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| **callow**  kal-oh | *adj.* Young and inexperienced; immature.  The student was too **callow** to knew he was being fooled. |
| **contemporary**  kuh n-tem-puh-rer-ee | *n.* A person living during the same period as another.  Martha Jane Canary, known as “Calamity Jane,” and Annie Oakley were **contemporaries**.  *adj.* Existing or occurring at the same time.  The rise in fuel costs was **contemporary** with the demand for alternative fuels. |
| **cynical**  sin-i-kuh l | *adj.* Doubtful of the sincerity of others’ motives; skeptical.  People become **cynical** about diet programs when lost weight is soon regained.  **cynic** *n.*  Even though many clients have lied to her, Katharine, a public defender, has not become a **cynic**. |
| **despot**  des-puh t | *n.*  A ruler with absolute power or tyrannical control over a group of people.  In the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, thousands fled Haiti seeking refuge from the **despot** Jean Claude Duvalier.  **despotic** *adj.*  The Declaration of Independence of the United States asserts the government’s right to overthrow a **despotic** ruler. |
| **enunciate**  ih-nuhn-see-eyt | *v.* 1. To pronounce clearly.  In speech class we learn to **enunciate** our words.  2. To state; to announce.  The president **enunciated** his objectives for the coming year in his State of the Union address to Congress. |
| **impediment**  im-ped-uh-muh nt | *n.* Anything that gets in the way; an obstacle.  After the hurricane, fallen trees were **impediments** to traffic in our neighborhood. |
| **impoverish**  im-pov-rish | *v.*  1. To make poor.  Uncontrolled gambling can **impoverish** a person.  2. To take away.  Continual over-farming **impoverishes** the soil.  **impoverished** *adj.*  The Peace Corps is an agency of the United States government that sends volunteers to improve living standards in **impoverished** areas of the world. |
| **indolent**  in-dl-uh nt | *adj.*  Indulging in ease; avoiding exertion; lazy.  Being in the torrid heat of the tropical sun makes one feel **indolent**.  **indolence** *n.*  His failure to reach his goal certainly cannot be attributed to **indolence**. |
| **sagacious**  suh-gey-shuh s | *adj.* Showing sound judgment; wise.  My grandmother’s **sagacious** advice has guided me many times over the years.  **sagacity** *n.*  I was amazed when she questioned the **sagacity** of my plan to climb the mountain. |
| **secular**  sek-yuh-ler | *adj.* Worldly; not connected with a church or religion.  The choir included a few **secular** songs in the memorial service. |
| **speculate**  spek-yuh-leyt | *v.* 1. To think about or make guesses.  As we waited, we **speculated** about whether he’d keep his promise and show up.  2. To engage in a risky business venture.  She lost a great deal of money when she **speculated** in the stock market last year. |
| **strife**  strahyf | *n.* Conflict or struggle.  The **strife** between the two families has existed for a few years now. |
| **venerate**  ven-uh-reyt | *v.* To show great respect for.  Asian cultures **venerate** their ancestors long after they have died. |
| **voracious**  voh-rey-shuh s | *adj.* 1. Ravenous; desireing and eating a large amount of food.  We arrived back from our hike with **voracious** appetites.  2. Greatly eager.  Simon has been a **voracious** reader since childhood. |
| **wane**  weyn | *v.* To get smaller, dimmer, or weaker; to near an end.  When interest in sitcoms **waned**, the television networks switched to reality shows. |