

**abandon**

v. to leave behind; to give something up

After trying in vain for several years, Julie abandoned her dream of setting up an online bookstore.

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**banal**

adj. trite; without freshness or originality; commonplace;  
stale; usual

It was a banal suggestion to have the annual picnic in the park, since that was where it had been for the past five years.

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**cabal**

n. group of people joined by a secret; group of conspirators

The very idea that there could be a cabal cast suspicion on the whole operation.

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**dearth**

n. scarcity; shortage; lack

A series of coincidental resignations left the firm with a dearth of talent. The dearth of the coverage forced him to look for a new insurance agent.

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**ecclesiastic**

adj. pertaining or relating to a church

Ecclesiastic obligations include attending mass.

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**facetious**

adj. joking in an awkward or improper manner;  
entertaining amusing

His facetious sarcasm was inappropriate during his first  
staff meeting.

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**glib**

adj. smooth and slippery; speaking or spoken in a smooth manner; easily fluent; careless; insincere

The salesman was so glib that the customers failed to notice the defects in the stereo.

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**harangue**

n. lengthy, heartfelt speech; scolding; lecture

We sat patiently and listened to her harangue. When he finally stopped his haranguing, I responded calmly.

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**idiosyncrasy**

n. personal peculiarity; mannerism; eccentricity

Her tendency to bite her lip is an idiosyncrasy.

**jargon**

n. incoherent speech; specialized vocabulary in certain fields

The conversation was nothing but jargon, but then the speakers were nothing but cartoon characters who specialize in an oddly bracing form of gibberish. The engineers' jargon is indecipherable to a lay person.

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**ken**

v. to recognize; to perceive; to grasp; to comprehend

It was difficult to ken exactly what she had in mind.

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**labyrinth**

n. maze; complicated network of passages; something confusing or bewildering

Be careful not to get lost in the labyrinth of vegetation.

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**malicious**

adj. spiteful; vindictive

The malicious employee slashed her tires for revenge.

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**nautical**

adj. of the sea; having to do with sailors, ships or navigation

The coastal New England town had a charming nautical influence.

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**obdurate**

adj. stubbornly persistent in wrongdoing; stiff-necked

The obdurate child refused to go to school. The obdurate youngster refused to eat the Brussels sprouts.

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**panegyric**

n. high praise; commendation

Upon his retirement, he received a great panegyric from many of his associates. His panegyric to his opponent stood in sharp contrast to the harsh tenor of the campaign.

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**quixotic**

adj. foolishly idealistic; extravagantly chivalrous;  
impractical

He was popular with the ladies due to his quixotic charm.  
She had a quixotic view of the world, believing that  
humans need never suffer.

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**raconteur**

n. person skilled at telling stories

Our questions ranged far and wide and his courtesy and patience turned them into an intriguing trail of discovery which was endlessly fascinating and richly rewarding, for he is also a natural raconteur.

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**sagacious**

adj. wise; clever; shrewd

Many of her friends came to her with their problems because she gave sagacious advice. Whole communities were alienated and impoverished; a large part of the nation was left with a feeling halfway between guilt and unease; and Baldwin's reputation as a statesman of sagacious moderation was badly dented.

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**temerity**

n. foolhardiness; impetuosity; rashness; boldness

For the first few days we kept the family shut into the cow-shed, to protect them from the cats; but I really think that if any cat had had the temerity to put in an attack, the hen would have chased it half-way to Gloucester. Many, it is true, shouted enthusiastically that we were right and to be congratulated, but many others were up in arms at our intrepid temerity.

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**ubiquitous**

adj. omnipresent; present everywhere

A ubiquitous spirit followed the man wherever he went.

Water may seem ubiquitous, until a drought comes along.

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**vanquish**

v. to subdue; to conquer; to defeat; to win

Engels's argument is clear: the Germans were able to vanquish the Romans because their society was not so internally corrupted by class.

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**waive**

v. to give up; to put off until later

I will waive my rights to have a lawyer present because I don't think I need one. As hard as he tried, he could only waive his responsibility for so long.

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**zealot**

n. believer; enthusiast; fan; radical

Stockman was obviously a key figure; a supply-side zealot with an impressive grasp of the complexities of the budgetary process, he dazzled both colleagues and adversaries. To judge from what little evidence survives, there seems to have been a strong dynastic element involved in Zealot leadership.

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