

VERBAL ADVANTAGE
SUCCESS EDITION
ADVANCED

Level X

By Charles Harrington Elster

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

With Pronunciations, Synonyms, Antonyms and Related Information Listed in Order of Presentation, by Level and Number. The abbreviation N.B. stands for the Latin nota bene and means "note well, take good note of."

1. JEJUNE (ji-JOON)

Dull, uninteresting, or unsatisfying; devoid of nourishment, substance, or significance.

Synonyms: *flat, stale, arid, insipid, vapid* (Level 8, Word 37).

Etymology and related word: Latin *jejunos*, fasting, hungry, barren, dry, the source also of *jejenum*, the middle section of the small intestine, between the duodenum and the ileum, believed to be empty after death.

Usage problem: If you look up *jejune* in a current dictionary, you will also see another definition of the word: youthful, childish, immature, puerile. This sense is objected to by certain usage experts who regard it as having developed through an erroneous analogy with the word *juvenile*.

According to Jacques Barzun, one of the world's foremost authorities on English usage, "the meaning 'youthful, childish' for *jejune* has got into the dictionaries only as a concession to the misusers."

On the other hand, William Safire, the language maven of *The New York Times*, believes that "childish, puerile" is the sense in which *jejune* is most commonly used today. "At a certain point, what people mean when they use a word becomes its meaning," writes Safire. "We should resist its adoption, pointing out the error, for years; mockery helps; if the meaning persists, though, it is senseless to ignore the new sense."

2. PAUCITY (PAW-si-tee)

An insufficiency, scarcity, especially a serious or extreme one, a dire lack.

Synonyms: *dearth* (Level 3, Word 12), *shortage, deficiency, exiguity* (corresponding adjective: *exiguous*).

Antonyms: *superabundance, superfluity, plethora*.

Etymology: Latin *paucitas*, fewness, scarcity, from *paucus*, few.

3. MINATORY (MIN-uh-for-ee)

Threatening, menacing; having a threatening or menacing aspect or nature.

Synonym: *minacious*.

Etymology and related word: *Minatory* and *minacious* come from the Latin *minari*, to threaten and are related to the word *menace*.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

4. PUTATIVE (PYOO-tuh-tiv)

Supposed, reputed, commonly considered or regarded as such; deemed to be so but not proved.

Antonyms: *certain, definite, unquestionable, indisputable, indubitable, incontrovertible, irrefragable.*

Etymology: Latin *putare*, to consider, believe, think, suppose.

5. LUCUBRATION (LOO-kyoo-BRAY-shin)

Nocturnal labor; study, writing, or work done late at night.

Etymology: Latin *lucubrate*, to work by candlelight.

Corresponding adjective: *lucubratory*, literally "done by candlelight"; hence, pertaining to nocturnal study or labor.

Corresponding verb: *lucubrate*, to work, study, or write into the wee hours.

Usage: *Lucubrate* may also mean to compose with laborious effort, and especially to write in a scholarly or pedantic fashion; *lucubration* has also come to mean anything produced by laborious study or effort, especially an elaborate, pedantic, or pretentious piece of writing.

6. TROGLODYTE (TRAHG-luh-dyt)

(1) A cave dweller.

(2) A person who lives or behaves in a primitive, brutish, or crude manner.

(3) A person who lives in seclusion.

Corresponding adjective: *troglydytic*.

Etymology: Greek, literally "one who creeps into holes."

Additional useful words: *anchorite, eremite* (both mean "a hermit, recluse, person who lives in seclusion").

7. ALEATORY (AY-lee-uh-for-ee)

Depending on luck, chance, or on some contingent event; hence, uncertain, unpredictable.

Etymology: Latin *aleator*, a gamester, thrower of dice, craps shooter, which comes in turn from *alea*, a game of dice. *Aleatory* means literally depending upon the throw of the dice.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

8. FARRAGO (fuh-RAY-goh, also fuh-RAH-goh)

A mixture, especially a confused or jumbled mixture.

