



Top Test Prep Your SAT Roadmap

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Basics

THE TEST

- Three subjects: Math, Reading, and Writing, each featuring several different question types.
- Ten sections, most of which are multiple choice, and each of which has a time limit between 10 and 25 minutes.
- Takes about four hours total.
- Calculators are allowed on Math sections.
- About 35% are of the questions are easy, 50% are of medium difficulty, 15% are hard.
- One of the nine multiple choice sections is experimental, meaning the testmakers are using it to test out new questions. It won't be scored, but

there's no way to tell which one it is.

- You need to register for the SAT about a month in advance. You can do it at collegeboard.com.

SCORING

- You get a score between 200 and 800 in each subject (Reading, Writing, and Math). These are added to produce a total between 600 and 2400. Higher is better.
- Your test is scored automatically, not by hand, so make sure you mark your answer sheet as instructed.
- Your raw score is the total number of questions you get right minus $\frac{1}{4}$ the number of multiple

choice questions you get wrong.

- Your scaled score (600-2400) is proportional to your raw score, and the exact calculation depends on the difficulty of the specific test.
- As your score gets higher, it gets harder to improve: going from a 2200 to a 2400 takes more work than going from a 1300 to a 1500.

TEST DAY TIPS

- Bring a calculator, two pencils, and a snack.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before.
- Have a little caffeine, but not too much.
- If you don't know the right answer, guess if you can eliminate at least *one* of the choices.

Studying

Maximize the effectiveness of your SAT prep:

Live the strategic life. We give you strategies for the SAT, but use them elsewhere too. Be **APT** when you read the Internet. Notice grammatical errors in conversations. Use **UnWrAP** in your math class. Et cetera. It's great practice for the test, and the strategies will help with your other work.

Heed: read! To help on the Reading and Writing sections, read high-quality material on your own. Choose articles that interest you from well-written publications like *The Economist*, *New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*, and read them with your strategies. The best way to learn reading,

grammar, and vocab is to read good writing.

Deed before speed. There are two things you have to be able to do on the SAT: answer the questions *correctly* and answer them *quickly*. As you study, make sure you're getting the questions right before you worry about going fast. If you learn to answer the questions correctly, it's easy to get faster. If you try to go fast before you understand everything, you'll end up confused.

Pick up the pace. Once you master the material, speed up by taking sections in *less* than the allotted time. Try a 25-minute section in 20 minutes, or 15. It's like running with ankle weights on: once

you go back to normal, it'll seem easy.

Keep it real. Also when you're practicing, use the most authentic conditions possible. You'll be taking the real test at 9 AM on a Saturday, so why not practice then too? For all practice, find a quiet, well-lit place with a good writing surface, and if you're timing yourself be strict about it. Don't take breaks during sections or let in any distractions.

Fear no test! One of the biggest mistakes students make on the SAT is thinking it's harder than it is. The questions are designed for high schoolers, so you can do all of them! Don't ever assume a problem is too hard for you before you try it.

There are two types of questions on the SAT Reading: Sentence Completions and Passage-Based Reading. Each test contains 19 Sentence Completions and 48 Passage-Based Reading questions.

SENTENCE COMPLETIONS

Sentence Completions are fill-in-the-blank questions, with either one or two blanks in a sentence. Here's an example of a one-blank question: Cereal was ----- to find that his favorite breakfast cereal was no longer being sold at his local grocery store.

- (A) revitalized (B) eligible (C) substantiated
(D) kindled (E) dismayed

Step into the void. There are two things that make Sentence Completions difficult: the sentences are complicated, and the vocabulary is tough. Taking on both of them at the same time can get confusing, so start by figuring out what the sentence is *trying* to say. Read it carefully and come up with your own word(s) to fill in the blank before you look at the answer choices. Your word doesn't have to be fancy; for the example question, we could fill in the blank with something like "upset," "unhappy," or "sad"—wouldn't you be sad if you couldn't get your Lucky Charms?

Are you a good word or a bad word?

If you aren't sure about what word should go in the blank, don't panic! You can still narrow down the answer choices by deciding what *kind* of word should go in the blank: a good word or a bad word. Use this logic to help with your eliminations. In our example, the blank clearly needs a "bad" word.

Be a hater. Now that you know what needs to go in the blank(s), it's time to match your word to the answer choices. This is easy if you know the meanings of the answer choices, but tricky if you don't. The first step is to cross out any choice that you *know* is wrong. If you're dealing with a two-blank question, eliminate any choice that has either word wrong. Don't get sucked in by half-right an-

swers: on the SAT, half right is all wrong.

