɒsjʊəri/

a container or room in which the bones of dead people are placed

There was an ancient ossuary beneath the church.

ostensible

adjective /ɒ'stensɪbl/

stated or appearing to be true, but not necessarily so

Although the ostensible purpose of the expedition was to discover new lands, the explorers were really interested in expanding trade.

osteoporosis

noun /,ɒstɪəʊpə'rəʊsɪs/

a medical condition in which the bones become brittle and fragile from loss of tissue

Her mother was suffering from osteoporosis.

ostracize

verb /'ɒstrəsaɪz/

to refuse to let somebody be a member of a social group

His colleagues decided to ostracize him for refusing to support the strike.

otiose

adjective /'əʊtiəs, 'əʊʃiəs/

serving no practical purpose or result

He had to sit through an otiose round of meetings.

otorhinolaryngology

noun /,əʊtəʊ,raɪnəʊ,lærɪŋ'ɡɒlədʒɪ/

the study of diseases of the ear, nose, and throat

Farah is specializing in pediatric otorhinolaryngology.

oubliette

noun /,u:blɪ'et/

a secret dungeon with access only through a trapdoor in its ceiling

Prisoners in the oubliette were left to starve and drown when the groundwater rose.

overture

noun /'əʊvətʃʊə[r]/

an orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera or play

Often the overture to an opera is performed as a stand alone work.

overweening

adjective /,əʊvə'wi:ɪŋ/

showing too much confidence or pride

His overweening pride in his accomplishments was not justified.

ovoviviparous

adjective /,əʊvəʊvi'vɪpərəs/

producing young by means of eggs hatched within the body of the parent

Some snakes are ovoviviparous reptiles.

paella

noun /paɪˈelə/

a Spanish dish made from rice, shellfish, chicken, and vegetables

His Spanish wife cooked a paella for dinner.

pahoehoe

noun /pəˈhoʊhoʊ/

a type of lava having a smooth, swirled surface
Pahoehoe is the second most abundant type of lava flow.

palaeocene

adjective /ˈpælɪəʊsiːn, ˈpeɪlɪəʊsiːn/

of or formed in the first epoch of the Tertiary period, which lasted for 10 million years

During the paleocene period, reptiles were more widely distributed over the globe due to climatic conditions.

Palaeolithic

adjective /ˌpælɪəʊˈlɪθɪk, ˌpeɪlɪəʊˈlɪθɪk/

from or connected with the early part of the Stone Age

Neanderthals in the Palaeolithic era lived a savage life.

palatable

adjective /ˈpælətəbəl/

having a pleasant or acceptable taste

The chef was instructed to prepare a palatable meal for the dignitaries.

palindrome

noun /ˈpælɪndrəʊm/

a word or phrase that reads the same backwards as forwards

A good word game is to find a phrase that is a palindrome.

palladium

noun /pəˈleɪdɪəm/

a rare silvery-white metal resembling platinum
His ring was made of palladium.

pallid

adjective /ˈpælɪd/

pale, typically because of poor health

Reena's pallid complexion was the result of high fever.

palmetto

noun /pælˈmetəʊ/

a fan palm, especially one of a number occurring from the southern U.S. to northern South America

The strips of the leaf blade of a palmetto are used in weaving mats.

panache

noun /pəˈnæʃ/

flamboyant confidence of style or manner

He entertained the crowd with great panache.

pandemonium

noun /ˌpændəˈmeɪniəm/

a situation in which there is a lot of noise, activity and confusion

Pandemonium broke out when the terrible news was announced.

Pangaea

noun /pænˈdʒiːə/

the ancient supercontinent, comprising all the present continents joined together, which began to break up about 200 million years ago

Pangaea is postulated to have existed in late Palaeozoic and Mesozoic times.

panjandrum

noun /pænˈdʒændrəm/

a person who has or claims to have a great deal of authority or influence

The panjandrum was usually laughed at by his subordinates behind his back.

paparazzi

plural noun /ˌpæpəˈrætsi/

a group of freelance photographers who pursue celebrities to get photographs of them

The paparazzi got a strict warning not to intrude on the superstar's privacy.

P

15 to 17
age group

papyrus

noun /pəˈpaɪrəs/

a material prepared in ancient Egypt from the pithy stem of a water plant, used in sheets for writing or painting on

Papyrus was used in place of paper throughout the ancient Mediterranean world.

paralytic

adjective /ˌpærəˈlɪtɪk/

relating to paralysis

She has been suffering from a paralytic illness since she was a child.

paranoia

noun /ˌpærəˈnoɪə/

a mental illness in which a person believes that other people are trying to harm them

His acute paranoia made itself evident, as he claimed that more and more people were trying to kill him.

parapet

noun /ˈpærəpɪt/

a low protective wall along the edge of a balcony, bridge, or roof

I leaned over the parapet and waved goodbye.

paraselene

noun /ˌpærəsiˈliːni/

a bright spot in the sky formed by moonlight

A paraselene is also called a mock moon.

pariah

noun /pəˈraɪə/

a social outcast

Huckleberry Finn was a pariah because he was the son of the town drunkard.

Parisienne

noun /pæˈrɪziˈen/

a girl or woman from Paris

The novel's main character is a Parisienne.

parlance

noun /ˈpɑːləns/

a particular way of speaking or using words

Legal parlance is so confusing that I need a lawyer to help me understand.

parlous

adjective /ˈpɑːləs/

full of danger or uncertainty

The parlous state of security in this country needs immediate attention.

parochial

adjective /pəˈrɒkiəl/

having a limited or narrow outlook or scope

His parochial outlook meant he was out of touch with the wider world.

parole

noun /pəˈrəʊl/

the release of a prisoner before the end of a sentence

He is hoping to get parole.

paroxysm

noun /ˈpærəksɪzəm/

a sudden strong feeling or expression of an emotion that cannot be controlled

He went into a paroxysm of rage.

parquet

noun /ˈpɑːkeɪ/

flooring composed of wooden blocks arranged in a geometric pattern

Parquet is old-fashioned, but still preferable to vinyl.

partiality

noun /ˌpɑːʃɪˈælɪti/

an unfair bias in favour of one person or thing

The judge recused himself from the case due to his partiality.

participle

noun /ˈpɑːtɪsɪpl, pɑːˈtɪsɪpl/
a word formed from a verb and used as an adjective or a noun
The past participle of the verb “to learn” is always regular when used as an adjective.

partisan

adjective /ˈpɑːtɪzən, ˌpɑːtɪˈzæn/
prejudiced in favour of a particular cause
Partisan politics harm the nation as a whole.

pasquinade

noun /ˌpæskwɪˈneɪd/
a satire or lampoon, originally one displayed or delivered in a public place
A pasquinade often assaulted misgovernment and denounced injustice.

passacaglia

noun /ˌpæsəˈkɑːliə/
a composition typically in slow triple time with variations over a ground bass
The passacaglia originated in early seventeenth-century Spain and is still used by contemporary composers.

patchouli

noun /ˈpætʃʊli, pəˈtʃuːli/
an aromatic oil obtained from a South East Asian shrub, which is used in perfumery, insecticides, and medicine
The room smells a little too much of musk and patchouli.

paterfamilias

noun /ˌpætəfəˈmɪliəs, ˌpeɪtəfəˈmɪliəs/
the male head of a family or household
Under Roman law, a paterfamilias was responsible for the well-being and the legal and moral propriety of the family.

pathogenesis

noun /ˌpæθəʊˈdʒenɪsɪs/
the manner of development of a disease
Types of pathogenesis include microbial infection, inflammation, malignancy and tissue breakdown.

pathology

noun /pəˈθɒlədʒi/
the science of the causes and effects of diseases
Understanding a disease's pathology is an important step in finding a cure.

pathos

noun /ˈpeɪθɒs/
a quality that evokes pity or sadness
The film captured the pathos of their plight.

patisserie

noun /pəˈtiːsəri, pəˈtɪsəri/
a shop where pastries and cakes are sold
The patisserie has introduced hot cross buns which are delicious.

patois

noun /ˈpætwaː/
the dialect of a particular region, especially one with low status
Such patois often develops among students, soldiers and other groups to foster a sense of belonging.

patrician

noun /pəˈtrɪʃən/
an aristocrat or nobleman
Being a patrician, he comes from a family of high social rank.

patrimony

noun /ˈpætrɪməni/
property that is inherited when a father dies
As predicted by his critics, he wasted his patrimony within two years of his father's death.

P

15 to 17
age group

patronage

noun /'pætrənɪdʒ, 'peɪtrənɪdʒ/
the support given by a patron
Without the patronage of several large firms, the festival would not have taken place.

paucity

noun /'pɔːsɪti/
the presence of something in only small or insufficient quantities or amounts
The paucity of skilled workers was a drain on the economy.

peccadillo

noun /,pekə'dɪləʊ/
a relatively minor fault or sin
His wife forgave his peccadillo.

peccant

adjective /'pekənt/
guilty of a moral offense
Outside the confessional stood a short line of peccant parishioners waiting to seek redemption for their sins.

pecuniary

adjective /pɪ'kjuːniəri/
relating to or connected with money
I did not expect a pecuniary reward for my work on this project.

pediculicide

noun /,pedɪ'kjuːlɪsaɪd/
a chemical used to kill lice
She is annoyed that the pediculicide she is using isn't very effective.

pediment

noun /'pedɪmənt/
the part in the shape of a triangle above the entrance of a building in the ancient Greek style
The pediment of the building was decorated with figures from Greek mythology.

penchant

noun /'pɒʃɒ/
a strong or habitual liking for something or tendency to do something
She has a penchant for Mexican food.

penurious

adjective /pɪ'njʊəriəs/
poverty-stricken
The penurious man was forced to live in a shelter.

perception

noun /pə'sepʃn/
the way you notice things
She showed great perception in her assessment of the family's situation.

percussion

noun /pə'kʌʃn/
musical instruments that you play by hitting them with your hand or with a stick
The track features Joey Langton on percussion.

peregrine

noun /'perɪgrɪn/
a powerful falcon found on most continents, breeding chiefly on mountains and coastal cliffs and used for falconry

perennial

adjective /pə'reniəl/
lasting or existing for a long or apparently infinite time
The citizens have a perennial distrust of anyone in power.

perfidiously

adverb /pə'fɪdiəsli/
deceitfully
He was perfidiously playing one side against the other.

periapsis

noun /,perɪ'æpsɪs/
the point at which an orbiting object is closest to the body it is orbiting
An object is at its greatest velocity at the periapsis.

peripatetic**adjective** /ˌpɛrɪpəˈtɛtɪk/

going from place to place, for example in order to work

*I do not think that she will ever adapt to the peripatetic nature of military life.***peristalith****noun** /pəˈrɪstəˌlɪθ/a circle of upright stones surrounding a burial mound
*Although the burial mound is now almost gone, the surrounding peristalith still survives.***peritonitis****noun** /pɛrɪtəˈnaɪtɪs/

a serious condition in which the inside wall of the body becomes swollen and infected

*The doctor told the family that she was suffering from peritonitis.***peritrichous****adjective** /pəˈrɪtrɪkəs/covered all over with uniformly distributed flagella
*The flagella have a peritrichous arrangement.***perjury****noun** /ˈpɜːdʒəri/the crime of telling a lie in a court of law
*The judge found him guilty of perjury.***permissive****adjective** /pəˈmɪsɪv/

allowing or characterized by great or excessive freedom of behaviour

*Claire's children took her permissive attitude for granted.***perquisite****noun** /ˈpɜːkwɪzɪt/

a benefit which one enjoys or is entitled to on account of one's job or position

*A car was a perquisite for his job.***persecute****verb** /ˈpɜːsɪkjʊːt/

to treat someone in a cruel and unfair way, especially because of their race, religion or political beliefs

*The government continues to persecute minorities.***persimmon****noun** /pəˈsɪmən/

an edible fruit that resembles a large tomato and has very sweet flesh

*I tasted a persimmon for the first time, and it was delicious.***personage****noun** /ˈpɜːsənɪdʒ/

a person, especially a famous or important one

*A royal personage attended his wedding.***personnel****noun** /ˈpɜːsəˈnel/

people employed in an organization or engaged in an organized undertaking such as military service

*Army personnel are not allowed to leave the base.***perspicacious****adjective** /ˈpɜːspɪˈkeɪʃəs/

able to understand quickly

*He was a most perspicacious student.***pertinacious****adjective** /ˈpɜːtɪˈneɪʃəs/

holding firmly to an opinion or a course of action

*He is bound to succeed because of his pertinacious nature.***pertinent****adjective** /ˈpɜːtɪnənt/

belonging or related to the subject or matter at hand

*She asked some pertinent questions.***pervasive****adjective** /pəˈveɪsɪv/

existing in all parts of a place or a thing

Despite airing them for several hours, she could not rid her clothes of the pervasive odour of mothballs.