Synonyms: *conglomeration, medley, mishmash, hodgepodge, miscellany, potpourri, pastiche, salmagundi.*

Etymology: Latin, literally "mixed fodder for animals; a jumbled assortment of grains."

Corresponding adjective: *farraginous*, mixed, jumbled, miscellaneous, heterogeneous.

9. CYNOSURE (SY-nuh-shuur)

A center of attention or interest, focal point.

Etymology: Greek *kynosoura*, a dog's tail, from *kynos*, a dog.

N.B. This discussion explores the origin of the words *cynical*, *cynic*, and *cynicism*, and their relation to Diogenes of Sinope, a Cynic philosopher nicknamed *kynos*, or *kyon*, "the dog," for his outrageous behavior.

Usage: *Cynosure* (capital C) refers to the constellation Ursa Minor or to Polaris, the North Star, also called the polestar, which is part of this constellation.

10. BADINAGE (bad'n-AHZH, also BAD'n-azh)

Banter; playful, teasing talk; good-natured joking or gently mocking conversation.

Synonyms: *repartee, raillery, persiflage.*

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the words *banter*, *badinage*, *persiflage*, and *raillery*, which suggest good-humored jesting.

11. HIERATIC (HY-ur-AT-ik)

Priestly; pertaining to or used by priests; reserved for holy or sacred uses (*hieratic* writings, vestments, etc.).

Synonyms: *clerical, ministerial, pastoral, ecclesiastical, sacerdotal.*

Related words: The prefix *hier-* (or *hier-*) comes from Greek and means sacred, holy, divine. It appears in the words *hierocracy*, rule by priests, ecclesiastical government; *hierarch*, a person who rules over sacred things, a high priest, and also a person who occupies a high position in a hierarchy; and *hierarchy*, an organized body or system strictly arranged in order of rank, power, or class.

Additional useful information: *Hieratic* may also designate a form of ancient Egyptian writing in which the traditional hieroglyphics took on a more cursive, or flowing, form. The *hieratic* style was opposed to the *demotic* style. *Demotic* (Greek *demos*, the people) means of the people, popular. From the same source comes *democracy*, rule by the people. *Demotic* may also refer to speech or writing that is vernacular, popular, informal.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

12. SATURNINE (SAT-ur-nyn)

Gloomy, sullen, or somber in appearance, manner, or temperament.

Synonyms: *grave, melancholy, morose, taciturn, phlegmatic* (Level 9, Word 33).

Antonyms: *mercurial* (Level 8, Word 27), *sanguine* (Level 10, Word 21).

Etymology: Literally, "of or pertaining to the planet Saturn."

13. EXECRATE (EKS-uh-krayt)

To denounce vehemently, declare hateful or detestable; also, to loathe, abhor, detest utterly. Etymology: Latin, literally "to put under a curse."

Corresponding adjective: *execrable*, abominable, abhorrent, loathsome, utterly detestable. Corresponding noun: *execration*, a vehement denunciation or the act of *execrating*, declaring hateful or detestable.

14. VITIATE (VISH-ee-ayt)

To corrupt, spoil, ruin, contaminate, impair the quality of, make faulty or impure; also, to weaken morally, defile, debase.

Etymology: Latin *vitium*, a fault, vice.

Legal usage: A *vitiated* contract or a *vitiated* claim has been corrupted or violated and is therefore invalid, rendered ineffective.

Corresponding noun: *vitiating*, corruption, spoliation, the act of vitiating or the state of being vitiated.

15. VENIAL (VEE-nee-ul)

Excusable, forgivable, pardonable, able to be overlooked.

Etymology: Latin *venia*, grace, indulgence.

Religious usage: In theology, *venial* is opposed to *mortal*. *Venial* sins are pardonable; *mortal* sins exclude one from grace.

Usage tip: Be careful to distinguish *venal* (Level 9, Word 14) and *venial* in spelling and meaning. *Venal* means corruptible, capable of being bribed or bought off.

16. RISIBLE (RIZ-i-buul)

Provoking or capable of provoking laughter.