Let's RaP. Now you know what goes in the blank, you've crossed off wrong answers, and there's still more than one word you don't recognize (and which therefore could be the answer). To crack the definitions of hard words, try to pick out **Roots and Phrases**. Roots are parts of words that appear in lots of words with similar meanings. You may not know "revitalized" but you know "re-" means "again" and you've heard of "vital signs" and "vitamins." You may also know that in Romance languages like French and Spanish, the words for "life" begin "vi-," so it makes sense that "revitalized" means "to give new life to" and can be eliminated. You may not recognize any roots for "eligible," but you've probably heard it before in various phrases: an "ineligible receiver" is one you can't throw to in football, and an "eligible bachelor" is a desirable one, so "eligible" seems like a "good" word and therefore won't work here. Likewise, you can eliminate "substantiated" (same roots as "substance") and "kindled" (would Amazon give their product a negative name?). **The answer is (E).**

PASSAGE-BASED READING

For Passage-Based Reading questions, the SAT gives you one or two passages and asks you questions to test your comprehension. Here's a sample passage:

Historically, about once in every three generations a social convulsion has occurred; such catastrophes must continue to occur in order that laws and institutions may be adapted to the growth of the citizenry. Human society is a living organism and functions mechanically, just like any other organism: citizens are molecules, transit systems are the blood flow, mass media and telecommunications are the nervous system, and laws and institutions are a sort of skin or envelope. This skin, however, does not expand automatically, but is only fitted to new conditions by those painful and conscious efforts which we call revolutions. Usually these revolutions are warlike, but sometimes they are benign.

Why does the author think revolution is necessary?

- (A) Like the human body, human societies occasionally grow cancerous cells of dissension and must eradicate them to maintain the peace.
(B) Historically, human institutions have automatically changed in response to societal changes.
(C) People prefer peaceful transitions to warlike ones because society is a delicate living organism.
(D) Society is constantly changing, and the power structure must change accordingly.
(E) People forget the lessons of the past over the course of generations because society's nervous system experiences change.

Be APT. Before you look at the questions, read the whole passage thoroughly. As you go, **Annotate** the passage with notes (one or two words each) to help you remember what's being talked about where. Pay special attention to the author's **Point of view**. And when you're done, take a second to give the passage your own **Title** that summarizes the main idea and attitude of the passage. Learn to read passages thoroughly before you worry about reading them fast or answering the questions.

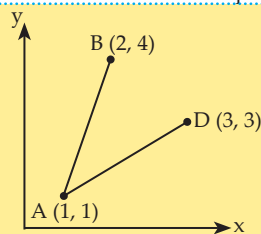
Keep hating. Eliminate answers that are too extreme (using words like "always," "never," "none," etc.), too specific (referring to details not in the passage or not relevant to the question), or erroneous. Remember: all the answer choices are designed to sound right if you're not paying attention to details. These questions aren't subjective: every answer except the right one is objectively wrong, so look for wrong answers—they often stand out more than right ones. In the example, (A) mentions cancer but the passage doesn't. (B) is wrong because of the word "automatically." (C) is true, but not relevant to the question. (D) is true, if a little boring. (E) sounds plausible, but the passage doesn't mention anything being forgotten over generations. Therefore **(D) is correct.**

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Reading

OVERVIEW

There are 54 Math questions on the SAT, but it's not as hard as you think. It only goes up to Algebra II, and you don't need to know trigonometry, logarithms, or calculus. Here's an example:



Line segments \overline{AB} , \overline{AC} (not pictured), and \overline{AD} lie in the coordinate plane pictured above. Point A is at (1, 1), point B is at (2, 4), and point D is at (3, 3). If the average of the slopes of segments \overline{AB} , \overline{AC} , and \overline{AD} is 2, which of the following could be the coordinates of point C?

- (A) (4.1, 2.1) (B) (3.9, 2.2) (C) (3.8, 2.4)
(D) (3.6, 2.6) (E) (3.8, 1.8)

All you need to do is break questions that seem hard into smaller chunks and use those chunks to build yourself an answer. Here's how:

Don't Be a Hero. The SAT gives you two great tools to help you on the Math section: your calculator and a "formula box" at the beginning of each section. Use these! You can probably solve most of the problems without them, but why make it harder on yourself?

UnWRAP. This is a four-step process that will take you through *any* math problem, especially if you don't now how to get started.

Step 1: Underline the prompt. What's the question actually asking for? In our problem, we would underline "Which of the following could be the coordinates of point C?"