P

15 to 17
age group

petition

noun /pə'tɪʃn/

a formal written request, especially one signed by many people appealing to somebody in authority
The victimised employees filed a petition against their manager.

pewter

noun /'pjʊ:tə[r]/

a grey metal made by mixing tin with lead, used especially in the past for making cups and dishes
A fine collection of old pewter was sold at the auction.

peyote

noun /peɪ'əʊti/

a small, blue-green cactus that contains a powerful drug that affects people's minds
Some Native American tribes use peyote in their traditional ceremonies.

phantasmagoria

noun /ˌfæntæzmə'ɡɔːrɪə/

a sequence of real or imaginary images like that seen in a dream
What happened next was a phantasmagoria of horror and mystery.

pharaoh

noun /'fɛərəʊ/

a ruler of ancient Egypt
The pharaoh ordered his people to worship him.

Pharisaical

adjective /fæɪrɪ'seɪɪkl/

marked by hypocritical self-righteousness
Our society is plagued with insincerity and Pharisaical pride.

pharmacognosy

noun /ˌfɑːmə'kɒɡnəsi/

the branch of knowledge concerned with medicinal drugs obtained from plants or other natural sources
His interest in medicinal herbs and roots has led him to study pharmacognosy in depth.

pharmacopoeia

noun /ˌfɑːməkə'piːə/

an official publication containing a list of medicinal drugs with their effects and directions for their use
The doctor consulted a pharmacopoeia before writing the prescription.

philistine

noun /'fɪlɪstain/

a person who is hostile or indifferent to culture and the arts
I am a complete philistine when it comes to paintings.

philologist

noun /fɪ'lɒlədʒɪst/

a person who studies the structure, historical development, and relationships of a language or languages
J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of The Lord of the Rings, was also a philologist.

phlegmatic

adjective /fleg'mætɪk/

having an unemotional and stolidly calm disposition
If we are as phlegmatic as we like to believe, would we revel so conspicuously in our tragedy?

pho

noun /'fɜː/

a type of Vietnamese soup, typically made from beef stock and spices to which noodles and thinly sliced beef are added
I ordered a spring roll and beef pho at the restaurant.

phosphate

noun /'fɒsfert/

a salt of phosphoric acid
Nitrate and phosphate are used as fertilisers.

photogenic

adjective /ˌfəʊtəʊ'dʒenɪk/

looking attractive in photographs
She has such a photogenic face.

Phrygian**adjective** /'frɪdʒiən/

relating to Phrygia, its people, or their language
It is one of the oldest occupied sites known to man, where the first settlement, according to Phrygian myth, appeared.

phthalate**noun** /'f[θ]əleɪt/

a salt or ester of phthalic acid
The best treatment for any exposure to dibutyl phthalate is water.

phyllotaxis**noun** /fɪləʊ'tæksɪs/

the arrangement of leaves on a stem
Distichous phyllotaxis, also called "two-ranked leaf arrangement," is a special case of either opposite or alternate leaf arrangement.

physiatrist**noun** /fɪzi'ætrɪst/

a physician specializing in physical medicine
A physiatrist aims to restore functional ability to those with physical impairments or disabilities.

picaresque**adjective** /pɪkə'resk/

connected with literature that describes the adventures of a person who is sometimes dishonest but easy to like
'Tom Jones' has been hailed as one of the best picaresque novels in English literature.

pinnacle**noun** /'pɪnəkl/

the highest, most important or successful part of something
He has reached the pinnacle of his career.

pinochle**noun** /'pi:nɒkl/

a card game for two or more players using a 48-card deck
He and his card rivals wore fedoras and smoked and played vicious rounds of pinochle.

piranha**noun** /pɪ'rɑ:nə/

a small South American freshwater fish that attacks and eats live animals

pirouette**noun** /,pɪrə'et/

an act of spinning on one foot
The ballerina's pirouette was flawless in form.

piscivorous**adjective** /pɪ'sɪvərəs/

feeding on fish
The alligator is not completely piscivorous while the aquatic genet is strictly dependent on fish for food.

pituitary**noun** /pɪ'tju:ɪtəri/

a small organ at the base of the brain
The pituitary produces hormones that influence body growth.

pizzazz**noun** /pɪ'zæz/

a lively and exciting quality or style
The new television channel is auditioning young people who have glamour and pizzazz.

placebo**noun** /plə'si:bəʊ/

a dummy medicine given to patients who do not need medicine but think that they do
The doctor gave his patient a placebo and was amused to hear that he had made a complete recovery.

plaque**noun** /plæk/

a flat piece of stone or metal, usually inscribed with a name and dates, attached to a wall in memory of a person or an event
A bronze plaque hung outside the house where the poet was born.

P

15 to 17
age group

plausible

adjective /ˈplɔːzɪbl/

seeming reasonable or probable

The only plausible explanation is that he had forgotten.

Pleiades

noun /ˈpleɪədiːz/

a well-known cluster of stars in the constellation

Taurus, also known as ☐ Seven Sisters ☐

The Pleiades is easily visible to the naked eye in the night sky.

plenipotentiary

noun /ˌplenɪpəˈtenʃəri/

a person who has full powers to take action or make decisions on behalf of their government

The commissioner acting as a plenipotentiary did whatever was necessary to stop the riots.

plethora

noun /ˈpleθərə/

a quantity greater than what is needed or can be used

The report contained a plethora of detail.

plummet

verb /ˈplʌmɪt/

to fall or drop straight down at high speed

The children watched the acrobat plummet into the net.

pneumoconiosis

noun /ˌnjuːməʊkəʊniˈəʊsɪs/

a chronic lung disease caused by the habitual inhalation of irritants

Without proper protection, factory and chemical workers run the risk of developing pneumoconiosis.

pococurante

adjective /ˌpəʊkəʊkjʊˈrænti/

indifferent or unconcerned

The vain lady offended many would-be suitors by responding to their greetings in a pococurante manner.

podzol

noun /ˈpɒdzɒl/

an infertile acidic soil having an ash-like subsurface layer and a lower dark stratum

Podzol is typically found in temperate coniferous woodlands.

polemic

noun /pəˈlemɪk/

a strong verbal or written attack on someone or something

The politician's victory speech was little more than a polemic against the opposition.

poliomyelitis

noun /ˌpəʊliəʊmaɪəˈlaɪtɪs/

an infectious viral disease that affects the central nervous system and can cause paralysis

Poliomyelitis can be prevented through vaccination.

polysyndeton

noun /ˌpɒliˈsɪndɪtən/

the use of several conjunctions or, more commonly, the same conjunction several times, in swift succession

Maya Angelou, an African American female poet, is well known for her use of polysyndeton.

pomposity

noun /pɒmˈpɒsɪti/

the quality of being self-important

Although the speaker had good things to say, we had to laugh at his pomposity.

pompous

adjective /ˈpɒmpəs/

affectedly grand, solemn, or self-important

His speech was delivered in a pompous manner.

positron

noun /ˈpɒzɪtrɒn/

a subatomic particle with the same mass as an

electron and a numerically equal but positive charge

Electrons, positrons, and photons can be separated and isolated at macroscopic distances.

posthumous

adjective /'pɒstjʊməs/
happening after a person has died
The grieving widow received her husband's posthumous award for bravery.

poultice

noun /'pəʊltɪs/
a soft substance spread on a cloth, sometimes heated, and put on the skin to reduce pain or swelling
The doctor advised him to apply a poultice to his swollen arm.

pragmatist

noun /'prægmətɪst/
a person who is guided more by practical considerations than by ideals
Being a pragmatist, he is the best person to call in an emergency.

preciosity

noun /,preʃɪ'ɒsɪti/
excessive refinement in art, music, or language
Many new movements in the arts are a reaction to the preciosity of the preceding style.

precipice

noun /'presɪpɪs/
a very steep side of a high mountain or cliff
Indiana Jones found himself dangling from the edge of the precipice.

preclude

verb /prɪ'kluːd/
to prevent
His appearance for the England A team does not preclude him from playing for Ireland.

precocious

adjective /prɪ'kəʊʃəs/
prematurely developed
He is an extremely precocious child and can read very well.

prestissimo

adverb and adjective /pre'stɪsɪməʊ/
in as fast a tempo as possible
This passage should be played prestissimo.

prevalent

adjective /'prevələnt/
widespread in a particular area or at a particular time
The use of DDT was prevalent in the U.S. before it was banned for health concerns.

prevaricate

verb /prɪ'væɪkət/
to speak or act evasively
It is a well known fact that politicians will prevaricate at news conferences.

primogeniture

noun /,praɪməʊ'dʒenɪtʃə[r]/
the fact of being the first child born in a family
His primogeniture makes him the heir to his father's title.

prion

noun /'prɪːɒn/
a very small unit of protein that is believed to be the cause of brain diseases
The biology teacher explained to us what a prion was.

privation

noun /praɪ'veɪʃn/
a lack of the basic things that people need for living
In his youth he had seen much hunger and privation in Africa.

privy

adjective /'prɪvi/
sharing in the secret of something
He was a member of the privy council.

proclaim

verb /prə'kleɪm/
to make known by public announcement
They dare not proclaim their intentions loudly.

P

15 to 17
age group

prodigious

adjective /prə'dɪdʒəs/

very large or powerful and causing surprise or admiration

Young Mozart's prodigious talents are talked about to this day.

profundity

noun /prə'fʌndɪti/

great depth of insight or knowledge

His ideas lacked profundity and analytical precision.

profusion

noun /prə'fjuːʒn/

a very large quantity of something

Seldom have I seen such a profusion of flowers in one place.

progenitor

noun /prəʊ'dʒenɪtə[r]/

a person or thing from which a person, animal, or plant is descended

He was a progenitor of a distinguished family.

prognathous

adjective /prɒɡ'neɪθəs, 'prɒɡnəθəs/

having a projecting lower jaw or chin

His prognathous face made him appear quite formidable.

prolegomenon

noun /ˌprəʊlɪ'ɡɒmɪnən/

a critical or discursive introduction to a book

Ibn Khuldun is famous for the prolegomenon he wrote for his book on world history.

proletariat

noun /ˌprəʊlɪ'teəriət/

working-class people regarded collectively

The proletariat welcomed the early ideas of communism in Russia.

prolific

adjective /prə'lɪfɪk/

abundantly productive

She was a prolific writer and wrote as many as three books a year.

prologue

noun /'prɒləʒ/

the preface or introduction to a document, poem, or performance

The signing of the agreement was a prologue to better relations between the two countries.

propaganda

noun /ˌprɒpə'gændə/

ideas or statements that are intended as publicity for a particular cause and are often false

The play is sheer political propaganda.

propagate

verb /'prɒpəgeɪt/

to spread something

If we are to live in harmony, we must propagate the idea of peace.

propitious

adjective /prə'pɪʃəs/

likely to produce a successful result

It was not a propitious time to start a new business.

propulsion

adjective /prə'pʌlʃn/

the force that drives something forward

The scientists at NASA are examining alternative spacecraft propulsion concepts.

proscenium

noun /prə'siːniəm/

the part of a theatre stage in front of the curtain

He prefers working in a traditional theatre with a proscenium.

protegee

noun /'prɒtəʒeɪ/

a female who is protected and helped by another
Your boss doesn't have time to make you his protegee, offering step-by-step guidance throughout your tasks.

protrude

verb /prə'truːd/

to extend beyond or above a surface
Something like a fin protruded from the water.

proverbial

adjective /prə'vɜːbiəl/

referred to in a proverb or idiom
I'm going to stick out like the proverbial sore thumb.

proximity

noun /prɒk'sɪmɪti/

immediate nearness
The restaurant benefits from its proximity to several cinemas.

psaltery

noun /'sɔːlt[ə]ri, 'sɒlt[ə]ri/

an ancient and medieval musical instrument like a dulcimer but played by plucking the strings
The double psaltery had two ranks of strings, one on either side of the soundbox.

pterodactyl

noun /ˌtɛrə'dæktɪl/

a pterosaur of the late Jurassic period, with a long slender head and neck and a very short tail

puddle

noun /'pʌdəl/

a small pool of water, especially of rain
The puppies splashed around in the puddle.

pueblo

noun /'pwebləʊ/

a town or village in Spain, Latin America, or the south-western US, especially an American Indian settlement
The pueblo was far from any major roads and did not receive many visitors.

punctilious

adjective /pʌŋk'tɪliəs/

showing great attention to detail or correct behaviour
She is a punctilious hostess.

purlieu

noun /'pɜːljʊː/

the area near or surrounding a place
The purlieu of the castle had a clean atmosphere.

pusillanimous

adjective /ˌpjuːsɪ'lænɪməs/

showing a lack of courage or determination
It is a pusillanimous act to leave a friend behind to face danger alone.

putative

adjective /'pjʊ:tətɪv/

generally considered or reputed to be
The court was shown the putative weapon used in the murder.

pyromaniac

noun /ˌpaɪrəʊ'meɪniæk/

a person who enjoys making or watching fires
The detectives searched the area for the pyromaniac who had set the building on fire.

pyrrhic

adjective /'pɪrɪk/

won at too great a cost to have been worthwhile for the victor
The reoccupation of the territory was seen as a pyrrhic victory.