Synonyms: *laughable, amusing, ludicrous, hilarious, ridiculous, droll* (Level 5, Word 36).

Etymology and related words: *Risible*, *ridicule*, and *ridiculous* all come from the Latin *ridere*, to laugh at.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

17. LIONIZE (LY-uh-nyz)

To treat a person as a celebrity or as an object of great interest or importance.

Related word: *lion*, an important, famous, or celebrated person (a *lion* in his profession, a *lion* of industry, a literary *lion*).

18. CONTRETEMPS (KAHN-truh-ta(n))

An embarrassing, awkward, unexpected situation or event; a sudden mishap or hitch; an inopportune occurrence.

Etymology: French, literally "against the time" or "out of time"; first applied in English to the sport of fencing to mean (*OED*) "a pass or thrust ... made at a wrong or inopportune moment."

Usage and pronunciation tip: The plural is spelled the same, *contretemps*, but pronounced KAHN-truh-tah(n)z.

19. RODOMONTADE (RAHD-uh-mun-TAYD)

Arrogant boasting or bragging.

Synonyms: *bluster, braggadocio, vainglory, gasconade, fanfaronade, jactitation.*

Etymology: The character Rodomont, a boastful warrior king in Boiardo's *Orlando Inamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, from Italian *rodomonte*, literally "one who rolls away mountains."

20. HEBETUDE (HEB-i-t(y)ood)

Stupidity, dullness, obtuseness, lethargy of mind or spirit.

Corresponding verb: *hebetate*, to make or become dull, blunt, or obtuse.

Corresponding adjective: *hebetudinous*, dull, stupid, obtuse.

Etymology: Latin *hebes*, blunt, dull.

* * * * *

What's Your Phobia?

This interlude in the program explores various *phobias*, exaggerated or unnatural fears (from Greek *phobos*, fear, dread, horror, flight).

As a combining form, *-phobia* can be joined with other elements to form a word meaning the fear, dread, or extreme dislike of something. The antonym of *-phobia* is *-philia* (Greek *philein*, to love).

The discussion covers the following phobias:

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

- *claustrophobia*: fear of enclosed space.
- *agoraphobia*: fear of open space.
- *xenophobia*: (Level 9, Word 19) fear of strangers or foreigners, or of anything strange or foreign.
- *Francophobia, Gallophobia*: fear of the French.
- *Germanophobia*: fear of the Germans.
- *Japanophobia*: fear of the Japanese.
- *Grecophobia*: fear of the Greeks.
- *Russophobia*: fear of the Russians.
- *Anglophobia*: fear of the English.
- *bacteriophobia*: fear of germs.
- *demonophobia*: fear of demons.
- *pharmacophobia*: fear of medicine or drugs.
- *syphilophobia*: fear of syphilis, or fear that one is infected with it.
- *pyrophobia*: fear of fire.
- *neophobia*: fear of anything new.
- *aeronausiphobia*: fear of airplanes.
- *aviatophobia*: fear of flying in an airplane.
- *sitiophobia*: fear or dread of food.
- *ablutophobia*: fear of bathing.
- *sophophobia*: fear of learning.
- *allodoxaphobia*: fear of others' opinions.
- *thanatophobia*: fear of death.
- *ataxiophobia*: fear of disorder.
- *dysmorphophobia*: fear of deformity or anything misshapen.
- *dustophobia, rupophobia*: dread of dirt.
- *dishabillophobia*: fear of disrobing in front of someone (from *dishabille*, Level 9, Word 43).
- *philemaphobia*: fear of kissing.
- *staurophobia*: fear of crucifixes.
- *pantophobia*: fear of everything.
- *chronophobia*: fear of time.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

- *phobophobia*: the fear of those who have nothing to fear but fear itself.

* * * * *

21. SANGUINE (SANG-gwin)

Confident, cheerful, hopeful, optimistic.

Etymology: (Latin *sanguis*, blood) *Sanguine* originally meant having blood as the dominant humor in one's system; hence, having a ruddy, healthy complexion and a warm temperament. Eventually this sense evolved into the current meaning: confident, cheerfully optimistic.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the words *sanguine* and *sanguinary*, which are sometimes confused.

