A Cure for the Common WORD

Remedy Your Ailing Vocabulary with 3,000+ Vibrant Alternatives to the Most Overused Words

K.D. Sullivan
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Introduction

I’m reading a very interesting book.

Can you tell from the preceding sentence exactly what I mean by *interesting?* Not really. But what if I say, “I’m reading a very *helpful* book” or “I’m reading a very *comprehensive* book”? By changing just one word in this sentence to a more specific word, I convey a different meaning and give you more information about what I want to say. That’s the goal of *A Cure for the Common Word*—to help you learn to more precisely convey your intended meaning when you write and when you speak.

Many of us tend to use the same words over and over. Even though it is estimated that the average person knows more than twenty thousand words, he or she uses only about 10 percent of those in daily life. Often it’s out of habit or because it’s easier to use the same old words, but sometimes it’s because we don’t fully understand the nuance of some alternative words or when it might be appropriate—and more powerful—to use them.

Granted, sometimes a vague or ambiguous word is just what you want—for example, when you are being discreet or want to leave your words open to interpretation. For example, if friends set you up on a less-than-stellar blind date, you can gracefully get out of giving a negative opinion by vaguely describing your date as a “nice” guy.

If you do want to be specific, then by expanding your repertoire of words, when you write and speak you will be able to use the most precise word for your meaning, not just the first word that comes to mind. And by using these more precise words, you will be able to communicate *exactly* what you mean and will do so in a quick and concise manner.

Using the same example of our blind date—and assuming this time that the date with Rich was a positive one—see what happens when we use different alternatives for our “nice” guy?
A Cure for the Common Word is for anyone from middle-school age to adult, for those who write and speak in their profession and those eager to improve their vocabulary to be more effective in what they say.

For example, did you know that in the preceding sentence, eager is exactly the right word, rather than anxious, which many people would have used? That's because eager means having or showing keen interest or intense desire, whereas anxious means uneasy and apprehensive about an uncertain event.

How to Use This Book

This book includes one hundred of the most commonly overused words in the English language, based on research from several sources. Because these common words can often be vague, limiting, or confusing in a sentence, we'll show you how choosing specific alternatives to these common words helps you to more precisely convey your intended meaning.

Before we describe the elements of this book, let’s take a brief look at the definitions of a few terms used throughout the book:

connotation—the associated or secondary meaning of a word or an expression in addition to its explicit or primary meaning
definition—a statement of the meaning of a word, phrase, or term, as in a dictionary entry
impression—a strong effect produced on the intellect, feelings, conscience, etc.
meaning—what is intended to be, or actually is, expressed or indicated
nuance—a subtle difference or distinction in expression, meaning, response, etc.

Each of these refers to going beyond the definition of a word, to the subtleties of what you mean—or what is perceived.

Now a guide to help you with the symptoms of and cures for the common words in this book.

A number of elements are associated with each of the one hundred common words in this book. The following descriptions will help you gain the most use of the alternatives offered in this book.

On each left-hand page, you’ll see

• **The common word.** Be alert because of the one hundred common words, a few are the same word in spelling but not in definition. You’re not seeing double.

• **The common word’s part of speech.**

• **A brief definition or definitions of the common word.** Some common words are given only one definition, but other common words can be defined more than one way, all similar in nature.

• **Seven alternatives to the common word.** The meanings of these will all appear on the right-hand page.

• **A more thorough list of alternatives for the common word.** Though this list may not include all synonyms, we’ve listed the most relevant and/or powerful alternatives. A traditional thesaurus—in print or online—may list more words in all their forms, including their parts of speech.

• **And for fun, a famous quote.** The quote gives an example in which one of the alternatives was just the right word—the precise cure for what the speaker wanted to say.
On each right-hand page, you’ll find

• **The diagnosis.** Each of the common words has some symptoms that need a cure. The diagnosis of the problem will be vague, limiting, or confusing.

• **A sentence using the common word.** Think of this as our “patient.” Here’s where you’ll see how the common word may not convey clearly what you want to say (vague), doesn’t say enough of what you’d like to convey (limiting), or could have different meanings (confusing).

• **The sentence’s meaning.** Here are the “symptoms” of the common word—what the sentence means as written and how using the common word may keep us from understanding what’s truly meant.

• **Expanded alternatives and meanings.** These “remedies” to our diagnosis are just a few of the many options you can choose from to highlight a primary point you want to make or a meaning you want to imply. Note that these alternative meanings and explanations are not definitions. Some alternatives are very similar and offer only slight nuances—subtle connotations or implications that evoke slightly different feelings or perceptions of what’s meant. Others show how changing the word can dramatically change the actual meaning of the sentence. So look for key words to differentiate the implications of using each alternative.

• **A second quote.** Another fun, inspirational, or witty quote illustrates how choosing one of the alternative words gives a sentence—or sentiment—power and precise meaning.

**A Wealth of Words**

Because English has welcomed influences from so many other languages, you have a wealth of word choices to consider. Here are a few statistics you may not be aware of:

• The English language consists of more than a million words, if you include technical and scientific terms.
• The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), Second Edition, contains approximately 291,500 main entries with a total of more than 600,000 definitions, and *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition, contains approximately 25,000 main entries and more than 400,000 definitions!

• Experts estimate that the average educated person knows about 20,000 words and uses about 2,000 in a week.

It’s actually pretty great that we have so many ways to express ourselves, and it can be fun discovering and using just the right word to say so precisely/exactly/perfectly/ideally/eloquently what we want to say/express/convey/write/communicate.

One of the very best ways that you can improve your vocabulary and develop your writing and speaking skills is to read, read, read. As you do, be aware of how effective writers present their ideas in ways that enable you to know and feel exactly what they’re saying, as if you’re right in the middle of the action.

I hope that the examples and alternatives to the common words in this book give you a great deal of information of what’s possible. And I hope that this is a springboard for you to try new words, not only with the common overused words in this book, but in all your writing and speaking.

This book is for all those who are eternally curious, who have a joy in learning, and who ask and seek when they don't know. Have fun!
**absolutely**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF SPEECH</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>positively; certainly; having no restriction, exception, or qualification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```
absolutely  actually  categorically  completely  conclusively  consummately  decidedly  decisively  def  definitely  doubtless  easily  entirely  exactly  fully  ideally  positively  precisely  purely  really  right on  straight out  sure enough  surely  thoroughly  truly  unambiguously  unconditionally  unquestionably  utterly  wholly
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**CURED!**

Frodo: “You’re late.” Gandalf: “A wizard is never late, Frodo Baggins. Nor is he early. He arrives **precisely** when he means to.”

J. R. R. TOLKIEN
Bob is absolutely the right person for the job.

We know from this sentence that Bob is a good choice, but we’d like more information on how that was determined or why he is so right for the job.

Substitute an alternative remedy for absolutely:

Bob is ______________ the right person for the job.

- **conclusively**: There were some questions as to whether Bob was right for the job, and this puts an end to any debate.
- **consummately**: Bob has the highest degree of qualifications for the job.
- **decidedly**: There was never any hesitation that Bob was right for the job.
- **easily**: Neither discussion nor considering other candidates was even necessary, because Bob is without question right for the job.
- **fully**: Bob is right for the job in every manner and degree.
- **precisely**: For some or many reasons, Bob is exactly the right choice—even if he doesn't match an original profile of who would be right.
- **unconditionally**: Bob is right for the job, with no conditions or limits on that perspective.

*Effort only fully releases its reward after a person refuses to quit.*

—NAPOLEON HILL
There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method.

HERMAN MELVILLE
Matt stayed after school to spend time on his **activity**.

We’re unsure whether Matt is spending time on something fun—or not fun. The following alternatives give us more information.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *activity*:

Matt stayed after school to spend time on his ____________.

- **enterprise**: Matt is doing something that involves his ingenuity or is related to something entrepreneurial.
- **exercise**: Matt is doing something as a means of practice or training.
- **job**: Matt is performing work as part of the routine of his occupation, possibly for pay.
- **pastime**: Matt is enjoying a hobby or something that amuses him.
- **project**: Matt is working on something he has contemplated or devised either for fun or to meet an obligation, such as a science project.
- **pursuit**: Matt is putting in an effort to attain something that meets special criteria for him, a quest, such as practicing and honing a particular skill.
- **task**: Matt has a commonly assigned piece of work to be finished within a certain time.

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*Defining and analyzing humor is a *pastime* of humorless people.*

ROBERT BENCHLEY
**PART OF SPEECH**
verb

**DEFINITION**
to produce a material influence upon or alteration in

---

**cures for the common word**

- act on
- alter
- change
- disturb
- impinge
- impress
- incline
- induce
- influence
- inspire
- interest
- involve
- moderate
- modify
- motivate
- move
- overcome
- perturb
- prevail
- prompt
- regard
- relate
- stir
- sway
- touch
- transform
- upset

---

Some painters **transform** the sun into a yellow spot, others transform a yellow spot into the sun.

**PABLO PICASSO**

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Your decision will **affect** the outcome.

We know the outcome will be altered, but not how much your decision will be an influence, or if it will be positive or negative or to your advantage or the advantage of others.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *affect*:

Your decision will ______________ the outcome.

- **alter**
  The outcome will be different in some ways, but without completely changing it into something new.

- **influence**
  You have the power or capacity to cause a change in indirect or intangible ways—presumably in your favor—and this may indicate negative interference.

- **modify**
  Your decision will cause fundamental changes to the outcome and may even give a new orientation to the end.

- **prompt**
  Your decision will spur on action.

- **sway**
  Your decision will have a controlling influence, possibly in a way that benefits you but not necessarily others.

- **transform**
  Your decision will greatly change the outcome in a positive way.

- **upset**
  Your decision will unexpectedly defeat an anticipated outcome.

---

*We write frankly and freely but then we “modify” before we print.*

MARK TWAIN
amazing

PART OF SPEECH: adjective
DEFINITION: causing great surprise or sudden wonder

Love is the only shocking act left on the face of the earth.

SANDRA BERNHARD
The magician performed amazing tricks.

We were all amazed at the wonder of the magician’s tricks, but amazing doesn’t specify whether the experience was intellectual or emotional, positive or negative. There are different ways to be amazed.

powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for amazing:

The magician performed _____________ tricks.

 alarming The tricks were startling and caused a sudden fear or panic.
 bewildering The tricks confused us, especially because of their complexity, variety, and multitude of objects and considerations.
 dumbfounding The tricks were so remarkable that we didn't know what to say.
 electrifying The tricks startled us and thrilled us.
 impressive The tricks made such an impression on us that we marveled at how the magician was able to accomplish them.
 remarkable The tricks were uncommon in an extraordinary way.
 shocking The tricks were extremely startling, distressing, or offensive.

I deny the lawfulness of telling a lie to a sick man for fear of alarming him. You have no business with consequences; you are to tell the truth.

SAMUEL JOHNSON
PART OF SPEECH: adjective
DEFINITION: very impressive; inspiring; terrific, extraordinary

awe-inspiring
breathtaking
imposing
moving
majestic

Cures for the common word:

- alarming
- astonishing
- awe-inspiring
- awful
- beautiful
- breathtaking
- daunting
- dreadful
- exalted
- fabulous
- fearful
- fearsome
- formidable
- frantic
- frightening
- grand
- horrifying
- imposing
- impressive
- intimidating
- magnificent
- majestic
- mind-blowing
- moving
- nervous
- outstanding
- overwhelming
- shocking
- striking
- stunning
- stupefying
- stupendous
- terrible
- terrifying
- wonderful
- wondrous

Thunder is good, thunder is **impressive**; but it is lightning that does the work.

MARK TWAIN
The view of Bryce Canyon’s rock formations was **awesome**.

*Awesome* is an all-encompassing description of the rock formations, which made a significant impression on us, but limits us from knowing just how the view impacted us.

---

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *awesome*:

The view of Bryce Canyon’s rock formations was _________.

- **awe-inspiring**: The view inspired awe by its exceptional beauty.
- **breathtaking**: The view was exciting, thrilling, and astonishing, figuratively taking our breath away, because we’d never seen anything like this before.
- **imposing**: The formations were very impressive because of their great size, dignity, and stately appearance.
- **impressive**: The view gave us a feeling of respect and admiration for what nature had created.
- **majestic**: The view had an air of authority and dignity—superior to mundane matters.
- **moving**: The view was stirring and evoked strong feelings or emotions.
- **wondrous**: The view is to be marveled at, and we appreciated its wonder, uniqueness, or other special qualities.

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**CURED!**

*The speed of communications is **wondrous** to behold. It is also true that speed can multiply the distribution of information that we know to be untrue.*

EDWARD R. MURROW
bad

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  of poor or inferior quality; defective; deficient

cures for the common word

abominable  disagreeable  offensive
amiss  dissatisfactory  poor
atrocious  dreadful  repulsive
awful  erroneous  rough
bad news  fallacious  sad
beastly  faulty  skuzzy
bottom out  harmful  sleazy
bummer  imperfect  slipshod
careless  inadequate  stinking
cheap  incorrect  synthetic
atrocious  inferior  unacceptable
awful  injurious  unfavorable
bad news  lousy  unsatisfactory
beastly  off  unsatisfactory
bottom out  careless  cheap
bummer  corrupt  crummy
defective  disagreeable  offensive
deficient  dissatisfactory  poor

You’d be surprised how much it costs to look this cheap.  
DOLLY PARTON

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One of the judges felt the contestant’s **bad** costume ruined the performance.

Using *bad* doesn’t indicate what the judge thought was so awful about the costume, and the alternatives tell us more about how the quality of a costume could ruin a whole performance.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for *bad*:

One of the judges felt the contestant’s ____________ costume ruined the performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>atrocious</td>
<td>The contestant’s costume was shockingly dreadful, abominable—extremely awful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheap</td>
<td>Nothing negative about something being inexpensive, but <em>cheap</em> gives the implication that it is also of poor quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defective</td>
<td>The costume wasn’t working properly during the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferior</td>
<td>The contestant’s costume didn’t meet high enough expectations to make a good impression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offensive</td>
<td>The contestant’s costume was disagreeable and repugnant to the senses, morally or otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleazy</td>
<td>The costume was flimsy, and the connotation is that it didn’t show the class or sophistication it probably should have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slipshod</td>
<td>The costume was sloppy, and the judge could tell it was put together carelessly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CURED!**

*Revenge is not always sweet, once it is consummated we feel **inferior** to our victim.*

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**EMILE M. CIORAN**
**PART OF SPEECH**  
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**  
*elementary; of, being, or serving as a starting point; fundamental*

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**cures for the common word**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>basal</th>
<th>foundational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beginning</td>
<td>fundamental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capital</td>
<td>indispensable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>central</td>
<td>inherent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chief</td>
<td>intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy</td>
<td><strong>introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elemental</td>
<td>key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elementary</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essential</td>
<td>necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>principal</strong></td>
<td>primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>principal</strong></td>
<td>primitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radical</td>
<td>rudimentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simplified</td>
<td>substratal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substratal</td>
<td>underlying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vital</td>
<td><strong>intrinsic</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*In the television age, the key distinction is between the candidate who can speak poetry and the one who can only speak prose.*

**RICHARD M. NIXON**
Our textbook covered the **basic** concepts of advertising.

We can tell that the concepts in the book are necessary in any study of advertising, but the definition of what is considered *basic* isn’t clear.

Substitute an alternative remedy for *basic*:

Our textbook covered the _____________ concepts of advertising.

- **chief**: These are the most important concepts, though there are different perspectives on what is most important.
- **elementary**: The concepts covered pertain to the rudimentary principles of advertising.
- **essential**: The concepts covered are indispensable and should not be disregarded.
- **foundational**: These concepts represent the groundwork on which more advanced study will be based.
- **introductory**: The concepts covered serve as only a starting point, with much more to be learned.
- **key**: The major and pivotal concepts are covered; *key* may also mean the concepts are presented in a brief or condensed manner.
- **principal**: Concepts of highest importance are covered.

---

_Sir Walter Scott_

> *All men who have turned out worth anything have had the chief hand in their own education.*
beautiful

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  having qualities that give great pleasure or satisfaction to the senses or mind

cures for the common word

alluring  angelic
appealing  attractive
beauteous  bewitching
charming  classy
comely  cute
dazzling  delicate
delightful  divine
elegant

enticing  excellent  exquisite
fascinating  fine  foxy
fascinating  good-looking  gorgeous
graceful  grand  handsome
ideal  lovely  magnificent

cured!

"To love for the sake of being loved is human, but to love for the sake of loving is angelic."

ALPHONSE DE LEMARTINE
The **beautiful** statue caught our attention.

We know the statue is appealing and attention grabbing, but we’re not sure exactly in what way.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *beautiful*:

The ____________ statue caught our attention.

- **alluring**: The statue has a tempting, enticing, or seductive quality.
- **angelic**: The statue is befitting an angel, especially in beauty or in expressing virtue.
- **delicate**: The details or craftsmanship of the statue is exquisitely fine or dainty.
- **elegant**: The statue is luxurious in style or design.
- **fascinating**: There’s something about the look or meaning of the statue that is of great interest or attraction.
- **graceful**: The statue is pleasing or attractive in line, proportion, or movement.
- **stunning**: The statue is strikingly impressive, especially in beauty or excellence.

"Grow **graceful**, growing old."  
ANONYMOUS
**verb**

*to perform the first or earliest part of some action; to commence; to start*

- **commence**
- **embark on**
- **initiate**
- **undertake**
- **launch**
- **plunge into**
- **mount**

**cures for the common word**

- activate
- actualize
- break ground
- bring about
- cause
- **commence**
- create
- effect
- **embark on**
- enter on
- enter upon
- establish
- eventuate
- found
- generate
- get going
- give impulse
- go ahead
- go into
- impel
- inaugurate
- induce
- **initiate**
- instigate
- institute
- introduce
- **launch**
- lead
- make
- make active
- motivate
- **mount**
- occasion
- open
- originate
- **plunge into**
- prepare
- produce
- set about
- set up
- trigger
- undertake

---

"Two of the most difficult tasks a writer can **undertake**, to write the truth about himself and about his mother."

*TIME MAGAZINE*

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The military will **begin** the offensive in twenty-four hours.

The use of *begin* tells us when the action will start, but it doesn’t give us a clear idea of the military’s role and intent.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *begin*:

The military will ______________ the offensive in twenty-four hours.

- **commence**
  The military is taking the first step to set the offensive in motion.

- **embark on**
  The military is about to begin a major offensive.

- **initiate**
  The military will take the lead in the offensive.

- **launch**
  The military will enter enthusiastically into the offensive.

- **mount**
  The military will be increasing the amount or intensity of the offensive.

- **plunge into**
  The military will forcibly thrust into the offensive, or perhaps it is moving ahead suddenly.

- **undertake**
  The military is taking it upon itself to achieve its objective.

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**CURED!**

*Courage is the ladder on which all the other virtues mount.*

CLARE BOOTHE LUCE
The qualities of an exceptional cook are akin to those of a successful tightrope walker: an abiding passion for the task, courage to go out on a limb and an impeccable sense of balance.

BRYAN MILLER
George is a better choice for lead guitarist.

We’d like to know what particular quality makes George the better choice and why better than someone else.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *better*:

George is a _____________ choice for lead guitarist.

- **exceptional** George is an unusually excellent lead guitarist, making him one of a select, exclusive group.
- **higher quality** George’s talents are above those of others who were compared.
- **more appropriate** George is the better choice for reasons beyond his playing skills; for example, he may look better for the part or have good connections in the industry.
- **preferable** George is the choice over others, but *preferable* still doesn’t tell us exactly why.
- **sophisticated** George’s music appeals to the tastes of a more discerning or knowledgeable audience.
- **superior** George’s talents are above those of the average guitarist.
- **worthier** George is more deserving of the gig of lead guitarist.

“The risk of a wrong decision is preferable to the terror of indecision.”

MAIMONIDES
PART OF SPEECH: adjective  
DEFINITION: large, as in size, height, width, or amount

cures for the common word

ample  brimming  bulky  burly  capacious  chock-full  colossal  commodious  considerable  copious  enormous  extensive  fat  full  gigantic  heavy-duty  heavyweight  hefty  huge  hulking  humungous  husky  immense  jumbo  king-sized  mammoth  massive  monster  oversize  ponderous  prodigious  roomy  sizable  spacious  strapping  stuffed  substantial  thundering  vast  voluminous  walloping  whopping

“Old age is like climbing a mountain. You climb from ledge to ledge. The higher you get, the more tired and breathless you become, but your views become more extensive.”

INGMAR BERGMAN

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Casey stood beside the big marble columns of the Acropolis.

We all have different perspectives on size, and big in this sentence doesn’t give us a familiar frame of reference, whereas some of the alternatives give us a much better sense of the columns’ enormity.

Substitute an alternative remedy for big:

Casey stood beside the _____________ marble columns of the Acropolis.

- **colossal**: Generally meaning “extraordinarily great in size,” in architecture *colossal* can also pertain to a classical order whose columns span two or more stories of a building.
- **extensive**: The columns extend over a great area.
- **hefty**: The columns are clearly heavy and weighty.
- **massive**: The columns are large and bulky.
- **prodigious**: Many things can be big, but *prodigious* gives the sense that to you they are unusually great in size.
- **substantial**: Not only are the columns big in size, but they are also of solid and strong construction.
- **whopping**: An informal way to say, “Those columns are huge!”

Why does a slight tax increase cost you two hundred dollars and a substantial tax cut save you thirty cents?

PEG BRACKEN
boring

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION   uninteresting and tiresome; dull

interminable
monotonous
stale
wearisome
stodgy
tedious

**cures for the common word**

bomb
bromidic
characterless
colorless
commonplace
drab
drag
drudging
dull
flat
ho-hum
humdrum
insipid

interminable
irksome
lifeless
monotonous
platitudinous
plebeian
prosaic
repetitious
routine
spiritless
stale
stereotypical
stodgy

stuff
stupid
tame
tedious
threadbare
tiresome
tiring
trite
unexciting
vapid
wearisome
well-worn
zero

**CURED!**

*Poetry is like fish: if it’s fresh, it’s good; if it’s *stale*, it’s bad; and if you’re not certain, try it on the cat.*

OSBERT SITWELL

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Michael and Beth sat through a **boring** movie.

From this sentence, it’s likely a safe bet that Michael and Beth didn’t enjoy the movie, but we don’t know what specific qualities made it so dull.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *boring*:

Michael and Beth sat through a ______________ movie.

- **interminable**: The movie was so monotonously or annoyingly long that they thought it would never end.
- **monotonous**: The movie was severely lacking in variety.
- **stale**: The movie had no novelty; it was just like movies they’d seen over and over before.
- **stodgy**: The movie was unduly formal and traditional.
- **tedious**: The movie was tiresome because it was so long, slow, or dull.
- **unexciting**: The movie wasn’t at all stimulating or thought-provoking.
- **wearisome**: The movie was so lacking in interest that Michael and Beth were mentally tired out.

---

“Golf without bunkers and hazards would be tame and **monotonous**. So would life.”

B. C. FORBES
PART OF SPEECH    verb
DEFINITION      to carry, convey, lead, or cause to go along to another place

accompanied
transport
escort
usher
chaperone
lead
schlepp

You can lead a man to Congress, but you can’t make him think.

MILTON BERLE

CURED!
Please bring the stars of the show backstage.

Choosing bring in this sentence is very neutral and doesn’t tell us much about the speaker’s perspective or opinion—about you or the stars of the show.

Powerful Remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for bring:

Please ______________ the stars of the show backstage.

**accompany** You’re being asked to come backstage along with the stars, suggesting you are a welcome participant as opposed to someone doing a job.

**chaperone** As part of your task, you may need to ensure propriety or restrict the activity of the stars or others in some way.

**escort** Choosing escort can give a sense of respect for the stars or can suggest that the stars require some supervision.