Step 2: Write out relevant formulas. If you already know how to do the problem, go for it. If you're having trouble getting started, think of it this way: in Math problems, the test gives you some information and asks for other information. Sometimes finding this other information is straightforward, but not always. If you're stuck, start writing out everything you know about the problem and look for how it might fit together to give you the information you underlined. For the example, we could write out the following:

$$\text{Average} = \frac{\text{sum of numbers}}{\text{number of numbers}}$$

$$\text{Slope} = \frac{y_1 - y_2}{x_1 - x_2}$$

$$A(1, 1), B(2, 4), D(3, 3)$$

$$\text{Average}_{\text{slopes of } \overline{AB}, \overline{AC}, \text{ and } \overline{AD}} = 2$$

Step 3: Assemble equations. Once you've written out everything you know, think about what might fit together to give you the thing you don't know, and then assemble it accordingly. In our case, using the slope formula, we can find the slopes of segments \overline{AB} and \overline{AD} :

$$m_{\overline{AB}} = (4 - 1) / (2 - 1) = 3/1 = 3,$$

$$m_{\overline{AD}} = (3 - 1) / (3 - 1) = 2/2 = 1.$$

We don't know the slope of segment \overline{AC} ($m_{\overline{AC}}$) but if we did we could use it to check whether the points in the answer choices work, so let's use the average formula to find it. If the average of all three slopes is 2, then we have

$$(3 + m_{\overline{AC}} + 1) / 3 = 2 \rightarrow \text{Multiply both sides by 3} \rightarrow$$

$$(3 + m_{\overline{AC}} + 1) = 6 \rightarrow \text{Combine terms} \rightarrow$$

$$4 + m_{\overline{AC}} = 6 \rightarrow \text{Subtract 4 from both sides} \rightarrow$$

$$m_{\overline{AC}} = 2.$$

So the slope of segment \overline{AC} is 2.

Step 4: Plug in and solve. Now that we have our plan of attack, we can plug in the relevant numbers and solve. For the example, we just need to try each answer choice and see which one would give \overline{AC} a slope of 2 (use a calculator!):

$$(A) (4.1 - 1) / (2.1 - 1) = 2.81$$

$$(B) (3.9 - 1) / (2.2 - 1) = 2.63$$

$$(C) (3.8 - 1) / (2.4 - 1) = 2$$

$$(D) (3.6 - 1) / (2.6 - 1) = 1.625$$

$$(E) (3.8 - 1) / (1.8 - 1) = 3.5$$

So the answer is (C).

These strategies apply to all SAT Math problems, of which there are four categories:

NUMBERS & OPERATIONS

This is basically pre-algebra. It includes things like percentages, fractions, factors & multiples, sequences, and sets. Here's an example:

Four times a given number is 2 more than twice the number. What is one possible value of the number?

- (A) 1 (B) 2 (C) 3 (D) 4 (E) 5

Let's **UnWRAP** it:

Underline: "one possible value of the number"

Write out relevant formulas: Here we need to translate the words we're given into math: we can call "a given number" x . So "four times a given number" would be $4x$. "Twice the number" would be $2x$, and "2 more than" would be $+ 2$. "Is" means $=$.

Assemble equations: Now we need to put all those parts together:

Four times ($4 \cdot$) a given number (x) is ($=$) 2 more than ($+ 2$) twice ($2 \cdot$) the number (x) \rightarrow

$$4x = 2 + 2x$$

Plug in and solve: Now we solve for x :

$$4x = 2 + 2x \rightarrow \text{subtract } 2x \text{ from both sides} \rightarrow$$

$$2x = 2 \rightarrow \text{divide both sides by } 2 \rightarrow$$

$$x = 1$$

The correct answer is (A).

GEOMETRY & MEASUREMENT

This includes problems related to shapes or measuring space. Here's an example:

A box has length and width x and height $2x$. Its volume is 250. What is its height to the nearest tenth?

- (A) 5.0 (B) 10.0 (C) 20.0 (D) 6.3 (E) 12.6

Time to **UnWRAP**:

Underline: "height to the nearest tenth."

Write out relevant formulas:

$$\text{Volume}_{\text{box}} = \text{length} \cdot \text{width} \cdot \text{height}$$

$$\text{length} = \text{width} = x$$

$$\text{height} = 2x$$

Assemble equations: Let's substitute the values we're given for base, width, and height:

$$\text{Volume}_{\text{box}} = x \cdot x \cdot 2x$$

Plug in and solve: Now plug in the given number and solve:

$$250 = x \cdot x \cdot 2x \rightarrow \text{Now combine terms} \rightarrow$$

$$250 = 2x^3 \rightarrow \text{Divide both sides by } 2 \rightarrow$$

$$125 = x^3 \rightarrow \text{Take the cube root of both sides} \rightarrow$$

$$x = 5$$

But we're not done yet. We need the height, and

$$\text{height} = 2x \rightarrow \text{so} \rightarrow$$

$$\text{height} = 2(5) = 10$$

The answer is (B).