22. DEIPNOSOPHIST (dyp-NAHS-uh-fist)

An adept conversationalist, especially one who enjoys conversing at the table.

Etymology and related words: *Deipnosophist* (noun), *deipnosophistic* (adjective), and *deipnosophism* (noun) come from the Greek *deipnon*, a meal, and *sophistes*, a wise man. The *Deipnosophistai* by Athenaeus details the conversation of a group of learned men who are dining together.

Additional useful words: *Symposium*, which means literally "a drinking party," comes from the title of a Platonic dialogue; *preprandial*, before dinner; *postprandial*, after dinner.

23. FRANGIBLE (FRAN-ji-buul)

Breakable, fragile, frail, delicate, easily damaged or destroyed.

Additional useful word: *friable*, easily crumbled, crushed, or pulverized.

24. APODICTIC (AP-uh-DIK-tik)

Absolutely certain, necessarily true, proved or demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Synonyms: *incontestable*, *incontrovertible*, *irrefragable*.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

25. FULMINATE (FUHL-mi-nayt)

To explode, especially to explode with invective and denunciations; to shout forth condemnation and censure.

Corresponding noun: *fulmination*, an explosion, detonation; also (especially) a thundering verbal explosion, loud denunciation or condemnation.

Etymology: Latin *fulminare*, to strike with lightning, from *fulmen*, a stroke of lightning, thunderbolt.

26. SCARIFY (SKAR-i-fy)

(1) To wound the feelings of; make cutting remarks about; distress by criticizing sharply.

(2) (medicine) To make a series of shallow cuts or punctures in the skin, as in vaccinating.

(3) (agriculture) To cut into the ground; loosen or break up the soil either to aerate it or in preparation for planting.

Synonyms: *lacerate* (Level 1, Word 35), flay, *castigate*, *vituperate*, *excoriate* (Level 9, Word 40).

Corresponding noun: *scarification*.

Etymology: Literally, "to scratch," from Greek *skariphos*, a pencil or stylus.

Usage: *Scarify* and *scare* are similar in spelling and sound but entirely unrelated in derivation and meaning.

27. HEBDOMADAL (heb-DAHM-uh-dul)

Weekly; pertaining to a week or seven-day period.

Corresponding noun: *hebdomad*, a group of seven or a seven-day period, a week.

Etymology: Latin and Greek words for the number 7.

28. DIVAGATE (DY-vuh-gayt)

To wander, ramble, or drift about hence, to digress.

Corresponding noun: *divagation*, a digression or the act of wandering or rambling.

Etymology: Latin *divagari*, to wander about, from *dis-*, "apart," and *vagari*, to wander, ramble, roam.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

29. IATROGENIC (eye-AT-truh-JEN-ik)

Caused by medical examination or treatment.

Antonym: pathological, pertaining to or caused by disease.

Etymology and related word: Iatric, pertaining to medicine or medical doctors, and iatrogenic begin with the combining form iatro- (Greek iatros, a physician), which means "medical" or "medicine." The combining form -genic means "producing" or "generating."

30. TERGIVERSATION (TUR-jiv-ur-SAY-shin)

Desertion; specifically, the act of deserting something to which one was previously loyal, such as a cause, a party, or a religious faith.

Synonyms: abandonment, defection.

Corresponding verb: tergiversate (TUR-jiv-ursayt). Tergiversate and Apostatize are synonymous.

Etymology: Latin, literally "to turn one's back."

Usage: Tergiversate and tergiversation may also be used figuratively of language that is shifty and evasive, that does not take a firm stand. In this sense, tergiversate is a synonym of equivocate and tergiversation is a synonym of equivocation.

* * * * *

At this point in the program there is a discussion of two common problems people have in using the word *number*.

Number vs. Amount

Number refers to things that can be counted, itemized, enumerated, considered separately or individually (the *number* of people at an event, a *number* of things to do, a *number* of problems to solve, the *number* of papers on your desk, or the *number* of volts in an electric current).

