

VERBAL ADVANTAGE
SUCCESS EDITION
ADVANCED

Level VII

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Verbal Advantage Level Seven

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."

In addition to the vocabulary lessons, Level 7 contains an overview of the subject of *abusage*, the abuse of language.

The author identifies five general categories of *abusage* that plague the average educated person: (1) redundancy; (2) the "sounds-like syndrome"; (3) vogue words; (4) "adverbiage"; and (5) jargon. Throughout Level 7, after each set of ten key-word discussions, the author explores one of these categories of *abusage*.

1. REDRESS (REE-dres or ri-DRES)

Reparation, compensation, satisfaction for a wrong done.

Synonyms: *amends, recompense, retribution, rectification, requital, quittance.*

Usage: *Redress* may take the form of a monetary compensation or it may be an act or statement that makes amends, that repairs or compensates for a wrong.

Corresponding verb: *redress* (ri-DRES), to repair, set right, make amends for.

2. ANOMALOUS (uh-NAHM-uh-lus)

Irregular, abnormal, out of place; deviating from what is usual or expected; not fitting in with a common type or conforming to a general rule.

Synonyms: *inconsistent, unnatural, eccentric, aberrant* (uh-BER-int).

Corresponding noun: *anomaly*, a deviation from the norm, an irregularity.

3. OBSEQUIIOUS (uhb-SEE-kwee-us)

Subservient, submissive, obedient; ready and willing to serve, please, or obey.

Corresponding noun: *obsequiousness*, subservience, obedience, an eager desire to serve or obey.

Synonyms: *compliant, servile, slavish, ingratiating* (Level 3, Word 13), *deferential, fawning, toadying, truckling, sycophantic.*

Antonyms: *unruly, defiant, intractable* (Level 5, Word 12), *refractory* (Level 6, Word 42), *recalcitrant, intransigent.*

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4. DIDACTIC (dy-DAK-tik)

Instructive, designed or intended to teach.

Synonyms: *edifying, preceptive, expository, hortatory, pedagogic.*

N.B. *Pedagogic* is the adjective corresponding to the noun *pedagogue*. A *pedagogue* is a teacher, but today the word is sometimes used disparagingly to mean a teacher who is strict, narrowminded, or dogmatic.

Etymology: Greek *didaktikos*, skillful or adept at teaching.

Connotation: *Didactic* often connotes morally instructive or edifying: A great work of fiction may be as *didactic* as it is entertaining. Sometimes *didactic* has the negative connotation of inclined to lecture others in a tedious or excessively moralistic way: "His *didactic* manner of telling everyone how the organization should be run."

Corresponding noun: *didactics*, the art or science of teaching.

N.B. The word *pedagogy* may also refer to the art or science of teaching, but more often it means the teaching profession.

5. TRUNCATE (TRUNGK-ayt, like *trunk* + *ate*)

To cut short, shorten by cutting or lopping off.

Synonyms: *condense, abridge, abbreviate, curtail.*

Antonyms: *lengthen, extend, elongate, prolong, protract* (Level 3, Word 25).

Etymology: Latin *truncare*, to maim, mutilate, shorten by cutting off. *Truncare* comes in turn from *truncus*, (adjective) maimed, mutilated, cut short or lopped off; (noun) a tree that has been cut down.

Usage: *Truncate* usually suggests a more severe or substantial cutting or shortening than its synonyms *condense, abridge, abbreviate, and curtail*, which comes closest to the severity of *truncate*. *Truncate* may refer to a cutting short in number, length, or duration.

Corresponding adjective: *truncated*, cut short, abbreviated, terminated abruptly.

6. ABSTEMIOUS (ab-STEE-mee-us)

(1) Sparing or moderate, especially in eating or drinking.

(2) Characterized by abstinence, not partaking or indulging, especially in alcoholic beverages.

Etymology: Latin *abstemius*, abstaining from liquor.

Corresponding noun: *abstemiousness.*

Synonyms: *sober, temperate, ascetic.* *Ascetic* means rigorously abstemious, practicing strict and extreme abstinence or self-denial.