ALGEBRA & FUNCTIONS

This includes, well, algebra and functions: factoring, exponents, roots, quadratics, graphs, domain and range, inequalities, et cetera. Here's an example:

Let $f(x) = x^5$ and $g(z) = |z|$. What is the value of $g(f(-1))$?

- (A) -1 (B) 0 (C) 1 (D) 5

(E) Answer cannot be determined

Shall we **UnWRAP**? Indeed, we shall:

Underline: "value of $g(f(-1))$ " To solve this problem, first we need to find $f(-1)$, then we need to plug that into g .

Write out relevant formulas: From the question, we have $f(x) = x^5$ and $g(x) = |x|$.

Assemble equations: We're looking for $g(f(-1))$, so let's spell out what that means:

$$g(f(-1)) = |f(-1)|$$

$$f(-1) = (-1)^5$$

Plug in and solve: Now we just solve for $f(-1)$ and plug the answer into g :

$$f(-1) = (-1)^5 = -1 \rightarrow \text{plug that answer into } g \rightarrow$$

$$g(f(-1)) = |-1| = 1$$

So our answer is C.

DATA & STATISTICS

These questions cover probability, averages (mean, median, & mode), and data representation (graphs, tables, scatterplots, etc.). Here's an example:

A car race has 2 red cars, 3 green cars, and 4 blue cars. If a blue car comes in last, what is the probability that a red car comes in first?

- (A) $1/9$ (B) $2/9$ (C) $2/7$ (D) $1/8$ (E) $1/4$

Now for a change of pace, let's **UnWRAP** this one:

Underline: "probability that a red car comes in first."

Write out relevant formulas:

2 red cars, 3 green cars, 4 blue cars

$$\text{Probability}_{\text{event}} = \frac{\text{number of ways it could come true}}{\text{total possible outcomes}}$$

Assemble equations: We need to figure out the total number of possible outcomes and the number of ways a red car could come in first. Since there are 2 red cars, there are 2 ways one could come in first (either one could win). Since there are 9 total cars ($2 + 3 + 4 = 9$), we might think there are 9 total possible outcomes. But since a blue car definitely comes in last, we know that there are only 3 blue cars that could come in first. So we get these equations:

$$\text{Probability}_{\text{red car winning}} = \frac{\text{number of red cars}}{\text{total cars that could win}}$$

$$\text{number of red cars} = 2$$

$$\text{total cars that could win} = 8$$

Plug in and solve: This should be easy:

$$\text{Probability}_{\text{red car winning}} = 2/8 = 1/4$$

The answer is (E).

The SAT Writing section includes multiple choice questions of three types: Most tests have 18 Error Identifications, 25 Improving Sentences questions, and 6 Improving Paragraphs questions. In all three question types, you're asked to find errors in small pieces of writing, and the same errors come up over and over:

TOP TEN ERRORS ON THE SAT WRITING SECTION

Pithy Title	Example	Explanation
The numbers don't add up	The department of human resources have a meeting today.	"The department of human resources," though it includes many people, is one thing, so the verb should be "has." Verbs must match subjects and pronouns must match nouns.
Time keeps on slippin'.	Sue had a meeting tomorrow.	If the meeting is tomorrow, Sue "has" it or "will have" it. You can't say she "had" is already. Make sure the verb tenses match all the sentence's clues about time.
Don't tread on "I."	Sue and me have a meeting today.	This should be "Sue and I." A simple trick to test for this: when a pronoun is part of a list, take out the rest of the list to see if it's the right pronoun: you'd never say "Me have a meeting today," so you can't say "Sue and me have a meeting today."
Who's on first?	Liz knows Sue has a meeting today because it's on her calendar.	Whose calendar—Liz's or Sue's? If a sentence could be interpreted more than one way, it's ambiguous and needs to be edited.
Does your conjunction function?	Sue has a meeting all day, but she will not be able to answer the phone.	"But" should be "so." Conjunctions need to reflect the attitude of the sentence. Here, the first part is the cause and the second part is the effect, so "so" is better than "but."
The sentence is wrong, bad, and it's terrible.	Sue's meeting will be faster than Liz.	"Liz" should be "Liz's." It makes no sense to compare Liz's speed to Sue's meeting's speed; you should compare Liz's meeting's speed to Sue's meeting's speed. This error also comes up in lists: all the elements of a list should be the same type of thing phrased the same way; if the first two are -ing verbs, the third should be too.
Now misplaced, you will never find your modifier.	On her way to the meeting, a bus nearly hit Sue.	Tricky one: when the first half of the sentence refers to a specific word (in this case, "Sue"), the second half needs to begin with that word. Since "Sue" is the thing "on her way to the meeting," "Sue" needs to be the first word after the comma: "On her way to the meeting, Sue nearly got hit by a bus."
Be good; do well.	Sue has a briefly meeting today.	"Briefly" should be "brief." Adverbs (usually ending in "-ly") modify verbs and adjectives; adjectives modify nouns.
Brevity is the soul of wit.	Sue is planning to go to a meeting that she does not anticipate missing on this, the current day.	This could be "Sue plans to go to a meeting today." It conveys exactly the same meaning but is much shorter; therefore, it's better.
You've got the wrong word.	Sue will go at a meeting today.	"At" should be "to." In English, certain words just go together. Watch for odd word choices on the SAT.