Amount refers to things that are considered collectively, as a mass or whole (the *amount* of sugar, the *amount* of trouble we are having, the *amount* of food we buy, the *amount* of paper on your desk).

Number with a verb: singular or plural?

When *number* is preceded by the indefinite article *a* (*a number*), the construction is plural and requires a plural verb: *a number of boxes were sent*; *a number of things were done*; *a number of people are here*; *a number of new employees have joined the health club* (not *has joined*).

When *number* is preceded by the definite article *the* (*the number*), the construction is singular and requires a singular verb: *the number of things left to do is overwhelming*; *the number of people in attendance is fifty*; *the number of members in the organization has decreased* (not *have decreased*).

* * * * *

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

31. NACREOUS (NAY-kree-us)

Pearly, consisting of or resembling mother-of-pearl.

Synonyms: *iridescent, margaritaceous.*

Corresponding noun: *nacre* (NAY-kur), a synonym of *mother-of-pearl*.

32. FAMANT (FAY-nee-int)

Lazy, idle, sluggish, good-for-nothing.

Synonyms: *do-nothing, shiftless, slothful, lackadaisical, lethargic, indolent, somnolent, torpid, otiose, hebetudinous.*

Pronunciation tip: There is no *lax* in *lackadaisical*; say LAK-uh-DAY-zuh-kul.

Etymology: French, literally "to do nothing."

Corresponding nouns: *faineant*, a lazy person, an idler, sluggard; *faineance*, idleness, inactivity, indolence, or the lazy, do-nothing attitude of a *faineant* person.

Pronunciation tip: If you look up *faineant* in a current dictionary, you may find the French pronunciation, fay-nay-A(N), listed first or even listed alone. Despite what these sources say, the French pronunciation is not recommended because evidence shows that educated speakers have anglicized the word (made it sound English) since at least the 1920s. Two of the 20th century's most respected arbiters on pronunciation, the second edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary* (1934), and Kenyon and Knott's *Pronouncing Dictionary of American English* (1949), both prefer FAY-nee-int.

33. HISPID (HIS-pid)

Covered with stiff hairs, bristles, or small spines; rough and bristly.

Etymology: Latin *hispidus*, rough, hairy, bristly.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes *hispid* and *hirsute*, which means extremely hairy or covered with hair.

34. LONGANIMITY (LAHNG-guh-NIM-i-tee)

Long-suffering patience; the ability to calmly endure hardship or suffering.

Synonym: *forbearance.*

Etymology: Latin *longus*, meaning "long," and *animus*, spirit, mind.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

35. **SCIOLIST** (SY-uh-list)

A person who has only superficial knowledge of a subject, or who pretends to have knowledge.

Etymology: Latin, literally "a smatterer," ultimately from the Latin *scire*, to know.

Corresponding noun: *sciolism*, superficial or pretended knowledge.

36. **PROPINQUITY** (pro-PING-kwi-tee)

(1) Nearness in place or time, proximity.

(2) Nearness or similarity in nature, kinship, close relation.

Etymology: Latin *propinquitās*, nearness, proximity, or friendship, relationship.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes *proximity* and *propinquity*.

37. **FACTITIOUS** (fak-TISH-us)

Not natural or genuine, produced artificially.

Synonyms: sham, contrived, bogus, fraudulent, spurious (Level 8, Word 18).

Etymology: Latin *facticius*, made by art, artificial, from *facere*, to make.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes artificial and factitious.

38. **PLEXIFORM** (PLEK-si-form)

In general, complicated or elaborate; specifically, like a plexus or network.

Related word: plexus, "a network" or "any complex structure containing an intricate network of parts" (Random House Webster's College Dictionary).

Etymology: Latin *plectere*, to braid, intertwine, interweave.

39. **SUSURRUS** (suu-SUR-us)

A soft, subdued sound; a whispering, murmuring, muttering, or rustling sound.

Synonym: susurration (SOO-suh-**RAY**-shin).