**lead** In this case, you will go before the stars in order to show the way.

**schlepp** Schlepp gives the sense that the person speaking isn’t very impressed or thrilled about accompanying the stars backstage.

**transport** This implies you’ll need to use some sort of car, cart, etc., to convey the stars, since it’s doubtful you’ll need to physically carry them.

**usher** You will lead the stars backstage and possibly introduce them to the appropriate person or people.

Cured!

“When you escort someone, escort him all the way to his destination; if you help someone, help him thoroughly.”

Chinese Proverb
certain

PART OF SPEECH adjective
DEFINITION confident; free from doubt or reservation

assured
conclusive
evident
unambiguous
reliable
irrefutable
fixed

We have no reliable guarantee that the afterlife will be any less exasperating than this one, have we?

NOEL COWARD

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The outcome of the election was **certain**.

In this sentence, we can’t clearly tell whether the certainty of the election was perceived in a positive or negative light.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *certain*:

The outcome of the election was ____________.

- **assured**: The sense is that the outcome was promised or guaranteed in advance, and this can have either a positive or a negative connotation.

- **conclusive**: The outcome served to settle a question.

- **evident**: The outcome of the election is obvious and easily seen or understood.

- **fixed**: This offers a negative connotation, implying that the outcome was arranged in advance privately and possibly dishonestly.

- **irrefutable**: It would be impossible to deny or disprove the outcome.

- **reliable**: People will be confident that the outcome is dependable, accurate, and honest.

- **unambiguous**: The outcome has a single clearly defined meaning.

---

*If you think of paying court to the men in power, your eternal ruin is assured.*

STENDHAL [MARIE-HENRI BEYLE]
change

**PART OF SPEECH**  
verb

**DEFINITION**  
to make different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone

---

**cures for the common word**

accommodate  
adapt  
**adJUST**  
alter  
alternate  
commute  
convert  
**diminish**  
diverge  
diversify  
evolve  
fluctuate  
make over  
make innovations  
**moderate**

**modify**  
modulate  
mutate  
naturalize  
recondition  
redo  
reform  
regenerate  
remake  
remodel  
renovate  
reorganize  
replace  
resolve  
restyle

revolutionize  
shape  
shift  
substitute  
tamper with  
transfigure  
transform  
translate  
transmute  
transpose  
turn  
vacillate  
**vary**  
veer  
warp

---

*Age does not diminish the extreme disappointment of having a scoop of ice cream fall from the cone.*

JIM FIEBIG

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Martha always wants to change the rules in the middle of the game.

We can infer from this sentence that the speaker is not happy about the rule changing, but how unhappy may be better clarified by how and how much Martha wants to change the rules.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for change:

Martha always wants to __________ the rules in the middle of the game.

- **adapt**
  - Martha wants to make logical or fitting changes that make sense.

- **adjust**
  - Now Martha wants to change the rules so they fit or conform—but to her perspective and not necessarily to anyone else’s.

- **diminish**
  - Martha wants to put less emphasis on the rules of the game, perhaps because it’s not going well for her.

- **moderate**
  - Martha feels there are too many rules or they are too strict, so she wants to reduce the excessiveness of them.

- **modify**
  - Martha wants to change the form or quality of the rules, but only slightly.

- **reorganize**
  - Martha wants to completely rearrange the rules.

- **vary**
  - Martha wants to change the rules slightly to avoid monotony.

---

*Not being able to control events, I control myself, and I adapt myself to them, if they do not adapt themselves to me.*

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE
**choose**

**PART OF SPEECH**  
verb

**DEFINITION**  
to select from a number of possible alternatives; to decide on and pick out

---

### CURES FOR THE COMMON WORD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>accept</th>
<th>fancy</th>
<th>set aside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>adopt</td>
<td>favor</td>
<td>settle upon</td>
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<tr>
<td>appoint</td>
<td>finger</td>
<td>single out</td>
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<tr>
<td>cast</td>
<td>fix on</td>
<td>slot</td>
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<tr>
<td>co-opt</td>
<td>glean</td>
<td>sort</td>
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<tr>
<td>crave</td>
<td>identify</td>
<td>tag</td>
</tr>
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<td>take</td>
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<td>decide on</td>
<td>love</td>
<td>tap</td>
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<td>elect</td>
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<td>winnow</td>
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<td>see fit</td>
<td>wish for</td>
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<tr>
<td>extract</td>
<td>select</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*History will never accept difficulties as an excuse.*

JOHN F. KENNEDY
This year the foundation will **choose** two charities to support.

Using *choose* in this sentence gives complete information but doesn’t give us the sense of how the members of the foundation feel or think about the two charities.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *choose*:

This year the foundation will _____________ two charities to support.

- **accept**
  The charities were suggested or offered (as opposed to sought out), and the foundation will respond affirmatively to supporting them.

- **elect**
  In this case, the charities were voted on and won the votes.

- **embrace**
  The foundation willingly and eagerly wants to support these two charities.

- **favor**
  The foundation prefers these two charities and may have treated them with partiality in comparison to other charities.

- **identify**
  This tells us that the foundation recognized these two charities; the connotation is that the foundation recognized *and* chose them.

- **nominate**
  The foundation is proposing these two charities to support.

- **prefer**
  The foundation members like these two charities better and value them more highly than others.

---

*People say that life is the thing, but I prefer reading.*

LOGAN PEARSELL SMITH
**common**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF SPEECH</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
<td>ordinary; widespread; general; of frequent occurrence; usual; familiar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**cures for the common word**

- accepted
- average
- banal
- bourgeois
- casual
- characteristic
- colloquial
- conventional
- current
- customary
- daily
- everyday
- familiar
- frequent
- general
- habitual
- hackneyed
- homely
- humdrum
- informal
- mediocre
- monotonous
- natural
- obscure
- passable
- plain
- prevailing
- prevalent
- prosaic
- regular
- routine
- run-of-the-mill
- simple
- stale
- standard
- stereotypical
- stock
- trite
- typical
- undistinguished
- universal
- unvaried
- usual
- wearisome
- workaday

*Great spirits have always faced violent protest from mediocre minds.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Claire selected a **common** theme for her term paper.

As the multiple definitions of this word indicate, *common* can mean such a wide variety of things—some positive and some negative—so we are unclear as to what it means in this sentence.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *common*:

Claire selected a _____________ theme for her term paper.

- **conventional** The theme is ordinary rather than different or original, but this doesn’t usually have a negative connotation.
- **familiar** The theme is one known by many people.
- **mediocre** The theme is of only ordinary or moderate quality; it is barely adequate.
- **routine** The theme is unimaginative and in this sentence has a negative connotation—likely indicating the professor has seen this theme over and over.
- **simple** The theme is easy to understand, and we’re not sure in this case if that’s good or bad.
- **stale** The theme lacks originality or spontaneity or presents a perspective that many have presented before.
- **stock** Since *stock* means something kept regularly on hand, this theme might have been taken from a list online or some overused resource.

*My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.*

THE DALAI LAMA
PART OF SPEECH  adjective  
DEFINITION  free from error; especially conforming to fact or truth

cures for the common word

actual  impeccable  right  
amen  just  righteous  
appropriate  legitimate  rigorous  
equitable  nice  stone  
exact  OK  strict  
factual  on target  true  
faithful  perfect  undistorted  
faultless  precise  unmistakable  
flawless  proper  veracious  
for sure  regular  veridical  

Cyberspace: a consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation.

WILLIAM GIBSON
Be sure to use the correct details in the brochure.

Especially in business, correct can mean much more than just the facts—it can refer to etiquette or tone—so we need more description of what correct means for the brochure.

Substitute an alternative remedy for correct:

Be sure to use the ___________ details in the brochure.

**appropriate** The details should be suitable or fitting for this particular brochure.

**factual** Be sure all details pertain to accurate facts.

**legitimate** The details need to be in accordance with established or accepted patterns and standards.

**on target** This is a slang way to say that the details should reach a particular audience or substantiate a point.

**precise** The details should be exactly what you want to say, neither more nor less.

**proper** The details should strictly belong or be applicable to the brochure, company, and/or image.

**undistorted** The details should not be altered or misrepresented.

---

*In suggesting gifts: money is appropriate, and one size fits all.*

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF SPEECH</th>
<th>verb</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
<td>to set or make true, accurate, or right; to remove the errors or faults from</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Cures for the Common Word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>alter</th>
<th>help</th>
<th>remedy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ameliorate</td>
<td>improve</td>
<td>remodel</td>
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<td>launder</td>
<td>reorganize</td>
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<td>better</td>
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<td>change</td>
<td>make right</td>
<td>retouch</td>
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<td><strong>clean up</strong></td>
<td>mend</td>
<td>review</td>
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<td>cure</td>
<td>pay dues</td>
<td>revise</td>
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<tr>
<td>debug</td>
<td>pick up</td>
<td>revise</td>
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<tr>
<td>do over</td>
<td><strong>polish</strong></td>
<td>revise</td>
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<td>doctor</td>
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<td><strong>edit</strong></td>
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<td>set straight</td>
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<td>fiddle with</td>
<td><strong>polish</strong></td>
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<td>fix up</td>
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<td>go over</td>
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<td><strong>reclaim</strong></td>
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**CURED!**

*He who does not get fun and enjoyment out of every day . . . needs to reorganize his life.*

GEORGE M. ADAMS

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Lois will **correct** the article before it’s published.

We know Lois will fix the article in some way, but using a more precise word will help us understand to what level or degree.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *correct*:

Lois will ___________ the article before it’s published.

- **clean up**
  Lois will correct errors as well as look to rid the article of small details or wording that is considered undesirable.

- **edit**
  Now an accepted term to mean to revise or correct, *edit* may also imply a professional editor’s review of the article.

- **polish**
  In addition to correcting errors, Lois will aim to refine and add elegance to the article.

- **reorganize**
  The article needs to undergo changes in organization.

- **review**
  Lois will examine the article with an eye to criticism or correction.

- **revise**
  Lois will fix or improve the article, or simply only update the information.

- **touch up**
  There may not even be errors in the article, but it could benefit from slight changes.

---

*I edit out the bad stuff and deliver the good stuff. Seventy-five percent of all wine is awful.*

PETER MORRELL
The great artists of the world are never Puritans, and seldom even ordinarily respectable.

HENRY LOUIS MENCKEN
Pat needs a **decent** dress for the party.

In this sentence, it’s unclear if Pat’s dress needs to be in good shape, in morally good taste, or something completely different.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *decent*:

Pat needs a(n) ____________ dress for the party.

| **appropriate** | Pat’s dress needs to be suitable and just right for this particular type of party. |
| **becoming**    | Pat wants a dress that will have a pleasing effect and give her an attractive appearance. |
| **chaste**      | Pat feels her dress should be conservative in style and not excessively ornamented. |
| **immaculate**  | Pat needs her dress to be spotlessly clean, with every aspect of it in perfect condition. |
| **proper**      | Pat’s dress needs to conform to established standards for the occasion. |
| **respectable** | Pat hopes her dress will make a certain, esteemed impression on the attendees. |
| **suitable**    | Pat would like her dress to be appropriate for the occasion and also fitting for her character. |

---

*I present myself to you in a form **suitable** to the relationship I wish to achieve with you.*

LUIGI PIRANDELLO
### PART OF SPEECH
verb

### DEFINITION
*to bring out the capabilities or possibilities of; to cause to grow or expand*

- augment
- enrich
- improve
- strengthen
- lengthen
- perfect
- refine
- cure sf or the common word:
  - actualize
  - advance
  - amplify
  - **augment**
  - beautify
  - broaden
  - build up
  - cultivate
  - deepen
  - dilate
  - elaborate
  - enlarge
  - enrich
  - evolve
  - exploit
  - extend
  - finish
  - heighten
  - **improve**
  - intensify
  - **lengthen**
  - magnify
  - materialize
  - perfect
  - polish
  - promote
  - realize
  - refine
  - strengthen
  - stretch
  - unfold
  - widen
  - work out

---

**CURED!**

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

ANNE FRANK
The loan committee asked us to **develop** our business plan.

In order to provide the committee with exactly what they want, we need to know exactly what they want, and *develop* doesn’t give us enough information.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *develop*:

The loan committee asked us to ______________ our business plan.

- **augment**: The committee likes what we have but wants us to give more detail to the information we already have included.
- **enrich**: We need to add or change information to make our plan more desirable.
- **improve**: We need to raise the quality of the information in the business plan.
- **lengthen**: The committee feels our plan is too slight and wants a more substantial document.
- **perfect**: Our plan is pretty good, but the committee wants us to make it flawless—or as close as possible—to give us the best opportunity of approval.
- **refine**: Our plan needs to be more precise or in clearer form.
- **strengthen**: To increase our chances for a loan, the bank wants us to make our plan stronger—for example, by giving more information on our financial status.

---

*One thousand days to learn; ten thousand days to refine.*

_Japanese Proverb_
difficult

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  not easily or readily done

arduous
backbreaking
challenging
laborious
herculean

To build may have to be the slow and laborious task of years.
To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL
A difficult job can wear you out, or it can be satisfying.

From this use of difficult, it’s unclear whether we are talking about a job that is hard physically or mentally and in what way it is not easy.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for difficult:

A(n) ____________ job can wear you out, or it can be satisfying.

**arduous**

The job is physically strenuous, requiring a great deal of energy and vigor.

**backbreaking**

The job is an exhausting physical task, demanding great effort and endurance.

**challenging**

Though the job is not easy, it’s an undertaking that is stimulating.

**demanding**

The job requires more effort and time than is generally considered to be due.

**herculean**

The job is very hard to perform, requiring great physical or mental strength.

**intricate**

The job is complicated and hard to understand.

**laborious**

The job requires a lot of work, exertion, or perseverance either physically or mentally.

"The story of civilization is, in a sense, the story of engineering—that long and arduous struggle to make the forces of nature work for man’s good."

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP
difficult

PART OF SPEECH: adjective
DEFINITION: complicated; hard to comprehend

cures for the common word

abstract
abstruse
baffling
bewildering
complex
confounding
confusing
dark
deep
delicate
enigmatic
enigmatical
entangled
esoteric
formidable
hard
hidden
inexplicable
intricate
involved
knotty
labyrinthine
loose
meandering
mysterious
mystifying
obscure
obstinate
paradoxical
perplexing
problematic
profound
puzzling
rambling
subtle
tangled
thorny
ticklish
troublesome
unclear
unfathomable
unintelligible

Some problems are so complex that you have to be highly intelligent and well informed just to be undecided about them.

LAURENCE JOHNSTON PETER

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Romantic relationships can be **difficult**.

*Difficult* in this case is a little ambiguous. It has a negative connotation, but it doesn't give us the full picture of how the relationship is challenging.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for *difficult*:

Romantic relationships can be ____________.

- **complex**: Some relationships can be so complicated or intricate that they’re hard to understand or deal with.
- **enigmatic**: Relationships can be baffling, puzzling, and mysterious, which may be a positive to some people.
- **entangled**: Relationships can be intertwined with difficulties, including anything from emotional to logistical complications.
- **mysterious**: Relationships can involve secrets or unexplained aspects, which may have a positive or negative connotation.
- **perplexing**: Relationships can be confusing and marked with uncertainty or doubt.
- **problematic**: Relationships can make great mental demands that seem hard to comprehend, solve, or even believe.
- **thorny**: Relationships can be full of difficulties or complexities; *thorny* clearly has a much more negative connotation.

---

*The way of the troublemaker is *thorny*.*

American Umpqua Indian Proverb
PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  honest; straightforward; frank; candid

cures for the common word

absolute  frank  sincere
bald  genuine  straight
blunt  guileless  straightforward
candid  matter-of-fact  truthful
categorical  open  unequivocal
downright  outspoken  unambiguous
direct  explicit  uncealed
explicit  expressive  undisguised
express  forthright  unequivocal
forthright  candid  unreserved

He was always smoothing and polishing himself, and in the end he became blunt before he was sharp.

G. C. (GEORG CHRISTOPH) LICHTENBERG
Betty was very **direct** in all her remarks.

Being *direct* can be considered admirable or impolite, so using a more precise alternative will let us know how we feel about Betty’s remarks.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *direct*:

Betty was very ____________ in all her remarks.

**blunt**

Betty spoke abruptly, which is not usually considered a positive way to speak.

**candid**

Betty seemed to speak free from reservation or disguise, meaning she was being honest; candid often has the connotation of the honesty being refreshing.

**explicit**

Betty fully and clearly expressed her remarks, leaving nothing she thought as merely implied.

**forthright**

Betty’s remarks were characterized by her direct manner or speech, without subtlety or evasion.

**outspoken**

Betty was free and unreserved in her remarks; *outspoken* often has a negative connotation.

**unambiguous**

There was no doubt about what Betty’s remarks meant, because they expressed a single, clearly defined meaning.

**unequivocal**

Betty’s remarks were not subject to conditions or exceptions, leaving no doubt about her meaning.

*Cured!*

George Orwell’s contention was that it is a sure sign of trouble when things can no longer be called by their right names and described in plain, *forthright* speech.

CHRISTOPHER LASCH
**do**

**PART OF SPEECH**  
verb

**DEFINITION**  
to perform, execute, carry out

---

**cures for the common word**

- accomplish
- achieve
- act
- arrange
- bring about
- cause
- complete
- conclude
- cook
- create
- determine
- discharge
- effect
- end
- engage in
- execute
- finish
- fix
- fulfill
- get ready
- look after
- make
- make ready
- move
- operate
- organize
- perform
- perk
- prepare
- produce
- pull off
- see to
- succeed
- take on
- transact
- undertake
- wind up
- work
- wrap up

---

"Don’t agonize, organize."

FLORYNCE KENNEDY
If you want to have a successful event, John at On Board Entertainment can do it.

We know that John is the right person to go to, but since the verb do can stand in for hundreds of actions, we don't have enough information about John's specific role in the successful event.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for do:

If you want to have a successful event, John at On Board Entertainment can ___________ it.

- **arrange**
  - *Arrange* can mean that John will plan the overall aspects or the details of the event.

- **create**
  - The event will evolve from John’s own thought and imagination.

- **execute**
  - John will ensure that the event is carried out in accordance with an established plan—his, the client’s, or both.

- **organize**
  - John will coordinate each of the interdependent parts of the plan for united action—in this case, a successful event.

- **prepare**
  - John may actually get ready each aspect of the event—from the smallest detail to the largest.

- **produce**
  - John will supervise the entire event, contributing creatively and possibly also financially.

- **undertake**
  - John has agreed to take it upon himself to work on this event and is committed to making it a success.

*The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN
56

easy

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  capable of being accomplished or acquired with ease; posing no difficulty

cures for the common word

accessible  manageable  pleasant
apparent  manifest  pushover
basic  mere  relaxed
child’s play  natural  royal
cinch  no bother  simple
clear  no problem  slight
comfortable  no sweat  smooth
effortless  no trouble  snap
elementary  obvious  straightforward
elementary  pushover  uncomplicated
evident  no problem  uninvolved
facile  no sweat  untroublesome
inconsiderable  no trouble  yielding
light  plain  plain sailing
little

The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
Professor Waddingham made the new math seem **easy**.

Thank goodness someone can make the new math seem easy, but in this sentence we’re not sure exactly *how* the professor managed to make it less difficult.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *easy*:

Professor Waddingham made the new math seem _____________.

- **accessible**: She showed us how to easily approach and use the math.
- **effortless**: She taught us a way to learn the math that required little or no effort.
- **elementary**: She helped us learn by showing us the fundamental and simplest aspects of the math.
- **manageable**: She found a way to make us feel in control of learning the math instead of lost by it.
- **obvious**: She was able to show us the math in a way that we easily understood.
- **painless**: This is an informal way to say that she made learning the math seem like it required little or no hard work.
- **uncomplicated**: She was able to make the math seem simple instead of complex or involved.

*Suffering, once accepted, loses its edge, for the terror of it lessens, and what remains is generally far more manageable than we had imagined.*

---

*LESLEY HAZELTON*
effective

PART OF SPEECH: adjective
DEFINITION: producing the intended or expected result; adequate to accomplish a purpose

cures for the common word

able
active
adequate
capable
cogent
compelling
competent
convincing
direct
effectual
efficacious
efficient
emphatic
energetic
forceful
forcible
impressive
live
moving
operative
persuasive
potent
powerful
powerhouse
practical
producing
resultant
serviceable
serving
sound
striking
successful
sufficient
telling
trenchant
useful
valid
virtuous
yielding

It's pretty hard to be efficient without being obnoxious.

KIN HUBBARD
The speechwriter used very **effective** language.

We can infer that the language was successful in getting the writer’s point across well, or it evoked in the reader the writer’s desired effect, but it’s not clear how the language was used to accomplish the writer’s goal.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *effective*:

The speechwriter used very ___________ language.

- **compelling** The language had a powerful and irresistible effect, engaging us to keep reading.
- **convincing** By the use of argument or evidence, the language brought us to a firm belief the writer intended for us.
- **efficient** The language functioned in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort; however, *efficient* doesn’t lend itself toward a creative feel.
- **forceful** The writing was powerful and vigorous, as opposed to soft or gentle and coercing.
- **persuasive** The language was able to persuade us into thinking, seeing, or feeling just as the writer intended.
- **powerful** The writer used language with great reason, authority, or influence and impacted us—an ideal goal for a speech.
- **practical** The language used achieved the intended effect, but *practical* doesn’t give the impression of a speech that was outstanding or that moved people to action.

---

*Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren’t.*

MARGARET THATCHER
### Emphasize

**PART OF SPEECH**  
*verb*

**DEFINITION**  
*to lay stress upon; to single out as important*

---

**cures for the common word**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Impress</th>
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<td>Underscore</td>
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<td>Underscore</td>
<td>Weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**CURED!**

*A talent for drama is not a talent for writing, but is an ability to **articulate** human relationships.*

— Gore Vidal

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**Emphasize** your work experience when applying for a job.

You always want to present yourself at your best when applying for a job, but in this sentence we don’t have enough information about *how* exactly to best present your work experience.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *emphasize*:

______________ your work experience when applying for a job.

**accentuate**  
In addition to your other qualities, single out your work experience to present as important.

**articulate**  
Formulate what you want to say about your work experience, and express your thoughts with clarity and effectiveness.

**dramatize**  
Represent your work experience vividly, emotionally, or strikingly.

**highlight**  
You want to present all of your positive attributes, but you want your work experience to be the most interesting or memorable part of your application.

**reiterate**  
You want to mention your work experience repeatedly for emphasis.

**spotlight**  
You have so many qualifications for the job, your work experience may be overshadowed, and you want to call particular attention to your experience.

**underscore**  
Especially if you think your work experience is the key to winning the job—or you might not fully have other qualities the company is looking for—give extra weight to your experience.

---

_Cured_!

*Hard work *spotlights* the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don’t turn up at all.*

Sam Ewig
### verb

to come to a conclusion; to terminate or cease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb</td>
<td>to come to a conclusion; to terminate or cease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **break off**
- **conclude**
- **delay**
- **resolve**
- **finish**
- **interrupt**

### Cures for the Common Word

- abolish
- abort
- accomplish
- achieve
- break off
- break up
- call off
- cease
- close
- close out
- complete
- conclude
- consummate
- crown
- culminate
- cut short
- delay
- determine
- discontinue
- dispose of
- dissolve
- drop
- expire
- finish
- get done
- give up
- halt
- perorate
- postpone
- quit
- relinquish
- resolve
- settle
- sew up
- shut down
- stop
- terminate
- ultimate
- wind up
- wrap
- wrap up

### Cured!

*Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.*

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
We need to **end** the negotiations today.

Unfortunately, choosing *end* here doesn’t give us any inclination as to whether the negotiations will end positively or negatively and successfully or not.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *end*:

We need to _______________ the negotiations today.