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7. ETHEREAL (i-THEER-ee-ul)

Heavenly, not earthly; hence, very light, airy, delicate, or refined.

Synonyms: *celestial, lofty, elevated, tenuous, rarefied, sublime.*

Antonyms: *mundane* (Level 4, Word 22), *terrestrial, sublunary.*

Related word: *ether*, which in one of its senses refers to an imaginary substance that the ancients believed filled the upper regions of space. *Ether* was the lightest and most subtle of the elements, which included earth, water, and fire.

8. BOMBASTIC (bahm-BAS-tik)

Pompous, pretentious, inflated, overblown.

Usage: *Bombastic* applies to speech or writing that is pompous, overblown, or pretentious, or to people who express themselves in this way.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the synonyms *bombastic, grandiloquent* (Level 6, Word 35), and *turgid*, which denote extravagant language.

Corresponding noun: *bombast*, verbal padding; speech or writing that is wordy, puffed-up, and pretentious.

9. SENESCENT (si-NES-int)

Aging, growing old, on the decline.

Etymology and related words: Latin *senex*, old, the source also of *senile* and *senate*, which means literally "a council of elders."

Usage: *Senescent* may apply to persons, things, or ideas that are growing old, decrepit, or outworn.

Antonym: *juvenescent*, growing younger.

Corresponding noun: *senescence*, the process of becoming old or the state of being old.

10. PERNICIOUS (pur-NISH-us)

Deadly, fatal, destructive, causing great harm or injury.

Synonyms: *injurious, ruinous, deleterious* (Level 4, Word 33), *noxious, baneful, malign, noisome* (Level 9, Word 38).

Antonyms: *healthful, wholesome, salutary, salubrious.*

Etymology: Latin *perniciosus*, destructive, ruinous, and *perniciēs*, destruction, disaster, ultimately from *nex*, a violent death.

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The discussion of abuse begins here with an exploration of the first category, *redundancy*.

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11. CATHOLIC (KATH-uh-lik or KATH-lik)

Universal, all-inclusive, all-embracing, comprehensive; specifically, broadminded, tolerant, or all-embracing in one's sympathies, interests, or tastes.

Usage tip: *Catholic*, with a capital C, refers to the Roman Catholic Church, to the religion of Catholicism, or to a member of the Catholic Church. *Catholic*, with a small c, has nothing to do with religion. It comes directly from Latin and Greek words meaning universal, general, and suggests a broadminded, tolerant, all-embracing outlook on life.

Synonyms: *open-minded, liberal, ecumenical, latitudinarian.*

Antonyms: *narrow-minded, bigoted, biased, intolerant, dogmatic, parochial.*

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the words *ecumenical* and *catholic*.

12. OBJURGATION (AHB-jur-GAY-shin)

A harsh rebuke, vehement scolding or denunciation.

Synonyms: *reproof, reproach, upbraiding, vilification, vituperation.*

Corresponding verb: *objurgate* (pronounced AHB-jur-gayt or uhb-JUR-gayt), to rebuke sharply, chide harshly, denounce vehemently. Etymology: Latin *ob-*, against, and *jurgare*, to scold or quarrel.

13. EFFUSIVE (i-FYOO-siv)

Gushing, overflowing, overly demonstrative, expressing emotion in an excessive or unrestrained manner.

Synonyms: *exuberant, profuse, ebullient, impassioned, ecstatic, rhapsodic.*

Antonyms: *undemonstrative, reserved, aloof, indifferent, reticent, diffident, taciturn* (Level 3, Word 2), *laconic* (Level 3, Word 18).

Etymology: Latin *effusio*, a pouring forth, from *effundere*, to pour out or pour forth.

Corresponding noun: *effusion*, a pouring or gushing forth. *Effusion* may be used of a literal gushing (as of gas or fluid), or it may be used figuratively of an unrestrained emotional outburst in speech or writing.