ERROR IDENTIFICATIONS

In Error IDs, you're given a sentence with four underlined parts and asked to pick the one that needs to be edited or pick "No Error." Here's an example: Trisha is a brilliant student, a savvy negotiator, and

works very hard; her inability to secure a job for
 A B
 next year is a shocking failure of the supposedly ef-
 C D
 ficient labor market. No error.
 E

See no evil; hear the evil. Whether you know it or not, you have the rules of English grammar in your head. Maybe you can't explain the difference between a participle and a preterite verb, but you can hear when one is used incorrectly. Try to hear each sentence in your head; don't just scan for mistakes. Use your ears, not your eyes. In the example, nothing looks particularly wrong, but read it aloud—it sounds wrong, doesn't it? That's because the last item in the list in the sentence—"works very hard"—is different from the first two—"a brilliant student, a savvy negotiator." It's an error in parallelism. **The answer is (A).**

IMPROVING SENTENCES

In these questions, you're given a sentence with one part underlined, and five options for what to put in the underlined portion. The first option (A) is always the same as the original; it's like No Error. Here's an example: Walking through the countryside, the pink and blue wildflowers were especially beautiful to Marcus.

- (A) the pink and blue wildflowers were especially beautiful to Marcus.
- (B) the pink and blue wildflowers, beautiful, were special to Marcus.
- (C) the wildflowers, in both blue and pink colors, were found to be especially beautiful by Marcus.
- (D) Marcus found the pink and blue wildflowers especially beautiful.
- (E) Marcus, finding pink and blue wildflowers, and thinking they are beautiful.

Keep it in context. Most of the answer choices are designed to look good on their own; you need the rest of the sentence to figure out which one is correct. Re-read the whole sentence with each choice in context, and hear each one in your head. In the example, only (B) contains a grammatical error on its own. The other choices could all work, depending on the rest of the sentence. But if we read the whole sentence, we see it has a misplaced modifier: the first part ("Walking through the countryside") is about Marcus, so "Marcus" needs to be the first word after the comma. That still leaves (D) and (E) as possibilities. But again, substituting each of them and reading the whole sentence, we should see that if we choose (E), the sentence ("Walking through the countryside, Marcus, finding pink and blue wildflowers, and thinking they are beautiful") has no verb. Therefore **(D) is correct.**

IMPROVING PARAGRAPHS

Improving Paragraphs are a lot like Improving Sentences, except—you're not going to believe this—you're dealing with whole paragraphs instead of sentences. Some of the questions are similar, but

others ask about how the sentences work together. **Flow like Flo-Rida.** A lot of these questions are about how sentences work together, so focus on making them flow well. If Sentence 3 is negative and Sentence 4 is positive, Sentence 4 needs to start by acknowledging the change in attitude ("However," "Conversely," etc.).

THE ESSAY

Every SAT begins with an essay. You get 25 minutes to write up to two pages. Here's an example: Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Scientific fields as varied as economics and evolutionary biology paint a picture of humans as selfish and competitive, just like the rest of Earth's creatures. Some people believe we should fight this instinct, that the world has become too competitive and people should be more cooperative and less adversarial. But this view underestimates the extent to which the competitive drive is hard-wired into our brains: one person's success will always be someone else's failure.

Assignment: Must one person's success come at someone else's expense? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Follow the recipe.