**break off**

Meaning to “stop suddenly,” *break off* gives the impression that it was not a positive end of the day for either side in the negotiations.

**conclude**

The impression is not only that the negotiations will finish but also that the two sides will finally come to a decision or settlement.

**delay**

The negotiations will be put off to a later time, which may be OK, but sometimes *delay* can imply someone is hindering the progress.

**finish**

This is a neutral term—neither positive or negative—to say the two sides need to complete the negotiations.

**interrupt**

The negotiations will cease before they are complete, and the interruption may be for a reason that is not the fault of either side.

**postpone**

This indicates delaying the negotiations to another time, but it can also imply that they are delayed because one or both sides find the negotiations less important than originally thought.

**resolve**

This implies that the negotiators will reach a conclusion after a deliberation—hopefully one that’s beneficial and satisfactory to both sides.

---

*You may delay, but time will not.*

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**
energy

PART OF SPEECH noun
DEFINITION the capacity for vigorous activity; abundant available power

drive
endurance
intensity
zeal
liveliness
pizzazz

Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
Our yoga instructor Rada exhibits boundless energy.

The use of energy in this sentence doesn’t firmly convey what impresses us about Rada—maybe her physical skills, her mental outlook, or her attitude.

powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for energy:

Our yoga instructor Rada exhibits boundless ________________.

drive Rada is highly motivated and focused on a course toward her goals.
endurance Rada has the ability and strength to go on and on, despite fatigue.
intensity Rada has great energy, strength, and concentration during the yoga class—and likely outside of class also.
liveliness Rada is animated in her action and expression, which helps keep us all upbeat.
pizzazz Beyond lively, Rada has a downright dazzling style, flair, and energetic personality.
stamina Rada has a strength of physical constitution to endure fatigue and just about anything else.
zeal Rada has such an enthusiastic and tireless devotion to yoga as an ideal, which can be contagious.

“Endurance is patience concentrated.”

THOMAS CARLYLE
enjoy

PART OF SPEECH  verb
DEFINITION  to experience joy or satisfaction from; to take pleasure in

cures for the common word

adore    appreciate    be entertained    be pleased    delight in    dig    dote on    drink in    eat up
fancy    flip for    flip over    funk    go    groove on    have fun    like    love
luxuriate in    mind    pleasure in    rejoice in    relish    revel in    savor    savvy    take to

The trouble with being punctual is that nobody’s there to appreciate it.
FRANKLIN P. JONES
I *enjoy* a break in my sunny backyard.

Choosing *enjoy* doesn’t fully convey how much or why exactly I look forward to this break.

**Powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *enjoy*:

I ___________ a break in my sunny backyard.

- **Adore**: Choosing *adore* comes closer to telling you how much I deeply love this escape.
- **Appreciate**: I’m grateful to have the time for and I truly value this break in the sunny yard.
- **Delight in**: Beyond simply liking my break in the yard, it gives me great joy.
- **Love**: Meaning “to like or desire enthusiastically,” *love* is now a casual way to say how much I really, really enjoy my break in the sunny yard.
- **Luxuriate in**: This conjures up an image of lounging, reveling in my experience.
- **Relish**: This break is so wonderful that I eagerly look forward to it.
- **Savor**: I enjoy every minute of my break, knowing it’s back to responsibilities when break time is over.

*Relished* by the wisest men.

ROALD DAHL
To be witty is not enough. One must possess sufficient wit to avoid having too much of it.

ANDRE MAUROIS
We have **enough** earthquake supplies for three people for a week.

In this sentence, *enough* for one person can be starvation (or excess) for others, so choosing a more precise word gives more information—or at least a better indication of how many supplies are stored.

---

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *enough*:

We have _____________ earthquake supplies for three people for a week.

- **adequate**
  We’re confident that we have supplies necessary for the basic requirements.

- **ample**
  We have more than enough supplies, which means we may be able to accommodate more people or for a longer duration.

- **copious**
  We have large quantities of supplies, more than ample, so we can invite in whoever needs help.

- **plentiful**
  We have a great quantity of supplies, but perhaps only if we stick to the prescribed number of people and/or duration anticipated.

- **sufficient**
  We have a quantity of supplies that can fulfill our need or requirement, but without being abundant.

- **suitable**
  Choosing *suitable* indicates that in addition to a proper amount of supplies, they are ones appropriate to the purpose.

- **unlimited**
  Not only do we have supplies immediately available, but we have a resource to provide an infinite amount for as many and as long as we need.

---

*The supply of words in the world market is plentiful but the demand is falling.*

*Let deeds follow words now.*

LECH WALESKA
excellent

**PART OF SPEECH**
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**
of the highest or finest quality; exceptionally good of its kind

---

exemplary

distinguished

tiptop

incomparable

notable

---

cures for the common word

accomplished, admirable, attractive, champion, choice, desirable, distinctive, distinguished, estimable, exceptional, exemplary, exquisite, fine, first, first-class, first-rate, good, great, high, incomparable, invaluable, magnificent, meritorious, notable, noted, outstanding, peerless, premium, priceless, prime, remarkable, select, skillful, splendid, sterling, striking, superb, superior, superlative, supreme, tiptop, top-notch, transcendent, unsurpassed, wonderful

---

*CURED!*

_In every phenomenon the beginning remains always the most notable moment._

THOMAS CARLYLE
Katie has proved to be an excellent CEO.

When Katie took the position of CEO, we anticipated she would be excellent—an expectation she lived up to—but excellent doesn’t give us a clear idea of the criteria on which we’re basing our assessment.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for excellent:

Katie has proved to be a(n) _______________ CEO.

- **distinguished**: Katie stands above others in her character, achievements, and reputation.
- **exemplary**: Katie is commendable and worthy of high praise and imitation.
- **incomparable**: Katie's performance is beyond comparison—matchless and unequaled.
- **invaluable**: Katie has done such a fine job that she has proved to be priceless, and the company would suffer greatly if she ever left.
- **notable**: Katie is worthy of notice because of her outstanding work.
- **skillful**: Katie has shown great knowledge, skill, and aptitude at her position as CEO.
- **tiptop**: This is an informal way to say that Katie’s work is of the highest quality.

---

*Cured!*

*Jackie Robinson, as an athlete and as someone who was trying to make a stand for equality, he was exemplary.*

*Kareem Abdul-Jabbar*
**exciting**

**PART OF SPEECH**
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**
*producing excitement or strong feeling in; stirring; thrilling; exhilarating*

---

**cures for the common word**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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**flashy**
**heady**
**hectic**
**impelling**
**impressive**
**interesting**
**intriguing**
**lively**
**melodramatic**
**mind-blowing**
**moving**
**neat**
**overpowering**
**overwhelming**
**provocative**
**racy**
**rip-roaring**
**rousing**
**sensational**
**showy**
**spine-tingling**
**stimulating**
**stirring**
**thrilling**
**titillating**
**wild**
**zestful**

---

"Perhaps of all the creations of man language is the most astonishing."

LYTTON STRACHEY
President Kennedy was an exciting speaker.

Almost anyone who ever heard Kennedy speak—in person or on tape—likely felt strong emotion, but exciting doesn’t specifically describe how you or I might have been affected by hearing him speak.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for exciting:

President Kennedy was a(n) ________________ speaker.

- **arresting** He had a way of attracting and holding—practically commanding—the attention of a crowd.
- **astonishing** He was a great and impressive speaker, to the surprise of his detractors.
- **dramatic** He spoke in a way that was sensational and thrilling.
- **electrifying** His speaking was sometimes shocking but definitely caused a surge of emotion.
- **intoxicating** Listening to him speak made people enthusiastic and exhilarated, almost light-headed.
- **provocative** He sometimes said things that were controversial, tending to stimulate—or provoke—discussion.
- **stirring** As well as rousing stimulating discussion, he could also rouse people to strong action.

*Beauty is often worse than wine; intoxicating both the holder and beholder.*

JOHN ZIMMERMAN
The race is not always to the **swift**, nor the battle to the strong but that’s the way to bet.

**DAMON RUNYON**
Everyone agreed that Boomer ran the dog course at a fast pace.

Choosing to use fast gives a pretty vivid image of Boomer racing the course, but there are a few instances where fast isn’t the best way to run a course. The following alternatives tell us more.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for fast:

Everyone agreed that Boomer ran the dog course at a(n) ______________ pace.

- **agile**
  Boomer was quick and well coordinated in his movements, and he also displayed an ability to think quickly, reacting well to course changes.

- **brisk**
  Boomer’s movements were marked by speed and vigor.

- **dashing**
  As Boomer ran, he exhibited a spirited and lively energy as well as elegance.

- **expeditious**
  Boomer acted with speed and efficiency, though expeditious gives us no clue as to how gracefully he performed.

- **hasty**
  Boomer ran fast, but choosing hasty often carries a negative connotation, implying he was unduly quick and rash in his movements and choices.

- **nimble**
  Boomer was quick and light on his feet, moving with rapid ease.

- **swift**
  Not only was Boomer moving with great speed, acting and reacting quickly and cleverly, swift can also invoke a wonderful image of joy and freedom.

---

One cool judgment is worth a thousand hasty counsels. The thing to do is to supply light and not heat.

WOODROW WILSON
PART OF SPEECH  | verb
DEFINITION     | to perceive or examine by touch

cures for the common word

- caress
- clasp
- clutch
- explore
- finger
- fondle
- frisk
- fumble
- grapple
- grasp
- grip
- grope
- handle
- manipulate
- maul
- palm
- palpate
- paw
- perceive
- pinch
- ply
- poke
- press
- sense
- squeeze
- stroke
- test
- thumb
- tickle
- touch
- try
- twiddle
- wield

CURED!

"Gentlemen, it is better to have died as a small boy than to fumble this football."

JOHN HEISMAN
Finally, Eric could **feel** the rescue rope.

Choosing *feel* here doesn't tell us anything about the circumstances of why Eric is feeling for the rope; whereas, the following alternatives give us a much more vivid image of the situation.

---

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *feel*:

Finally, Eric could __________ the rescue rope.

- **clutch**: Eric is holding the rope tightly, or attempting to grasp it, indicating he may be about to fall if he doesn’t seize it quickly.
- **fumble**: Eric is feeling about clumsily for the rope; perhaps he just can’t reach it.
- **grope**: Eric is blindly feeling about with his hands with some uncertainty because he can’t see the rope.
- **handle**: Even if the rope might be difficult to grasp, Eric is able to manage it.
- **sense**: Eric has so much experience climbing that he has an intuitive or acquired perception of where the rope is.
- **squeeze**: Eric is able to press the rope gently, maybe just to be sure it’s really there if needed.
- **touch**: Eric can feel the rope, and this is more a matter of information than giving us any clue to his situation.

---

*Love is blind. That is why he always proceeds by touch.*

FRENCH PROVERB
**PART OF SPEECH**  
**verb**

**DEFINITION**  
to occupy to the full capacity

---

**cures for the common word**

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<th>replenish</th>
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<td>impregnate</td>
<td>sate</td>
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<td>bulge out</td>
<td>inflate</td>
<td>satiate</td>
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<tr>
<td>charge</td>
<td>jam-pack</td>
<td>satisfy</td>
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<td>choke</td>
<td>lade</td>
<td>saturate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clog</td>
<td>load</td>
<td>shoal</td>
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<tr>
<td>close</td>
<td>meet</td>
<td>stock</td>
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<tr>
<td>congest</td>
<td>occupy</td>
<td>store</td>
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<tr>
<td>cram</td>
<td>overflow</td>
<td>stretch</td>
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<tr>
<td>crowd</td>
<td>pack</td>
<td>stuff</td>
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<tr>
<td>distend</td>
<td>permeate</td>
<td>suffuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>fulfill</td>
<td>pervade</td>
<td>supply</td>
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<tr>
<td>furnish</td>
<td>plug</td>
<td>swell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glut</td>
<td>pump up</td>
<td>take up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gorge</td>
<td>ram</td>
<td>top off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

_The first forty years of life give us the text; the next thirty supply the commentary on it._

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER
The local parks departments fill the streams with fish.

We know that fish are being added to the streams, but surprisingly, fill doesn’t tell us to what degree, nor does it tells us if this is a good or bad thing.

Substitute an alternative remedy for fill:

The local parks departments ______________ the streams with fish.

- **clog**
  They put in so many fish that the streams are choked up, and it’s hard to swim or boat in them.

- **cram**
  They have forced in more fish than the streams can easily hold, which is not healthy for the fish or the environment.

- **pack**
  The departments have crowded the fish together, perhaps in one set-off area of each stream.

- **saturate**
  This implies that the streams are completely packed, but saturate doesn’t carry the same negative connotation as cram.

- **stock**
  The parks departments have added fish to the streams to have an appropriate number available.

- **supply**
  The departments have added fish to the streams, but the connotation here is that the streams were lacking the requisite amount.

- **top off**
  This is an informal term to indicate that the departments added just a few fish, because the streams were almost full to begin with.

--

*Next to a circus there ain’t nothing that packs up and tears out faster than the Christmas spirit.*

KIN HUBBARD
cures for the common word

absolute  
bottom-line  
closing  
concluding  
crowning  
decided  
decisive  
definite  
definitive  
determinate  
determinative  
ending  
eventual  
finished  
finishing  
hindmost  
incontrovertible  
irrefutable  
irrevocable  
last-minute  
latter  
settled  
supreme  
swan song  
terminal  
terminating  
ultimate  
unanswerable  
unappealable

CURED!

"Final thoughts are so, you know, final. Let’s call them closing words."

CRAIG ARMSTRONG
The company’s **final** decision regarding pay increases surprised us.

Though it’s clear we were surprised by the decision, *final* doesn’t indicate much about what was involved in the decision or how we feel about it.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *final*:

The company’s ____________ decision regarding pay increases surprised us.

- **bottom-line** Whether we like the decision or not, it isn’t going to change.
- **closing** There were negotiations or discussion on the topic, and the decision concludes those negotiations.
- **concluding** This implies that the decision was determined by reasoning, and the connotation is that we believe careful consideration was given to the decision.
- **eventual** Even though we were surprised, we knew a decision was expected at some point due to a process already begun and ongoing.
- **irrevocable** The company’s decision is unalterable, so it cannot be changed or recalled.
- **last-minute** The company’s decision was made just prior to a deadline.
- **ultimate** The company’s decision was the final conclusion, ending a series of discussions.

*It is easy to answer the ultimate questions—it saves you bothering with the immediate ones.*

JOHN OSBORNE
**fine**

**PART OF SPEECH**
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**
of superior or best quality; excellent

---

**cures for the common word**

accomplished  
aces  
admirable  
attractive  
beautiful  
capital  
choice  
dandy  
elegant  
exceptional  
expensive  
exquisite  
fashionable  
first-class  
first-rate  
five-star  
good-looking  
great  
handsome  
lovely  
magnificent  
ornate  
outstanding  
pleasant  
rare  
refined  
select  
showy  
skilful  
smart  
spiffy  
splendid  
striking  
subtle  
superior  
supreme  
top-notch  
well-made  
wicked

---

*I sometimes give myself admirable advice, but I am incapable of taking it.*

MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU
Dorothy’s parents thought Ray was a fine choice as their daughter’s date to the country club dinner.

In this sentence, we’re unsure if Dorothy’s parents found their daughter’s date as merely adequate or an excellent surprise—we need more information.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for fine:

Dorothy’s parents thought Ray was a(n) _______________ choice as their daughter’s date to the country club dinner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>admirable</td>
<td>Ray is a young man who inspires approval and respect—by his character or his actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elegant</td>
<td>Ray is gracefully refined and dignified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fashionable</td>
<td>Ray has a stylish way of dressing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first-rate</td>
<td>Ray is foremost in quality above other young men Dorothy (or her parents) might have considered as her date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refined</td>
<td>Ray shows a well-bred character, manner, and feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smart</td>
<td>Ray has a dashing, neat, and trim appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>striking</td>
<td>Ray has an impressively attractive appearance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CURED!**

“One of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that the cat has only nine lives.”

MARK TWAIN
The United Nations is presently unable to **break up** a skirmish between two warring Girl Scout factions, so how they’re supposed to aid the world is an even bigger conundrum.

**CURED!**

*ARTHUR LOTTI*
Karen and her crew had to **finish** filming at midnight.

Though we know filming had to cease, *finish* doesn’t tell us whether the filming was completed or only interrupted.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *finish*:

Karen and her crew had to ____________ filming at midnight.

- **break up** The filming was disrupted for some reason—and not in a good way.
- **finalize** They were in the process of putting the entire filming of a movie in final form.
- **fold** This is an informal way to say that they were forced to close down filming.
- **halt** They had to stop filming for the evening, though we don’t know if it’s temporarily or permanently.
- **scrub** This is a slang way to say the filming has been done away with—just plain canceled.
- **shut down** This is a more traditional way of saying the filming was ended but not completed.
- **wrap up** This is the movie and TV term for completing the filming of the final scene.

*We are not so much concerned if you are slow as when you come to a halt.*

CHINESE PROVERB
funny

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  humorous; causing amusement or laughter; comical

CURSES FOR THE COMMON WORD

absurd  gay  playful
amusing  good-humored  priceless
antic  hilarious  rich
a scream  humorous  ridiculous
bizarre  hysterical  riotous
blithe  jocular  risible
capricious  joking  side-splitting
clever  jolly  silly
comical  killing  slapstick
diversing  knee-slapping  sportive
droll  laughable  unusual
entertaining  ludicrous  uncommon
facetious  merry  whimsical
farcical  mirthful  witty

CURED!

The desire to seem clever often keeps us from being so.
FRANÇOIS VI DUKE (DUC) DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD
Michael told us a **funny** story.

In this sentence, *funny* doesn’t tell us what exactly was funny about Michael’s story—whether it made us laugh, was unusual, or something different.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *funny*:

Michael told us a(n) _____________ story.

- **amusing**  The story was entertaining or diverting, so it raised a smile but wasn’t uproarious.
- **bizarre**  The story was strikingly unconventional and far-fetched, and it led us to wonder if it was true or not.
- **clever**  The details or plot of the story were original, and the connotation is that the story was intriguing.
- **hysterical**  The story was so extremely funny we were laughing uncontrollably.
- **ludicrous**  The story was laughable because of some obvious absurdity or incongruity.
- **whimsical**  The story was lighthearted and given to whimsy or fancy.
- **witty**  The story was quick and clever in its amusing insights.

---

*A witty saying proves nothing.*

FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET VOLTAIRE
The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain—until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.

JANE ADDAMS
I’d like to **get** more information from the president before I accept his proposal.

We’re unsure of the nature of the proposal as well as how to go about getting more information from the president.

---

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *get*:

I’d like to ____________ more information from the president before I accept his proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>capture</td>
<td>In a different context, this might mean obtaining the information by force or skill, but now it can also imply that I’m going to gather or record the information from different sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elicit</td>
<td>I’m going to draw the information from somewhere or someone, which still has a negative connotation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extract</td>
<td>Though this might indicate drawing out by force, it can also mean to deduce or interpret information based on several factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gain</td>
<td>I’m going to acquire the information by my devoted research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glean</td>
<td>I’m discovering information, a little at a time, from being alert to different resources I’ve investigated or things people have said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procure</td>
<td>I’m going to obtain the information by some special means; the connotation is that it may be by unscrupulous and indirect means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure</td>
<td>I’m going to get possession of information from a dependable source.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Who has confidence in himself will gain the confidence of others.*

LEIB LAZAROW
give

PART OF SPEECH  verb
DEFINITION  to impart or communicate

cures for the common word

accord
administer
ante up
award
bequeath
bestow
cede
commit
confer
consign
convey
deed
deliver
dish out
dispense
distribute
dole out
donate
dow
entrust
fork over
furnish
grant
hand
imp
t
lease
let have
parcel out
part with
pass out
permit
pony up
present
provide
relinquish
remit
sell
shell out
subsidize
supply
throw in
transfer
transmit
vouchsafe
will

Sometimes I need what only you can provide—your absence.
ASHLEIGH BRILLIANT
Give advice sparingly.

This is usually a good idea, but choosing give is very neutral, and doesn’t tell us much about the intent behind the advice given and the reaction of the advisee.

powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for give:

________________ advice sparingly.

administer The advice is intended to contribute assistance, perhaps in a formal way.

bestow The advice is being presented as a gift—or that is the intention of the giver, even if the receiver may not feel that way.

confer The advice is being offered as a favor or honor, which may or may not be received with appreciation.

dispense The advice is being distributed in parts or portions and has a connotation of being given without much emotion.

dole out This is an informal way of saying the advice will be given in portions.

impair Meaning “to tell, relate, and pass down,” impart gives the sense of someone wise and knowledgeable sharing their wisdom—and it's gratefully received.

provide The advice—almost like simple facts and information—is made available.

People who have given us their complete confidence believe that they have a right to ours. The inference is false; a gift confers no rights.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE
PART OF SPEECH  verb
DEFINITION  to move or proceed, especially to or from something

cures for the common word

abscond  get going  quit
advance  hie  repair
approach  hightail  retire
beat it  journey  run away
bug out  lam  shove off
cruise  leave  skip out
decamp  light out  split
depart  mosey  take flight
ecape  move  take off
exit  pass  tool
east  proceed  travel
fare  progress  vamoose
flee  pull out  wend
fly  push on  withdraw
get away

In what other business can a guy my age drink martinis, smoke cigars and sing? I think all people who retire ought to go into show business. I’ve been retired all my life.

GEORGE BURNS
In the morning, we’ll **go** to the tropical island by boat.

Choosing *go* for this sentence doesn’t give us much information about the speed or urgency of our journey or the motivations for it.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *go*:

In the morning, we’ll ********** to the tropical island by boat.

- **cruise**
  
  This gives us the feeling of a leisurely pleasure trip to the island.

- **escape**
  
  We are going to slip away to that tropical refuge, probably from the daily routine or problems we’d like a break from.

- **get away**
  
  We’re going to take a vacation to the island.

- **hie**
  
  We’re in a hurry to get to the sunny beaches on that island.

- **journey**
  
  Beyond heading for our destination, we’re going to take our time as we go the long distance.

- **proceed**
  
  We’re heading to the island, after an interruption of our trip.

- **retire**
  
  This implies we are going to the island for some privacy—or are now going to be enjoying a work-free life.

---

To travel is to take a **journey** into yourself.

DENA KAYE
Say encouraging words to young people, make them feel **welcome** on the planet Earth (many do not). Show by example that we don’t need all we have in order to be happy and productive.

PAUL LUTUS
Volunteering gives most people a good feeling.

It’s true that most people feel they receive more from volunteering than they give, but good doesn’t adequately express how volunteering makes most people feel.

powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for good:

Volunteering gives most people a(n) ____________ feeling.

commendable  Our volunteering is perceived by others as praiseworthy.
gratifying  Volunteering gives us a pleasing feeling of satisfaction.
honorable  We feel we are doing something creditable based on high principles and character.
satisfying  Our volunteering fulfills our expectations, giving a sense of full contentment.
valuable  We feel we’re contributing in a helpful way, one we hope is worthy of respect.
welcome  Volunteering gives us an agreeable feeling of pleasure or satisfaction—a feeling maybe we don’t often experience.

wonderful  Volunteering is beyond good, it’s great, excellent, marvelous—so true.

Education is a wonderful thing. If you couldn’t sign your name you’d have to pay cash.

RITA MAE BROWN
**good**

**PART OF SPEECH**
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**
*having the qualities that are desirable or distinguishing in a particular thing; skilled*

---

**CURES FOR THE COMMON WORD**

able  
accomplished  
adept  
adroit  
au fait  
capable  
clever  
competent  
dexterous  
efficient  
experienced  
expert  
first-rate  
**masterful**  
proficient  
proper  
qualified  
reliable  
**responsible**  
satisfactory  
serviceable  
**skillful**  
suitable  
suited  
talented  
thorough  
trained  
**trustworthy**  
useful  
wicked

---

**CURED!**

*Responsible artists try to affect you sensually in a way that enlarges your experience.*

PAULINE KAEL
Jack is a good canoe builder.