Usage: *Effusive* is nearly always used figuratively to mean gushing or overflowing with emotion, overly demonstrative.

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14. UMBRAGE (UHM-brij)

Offense, resentment.

Synonyms: *displeasure, irritation, indignation, pique.*

Usage: *Umbrage* is most commonly used today in the phrase "to take umbrage," meaning to take offense. You may also *feel* umbrage, resentment, at something, or *give* umbrage, offense, to someone else, but these constructions are less common.

15. VICISSITUDE (vi-SIS-i-t(y)ood)

A change, variation.

Synonyms: *alternation, fluctuation, mutation.*

Usage: *Vicissitude* is often used in the plural, *vicissitudes*, to refer to the changes that occur during the course of something, the ups and downs.

16. CONTENTIOUS (kuhn-TEN-shus)

Argumentative, quarrelsome; ready and eager to argue, bicker, or debate.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the words *contentious*, *litigious*, *pugnacious* (Level 5, Word 8), *disputatious*, *belligerent*, and *bellicose*, all of which refer to quarrelsome or hostile parties who are inclined to engage in argument or conflict.

Antonyms: *peaceable, obliging, civil, tolerant, amiable, amicable, benevolent, equable, forbearing.*

Etymology and related words: Latin *contentio*, striving, effort, ultimately from *contendere*, to strain or strive against another. From the same source we inherit the verb to *contend* and the noun *contention*, which may mean either a struggle, opposition, or an assertion made in an argument.

17. OBEISANCE (oh-BAY-sins)

A gesture of respect or submission, or an attitude of respect and submission.

Synonyms: *deference, homage, adoration, reverence, veneration.*

Usage: *Obeisance* is used chiefly of formal situations in which respect or homage is paid to a god, a ruler, a religious leader, or a person of great influence or power.

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18. ASSIDUOUS (uh-SIJ-oo-us)

Hardworking, industrious; done with persistent, careful, and untiring attention.

Synonyms: *diligent, painstaking, persevering, unrelenting, indefatigable, sedulous.*

Antonyms: *lazy, shiftless, indolent, languid, phlegmatic* (Level 9, Word 33), *otiose.*

Etymology and related words: Latin *adsiduus*, sitting continuously in one place, engaged in an occupation, ultimately from *sedere*, to sit down, the source also of the English words *sedate* and *sedentary*.

Corresponding noun: *assiduousness*, hard and careful work.

19. DUPLICITY (d(y)oo-PLIS-i-tee)

Deceit, cunning, double-dealing, hypocritical deception.

Synonyms: *trickery, dishonesty, fraud, guile, chicanery, casuistry, mendacity.*

Etymology and usage: Latin *duplicitas*, doubleness, and *duplicare*, to double, ultimately from *duplex*, twofold, double. Literally, *duplicity* means doubleness of heart or speech; in modern usage it refers to double-dealing, an act of deception in which one uses hypocritical or misleading words or actions to hide one's true intentions.

Corresponding adjective: *duplicitous*, twofaced, deceitful.

20. INSOUCIANT (in-SOO-see-int)

Carefree, nonchalant, lightheartedly unconcerned or indifferent, free from worry or anxiety, calm and unbothered.

Etymology: The French phrase *sans souci* means without care or worry. *Insouciant* combines the privative prefix *in-*, not, with the French *souci*, care, worry, to mean literally not caring, free from worry, lightheartedly unconcerned.

Usage: *Insouciant* sometimes implies a carefree indifference or lack of concern for consequences.

Corresponding noun: *insouciance*, lighthearted indifference, nonchalance, a carefree lack of concern.

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The discussion of abuse continues here with an exploration of the second category, the *sounds-like syndrome*.

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21. MYRMIDON (MUR-mi-dahn or MUR-mi-dun)

A loyal follower, faithful servant or subordinate, especially someone who is unquestioningly obedient.

Etymology: In ancient Greek legend, the *Myrmidons* were a savage, warlike people of the region of Thessaly who fought in the Trojan War under their king, the great warrior Achilles. The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces *myrmidon* back to the year 1400, and shows that by the 17th century it had come to be used in a general sense to mean "an unscrupulously faithful follower or hireling; a hired ruffian."