Q

15 to 17
age group

quadriceps

noun /'kwɒdrɪseps/
the great extensor muscle of the knee
The athlete injured his quadriceps.

quadripartite

adjective /'kwɒdrɪ'pɑːtɪt/
divided into four parts
The quadripartite painting was quite unusual.

quadriplegia

noun /'kwɒdrɪ'pliːdʒə/
paralysis of all four limbs
Quadriplegia occurs when the neck area of the spinal cord is injured.

quaff

verb /kwɒf/
to drink a large amount of something quickly
I saw him quaff a whole jug of lemonade when he came back from the gym.

quandary

noun /'kwɒndəri/
a state of difficulty or perplexity
Hassan was in a quandary about whether or not he should go to Lahore.

quartz

noun /kwɔːts/
a hard mineral, often in crystal form, that is used to make very accurate clocks and watches
He had collected hundreds of specimens of quartz from around the world.

quassia

noun /'kwɒʃə, 'kwɒʃiə, 'kwæsiə/
a drug from the heartwood and bark of various tropical trees of the ailanthus family
Quassia is used as a bitter tonic and remedy for roundworms in children and as an insecticide.

quatorzain

noun /'kætəzeɪn/
a fourteen line poem, especially an irregular sonnet
Our homework is to compose a quatorzain.

queasy

adjective /'kwɪːzi/
wanting to vomit
He had a queasy stomach and kept throwing up.

quebracho

noun /keɪ'brɑːtʃəʊ/
a South American tree whose timber and bark are a rich source of tannin
The red quebracho grows only in the jungles of the Gran Chaco along the banks of the Paraguay River.

quell

verb /kwel/
to put an end to a rebellion or other disorder, typically by the use of force
Extra police were called to quell the disturbance.

quern

noun /kwɜːn/
a simple hand mill for grinding corn, typically consisting of two circular stones
The flour was ground using a quern.

quiche

noun /kiːʃ/
an open pie filled with a mixture of eggs and milk with meat, vegetables, and cheese
My mother made me a delicious quiche for lunch.

quiddity

noun /'kwɪdɪti/
the essential nature of a person or thing
His generous quiddity has won him many friends.

quiescent

adjective /kwɪ'esnt/
being in a state of repose
Sometimes one longs for a quiescent mind.

quinone

noun /kwɪ'nəʊn, 'kwɪnəʊn/
a yellow crystalline compound related to benzene but having two hydrogen atoms replaced by oxygen
The chemical compound quinone is a ring phenolic compound.

quinquagenarian

noun /ˌkwɪŋkwədʒɪˈneəriən/

a person who is between 50 and 59 years old
“Who was the first quinquagenarian voted into office?” Ahmed asked.

quirk

noun /kwɜːk/

an aspect of somebody’s personality or behaviour that is a little strange
His insistence on eating a banana from the wrong end is an endearing quirk.

quodlibet

noun /ˈkwɒdlɪbet/

a light-hearted medley of well-known tunes
The concert ended with a quodlibet of popular songs.

quoits

noun /kɔɪts, kwɔɪts/

a game in which rings are thrown over pegs in the ground
She played quoits at the carnival.

rabbi**noun** /ˈræbaɪ/

a Jewish title of respect or honour for a teacher or doctor of the law

The rabbi delivered the sermon, and everyone listened attentively.

raceme**noun** /ˈræsi:m, rəˈsi:m/

A flower cluster with the separate flowers attached by short equal stalks at equal distances along a central stem.

The small, pale violet flowers of the plant are produced on an elongated terminal raceme.

raconteur**noun** /ˌrækɒnˈtɜ:/

a person who tells anecdotes in a skilful and amusing way

He is very popular at dinner parties because he is such a skilled raconteur.

ragout**noun** /ræˈgu:/

a richly seasoned stew of meat or poultry and vegetables

Everyone savoured the delicious ragout of duck with mushrooms and truffles.

rampant**adjective** /ˈræmpənt/

existing or spreading in an uncontrolled way

Most of Africa is plagued with rampant unemployment.

rancid**adjective** /ˈrænsɪd/

smelling or tasting unpleasant as a result of being old and stale

I got rid of the rancid butter stored in the refrigerator.

rapport**noun** /ræˈpɔ:[r]/

a friendly relationship in which people understand each other well

The teacher had a good rapport with his students.

rapt**adjective** /ræpt/

so absorbed in one particular thing that you are not aware of anything else

They listened to the music with rapt attention.

ratchet**noun** /ˈrætʃɪt/

a wheel or bar with teeth along the edge and a metal piece that fits between the teeth, allowing movement in one direction only

His watch wasn't working because a ratchet had broken loose.

rationale**noun** /ˌræʃəˈneɪl/

a set of reasons or a logical basis for a course of action or belief

What is the rationale behind this decision?

raucous**adjective** /ˈrɔ:kəs/

sounding loud and harsh

Raucous laughter could be heard from the club down the street.

ravenous**adjective** /ˈrævənəs/

extremely hungry

Ali hogged all the food like a ravenous beast.

ravine**noun** /rəˈvi:n/

a deep, narrow gorge or valley

The ravine was so deep and dark that we could not see the bottom.

ravioli**plural noun** /ˌrævɪˈəʊli/

small pasta envelopes containing minced meat, fish, cheese, or vegetables, usually served with a sauce

In Italy, most regions have their own version of ravioli.

reams

plural noun /rɪˈmz/

a large quantity of something, especially paper or writing

Reams of notes were haphazardly stacked around the office.

recede

verb /rɪˈsiːd/

to move gradually away from somebody or away from a previous position

It is sad, but memories of childhood tend to recede as time goes by.

recherchØ

adjective /rəˈʃeəʃeɪ/

rare, exotic, or obscure

Some of the linguistic terms are perhaps a bit recherché for the average readership.

recipient

noun /rɪˈsɪpiənt/

a person or thing that receives something

The doctor is a recipient of many awards.

recitative

noun /ˌresɪtəˈtɪv/

a passage in an opera or oratorio that is sung in the rhythm of ordinary speech with many words on the same note

In an opera, most of the action and dialogue happens during the recitative.

recrimination

noun /rɪˌkrɪmɪˈneɪʃn/

an accusation in response to one from someone else

The politicians descended to recrimination during the debate.

rectitude

noun /ˈrektɪtjuːd/

correct and honest behaviour

He was a man known and appreciated for his rectitude.

redemption

noun /rɪˈdempʃn/

the state of being saved from evil

She prayed regularly for her redemption.

reek

verb /riːk/

to smell strongly and unpleasantly

One would expect that the nurse's office would reek of iodine and disinfectant.

refraction

noun /rɪˈfrækʃn/

the phenomenon of waves being deflected in passing obliquely through the interface between one medium and another or through a medium of varying density

When you look at a stick inserted in water, it looks bent because of the refraction of light.

reggae

noun /ˈregeɪ/

a type of West Indian popular music with a strong rhythm

Bob Marley is considered the father of reggae.

rejuvenate

verb /rɪˈdʒuːvəneɪt/

to make somebody or something feel or look younger

The magician claimed that his potion would rejuvenate the aged.

remanent

adjective /ˈremənənt/

remaining after the magnetizing field has been removed

Remanent magnetization is necessary for transformers, electric motors, and generators.

reminiscence

noun /ˌremɪˈnɪsnz/

a story told about a past event remembered by the narrator

We listened to the old lady's reminiscence of the time she met her husband.

R

15 to 17
age group

remonstrate

verb /'remənstreɪt/

to make a forcefully reproachful protest
He turned angrily to remonstrate with Tommy.

renegade

noun /'renɪgeɪd/

a person who deserts and betrays an organization, country, or set of principles
In his youth he was a bit of a renegade and was frequently in trouble with the police.

repertoire

noun /'repətwa:ʃ[r]/

all the plays, songs, or pieces of music that a performer knows and can perform
The opera company decided to include Madame Butterfly in its repertoire.

reprimand

verb /'reprɪmɑ:nd/

to tell somebody officially that you do not approve of them or their actions
The principal had to reprimand the student for disrupting class.

repugnance

noun /rɪ'pʌgnəns/

a strong feeling of disgust
She looked at the dead snake with repugnance.

rescind

verb /rɪ'sɪnd/

to revoke, cancel, or repeal a law, order, or agreement
The government threatened to rescind the treaty if the terms were not met.

resuscitate

verb /rɪ'sʌsɪteɪt/

to make somebody start breathing again or become conscious again after they have almost died
The lifeguard was able to resuscitate the unconscious child.

reticence

noun /'retɪsn̩s/

the quality of being reserved
She did not mind her husband's reticence.

revere

verb /rɪ'vɪə[r]/

to feel great respect or admiration for somebody
We should revere Mother Nature and do our best to stop global warming.

Rhadamanthine

adjective /ˌrædə'mænθaɪn/

showing stern and inflexible judgement
The employees knew better than to cross their Rhadamanthine boss.

rheme

noun /rɪ:m/

the part of a sentence or clause that adds new information to what the reader or audience already knows
In the grammar class, the teacher discussed how information is conveyed in clauses using 'theme' and 'rheme'.

rheumatism

noun /'ru:mətɪzəm/

a disease that makes the muscles and joints painful, stiff and swollen
She was advised not to walk on cold floors as she was suffering from rheumatism.

rhinencephalon

noun /ˌraɪnɪnsə'fælɒn/

the part of the brain concerned with the sense of smell
The lab mice were exposed to a virus that affected the anterior rhinencephalon.

rhizogenic

adjective /ˌraɪzəʊ'dʒenɪk/

producing roots
Moss and liverwort are rhizogenic plants.

rhizome

noun /ˈraɪzəm/

the thick stem of some plants that grows along or under the ground and has roots and stems growing from it

Our botany teacher taught us the characteristics of a rhizome.

rhodopsin

noun /ˈrɒdɒpsɪn/

a purple pigment in the retina that is needed for vision

Rhodopsin is a pigment in the eyes which is needed for black and white vision.

rhombohedron

noun /ˌrɒmbəʊˈhiːdrən/

a solid figure whose faces are six equal rhombuses
The art students made a rhombohedron using clay and wire.

rhyolite

noun /ˈraɪələɪt/

a volcanic rock of granitic composition

Rhyolite mainly occurs in continental and submarine volcanoes.

ribosome

noun /ˈraɪbəˌsəʊm/

any of numerous minute particles in the cytoplasm of cells

In 1955, George Palade, a cell biologist, discovered the ribosome and identified its function as making proteins.

rickettsia

noun /rɪˈkɛtsɪə/

any of a group of very small bacteria that includes the causative agents of typhus and other febrile diseases
Rickettsia is transmitted to humans by lice, fleas, ticks, and mites.

ricochet

verb /ˈrɪkəʃeɪ/

to rebound off a surface

It's funny how bullets never seem to ricochet in action films.

rigadoon

noun /ˌrɪɡəˈduːn/

a once popular lively dance for one couple, with a jumping step

The rigadoon became popular as a court dance during the reign of Louis the 14th.

rigorous

adjective /ˈrɪɡərəs/

careful and with a lot of attention to detail

The company conducts rigorous testing of consumer products.

riotous

adjective /ˈraɪətəs/

noisy or violent especially in a public place

The organisers of the march were charged with assault and riotous assembly.

risqué

adjective /rɪˈskeɪ/

slightly indecent and liable to shock

The risqué ice-cream commercial was taken off the air by the censor board.

rivulet

noun /ˈrɪvjʊlɪt/

a small stream of water or another liquid

A rivulet of sweat ran down her back.

rogue

noun /rəʊɡ/

a dishonest or unprincipled man

You are a rogue and an embezzler.

rotogravure

noun /ˌrəʊtəʊɡrəˈvjuː/

a printing system, using a rotary press, that runs at high speeds

Rotogravure is used for long print runs of magazines and stamps.