In this sentence, we understand that Jack is capable of building an outrigger, but it doesn’t give us a clear idea of the extent of his training and skills.

powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for good:

Jack is a(n) ______________ canoe builder.

accomplished  Jack is good at what he does as the result of his practice or training, and the implication is that his work is much above average.

experienced  Jack’s skill or wisdom comes through his experience.

masterful  Jack’s skills are beyond good, having and reflecting the power and skill of a master.

responsible  Without indicating his skill level, Jack has shown that we can depend on him in terms of honesty in his work and his dealings with us.

skillful  Jack is very good at his trade.

talented  Beyond skilled, Jack is creative or artistic in his work.

trustworthy  Jack’s skills and performance are deserving of trust or confidence.

The only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him.

HENRY STIMSON
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF SPEECH</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
<td>important; eminent; distinguished; remarkable or outstanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cures for the Common Word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>augustin</th>
<th>highly regarded</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>capital</td>
<td>honorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrated</td>
<td>illustrious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chief</td>
<td>impressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commanding</td>
<td>leading</td>
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<tr>
<td>dignified</td>
<td>lofty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distinguished</td>
<td>lordly</td>
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<tr>
<td>eminent</td>
<td>majestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exalted</td>
<td>major</td>
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<tr>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>noble</td>
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<td>famous</td>
<td>notable</td>
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<tr>
<td>glorious</td>
<td>noted</td>
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<td>grand</td>
<td>outstanding</td>
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<td>heroic</td>
<td>paramount</td>
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<td>puissant</td>
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<td>remarkable</td>
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<td>renowned</td>
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<td>royal</td>
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<td>stately</td>
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<td>sublime</td>
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<td></td>
<td>superior</td>
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<td></td>
<td>superlative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>talented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*The most heroic word in all languages is revolution.*

EUGENE DEBS
As a **great** leader, Nelson Mandela listens as well as he speaks.

In this sentence, *great* doesn’t give us enough information to explain why Nelson Mandela is so highly thought of.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for *great*:

As a(n) _____________ leader, Nelson Mandela listens as well as he speaks.

**commanding**  
President Mandela has an imposing and authoritative presence.

**distinguished**  
President Mandela is a wise man of great dignity, as well as an eminent and distinctive leader, as evidenced in part by his great accomplishments.

**heroic**  
President Mandela has displayed the character and attributes of a hero, showing his boldness and daring under extreme measures.

**highly regarded**  
President Mandela is held in high esteem and respect.

**idealistic**  
President Mandela’s beliefs are of high and noble principles, though *idealistic* can carry a connotation of unrealistic.

**magnanimous**  
President Mandela is generous in his forgiving of insult and injury, free from petty resentfulness or vindictiveness.

**talented**  
President Mandela exhibits special skills and abilities.

---

*Nothing is more *idealistic* than a journalist on the defensive.*  

MELVIN MADDOCKS
PART OF SPEECH  verb
DEFINITION  to expand or increase gradually by concerted effort

abound  advance  age  amplify  arise  augment  breed  build  burgeon  cultivate  develop  dilate  enlarge  expand  extend  fill out  flourish  gain  germinate  heighten  increase  issue  luxuriate  maturate  mature  mount  multiply  originate  produce  propagate  pullulate  raise  ripen  rise  shoot  spread  sprout  stem  stretch  swell  thicken  thrive  turn  wax  widen

I hate the man who builds his name on the ruins of another’s fame.

JOHN GAY
In going back to school, Christine knows both her knowledge and experience will **grow**.

We know that Christine’s growth will be a positive experience, but *grow* doesn’t clearly tell us what she is hoping for.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *grow*:

**In going back to school, Christine knows both her knowledge and experience will __________.**

- **advance**: Christine knows her education will move her forward in life.
- **build**: Christine realizes her knowledge and experience will increase and strengthen.
- **burgeon**: This implies Christine’s knowledge and experience will develop quickly.
- **develop**: Christine is hoping to build her skills to a more advanced level.
- **expand**: Christine realizes she is extending both the volume and the scope of her knowledge.
- **flourish**: Christine’s hoping she’ll thrive in a period of her highest productivity.
- **mature**: Christine believes her knowledge and experience will evolve toward fuller development.

“You can’t say civilization don’t **advance** . . . in every war they kill you in a new way.”

---

**WILL ROGERS**
To be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES JR.
My granddaughter Taevin is such a happy child.

In this sentence, happy is just too mild a word and not expressive enough to tell us the ways Taevin displays her happiness.

Substitute an alternative remedy for happy:

My granddaughter Taevin is such a(n) ____________ child.

- **cheerful**: She is always in good spirits.
- **delightful**: She gives us all great pleasure and delight and is very entertaining.
- **lively**: She is full of life and vital energy—and very active.
- **mirthful**: She is full of gladness and gaiety, so joyous.
- **peaceful**: She is rarely argumentative or quarrelsome.
- **playful**: She loves to play and have fun—and can find play in the simplest of things.
- **upbeat**: She is happy, cheerful, and optimistic.

Make the expectations lively enough, and action will follow.

MASON COOLEY
In ballet a complicated story is impossible to tell. . . . We can’t dance synonyms.

GEORGE BALANCHINE
The **hard** hike up Mount Tam took us the whole day.

We can't tell from the use of *hard* if the hike was more than we would have hoped for or a welcome challenge.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *hard*:

The _______________ hike up Mount Tam took us the whole day.

- **arduous** The hike was laborious and steep and required great exertion.
- **complicated** The hike had aspects that were elaborate, complex, and intricate.
- **demanding** The hike called for more intensive effort, attention, and skill than we expected.
- **exhausting** By the end of the hike, we were extremely fatigued and weary.
- **formidable** The hike proved to be somewhat discouraging because of Mount Tam's intimidating size and difficulty.
- **rugged** The terrain was rocky or hilly, with jagged surfaces.
- **strenuous** The hike was characterized by vigorous exertion, but the connotation is that it was a positive and enjoyable workout.

---

*Golf seems to be an **arduous** way to go for a walk. I prefer to take the dogs out.*

— **PRINCESS ANNE**
We all of us need assistance. Those who **sustain** others themselves want to be **sustained**.

MAURICE HULST

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Helga was kind enough to help me through a tough time. Help can come in many ways, and help doesn’t tell us much about the ways Helga’s showed her kindness.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for help:

Helga was kind enough to __________ me through a tough time.

- **assist**
  Helga offered me aid—financially, emotionally, and in other ways.

- **befriend**
  Helga and I weren’t as close before this tough time, and now she’s become much more friendly.

- **bolster**
  I was a little shaky, and Helga offered me her strength—she was someone to lean on.

- **encourage**
  Helga has inspired me with courage, spirit, and confidence.

- **stand by**
  Even when things got really rough, I knew I could rely on Helga.

- **support**
  Helga not only offered me financial aid but also held me up emotionally.

- **sustain**
  Helga helped me keep going without either of us giving way or yielding to how tough the time was.

---

“**A government that robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul.**”

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
### important

**PART OF SPEECH**
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**
*substantial; of much or great significance or consequence*

---

#### Cures for the Common Word

- big-league
- chief
- considerable
- conspicuous
- critical
- crucial
- decisive
- earnest
- **essential**
- exceptional
- exigent
- extensive
- far-reaching
- foremost
- front-page
- grave
- great
- heavy
- **imperative**
- importunate
- **influential**
- large
- marked
- material
- **meaningful**
- momentous
- notable
- of note
- of substance
- **paramount**
- ponderous
- pressing
- primary
- principal
- **relevant**
- salient
- serious
- signal
- **significant**
- something
- standout
- substantial
- urgent
- vital
- weighty

---

**Only Irish Coffee provides in a single glass all four essential food groups: alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fat.**

ALEX LEVINE

---

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Community approval of the new clinic is **important** to the developer.

We can't tell from the use of *important* in this sentence if the approval is something the developer cares about or if it’s required for construction of the new clinic.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *important*:

Community approval of the new clinic is ______________ to the developer.

- **essential**: The approval is necessary to the actual continuance of the project, and without it, the project will not move forward.
- **imperative**: In addition to being absolutely necessary or required, the community’s input is unavoidable.
- **influential**: The community’s input will influence the developer's plans.
- **meaningful**: This gives the impression that the developer cares about the wishes of the community.
- **paramount**: The community's approval could have a chief impact on the developer's plans.
- **relevant**: The community’s input should have significant and demonstrable bearing on the issues.
- **significant**: The community’s approval matters, but there’s no indication the approval—or not—will have any bearing on the developer’s plan.

“The most **influential** of all educational factors is the conversation in a child’s home.”

WILLIAM TEMPLE
interesting

PART OF SPEECH adjective
DEFINITION arousing the curiosity or engaging the attention

absorbing
amusing
compelling
stimulating
fascinating
riveting
intriguing
cures for the common word
absorbing
affecting
alluring
amusing
arresting
captivating
charismatic
compelling
curious
delightful
elegant
enchanting
engaging
engrossing
entertaining
enthraling
entrancing
exceptional
exotic
fascinating
gracious
gripping
impressive
inspiring
intriguing
inviting
magnetic
pleasing
pleasurable
provocative
refreshing
riveting
stimulating
stirring
striking
suspicious
thought-provoking
unusual
winning

I enjoyed the courtroom as a stage—but not so amusing as Broadway.

MAE WEST

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My mom and I saw a very interesting play.

It is hard to know exactly what this means—if the play was good, bad, or something else entirely.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *interesting*:

My mom and I saw a very _____________ play.

**absorbing**
The play was engaging and engrossing and occupied our full attention or interest.

**amusing**
The play was entertaining in a light, playful, or pleasant manner and caused us to laugh.

**compelling**
The play irresistibly kept our attention and urged, almost forced, us to think about its message.

**fascinating**
The play was irresistibly charming and captivating and caused us to see a point with a different perspective.

**intriguing**
The play aroused our interest—and our curiosity.

**riveting**
The play held our attention and kept us engrossed in the action, dialogue, or message.

**stimulating**
The play was exciting and invigorating.

“Good communication is as **stimulating** as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.”

ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH
**PART OF SPEECH**

**verb**

**DEFINITION**

to hold or retain in one’s possession

---

**accumulate**

**amass**

**deposit**

**store**

**heap**

**maintain**

---

**cures for the common word**

- accumulate
- amass
- cache
- care for
- carry
- conduct
- conserve
- control
- deposit
- detain
- direct
- enjoy
- garner
- grasp
- grip
- have
- heap
- hold back
- maintain
- manage
- own
- pile
- place
- possess
- preserve
- put up
- reserve
- retain
- save
- stack
- stock
- store
- withhold

---

**CURED!**

*We accumulate our opinions at an age when our understanding is at its weakest.*

G. C. (GEORG CHRISTOPH) LICHTENBERG
There’s room for Chris to **keep** his entire antique ski collection in the new garage.

In this sentence, *keep* doesn’t tell us precisely what Chris is doing with the collection and what the main advantage is of the new garage.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *keep*:

There’s room for Chris to _____________ his entire antique ski collection in the new garage.

- **accumulate**: Chris will be able to collect his skis in gradual degrees.
- **amass**: Chris will have plenty of room to collect a large quantity of his skis.
- **deposit**: Choosing *deposit* implies that it’s not Chris’s garage, but that someone is letting Chris leave his collection there.
- **heap**: Chris is going to pile up his collection in the garage.
- **maintain**: The new garage gives Chris a place to work on and keep his collection in good condition.
- **save**: Chris’s collection will now be safe in the new garage.
- **store**: Chris may not get to enjoy his collection all the time, but now he can place it in the new garage for future use.

"It is possible to **store** the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated."

ALEC BOURNE
kind

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  of a good or benevolent nature or disposition

affectionate  amiable  compassionate
indulgent  obliging  friendly
generous

cures for the common word

affectionate  considerate  lenient
all heart  cordial  loving
altruistic  courteous  mild
amiable  friendly  neighborly
amicable  generous  philanthropic
beneficent  gentle  propitious
benevolent  good-hearted  softhearted
big  gracious  sympathetic
bounteous  humane  tenderhearted
charitable  humanitarian  thoughtful
clement  indulgent  tolerant
compassionate  kindhearted  understanding
congenial  kindly

Always when I see a man fond of praise I always think it is because he is an affectionate man craving for affection.

J. B. YEATS
Everyone likes the kind nanny.

There are many facets of being kind, and the following alternatives tell us more about the different ways in which she might be a great nanny.

Substitute an alternative remedy for kind:

Everyone likes the ____________ nanny.

affectionate She shows love and affection and is fondly tender.

amiable She is very agreeable and willing to accept the wishes, decisions, or suggestions of others.

compassionate She is sympathetic and feels and shows compassion.

friendly She is kind and pleasant, not antagonistic or hostile.

generous She is unselfish and liberal in giving and sharing—of her time, creativity, and attention.

indulgent She’s lenient and permissive; indulgent carries a somewhat negative connotation of her giving in too much.

obliging She is often willing or eager to do favors for people and is very accommodating.

Conrad Hilton was very generous to me in the divorce settlement. He gave me 5,000 Gideon Bibles.

ZSA ZSA GABOR
know

PART OF SPEECH  | verb
DEFINITION      | to perceive or understand as fact or truth; to apprehend clearly and with certainty

appreciate
comprehend
discern
notice
fathom
ken
learn
cures for the common word
apperceive appreciate comprehend have
apprehend differentiate ken
be acquainted discern learn
be cognizant discriminate notice
be informed distinguish perceive
be read experience realize
be versed fathom recognize
cognize feel certain see

cURED!

The movies are so rarely great art, that if we can’t appreciate great trash, there is little reason for us to go.

PAULINE KAEL

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
It took me a while to **know** the local customs.

Being familiar with local customs can be very helpful, but this sentence doesn’t clearly indicate whether I understand or accept the customs.

Substitute an alternative remedy for *know*:

It took me a while to ____________ the local customs.

- **appreciate** I became fully aware of the customs and was able to acknowledge that they are true for the area.
- **comprehend** Even though some of the customs were unfamiliar to me, I grasped their nature and meaning.
- **discern** By observing, I became able to recognize certain actions as local customs—as opposed to unfamiliar individual behavior.
- **fathom** I was finally able to comprehend and perceive the truth of the customs.
- **ken** I was already acquainted with some of the customs, because someone had told me about some of them, and now I understand them even more.
- **learn** I came to know about the customs from my own study and experience.
- **notice** It took me a while even to become aware of the local customs.

---

*Learn from the mistakes of others—you can never live long enough to make them all yourself.*

JOHN LUTHER
**le**ave

**PART OF SPEECH**  
verb

**DEFINITION**  
to depart from permanently; to quit

---

**abandon**  
abscond  
break away  
cast off  
clear out  
cut out  
decamp  
defect  
**desert**  
disappear  
**ditch**  
embark  
emigrate  
**escape**  
exit

---

**flee**  
flit  
fly  
**forsake**  
go away  
go forth  
head out  
migrate  
move out  
part  
pull out  
push off  
quit  
relinquish  
retire

---

**ride off**  
run along  
sally  
scram  
set out  
slip out  
split  
step down  
take leave  
take off  
vacate  
vamoose  
vanish  
walk out  
withdraw

---

*A poem is never finished, only abandoned.*  
PAUL VALERY

---

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Darrel had to **leave** his car at the side of the road.

No doubt there was something wrong for Darrel to have to leave his car, but *leave* in this sentence doesn’t give an indication of just why, and the following alternatives tell a bit more of the story.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for *leave*:  

Darrel had to _____________ his car at the side of the road.

- **abandon**  
  Darrel needed to leave and completely give up on the car, which was perhaps broken beyond repair.

- **desert**  
  Darrel left the car without intending to return; the implication is that he left contrary to a promise or commitment not to.

- **ditch**  
  This is an informal way to say that Darrel had to get rid of the car for some reason.

- **escape**  
  Darrel got away from the car—after being confined or restrained in it for some reason—perhaps because of some impending danger.

- **exit**  
  Darrel gave up possession of the car; the implication is that he was able to walk away calmly as opposed to hurrying away.

- **flee**  
  Darrel quickly ran away from the car, but we still don’t know why.

- **forsake**  
  Darrel adored that classic car, but for some reason he sadly had to give it up.

---

*Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.*

SAMUEL ULLMAN
PART OF SPEECH  
noun

DEFINITION  
the way in which a person or thing appears to the eye or to the mind

cures for the common word

air  aspect  attitude  bearing  cast  character  complexion  countenance  demeanor

effect  expression  face  fashion  feature  form  guise  image  manner

mien  mug  physiognomy  posture  presence  seeming  semblance  shape  visage

A man’s own manner and character is what most becomes him.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO
The woman in the park had a sad look about her.

In this sentence, it’s unclear exactly what gave us the sense that the woman was sad, and the alternatives give us a clearer explanation of how she is demonstrating her sadness.

Substitute an alternative remedy for *look*:

The woman in the park had a sad ___________ about her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>air</td>
<td>It was her appearance or manner that gave the impression of being sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bearing</td>
<td>Her posture and the way she conducted herself, maybe even her gestures, made her appear sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>countenance</td>
<td>The look or expression on her face was sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demeanor</td>
<td>Her conduct and behavior—perhaps crying—told us she was sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effect</td>
<td>By her look or manner, she was causing those around her to be sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manner</td>
<td>The way she was speaking with and treating others told us of her sadness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mien</td>
<td>Some aspect of her manner revealed her inner state of sadness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excess on occasion is exhilarating. It prevents moderation from acquiring the deadening effect of a habit.*

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM
After a semester or so, my infatuation with computers burnt out as quickly as it had begun.

ERIC ALLIN CORNELL
Taylor realized that her feelings for Thorne were actually love.

Love can have a broad spectrum of meanings, and in this sentence, love doesn’t give us much clarity on the level of Taylor’s feelings.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for love:

Taylor realized that her feelings for Thorne were actually ______________.

**affection**    Taylor had a tender fondness for Thorne, but it wasn’t really true love.

**appreciation**   Taylor felt great gratitude to Thorne, but not necessarily an affection for him.

**devotion**   Taylor was thankful to Thorne to a degree that caused an earnest attachment to him.

**infatuation**   Taylor had a foolish, all-absorbing passion for Thorne, which probably won’t last.

**lust**   Taylor realized she really only had an intense sexual desire for Thorne.

**regard**   Taylor had great respect for Thorne and held him in high esteem.

**worship**   Taylor had an adoring reverence for Thorne.

"Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business, is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI
The article’s **main** point concerned increased global warming.

We know that *main* implies importance of some kind, but we’re not sure in what way or on what the importance is based.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *main*:

The article’s __________ point concerned increased global warming.

**dominant**

There were many points in the article, and increased global warming is the one that most influenced the information or perspective of the article.

**foremost**

Increased global warming was the article’s most important point, ahead of all others.

**fundamental**

Increased global warming was the primary point upon which the rest of the article was based.

**leading**

Increased global warming was the first point of the article.

**necessary**

The point of increased global warming was essential and requisite to the entire article.

**outstanding**

The point of increased global warming was most prominent and striking; it stood out.

**vital**

Getting across the truth of increased global warming was of critical importance.

*Love and freedom are vital to the creation and upbringing of a child.*

SYLVIA PANKHURST
PART OF SPEECH: verb
DEFINITION: to cause to exist or happen; to bring about; to create

The first qualification for a historian is to have no ability to invent.
STENDHAL [MARIE-HENRI BEYLE]
Jason is working to **make** a state-of-the-art veterinary clinic.

This is certainly a noble cause, but *make* doesn’t clearly tell us what Jason’s role will be in bringing the clinic into existence.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *make*:

Jason is working to __________ a state-of-the-art veterinary clinic.

- **arrange**
  Jason is bringing about an agreement to create the clinic, but we don’t know if he will be involved with putting together the clinic.

- **assemble**
  Jason is going to bring together all the components needed for the entire clinic.

- **bring about**
  This is an informal way to say that Jason will do everything necessary to accomplish the goal of bringing the clinic into existence.

- **build**
  This could mean that Jason will actually help to construct the building, but it may mean that he will be instrumental in assembling all the parts needed to establish the clinic.

- **invent**
  This implies there has never been such a clinic and Jason is creating it based on his own ingenuity—and maybe some experimentation.

- **prepare**
  This implies a clinic is in existence and Jason is going to be sure it is duly state-of-the-art equipped in proper condition and readiness.

- **throw together**
  Jason is putting together the clinic in a hurried way, and although this can have a connotation of being haphazard, in today’s world it can imply admiration for doing something so big so quickly.

---

*It takes twenty years to *build* a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.*

WARREN BUFFET
PART OF SPEECH  adjective

DEFINITION  hostile, offensive, selfish, or unaccommodating; nasty; malicious

---

cures for the common word

bad-tempered  hard-nosed  rugged
bitchy  ignoble  scurrilous
callous  ill-tempered  shameless
cantankerous  infamous  sinking
churlish  knavish  snide
dangerous  liverish  sour
despicable  lousy  the lowest
difficult  malicious  treacherous
dirty  malign  troublesome
disagreeable  nasty  ugly
dishonorable  pernicious  unpleasant
evil  pesky  unscrupulous
formidable  perfidious  vexatious
hard  pesky  vicious

---

May the forces of evil become confused on the way to your house.

GEORGE CARLIN
The wicked stepmother in *Cinderella* was downright *mean*.

Well, she sure was, but *mean* is too limiting when there are so many other words to use that describe the horrid ways she showed that meanness.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *mean*:

The wicked stepmother in *Cinderella* was downright ____________.

- **cantankerous** She was constantly disagreeable and argumentative.
- **churlish** She was rude, crude, ill-mannered, coarse, and contemptible in behavior and appearance.
- **dangerous** She caused Cinderella great physical and emotional injury, to say the least.
- **dishonorable** She was clearly unprincipled and disreputable.
- **evil** Her entire personality was characterized by anger and spite.
- **formidable** For years she managed to cause fear and apprehension—in everyone.
- **troublesome** She caused trouble for everyone and was constantly annoying.

*Cured!*

“Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It’s the transition that’s *troublesome.*”

ISAAC ASIMOV
One should never criticize his own work except in a fresh and hopeful mood. The self-criticism of a tired mind is suicide.

CHARLES HORTEN COOLEY
I need to conduct more research for my report.

In this sentence, more is clear in indicating additional research but doesn’t tell us much about what kind of research.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for more:

I need to conduct ____________ research for my report.

deeper  I need to continue my research extending far down from the surface meaning of my topic.

expanded  I need to look beyond the current scope of my research to increase the length and detail of my report.

fresh  I need to look at my topic in a novel and different way than I have so far.

heavier  I’ve been a little light on my research and need to do much more than before.

major  I haven’t done any research so far, and I have a lot to do!

supplementary  I need to add something to my research to make it complete—perhaps to make up for a deficiency or to extend or strengthen the whole report.

wider  I need to look at a much greater variety of subjects or cases to give me more thorough information.

“**The responsibility of tolerance lies in those who have the wider vision.**

GEORGE ELIOT
### need

**PART OF SPEECH**  
*noun*

**DEFINITION**  
*urgent want, as of something required or wanted*

---

**cures for the common word**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ache</th>
<th>duty</th>
<th>requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>charge</td>
<td>exigency</td>
<td>requisite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>commitment</strong></td>
<td>extremity</td>
<td>right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>committal</td>
<td>hunger</td>
<td>thirst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>compulsion</strong></td>
<td>itch</td>
<td>urge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>craving</td>
<td>longing</td>
<td>urgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demand</td>
<td>must</td>
<td>use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desire</td>
<td>obligation</td>
<td>weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devoir</td>
<td>occasion</td>
<td>wish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*I write of the wish that comes true—for some reason, a terrifying concept.*  

**JAMES M. CAIN**
Parents may feel a need to protect even their adult children.

In this sentence, need doesn’t give us a clear indication as to whether the desire to protect is appropriate or not.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for need:

Parents may feel a _______________ to protect even their adult children.

