

bivouac

meaning

temporary encampment

example

While in bivouac, we spent the night in our sleeping bags under the stars.

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chronic

meaning

long established, as a disease

example

The doctors were finally able to attribute his chronic headaches and nausea to traces of formaldehyde gas in his apartment.

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concentric

meaning

having a common center

example

The target was made of concentric circles.

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conservatory

meaning

school of the fine arts (especially music or drama)

example

A gifted violinist, Marya was selected to study at the conservatory.

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disapprobation

meaning

disapproval; condemnation

example

The conservative father viewed his daughter's radical boyfriend with disapprobation.

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dormant

meaning

sleeping; lethargic; torpid

example

Sometimes dormant talents in our friends surprise those of us who never realize how gifted our acquaintances really are.

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dutiful

meaning

respectful; obedient

example

The dutiful child grew up to be a conscientious adult aware of his civic obligations.

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extradition

meaning

surrender of prisoner by one state to another

example

The lawyers opposed the extradition of their client on the grounds that for more than five years he had been a model citizen.

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fecundity

meaning

pretend

example

Lady Macbeth feigned illness in the courtyard although she was actually healthy.

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felicitous

meaning

happiness; appropriateness (of a remark, choice, etc.)

example

She wrote a note to the newlyweds wishing them great felicity in their wedded life.

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fetter

meaning

shackle

example

The prisoner was fettered to the wall.

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forte

meaning

strong point or special talent

example

I am not eager to play this rather serious role, for my forte is comedy.

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gambit

meaning

opening in chess in which a piece is sacrificed

example

The player was afraid to accept his opponent's gambit because he feared a trap which as yet he could not see.

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grapple

meaning

wrestle; come to grips with

example

He grappled with the burglar and overpowered him.

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haggle

meaning

argue about prices

example

I prefer to shop in a store that has a one-price policy because, whenever I haggle with a shopkeeper, I am never certain that I paid a fair price for the articles I purchased.

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heretic

meaning

person who maintains opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church

example

She was punished by the Spanish Inquisition because she was a heretic.

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kindle

meaning

start a fire; inspire

example

Her teacher's praise kindled a spark of hope inside her.

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millennium

meaning

thousand-year period; period of happiness and prosperity

example

I do not expect the millennium to come during my lifetime.

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officious

meaning

meddlesome; excessively pushy in offering one's services

example

After her long flight, Jill just wanted to nap, but the officious bellboy was intent on showing her all the special features of the deluxe suite.

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penance

meaning

self-imposed punishment for sin

example

The Ancient Mariner said, "I have penance done and penance more will do," to atone for the sin of killing the albatross.

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polygamist

meaning

one who has more than one spouse at a time

example

He was arrested as a polygamist when his two wives filed complaints about him.

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posthumous

meaning

after death (as of child born after father's death or book published after author's death)

example

The critics ignored his works during his lifetime; it was only after the posthumous publication of his last novel that they recognized his great talent.

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protocol

meaning

diplomatic etiquette

example

We must run this state dinner according to protocol if we are to avoid offending any of our guests.

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provoke

meaning

stir up anger; cause retaliation

example

In order to prevent a sudden outbreak of hostilities, we must not provoke our foe.

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rabid

meaning

like a fanatic; furious

example

He was a rabid follower of the Dodgers and watched them play whenever he could go to the ball park.

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renown

meaning

fame

example

For many years an unheralded researcher, Barbara McClintock gained international renown when she won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine.

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resolve

meaning

determination

example

Nothing could shake his resolve that his children would get the best education that money could buy.

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rubric

meaning

title or heading (in red print);
directions for religious ceremony;
protocol

example

In ordaining the new priests, the bishop carefully observed all the rubrics for the ordination service.

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salutary

meaning

tending to improve; beneficial;
wholesome

example

The punishment had a salutary effect on the boy, as he became a model student.

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seismic

meaning

pertaining to earthquakes

example

The Richter scale is a measurement of seismic disturbances.

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semblance

meaning

outward appearance; guise

example

Although this book has a semblance of wisdom and scholarship, a careful examination will reveal many errors and omissions.

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shackle

meaning

chain; fetter

example

The criminal's ankles were shackled to prevent his escape.

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skulk

meaning

move furtively and secretly

example

He skulked through the less fashionable sections of the city in order to avoid meeting any of his former friends.

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stealth

meaning

sliness; sneakiness; secretiveness

example

Fearing detection by the sentries on duty, the scout inched his way toward the enemy camp with great stealth.

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subjugate

meaning

conquer; bring under control

example

It is not our aim to subjugate our foe; we are interested only in establishing peaceful relations.

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surpass

meaning

exceed

example

Her SAT scores surpassed our expectations.

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unsavory

meaning

distasteful; morally offensive

example

People with unsavory reputations should not be allowed to work with young children.

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vassal

meaning

in feudalism, one who held land of a superior lord

example

The lord demanded that his vassals contribute more to his military campaign.

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vestige

meaning

trace; remains

example

We discovered vestiges of early Indian life in the cave.

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vex

meaning

annoy; distress

example

Please try not to vex your mother; she is doing the best she can.

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waggish

meaning

mischievous; humorous; tricky

example

He was a prankster who, unfortunately, often overlooked the damage he could cause with his waggish tricks.

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anvil

meaning

iron block used in hammering out metals

example

After heating the iron horseshoe in the forge, the blacksmith picked it up with his tongs and set it on the anvil.

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apprise

meaning

inform

example

When he was apprised of the dangerous weather conditions, he decided to postpone his trip.

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archipelago

meaning

group of closely located islands

example

When he looked at the map and saw the archipelagoes in the South Seas, he longed to visit them.

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artifice

meaning

deception; trickery

example

The Trojan War proved to the Greeks that cunning and artifice were often more effective than military might.

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