R

15 to 17
age group

rudder

noun /ˈrʌdə[r]/

a flat piece hinged vertically near the stern of a boat or ship for steering

The rudder was too small to effectively steer the large ship.

rumpus

noun /ˈrʌmpəs/

a noisy, confused, or disruptive commotion

He caused a rumpus with his flair for troublemaking.

rusticate

verb /ˈrʌstikeɪt/

to suspend a student from a university as a punishment, used chiefly at Oxford and Cambridge

The dean threatened to rusticate the student if he did not improve his grades.

rutilant

adjective /ˈruːtɪlənt/

glowing or glittering with red or golden light

The rutilant gems in her neckalce went very well with her gold dress.

sabbatical

noun /sə'batɪkl/

a period of time when somebody, especially a teacher at a university, is allowed to stop their normal work in order to study or travel
He has taken a sabbatical for one year to live and do research in Jordan.

sacculus

noun /'sækjʊləs/

the smaller of the two fluid-filled sacs forming part of the labyrinth of the inner ear
The sacculus sends signals to the brain concerning the orientation of the head.

sacerdotal

adjective /ˌsæsə'dəʊtl/

relating to priests
He pledged allegiance to the sacerdotal authority.

sachet

noun /'sæʃet/

a closed plastic or paper packet that contains a very small amount of a powder or liquid
When we opened our take-away burgers, we realised that they had only given us one sachet of sauce.

sacrosanct

adjective /'sækrəsæŋkt/

regarded as too important or valuable to be interfered with
Their father's dying wishes were considered sacrosanct by all the family.

sagacious

adjective /sə'geɪʃəs/

having or showing keen mental discernment and good judgement
I was impressed by her sagacious decision.

salubrious

adjective /sə'lu:briəs/

healthy
The growing pollution in the city has caused many people to move to a more salubrious area.

salutary

adjective /'sæljʊtəri/

beneficial, especially with reference to something unwelcome or unpleasant
The teen's punishment had a salutary effect on his younger brother.

sanctimonious

adjective /ˌsæŋktɪ'məʊniəs/

making a show of being morally superior to other people
Her colleagues resented her sanctimonious lectures.

sangfroid

noun /sɒ'frwaɪ/

composure or coolness shown in danger or under trying circumstances
He displayed remarkable sangfroid when everyone else was panicking during the crisis.

sanguine

adjective /'sæŋɡwɪn/

cheerful and confident about the future
He takes a more sanguine view of the future than most analysts.

saprophagous

adjective /sə'prɒfəɡəs/

feeding on or obtaining nourishment from decaying organic matter
Dead bodies of plants and animals are a rich source of organic matter for saprophagous insects.

saprophyte

noun /'sæprəʊfaɪt/

a plant, fungus, or microorganism that lives on dead or decaying organic matter
A mushroom is a type of saprophyte.

Saracen

noun /'særəs[ə]n/

an Arab or Muslim, especially at the time of the Crusades
The historical video game allows the player to fight as a Saracen or a Crusader.

S

15 to 17
age group

sarcasm

noun /'sɑ:kæzəm/

the use of irony to mock or convey contempt
She had a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

sarcophagus

noun /sɑ:'kɒfəgəs/

a stone coffin
Many people visited the display of the sarcophagus in the museum.

sardonic

adjective /sɑ:'dɒnɪk/

grimly mocking or cynical
There was a sardonic vein running through her otherwise humorous article.

sarmentose

adjective /sɑ:'mentəs/

having stems in the form of runners
Strawberry is a typical example of a sarmentose plant.

sarsaparilla

noun /,sɑ:səpə'ri:lə/

a preparation of the dried rhizomes of various plants used to flavor some drinks and medicines
I have yet to try a drink made with sarsaparilla.

sartorial

adjective /sɑ:'tɔ:riəl/

relating to tailoring, clothes, or style of dress
He was famous for his sartorial elegance.

Sasquatch

noun /'sæskwætʃ, 'sæskwɒtʃ/

a large, hairy apelike creature supposedly found in Northwest America, also called Bigfoot
Most scientists discount the existence of Bigfoot or Sasquatch.

sassafras

noun /'sæsəfræs/

An American tree with pleasant-smelling leaves and bark.
The leaves of sassafras are sometimes used to make a type of tea.

satellite

noun /'sætələɪt/

an electronic device that is sent into space and moves around the Earth or another planet
The spy satellite was finally launched by the government.

saturate

verb /'sætʃəreɪt/

to cause to become thoroughly soaked with water or other liquid so that no more can be absorbed
It is never a good thing to saturate the soil around a plant.

satyagraha

noun /sə'tjɑ:grəhɑ:/

a policy of passive political resistance, especially that advocated by Mahatma Gandhi against British rule in India
Gandhi envisioned satyagraha as a universal solvent for injustice and harm.

satyr

noun /'sætə[r]/

a mythological god of the woods, with a man's face and body and a goat's legs and horns
You will find mention of a satyr in the children's book: 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'.

sauerbraten

noun /'sauəbrætən/

a dish of German origin consisting of beef marinated in vinegar with peppercorns, onions, and other seasonings before cooking
The sauerbraten at the restaurant was well marinated.

sauerkraut

noun /'sauəkraʊt/

a German dish of chopped pickled cabbage
I made three batches of sauerkraut from two heads of purple cabbage.

saunter

verb /'saʊntə[r]/

to walk in a slow, relaxed manner
The ladies used to saunter in the park every day.

sawyer

noun /'sɔːjər/
a person who saws timber for a living
He earns his living as a sawyer.

saxophone

noun /'sæksəfəʊn/
a member of a family of metal wind instruments with a reed like that of a clarinet, used especially in jazz and dance music
Brass is normally used to make the body of a saxophone.

scabrous

adjective /'skeɪbrəs, 'skæbrəs/
rough and covered with, or as if with, scabs
The lizard has scabrous skin.

scapula

noun /'skæpjʊlə/
the shoulder blade
Adam fractured his scapula while playing football.

scarab

noun /'skærəb/
a large black beetle regarded as sacred by the ancient Egyptians

sceptre

noun /'septə[r]/
a decorated rod carried by a king or queen at ceremonies as a symbol of their power
You can see the queen's sceptre and orb if you visit the Tower of London.

Schadenfreude

noun /'ʃɑːdənfroɪdə/
pleasure derived by someone from another person's misfortune
I tried to suppress the feeling of Schadenfreude when I saw my rival suffering.

schematic

adjective /ski:'mætɪk/
referring to a diagram or other representation which is symbolic and simplified
I couldn't understand the symbols used on the schematic diagram.

scherzando

adverb and adjective /skeə'tsændəʊ/
to be performed in a playful manner
My teacher asked me to play scherzando.

schist

noun /ʃɪst/
a type of rock formed of layers of different minerals, that breaks naturally into thin flat pieces
Mica schist can be broken into flakes or ground into a glittery powder.

schmaltz

noun /ʃmɔːlts, ʃmæltz/
the quality of being too sentimental
At the end of the movie, we drown in a sea of schmaltz.

schmo

noun /ʃməʊ/
a stupid person
That boy is such a schmo.

schottische

noun /ʃɒ'tiːʃ/
a 19th-century German dance resembling a slow polka
The schottische was popular in Victorian era ballrooms as a part of the Bohemian folk-dance craze.

scimitar

noun /'sɪmɪtəl/
a short sword with a curved blade that broadens towards the point
The Turkish palace guard carried a scimitar.

S

15 to 17
age group

scintilla

noun /sɪn'tɪlə/

a tiny trace or spark of a specified quality or feeling
There is not a scintilla of doubt in my mind that he is guilty of the crime.

scour

verb /'skaʊə[r]/

to clean something by rubbing its surface with rough material
I had to scour the pans.

screed

noun /skri:d/

a long piece of writing, especially one that is not very interesting
It took me three hours to read through the screed that Aisha had sent me.

scrofula

noun /'skrɒfjələ/

a disease in which the glands swell, probably a form of tuberculosis
The doctor suspected that the patient was suffering from scrofula.

scrophulariaceous

adjective /'skrɒfjʊləəri'eɪʃəs/

pertaining to the figwort family of plants, Scrophulariaceae
Scrophulariaceous plants thrive best in moist environments.

scrupulous

adjective /'skru:pjʊləs/

careful, thorough, and extremely attentive to details
Readers commend the author for his scrupulous attention to detail.

scurrilous

adjective /'skʌrɪləs/

making or spreading scandalous claims about someone with the intention of damaging their reputation
He wrote a scurrilous piece about me in the local press.

scythe

noun /saɪð/

a tool with a long handle and a slightly curved blade, used for cutting long grass and wheat
Peasants still cut the harvest with a scythe.

secant

adjective /'si:kənt/

the ratio of the hypotenuse to the shorter side adjacent to an acute angle in a right triangle
The secant of an angle is the reciprocal of the cosine of the same angle.

secession

noun /sɪ'seʃn/

the formal withdrawal of membership of a group
Before the American Civil War, the southern states declared their secession from the union.

secrecy

noun /'si:krisi/

the state or quality of being hidden
The whole affair is still shrouded in secrecy.

secrete

verb /sɪ'kri:t/

to produce and discharge a substance
Bees secrete wax from glands.

sectarian

adjective /sek'teəriən/

connected with the differences that exist between groups of people who have different religious views
Sectarian violence is bad for society.

sedulous

adjective /'sedjʊləs/

showing dedication and diligence
She pays sedulous attention to detail.

segue

noun /'segweɪ/

an uninterrupted transition from one piece of music or film scene to another
The segue between the two scenes was skilfully managed.

seguidilla

noun /ˌseɡɪ'diːljə/
a Spanish dance in triple time
The seguidilla is performed in pairs with animated footwork.

seigniorage

noun /ˈseɪnjəriːdʒ/
the profit made by a government by issuing currency, especially the difference between the face value of coins and their production costs
The issuer of the key currency can collect seigniorage.

seismicity

noun /saɪz'mɪsɪti/
the frequency of earthquakes in a region
I do not want to live in San Francisco, due to the high seismicity of the area.

semanticist

noun /sɪ'mæntɪsɪst/
one who is a specialist in the study of meanings of words and phrases
The school invited a semanticist to conduct a workshop for the English language teachers.

semaphore

noun /ˈseməfəʊ[r]/
an apparatus for giving signals by the disposition of lanterns, flags, or oscillating arms
The soldiers communicated amongst each other using semaphore.

seminary

noun /ˈseminəri/
a college where priests, ministers or rabbis are trained
My brother joined the seminary because he wants to become a priest.

seneschal

noun /ˈsenəʃəl/
an officer having full charge of domestic arrangements
The nobleman rewarded the seneschal for arranging a magnificent feast.

sensory

adjective /ˈsensəri/
connected with your physical senses
He was diagnosed with an illness which would affect his sensory organs.

sensuous

adjective /ˈsensʊəs/
relating to or affecting the senses rather than the intellect
I'm drawn to the poetic, sensuous qualities of her paintings.

sequacious

adjective /sɪˈkweɪʃəs/
lacking independence or originality of thought
Her sequacious routine sounds very boring.

sequoia

noun /sɪˈkwɔɪə/
a very tall North American tree
The giant sequoia is said to be the oldest and most massive of all living things.

serendipity

noun /ˌserənˈdɪpɪti/
the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way
Many scientific discoveries were made by a stroke of serendipity.

serene

adjective /səˈriːn/
calm and peaceful
Serene music was playing in the background as they had their dinner on a yacht.

sesquicentennial

noun /ˌseskwɪsenˈtenɪəl/
relating to the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of a significant event
The city celebrated its sesquicentennial last year.

S

15 to 17
age group

sesquipedalian

adjective /ˌsɛskwɪpɪˈdeɪliən/

having many syllables

The use of sesquipedalian terms by the orator made the speech difficult to understand.

sewerage

noun /ˈsuːərɪdʒ/

the system by which waste water is carried away from houses and factories

The sewerage was totally blocked during the rainy season.

sforzando

adjective /sfɔːˈtsʌːndəʊ/

to be played with a strong initial attack

The last sforzando note echoed through the hall.

shalloon

noun /ʃælˈluːn/

a twilled woolen fabric used largely for linings

The jacket was very warm as it was lined with shalloon.

sharecropper

noun /ˈʃeəkrɒpə[r]/

a tenant farmer who receives an agreed share of the value of the crop

The sharecropper was cheated out of his due share of the crop.

shellac

noun /ʃəlˈæk/

lac resin melted into thin flakes, used for making varnish

He has business interests in the shellac industry.

shibboleth

noun /ˈʃɪbəlθ/

an old idea, principle or phrase that is no longer accepted by many people as important or appropriate to modern life

Elderly politicians are still clinging to more than one shibboleth of party doctrine.

shoddy

adjective /ˈʃɒdi/

of poor quality or imitating something of better quality
The painting was a shoddy imitation of the original.

shrapnel

noun /ˈʃræpnəl/

small pieces of metal that are thrown outwards from an exploding bomb

The doctor removed the tiny piece of shrapnel from my shoulder with great difficulty.

sibilant

adjective /ˈsɪbɪlənt/

making a hissing sound

The room was filled with the sibilant sound of whispering.

sibylline

adjective /ˈsɪbɪlɪn/

mysterious and difficult to understand

I failed to understand the sibylline verses of the ancient text.

sievert

noun /ˈsiːvə[r]t/

a unit for measuring the biological effect of ionizing radiation

The sievert is an important unit for monitoring radiation poisoning from nuclear reactors.

signorina

noun /ˌsiːnjəˈriːnə/

a title or form of address used for an Italian-speaking unmarried woman

We thanked the signorina for guiding us to the Sistine Chapel.

silhouette

noun /ˌsɪləˈet/

the outlines of an object filled in with a black colour

I saw the silhouette of a man against the evening sky.

silicate

noun /'sɪlɪkɪt, 'sɪlɪkət/
a salt in which the anion contains both silicon and oxygen
Silicate constitutes a large proportion of the earth's minerals and is present in cement and glass.

silviculture

noun /'sɪlvɪkʌltʃə/
the growing and cultivation of trees
Silviculture should be practised in order to maintain the balance in our ecosystem.

simulate

verb /'sɪmjʊleɪt/
to imitate the appearance or character of
Movie producers have found it difficult to simulate blood.

sinfonietta

noun /ˌsɪnfəʊni'etə/
a short or simple symphony
The audience was enthralled by the French composer's new sinfonia.

sinister

adjective /'sɪnɪstə[r]/
seeming evil or dangerous
The sinister man lurking outside the house turned out to be the gas meter reader.

sinuous

adjective /'sɪnjuəs/
having many curves and turns
We could see the sinuous path of the river in the valley below.

siree

exclamation /sə'ri:/
used for emphasis, especially after □yes□ α□m□
He's not going to do it, no siree!

sirius

noun /'sɪriəs/
the brightest star in the sky
Sirius is also known as the 'Dog star'.

sirocco

noun /sɪ'rɒkəʊ/
a hot wind that blows from Africa into southern Europe
After a long winter, Europeans enjoyed the sirocco.