**commitment**  Parents may feel bound emotionally to protect their children with a sincere and steadfast pledge, which tends to give us a positive sense.

**compulsion**  Some parents have an irresistible impulse to protect their children, regardless of the rationality of the motivation; compulsion tells us that the feeling is probably not appropriate.

**duty**  Parents may feel they are doing what they are required to do by moral or legal obligation.

**longing**  Some parents have a strong, persistent desire or craving to protect their adult children.

**obligation**  Parents may feel bound by duty, custom, or law to protect their children; the connotation is that perhaps they are doing so because they have to rather than because they want to.

**urgency**  There may be an earnest and pressing importance for the parents to protect their children; the implication is that there is real danger.

**wish**  Parents often have a continuing want and desire to protect their children.

“*The duty of youth is to challenge corruption.*

KURT COBAIN
new

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  of recent origin, production, purchase, etc.

cures for the common word

dewy
different
dissimilar
distinct
edgy
fashionable
fresh
inexperienced
just out
latest
modern
modernistic
modish
neoteric
newfangled
novel
now
original
recent
strange
topical
ultramodern
uncontaminated
unfamiliar
unique
unknown

unlike
unseasoned
unskilled
unspoiled
untouched
untrained
untired
untrodden
unused
unusual
up-to-date
virgin
youthful

CURED!

I think modern science should graft functional wings on a pig, simply so no one can ever use that stupid saying again.

ANONYMOUS
The detergent manufacturer introduced a **new** formula.

In this example, *new* could have a host of different meanings—both positive and negative.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *new*:

The detergent manufacturer introduced a _____________ formula.

- **fresh**  The formula is newly made or obtained.
- **latest** The formula may have been created at any time, and this is the most recent formula the manufacturer is introducing.
- **modern** The formula is characteristic or expressive of recent times.
- **novel** The formula is of a new kind, different from anything seen or known before.
- **unfamiliar** The formula may have been around for some time but is not known or well known.
- **unique** This could have two slightly different meanings: the formula is the only one of its kind, or it is not the typical formula.
- **untried** The formula possibly has not ever been tried or at least has not been adequately tested or proved.

**CURED!**

Create your own visual style . . . let it be **unique** for yourself and yet identifiable for others.

GEORGE ORSON WELLES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF SPEECH</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
<td>immediately following in time, order, importance, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**cures for the common word**

- abutting
- adjacent
- adjoining
- after
- alongside
- attached
- beside
- bordering
- close
- closest
- coming
- connecting
- consecutive
- consequent
- contiguous
- ensuing
- following
- immediate
- later
- nearby
- nearest
- neighboring
- proximate
- subsequent
- succeeding
- succeeding
- thereafter
- touching

**CURED!**

*Arrogance and snobbism live in **adjoining** rooms and use a common currency.*

MORLEY SAFER
Rosie’s best friend lives in Brewster, the next town on Highway 1.

Choosing next here actually gives us sufficient information, but the following alternatives broaden our understanding of where Brewster is in relation to where Rosie lives.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for next:

Rosie’s best friend lives in Brewster, the ____________ town on Highway 1.

**adjacent**  Brewster is close to Rosie’s town, but adjacent doesn’t give us an indication of in which direction or if it’s a bordering town or simply nearby.

**adjoining**  Brewster is bordering the town where Rosie lives, in direct contact at some point.

**closest**  There are several towns nearby, but Brewster is most near to Rosie’s town.

**following**  Continuing on Highway 1, Brewster is a town we’ll come to—though it doesn’t tell us how close or in which direction.

**nearest**  Brewster is within the shortest distance or interval of time from Rosie’s house.

**neighboring**  Since we’re talking of towns, this is an ideal word for a nearby or adjacent town.

**subsequent**  On Highway 1, Brewster is the town that comes after Rosie’s town—again, though, it doesn’t tell us in which direction or how far it is.

---

*At a formal dinner party, the person nearest death should always be seated closest to the bathroom.*

—George Carlin
nice

PART OF SPEECH: adjective
DEFINITION: pleasing and agreeable in nature

cures for the common word

admireable
agreeable
amiable
approved
attractive
becoming
charming
commendable
considerate
copacetic
cordial
courteous
cultured
decorous
delightful
favorable
friendly
genial
gentle
good
gracious
helpful
hunky-dory
ingratiating
inviting
kind
kindly
lovely

nifty
obliging
OK
peachy
pleasant
pleasurable
polite
seemly
swell
unpresumptuous
welcome
well-mannered
winning
winsome

CURED!

Being cultured is the least expensive form of respectability.

MASON COOLEY

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Rich has a **nice** personality.

We know that this means something positive (unless being used facetiously), but we’d like to know more precisely what is pleasant about Rich.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *nice*:

Rich has a(n) _____________ personality.

**becoming**

Rich’s personality is pleasing and appropriate, and he presents himself in the best light.

**charming**

Rich is a delight and can induce an action using his strong attractiveness or personal skills.

**cordial**

Rich is warm, sincere, and friendly.

**cultured**

Rich is refined in his manner and enlightened and knowledgeable in the arts.

**gentle**

Rich is never severe or harsh in any way.

**gracious**

Rich is kind and courteous and has a compassionate nature.

**well-mannered**

Rich is polite and courteous and is considered to be socially “correct” in his behavior.

---

“I’m a **charming** coward; I fight with words.”

CARL REINER
PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  having lived or existed for a relatively long time; far advanced in years or life

cures for the common word

aged  ancient  broken down  debilitated  decrepit  deficient  doddering  elderly  enfeebled  exhausted  experienced  fossil

aged  ancient  broken down  debilitated  decrepit  deficient  doddering  elderly  enfeebled  exhausted  experienced  fossil

geriatric  getting on  gray-haired  grizzled  hoary  impaired  inactive  infirm  mature  matured  olden  patriarchal

seasoned  senile  senior  skilled  superannuated  tired  used  venerable  versed  veteran  wasted  worn

Imagination grows by exercise, and contrary to common belief, is more powerful in the mature than in the young.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM
Jim is an old member of the cast.

When *old* is used in this context, it would probably be kinder to look for an alternative—one that has a more diplomatic and more precise connotation.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *old*:

Jim is a(n) ______________ member of the cast.

- **aged**
  - We don’t know how long Jim has been with the cast, but he is advanced in age.

- **experienced**
  - Whether it’s with this cast or just in the industry, Jim has gained a level of skill or knowledge based on his past experience.

- **mature**
  - Jim—or at least his skills—are fully developed in body or mind.

- **seasoned**
  - Jim is competent because of his trial and experience.

- **senior**
  - Though this could relate to Jim’s chronological age, it would more often imply he is of higher or the highest rank or standing in the cast.

- **skilled**
  - Jim’s skill is either from experience or from training.

- **veteran**
  - Jim has long service with the cast.

---

*I was very, very naive for a veteran guy. I thought I was going to be a place where dissent could be heard.*

PHIL DONAHUE
An original writer is not one who imitates nobody, but one whom nobody can imitate.

FRANÇOIS-RENÉ DE CHATEAUBRIAND
The manuscript files are on my old computer.

For a second printing of my book, I need the original manuscript files, and we can’t tell from the use of old in this sentence whether I’m going to be able to get those files or not.

Substitute an alternative remedy for old:

The manuscript files are on my ________computer.

antiquated The files are on a computer that is so obsolete I no longer use it.

former I’m referring to the computer I used before my current one, and it doesn’t necessarily mean there was or is anything wrong with it.

old-fashioned The computer is out of style but still may work just fine.

onetime The connotation is that the files are on the computer I used at one time and may no longer have access to.

original The files are on my very first computer.

primitive The computer is rather simple and unsophisticated and probably can’t even perform the way I need it to today.

worn-out My beloved computer is no longer working; it is so damaged by use that it’s beyond repair.

Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not sure about the former.

ALBERT EINSTEIN
open

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  not closed or barred; relatively free of obstructions

cures for the common word

accessible  gaping  unbolted
agape  naked  unburdened
airy  navigating  uncluttered
ajar  patent  uncovered
bare  patulous  unfolded
clear  peeled  unfurled
cleared  revealed  unimpeded
dehiscent  rolling  unlocked
disclosed  spacious  unobstructed
disclosed  spread out  unsealed
disclosed  stripped  unsealed
empty  susceptible  unstopped
expanded  free  vacated
exposed  unbarred  wide
extended  unblocked  yawning

We're an ideal political family, as accessible as Disneyland.

MAUREEN REAGAN
We’re creating an open path from the house to the garden.

Because open as an adjective has almost eighty definitions, many of which could apply in this sentence, we definitely need to narrow our meaning to have a clearer picture about the path to the garden.

powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for open:

We’re creating a(n) ________________ path from the house to the garden.

accessible
airy
exposed
navigable
spacious
uncluttered
unobstructed

We’ll now have a path that can be easily reached and used.
The path may be covered, but it is open to a free current of fresh air.
The path won’t be sheltered from the elements.
The path will now be wide enough to provide us easy passage to the garden.
Our path will have a great vast area.
The path now will be orderly and neat.
We’re clearing any and all impediments or hindrances to create a clear path.

I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than to those attending too small a degree of it.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
To me, photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event.

HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON
A part of the population was evacuated early.

In this sentence, we aren’t given enough information to know how many people were evacuated or if the early evacuation was a positive or negative situation.

powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for part:

A(n) _____________ of the population was evacuated early.

- allotment: A predetermined number of people, or specific people, had been chosen for early evacuation should the need arise.
- fraction: Only a minute number of people were evacuated early, and in this case, the implication is that the number was far too few.
- fragment: Only a small, isolated group of people were evacuated early.
- parcel: The people in a specific geographic portion of the city were evacuated early; parcel implies a relatively small geographic area.
- ration: Only a set amount of people were set apart for early evacuation; the implication with ration is that it was a small number of people.
- sector: A geographic section or zone of the population was evacuated early, though we have no indication how small or large that section was.
- segment: Though segment could refer to a geographic location, the connotation is more that a certain group determined by some other factor (perhaps need or, unfortunately, economic status) was evacuated early.

It is unconscionable that we ration health care by the ability to pay. . . . Your heart breaks. Health care should be a given.

KATHRYN ANASTOS
The advantage of a **classical** education is that it enables you to despise the wealth which it prevents you from achieving.

RUSSELL GREEN
Susan is a **perfect** first-chair violinist.

Susan is an ideal choice, but this doesn’t give us much information as to what specifically makes her so right for the position.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for **perfect**:

Susan is a(n) ________________ first-chair violinist.

- **accomplished**: Susan is highly skilled as a violinist; she is an expert.
- **classical**: *Classical* in this sentence could have two meanings: Susan’s talents are of the highest quality, or she plays more enduring types of music.
- **consummate**: Susan can superbly perform a complete range of music.
- **experienced**: Susan is certainly skillful through her experience, but this may refer instead to her experience at being first chair.
- **impeccable**: Susan’s playing is considered faultless.
- **sound**: Susan is competent and reliable, which may be fine but doesn’t indicate an advanced skill.
- **unequaled**: Susan’s talents as a violinist are matchless and cannot be surpassed.

---

*John Wayne was a **consummate** gentleman. Bigger than life.*

JENNIFER O’NEILL
**piece**

**PART OF SPEECH**  noun

**DEFINITION**  a separate or limited portion or quantity of something

---

**cures for the common word**

- allotment
- bit
- **bite**
- case
- chomp
- chunk
- cut
- division
- example
- fraction
- fragment
- **gob**
- half
- hunk
- instance
- interest
- item
- length
- lot
- **lump**
- member
- moiety
- morsel
- mouthful
- parcel
- percentage
- portion
- quantity
- quota
- sample
- scrap
- section
- segment
- share
- shred
- slice
- smithereens
- snack
- specimen

---

*Sculpture is the art of the hole and the lump.*

AUGUSTE RODIN
When I got home from work, I saw that the family had left me one
**piece** of pie.

In this sentence, I’m not sure just how big—or small—a **piece** of pie I’m going to get to enjoy.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for **piece**:

When I got home from work, I saw that the family had left me one
____________ of pie.

- **allotment**: There are five in the family and five pieces of pie, so they kindly set aside my equal share.
- **bite**: Well, it’s not a lot, but at least they left a mouthful.
- **gob**: Using **gob** here is an informal way to say they left me a huge quantity of pie.
- **lump**: It was an irregularly shaped mass on the plate, so they probably had all picked away at it.
- **morsel**: There was such a small portion left, I could barely get a good taste.
- **scrap**: Unfortunately, all that was left were bits and pieces of leftovers.
- **slice**: Ah, a standard cut of pie—in this case big enough to enjoy fully.

*Cured!*

*Right now, I’m as single as a **slice** of American cheese.*

*Nick Cannon*
Honest criticism is hard to take, particularly from a relative, a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger.

FRANKLIN P. JONES
Robert is known for his **plain** speaking.

We can't be sure what's meant by *plain* here nor whether Robert's speaking style is considered positive or negative.

---

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *plain*:

Robert is known for his _____________ speaking.

- **forthright**: Robert goes straight to the point, without any subtlety or evasion.
- **guileless**: What Robert says is free of deceit.
- **honest**: Robert always speaks with honorable, upright, and fair intentions.
- **ingenuous**: Robert speaks sincerely and without reservation.
- **outspoken**: This means Robert speaks with frankness and without reservation, but *outspoken* has a connotation that this may be unwelcome or may be considered inappropriate.
- **sincere**: Robert speaks in a genuine and earnest way—with the added connotation that he speaks with emotion.
- **unfeigned**: Robert is genuine and says what he sincerely feels.

---

*“I can see clearly now . . . that I was wrong in not acting more decisively and more **forthrightly** in dealing with Watergate.*

RICHARD M. NIXON
**PART OF SPEECH**  
noun

**DEFINITION**  
a scheme or method of acting, doing, proceeding, making, etc.

---

**cures for the common word**

- aim
- angle
- animus
- arrangement
- big picture
- contrivance
- deal
- design
- device
- disposition
- expedient
- game plan
- gimmick
- idea

- intendment
- intention
- layout
- machination
- means
- **method**
- outline
- pattern
- picture
- platform
- plot
- policy
- procedure
- program

- project
- proposal
- proposition
- purpose
- scenario
- scheme
- **stratagem**
- **strategy**
- suggestion
- system
- tactic
- treatment
- undertaking
- way

---

**CURED!**

Art and science have their meeting point in **method**.

EDWARD ROBERT BULWER-LYTTON
For his extreme-sports training start-up company, Sam considered a bold marketing plan.

We expect something in a field like extreme sports to be bold, and the alternatives give us a much better feel for what Sam wants to accomplish with his marketing.

Substitute an alternative remedy for plan:

For his extreme-sports training start-up company, Sam considered a bold marketing ________________.

angle The plan is based on a certain viewpoint or attitude Sam has; angle can imply there is some secret motive to the plan.

game plan Sam is considering a carefully thought-out course of action.

gimmick Sam is considering an ingenious or novel approach designed to attract attention and increase appeal.

method Knowing that most basics of marketing apply to all industries, Sam is considering techniques in accordance with traditional marketing procedures.

platform Sam decided to base his approach on a body of principles in which he believes.

stratagem Sam is thinking of an elaborate maneuver to gain an advantage over his competitors.

strategy Sam is considering a series of maneuvers aimed at a specific goal.

We will never try to develop a strategy that wins on price. There is nothing unique about pricing.

JOSH S. WESTON
part of speech: verb
definition: to think out; to arrange a method or scheme to accomplish an objective

A man of personality can **formulate** ideals, but only a man of character can achieve them.

SIR HERBERT READ
The committee met to **plan** the next election campaign.

Choosing *plan* here is vague and limits our understanding of the committee’s intentions.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *plan*:

The committee met to ___________ the next election campaign.

- **craft**
  The committee devoted great care and ingenuity to construct a successful campaign.

- **devise**
  The committee is aiming to elaborate on existing principles or ideas.

- **engineer**
  The committee intends to arrange and manage the campaign by some expedient scheme, which leans toward a negative connotation.

- **formulate**
  The committee is working to invent a method or system for a successful campaign.

- **mastermind**
  The committee wants to skillfully plan and also direct the campaign, though *mastermind* can have a negative connotation.

- **outline**
  The committee is in the beginning stages of summarizing and sketching out the main features of the campaign.

- **shape**
  The committee wants to give definite form and organization to the campaign; *shape* has a positive connotation.

_We continue to shape our personality all our life. If we knew ourselves perfectly, we should die._

ALBERT CAMUS
cures for the common word

affable  agreeable  amiable  amusing  bland  charming  cheerful  cheery  civilized  congenial  convivial  copacetic  cordial  delightful  diplomatic

enchanting  engaging  enjoyable  fine  friendly  fun  genial  genteel  good-humored  gracious  gratifying  jolly  jovial  kindly  likable

lovely  mild-mannered  nice  obliging  pleasing  pleasurable  polite  refreshing  satisfying  social  soft  sweet  sympathetic  urbane  welcome

The most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar, familiar things new.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
My manager, Alexa, is always pleasant.

What a joy to work with a pleasant manager, so using the following alternatives allow me to elaborate on the degree of her good nature.

Substitute an alternative remedy for pleasant:

My manager, Alexa, is always ________________.

affable  Alexa is easy to approach and talk to, and she’s warmly polite.
cheerful  Alexa is always in good spirits, inspiring us to also be cheerful.
congenial  Alexa is agreeable, friendly, and sociable.
diplomatic  Alexa is tactful and very skilled in dealing with sensitive matters and people.
engaging  Alexa is always willing to involve herself and participate—in conversations or in what needs to be done.
polite  Alexa is always courteous, showing good manners toward others.
sympathetic  Alexa is compassionate and shows sympathy and understanding in a wide range of issues and to many people.

Polite conversation is rarely either.

FRAN LEBOWITZ
problem

PART OF SPEECH  noun
DEFINITION  situation, matter, or person that presents perplexity or difficulty

I really resent being liked openly. I don’t find any challenge in being liked.

JOHN CASSAVETES
Our **problem** is whether to add a new room on a tight budget or wait.

This sentence doesn’t make it clear how we are viewing the problem of whether to add on the new room now or be crowded for a while longer and wait until we have more money.

Substitute an alternative remedy for *problem*:

Our ____________ is whether to add a new room on a tight budget or wait.

- **challenge**: Our tight budget is certainly a difficulty, but we consider the process of figuring it out to be stimulating.
- **complication**: We thought we had enough money for the remodel, but unexpected things happened to present a problem with the original situation.
- **dilemma**: The need to remodel and the tight budget pose a situation requiring a choice between equally undesirable alternatives.
- **headache**: *Headache* in this example is an informal—but clear—way of saying that not being able to reach a decision is annoying and bothersome and gives us both a need to head for the aspirin.
- **issue**: Deciding which option is most important will determine our choice.
- **obstacle**: The tight budget is hindering our progress, but it won’t stop us from making a sound decision.
- **quandary**: We’re in a state of uncertainty about what to do, caught between equally unfavorable options.

---

**CURED!**

*The greatest obstacle to discovering the shape of the earth, the continents, and the oceans was not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge.*  

---

**DIAGNOSIS  limiting**

*The greatest obstacle to discovering the shape of the earth, the continents, and the oceans was not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge.*  

---

**DANIEL BOORSTIN**
prove

**PART OF SPEECH**  
verb

**DEFINITION**  
to establish the truth or genuineness of, as by evidence or argument

---

**cures for the common word**

- affirm
- analyze
- ascertain
- assay
- attest
- authenticate
- back
- bear out
- certify
- check
- confirm
- convince
- corroborate
- declare
- demonstrate
- determine
- document
- end up
- establish
- evidence
- evince
- examine
- experiment
- explain
- find
- fix
- justify
- make evident
- manifest
- pan out
- result
- settle
- show
- substantiate
- sustain
- test
- testify
- trial
- try
- turn out
- uphold
- validate
- verify
- warrant
- witness

---

"Golfers have **analyzed** the game in order to find “the secret.” There is no secret."  
HENRY COTTON
The defense attorney was determined to **prove** his client’s story.

Even if we assume his client is being honest, **prove** doesn’t give us much information as to how the attorney will show his client’s story to be true.

---

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for **prove**:

The defense attorney was determined to _____________ his client’s story.

- **analyze**
  The attorney is going to examine the evidence critically, to bring out the essential elements so as to identify causes and key factors.

- **authenticate**
  The attorney is going to establish the story as genuine, with the help of an expert in the field.

- **certify**
  The attorney will present reliable information to attest to the truth of the story.

- **corroborate**
  The attorney has evidence, facts, or a person who can establish or strengthen his client’s story.

- **document**
  The attorney will furnish specific references, citations, and so on, in support of the statements his client made.

- **justify**
  Even if his client might have broken a law, the attorney wants to show that his client’s actions were just or right.

- **verify**
  The attorney will substantiate the truth of his client’s story by use of a combination of evidence and testimony.

---

“The first thing any comedian does on getting an unscheduled laugh is to **verify** the state of his buttons.”

— W. C. Fields
put

**PART OF SPEECH**  verb

**DEFINITION**  to move or place anything into or out of a specific location or position

- embed
- fasten
- fix
- place
- situate
- install

---

**cures for the common word**

- bring
- concenter
- concentrate
- deposit
- embed
- establish
- fasten
- fix
- fixate
- focus
- insert
- install
- invest
- lay
- nail
- park
- peg
- place
- plank
- plant
- plop
- plunk
- quarter
- repose
- rest
- rivet
- seat
- settle
- situate
- stick

---

*COFFEE.EXE* missing. **Insert** cup and press any key.

---

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
Safely **put** the battery in its correct engine compartment.

We know the battery needs to be in the appropriate engine compartment but not specifically how the battery needs to be placed.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *put*:

Safely _____________ the battery in its correct engine compartment.

- **embed** The battery needs to be placed in a compartment that completely surrounds it.
- **fasten** The battery needs to be attached securely to something else—like the compartment hatch.
- **fix** The battery needs to be stable in the compartment.
- **insert** The battery needs to be set into, between, or among the appropriate location in the engine compartment.
- **install** The battery needs to be placed in position and connected for proper use.
- **place** The battery needs to be put in the compartment in the proper position.
- **situate** We need to be sure the battery is put in the correct compartment.

“Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to **place** it, and I shall move the world.”

ARCHIMEDES
quick

part of speech: adjective
definition: done, proceeding, or occurring with promptness or rapidity

cures for the common word

abrupt  accelerated  active  agile  alert  animated  ASAP  breakneck  brief  brisk  cursory  curt  double time  energetic

expeditious  express  fleet  hasty  headlong  hurried  immediate  impatient  impetuous  instantaneous  keen  lively  mercurial  nimble

perfunctory  posthaste  prompt  pronto  rapid  responsive  snappy  speedy  spirited  sprightly  spry  sudden  swift  winged

The difficult can be done immediately, the impossible takes a little longer.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
We received a quick response from the loan committee—"declined."

Though we’re not thrilled that the answer was no, the following alternatives give a clearer indication of how we felt about the committee’s decision process.

Substitute an alternative remedy for quick:

We received a(n) ______________ response from the loan committee—“declined.”