This is easy: all you need to do is follow our recipe to bake yourself a delicious, nutritious, high-scoring essay:

- Answer, rephrased.** The essay prompt always has a question, and there's no right or wrong answer, but you *must* pick a side. Be clear about your position, but don't restate the question. In the example, either one person's success must come at someone else's expense, or not, but don't use those words. Instead, try something like "Though life may sometimes seem like a zero-sum game, genuine win-win situations do exist."
- 2 or 3 specific examples that support your answer.** SAT questions are lofty and abstract, but your essay shouldn't be. Consider: "Rather than competing for grades, my Chemistry classmates and I studied together and all improved our grades." Down-to-Earth but pretty convincing, right? Keep your examples simple and be sure to connect them back to your answer: "We all benefited from studying together, at no one's expense."
- 1 conclusion.** Restate your thesis, mention your examples, rephrase everything. It's that easy.

Assemble the ingredients first.

You get 25 minutes for the essay. Take the first 5 to choose an answer and make an outline. It doesn't have to be beautiful, just enough so you understand your notes and always know what you're going to say next. Here's one for the example:

Intro.	No, there are win-wins.
Ex. 1	Chem. class studying together.
Ex. 2	Discovery of penicillin helps sick people and drug companies.
Ex. 3	Yahoo using Google's algorithm benefits users and both companies.
Concl.	In school, medicine, & business, people help each other and hurt no one.

Add some flavor.

Three more quick tips to increase your score easily:

- Throw in your new vocabulary.
- Use transitions to make the last and first sentences of each paragraph flow well.
- Vary your sentence structure and length.

Make it a meal.

Use the full two pages. Studies show longer SAT essays get higher grades.

The easiest way to improve your Reading score is to learn vocabulary words. Learn five of these every week and you'll know all 240 in less than a year.

TTP's Top 240 SAT Words

Abdicate: *v.* to cast off or relinquish
Aberration: *n.* large difference from the norm
Abject: *a.* in low or miserable circumstances
Abridge: *v.* to shorten without losing meaning
Abstemious: *a.* sparing in consumption; temperant
Accolade: *n.* a symbol of approval or distinction
Acrimonious: *a.* harsh in language or expression
Acquiesce: *v.* to agree or express agreement
Acumen: *n.* shrewdness shown by keen insight
Affable: *a.* friendly; having an outgoing disposition
Alacrity: *n.* liveliness or eagerness
Alleviate: *v.* to make easier to endure; to mitigate
Alloof: *a.* remote in manner; distant; shy
Amass: *v.* to collect or gather; to gather together
Ambivalence: *n.* mixed feelings or emotions
Ameliorate: *v.* to get better; to make better
Amity: *n.* a cordial disposition; a state of friendship
Antagonize: *v.* to provoke the hostility of
Antediluvian: *a.* very old; *n.* a very old person
Apathy: *n.* an absence of interest or enthusiasm
Apocryphal: *a.* of doubtful authenticity
Arcane: *a.* obscure; largely unknown
Atrophy: *n.* weakening or degeneration
Augment: *v.* to enlarge, grow, or intensify
Avuncular: *a.* like an uncle; kind
Belie: *v.* to represent falsely; to contradict
Bellicose: *a.* showing a ready disposition to fight
Belittle: *v.* to express a negative opinion of
Belligerence: *n.* hostile or warlike disposition
Benign: *a.* not harmful
Blatant: *a.* noisy, offensive, or obvious
Brevity: *n.* the attribute of being brief or fleeting
Bucolic: *a.* relating to the countryside
Burgeon: *v.* to grow and flourish
Callous: *a.* emotionally hardened
Candid: *a.* openly straightforward; honest
Cantankerous: *a.* stubborn; irritable
Capitulate: *v.* to surrender under agreed conditions
Capricious: *a.* impulsive; motivated by whim
Censure: *n.* harsh criticism; *v.* to rebuke formally
Charlatan: *n.* a quack; one showing false pretenses
Churlish: *a.* having a bad disposition; surly; rude
Clairvoyant: *n.* psychic person; *a.* psychic
Clemency: *n.* leniency; pardon for crimes
Coalesce: *v.* to fuse or cause to mix together
Complacent: *a.* contented to a fault; unambitious
Confound: *v.* to be confusing or perplexing to
Congel: *v.* to change from liquid to solid state
Convivial: *a.* friendly, lively, and enjoyable
Copious: *a.* large in number or quantity
Cupidity: *n.* greed and strong desire for wealth
Cursory: *a.* hasty and without attention to detail
Credence: *n.* plausibility; acceptance as truth
Cryptic: *a.* mysterious; having a hidden meaning
Decorous: *a.* dignified in conduct or manners
Deviate: *v.* to stray from the norm or standard
Derelict: *a.* neglected by owner or occupant
Dictum: *n.* an authoritative declaration
Didactic: *a.* designed or intended to teach
Disdain: *n.* lack of respect; *v.* to have contempt for
Disingenuous: *a.* not honest; fake
Distend: *v.* to swell; to cause to expand
Docile: *a.* easily handled or managed; placid
Dubious: *a.* not convinced; doubtful
Edict: *n.* a proclamation having the force of law
Efface: *v.* to make insignificant; to erase completely
Effervescent: *a.* bubbly or enthusiastic
Eloquent: *a.* well-spoken; articulate
Enigmatic: *a.* not clear or understandable
Ephemeral: *a.* lasting a very short time
Epitome: *n.* a perfect example; archetype
Equivocate: *v.* to be deliberately ambiguous
Erudite: *a.* well-read or esteemed for knowledge
Eschew: *v.* to avoid or shun
Evanescent: *a.* tending to vanish like vapor
Exacerbate: *v.* to exasperate, irritate, or make worse
Exculpate: *v.* to clear from fault or guilt