Sisyphean

adjective /ˌsɪsɪ'fi:ən/
denoting a task that can never be completed
It was a Sisyphean task of epic proportions that defied a normal life expectancy.

situs

noun /'sɪtəs/
a position or location, especially the usual or right position of an organ or part of the body
The doctor was satisfied with the situs of the kidney after the transplant operation.

sitzkrieg

noun /'zɪtskri:g, 'sɪtskri:g/
a war, or a phase of a war, in which there is little or no active warfare
The most striking was the fact that World War II began with a bang followed by eight months of sitzkrieg before the Battle of France.

skein

noun /skeɪn/
a length of thread or yarn, loosely coiled and knotted
He just added one skein of yarn while making the inventory.

skeuomorph

noun /'skju:əʊ,mɔ:f/
an object or feature which imitates the design of a similar artifact made from another material
Many computer apps use a skeuomorph to represent the physical object they are meant to replace.

skulk

verb /skʌlk/
to keep out of sight, typically with a sinister or cowardly motive
He told her not to skulk outside the door like a spy.

S

15 to 17
age group

slaughter

noun /'slɔ:tə[r]/

to kill for food or in a cruel or violent way
I was shocked at the wide spread slaughter of innocent civilians.

sleuth

noun /'slu:θ/

a person who investigates crimes
I hired an amateur sleuth to work on the case.

slither

verb /'slɪðə[r]/

to move smoothly over a surface with a twisting or oscillating motion
The snake would slither through the garden.

sludge

noun /slʌdʒ/

thick, soft, wet mud or a similar mixture of liquid and solid components
There was some sludge at the bottom of the tank.

snobbery

noun /'snɒbəri/

the attitudes and behaviour of people who despise others for being socially inferior
There is still a great deal of snobbery in our society.

snuggle

verb /'snʌɡəl/

to settle or move into a warm, comfortable position
She would snuggle with her teddy bear while sleeping.

sobriety

noun /səʊ'braɪəti/

the quality of refraining from excess
He was a man noted for sobriety.

sobriquet

noun /'səʊbrɪkeɪ/

a person's nickname
"Mevlana" is the sobriquet given to Maulana Rumi by the Turks.

sojourn

noun /'sɒdʒɜ:n/

living in a place as a temporary resident
She was planning a summer sojourn abroad.

solfatara

noun /,sɒlfə'ta:rə/

a volcanic crater emitting sulfurous and other gases
The area close to a solfatara is not fit for vegetation.

solicitude

noun /sə'lɪsɪtju:d/

care or concern for someone or something
I was touched by his solicitude for the boy.

solstice

noun /'sɒlstɪs/

either of the two times of the year at which the sun reaches its highest or lowest point in the sky at midday, marked by the longest and shortest days
The children eagerly awaited the summer solstice.

sombre

adjective /'sɒmbə[r]/

dark, dull or gloomy
I hate wearing sombre colours, especially in summer.

sombrero

noun /sɒm'breərəʊ/

a felt or straw hat with a wide brim, typically worn in Mexico
The sombrero provided protection from the blazing sun.

somersault

noun /'sʌməsɒlt/

an acrobatic movement in which a person turns head over heels in the air or on the ground and lands or finishes on their feet
The acrobat's somersault amazed the audience.

somnambulate

verb /sɒm'næmbjuleɪt/

to sleep-walk
There are many theories as to why some people tend to somnambulate.

sopping

adjective /'sɒpɪŋ/

saturated with liquid

His clothes were sopping from the rain.

soprano

noun /sə'prɑ:nəʊ/

the highest singing voice

The main female role in the opera was sung by a soprano.

sordid

adjective /'sɔ:dɪd/

involving immoral or dishonourable actions and motives

I don't want to know all the sordid details.

sorghum

noun /'sɔ:gəm/

a cereal which is native to warm regions of the Old World and is a major source of grain and stockfeed
Making syrup from sorghum is labour intensive.

sortilege

noun /'sɔ:tɪlɪdʒ/

the practice of foretelling the future from a card or other item drawn at random from a collection
The villagers thought the woman was a witch and had used sortilege to deceive them.

sostenuto

adjective /,sɒstə'nu:təʊ/

to be played in a sustained or prolonged manner

The adagio sostenuto made a powerful impression on many listeners.

soubrette

noun /su:'bret/

an actress or other female performer playing a lively, flirtatious role in a play or opera

The soubrette of the piece, Musetta, is supposed to offer comic relief to the central tragic affair.

spasmodic

adjective /spæz'mɒdɪk/

occurring or done in brief, irregular bursts

Spasmodic fighting continued even after the cease-fire took effect.

spatter

verb /'spætə/

to cover with drops or spots of something

Be careful, the car radiator might spatter boiling water on you.

spectator

noun /spek'tetə[r]/

one who is personally present at, and sees, any event or activity

He went to the match as a spectator.

spectre

noun /'spektə/

a ghost

The spectre of the eccentric millionaire was rumoured to haunt the old mansion.

sphagnum

noun /'sfæɡnəm/

a plant of a genus that comprises the peat mosses

Sphagnum is often used to improve soil conditions.

spinster

noun /'spɪnstə[r]/

an unmarried woman, typically one past the common age for marrying

His spinster aunt left him a large fortune in her will.

splice

verb /splaɪs/

to join or connect a rope or ropes by interweaving the strands at the ends

I learned how to splice rope while camping.

spoliation

noun /,spəʊlɪ'eɪʃən/

the action of ruining or destroying something

The spoliation of the natural environment must be stopped.

S

15 to 17
age group

spondylitic

adjective /ˌspɒndɪˈlɪtɪk/

affected with inflammation of the joints of the backbone

He suffered from a spondylitic illness that hampered his mobility.

spontaneity

noun /ˌspɒntəˈneɪti/

the state or quality of being unplanned or unarranged

The audience loved the spontaneity of the performance by the leading actress.

sputum

noun /ˈspjuːtəm/

liquid from the throat or lungs, especially when it is coughed up because of disease

There was blood in his sputum.

squall

noun /ˈskwɔːl/

a sudden violent gust of wind often attended with rain or snow

A sudden squall blew our boat off course.

squander

verb /ˈskwɒndə[r]/

to waste money or time in a stupid or careless way

He was tempted to squander his first salary on a DVD player.

squawk

noun /ˈskwɔːk/

a loud harsh cry

A loud squawk was heard when the cat attacked the crow.

squeamish

adjective /ˈskwiːmɪʃ/

easily upset, or made to feel sick by unpleasant sights or situations

I wouldn't recommend this movie to squeamish people.

stagnant

adjective /ˈstæɡnənt/

having no current or flow and often having an unpleasant smell as a result

Stagnant water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

stalemate

noun /ˈsteɪlmeɪt/

a disagreement or a situation in a competition in which neither side is able to win or make any progress

The chess match ended in a stalemate.

staphylococcus

noun /ˌstæfɪləʊˈkɒkəs/

a type of bacteria that can cause infections

Staphylococcus causes boils, septicaemia, and other infections.

statuary

noun /ˈstætʃʊəri, ˈstætjʊəri/

statues

He has an impressive collection of marble statuary in his drawing room.

stature

noun /ˈstætʃə[r]/

a person's natural height

He was a man of short stature.

steeple

noun /ˈstiːpl/

a tall pointed tower on the roof of a church, often with a spire on it

The steeple of the old church collapsed during the storm.

stellar

adjective /ˈstelə[r]/

connected with the stars

He is studying stellar constellations.

stevedore

noun /ˈstiːvədəː[r]/

a person whose job is moving goods on and off ships

The stevedore nimbly avoided being hit by the crane.

stigmatize

verb /'stigmətaɪz/

to describe or regard as worthy of disgrace or great disapproval

As a teacher, I make an effort never to stigmatize a student as a failure.

stiletto

noun /sti'letəʊ/

a kind of dagger with a slender, pointed blade
The youth was arrested for carrying a stiletto.

stirrup

noun /'stɪrəp/

a shaped piece of metal, wood or leather attached by a strap to the saddle, used to assist a person in mounting a horse
Put your foot in the stirrup.

stochastic

adjective /stə'kæstɪk/

having a random probability distribution or pattern that may be analysed statistically but may not be predicted precisely
A stochastic analysis is frequently used to predict future prices in the stock market.

stodgy

adjective /'stɒdʒi/

describing food that is heavy, filling, and high in carbohydrates
I try to avoid the stodgy pudding that my aunt makes.

stoichiometry

noun /ˌstɔɪki'ɒmɪtri/

the branch of chemistry concerned with the proportions in which elements are combined in compounds and the quantitative relationships between reactants and products in chemical reactions
The relative stoichiometry of the different sequence copies in the parental lines was also studied by the scientist.

strenuous

adjective /'strenjuəs/

requiring or using great effort or exertion
Every day he does an hour of strenuous exercise.

strident

adjective /'straɪdnt/

loud and harsh in sound

I don't like the strident manner in which he scolds his servants.

strychnine

noun /'stri:kni:n/

a poisonous substance used in very small amounts as a medicine
Many murderers in the past used strychnine as the poison of choice.

stucco

noun /'stʌkəʊ/

plaster of any kind used as a coating for walls
The stucco was damaged by the heavy rains.

stultifying

adjective /'stʌltɪfaɪɪŋ/

rendering ineffective
I have to get away from the stultifying boredom of this job.

stumpage

noun /'stʌmpɪdʒ/

timber in standing trees, often sold without the land at a fixed price per tree or per stump
Stumpage is hard to check and causes numerous ecological problems.

sturgeon

noun /'stɜːdʒən/

a very large primitive fish with bony plates on the body, commercially important for its caviar and flesh

Stygian

adjective /'stɪdʒiən/

very dark
They couldn't see much in the Stygian crypt.

subcutaneous

adjective /ˌsʌbkjuː'teɪniəs/

situated or applied under the skin
The subcutaneous injection was rather painful.

subliminal**adjective** /ˌsʌbˈlɪmɪnəl/

affecting your mind even when you are not aware of it
The effect of subliminal advertising is more powerful than most people realise.

submersible**adjective** /səbˈmɜːsɪbl/

designed to operate while submerged
A bathysphere is a large, strong submersible sphere used for deep sea observations.

substrate**noun** /ˈsʌbstreɪt/

the base on which an organism lives
Soil is the substrate of most seed plants.

subversive**adjective** /səbˈvɜːsɪv/

seeking to undermine an established system or authority
The police discovered that subversive literature was being distributed at night by a network of volunteers.

succedaneum**noun** /ˌsʌksɪˈdeɪniəm/

a substitute, especially for a medicine or drug
The doctor prescribed a succedaneum in case he had a reaction to the first drug.

succession**noun** /səkˈseʃn/

a following of one after another
The three explosions took place in quick succession.

succinct**adjective** /səkˈsɪŋkt/

expressed briefly and clearly
The students were asked to give succinct answers.

suffice**verb** /səˈfaɪs/

to be enough, or sufficient
One example will suffice to illustrate the point.

sundry**adjective** /ˈsʌndri/

of various kinds
The fair had food, music, and sundry other distractions.

supercilious**adjective** /ˌsuːpəˈsɪliəs/

showing an air of superiority towards others
He resented his colleague's supercilious attitude.

supplant**verb** /səˈplɑːnt/

to supersede and replace
The ambitious deputy schemed to supplant the party's leader.

suppressant**adjective** /səˈpresənt/

tending to suppress or restrain an action or condition
Acid suppressant capsules effectively neutralize the acid.

supremacy**noun** /suːˈpreməsi/

the state of being superior to all others in authority, power, or status
It is hard to challenge Japan's supremacy in the field of electronics.

