

consonance

meaning

harmony; agreement

example

Her agitation seemed out of consonance with her usual calm.

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cursive

meaning

flowing, running

example

In normal writing we run our letters together in cursive form; in printing, we separate the letters.

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debauch

meaning

corrupt; make intemperate

example

A vicious newspaper can debauch public ideals.

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doddering

meaning

shaky; infirm from old age

example

Although he is not as yet a doddering and senile old man, his ideas and opinions no longer can merit the respect we gave them years ago.

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execrate

meaning

curse; express abhorrence for

example

The world execrates the memory of Hitler and hopes that genocide will never again be the policy of any nation.

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exemplary

meaning

erving as a model; outstanding

example

Her exemplary behavior was praised at commencement.

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fulminate

meaning

thunder; explode

example

The people against whom she fulminated were innocent of any wrongdoing.

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gravity

meaning

seriousness

example

We could tell we were in serious trouble from the gravity of her expression.

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gruel

meaning

thin, liquid porridge

example

Our daily allotment of gruel made the meal not only monotonous but also unpalatable.

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imbroglio

meaning

complicated situation; perplexity; entanglement

example

He was called in to settle the imbroglio but failed to bring harmony into the situation.

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impasse

meaning

predicament from which there is no escape

example

In this impasse, all turned to prayer as their last hope.

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inclement

meaning

stormy; unkind

example

I like to read a good book in inclement weather.

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ingrained

meaning

deeply established; firmly rooted

example

Try as they would, the missionaries were unable to uproot the ingrained superstitions of the natives.

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interregnum

meaning

period between two reigns

example

Henry VIII desperately sought a male heir because he feared the civil strife that might occur if any prolonged interregnum succeeded his death.

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jocund

meaning

merry

example

Santa Claus is always vivacious and jocund.

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lumen

meaning

unit of light energy (one candle's worth)

example

In buying light bulbs, she checked not only their power, as measured in watts, but their brightness, as measured in lumens.

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maculated

meaning

spotted; stained

example

Instead of writing that Gorbachev had a birthmark on his forehead, the pompous young poet sang of the former premier's maculated brow.

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maternal

meaning

woman who rules a family or larger social group

example

The matriarch ruled her gypsy tribe with a firm hand.

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matriarch

meaning

point of origin; array of numbers or algebraic symbols; mold or die

example

Some historians claim the Nile Valley was the matrix of the Western civilization.

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melee

meaning

fight

example

The captain tried to ascertain the cause of the melee that had broken out among the crew members.

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mischance

meaning

ill luck

example

By mischance, he lost his week's salary.

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mote

meaning

small speck

example

The tiniest mote in the eye is very painful.

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piscatorial

meaning

pertaining to fishing

example

He spent many happy hours at the lake in his piscatorial activities.

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prehensile

meaning

capable of grasping or holding

example

Monkeys use not only their arms and legs but also their prehensile tails in traveling through the trees.

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protrude

meaning

stick out

example

His fingers protruded from the holes in his gloves.

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pseudonym

meaning

pen name

example

Samuel Clemens' pseudonym was Mark Twain.

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rote

meaning

repetition

example

He recited the passage by rote and gave no indication he understood what he was saying.

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runic

meaning

mysterious; set down in an ancient alphabet

example

Tolkien's use of Old English words and inscriptions in the runic alphabet give *The Lord of the Rings* its atmosphere of antiquity.

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sedentary

meaning

requiring sitting

example

Because he had a *sedentary* occupation, he decided to visit a gymnasium weekly.

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shun

meaning

keep away from

example

Cherishing his solitude, the recluse shunned the company of other human beings.

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sojourn

meaning

temporary stay

example

After his sojourn in Florida, he began to long for the colder climate of his native New England home.

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tome

meaning

large volume

example

He spent much time in the libraries poring over ancient tomes.

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unearthly

meaning

not earthly; weird

example

There is an unearthly atmosphere in her work that amazes the casual observer.

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variegated

meaning

many-colored

example

Without her glasses, Gretchen saw the fields of tulips as a variegated blur.

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viand

meaning

food

example

There was a variety of viands at the feast.

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wheedle

meaning

cajole; coax; deceive by flattery

example

She knows she can wheedle almost anything she wants from her father.

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whinny

meaning

neigh like a horse

example

When he laughed through his nose, it sounded as if he whinnied.

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whit

meaning

smallest speck

example

There is not a whit of intelligence or understanding in your observations.

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amorous

meaning

shapeless; vague; indeterminate

example

Don Juan was known for his amorous adventures.

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apathy

meaning

lack of caring; indifference

example

A firm believer in democratic government, she could not understand the apathy of people who never bothered to vote.

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asymmetric

meaning

not identical on both sides of a dividing central line

example

Because one eyebrow was set markedly higher than the other, William's face had a particularly asymmetric appearance.

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auspicious

meaning

favoring success

example

With favorable weather conditions, it was an auspicious moment to set sail.

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camaraderie

meaning

good-fellowship

example

What he loved best about his job was the sense of camaraderie he and his co-workers shared.

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cleft

meaning

split

example

Erosion caused a cleft in the huge boulder.

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condign

meaning

adequate; deservedly severe

example

The public approved the condign punishment for the crime.

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