Extol: *v.* to praise, glorify, or honor
Fathom: *v.* to understand or comprehend
Fastidious: *a.* giving attention to detail; demanding
Flourish: *v.* to grow stronger; to bloom
Foible: *n.* a distinctive behavioral attribute
Frivolous: *a.* not important; lacking seriousness
Frugal: *a.* avoiding waste; thrifty
Furtive: *a.* marked by quiet or secrecy
Futile: *a.* producing no result; unproductive
Garner: *v.* to acquire or deserve by one's efforts
Gaudy: *a.* conspicuous; tastelessly showy
Germane: *a.* relevant or appropriate
Glean: *v.* to gather bit by bit
Gluttony: *n.* eating to excess; excessiveness
Glib: *a.* well-spoken but insincere or shallow
Gregarious: *a.* enjoying company; sociable
Guile: *n.* the use of tricks for deception; cunning
Gusto: *n.* vigorous and enthusiastic enjoyment
Hackneyed: *a.* repeated too often; unoriginal
Harbinger: *n.* omen; sign of bad news
Haughty: *a.* blatantly and disdainfully proud
Hinder: *v.* to put at a disadvantage
Hone: *v.* to make perfect or complete; to sharpen
Hyperbole: *n.* extravagant exaggeration
Iconoclast: *n.* someone who attacks cherished ideas
Idiosyncratic: *a.* peculiar to the individual
Impudent: *a.* marked by casual disrespect
Incite: *v.* to provoke
Incorrigible: *a.* willful; unruly; not easily swayed
Indignant: *a.* angered at something unjust or wrong
Indolent: *a.* disinclined to work or exertion; lazy
Insolent: *a.* marked by casual disrespect
Innocuous: *a.* producing no injury; harmless
Ineffable: *a.* defying expression or description
Irascible: *a.* quickly aroused to anger
Irrefutable: *a.* impossible to deny or disprove
Jargon: *n.* specialized technical terminology
Jettison: *v.* to throw, as from an airplane
Jocular: *a.* characterized by jokes and good humor
Judicious: *a.* marked by the use of good judgment
Juxtapose: *v.* to place side by side to show contrast
Kindle: *v.* to cause to catch fire; to call forth
Laconic: *a.* brief and to the point; succinct
Lackadaisical: *a.* lacking spirit or liveliness; lazy
Languid: *a.* lacking spirit or liveliness
Laud: *v.* to give praise; to approve of highly
Levity: *n.* a manner lacking seriousness
Listless: *a.* lacking zest or vivacity; lethargic
Loquacious: *a.* full of trivial conversation; talkative
Lucid: *a.* having a clear mind; easily understandable
Lugubrious: *a.* excessively mournful
Magnanimous: *a.* generous; taking the high road
Maladroit: *a.* clumsy; lacking skill or adroitness
Malleable: *a.* capable of being shaped or bent
Maxim: *n.* a general truth or proverbial statement
Mellifluous: *a.* pleasing to the ear; flowing in nature
Mendacious: *a.* lying or deceitful
Mendicant: *n.* a beggar
Mettle: *n.* the courage to carry on
Mercurial: *a.* prone to sudden unpredictable change
Misanthrope: *n.* one who hates or distrusts humans
Miscreant: *n.* a person without moral scruples
Mitigate: *v.* to make less severe or harsh
Mollify: *v.* to soften, appease, or pacify
Motley: *a.* consisting of an assortment
Mundane: *a.* ordinary; boring; everyday
Munificent: *a.* very generous; giving
Myopic: *a.* lacking foresight; narrow-minded
Myriad: *n.* a large number; *a.* numerous; many
Nadir: *n.* an extreme state of adversity; lowest point
Narcissistic: *a.* self-centered; vain
Nebulous: *a.* lacking definition or definite form
Nefarious: *a.* extremely wicked
Nepotism: *n.* favoritism shown to relatives
Nexus: *n.* a connected series or group
Nullify: *v.* to show to be invalid; to declare invalid
Obdurate: *a.* stubborn; persistent in wrongdoing
Obsequious: *a.* groveling; submissive to power
Onerous: *a.* not easily borne; wearing
Obtuse: *a.* lacking sharpness or intellectual ability
Odyssey: *n.* a long, eventful journey
Opulent: *a.* ostentatiously rich or luxurious