Additional useful word: *rapine* (RAP-in, rhymes with *happen*), the act of seizing and carrying off property by force, plunder.

22. NASCENT (NAS-int, also NAY-sent)

Beginning to exist or develop; in the process of being born or begun; coming or having just come into being.

Synonyms: *emerging, dawning, developing, commencing, embryonic, incipient, inchoate* (Level 7, Word 35).

Antonyms: *ancient, extinct, outworn, outmoded, antiquated, obsolete, senescent* (Level 7, Word 9), *antediluvian*. *Antediluvian* means of the time before the Deluge, the great flood described in the first book of the Bible, Genesis; hence, extremely old or old-fashioned.

Etymology: Latin *nasci*, to be born.

Corresponding noun: *nascency*, birth or beginning.

23. ACCEDE (ak-SEED)

To consent, yield, give in or agree to.

Synonyms: *comply, submit, assent, concur* (Level 1, Word 18), *acquiesce* (Level 4, Word 31).

Antonyms: *resist, disagree, oppose, protest, contradict, dispute, dissent, wrangle, cavil* (Level 3, Word 29).

Etymology: Latin *accedere*, to approach, come near.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the verbs to *accede*, *acquiesce*, *assent*, *concur*, and *consent*.

Usage: *Accede* implies yielding a position or giving in to a demand or request, often under pressure. *Accede* may also be used to mean to attain or assume an office or title (to *accede* to the throne or to the presidency).

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24. MAGNANIMOUS (mag-NAN-i-mus)

Noble, honorable; generous in overlooking injury or insult; high-minded, unselfish.

Synonyms: *courageous, exalted, lofty* (for the noble, high-minded connotation); *charitable, altruistic, beneficent* (for the generous, unselfish connotation).

Antonyms: *vile, contemptible, malicious, despicable, ignominious, covetous, avaricious* (Level 2, Word 40), *mercenary* (Level 3, Word 14), *venal* (Level 9, Word 14), *vindictive* (Level 5, Word 39), *churlish, sordid, abject, servile, sycophantic, pusillanimous* (Level 9, Word 16).

Etymology: Latin *magnus*, great, and *animus*, spirit.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the words *noble* and *magnanimous*.

Corresponding noun: *magnanimity*, noble generosity, greatness or dignity of mind or heart.

25. NONAGE (NAHN-ij)

Immaturity, youth; especially the period of legal minority, the state of being a minor in the eyes of the law.

Etymology: Middle English, from AngloFrench, combining the prefix *non-*, not, with the word *age* (literally, "not of age").

26. INVECTIVE (in-VEK-tiv)

Vehement or abusive language involving bitter, scathing accusations or denunciations.

Synonyms: *slander, defamation, aspersion, objurgation* (Level 7, Word 12), *billingsgate, vituperation, obloquy*.

Antonyms: *praise, commendation, adulation, eulogy, encomium*.

N.B. This discussion covers the origin and precise meaning of the words *billingsgate*, *vituperation*, and *obloquy*, and distinguishes the words *abuse* and *invective*.

Etymology and related word: Latin *invehere*, to attack with words, the source also of the English verb to *inveigh*, to attack violently with words, protest furiously or express angry disapproval. *Inveigh* is always followed by *against* (*inveigh against* an unfair company *policy*; *inveigh against* an abuse of First Amendment rights).

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27. MACHINATION (MAK-i-NAY-shin)

A crafty or treacherous plot, malicious scheme, cunning design or plan to achieve a sinister purpose (often used in the plural, *machinations*).

Synonyms: *stratagem, conspiracy, contrivance, ruse, cabal* (kuh-BAHL).

Etymology: Latin *machinari*, to plot, devise, contrive to do evil, from *machina*, a device or contrivance for performing work.