- **abrupt**: The decision was fast and also delivered in a brusque manner, as if from the surface facts, we didn’t fit in a formula and they wouldn’t consider us beyond the easy formula.
- **accelerated**: The decision came in less time than required, and some of the detail to be considered might have been eliminated.
- **expeditious**: Though the decision came with speed and efficiency, the connotation is that the facts were considered thoroughly.
- **hurried**: We feel the committee was pushed—for some reason or by someone—to make a rapid decision and possibly did not give our request its fully due review.
- **immediate**: The decision occurred without delay.
- **perfunctory**: The committee made a hasty decision without thorough attention to detail.
- **responsive**: The committee readily reacted to our appeals and efforts.

The hurried are not competent; the competent are not hurried.

CHINESE PROVERB
quick

**PART OF SPEECH**  adjective
**DEFINITION**  prompt to understand, learn, etc.

cures for the common word

able  competent  prompt
active  deft  quick-witted
acute  dexterous  ready
adept  discerning  receptive
adroit  effective  savvy
all there  effectual  sharp
apt  intelligent  shrewd
astute  keen  skillful
bright  knowing  slick
canny  nimble-witted  vigorous
capable  perceptive  whiz
clever  perspicacious  wise

Any event, once it has occurred, can be made to appear inevitable by a **competent** historian.

LEE SIMONSON
Caitlin is a quick learner.

She’s always been fast at learning in several areas, but quick doesn’t give us much specific information about her particular learning skills.

Substitute an alternative remedy for quick:

Caitlin is a(n) _____________ learner.

- **acute** Caitlin has a sharp intellect, a keen sense of perception, or both.
- **adept** Caitlin is very skilled in her method of learning.
- **astute** Caitlin is clever and observant in her learning.
- **canny** Caitlin shows keen and sound judgment in what and how she studies or learns.
- **competent** Caitlin learns adequately for whichever topic she’s studying.
- **perceptive** Caitlin shows keen insight, understanding, or intuition about the topic she’s studying.
- **receptive** Caitlin has a wonderful ability to easily receive knowledge, ideas, etc.

What helps me go forward is that I stay receptive, I feel that anything can happen.

ANOUK AIMEE
ready

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  prepared or available for service, action, or progress

equipped

available

fit

handy

on call

qualified

waiting

cures for the common word

accessible
adjusted
all set
anticipating
apt
arranged
at hand
available
bagged
completed
convenient
covered
equipped
expectant
fit
fixed for
handy
in line
in order
in place
in position
near

on call
on hand
on tap
open to
organized
primed
qualified
ripe
set
waiting
wired

CURED!

Television is the first truly democratic culture, the first culture available to everybody and entirely governed by what the people want. The most terrifying thing is what people do want.

CLIVE BARNES
The boat is ready for launch.

This sentence doesn’t give us clear information about the boat’s readiness to launch.

Substitute an alternative remedy for ready:

The boat is ________________ for launch.

available  Perhaps it’s a rental boat, and now it’s ready for our use.
equipped  The boat is supplied with the necessities, such as tools or provisions.
fit  I’m glad to know the boat is in good physical condition.
handy  The boat is within easy reach or conveniently available when I am.
on call  The boat is available on short notice—all I have to do is call.
qualified  The boat has all the qualities and features required by law or custom.
waiting  The boat is remaining inactive or stationary—in anticipation of being ready when I am.

“Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.”

BLAISE PASCAL
It is dangerous to be right in matters on which the established authorities are wrong.

FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET VOLTAIRE
The driver followed his *regular* route, despite the heavy snows.

There are several definitions for *regular*, so the alternatives tell us more precisely about the driver’s route.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for *regular*:

The driver followed his ____________ route, despite the heavy snows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>approved</td>
<td>The driver followed the route that was agreed to by the company he works for, his customers, or the laws—even though it isn't his preferred route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customary</td>
<td>The driver followed his usual, habitual route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daily</td>
<td>The driver took the same route he does every single workday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>established</td>
<td>The driver followed a route that is not necessarily required but conforms to accepted standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>official</td>
<td>The driver took the route that was authorized and dictated by the company he works for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>routine</td>
<td>Like <em>customary</em>, <em>routine</em> indicates an unvarying and habitual route but with the connotation of it being unimaginative or rote procedure for the driver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typical</td>
<td>The driver can take different routes, and the route he takes is representative or characteristic of the route most drivers take.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*The FBI, to its credit in a self-serving sort of way, rejects the *routine* use of the polygraph on its own people.*

---

**ALDRICH AMES**
Vigorous writing is concise.

WILLIAM STRUNK JR.
I had time before the meeting to read the short report.

We can’t tell from the use of short if the report started out by being brief or was cut down—and if so, appropriately or not.

Substitute an alternative remedy for short:

I had time before the meeting to read the ____________ report.

- **abbreviated**: The report has been shortened to a smaller version of the original—and we don’t know if important parts of it have been omitted.
- **brief**: The full report is of short duration.
- **concise**: The full report is successful in being comprehensive in scope while using few words.
- **condensed**: The report has been reduced to a shorter form but retains all the pertinent information.
- **precise**: The report is sharply exact and accurate, though precise doesn’t give any indication of its length.
- **succinct**: The report is characterized by its verbal brevity, with no wasted words.
- **summarized**: The report includes all of the primary points of a larger report, expressed in a concise form—with the connotation that none of the vital information has been lost.

*There is no more difficult art to acquire than the art of observation, and for some men it is quite as difficult to record an observation in brief and plain language.*

WILLIAM OSLER
**PART OF SPEECH**  
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**  
clear; easy to understand, deal with, use, etc.

---

**cures for the common word**

- child’s play
- manageable
- snap
- straightforward
- transparent
- uncomplicated
- understandable
- uninvolved
- unmistakable
- unmixed
- untroublesome
- vanilla

- clean
- mild
- no problem
- no sweat
- picnic
- plain
- quiet
- royal
- self-explanatory
- smooth
- snap
- straightforward
- transparent
- uncomplicated
- understandable
- uninvolved
- unmistakable
- unmixed
- untroublesome
- vanilla

---

*Unless one is a genius, it is best to aim at being* intelligible.

ANTHONY HOPE
Daisy hoped the test questions would be simple.

In this sentence, it’s not clear if Daisy might be worried that she didn’t study sufficiently for the test or if her concern is based on the difficulty of the test subject itself.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for simple:

Daisy hoped the test questions would be ________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>child’s play</th>
<th>This is an informal way to say that Daisy hopes she can easily answer the questions, because the questions are easy or because Daisy studied so well she knows the content.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>effortless</td>
<td>Daisy hopes the questions will require no effort to answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elementary</td>
<td>Daisy hopes the questions relate to the fundamental or simplest aspects of the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligible</td>
<td>Daisy hopes the questions are written in a clear way that she can easily understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-explanatory</td>
<td>Daisy hopes that what the questions are asking for is obvious, needing no further explanation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straightforward</td>
<td>Daisy hopes the questions are free from ambiguity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncomplicated</td>
<td>Daisy hopes the questions are not complex or involved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**small**

**PART OF SPEECH**

*adjective*

**DEFINITION**

*of limited size; of comparatively restricted dimensions; not big*

---

**cures for the common word**

- baby
- bantam
- bitty
- cramped
- diminutive
- humble
- immature
- inadequate
- inconsequential
- inconsiderable
- insignificant
- insufficient
- limited
- little
- meager
- microscopic
- mini
- miniature
- minuscule
- minute
- modest
- narrow
- paltry
- petite
- petty
- picayune
- pint-sized
- pitiful
- pocket-sized
- poor
- puny
- pygmy
- runty
- scanty
- short
- slight
- small-scale
- stunted
- teeny
- toy
- trifling
- trivial
- undersized
- wee
- young

---

*It’s hard to be humble, when you’re as great as I am.*

MUHAMMAD ALI

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
The **small** house down the block is for sale.

For some, *small* would be ideal, and for others it wouldn’t be, and in this sentence we're not sure whether the house being small is positive or negative.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *small*:

The ____________ house down the block is for sale.

*cramped*  The house is severely limited in space.

*humble*  The house is not one considered high in quality—in reference to its “rank” in relation to others in the neighborhood, as opposed to in reference to its stability.

*inadequate*  The house doesn’t offer us enough room or other features to be suitable for the wants of our family.

*insufficient*  The house is lacking in what we absolutely require.

*miniature*  This indicates the house is a small-scale representation of a full-sized house.

*minuscule*  It’s a very tiny house, maybe just studio sized.

*modest*  The house is a nice one, just free from ostentation or showy extravagance.

---

*Nobody who takes on anything big and tough can afford to be modest.*

George Orson Welles
PART OF SPEECH: adjective
DEFINITION: distinguished or different from what is ordinary or usual

**special**

- distinctive
- exceptional
- exclusive
- red-letter
- festive
- important

**cures for the common word**

certain
characteristic
chief
choice
defined
definite
designated
determinate
different
distinctive
earmarked
exceptional
exclusive
express
extraordinary

festive
first
gala
important
individual
limited
main
major
marked
memorable
momentous
particular
peculiar
personal
primary

primo
proper
rare
red-letter
reserved
restricted
select
set
significant
smashing
specialized
specific
uncommon
unique
unusual

**CURED!**

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear."

AMBROSE REDMOON
John and Tawni want to plan a special day together. *Special* implies that John and Tawni are planning a wonderful day, but it doesn’t tell us enough about in what way it will not be a typical day.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *special*:

John and Tawni want to plan a(n) ____________ day together.

- **distinctive** They want the day to have a unique and different quality, implying in a positive way.
- **exceptional** They are planning something for their day that will be a rare instance and/or unusually excellent.
- **exclusive** The connotation is that they want a day together alone—omitting anyone else from their plans.
- **festive** They are planning a day that’s joyous, full of fun and gaiety.
- **important** They want to do something of great significance to them both.
- **memorable** It will be a day worth remembering.
- **red-letter** This is an informal way to say it will be a memorable day that is especially important or happy for them.

**CURED!**

*Good design is making something intelligible and memorable. Great design is making something memorable and meaningful.*

DIETER RAMS
### PART OF SPEECH
verb

### DEFINITION
*to spend some time in a place, in a situation, with a person or group, etc.*

### Cures for the Common Word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abide</th>
<th>hang out</th>
<th>respite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bide</td>
<td>hover</td>
<td>roost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bunk</strong></td>
<td>lag</td>
<td>settle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continue</td>
<td>last</td>
<td>sit tight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dally</td>
<td>linger</td>
<td>sojourn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delay</td>
<td>loiter</td>
<td>squat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dillydally</td>
<td>nest</td>
<td>stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endure</td>
<td>outstay</td>
<td>stay out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establish oneself</td>
<td>pause</td>
<td>stay put</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>halt</td>
<td>perch</td>
<td>stick around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang</td>
<td>procrastinate</td>
<td>stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang about</td>
<td>remain</td>
<td>sweat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang around</td>
<td>reprieve</td>
<td>sweat it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hang in</td>
<td>reside</td>
<td>tarry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Now and then it’s good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy.*

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE
Bert wanted to **stay** at Ernie’s house after school.

This sentence doesn’t tell us much about why and for how long Bert wants to stay at Ernie’s house.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for *stay*:

Bert wanted to ______________ at Ernie’s house after school.

- **bunk**: Bert wants to sleep over at Ernie’s.
- **dally**: Bert may be having fun, but choosing *dally* means to waste time, so maybe he’s supposed to be doing homework or chores.
- **hang out**: Bert wants to spend time at Ernie’s because he likes Ernie and the things they do there.
- **linger**: Bert is reluctant to leave, so he’s staying longer than expected.
- **loiter**: Bert is lingering aimlessly at Ernie’s—and Ernie isn’t even home.
- **pause**: Bert just wanted to stop for a short time at Ernie’s on his way home.
- **sit tight**: This is a slang expression meaning Bert has decided to stay at Ernie’s for a while, biding his time and taking no action.

*Why hurry over beautiful things? Why not **linger** and enjoy them?*

**CLARA SCHUMANN**
strange

PART OF SPEECH  adjective
DEFINITION  deviating; unusual, extraordinary, or curious; odd

cures for the common word

aberrant  idiosyncratic  perplexing
abnormal  ignorant  quaint
astonishing  inexperienced  queer
astounding  irregular  rare
atypical  marvelous  remarkable
bizarre  mystifying  singular
curious  new  unaccountable
different  newfangled  unaccustomed
eccentric  odd  uncanny
erratic  oddball  uncommon
exceptional  off  unfamiliar
extraordinary  offbeat  unheard of
fantastic  outlandish  unseasoned
far-out  out-of-the-way  unusual
funny  peculiar  weird

Middle Age is that perplexing time of life when we hear two voices calling us, one saying, “Why not?” and the other, “Why bother?”

SYDNEY J. HARRIS
The man’s strange clothes made him stand out.

There are a lot of different types of clothes that could be considered strange, partially determined by the viewer, and strange in this sentence doesn’t indicate what about the man’s clothes made him stand out.

Substitute an alternative remedy for strange:

The man’s ____________ clothes made him stand out.

- **bizarre**
  His clothing was markedly unusual in appearance—in fact, outrageously or whimsically odd.

- **curious**
  His clothes aroused attention, being inexplicable or highly unusual—for example, a football uniform as he walked his dog.

- **eccentric**
  His way of dressing deviated from the conventional—for example, a top hat with his workout clothes.

- **idiosyncratic**
  Though we don’t have a clue as to why he’s dressing that way, it likely makes perfect sense to him.

- **outlandish**
  His clothing was freakishly odd in appearance, but the connotation is that it is simply wildly inappropriate for the occasion.

- **perplexing**
  His clothing is confusing—for example, wearing a heavy wool coat on a hot and sunny day.

- **quaint**
  His clothing has an old-fashioned attractiveness or charm and is oddly picturesque in a pleasing or amusing way.

**Eccentric behavior is not routinely noticed around a movie set.**  

---

**CURED!**

---

**GENE TIERNEY**
### PART OF SPEECH
verb

### DEFINITION
*to get into one’s hold or possession by voluntary action or by force, skill, or artifice*

### Cures for the Common Word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abduct</th>
<th>earn</th>
<th>obtain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accept</td>
<td>enslave</td>
<td>overtake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>acquire</strong></td>
<td>entrap</td>
<td>pick up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrest</td>
<td>gain possession</td>
<td>pull in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attain</td>
<td>gather up</td>
<td>reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bag</td>
<td>glom</td>
<td>reap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capture</td>
<td>grab</td>
<td>receive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carry off</td>
<td>grasp</td>
<td>secure</td>
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<tr>
<td>carve out</td>
<td>grip</td>
<td>seize</td>
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<td>catch</td>
<td>handle</td>
<td>select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choose</td>
<td>haul in</td>
<td>snag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clasp</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>snatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clutch</td>
<td>hold</td>
<td>strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collar</td>
<td>nab</td>
<td>take in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collect</td>
<td>nail</td>
<td>win</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Happiness is like those palaces in fairy tales . . . we must fight in order to obtain it.**

ALEXANDRE DUMAS
The investors will take control of the company next week.

Though *take* often has a very neutral meaning—neither positive or negative—in this sentence it gives the sense that the takeover may have been hostile; whereas, the following alternatives give us a truer picture.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *take*:

The investors will _____________ control of the company next week.

- **acquire**: The investors will come into possession or ownership of the company, possibly simply by purchase.
- **earn**: The investors will deservedly have control.
- **obtain**: The investors will come into possession of the company either through their efforts or by a request.
- **receive**: Possession of the company was offered to the investors—most likely for a price or an exchange of some kind—and the investors have agreed.
- **secure**: The investors thought they would be taking control, and now they will be able to ensure this.
- **seize**: The investors have found a way to take possession by force; the connotation is that it may happen in an underhanded and partially secretive way.
- **win**: The investors will gain control through their labor or through a successful competition, such as winning a bidding war for the company.

---

*What a child doesn’t receive he can seldom later give.*

P. D. JAMES
PART OF SPEECH: verb
DEFINITION: to accept, handle, or deal with in a particular way; to endure

cures for the common word

abide
accept
accommodate
bear
bear with
brave
brook
contain
give access
go
go through
hack
hang in
hang on
hang tough
hold
let in
live with
lump it
receive
ride out
stand
stand for
stomach
submit to
suffer
swallow
take it
tolerate
undergo
weather
welcome
welcome
withstand

I respect those who resist me; but I cannot tolerate them.

CHARLES DEGAULLE
My boyfriend can **take** the cold weather much better than I can.

We can't tell from this use of *take* much about his attitude toward cold weather—if he loves the cold or just puts up with it.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *take*:

My boyfriend can ___________ the cold weather much better than I can.

- **abide**: He can tolerate and withstand the cold without yielding or submitting to freezing or to finding a way to get warm.
- **accommodate**: He manages to adapt to make being cold suitable for him.
- **brave**: He faces the cold courageously.
- **live with**: He can accept the cold weather perhaps as a trade-off for other advantages that go with a cold-weather climate.
- **tolerate**: He can endure the cold without even being upset by being cold.
- **welcome**: He actually accepts the cold with pleasure.
- **withstand**: He successfully resists and endures the cold, whereas I just have to find a fireplace or a heater.

---

*Fortune favors the **brave**.*

**VIRGIL**
**thin**

**PART OF SPEECH**
*adjective*

**DEFINITION**
of relatively slight consistency; scant; not abundant or plentiful

---

**cures for the common word**

- attenuated
- beanpole
- bony
- cadaverous
- **delicate**
- emaciated
- ethereal
- featherweight
- fine
- fragile
- **gangly**
- gaunt
- haggard
- lanky
- **lean**
- lightweight
- meager
- narrow
- peaked
- pinched
- puny
- rangy
- rarefied
- rawboned
- reedy
- rickety
- **scrawny**
- shriveled
- skeletal
- skinny
- slender
- slight
- slim
- small
- spare
- spindly
- starved
- subtle
- threadlike
- twiggy
- undernourished
- underweight
- **wan**
- wasted
- wizened

---

*A wise child pleases his father; a **skinny** dog shames his master.*

**CHINESE PROVERB**
As a teenager, Nicole was always thin.

Thin can very easily have either positive or negative connotations, so we want to be more specific—and perhaps more “gentle” when describing Nicole’s appearance.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for thin:

As a teenager, Nicole was always ________________.

- **delicate**: Nicole had such a slight build that she looked fragile and might easily be susceptible to illness.
- **gangly**: Nicole was awkwardly tall and spindly.
- **lean**: Nicole didn’t have much fat and looks healthy.
- **scrawny**: Nicole was so excessively thin, she looked like she was starving.
- **skinny**: Skinny is a less-than-flattering way of saying that Nicole is thin.
- **slender**: Nicole’s slight figure gave the impression of her being light and graceful.
- **wan**: Nicole’s weight gave her the appearance of being ill, fatigued, and even unhappy.

---

*The delicate and infirm go for sympathy, not to the well and buoyant, but to those who have suffered like themselves.*

CATHERINE E. BEECHER
**think**

**PART OF SPEECH**  
verb

**DEFINITION**  
to contemplate; to employ one’s mind rationally and objectively

---

**cures for the common word**

- analyze
- appraise
- appreciate
- brood
- cerebrate
- chew
- cogitate
- comprehend
- conceive
- **consider**
- deduce
- deliberate
- estimate
- evaluate
- examine
- figure out
- ideate
- imagine
- infer
- intellectualize
- judge
- logicalize
- meditate
- mull
- mull over
- muse
- noodle
- ponder
- rationalize
- reason
- reflect
- resolve
- ruminate
- sort out
- speculate
- stew
- study
- turn over
- weigh

---

**CURED!**

_When in charge, ponder. When in trouble, delegate. When in doubt, mumble._

SOLWAY COMMUNITY PRESS
Think long and hard about the consequences before you quit school.

Good advice, though choosing *think* for this sentence doesn’t tell us how carefully and thoroughly you’re considering the consequences.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *think*:

_______________ long and hard about the consequences before you quit school.

| **consider** | It’s important to reflect carefully about the decision you’re about to make; the connotation is that you’re taking the situation seriously. |
| **deliberate** | You will think carefully and slowly about the choice to be made and may consult with another or others in the process of reaching a decision. |
| **evaluate** | You’re judging the significance, worth, or quality of your decision. |
| **examine** | You’re taking time to carefully inspect, scrutinize, and investigate the possible sequences. |
| **ponder** | You’re considering your decision deeply and thoroughly. |
| **reason** | You are aiming to form conclusions based on the facts you know. |
| **speculate** | You’re casually talking over the consequences conjecturally without sufficient reason to reach a conclusion. |

---

*I don’t consider myself bald, I’m just taller than my hair.*

TOM SHARPE
PART OF SPEECH  
verb
DEFINITION  
to attempt to do or accomplish

aim  
aspire  
attack  
attempt  
bear down  
buckle down  
compete  
contend  
contest  
drive for
endeavor  
essay  
extert oneself  
go after  
hump it  
labor  
lay to  
propose  
risk  
seek
shoot for  
speculate  
strive  
struggle  
tackle  
undertake  
venture  
vie for  
work  
wrangle

Let us **endeavor** to live, so that when we die, even the undertaker will be sorry.

MARK TWAIN

Copyright © 2008 by K.D. Sullivan. Click here for terms of use.
I’m going to **try** to learn French before our family vacation.

*Try* doesn’t indicate the strength of my commitment or say how hard I’m going to try or how successful I think I’ll be.

### powerful remedies

Substitute an alternative remedy for *try*:

I’m going to ____________ to learn French before our family vacation.

**aim**

The key point is that I’m directing my efforts to learning *before* our vacation.

**bear down**

I’m going to work harder than I have in the past to learn, intensifying my efforts.

**endeavor**

I’m going to dedicate real effort in attempting to learn, but the implication is that I feel I may not be completely successful.

**labor**

I’m going to work hard toward my goal of learning French.

**struggle**

I’ll be strenuously engaged in what I consider the problem of learning French.

**undertake**

I’m going to take it upon myself to learn French for all of us, maybe because they’ve left it to me to be the family translator.

**venture**

I’m going to work to learn French, even if some of my friends doubt I’ll be successful.

---

*In the *struggle* between the stone and the water, in time, the water wins.*

CHINESE PROVERB
**PART OF SPEECH**

verb

**DEFINITION**

to employ for some purpose; to put into service

---

**CURES FOR THE COMMON WORD**

- accept
- adopt
- apply
- bestow
- capitalize
- consume
- control
- do with
- draw on
- employ
- exercise
- exert
- exhaust
- expend
- exploit
- govern
- handle
- make do
- make use
- make with
- manage
- manipulate
- operate
- play on
- ply
- practice
- put forth
- regulate
- relate
- run
- run through
- spend
- utilize
- waste
- wield
- work

---

**CURED!**

Under Capitalism, man **exploits** man. Under Communism, it’s exactly the opposite.

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH
Mr. and Mrs. Doors use their influence when fund-raising.

We’d like to think their influence is used in a good way, but we can’t be sure in this sentence, whereas the alternatives tell us more about their intentions.

Mr. and Mrs. Doors ____________ their influence when fund-raising.

apply Their intention is to use their influence in a positive way when engaging with potential donors, though apply can have somewhat of a negative connotation.

draw on They consider their influence a source to encourage donors—perhaps offering something in exchange for donations.

employ They consider their influence a tool to achieve their goal.

exercise They are putting their influence to use to have a desired effect.

exert The implication when choosing exert is that they may be using their influence to try to force donors to contribute.

exploit There’s no doubt when choosing exploit that they are using their influence selfishly for their own ends.

wield It’s for a good cause, but they’re exercising their power in a dominating way.

The less people know about what is really going on, the easier it is to wield power and authority.

CHARLES, PRINCE OF WALES
usual

**PART OF SPEECH**
adjective

**DEFINITION**
commonplace; everyday

*cures for the common word*

accepted  
accustomed  
average  
chronic  
commonplace  
constant  
conventional  
current  
customary  
everyday  
expected  
familiar  
fixed

frequent  
garden variety  
general  
grind  
groove  
habitual  
mainstream  
matter-of-course  
natural  
normal  
optory  
plain  
prevailing

prevalent  
quotidian  
regular  
rife  
routine  
so-so  
standard  
stock  
typical  
unremarkable  
vanilla  
wonted  
workaday

“Romance is the glamour which turns the dust of everyday life into a golden haze.”