surfactant**noun** /sɜːˈfæktənt/

a substance which tends to reduce the surface tension of a liquid in which it is dissolved
A surfactant allows water based cleaners to bond with oil based stains.

surfeit

noun /'sɜːfɪt/

an excessive amount of something
A surfeit of rich and heavy food will definitely upset your stomach.

surmise

verb /sɜː'maɪz/

to suppose something is true without having evidence to confirm it
His expression led me to surmise that something was wrong.

surmount

verb /sɜː'maʊnt/

to overcome
Each time you surmount a difficulty, you gain something by the experience.

surrogate

adjective /'sʌrəɡət/

a person or thing acting as a substitute
She looked upon them as a surrogate family when her parents were away on business.

sustenance

noun /'sʌstənəns/

food and drink regarded as a source of strength
Poor rural economies turned to potatoes for sustenance.

susurrate

verb /'suːsʌreɪt/

to make a whispering or rustling sound
I heard the curtains susurrate in the breeze.

suzerainty

noun /'suːzərəɪnti/

the external control of one state over another state that is internally autonomous
The area came under the suzerainty of the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888.

swarthy

adjective /'swɔːði/

dark skinned
She looked pale standing beside her swarthy brother.

swathe

verb /sweɪð/

to wrap in several layers of fabric
It was necessary to swathe his hand in bandages to stop the bleeding.

sweltering

adjective /'sweltərɪŋ/

oppressively hot
The sweltering heat can be unbearable for visitors.

sycophancy

noun /'sɪkəˌfænsi/

praising important and powerful people insincerely, especially in order to get something from them
As the new director, I was warned about the sycophancy of certain employees.

syllipsis

noun /sɪˈlepsɪs/

a figure of speech in which a word is applied to two others of which it grammatically suits only one
The teacher asked us to find the syllepsis in the paragraph.

symposium

noun /sɪmˈpəʊziəm/

a meeting or conference to discuss something
He attended a symposium on environmental issues.

synapse

noun /'sɪnæps, 'sɪnæps/

a junction between two nerve cells, consisting of a minute gap across which impulses pass by diffusion of a neurotransmitter
Electrical impulses propel vesicles into the cell wall to spray the neurotransmitter into the synapse.

S

15 to 17
age group

synecdoche

noun /sɪˈnekdəki/

a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for the part

'Pakistan won by two goals' is a synecdoche.

synecology

noun /ˌsɪnɪˈkɒlədʒi/

the ecological study of whole plant or animal communities

Synecology is a science of observation, rather than experimentation.

synteny

noun /sɪnˈteni/

the occurrence of two or more genes on the same chromosome

While some chromosomes show conserved synteny, others are rearranged on different chromosomes.

syzygy

noun /ˈsɪzɪdʒi/

a conjunction or opposition in astronomy, especially of the moon with the sun

Syzygy in the sun-earth-moon system occurs at the time of full moon and new moon.

tabernacle

noun /'tæbəˌnækəl/

a meeting place for worship used by Mormons
Mormons hold their worship services in a tabernacle.

tableau

noun /'tæbləʊ/

a group of models or motionless figures representing a scene from a story or from history
She prepared a splendid tableau for her art history class.

tacit

adjective /'tæsɪt/

silent
The grim expression on his face was a tacit admission of failure.

taciturn

adjective /'tæsɪtʃn/

habitually silent, reserved, or uncommunicative
The host found her taciturn attitude to be very rude.

taiga

noun /'taɪgə/

the swampy coniferous forest of high northern latitudes
Many exotic animals dwell in the Siberian taiga.

talisman

noun /'tælɪzmən/

an object that is thought to have magic powers and to bring good luck
I used to carry a pebble as a talisman to help me pass exams.

tambourine

noun /tæmbə'reɪn/

a percussion instrument resembling a shallow drum with metal discs in slots around the edge
They danced to the beat of the tambourine.

tangential

adjective /tæn'dʒenʃl/

having only a slight or indirect connection with something
The negotiator avoided the main point and only spoke about tangential issues.

tangerine

noun /tændʒə'reɪn/

a kind of orange, much like the mandarin, but of deeper colour and higher flavour
She added a tangerine to the fruit salad.

tankard

noun /'tæŋkəd/

a large drinking vessel, especially one with a cover
He was holding a tankard in his hands.

taphonomy

noun /tæ'fɒnəmi/

the branch of palaeontology that deals with the processes of fossilization
Taphonomy helps us understand the environment and life history of once living organisms.

tapioca

noun /tæpɪ'əʊkə/

a beadlike starch obtained from cassava root, used in cooking as a thickening agent
She used tapioca in the egg pudding.

taramasalata

noun /tæɾəməsə'lɑ:tə/

a pinkish paste or dip made from the roe of a certain fish, mixed with olive oil and seasoning
Taramasalata is a Greek speciality.

tarantula

noun /tə'ræntjʊlə/

a very large hairy spider

tarmacadam

noun /tɑ:mə'kædəm/

a material used for surfacing roads or other outdoor areas
The car park was surfaced with tarmacadam.

T

15 to 17
age group

tatterdemalion

noun /ˌtætədɪ'meɪljən/

a person in tattered clothing

In his role in the school play, he had to dress as a tatterdemalion.

taupe

noun /təʊp/

grey with a tinge of brown

Her bedroom wall was painted taupe.

tautology

noun /təʊ'tɒlədʒi/

the saying of the same thing twice over in different words

Redundancy and tautology are undesirable and a sign of less than careful writing.

tautophony

noun /təʊ'tɒfəni/

the repetition of the same sound or sounds in language

The effect of this poem owes a lot to the poet's use of tautophony.

tawdry

adjective /'tɔːdri/

intended to be bright and attractive but cheap and of low quality

I fail to understand why a wealthy person like Saira should wear such tawdry jewellery.

taxidermy

noun /'tæksɪdʒmi/

the art of preserving, mounting and stuffing the skins of animals so as to represent their natural appearance

He earns his living by taxidermy.

technophile

noun /'teknəʊfaɪl/

a person who is enthusiastic about new technology

My son is a true technophile and has to buy every new gadget as soon as possible.

tedium

noun /'tiːdiəm/

the state or quality of being too long, slow, or dull

She longed for something to happen to relieve the tedium of everyday life.

teeter

verb /'tiːtə[r]/

to move unsteadily

I watched the child teeter as she tried to walk in her mother's high-heeled shoes.

Tejano

proper noun /te'hɑːnəʊ/

a type of popular music from Texas and northern Mexico

Several radio stations in Texas only play Tejano music.

telekinesis

noun /ˌtelɪkɪ'niːsɪs, ˌtelɪkɑː'niːsɪs/

the ability to move objects without touching them, using mental powers

The girl used telekinesis to lift a pencil lying on a nearby table.

teleology

noun /ˌtelɪ'ɒlədʒi/

the explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve rather than by postulated causes

He was extremely interested in studying teleology.

tempera

noun /'tempərə/

a mode or process of painting where the colouring is bound by egg yolk

She painted in tempera on the school walls.

tempestuous

adjective /tem'pestʃuəs/

characterized by strong and turbulent or conflicting emotion

She found out about his reckless and tempestuous disposition only after she married him.

tenaculum

noun /tɪ'nækjʊləm/

a sharp hook used by a surgeon for picking up small pieces of tissue

The surgeon asked for the tenaculum.

tenancy

noun /'tenənsi/

the possession of land or property as a tenant

His tenancy in that apartment has lasted twenty five years.

tenement

noun /'tenəmənt/

a room or a set of rooms forming a separate residence within a house or block of flats

They live in a crumbling tenement.

tenet

noun /'tenɪt/

one of the principles or beliefs that a theory or larger set of beliefs is based on

Believing in one God is the central tenet of Islam.

tenuous

adjective /'tenjʊəs/

very weak or slight

There is a tenuous connection between what is written and what really happened.

tercentenary

noun /tɜːsen'tiːnəri/

the three-hundredth anniversary of something

The head master held a garden party in the grounds to mark the tercentenary of the school.

terminable

adjective /'tɜːmɪnəbəl/

able to be ended

The contract was terminable by either party on 30 days notice.

termitary

noun /'tɜːmɪtəri/

a colony of termites, typically within a tall mound of cemented earth

A termitary can cause a lot of damage if it is close to wooden structures.

ternary

adjective /'tɜːnəri/

composed of three parts

In the air show, the aircraft flew in a ternary formation.

terpsichorean

adjective /tɜːpsɪkə'riːən/

relating to dancing

She had amazing terpsichorean skills.

terracotta

noun /tə'rækɒtə/

a type of fired clay, typically of a brownish-red colour and unglazed

I went to the garden centre to buy a terracotta pot for my new plant.

terraqueous

adjective /te'reɪkwɪəs/

consisting or formed of land and water

They travelled through the terraqueous region, collecting specimens of plant life.

terse

adjective /tɜːs/

sparing in the use of words

The president issued a terse statement denying the charges.

tessera

noun /'tesərə/

a small block of stone, tile, glass, or other material used in the construction of a mosaic

A mirror tessera adds great depth and sparkle to a mosaic.

T

15 to 17
age group

tetragonal

adjective /tɪ'træɡənəl/

of, relating to or shaped like a quadrilateral
The rhombus, and the trapezium are tetragonal figures.

tetrapterous

adjective /te'træptərəs/

having four wings
The bee is a tetrapterous insect.

textual

adjective /'tekstʃuəl/

relating to a text or texts
A textual analysis revealed a deeper meaning.

thalassaemia

noun /θælə'siːmiə/

any of a group of hereditary haemolytic diseases caused by faulty haemoglobin synthesis
She has been diagnosed with thalassemia and needs blood transfusions.

thaumaturgy

noun /'θɔːmə'tɜːrdʒi/

the working of magic feats
His performance of thaumaturgy will include extremely basic and simple magical techniques.

theocracy

noun /θɪ'ɒkrəsi/

a country that is governed by religious leaders
The Vatican City is a theocracy.

theophylline

noun /θɪə'filiːn/

a bitter crystalline compound present in small quantities in tea leaves
Theophylline was first extracted from tea leaves around 1888 in Germany.

therapsid

noun /θe'ræpsɪd/

a fossil reptile of a Permian and Triassic order, the members of which are related to the ancestors of mammals

thermionics

noun /θɜːmɪ'ɒnɪks/

the branch of science and technology concerned with the emission of electrons by hot bodies
Ahmed was an electronics engineer working in the area of thermionics.

thermostat

noun /'θɜːməstæt/

an automatic apparatus for regulating temperature
The car was overheating because the engine's thermostat was faulty.

thistle

noun /'θɪsl/

a wild plant with prickly leaves and purple, yellow, or white flowers
The moor was covered with thistle and broom.

threshold

noun /'θreʃhəʊld/

a strip of wood or stone forming the bottom of a doorway and crossed in entering a house or room
The shy girl stood on the threshold of the room, uncertain as to what she should do.

throes

plural noun /θrəʊz/

violent pains, especially at the moment of death
The creature was convulsed in its death throes.

thrombosis

noun /θrɒm'bəʊsɪs/

the obstruction of a blood vessel by a clot formed at the site of obstruction
His heart attack was due to thrombosis.

thwart

verb /θwɔːt/

to prevent someone from accomplishing something
Concentrated efforts should be made to thwart terrorist attacks.

thyme**noun** /taɪm/

a plant with small leaves that has a sweet smell and is used in cooking as a herb
Ancient Greeks burnt thyme as incense in their temples.

thyroid**noun** /'θaɪrɔɪd/

a gland at the front of the neck that produces hormones which control the way the body grows and functions
Certain medications can cause damage to the thyroid.

tibiotarsus**noun** /ˌtɪbiəʊ'tɑːrsəs/

the bone in a bird's leg corresponding to the tibia, fused at the lower end with some bones of the tarsus
The tibia and fibula are fused to form a single element, the tibiotarsus.

tintinnabulation**noun** /ˌtɪntɪnæbjʊ'leɪʃən/

a ringing or tinkling sound
His voice was drowned out by the tintinnabulation of the bells.

titubation**noun** /ˌtɪtʃʊ'beɪʃən/

a nodding movement of the head or body, especially as caused by a nervous disorder
His titubation made him the object of crude jokes.

titular**adjective** /'tɪtʃʊlə[r]/

holding a purely formal position or title without any real authority
The president is the titular head of the company, but the real power lies with the chairman.

tokamak**noun** /'tɒkəˌmæk/

a toroidal apparatus for producing controlled fusion reactions in hot plasma
The most common mechanism for controlling plasma reactions today is called a tokamak.

tonsillectomy**noun** /ˌtɒnsɪ'lektəmi/

a surgical operation to remove the tonsils
She is recovering from a tonsillectomy.

tonsure**noun** /'tɒnʃə/

the part of a monk's or priest's head left bare on top by shaving off the hair
We easily recognised the monk by his tonsure.