Related word and phrase: The Latin **machina** is also the source of *machine*, something devised to perform work, and it appears in a Latin expression now used in English: *deus ex machina* (DAY-uus eks MAH-ki-nah). *Deus ex machina* means literally "a god out of a machine"; in English it means "an unexpected occurrence that rescues someone or something from an apparently hopeless predicament" (*Eugene Ehrlich, Amo, Amas, Amat, and More*). Pronunciation tip: The *ch* in *machine* is soft; the *ch* in *machination* is hard, like a K. Do not say *mashination* (a recent, erroneous variant). The preferred pronunciation is MAK-i-NAY-shin.

28. DOCILE (DAHS'l)

Submissive, obedient, compliant; easy to direct, manage, or supervise; following instructions.

Synonyms: *amenable, deferential, malleable* (Level 2, Word 29), *tractable, acquiescent, obsequious* (Level 7, Word 3).

Antonyms: *willful, wayward, headstrong, obstinate* (Level 1, Word 34), *intractable* (Level 5, Word 12), *intransigent, refractory* (Level 6, Word 42).

Etymology and related word: Latin *docilis*, teachable, from *docere*, to teach, instruct. From the same source comes *docent* (DOH-sint), which may mean either a teacher at a university who is not a member of the faculty, or a lecturing tour guide in a museum, cathedral, or some such place of cultural interest.

N.B. Avoid the phrase *docent guide*, which is redundant.

Corresponding noun: *docility*.

Pronunciation tip: The pronunciation DOH-syl is the preference of British and Canadian speakers. The preferred American pronunciation is DAHS'l (rhymes with fossil).

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29. REDOUBTABLE (rĭ-DOWT-uh-buul)

Formidable, fearsome, arousing awe or dread; hence, worthy of or commanding respect.

Etymology and related words: Middle English, through an Old French verb meaning to fear or dread, ultimately from the Latin *dubitare*, to doubt, waver in opinion or action, the source also of the words *dubious* and *dubiety*, doubtfulness, uncertainty, wavering.

Usage: *Redoubtable* may apply to people or things, as a *redoubtable* hero or a *redoubtable* problem. The word is sometimes used to achieve a humorous, gently mocking effect.

30. PROGNOSTICATE (prahg-NAHS-ti-kayt)

To predict; especially, to predict from signs, symptoms, or present indications.

Synonyms: *foretell, forecast, foresee, prophesy, presage, vaticinate.*

Related words: *prognostic* (noun), an indication of something in the future; *prognostic* (adjective), pertaining to or serving as the basis of a prediction (*prognostic* powers, *prognostic* evidence); *prognostication*, a prediction, prophecy, forecast (economic *prognostications*); *prognosticator*, a person who makes predictions; *prognosis*, a prediction of the probable course and outcome of a disease or medical condition.

N.B. Take care to distinguish the words *prognosis* and *diagnosis*. A *diagnosis* describes the nature of the medical condition; a *prognosis* predicts its likely course and outcome.

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The discussion of abuse continues here with an exploration of the third category, *vogue words*.

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31. ENGENDER (en-JEN-dur)

To bring about, bring into being, give rise to, cause to exist, sow the seeds of.

Synonyms: *produce, generate.*

Antonyms: *prevent, suppress, subdue, quell, quash.*

Etymology: Latin *generare*, to beget, produce, bring to life.

Additional useful word: *procreation*, sexual intercourse, especially when it results in the creation of offspring.

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32. FETID (FET-id)

Stinking, foul-smelling; having an extremely offensive odor, as of something rotten or decayed.

Synonyms: *rank, rancid, malodorous, putrid, noisome, mephitic, graveolent.*

Antonyms: *fragrant, scented, perfumed, aromatic, redolent.*

Etymology: Latin *fetidus*, stinking, from *fetere*, to stink.

Usage: *Fetid* is usually reserved for an extremely offensive odor, such as that produced by rotting or decay.

Spelling and pronunciation tip: The spelling *foetid* and the pronunciation FEE-tid are British; If you're American, spell it *fetid* and pronounce, it with a short E: FET-id.

