

antipathy

meaning

aversion; dislike

example

His extreme antipathy to dispute caused him to avoid argumentative discussions with his friends.

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astringent

meaning

binding; causing contraction; harsh or severe

example

The astringent quality of unsweetened lemon juice made swallowing difficult.

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caustic

meaning

burning; sarcastically biting

example

The critic's caustic remarks angered the hapless actors who were the subjects of his sarcasm.

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colossal

meaning

huge

example

Radio City Music Hall has a colossal stage.

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communal

meaning

held in common; of a group of people

example

When they were divorced, they had trouble dividing their communal property.

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conclave

meaning

private meeting

example

He was present at all their conclaves as an unofficial observer.

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conjecture

meaning

surmise; guess

example

I will end all your conjectures; I admit I am guilty as charged.

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deranged

meaning

insane

example

He had to be institutionalized because he was deranged.

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efface

meaning

rub out

example

The coin had been handled so many times that its data had been effaced.

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effervescence

meaning

inner excitement; exuberance

example

Nothing depressed her for long; her natural effervescence soon reasserted itself.

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erratic

meaning

odd; unpredictable

example

Investors become anxious when the stock market appears erratic.

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feckless

meaning

fertility; fruitfulness

example

The fecundity of his mind is illustrated by the many vivid images in his poems.

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fluctuation

meaning

wavering

example

Meteorologists watch the fluctuations of the barometer in order to predict the weather.

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hiatus

meaning

gap; pause

example

Except for a brief two-year hiatus, during which she enrolled in the Peace Corps, Ms. Clements has devoted herself to her medical career.

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homeostasis

meaning

tendency of a system to maintain relative stability

example

A breakdown of the body's immune system severely undermines the body's ability to maintain homeostasis.

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intangible

meaning

not able to be perceived by touch; vague

example

Though the financial benefits of his Oxford post were meager, Lewis was drawn to it by its intangible rewards: prestige, intellectual freedom, the fellowship of his peers.

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iridescent

meaning

exhibiting rainbowlike colors

example

She admired the iridescent hues of the oil that floated on the surface of the water.

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laggard

meaning

slow; sluggish

example

The sailor had been taught not to be laggard in carrying out orders.

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lassitude

meaning

languor; weariness

example

The hot, tropical weather created a feeling of lassitude and encouraged drowsiness.

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luster

meaning

shine; gloss

example

The soft luster of the silk in the dim light was pleasing.

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moratorium

meaning

legal delay of payment

example

If we declare a moratorium and delay collection of debts for six months, I am sure the farmers will be able to meet their bills.

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onomatopoeia

meaning

words formed in imitation of natural sounds

example

Words like "rustle" and "gargle" are illustrations of onomatopoeia.

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onslaught

meaning

vicious assault

example

We suffered many casualties during unexpected onslaught of the enemy troops.

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onus

meaning

burden; responsibility

example

The emperor was spared the onus of signing the surrender papers; instead, he relegated the assignment to his generals.

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opalescent

meaning

iridescent

example

The Ancient Mariner admired the opalescent sheen on the water.

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pendant

meaning

hanging down from something

example

Her pendant earrings glistened in the light.

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penury

meaning

extreme poverty

example

When his pension fund failed, George feared he would end his days in penury.

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peripheral

meaning

marginal; outer

example

We lived, not in central London, but in one of those peripheral suburbs that spring up on the outskirts of the great city.

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pernicious

meaning

very destructive, harmful

example

He argued that these books had a pernicious effect on young and susceptible minds.

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precept

meaning

practical rule guiding conduct

example

Love thy neighbor as thyself is a worthwhile precept.

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privation

meaning

hardship; want

example

In his youth, he knew hunger and privation.

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prodigal

meaning

wasteful; reckless with money

example

The prodigal son squandered his inheritance.

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propound

meaning

put forth for analysis

example

In your discussion, you have propounded several questions; let us consider each one separately.

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quarantine

meaning

isolation of a person, place, or ship to prevent spread of infection

example

We will have to place this house under quarantine until we determine the nature of the disease.

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recrimination

meaning

countercharges

example

Loud and angry recriminations were her answer to his accusations.

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reminiscence

meaning

recollection

example

Her reminiscences of her experiences are so fascinating that she ought to write a book.

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reproach

meaning

blame; censure

example

I want my work to be above reproach and without error

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rigor

meaning

severity

example

Many settlers could not stand the rigors of the New England winters.

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sedulous

meaning

diligent

example

The young woman was so sedulous that she received a commendation for her hard work.

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sibling

meaning

brother or sister

example

We may not enjoy being siblings, but we cannot forget that we still belong to the same family.

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solace

meaning

comfort in trouble

example

I hope you will find solace in the thought that all of us share your loss.

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solstice

meaning

point at which the sun is farthest from the equator

example

The winter solstice usually occurs on December 21.

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tumult

meaning

commotion; riot; noise

example

She could not make herself heard over the tumult of the mob.

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accelerate

meaning

move faster

example

In our science class, we learn how falling bodies accelerate.

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affected

meaning

artificial; pretended

example

His affected mannerisms irritated many of us who had known him before his promotion.

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