topography**noun** /tə'pɒɡrəfi/

the physical features of an area of land, especially the position of its rivers and mountains
From the air, it is possible to see the entire topography of a region.

tortuous**adjective** /'tɔːtʃʊəs, 'tɔːtʃʊəs/

full of twists and turns
We had to endure a tortuous mountain track on our way to the hill station.

touche**exclamation** /tuː'ʃeɪ/

used as an acknowledgement during a discussion of a good or clever point made at one's expense by another person
My friend responded, 'touché', when I made a remark about his habitual tardiness.

tournedos**plural noun** /'tuənədəʊz/

small round thick cuts from a fillet of beef
The guests preferred to have the tournedos instead of the grilled fish.

tourniquet**noun** /'tuənɪkeɪ, 'tɔːnɪkeɪ/

a device for stopping the flow of blood through a vein or artery, typically by compressing a limb with a cord or tight bandage
They applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding.

toxoplasmosis**noun** /ˌtɒksəʊplæz'məʊsɪs/

a protozoal disease characterized by jaundice, enlarged liver and spleen, and convulsions
Doctors failed to diagnose his toxoplasmosis.

traceable**adjective** /ˈtreɪsəbl/

able to be followed on its course or to its origin
He wanted to track down all traceable calls.

tracery**noun** /ˈtreɪsəri/

a decorative pattern of lines and curves in stone
Mogul craftsmen were highly skilled at producing beautiful tracery in marble.

tracheid**noun** /ˈtreɪkɪd/

a type of water conducting cell in the xylem which lacks perforations in the cell wall
A tracheid is found in all vascular plants.

tracheophyte**noun** /ˈtreɪkɪəˌfaɪt/

a plant that has a conducting system of xylem and phloem elements
The tracheophyte is the dominant type of land plant, including trees and flowering plants.

trachyte**noun** /ˈtreɪkɑɪt/

a grey fine-grained volcanic rock consisting largely of alkali feldspar
Trachyte is an igneous rock and is commonly found in Europe.

traipse**verb** /ˈtreɪps/

to walk somewhere slowly when you are tired and unwilling
They hated having to traipse around the shops with their mother.

traitorous**adjective** /ˈtreɪtərəs/

guilty of treason
His traitorous behaviour will get him into a lot of trouble.

trajectory**noun** /trəˈdʒektəri/

the curved path of something that has been fired, hit or thrown into the air
She was able to see the trajectory of her golf ball much better with her new contact lens.

transcribe**verb** /trænˈskraɪb/

to change from one written form to another
After you transcribe your notes onto the computer, please email a copy to Mr. Hasan.

transcutaneous**adjective** /ˌtrænzkjʊˈteɪniəs/

existing, applied, or measured across the depth of the skin
Nitroglycerine is a transcutaneous medication applied directly to the skin.

transhumance**noun** /trænzˈhju:məns/

the action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle
In the 18th and 19th centuries, mountain farmers used to practice transhumance.

transient**adjective** /ˈtrænzɪənt/

lasting only for a short time
The chemist said that mild side effects which are transient in nature may occur.

translucent**adjective** /trænsˈlu:snt/

allowing light to shine through but not transparent
I bought a beautiful, translucent glass vase at the exhibition yesterday.

transmissivity

noun /ˌtrænzmiˈsɪvɪti, ˌtrɑːnsmiˈsɪvɪti/
the degree to which a medium allows something, in particular electromagnetic radiation, to pass through it
The transparency and transmissivity of the atmosphere is uniform over the globe.

trattoria

noun /ˌtrætəˈriːə/
a small, inexpensive Italian restaurant
We frequent the Italian trattoria around the corner from our house.

treacle

noun /ˈtriːkəl/
a dark viscous syrup obtained during the refining of sugar
We all loved her treacle pudding.

triassic

adjective /traɪˈæsiːk/
relating to the earliest period of the Mesozoic Era marked by the appearance of dinosaurs
The average climatic conditions of the Triassic Period were on the hot and dry side.

triboluminescence

noun /ˌtraɪbəʊluːmɪˈnesəns/
the emission of light from a substance caused by rubbing, scratching, or similar frictional contact
Francis Bacon observed triboluminescence as he chopped blocks of sugar cane at night in 1605.

trichinosis

noun /ˌtrɪkɪˈnəʊsɪs/
a disease caused by trichinae, typically from infected meat
The trichinosis caused him severe intestinal pain.

trichloroethylene

noun /ˌtraɪklɔːrəʊˈeθəliːn/
a colourless volatile liquid used as a solvent and formerly as an anaesthetic
Trichloroethylene is a clear non-flammable liquid with a sweet smell.

trickle

verb /ˈtrɪkəl/
to run or cause to run in thin or slow streams
She let the sand trickle through her fingers.

triennium

noun /traɪˈeniəm/
a specified period of three years
The economy did not grow during the last triennium.

trifling

adjective /ˈtraɪflɪŋ/
small and unimportant
I had to request my secretary not to bother me with trifling matters.

triforium

noun /traɪˈfɔːrɪəm/
a gallery or arcade above the arches of the nave, choir, and transepts of a church
The triforium is found in many old churches in England.

triptych

noun /ˈtrɪptɪk/
a picture that is painted or carved on three pieces of wood placed side by side
The Medieval altarpiece was a triptych.

troglodyte

noun /ˈtrɒglədait/
a person living in a cave, especially in prehistoric times
The troglodyte covered the walls of the cave with drawings of different animals.

tropopause

noun /ˈtrɒpəʊpəːz, ˈtrəʊpəʊpəːz/
the boundary, or transitional layer, between the troposphere and the stratosphere
Going upward from the surface, the tropopause is where air ceases to cool with height and becomes almost completely dry.

T

15 to 17
age group

truffle

noun /'trʌfəl/

a soft sweet made of a chocolate mixture
The truffle melted in his mouth.

truncheon

noun /'trʌntʃən/

a short thick stick that police officers carry as a weapon
The policeman waved his truncheon at the advancing youth.

tularaemia

noun /,tju:lə'ri:mɪə/

a severe infectious bacterial disease
Tularemia affects wild animals but can be transmitted to humans through the bite of various insects or contact with infected animals.

turgescence

noun /tɜ:'dʒesəns/

swelling
She suffered a turgescence of the ankle after she fell down the stairs.

turmoil

noun /'tɜ:mɔɪl/

a state or condition of extreme confusion, agitation, or commotion
In the teacher's absence, the class was in turmoil.

tusche

noun /'tu:ʃə, 'tu:ʃ/

a greasy black composition, in liquid form or to be mixed with liquids, used as ink for lithographic drawings
Tusche mixed with water flows more freely and dries more slowly.

tussock

noun /'tʌsək/

a small area of grass that is longer and thicker than the grass around it
When I was a child, I thought that the tussock in the garden was a magical place.

typography

noun /taɪ'pɒgrəfi/

the art or work of preparing books for printing, especially of designing how text will appear when it is printed
He learnt the art of typography in his apprenticeship at the printers.

tyrannical

adjective /tɪ'rænɪkl/

using power or authority over people in an unfair and cruel way
His tyrannical rule did not last for long.

ubiquitous

adjective /ju:'bɪkwɪtəs/

present, appearing, or found everywhere
The movie star was tired of being followed by the ubiquitous paparazzi.

ulcer

noun /'ʌlsə[r]/

a sore discharging pus
I have an ulcer in my mouth.

umlaut

noun /'ʊmlaʊt/

a mark consisting of two dots placed over a vowel in some languages to indicate a different vowel quality
The umlaut is common in German.

unerring

adjective /ʌn'ɜ:rɪŋ/

always right or accurate
She had an unerring instinct for good business deals.

unilateral

adjective /ju:nɪ'lætərəl/

performed by or affecting only one person, group, or country involved in a situation
It was a unilateral decision.

unkempt

adjective /ʌn'kempt/

not neat or tidy
Her wild, unkempt hair was difficult to comb.

unremunerative

adjective /ʌnrɪ'mju:nərətɪv/

bringing little or no profit or income
He is disheartened because his once flourishing business is now quite unremunerative.

unrequited

adjective /ʌnrɪ'kwɑ:tɪd/

describing a feeling which is not returned, especially love
Unrequited love was what drove him to take a job in central Africa.

unwavering

adjective /ʌn'weɪvərɪŋ/

not changing or becoming weaker in any way
His unwavering support for his wife during her long illness showed how much he truly loved her.

unwieldy

adjective /ʌn'wi:ldi/

difficult to move or control because of its size, shape, or weight
The postman was struggling with the unwieldy parcel.

upbraid

verb /ʌp'breɪd/

to scold
She should not upbraid him because he doesn't take criticism very well.

upsurge

noun /'ʌpsɜ:dʒ/

a sudden great increase
The recent upsurge in crime has caused some serious troubles.

uracil

noun /'juərəsɪl/

a compound found in living tissue as a constituent base of RNA
RNA has the same set of four bases, except that instead of thymine, RNA has uracil.

urchin

noun /'ɜ:tʃɪn/

a young child who is poor and dirty, often one who has no home
The dirty little street urchin was begging for food.

urticaria

noun /ɜ:tɪ'keəriə/

a rash of round, red weals on the skin caused by an allergic reaction
Her allergic reaction to penicillin caused urticaria.

U

15 to 17
age group

utilitarianism

noun /jʊˌtɪlɪˈteəriənɪzəm/

the doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority

The problem with a theory like utilitarianism is that it does not consider the needs of the minority.

utopia

noun /juːˈtəʊpiə/

an imagined place or state of things where everything is perfect

Creating a utopia is an admirable, but unrealistic, dream.

uxorial

adjective /ʌkˈsɔːriəl/

of or relating to a wife

He was known to be a hen-pecked husband whose decisions were easily swayed by uxorial influence.

vacuity

noun /və'kju:ti/
a lack of thought or intelligence
He denounced what he considered the vacuity of contemporary painting.

vainglorious

adjective /ˌveɪn'ɡlɔ:riəs/
too proud of your own abilities and achievements
He was a vainglorious and arrogant individual who never made any friends.

valedictory

adjective /ˌvæli'dɪktəri/
serving as a farewell
Yahya will deliver the valedictory address at the convocation.

valency

noun /'veɪlənsi/
the combining power of an element, especially as measured by the number of hydrogen atoms it can displace or combine with
Carbon always has a valency of 4.

valet

noun /'væleɪ/
originally a manservant, now usually a person who parks your car for you at a hotel or restaurant
The hotel manager asked the valet to park the car.

valetudinarian

noun /ˌvæltju:dɪ'neəriən/
a person who is unduly anxious about their health
My valetudinarian aunt explained all her ailments in great detail.

vaporetto

noun /ˌvæpə'retəʊ/
a canal boat in Venice used for public transport
We had to take a vaporetto to our hotel when we visited Venice.

vaquero

noun /və'keərəʊ/
a cowboy
The vaquero was sitting idle on the hill and strumming his guitar.

variegated

adjective /'veəriəgeɪtɪd/
exhibiting different colours, especially as irregular patches or streaks
The plant has attractive, variegated leaves.

vaudeville

noun /'vɔ:dəvɪl/
a type of entertainment featuring a mixture of specialty acts
Vaudeville was popular in the U.S. in the early 20th century.

vault

noun /vɔ:lt/
a secure room in a bank in which valuables are stored
She kept her jewellery in a vault at the bank.

veinous

adjective /'veɪnəs/
having prominent veins
His veinous arm was wounded badly.

velleity

noun /ve'li:ti/
a wish or inclination not strong enough to lead to action
The notion intrigued me, but it remained a velleity.

velociraptor

noun /və'lɒsɪræptə/
a small dromaeosaurid dinosaur of the late Cretaceous period
In the movie, the velociraptor looks very real and convincing.

V

15 to 17
age group

vendetta

noun /ven'detə/

a violent dispute between two groups in which people are murdered in revenge for previous murders
Romeo and Juliet lost their lives on account of the vendetta between their two families.