33. PEDANTIC (puh-DANT-ik)

Absurdly learned; scholarly in an ostentatious way; making an inappropriate or tiresome display of knowledge by placing undue importance on trivial details, rules, or formalities.

Useful phrase noted: *mea culpa*, (Latin) "my fault"; pronounced MAY-uh KUUL-puh.

Corresponding nouns: *pedant*, a person who overrates learning, makes an inappropriate display of knowledge, or lays undue stress on trivial points or on exact knowledge of detail; *pedantry*, an inappropriate display of learning or a slavish or dogmatic attention to rules and minor details of learning.

Etymology and related word: Italian, through Latin, from the Greek *paidagogos*, a tutor of children, the source also of the word *pedagogue*, which may mean simply a teacher, or a teacher who is narrow-minded, dogmatic, and pedantic. The Greek *paidagogos* comes from *pais*, *paidos*, a boy or child, and *agein*, to lead or conduct, and means literally a leader or conductor of youngsters. "Among the ancient Greeks and Romans," says the *Century Dictionary*, "the *pedagogue* was originally a slave who attended the younger children of his master, and conducted them to school, to the theater, etc., combining in many cases instruction with guardianship."

34. CAPITULATE (kuh-PITCH-uh-layt)

To yield, surrender; specifically, to surrender on specified terms or conditions.

Corresponding noun: capitulation, the act of surrendering or yielding on specified terms or conditions.

Etymology, related word, and usage: Latin *caput*, *capitis*, the head, the source also of decapitate. By derivation *capitulate* means to list the terms of surrender under various headings in a document; although some current dictionaries define *capitulate* as "to surrender unconditionally or on stipulated terms," in precise usage *capitulate* means to yield or surrender only on stipulated terms, although the terms do not necessarily have to be drawn up in a document.

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35. INCHOATE (in-KOH-it)

Just begun; in an early stage of development; partly in existence; not fully formed; undeveloped; imperfect; incomplete.

Synonyms: elementary, preliminary, nascent (Level 7, Word 22), rudimentary, incipient.

Etymology: Latin *incohatus*, just begun, not finished, incomplete, the past participle of the verb *incohare*, to begin, take in hand, start work on.

36. EXPONENT (eks-POH-nint)

A person who stands or speaks for something, a representative or advocate.

Etymology and related word: Latin *exponere*, to put forth, put on view, display, the source also of the English verb to *expound*, to explain, interpret, set forth point by point.

37. MENDACIOUS (men-DAY-shus)

Not truthful, lying, false, dishonest, deceitful.

Etymology: Latin *mendacium*, a lie, from *mendax*, lying, deceitful.

Synonyms: *fraudulent, hypocritical, disingenuous, evasive, equivocal, duplicitous, prevaricating.*

Antonyms: *truthful, honorable, upright, ethical, virtuous, scrupulous, veracious.*

Corresponding noun: *mendacity*, untruthfulness, lying, deceit.

38. STRIDENT (STRY-dint)

Loud and harsh-sounding, grating, shrill.

Synonyms: *earsplitting, screeching, discordant, clamorous, cacophonous, vociferous, stentorian.*

Antonyms: *faint, subdued, melodious, dulcet, euphonious.*

Etymology and related words: Latin *stridere*, to make a harsh noise. From *stridere*, English has also inherited *stridor* (STRY-dur), a harsh grating or creaking sound or, in medicine, a harsh sound made when breathing in or out that indicates obstruction of the respiratory tract; *stridulous* (STRIJ-uh-lus), making a harsh or shrill noise; and *stridulate* (STRIJ-uh-layt), to make a shrill, high-pitched grating or chirping sound (like a cricket).

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39. OLIGARCHY (AHL-i-gahr-kee)

Government by a few; rule or control exercised by a few persons or by a small, elite group.

Etymology: Greek *oligos*, few, little, and *archein*, to govern, rule.

Usage: *Oligarchy* may denote rule or control exercised by a few people, a state or an organization run by a few people, or the few dominant people themselves, and the word often suggests the hoarding of power for corrupt or selfish purposes.