Oscillate: *v.* to waver back and forth
Ostentatious: *a.* meant to attract notice or impress
Overt: *a.* open and observable; not secret or hidden
Palpable: *a.* capable of being perceived; tangible
Panacea: *n.* a cure-all; a remedy for all difficulties
Pander: *v.* to give satisfaction to others' desires
Parity: *n.* equality or equal status
Parsimony: *n.* extreme care in spending money
Paucity: *n.* an insufficient quantity or number
Pejorative: *a.* derogatory or demeaning
Penchant: *n.* a strong liking or fondness
Penury: *n.* a state of extreme poverty or destitution
Petulant: *a.* easily irritated or annoyed
Perfidy: *n.* betrayal of a trust
Perfunctory: *a.* hasty and without attention to detail
Peripatetic: *a.* often moving from place to place
Peripheral: *a.* related to the issue but not central to it
Pilfer: *v.* to make off with others' belongings
Placate: *v.* to soothe or mollify
Probity: *n.* complete and confirmed integrity
Proclivity: *n.* a natural inclination
Prodigal: *a.* marked by rash extravagance
Prodigious: *a.* impressively great in extent or force
Prudence: *n.* caution in practical affairs
Profuse: *a.* abundant; in great amount
Pugnacious: *a.* inclined to fight readily
Pulverize: *v.* to destroy completely
Puerile: *a.* juvenile and immature
Quagmire: *n.* a tough position; a predicament
Querulous: *a.* habitually complaining
Quixotic: *a.* impractically idealistic; unpredictable
Recalcitrant: *a.* stubbornly resistant to authority
Recant: *v.* to reject a formerly held belief
Reclusive: *a.* withdrawn from society; solitary
Replete: *a.* filled to satisfaction
Rescind: *v.* to annul by recalling; to take back
Respite: *n.* a pause, especially for relaxation
Rhetoric: *n.* effective use of language to persuade
Rupture: *v.* to make a sudden and noisy break
Saccharine: *a.* overly sweet
Salubrious: *a.* favorable to health of mind or body
Sardonic: *a.* disdainfully or ironically humorous
Scrutinize: *v.* to examine carefully or in detail
Sedulous: *a.* marked by care and persistent effort
Seditious: *a.* inciting discontent or rebellion
Sparse: *a.* not dense; not thickly settled
Spurn: *v.* to reject with contempt
Stringent: *a.* demanding strict attention to rules
Stymie: *v.* to hinder or prevent the progress of
Succinct: *a.* expressed in few words; concise
Sumptuous: *a.* rich and superior in quality
Surreptitious: *a.* marked by caution and secrecy
Sycophant: *n.* a servile, self-seeking flatterer
Symbiotic: *a.* cooperative, as a relationship
Taciturn: *a.* disinclined to talk or speak
Tantamount: *a.* essentially equal to
Tawdry: *a.* cheap and shoddy; tastelessly showy
Tenacious: *a.* sticking together; persistent
Tenuous: *a.* having little substance or significance
Tranquil: *a.* free from agitation or worry; placid
Transient: *a.* lasting a very short time
Truculence: *n.* defiant aggressiveness
Truncate: *v.* to shorten
Ubiquitous: *a.* existing everywhere at the same time
Urbane: *a.* polite and refined
Usurp: *v.* to seize by force without right
Venturesome: *a.* disposed to venture or take risks
Venal: *a.* associated with or open to bribery
Venerable: *a.* impressive by reason of age
Verbose: *a.* using or containing too many words
Vex: *v.* to bring trouble to; to annoy
Vilification: *n.* a rude expression intended to offend
Virulence: *n.* extreme hostility or harmfulness
Wanton: *a.* done maliciously or unjustifiably
Willful: *a.* disposed to disobedience; intentional
Wily: *a.* marked by skill in deception
Whet: *v.* to make keen or more acute
Wont: *n.* pattern of behavior; established custom
Whittle: *v.* to cut small bits or pare shavings from
Zealot: *n.* a fervent or militant proponent
Zenith: *n.* highest point; culmination