Venetian

adjective /vɪ'niːʃn/

relating to Venice or its people
The building was reminiscent of Venetian architecture.

vengeful

adjective /'vendʒfʊl/

wanting to take revenge
Her vengeful attitude will cause us great suffering.

ventriloquism

noun /ven'trɪləkwɪzəm/

the act of speaking in such a manner that the voice appears to come from some other source
He could not master the art of ventriloquism.

veracious

adjective /və'reɪʃəs/

truthful
It was hard not to believe her veracious explanation.

verbatim

adverb or adjective /vɜː'beɪtɪm/

in exactly the same words as were used originally
He repeated the instructions verbatim.

verderer

noun /'vɜːd[ə]rəl/

a judicial officer of a royal forest
The previous by-laws made by the verderer were challenged in court.

verdigris

noun /'vɜːdɪɡrɪs/

a bright bluish-green encrustation or patina formed on copper or brass by oxidation
The copper vase in the store had green stains which were probably verdigris.

verisimilitude

noun /ˌvɛrɪsɪ'mɪlɪtjuːd/

the appearance of being true or real
To add verisimilitude, the stage is covered with sand for the desert scenes.

verruca

noun /və'ruːkəl/

a wart or similar growth
She went to the doctor to get the verruca removed from her hand.

vertigo

noun /'vɜːtɪɡəʊ/

dizziness and loss of balance caused by looking down from a high place
He did not realise that he had vertigo until he went up to the roof of the building and looked down.

vesicle

noun /'vesɪkəl/

an air-filled swelling in a plant, especially a seaweed
When a resin vesicle is damaged during seed processing, the result is generally a decline in seed germination.

vestibule

noun /'vestɪbjʊːl/

an entrance hall
The vestibule of the hotel was magnificent.

vicarious

adjective /vɪ'keəriəs, var'keəriəs/

experienced in the imagination through the feelings or actions of another person
He got a vicarious thrill out of watching his son score the winning goal.

vicegerent

adjective /vaɪs'dʒɪərənt/

a person exercising delegated power on behalf of a sovereign or ruler
Bairam Khan was appointed young Akbar's vicegerent.

vicinity**noun** /vɪ'sɪnɪti/

the area near or surrounding a particular place
There is no hospital in the immediate vicinity.

vicissitude**noun** /vɪ'sɪsɪtjuːd/

a change of circumstances or fortune, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant
He considered injuring his leg only a vicissitude which he would soon overcome.

victualler**noun** /'vɪt[ə]lə/

a supplier of food
He ordered the victualler to send food to the village before the start of Ramadan.

villainous**adjective** /'vɪləniəs/

very wicked
The detectives were unable to catch the villainous robbers.

villanelle**noun** /'vɪlə'nel/

a poem of fixed form consisting usually of five three-line stanzas and a final four-line stanza and having only two rhymes throughout
We read a villanelle in literature class today.

vindicate**verb** /'vɪndɪkeɪt/

to clear of blame or suspicion
The new evidence could vindicate him completely.

violaceous**adjective** /'vaɪə'leɪʃəs/

of a violet colour
The fruiting body is pink or violaceous.

viridescent**adjective** /'vɪrɪ'desənt/

greenish or becoming green
He described her eyes as viridescent sparks.

virulent**adjective** /'vɪrələnt/

extremely dangerous or harmful and quick to take effect
She has recovered from a particularly virulent form of typhoid.

viscountcy**noun** /'vaɪkaʊntsi/

the rank or position of a viscount
His viscountcy made him a sought-after bachelor.

vituperation**noun** /vɪ'tjuːpə'reɪʃn/

bitter and abusive language
No one else attracted such vituperation from him.

vivacious**adjective** /vɪ'veɪʃəs/

attractively lively and animated
He had three pretty, vivacious daughters.

vivisepture**noun** /'vɪvɪ'sepəltʃə[r]/

an act or instance of burying someone alive
There are rumoured cases of accidental vivisepture.

vociferous**adjective** /vəʊ'sɪfərəs/

expressing or characterized by vehement opinions
The vociferous protests of the workers have given me a headache.

volatile**adjective** /'vɒlətaɪl/

liable to change suddenly
He was worried about her volatile personality.

voluminous**adjective** /və'ljuːmɪnəs/

of great size, quantity, volume, or extent
I sank down into a voluminous armchair.

V

15 to 17
age group

voracious

adjective /və'reɪʃəs/

wanting or devouring great quantities of food

His obesity was indicative of a voracious appetite.

voyager

noun /'vɔɪdʒə/

one who makes a journey, travel, or passage, especially to a distant land

The voyager had survived the long and arduous trip.

vulcanization

noun /vʌlkənəɪ'zeɪʃən/

a process for the hardening of rubber with sulphur and heat

Vulcanization is a complicated process.

vuvuzela

noun /vu:və'zelə/

a long horn blown by fans at soccer matches in South Africa

People lined the streets, one blew a vuvuzela while others shouted encouragement.

wainscoting

noun /'weɪnskɒtɪŋ/

wooden paneling that lines the lower part of the walls of a room

It's very nicely decorated with a lot of designer flair in terms of the wall colour and the restored wainscoting in the dining room.

wanton

adjective /'wɒntən/

childishly cruel or unruly

The teacher was disappointed by his wanton behaviour.

warmonger

noun /'wɔːmʌŋɡə[r]/

a person, especially a politician or leader, who wants to start a war

He was advised not to pay heed to the fiery speeches of the warmonger.

wastrel

noun /'weɪstrəl/

an idle, worthless, or disreputable person

Her husband was known as a wastrel.

waterborne

adjective /'wɔːtəbɔːn/

spread or carried by water

Waterborne diseases are not rare.

watercress

noun /'wɔːtəkres/

a water plant with small, round, green leaves and thin stems. It has a strong taste and is often eaten raw in salads

I added watercress to the salad.

watusi

noun /wə'tuːsi/

a solo dance that enjoyed brief popularity during the early 1960s, deriving its name from the Watusi tribe
The watusi was the second-most popular dance craze in the 1960s in the United States.

weaponry

noun /'wepənri/

weapons regarded collectively

The police force has very sophisticated weaponry.

Weimaraner

noun /'vaɪməˌrɑːnə, 'waɪməˌrɑːnə/

a breed of hunting dog, having a very short sleek grey coat and short tail

Weltschmerz

noun /'veltʃmeəts, 'veltʃmerts/

a feeling of melancholy and world-weariness

The early works of the Austrian poet Nikolaus Lenau express the Weltschmerz of the Romantic period.

Wensleydale

noun /'wenzlɪdeɪl/

a type of white cheese with a crumbly texture

Wensleydale is a cheese originally produced in Wensleydale, North Yorkshire.

werewolf

noun /'weəwʊlf/

a person who changes for periods of time into a wolf, typically when there is a full moon

We thought the film about a werewolf was going to be frightening, but it was really quite humorous.

whatchamacallit

noun /'wɒtʃəməˌkɔːlɪt/

a person or thing whose name one cannot recall, does not know, or does not wish to specify

The whatchamacallit on my car is broken again.

wheatear

noun /'wiːtiə/

a mainly Eurasian and African songbird related to the chats, with black and buff or black and white plumage and a white rump

W

15 to 17
age group

wheedle

verb /'wi:dəl/

to persuade by flattery

The children managed to wheedle money out of their father to go to the amusement park.

whimsical

adjective /'wɪmzɪkl/

playfully quaint or fanciful, especially in an appealing and amusing way

Much of his writing has a whimsical quality to it.

whippersnapper

noun /'wɪpəsənæpəl/

a young and inexperienced person considered to be presumptuous or overconfident

The old man called every young kid a whippersnapper.

whirligig

noun /'wɜ:lɪgɪg/

a toy that spins round, for example a top or windmill

The young boy had fun playing with his whirligig.

wilderness

noun /'wɪldənɪs/

an uncultivated and uninhabited area

Much of northern Canada is wilderness.

winceyette

noun /,wɪnsɪ'et/

a lightweight napped flannelette, used especially for nightclothes and undergarments

She asked the shopkeeper to show her shirts made of 100% pure winceyette.

woebegone

adjective /'wəʊbɪɡən/

looking very sad

I pitied him when I saw his woebegone expression.

wonderment

noun /'wʌndəmənt/

a feeling of pleasant surprise or wonder

She looked at him in surprise and wonderment.

wreckage

noun /'rekɪdʒ/

the results or remains of a disaster

The wreckage of the plane crash was spread over miles.

wunderkind

noun /'vʊndəkɪnd/

a person who achieves great success when relatively young

The term wunderkind is sometimes used as a synonym for prodigy.

xenobiology

noun /zenəbɪ'ɒlədʒi/

the investigation of extraterrestrial life forms
Xenobiology addresses the questions of whether life exists beyond Earth and how humans can detect it if it does.

xenophile

noun /'zenəˌfaɪl/

an individual who is attracted to foreign peoples, manners, or cultures
Sarah was a xenophile who spent hours chatting with the foreigners at university.

xeric

adjective /'zɪərɪk/

requiring small amounts of moisture
Xeric plants are usually deciduous, which means they drop leaves in the summer, or they are cacti or succulents.

xeriscape

noun /'zɪərɪskeɪp/

a garden or landscape created in a style that requires little or no irrigation or other maintenance
Replacing the traditional lawn with a xeriscape is a common trend in arid parts of the U.S.

xerostomia

noun /ˌzɪərə'stəʊmiə/

an abnormal lack of saliva
Xerostomia can be a side effect of a wide variety of medications.

xiphophyllous

adjective /zɪ'fɒlɪs/

having leaves in the shape of swords
Xiphophyllous plants add beauty to gardens.

xylan

noun /'zaɪlən/

a yellow polysaccharide consisting of xylose units which occurs in straw husks and other woody tissue
Xylan is one of the foremost anti-nutritional factors in common use feedstuff raw materials.

Y

15 to 17
age group

yarmulke

noun /'jɑ:mʊlkə, 'jɑ:məlkə/

a skullcap worn by orthodox male Jews at all times,
and by others during prayer
A person can be identified as Jewish by his yarmulke.

yashmak

noun /'jæʃmæk/

a veil concealing all of the face except the eyes, worn
by some Muslim women in public
*The yashmak is usually worn with an enveloping
garment called a chaddar.*

yeoman

noun /'jəʊmən/

a farmer who owned and worked his own land
The wealthy yeoman wanted to move to the city.

yore

noun /jɔ:/

of long ago or former times
*We spent the afternoon reminiscing about days of
yore.*

yuan

noun /ju'ɑ:n/

the basic monetary unit of China
The yuan has lost value against the dollar today.

zapateado**noun** /zæˌpætiˈɑːdəʊ/

a flamenco dance with rhythmic stamping of the feet
A Spanish dance troop specializing in zapateado is coming to the city this month.

zealot**noun** /ˈzelət/

a person who is fanatical and uncompromising in pursuit of their religious, political, or other ideals
Being a zealot, he will not take a day's rest until his party wins the election.

zephyr**noun** /ˈzefə[r]/

a soft, gentle wind
The heat of summer nights is made bearable when a zephyr blows.

Zeppelin**noun** /ˈzɛpəlɪn/

a large German dirigible airship of the early 20th century, long and cylindrical in shape and with a rigid framework.
The Zeppelin crashed to earth and burst into flames.

zetetic**adjective** /zɪˈtɛtɪk/

proceeding by inquiry
A zetetic approach to knowledge requires personal investigation into the subject.

zeugma**noun** /ˈzjuːgmə/

a figure of speech in which a word applies to two others in different senses
'John and his driving licence expired last week' is an example of zeugma.

zidovudine**noun** /zɪˈdɒvjʊdɪːn, zɪˈdəʊvjʊdɪːn/

an antiviral drug used to treat HIV infection and AIDS
The drug zidovudine was formerly known as AZT.

zineb**noun** /ˈzɪneb/

a white compound used as a fungicidal powder on vegetables and fruit
Terata have been observed in rats administered amounts of zineb in excess of 2000 milligrams per day.

zinnia**noun** /ˈzɪniə/

an American plant of the daisy family, which is cultivated for its bright showy flowers
My zinnia won first place at the county fair.

zoetrope**noun** /ˈzəʊtrəʊp/

a 19th-century optical toy consisting of a cylinder with a series of pictures on the inner surface that give an impression of continuous motion
The museum had an example of a zoetrope.

Zollverein**noun** /ˈzɒlfəˌraɪn/

the customs union of German states in the 19th century
The Zollverein created a free-trade zone amongst the German states and was an important step toward unification.

zowie**exclamation** /ˈzəʊi, zəʊˈiː/

expressing astonishment or admiration
Zowie, that's a lot of money!

zucchetto**noun** /tsuˈkɛtəʊ/

a small round skullcap varying in colour according to the rank of the wearer
In the Catholic tradition, the zucchetto is most commonly made of silk or polyester fabric.

zugzwang**noun** /'zu:gzwæŋ, 'ʌgzwæŋ/

a situation in the game of chess in which the obligation to make a move in one's turn is a serious, often decisive, disadvantage
As Beim explains, with accurate play, there is no way to put Black into zugzwang.

zwitterion**noun** /'zwɪtərəɪən/

a molecule or ion having separate positively and negatively charged groups
Today in our chemistry class we learnt the properties of a zwitterion.

zygomorphic**adjective** /ˌzaɪgəʊ'mɔːfɪk, zɪgəʊ'mɔːfɪk/

pertaining to organisms that can be divided into symmetrical halves along one axis only
Zygomorphic flowers generally have petals of two or more different shapes, sizes, and colors.

zygote**noun** /'zaɪgəʊt, 'zɪgəʊt/

a cell formed by the union of two gametes and the organism developing from that
The zygote is the first stage of development of an individual human being.

zymase**noun** /'zaɪmeɪs/

the enzyme complex in yeasts that catalyzes the breakdown of sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide
Zymase was first isolated from the yeast cell in 1897 by a German chemist.