Corresponding adjective: *oligarchic* or *oligarchical*.

Pronunciation tip: Some speakers pronounce *oligarchy* with a long O: OH-*ligarchy*. This recent variant is listed second in two current dictionaries; all other authorities, past and present, do not recognize it. Properly, the initial O is short, as in olive and *college*: AHL-*igarchy*.

40. REFULGENT (ri-FUHL-jint)

Shining brightly, brilliant, radiant, resplendent.

Synonyms: *gleaming, blazing, sparkling, luminous, incandescent, scintillating, coruscating*. (The discussion defines and distinguishes the last three synonyms.)

Antonyms: (easy) *dull, dim, obscure, gloomy, murky*; (hard) *tenebrous*, dark and gloomy; *umbrageous*, shady or overshadowed; *subfuscous*, dusky or somber; *crepuscular*, pertaining to twilight, hence, characterized by dim, waning, or glimmering light.

Etymology: Latin *refulgere*, to shine brightly, from *re-*, back, and *fulgere*, to shine, flash, or gleam.

Usage: *Refulgent* may mean shining, brilliant, radiant, either literally (a *refulgent* smile, the *refulgent* beam of a flashlight) or figuratively (a *refulgent* wit, *refulgent* beauty).

Corresponding noun: *refulgence*, brilliance, radiance, resplendence.

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The discussion of abusage continues here with an exploration of the fourth category, *adverbiage*.

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41. NEPOTISM (NEP-uh-tiz'm)

Favoritism shown to relatives.

Etymology: Latin *nepos*, *nepotis*, a nephew or grandson.

Usage: Despite its specific derivation, *nepotism* may denote favoritism shown to any relative, and the word usually applies to situations in business and public life where relatives are shown preference over "non-relatives" and receive privileges or positions that they may not necessarily deserve.

Corresponding adjective: *nepotistic*.

42. RIBALD (RIB-uld)

Humorous in a mildly indecent, coarse, or vulgar way.

Synonyms: *gross, indelicate, lewd, immodest, sensual, obscene*.

N.B. *Obscene* suggests lewdness or indecency that is strongly offensive, whereas *ribald* applies to coarse vulgarity that is humorous and only mildly indecent.

Antonyms: *refined, decent, polite, tasteful, cultured, polished, cultivated, decorous, urbane* (Level 1, Word 45).

Corresponding noun: *ribaldry*, language or behavior that is humorous in a mildly indecent or vulgar way.

Pronunciation tip: Certain dictionaries that cater to the gross whims of the vulgar masses now record the indelicate spelling pronunciation RY-bald and the equally uncultivated RIB-ald. There is no *rye* and there is no *bald* in *ribald*. The word should rhyme with *scribbled* and *dribbled*, as this limerick illustrates:

William Shakespeare, whenever he scribbled;
Used a quill that incessantly dribbled;
When his pen leaked a lot,
It made Willy quite hot,
And he wrote something suitably *ribald*.

43. AVUNCULAR (uh-VUNGK-yuh-lur)

Like an uncle, pertaining to an uncle, or exhibiting some characteristic considered typical of an uncle (an *avuncular* smile, an *avuncular* slap on the back, *avuncular* concern, *avuncular* generosity, *avuncular* advice).

Etymology: The noun *uncle* and the adjective *avuncular* both come from the Latin *avunculus*, a mother's brother.

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44. SUPPLICATE (SUHP-lī-kayt)

To ask, beg, or plead for humbly and earnestly.

Synonyms: *entreat, petition, importune, beseech*.

Etymology and related word: Latin *supplicare*, to kneel, get on one's knees, from *supplex*, kneeling, on one's knees. By derivation, to *supplicate* means to beg or plead for something on bended knee. From the same source comes *supple*, bending easily.

Corresponding nouns: *supplication*, a humble and earnest request or the act of begging or pleading for something humbly and earnestly. A person who supplicates or who makes a supplication may be called either a *suppliant* or a *supplicant*.

