

Definitions

Note the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the appropriate form of the word in the blank spaces in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms.

1. accelerate
(ak sel' ə rāt)

(v.) to speed up, cause to move faster; to bring about more quickly

The hikers needed to _____ their pace once it became clear that it would soon rain.

SYNONYMS: step up, quicken, hasten

ANTONYMS: slow down, decelerate

2. bystander
(bī' stan dər)

(n.) one who looks on or observes, a person present but not taking part

The _____ who had witnessed the collision gave his statement to the police.

SYNONYMS: observer, onlooker

ANTONYM: active participant

3. canvass
(kan' vās)

(v.) to go through an area in order to procure votes, sales, or opinions; to go over in detail; to discuss

The students volunteered to _____ the neighborhood for our candidate.

SYNONYMS: survey, solicit

4. casual
(kazh' ə wəl)

(adj.) happening by chance or on an irregular basis; showing little concern; informal

A _____ remark made by the mayor was taken out of context and used against him by the press.

SYNONYMS: haphazard, offhand

ANTONYMS: formal, serious, premeditated

5. downtrodden
(daŭn' träd ən)

(adj.) treated unfairly and cruelly, oppressed

Most of the immigrants at Ellis Island represented the _____ masses yearning to be free.

SYNONYMS: mistreated, ground underfoot

ANTONYMS: uplifted, liberated

6. entice
(en tis')

(v.) to attract, tempt

To _____ shoppers into the store, salespersons were giving away coupons for free gifts.

SYNONYMS: lure, lead on

ANTONYMS: nauseate, sicken, revolt, repel

7. **erode**
(i rōd')

(v.) to wear away gradually, eat away

Storms and mudslides _____ the road so that eventually it became impassable.

SYNONYMS: corrode, abrade

ANTONYMS: nurture, promote, encourage

8. **flounder**
(flaŭn' dər)

(v.) to thrash about in a clumsy or ineffective way

After suffering much damage in the storm, the small craft was left to _____ about helplessly.

SYNONYMS: wallow, struggle

9. **graphic**
(graf' ik)

(adj.) lifelike, vivid; relating to the pictorial arts

A witness gave the reporter a _____ account of the destruction caused by the tornado.

SYNONYMS: colorful, descriptive

ANTONYMS: dull, boring, unrealistic, colorless

10. **gruesome**
(grü' səm)

(adj.) horrible, revolting, ghastly

The _____ crime rocked the ordinarily quiet neighborhood.

SYNONYMS: gory, hideous

ANTONYMS: pleasant, delightful, appealing

11. **melancholy**
(mel' ən käl ē)

(adj.) sad, gloomy, unhappy; (n.) sadness, gloominess

It must have been the gloom of the house and the steady rain that made me feel so _____.

The tune and the lyrics of the song were filled with _____.

SYNONYMS: (adj.) depressed, dejected; (n.) dejection, depression

ANTONYMS: (adj.) merry, happy, cheerful; (n.) joy, elation

12. **ordeal**
(ôr dēl')

(n.) a difficult or painful experience, a trial

The climbers were exhausted by their _____ and quickly fell asleep.

SYNONYMS: hardship, trauma

ANTONYMS: pleasure, cinch

13. **parch**
(pärch)

(v.) to make dry and thirsty; to shrivel with heat

The fields of Oklahoma were _____ by drought in the 1930s.

SYNONYMS: dry up, dehydrate

ANTONYMS: soak, drench, saturate

14. persist
(pər sist')

(*v.*) to continue steadily in a course of action, refuse to stop or be changed; to last, remain

Despite stern warnings from their doctor, the brothers _____ in their bad habits.

SYNONYMS: persevere, keep at it, endure

ANTONYMS: give up, discontinue

15. puny
(pyü' nē)

(*adj.*) of less than normal strength or size; of no importance

The wrestler let out a coarse burst of laughter when his _____ opponent entered the ring.

SYNONYMS: undersized, pint-size, small, weak

ANTONYMS: robust, brawny, mammoth, gigantic

16. quibble
(kwib' əl)

(*v.*) to evade or belittle a point by twisting words or raising minor objections; (*n.*) a petty objection

Let's not _____ over details.

The buyer's _____ notwithstanding, the parties soon came to an agreement.

SYNONYMS: (*v.*) split hairs, cavil; (*n.*) squabble

17. ratify
(rat' ə fi)

(*v.*) to approve, give formal approval to, confirm

The legislatures of three-fourths of the states must _____ an amendment to the Constitution.

SYNONYMS: endorse, sanction

ANTONYMS: cancel, annul, veto

18. regal
(rē' gəl)

(*adj.*) royal, kinglike; fit for a king

The two families pooled their resources to give the bride and groom a truly _____ wedding.

SYNONYMS: majestic, stately, princely, august

ANTONYMS: lowly, humble, abject, servile

19. stifle
(stī' fəl)

(*v.*) to smother, prevent from breathing; to hold back or choke off

Unable to _____ her anger, the sculptor lashed out at her harshest critic.

SYNONYMS: strangle, suppress, snuff

ANTONYMS: nurture, promote, encourage

20. vital
(vīt' əl)

(*adj.*) having life, living; necessary to life, essential; key, crucial

The treaty is of _____ importance to the security of our nation.

SYNONYMS: indispensable, fundamental

ANTONYMS: nonessential, unnecessary