ELINOR GLYN
We discussed the **usual** problems at the meeting.

There's no way to tell from the use of *usual* in this sentence whether the problems are new or recurring, daunting or manageable.

---

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *usual*:

We discussed the ____________ problems at the meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjectives</th>
<th>description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>chronic</strong></td>
<td>They are continuing and recurring problems we’ve been discussing for a long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>everyday</strong></td>
<td>They are problems that occur on a very regular basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>expected</strong></td>
<td>They are problems we considered were likely or probable to occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>familiar</strong></td>
<td>They are problems that are commonly known or seen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>frequent</strong></td>
<td>They are problems that occur either quite often or at close intervals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>normal</strong></td>
<td>The problems are the standard or common type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>routine</strong></td>
<td>The problems either are ordinary and unvarying or are often repeated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

“No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home and rests his head on his old, familiar pillow.”

LIN YUTANG
The last of the human freedoms is to **choose** one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances.

VIKTOR E. FRANKL
I want to get away from all computers and phones this weekend.

It’s time for a break from technology, but want doesn’t give a clear enough idea of the degree of my get-away urgency.

Substitute an alternative remedy for want:

I _____________ to get away from all computers and phones this weekend.

ache
choose
hanker
long
need
prefer
yearn

ache
I’m very eager to get away; in fact, the thought of not getting away is painful.
choose
I have a number of possibilities for what to do this weekend, and I pick getting away.
hanker
I have a restless longing to get away.
long
I have a heartfelt desire, stronger than hoping, to get away, but for this weekend, it’s probably beyond my reach.
need
This is beyond a wish—I require relief!
prefer
If given a choice for this weekend, I’d select going away.
yearn
I have such a strong and earnest desire to get away, I’m practically dreaming of it.

After four years at the United Nations I sometimes yearn for the peace and tranquillity of a political convention.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON
weird

**PART OF SPEECH**
adjective

**DEFINITION**
of a strikingly odd or unusual character, strange

---

cures for the common word

- awful
- creepy
- curious
- dreadful
- eccentric
- eerie
- far-out
- flaky
- freaky
- funky
- ghastly
- ghostly
- grotesque
- haunting
- horrific
- kinky
- kooky
- magical
- mysterious
- occult
- odd
- oddball
- ominous
- outlandish
- peculiar
- preternatural
- queer
- secret
- singular
- spooky
- strange
- supernatural
- uncanny
- uncouth
- unearthly
- unnatural

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_CURED!

*That so few now dare to be eccentric marks the chief danger of the time.*

JOHN STUART MILL
I just met my weird new neighbors.

We know weird indicates that the neighbors are out of the ordinary, but we’re not sure in what way or if weird here means they’re good, bad, or neither—just different.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for weird:

I just met my _____________ new neighbors.

- **creepy**: My neighbors give me a sensation of uneasiness or fear or seem annoyingly unpleasant.
- **eccentric**: The neighbors’ behavior is a bit odd and unconventional, departing from an established “norm.”
- **flaky**: My neighbors are nice enough but not very reliable.
- **funky**: They’re unconventional but in a modish, humorous, tongue-in-cheek way.
- **mysterious**: There’s something about the neighbors that seems to elude explanation, leaving me wondering and wanting to find out more.
- **spooky**: Ooh, these people are a little scary.
- **uncouth**: My neighbors’ habits are unrefined, to say the least.

*The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all art and science.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN
People will accept your ideas much more **readily** if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first.

DAVID H. COMINS
For a few months, the conservatives and the liberals worked

**well**

Together.

Though it’s clearly a positive way they were working together, *well* doesn’t tell us what we consider good about this accomplishment, nor does it tell us much about what made their cooperation possible.

**powerful remedies**

Substitute an alternative remedy for *well*:

For a few months, the conservatives and the liberals worked

______________

Together.

- **adeptly** They worked together in a very skilled and expert manner.
- **commendably** They worked together in a way worthy of special praise.
- **conscientiously** Guided by and in accordance with the dictates of their consciences, they worked in a principled way.
- **effectively** They worked together adequately to accomplish the intended or expected result—but probably not much beyond that.
- **readily** They actually worked together willingly.
- **successfully** They worked together to a favorable outcome.
- **suitably** They worked in an appropriate and fitting way.

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*The genius of a good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with **successfully**.*

— WALTER LIPPMANN
Minicapsules

absolutely ADVERB 6
positively; certainly; having no restriction, exception, or qualification
actually, categorically, completely, conclusively, consummately, decidedly, decisively, def, definitely, doubtless, easily, entirely, exactly, fully, ideally, positively, precisely, purely, really, right on, straight out, sure enough, surely, thoroughly, truly, unambiguously, unconditionally, unquestionably, utterly, wholly

activity NOUN 8
a specific deed, action, or function
act, avocation, bag, ball game, bit, deed, endeavor, enterprise, entertainment, exercise, game, hobby, interest, job, labor, occupation, pastime, project, pursuit, racket, scene, scheme, stunt, task, undertaking, venture, work

affect VERB 10
to produce a material influence upon or alteration in
act on, alter, change, disturb, impinge, impress, incline, induce, influence, inspire, interest, involve, moderate, modify, motivate, move, overcome, perturb, prevail, prompt, regard, relate, stir, sway, touch, transform, upset

amazing ADJECTIVE 12
causing great surprise or sudden wonder
affecting, alarming, astonishing, astounding, bewildering, blown away, bowled down, bowled over, dazing, dazzling, dumbfounding, electrifying, flabbergasting, impressive, moving, overwhelming, perplexing, put away, remarkable, shocking, staggering, startling, striking, stunning, stupefying, touching, unexpected

awesome ADJECTIVE 14
very impressive; inspiring; terrific, extraordinary
alarming, astonishing, awe-inspiring, awful, beautiful, breathtaking, daunting, dreadful, exalted, fabulous, fearful, fearsome, formidable, frantic, frightening, grand, horrifying, imposing, impressive, intimidating, magnificent, majestic, mind-blowing, moving, nervous, outstanding, overwhelming, shocking, striking, stunning, stupefying, stupendous, terrible, terrifying, wonderful, wondrous

bad ADJECTIVE 16
of poor or inferior quality; defective; deficient
abominable, amiss, atrocious, awful, bad news, beastly, bottom out, bummer, careless, cheap, corrupt, crummy, defective, deficient, disagreeable, dissatisfactory, dreadful, erroneous, fallacious, faulty, harmful, imperfect, inadequate, incorrect, inferior, injurious, lousy, off, offensive, poor, repulsive, rough, sad, skuzzy, sleazy, slipshod, stinking, substandard, synthetic, unacceptable, unfavorable, unsatisfactory

basic ADJECTIVE 18
elementary; of, being, or serving as a starting point; fundamental
basal, beginning, capital, central, chief, easy, elemental, elementary, essential, foundational, fundamental, indispensable, inherent, intrinsic, introductory, key, main, necessary, primary, primitive, principal, radical, rudimentary, simplified, substratal, underlying, vital
beautiful  ADJECTIVE  20
having qualities that give great pleasure or satisfaction to see, hear, think about; delighting the senses or mind
aluring, angelic, appealing, attractive, beauteous, bewitching, charming, classy, comely, cute, dazzling, delicate, delightful, divine, elegant, enticing, excellent, exquisite, fair, fascinating, fine, foxy, good-looking, gorgeous, graceful, grand, handsome, ideal, lovely, magnificent, marvelous, pleasing, pretty, radiant, ravishing, refined, resplendent, shapely, splendid, statuesque, stunning, sublime, superb, taking, wonderful

begin  VERB  22
to perform the first or earliest part of some action; to commence; to start
activate, actualize, break ground, bring about, cause, commence, create, effect, embark on, enter on, enter upon, establish, eventuate, found, generate, get going, give impulse, go ahead, go into, impel, inaugurate, induce, initiate, instigate, institute, introduce, launch, lead, make, make active, motivate, mount, occasion, open, originate, plunge into, prepare, produce, set about, set up, trigger, undertake

better  ADJECTIVE  24
greater in excellence or higher in quality
bigger, choice, exceeding, exceptional, finer, fitter, greater, higher quality, improved, larger, more appropriate, more desirable, more fitting, more select, more suitable, more useful, more valuable, preferable, preferred, prominent, sophisticated, superior, surpassing, worthier

big  ADJECTIVE  26
large, as in size, height, width, or amount
ample, brimming, bulky, burly, capacious, chock-full, colossal, commodious, considerable, copious, enormous, extensive, fat, full, gigantic, heavy-duty, heavyweight, hefty, huge, hulking, humungous, husky, immense, jumbo, king-sized, mammoth, massive, monster, oversize, ponderous, prodigious, roomy, sizable, spacious, strapping, stuffed, substantial, thundering, vast, voluminous, walloping, whopping

boring  ADJECTIVE  28
uninteresting and tiresome; dull
bomb, bromidic, characterless, colorless, commonplace, drab, drag, drudging, dull, flat, ho-hum, humdrum, insipid, interminable, irksome, lifeless, monotonous, platitudinous, plebian, prosaic, repetitious, routine, spiritless, stale, stereotypical, stodgy, stuffy, stupid, tame, tedious, threadbare, tiresome, tiring, trite, unexciting, vapid, wearisome, well-worn, zero

bring  VERB  30
to carry, convey, lead, or cause to go along to another place
accompany, attend, back, bear, carry, chaperone, companion, conduct, consort, convey, deliver, escort, fetch, gather, guide, heel, hump, import, lead, lug, pack, pick up, piggyback, ride, schlepp, shoulder, take, take along, tote, transfer, transport, truck, usher

certain  ADJECTIVE  32
confident; free from doubt or reservation
absolute, assured, believing, calm, clear, conclusive, convinced, definite, evident, firm, fixed, guaranteed, incontrovertible, indubitable, infallible, irrefutable, known, plain, positive, predestined, real, reliable, safe, sanguine, secure, set, sound, sure, true, unambiguous, undeniable, unequivocal, unerring, unmistakable, unquestionable, verifiable
change VERB 34

to make different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone
accommodate, adapt, adjust, alter, alternate, commute, convert, diminish, diverge, diversify, evolve, fluctuate, make innovations, make over, moderate, modify, modulate, mutate, naturalize, recondition, redo, reform, regenerate, remake, remodel, renovate, reorganize, replace, resolve, restyle, revolutionize, shape, shift, substitute, tamper with, transfigure, transform, translate, transmute, transpose, turn, vacillate, vary, veer, warp

choose VERB 36

to select from a number of possible alternatives; to decide on and pick out
accept, adopt, appoint, cast, co-opt, crave, cull, decide on, designate, desire, determine, elect, embrace, excerpt, extract, fancy, favor, finger, fix on, glean, identify, judge, love, name, nominate, opt for, predestine, prefer, see fit, select, set aside, settle upon, sift out, single out, slot, sort, tag, take, tap, want, weigh, will, winnow, wish, wish for

common ADJECTIVE 38

ordinary; widespread; general; of frequent occurrence; usual; familiar
accepted, average, banal, bourgeois, casual, characteristic, colloquial, conventional, current, customary, daily, everyday, familiar, frequent, general, habitual, hackneyed, homely, humdrum, informal, mediocre, monotonous, natural, obscure, passable, plain, prevailing, prevalent, prosaic, regular, routine, run-of-the-mill, simple, stale, standard, stereotypical, stock, trite, typical, undistinguished, universal, unvaried, usual, wearisome, workaday

correct ADJECTIVE 40

free from error; especially conforming to fact or truth
actual, amen, appropriate, equitable, exact, factual, faithful, faultless, flawless, for sure, impeccable, just, legitimate, nice, OK, on target, perfect, precise, proper, regular, right, righteous, rigorous, stone, strict, true, undistorted, unmistaken, veracious, veridical

correct VERB 42

to set or make true, accurate, or right; to remove the errors or faults from
alter, ameliorate, amend, better, change, clean up, cure, debug, do over, doctor, edit, emend, fiddle with, fix up, go over, help, improve, launder, make over, make right, mend, pay dues, pick up, polish, reclaim, reconstruct, rectify, redress, reform, regulate, remedy, remodel, reorganize, repair, retouch, review, revise, right, set right, set straight, shape up, straighten out, touch up, turn around, upgrade

decent ADJECTIVE 44

respectable; suitable; conforming to a recognized standard of good taste
adequate, appropriate, approved, becoming, befitting, chaste, clean, comely, conforming, continent, correct, decorous, delicate, ethical, fair, fit, fitting, good, honest, honorable, immaculate, mannerly, modest, moral, nice, noble, presentable, proper, prudent, pure, reserved, respectable, right, spotless, stainless, standard, straight, suitable, trustworthy, unblemished, undefiled, untarnished, upright, virtuous, worthy

develop VERB 46

to bring out the capabilities or possibilities of; to cause to grow or expand
actualize, advance, amplify, augment, beautify, broaden, build up, cultivate, deepen, dilate, elaborate, enlarge, enrich, evolve, exploit, extend, finish, heighten, improve, intensify, lengthen, magnify, materialize, perfect, polish, promote, realize, refine, strengthen, stretch, unifold, widen, work out
difficult ADJECTIVE 48
not easily or readily done
ambitious, arduous, backbreaking, bothersome, burdensome, challenging, crucial, demanding, effortful, exacting, formidable, galling, gargantuan, hard, hard-won, heavy, herculean, immense, intricate, irritating, labored, laborious, onerous, painful, problem, problematic, prohibitive, rigid, severe, strenuous, titanic, toilsome, tough, troublesome, trying, unyielding, uphill, upstream, wearisome

difficult ADJECTIVE 50
complicated; hard to comprehend
abstract, abstruse, baffling, bewildering, complex, confounding, confusing, dark, deep, delicate, enigmatic, enigmatical, entangled, esoteric, formidable, hard, hidden, inexplicable, intricate, involved, knotty, labyrinthine, loose, meandering, mysterious, mystifying, obscure, obstinate, paradoxical, perplexing, problematical, profound, puzzling, rambling, subtle, tangled, thorny, ticklish, troublesome, unclear, unfathomable, unintelligible

direct ADJECTIVE 52
honest; straightforward; frank; candid
absolute, bald, blunt, candid, categorical, downright, explicit, express, forthright, frank, genuine, guileless, matter-of-fact, open, outspoken, plain, plain-spoken, point-blank, sincere, straight, straightforward, truthful, unambiguous, unconcealed, undisguised, unequivocal, unreserved

do VERB 54
to perform, execute, carry out
accomplish, achieve, act, arrange, bring about, cause, complete, conclude, cook, create, determine, discharge, effect, end, engage in, execute, finish, fix, fulfill, get ready, look after, make, make ready, move, operate, organize, perform, perk, prepare, produce, pull off, see to, succeed, take on, transact, undertake, wind up, work, wrap up

easy ADJECTIVE 56
capable of being accomplished or acquired with ease; posing no difficulty
accessible, apparent, basic, child’s play, cinch, clear, comfortable, effortless, elementary, evident, facile, inconsiderable, light, little, manageable, manifest, mere, natural, no bother, no problem, no sweat, no trouble, obvious, painless, paltry, picnic, plain, plain sailing, pleasant, pushover, relaxed, royal, simple, slight, smooth, snap, straightforward, uncomplicated, undemanding, uninvolved, untroublesome, yielding

effective ADJECTIVE 58
producing the intended or expected result; adequate to accomplish a purpose
able, active, adequate, capable, cogent, compelling, competent, convincing, direct, effectual, efficacious, efficient, emphatic, energetic, forceful, forcible, impressive, live, moving, operative, persuasive, potent, powerful, powerhouse, practical, producing, resultant, serviceable, serving, sound, striking, successful, sufficient, telling, trenchant, useful, valid, virtuous, yielding

emphasize VERB 60
to lay stress upon; to single out as important
accent, accentuate, affirm, articulate, assert, charge, dramatize, enlarge, enunciate, headline, highlight, impress, indicate, insist on, italicize, maintain, make clear, mark, pinpoint, play up, point out, press, prioritize, pronounce, punctuate, reiterate, repeat, rub in, spot, spotlight, underline, underscore, weight
end verb 62
to come to a conclusion; to terminate or cease
abolish, abort, accomplish, achieve, break off, break up, call off, cease, close, close out, complete, conclude, consummate, crown, culminate, cut short, delay, determine, discontinue, dispose of, dissolve, drop, expire, finish, get done, give up, halt, interrupt, perorate, postpone, quit, relinquish, resolve, settle, sew up, shut down, stop, terminate, ultimate, wind up, wrap, wrap up

energy noun 64
the capacity for vigorous activity; abundant available power
animation, ardor, birr, dash, drive, dynamism, élan, end, energy, enterprise, exertion, fire, force, forcefulness, fortitude, get-up-and-go, go, initiative, intensity, juice, life, liveliness, might, moxie, muscle, pep, pizzazz, pluck, potency, power, puissance, punch, spirit, spontaneity, stamina, steam, strength, toughness, tuck, vehemence, verve, vigor, vim, vitality, zeal, zest

enjoy verb 66
to experience joy or satisfaction from; to take pleasure in
adore, appreciate, be entertained, be pleased, delight in, dig, dote on, drink in, eat up, fancy, flip for, flip over, funk, go, groove on, have fun, like, love, luxuriate in, mind, pleasure in, rejoice in, relish, revel in, savor, savvy, take to

enough adjective 68
adequate for the want or need; sufficient for the purpose or to satisfy desire
abundant, acceptable, adequate, ample, bellyful, bounteous, bountiful, comfortable, competent, complete, copious, decent, fed up, full, had it, last straw, lavish, plenteous, plentiful, replete, satisfactory, satisfying, sufficient, sufficing, suitable, tolerable, unlimited

excellent adjective 70
of the highest or finest quality; exceptionally good of its kind
accomplished, admirable, attractive, champion, choice, desirable, distinctive, distinguished, estimable, exceptional, exemplary, exquisite, fine, first, first-class, first-rate, good, great, high, incomparable, invaluable, magnificent, meritorious, notable, noted, outstanding, peerless, premium, priceless, prime, remarkable, select, skillful, splendid, sterling, striking, superb, superior, superlative, supreme, tiptop, top-notch, transcendent, unsurpassed, wonderful

exciting adjective 72
producing excitement or strong feeling in; stirring; thrilling; exhilarating
animating, appealing, arousing, arresting, astonishing, bracing, breathtaking, dangerous, dramatic, electrifying, exhilarant, eye-popping, far-out, fine, flashy, heady, hectic, impelling, impressive, interesting, intoxicating, intriguing, lively, melodramatic, mind-blowing, moving, neat, overpowering, overwhelming, provocative, racy, rip-roaring, rousing, sensational, showy, spine-tingling, stimulating, stirring, thrilling, titillating, wild, zestful

fast adjective 74
quick; swift; moving or able to move, operate, function, or take effect quickly
accelerated, active, agile, breakneck, brisk, chop-chop, dashing, double time, electric, expeditious, expeditive, flashing, fleet, fleeting, flying, hair-trigger, hasty, hot, hurried, hypersonic, instant, lickety-split, like crazy, mercurial, nimble, PDQ, posthaste, pronto, quick, racing, rapid, ready, screamin’, snap, snappy, swift, velocious, winged
**feel** VERB 76

to perceive or examine by touch

caress, clasp, **clutch**, explore, finger, fondle, frisk, **fumble**, grapple, grasp, grip, **grop**e, handle, manipulate, mau1, palm, palpat1e, paw, perceive, pinch, ply, poke, press, sense, squeeze, stroke, test, thumb, tickle, touch, try, twiddle, wield

**fill** VERB 78

to occupy to the full capacity

block, brim over, bulge out, charge, choke, clog, close, congest, cram, crowd, distend, fulfill, furnish, glut, gorge, heap, impregnate, inflate, jam-pack, lade, load, meet, occupy, overflow, pack, permeate, pervade, plug, pump up, ram, replenish, sate, satiate, satisfy, saturate, shoal, stock, store, stretch, stuff, suffuse, supply, swell, take up, top off

**final** ADJECTIVE 80

conclusive or decisive; coming to the end; last in place, order, or time

absolute, bottom-line, closing, concluding, crowning, decided, decisive, definite, definitive, determinate, determinative, ending, eventual, finished, finishing, hindmost, incontrovertible, irrefutable, irrevocable, last-minute, latest, latter, settled, supreme, swan song, terminal, terminating, ultimate, unanswerable, unappealable

**fine** ADJECTIVE 82

of superior or best quality; excellent

accomplished, aces, admirable, attractive, beautiful, capital, choice, dandy, elegant, exceptional, expensive, exquisite, fashionable, first-class, first-rate, five-star, good-looking, great, handsome, lovely, magnificent, ornate, outstanding, pleasant, rare, refined, select, showy, skillful, smart, spiffy, splendid, striking, subtle, superior, supreme, top-notch, well-made, wicked

**finish** VERB 84

to get done

accomplish, achieve, bag it, break up, carry through, cease, chuck, clinch, close, complete, conclude, consume, cool it, crown, culminate, deplete, determine, discharge, end, execute, exhaust, finalize, fold, fulfill, halt, make, mop up, perfect, round off, scratch, scrub, settle, sew up, shut down, shutter, stop, terminate, wrap, wrap up

**funny** ADJECTIVE 86

humorous; causing amusement or laughter; comical

absurd, amusing, antic, a scream, bizarre, blithe, capricious, clever, comical, diverting, droll, entertaining, facetious, farcical, gay, good-humored, hilarious, humorous, hysterical, jocular, joking, jolly, killing, knee-slapping, laughable, ludicrous, merry, mirthful, playful, priceless, rich, ridiculous, riotous, risible, side-splitting, silly, slapstick, sportive, uncommon, unusual, whimsical, witty