Corresponding verb: susurrate (suu-SUR-ayt), to whisper, murmur.

Corresponding adjective: susurrant (suuSUR-int), softly whispering, rustling, or murmuring.

Etymology: Latin *susurrare*, to whisper, murmur, mutter.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

40. TRITURATE (TRICH-ur-ayt)

To grind, crush, or pound into fine particles or powder.

Synonyms: *pulverize, comminute, levigate.*

Etymology: Latin, "to thresh grain" or "tread out corn."

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the verbs to *pulverize* and to *triturate*.

Corresponding noun: *trituration*

* * * * *

Sesquipedalia verba

Here there is an interlude on *sesquipedalia verba*, Latin for "words a foot and a half long." The English word *sesquipedalian* may be used as a noun to mean a very long word, or as an adjective to mean measuring a foot and a half or given to using foot-and-half-long words.

The following *sesquipedalia verba* are noted:

- *muliebriety*: femininity, womanhood.
- *obnubilation*: clouding over, obscuring.
- *sarculation*: weeding with a hoe.
- *immorigerous*: rude, uncivil, disobedient.
- *vivisepulture*: the act of burying someone alive.
- *chryselephantine*: made of gold and ivory.
- *bruxomania*: the habit of grinding the teeth, especially in sleep or under stress.
- *philopatridomania*: a fanatic case of homesickness.
- *azygophrenia*: the psychoneurosis of single life.
- *uxorodespotism*: wifely tyranny.
- *borborygmus*: the sound of gas passing through the intestines, a gurgling in your gut.
- *cacophonopholist*: a lover of harsh sounds.
- *sacerdotophrenia*: clerical stagefright, fear of the pulpit.
- *horripilate*: to get goosebumps.
- *zenzizenzizenic*: the 8th power of a number.
- *bathysiderodromophobia*: fear of subways or underground trains.
- *floccinaucinihilipilification*: the act of categorizing something as trivial or worthless.
- *hippopotomonstrosesquipedalian*: pertaining to an extremely long word.
- *graphospasm*: the technical term for writer's cramp.

* * * * *

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

41. PROTEAN (PROH-tee-in)

Highly variable or changeable; readily assuming different shapes, forms, characters, or meanings.

Etymology: *Proteus*, a sea god in ancient Greek mythology who could change his shape at will.

42. CREPITATE (KREP-i-tayt)

To crackle; make a crackling, snapping, or popping noise.

Etymology and related word: Latin *crepitare*, to crackle, creak, rattle, or clatter, the source also of *decrepit* and the unusual word *crepitaculum*, the rattle or rattling organ of the rattlesnake.

Corresponding adjective: *crepitant*, crackling or creaking.

Corresponding noun: *crepitation*, a crackling or creaking sound; in medicine, the grating sound or sensation produced by rubbing together the fractured ends of a broken bone.

43. NOCTIVAGANT (nahk-TIV-uh-gint)

Wandering at night.

Etymology and related words: Latin *noctivagus*, wandering by night, from *nox*, night, and *vagari*, to wander about. *Vagari* is also the source of *vague*, *vagabond*, a wanderer, and *vagary* (properly vuh-GAIR-ee, now usually VAY-guh-ree), an odd, whimsical idea or an unpredictable, capricious action or event (the *vagaries* of the stock market).

Corresponding noun: *noctivagation*, the act of wandering in the night.

44. FULIGINOUS (fyoo-LIJ-i-nus)

Sooty, smoky; pertaining to, resembling, or consisting of soot or smoke.

Etymology: Latin *fuligo*, soot.

45. HORTATORY (HOR-tuh-for-ee)

Encouraging or urging to some course of action; giving earnest counsel or advice.

Related words: *exhort*, to urge or advise earnestly to do what is deemed right or proper; *exhortation*, a statement that *exhorts*, "language intended to incite and encourage" (*Webster 2*).

Etymology: Latin *hortari*, to encourage, incite.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

46. HELIOLATRY (HEE-lee-AHL-uh-tree)

Worship of the sun.

