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| **alacrity**  uh-lak-ri-tee | *n.* 1. Promptness in responding.  The seller of the classic car accepted my first offer with such **alacrity** that I wished I had offered less.  2. Eagerness.  At the beginning of recess, the children ran to the playground with **alacrity.** |
| **array**  uh-rey | *n.* 1. A large group of people or things.  The ship’s cabin contained an **array** of charts and maps.  2. An orderly arrangement or display.  The **array** of delectable sweets on the dessert tray tempted the diners.  *v.*  1. To place in order.  The marching band was **arrayed** at the entrance to the stadium for the Thanksgiving game.  2. To dress up.  The guests had **arrayed** themselves in elaborate attire for the Viennese ball. |
| **deduce**  dih-doos | *v.* To draw a conclusion from given facts.  Your carrying an umbrella leads me to **deduce** that you expect it to rain. |
| **encumber**  en-kuhm-ber | *v.* 1. To weigh down or burden.  I stumbled through the terminal door, **encumbered** by my two heavy suitcases.  2. To impede the action of.  Ice floes—large sheets of floating ice—**encumbered** the ships of early explorers in Antarctica.  **encumbrance** *n.*  Credit card debt was an **encumbrance** to the young couple as the struggled to save money for their first house. |
| **fraught**  frawt | *adj.* Full of or accompanied by (usually followed by *with)*.  We abandoned our idea of traveling up the Amazon River when we learned that such a trip would be **fraught** with danger. |
| **haphazard**  hap-haz-erd | *adj.* Marked by lack of plan, order, or direction.  He described in humorous detail his **haphazard** travels around Europe. |
| **incontrovertible**  in-kon-truh-vur-tuh-buh-l | *adj.* Impossible to dispute; unquestionable.  His statement that carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are increasing is **incontrovertible.** |
| **inexplicable**  in-ik-splik-uh-huh-l | *adj.* Hard to explain or impossible to understand.  The disappearance of many ships and planes within the Atlantic Ocean’s Bermuda Triangle is **inexplicable** to me. |
| **ingenious**  in-jeen-yuh s | *adj.* Marked by imagination, resourcefulness, or cleverness.  Disposing of garbage by converting it into energy is an **ingenious** idea.  **ingenuity** *n.*  When she brought back her science project, the child’s **ingenuity** was immediately apparent to her teachers. |
| **laggard**  lag-erd | *n.* One who falls behind others because of moving slowly or loitering; a straggler.  The **laggards** crossed the finish line long after the winner had broken the tape.  *adj.*  We have been **laggard** in getting the roof repaired. |
| **sustenance**  suhs-tuh-nuh ns | *n.* Something that provides nourishment; food needed to live.  Roots and berries provided **sustenance** for the sailors when the storm forced them to abandon ship and take refuge on the island. |
| **torrid**  tor-id | *adj.*  1. Intensely hot and dry.  It was impossible to walk barefoot on the **torrid** desert sand.  2. Burning with passion.  The old letter was filled with **torrid** declarations of undying love. |
| **traverse**  trav-ers, truh-vers | *v.* To pass over, across, or through.  Route 66, which **traverses** the United States from Chicago to Los Angeles, is sometimes called “The Mother Road” because in 1932 it opened the West to the automobile. |
| **ubiquitous**  yoo-bik-wi-tuh s | *adj.* Appearing to be present in large numbers or in many different places.  Tourists with cameras are **ubiquitous** in Europe every summer. |
| **zenith**  zee-nith | *n.* 1. The highest point; the peak.  Winning the Nobel prize for literature is, for some writers, the **zenith** of their career.  2. The point in the sky directly above the observer.  Through the telescope, we spotted a comet that appeared to be midway between the horizon and the **zenith.** |