

cartographer

meaning

map-maker

example

Though not a professional cartographer, Tolkien was able to construct a map of the fictional world.

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centripetal

meaning

tending toward the center

example

Does centripetal force or the force of gravity bring orbiting bodies to the earth's surface?

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charisma

meaning

divine gift; great popular charm or appeal

example

Political commentators have deplored the importance of a candidate's charisma in these days of television campaigning.

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charlatan

meaning

quack; pretender to knowledge

example

When they realized that the Wizard didn't know how to get them back to Kansas, Dorothy and her friends were sure they'd been duped by a charlatan.

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churlish

meaning

boorish; rude

example

Dismayed by his churlish manners at the party, the girls vowed never to invite him again.

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cliche

meaning

phrase culled in meaning by repetition

example

High school compositions are often marred by such cliches as "strong as an ox."

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concede

meaning

admit; yield

example

Despite all the evidence Monica had assembled, Mark refused to concede that she was right.

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convene

meaning

assemble

example

Because much is needed legislation had to be enacted, the governor ordered the legislature to convene in special session by January 15.

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culpable

meaning

deserving blame

example

Corrupt politicians who condone the activities of the gamblers are equally culpable.

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denotation

meaning

meaning; distinguishing by name

example

A dictionary will always give us the denotation of a word; frequently, it will always give us its connotation.

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dissolution

meaning

disintegration; looseness in morals

example

The profligacy and dissolution of life in Caligula's Rome appall some historians.

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docile

meaning

obedient; easily managed

example

As docile as he seems today, that old lion was once a ferocious, snarling beast.

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doggerel

meaning

poorverse

example

Although we find occasional snatches of genuine poetry in her work, most of her writing is mere doggerel.

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dross

meaning

waste matter; worthless impurities

example

Many methods have been devised to separate the valuable metal from the dross.

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egotism

meaning

conceit; vanity

example

She thought so much of herself that we found her egotism unwarranted and irritating.

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enigmatic

meaning

obscure; puzzling

example

Many have sought to fathom the enigmatic smile of the Mona Lisa.

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enormity

meaning

hugeness (in a bad sense)

example

He did not realize the enormity of his crime until he saw what suffering he had caused.

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fatuous

meaning

foolish; inane

example

He is far too intelligent to utter such fatuous remarks.

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flux

meaning

flowing; series of changes

example

While conditions are in such a state of flux, I do not wish to commit myself too deeply in this affair.

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haphazard

meaning

random; by chance

example

His haphazard reading left him unacquainted with the authors of the books.

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herbivorous

meaning

grain-eating

example

Some herbivorous animals have two stomachs for digesting their food.

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heterodox

meaning

unorthodox; unconventional

example

To those who upheld the belief that the earth did not move, Galileo's theory that the earth circled the sun was disturbingly heterodox.

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illusive

meaning

deceiving

example

This is only a mirage; let us not be fooled by its illusive effect.

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implication

meaning

that which is hinted at or suggested

example

If I understand the implications of your remark, you do not trust our captain.

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kinetic

meaning

producing motion

example

Designers of the electric automobile find that their greatest obstacle lies in the development of light and efficient storage batteries, the source of the kinetic energy needed to propel the vehicle.

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laborious

meaning

demanding much work or care;
tedious

example

In putting together his dictionary of the English language, Doctor Johnson undertook a laborious task.

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paramour

meaning

illicit lover

example

She sought a divorce on the grounds that her husband had a paramour in another town.

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paraphrase

meaning

restate a passage in one's own words while retaining thought of author

example

In 250 words or less, paraphrase this article.

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peccadillo

meaning

slight offense

example

If we examine these escapades carefully, we will realize that they are mere peccadilloes rather than major crimes.

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perceptive

meaning

insightful; aware; wise

example

Although Maud was a generally perceptive critic, she had her blind spots: she could never see flaws in the work of her friends.

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politic

meaning

expedient; prudent; well devised

example

Even though he was disappointed, he did not think it politic to refuse the offer.

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prognosis

meaning

forecasted course of a disease; prediction

example

If the doctor's prognosis is correct, the patient will be in a coma for at least twenty-four hours.

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rampant

meaning

rearing up on hind legs; unrestrained

example

The rampant weeds in the garden killed all the flowers that had been planted in the spring.

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rapport

meaning

emotional closeness; harmony

example

In team teaching, it is important that all teachers in the group have good rapport with one another.

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sextant

meaning

navigation tool used to determine a ship's latitude and longitude

example

Given a clear night, with the aid of his sextant and compass, he could keep the ship safely on course.

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somnolent

meaning

half asleep

example

The heavy meal and the overheated room made us all somnolent and indifferent to the speaker.

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specious

meaning

seemingly reasonable but incorrect

example

Let us not be misled by such specious arguments.

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suborn

meaning

persuade to act unlawfully
(especially to commit perjury)

example

In the Godfather, the mobsters used bribery and threats to suborn the witnesses against Don Michael Corleone.

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tether

meaning

tie with a rope

example

Before we went to sleep, we tethered the horses to prevent their wandering off during the night.

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title

meaning

right or claim to possession; mark of rank; name (of a book, film, etc.)

example

Though the penniless Duke of Ragwort no longer held title to the family estate, he still retained his title as head of one of England's oldest families.

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anguish

meaning

acute pain; extreme suffering

example

Visiting the site of explosion, Premier Gorbachev wept to see the anguish of the victims and their families.

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application

meaning

diligent attention; (secondary meaning) apply

example

Pleased with how well Tom had whitewashed the fence, Aunt Polly praised him for his application.

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asteroid

meaning

small planet

example

asteroids have become commonplace to the readers of interstellar travel stories in science fiction magazines.

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bombast

meaning

pompous, inflated language

example

Filled with bombast, the orator's speech left the audience more impressed with his pomposity than with his logic.

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cacophony

meaning

discord

example

Some people seem to enjoy the cacophony of an orchestra that is tuning up.

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