Etymology and related words: Greek *helios*, the sun, and *latreia*, worship. The English combining form *hello-* means "the sun" and appears in *heliotherapy*, a form of medical treatment involving exposure to sunlight; *heliocentric*, regarding the sun as the center of our planetary system, as opposed to *geocentric*; and *heliotropism* (HEE-lee-AH-truh-piz'm), the tendency of plants to bend or move toward-or in some cases, away from-a source of light.

Corresponding noun: *heliolater*, a sun worshiper.

Corresponding adjective: *heliolatrous*, sun worshipping.

47. SCIAMACHY (sy-AM-i-kee)

Shadow-boxing; the act of fighting a shadow or an imaginary enemy.

Etymology and related words: Greek *skia*, a shadow, and *mache*, a battle, contest, struggle. The English combining form *-machy* denotes a battle, contest, or struggle, as in *theomachy*, a battle against or between gods; *gigantomachy*, a war or battle between giants or superhuman beings; and *logomachy* (Greek *logos*, word), a battle of words.

48. GLABROUS (GLAB-rus)

Smooth and bald.

Etymology: Latin *glaber*, without hair, bald.

49. PETTIFOGGER (PET-ee-FAHG-ur)

A mean, tricky lawyer; especially, a lawyer who handles petty cases in an unethical, unscrupulous way.

Synonym: *shyster*.

Corresponding verb: *pettifog*, to carry on a law practice in a petty, tricky, unscrupulous way; by extension, to engage in chicanery or unethical practices in a business of any sort.

Corresponding noun: *pettifoggery*, legal tricks or chicanery.

Verbal Advantage Level Ten

50. EPICENE (EP-i-seen)

- (1) Having characteristics or qualities of both sexes.
- (2) Not having the characteristics or qualities of either sex, sexless, neuter.
- (3) (of style) lacking appeal or potency, feeble, flaccid.
- (4) (of a man) not virile, effeminate.

Etymology: Greek, literally "in common."

Related words: *hermaphroditic* (adjective) and *hermaphrodite* (noun), which come from *Hermaphroditus*, in Greek mythology the son of Hermes, the messenger of the gods, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. Hermaphroditus was united in one body with the water nymph Salmacis.

Usage: *Epicene* does not usually suggest having both male and female reproductive organs but rather having a range of characteristics of both sexes, emotional as well as physical.

Corresponding noun: *epicene* (an *epicene* person).

* * * * *

Final Pronunciation Tips

A special reminder about *nuclear*: Don't say NOOkyuh-lur. Think of *nuclear* as a combination of *new* and *clear*: Say NYOO-klee-ur or NOO-klee-ur.

Schizophrenia is properly pronounced SKITS-uh-FREE-nee-uh, not *schizo-FREN-ia*. The accent properly should be on the first syllable in the words *exquisite* and *hospitable*. For *atmospheric*, say AT-mus-FER-ik, not AT-mus-FEER-ik. PRAY-lood for *prelude* is a vogue pronunciation. The preferred pronunciation is PREL-yood. The pronunciations ONvuh-lope and ON-voy are pseudo-French; these words are thoroughly English and should be pronounced EN-voy and EN-vuh-lohp. Don't pronounce the H in *vehicle* and *herb*, and don't say zoo-ology or zoologist, as if these words had three O's. Say zoh-ology and zoh-ologist. Don't pronounce the extra in *extraordinary*; the word has five syllables, not six. Be sure to clearly pronounce the H in *huge* and *human*; don't say YOOJ and YOO-man. For the abbreviation etc., take your time and say ET SET-uh-ruh. It's sloppy to say ET SET-truh, and even worse to say EK SET-truh.

The eating disorder called *bulimia* properly is pronounced byoo-LIM-ee-uh, not buh-LEE-mee-uh. What you probably have often heard called a SKIZ'm (for the word *schism*) is in fact a SIZ'm. And last but not least, for the word (or credit card) *visa*, don't say VEE-suh with a hard S sound; say VEE-zuh with a soft S, which sounds like a Z, as in visor and *visible*.

* * * * *