45. IRASCIBLE (eye-RAS-i-buul or i-RAS-i-buul)

Easily angered, hot-tempered, extremely irritable or touchy.

Synonyms: *cranky, testy, peevish, petulant, irate, cantankerous, contentious* (Level 7, Word 16), *snappish, choleric, captious, splenetic*.

Antonyms: *calm, unruffled, placid, amiable, affable, equable*

Etymology and related words: The words *irascible* and *irate* both come from the Latin verb *irasci*, to be angry, which comes in turn from *ira*, anger, wrath. This Latin *ira* is also the direct source of the English word *ire*, anger, wrath.

N.B. *Irate* suggests temporary anger, the state of being infuriated or enraged at the moment or for the time being. *Irascible* suggests extreme irritability, and applies to a person easily provoked to anger. *Irascible* may also apply to that which displays anger or extreme irritability: *irascible* remarks.

46. INEXORABLE (in-EKS-uh-ruh-buul)

Relentless, unyielding, merciless; not able to be stopped, changed, or moved by entreaty or persuasion.

Synonyms: *unrelenting, unswerving, inflexible, immovable, uncompromising, intransigent, obdurate, implacable*.

Antonyms: *flexible, compromising, obliging, compliant, docile* (Level 7, Word 28), *tractable, acquiescent, complaisant* (kum-PLAY-zint).

Etymology: Latin *inexorabilis*, not moved by entreaty or supplication.

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the words *inexorable* and *implacable*.

Verbal Advantage Level Seven

47. PARVENU (PAHR-vuh-n(y)oo)

An upstart; specifically, a person who suddenly acquires wealth and power and rises to a higher class, but who is not accepted by the members of that class.

Etymology: French; literally, "a person newly come into success."

Usage: *Parvenu* almost always is used in a negative sense of a person who gains wealth and standing, but who cannot gain the social acceptance of the wealthy and powerful. In the eyes of the established elite, the *parvenu* is an upstart-undeserving, uncultured, immodest, and often pretentious.

Related word: *arriviste* (ar-ree-VEEST). This word also comes from French and means literally "a person who has recently arrived." *Arriviste* is used today of someone who attains social prominence or a position of power, sometimes by unscrupulous means and always without paying the necessary dues.

N.B. This discussion concludes by distinguishing *parvenu* and *arriviste*.

48. SALUBRIOUS (suh-LOO-bree-us)

Healthful, wholesome, favorable or conducive to well-being.

Antonyms: *insalubrious*, *deleterious* (Level 4, Word 33), *pernicious* (Level 7, Word 10), *noxious*, *baneful*, *malign*, *noisome* (Level 9, Word 38).

N.B. This discussion distinguishes the synonyms *salubrious*, *salutary*, and *wholesome*.

Etymology: Both *salutary* and *salubrious* come from the Latin *salus*, health.

Corresponding noun: *salubriousness*.

49. HYPERBOLE (hy-PUR-buh-lee)

Exaggeration in speech or writing; especially, extravagant exaggeration that is intentional and obvious.

Corresponding adjective: *hyperbolic* (HY-pur-BAHL-ik); less often, *hyperbolical*.

Pronunciation tip: Occasionally, you will hear an educated speaker who has learned this word from reading, but who has not bothered to check its pronunciation in a dictionary, say *hyper-bowl*. Hy-PUR-buh-lee is the only recognized pronunciation.

Verbal Advantage Level Seven

50. SANCTIMONIOUS (SANG-ti-MOH-nee-us)

Self-righteous; holier-than-thou; characterized by insincere or affected righteousness, virtuousness, or religious piety.

Etymology and usage: Latin *sanctus*, holy, sacred. In modern usage, *sanctimonious* refers to insincere, affected, or hypocritical holiness or righteousness.

Corresponding noun: *sanctimony*, righteousness or virtuousness that is affected or hypocritical.

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The discussion of abuse concludes here with an exploration of the fifth category, *jargon*

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