**get** VERB 88

to come into possession or use of; to acquire as a result of action or effort

access, accomplish, achieve, acquire, annex, attain, bag, build up, buy out, capture, clean up, come by, cop, draw, earn, educate, elicit, evoke, extort, extract, fetch, gain, glean, grab, inherit, land, lock up, make, net, obtain, parlay, pick up, procure, pull, rack up, realize, reap, receive, score, secure, snap, snap up, take, wangle, win
give VERB 90
to impart or communicate
accord, administer, ante up, award, bequeath, bestow, cede, commit, confer, consign, convey, deed, deliver, dish out, dispense, distribute, dole out, donate, endow, entrust, fork over, furnish, grant, hand, impart, lease, let have, parcel out, part with, pass out, permit, pony up, present, provide, relinquish, remit, sell, shell out, subsidize, supply, throw in, transfer, transmit, vouchsafe, will

go VERB 92
to move or proceed, especially to or from something
abscond, advance, approach, beat it, bug out, cruise, decamp, depart, escape, exit, fare, flee, fly, get away, get going, hie, hightail, journey, lam, leave, light out, mosey, move, pass, proceed, progress, pull out, push on, quit, repair, retire, run away, shove off, skip out, split, take flight, take off, tool, travel, vamoose, wend, withdraw

good ADJECTIVE 94
pleasant; enjoyable
acceptable, ace, admirable, agreeable, bully, capital, choice, commendable, competent, congenial, deluxe, excellent, exceptional, favorable, first-class, functional, gratifying, great, honorable, marvelous, nice, pleasing, positive, precious, prime, reputable, satisfying, select, serviceable, shipshape, sound, spanning, splendid, sterling, stupendous, super, superb, superior, tip-top, valuable, welcome, wonderful

good ADJECTIVE 96
having the qualities that are desirable or distinguishing in a particular thing; skilled
able, accomplished, adept, adroit, au fait, capable, clever, competent, dexterous, efficient, experienced, expert, first-rate, masterful, proficient, proper, qualified, reliable, responsible, satisfactory, serviceable, skillful, suitable, suited, talented, thorough, trained, trustworthy, useful, wicked

great ADJECTIVE 98
important; eminent; distinguished; remarkable or outstanding
august, capital, celebrated, chief, commanding, dignified, distinguished, eminent, exalted, excellent, famous, glorious, grand, heroic, highly regarded, honorable, idealistic, illustrious, impressive, leading, lofty, lordly, magnanimous, major, noble, notable, noted, outstanding, paramount, primary, principal, prominent, puissant, regal, remarkable, renowned, royal, stately, sublime, superior, superlative, talented

grow VERB 100
to expand or increase gradually by concerted effort
abound, advance, age, amplify, arise, augment, breed, build, burgeon, cultivate, develop, dilate, enlarge, expand, extend, fill out, flourish, gain, germinate, heighten, increase, issue, luxuriate, maturate, mature, mount, multiply, originate, produce, propagate, pullulate, raise, ripen, rise, shoot, spread, sprout, stem, stretch, swell, thicken, thrive, turn, wax, widen

happy ADJECTIVE 102
enjoying or showing joy or pleasure or good fortune
blessed, blissful, blithe, captivated, cheerful, chipper, content, convivial, delighted, delightful, ecstatic, elated, exultant, flying high, gay, glad, gleeful, gratified, hopped up, intoxicated, jolly, joyous, jubilant, laughing, light, lively, merry, mirthful, overjoyed, peaceful, peppy, perky, playful, pleasant, pleased, satisfied, sparkling, sunny, thrilled, tickled pink, up, upbeat
hard ADJECTIVE 104

difficult to do or accomplish; fatiguing; troublesome
arduous, backbreaking, ball-breaking, bothersome, burdensome, complex, complicated, demanding, distressing, exacting, exhausting, fatiguing, formidable, grinding, hairy, harsh, heavy, herculean, intricate, involved, irksome, knotty, laborious, mean, merciless, murderous, onerous, operose, rigorous, rough, rugged, scabrous, serious, severe, slavish, sticky, strenuous, terrible, tiring, toilsome, tough, troublesome, unsparing, wearing, wearisome

help VERB 106

to give aid; to be of service or advantage; to assist
abet, accommodate, advocate, aid, assist, back, ballyhoo, befriend, benefit, bolster, boost, buck up, cheer, cooperate, encourage, endorse, further, intercede, maintain, open doors, patronize, plug, promote, prop, puff, push, relieve, root for, sanction, save, second, serve, stand by, stimulate, stomp for, succor, support, sustain, uphold

important ADJECTIVE 108

substantial; of much or great significance or consequence
big-league, chief, considerable, conspicuous, critical, crucial, decisive, earnest, essential, exceptional, exigent, extensive, far-reaching, foremost, front-page, grave, great, heavy, imperative, importunate, influential, large, marked, material, meaningful, momentous, notable, of note, of substance, paramount, ponderous, pressing, primary, principal, relevant, salient, serious, signal, significant, something, standout, substantial, urgent, vital, weighty

interesting ADJECTIVE 110

arousing the curiosity or engaging the attention
absorbing, affecting, alluring, amusing, arresting, captivating, charismatic, compelling, curious, delightful, elegant, enchanting, engaging, engrossing, entertaining, enthralling, entrancing, exceptional, exotic, fascinating, gracious, gripping, impressive, inspiring, intriguing, inviting, magnetic, pleasing, pleasurable, provocative, refreshing, riveting, stimulating, stirring, striking, suspicious, thought-provoking, unusual, winning

keep VERB 112

to hold or retain in one’s possession
accumulate, amass, cache, care for, carry, conduct, conserve, control, deposit, detain, direct, enjoy, garner, grasp, grip, have, heap, hold back, maintain, manage, own, pile, place, possess, preserve, put up, reserve, retain, save, stack, stock, store, withhold

kind ADJECTIVE 114

of a good or benevolent nature or disposition
affectionate, all heart, altruistic, amiable, amicable, beneficent, benevolent, big, bounteous, charitable, clement, compassionate, congenial, considerate, cordial, courteous, friendly, generous, gentle, good-hearted, gracious, humane, humanitarian, indulgent, kindhearted, kindly, lenient, loving, mild, neighborly, obliging, philanthropic, propitious, softhearted, sympathetic, tenderhearted, thoughtful, tolerant, understanding

know VERB 116

to perceive or understand as fact or truth; to apprehend clearly and with certainty
apprehend, appreciate, apprehend, be acquainted, be cognizant, be informed, be read, be versed, cognize, comprehend, differentiate, discern, discriminate, distinguish, experience, fathom, feel certain, grasp, have, ken, learn, notice, perceive, realize, recognize, see, understand
leave VERB 118

to depart from permanently; to quit
abandon, abscond, break away, cast off, clear out, cut out, decamp, defect, desert, disappear, ditch, embark, emigrate, escape, exit, flee, flit, fly, forsake, go away, go forth, head out, migrate, move out, part, pull out, push off, quit, relinquish, retire, ride off, run along, sally, scam, set out, slip out, split, step down, take leave, take off, vacate, vamoose, vanish, walk out, withdraw

look NOUN 120

the way in which a person or thing appears to the eye or to the mind
air, aspect, attitude, bearing, cast, character, complexion, countenance, demeanor, effect, expression, face, fashion, feature, form, guise, image, manner, mien, mug, physiognomy, posture, presence, seeming, semblance, shape, visage

love NOUN 122

a profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person or an object
adulation, affection, allegiance, amity, amour, appreciation, ardor, attachment, crush, delight, devotion, emotion, enchantment, enjoyment, fervor, fidelity, fondness, friendship, hankering, idolatry, inclination, infatuation, involvement, liking, lust, partiality, passion, rapture, regard, relish, respect, sentiment, soft spot, taste, tenderness, weakness, worship, yearning, zeal

main ADJECTIVE 124

chief in size, extent, or importance; principal; leading
capital, cardinal, central, chief, controlling, critical, crucial, dominant, essential, first, foremost, fundamental, head, leading, major, necessary, outstanding, paramount, particular, predominant, preeminent, premier, prevailing, primary, prime, special, star, stellar, supreme, vital

make VERB 126

to cause to exist or happen; to bring about; to create
accomplish, adjust, arrange, assemble, beget, brew, bring about, build, cause, compile, compose, conceive, constitute, construct, cook up, dream up, effect, engender, fabricate, fashion, father, forge, form, frame, generate, hatch, initiate, invent, knock out, manufacture, mold, occasion, originate, parent, prepare, procreate, produce, put together, secure, shape, sire, spawn, synthesize, throw together, whip up

mean ADJECTIVE 128

hostile, offensive, selfish, or unaccommodating; nasty; malicious
bad-tempered, bitchy, callous, cantankerous, churlish, contemptible, dangerous, despicable, difficult, dirty, disagreeable, dishonorable, evil, formidable, hard, hard-nosed, ignoble, ill-tempered, infamous, knavish, liverish, lousy, malicious, malign, nasty, pernicious, pesky, rotten, rough, rude, rugged, scurrilous, shameless, sinking, snide, sour, the lowest, treacherous, troublesome, ugly, unfriendly, unpleasant, unscrupulous, vexatious, vicious

more ADJECTIVE 130

additional or further; in greater quantity, amount, measure, degree, or number
added, additional, amassed, another, augmented, bounteous, deeper, enhanced, exceeding, expanded, extended, extra, farther, fresh, further, greater, heavier, higher, increased, innumerable, larger, likewise, major, massed, new, numerous, other, replenishment, supplementary, wider
need  NOUN  132
urgent want, as of something required or wanted
ache, charge, commitment, committal, compulsion, craving, demand, desire, devoir,
duty, exigency, extremity, hunger, itch, longing, must, obligation, occasion,
requirement, requisite, right, thirst, urge, urgency, use, weakness, wish

new  ADJECTIVE  134
of recent origin, production, purchase, etc.
dewy, different, dissimilar, distinct, edgy, fashionable, fresh, inexperienced, just out,
latest, modern, modernistic, modish, neoteric, newfangled, novel, now, original, recent,
strange, topical, ultramodern, uncontaminated, unfamiliar, unique, unknown, unlike,
unseasoned, unskilled, unspoiled, untouched, untrained, untried, untrodden, unused,
unusual, up-to-date, virgin, youthful

next  ADJECTIVE  136
immediately following in time, order, importance, etc.
abutting, adjacent, adjoining, after, alongside, attached, beside, bordering, close,
closest, coming, connecting, consecutive, consequent, contiguous, ensuing, following,
immediate, later, nearby, nearest, neighboring, proximate, subsequent, succeeding,
thereafter, touching

nice  ADJECTIVE  138
pleasing and agreeable in nature
admirable, agreeable, amiable, approved, attractive, becoming, charming,
commendable, considerate, copacetic, cordial, courteous, cultured, decorous, delightful,
favorable, friendly, genial, gentle, good, gracious, helpful, hunky-dory, ingratiating,
inviting, kind, kindly, lovely, nifty, obliging, OK, peachy, pleasant, pleasurable, polite,
seemly, swell, unpresumptuous, welcome, well-mannered, winning, winsome

old  ADJECTIVE  140
having lived or existed for a relatively long time; far advanced in years or life
aged, ancient, broken down, debilitated, decrepit, deficient, doddering, elderly, enfeebled,
exhausted, experienced, fossil, geriatric, getting on, gray-haired, grizzled, hoary,
impaired, inactive, infirm, mature, matured, olden, patriarchal, seasoned, senile, senior,
skilled, superannuated, tired, used, venerable, versed, veteran, wasted, worn

old  ADJECTIVE  142
obsolete; no longer in general use
aboriginal, age-old, antediluvian, antiquated, antique, archaic, bygone, cast-off,
crumbling, dated, decayed, dèmodè, early, erstwhile, former, hackneyed, immemorial,
late, moth-eaten, of yore, olden, oldfangled, old-fashioned, old-time, onetime, original,
outdated, outmoded, passé, past, previous, primeval, primitive, primordial, quondam,
remote, rusty, stale, superannuated, time-worn, traditional, unfashionable, unoriginal,
venerable, worn-out

open  ADJECTIVE  144
not closed or barred; relatively free of obstructions
accessible, agape, airy, ajar, bare, clear, cleared, dehiscent, disclosed, emptied, expansive,
exposed, extended, free, gaping, naked, navigable, patent, patulous, peeled, revealed,
rolling, spacious, spread out, stripped, susceptible, unbarred, unblocked, unbolted,
unburdened, uncluttered, uncovered, unfolded, unfurled, unimpeded, unlocked,
unobstructed, unsealed, unstopped, vacated, wide, yawning
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>part</strong> NOUN 146</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>a portion or division of a whole that is separate or distinct</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allotment, apportionment, articulation, bit, branch, chunk, component, constituent, department, detail, division, element, factor, fraction, fragment, helping, hunk, ingredient, installment, item, limb, lot, measure, member, module, moiety, molecule, organ, parcel, particle, piece, portion, quantum, ration, scrap, section, sector, segment, share, side, slice, sliver, splinter, subdivision, unit</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>perfect</strong> ADJECTIVE 148</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>entirely without any flaws, defects, or shortcomings</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>absolute, accomplished, aces, adept, beyond compare, blameless, classical, consummate, crowning, culminating, defectless, excellent, excelling, experienced, expert, faultless, finished, flawless, foolproof, ideal, immaculate, impeccable, indefectible, masterful, masterly, matchless, paradisiacal, peerless, pure, skilled, skillful, sound, splendid, spotless, stainless, sublime, superb, supreme, ten, unblemished, unequaled, unmarred, untainted, un tarnished, utopian</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>piece</strong> NOUN 150</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>a separate or limited portion or quantity of something</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allotment, bit, bite, case, chomp, chunk, cut, division, example, fraction, fragment, gob, half, hunk, instance, interest, item, length, lot, lump, member, moiety, morsel, mouthful, parcel, percentage, portion, quantity, quota, sample, scrap, section, segment, share, shred, slice, smithereens, snack, specimen</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>plain</strong> ADJECTIVE 152</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>straightforward; frank or candid</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abrupt, artless, blunt, candid, direct, downright, forthright, frank, genuine, guileless, honest, impolite, ingenuous, open, outspoken, rude, sincere, straight arrow, straightforward, true, un concealed, undis guised, unfeigned, uninhibited, unreserved, unrestricted, unvarnished</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>plan</strong> NOUN 154</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>a scheme or method of acting, doing, proceeding, making, etc.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aim, angle, animus, arrangement, big picture, contrivance, deal, design, device, disposition, expedient, game plan, gimmick, idea, intention, intention, layout, machination, means, method, outline, pattern, picture, platform, plot, policy, procedure, program, project, proposal, proposition, purpose, scenario, scheme, stratagem, strategy, suggestion, system, tactic, treatment, undertaking, way</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>plan</strong> VERB 156</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>to think out; to arrange a method or scheme to accomplish an objective</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrange, bargain for, block out, blueprint, brainstorm, calculate, concoct, conspire, contemplate, contrive, cook up, craft, design, devise, draft, engineer, figure out, fix to, form, formulate, frame, hatch, intrigue, invent, line up, map, mastermind, meditate, organize, outline, plot, prepare, project, quarterback, ready, reckon on, represent, rough in, scheme, set out, shape, sketch, steer, trace, work out</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>pleasant</strong> ADJECTIVE 158</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>socially acceptable or adept; polite; amiable; agreeable</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affable, agreeable, amiable, amusing, bland, charming, cheerful, cheery, civilized, congenial, convivial, copacetic, cordial, delightful, diplomatic, enchanting, engaging, enjoyable, fine, friendly, fun, genial, genteel, good-humored, gracious, gratifying, jolly, jovial, kindly, likable, lovely, mild-mannered, nice, obliging, pleasing, pleasurable, polite, refreshing, satisfying, social, soft, sweet, sympathetic, urbane, welcome</td>
</tr>
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problem NOUN 160
situation, matter, or person that presents perplexity or difficulty
box, challenge, complication, count, crunch, dilemma, disagreement, dispute, disputed
point, doubt, headache, hitch, holy mess, hot potato, hot water, issue, mess, nut,
obstacle, pickle, predicament, quandary, question, scrape, squeeze, trouble, wortiment

prove VERB 162
to establish the truth or genuineness of, as by evidence or argument
affirm, analyze, ascertain, assay, attest, authenticate, back, bear out, certify, check,
confirm, convince, corroborate, declare, demonstrate, determine, document, end up,
establish, evidence, evince, examine, experiment, explain, find, fix, justify, make
evident, manifest, pan out, result, settle, show, substantiate, sustain, test, testify, trial, try,
turn out, uphold, validate, verify, warrant, witness

put VERB 164
to move or place anything into or out of a specific location or position
bring, center, concentrate, deposit, embed, establish, fasten, fix, fixate, focus, insert,
install, invest, lay, nail, park, peg, place, plank, plant, plop, plunk, quarter, repose, rest,
rivet, seat, settle, situate, stick

quick ADJECTIVE 166
done, proceeding, or occurring with promptness or rapidity
abrupt, accelerated, active, agile, alert, animated, ASAP, breakneck, brief, brisk, cursory,
curt, double time, energetic, expeditious, expeditive, express, fleet, flying, harefooted,
hasty, headlong, hurried, immediate, impatient, impetuous, instantaneous, keen, lively,
mercurial, nimble, perfunctory, posthaste, prompt, pronto, rapid, responsive, snappy,
speedy, spirited, sprightly, spry, sudden, swift, winged

quick ADJECTIVE 168
prompt to understand, learn, etc.
able, active, acute, adept, adroit, all there, apt, astute, bright, canny, capable, clever,
competent, deft, dexterous, discerning, effective, effectual, intelligent, keen, knowing,
nimble-witted, perceptive, perspicacious, prompt, quick-witted, ready, receptive, savvy,
sharp, shrewd, skillful, slick, vigorous, whiz, wise

ready ADJECTIVE 170
prepared or available for service, action, or progress
accessible, adjusted, all set, anticipating, apt, arranged, at hand, available, bagged,
completed, convenient, covered, equipped, expectant, fit, fixed for, handy, in line, in
order, in place, in position, near, on call, on hand, on tap, open to, organized, primed,
qualified, ripe, set, waiting, wired

regular ADJECTIVE 172
usual; normal; customary; recurring at fixed times; periodic
approved, bona fide, classic, common, commonplace, correct, customary, daily,
established, everyday, formal, general, habitual, lawful, legitimate, natural, normal,
official, ordinary, orthodox, prevailing, prevalent, proper, routine, run-of-the-mill,
sanctioned, standard, time-honored, traditional, typical, unexceptional, unvarying, usual
short ADJECTIVE 174
abridged; brief or concise
abbreviated, aphoristic, bare, boiled-down, breviloquent, brief, compendiary, compendious, compressed, concise, condensed, curtailed, curtail, cut short, decreased, decurate, diminished, epigrammatic, fleeting, laconic, lessened, little, momentary, pithy, pointed, precise, sententious, shortened, short-lived, short-term, succinct, summarized, summary, terse, undersized, unsustained

simple ADJECTIVE 176
clear; easy to understand, deal with, use, etc.
child's play, clean, easy, effortless, elementary, facile, incomplexe, intelligible, light, lucid, manageable, mild, no problem, no sweat, picnic, plain, quiet, royal, self-explanatory, smooth, snap, straightforward, transparent, uncomplicated, understandable, uninvolved, unmistakable, unmixed, untroublesome, vanilla

small ADJECTIVE 178
of limited size; of comparatively restricted dimensions; not big
baby, bantam, bitty, cramped, diminutive, humble, immature, inadequate, inconsequential, inconsiderable, insignificant, insufficient, limited, little, meager, microscopic, mini, miniature, minuscule, minute, modest, narrow, paltry, petite, petty, picayune, pint-sized, pitiful, pocket-sized, poor, puny, pygmy, runty, scanty, short, slight, small-scale, stunted, teeny, toy, trifling, trivial, undersized, wee, young

special ADJECTIVE 180
distinguished or different from what is ordinary or usual
certain, characteristic, chief, choice, defined, definite, designated, determinate, different, distinctive, earmarked, exceptional, exclusive, express, extraordinary, festive, first, gala, important, individual, limited, main, major, marked, memorable, momentous, particular, peculiar, personal, primary, primo, proper, rare, red-letter, reserved, restricted, select, set, significant, smashing, specialized, specific, uncommon, unique, unusual

stay VERB 182
to spend some time in a place, in a situation, with a person or group, etc.
abide, bide, bunk, continue, dally, delay, dillydally, endure, establish oneself, halt, hang, hang about, hang around, hang in, hang out, hover, lag, last, linger, loiter, nest, outstay, pause, perch, procrastinate, remain, reprieve, reside, respite, roost, settle, sit tight, sojourn, squat, stand, stay out, stay put, stick around, stop, sweat, sweat it, tarry

strange ADJECTIVE 184
deviating; unusual, extraordinary, or curious; odd
aberrant, abnormal, astonishing, astounding, atypical, bizarre, curious, different, eccentric, erratic, exceptional, extraordinary, fantastic, far-out, funny, idiosyncratic, ignorant, inexperienced, irregular, marvelous, mystifying, new, newfangled, odd, oddball, off, offbeat, outlandish, out-of-the-way, peculiar, perplexing, quaint, queer, rare, remarkable, singular, unaccountable, unaccustomed, uncanny, uncommon, unfamiliar, unheard of, unseasoned, unusual, weird

take VERB 186
to get into one's hold or possession by voluntary action or by force, skill, or artifice
abduct, accept, acquire, arrest, attain, bag, capture, carry off, carve out, catch, choose, clasp, clutch, collar, collect, earn, ensnare, entrap, gain possession, gather up, glom, grab, grasp, grip, handle, haul in, have, hold, nab, nail, obtain, overtake, pick up, pull in, reach, reap, receive, secure, seize, select, snag, snatch, strike, take in, win
Minicapsules

**take** **VERB** 188

to accept, handle, or deal with in a particular way; to endure

abide, accept, accommodate, bear, bear with, brave, brook, contain, give access, go, go through, hack, hang in, hang on, hang tough, hold, let in, live with, lump it, receive, ride out, stand, stand for, stomach, submit to, suffer, swallow, take it, tolerate, undergo, weather, welcome, withstand

**thin** **ADJECTIVE** 190

of relatively slight consistency; scant; not abundant or plentiful

attenuated, beanpole, bony, cadaverous, delicate, emaciated, ethereal, featherweight, fine, fragile, gangly, gaunt, haggard, lanky, lean, lightweight, meager, narrow, peaked, pinched, puny, rangy, rarefied, rawboned, reedy, rickety, scrawny, shriveled, skeletal, skinny, slender, slight, slim, small, spare, spindly, starved, subtle, threadlike, twiggy, undernourished, underweight, wan, wasted, wizened

**think** **VERB** 192

to contemplate; to employ one’s mind rationally and objectively

analyze, appraise, appreciate, brood, cerebrate, chew, cogitate, comprehend, conceive, consider, deduce, deliberate, estimate, evaluate, examine, figure out, ideate, imagine, infer, intellectualize, judge, logicalize, meditate, mull, mull over, muse, noodle, ponder, rationalize, reason, reflect, resolve, ruminate, sort out, speculate, stew, study, turn over, weigh

**try** **VERB** 194

to attempt to do or accomplish

aim, aspire, attack, attempt, bear down, buckle down, compete, contend, contest, drive for, endeavor, essay, exert oneself, go after, hump it, labor, lay to, propose, risk, seek, shoot for, speculate, strive, struggle, tackle, undertake, venture, vie for, work, wrangle

**use** **VERB** 196

to employ for some purpose; put into service

accept, adopt, apply, bestow, capitalize, consume, control, do with, draw on, employ, exercise, exert, exhaust, expend, exploit, govern, handle, make do, make use, make with, manage, manipulate, operate, play on, ply, practice, put forth, regulate, relate, run, run through, spend, utilize, waste, wield, work

**usual** **ADJECTIVE** 198

commonplace; everyday

accepted, accustomed, average, chronic, commonplace, constant, conventional, current, customary, everyday, expected, familiar, fixed, frequent, garden variety, general, grind, groove, habitual, mainstream, matter-of-course, natural, normal, ordinary, plain, prevailing, prevalent, expected, regular, rife, routine, so-so, standard, stock, typical, unremarkable, vanilla, wonted, workaday

**want** **VERB** 200

to feel a need or a desire for; wish for

ache, aspire, be greedy, choose, covet, crave, cream for, desiderate, die over, fancy, hanker, have ambition, hunger, incline toward, itch for, lech for, long, lust, need, pine, prefer, require, spoil for, thirst, wish, yearn, yen for
weird ADJECTIVE 198

of a strikingly odd or unusual character, strange

awful, creepy, curious, dreadful, eccentric, eerie, far-out, flaky, freaky, funky, ghastly, ghostly, grotesque, haunting, horrific, kinky, kooky, magical, mysterious, occult, odd, oddball, ominous, outlandish, peculiar, preternatural, queer, secret, singular, spooky, strange, supernatural, uncanny, uncouth, unearthly, unnatural

well ADVERB 200

in a good, proper, commendable, or satisfactory manner; excellently; skillfully

ably, accurately, adeptly, adequately, admirably, agreeably, attentively, capably, capitaly, carefully, closely, commendably, competently, completely, conscientiously, correctly, effectively, efficiently, effortlessly, excellently, expertly, famously, favorably, fully, irreproachably, nicely, pleasantly, proficiently, profoundly, properly, readily, rightly, satisfactorily, skillfully, smoothly, soundly, splendidly, strongly, successfully, suitably, thoroughly, with skill