

SITTIN' ON THE FENCE

ambiguous am BIG yoo us
open to more than one interpretation

His eyes were an ambiguous color: Some thought they were brown, and some thought they were green.

ambivalent am BIH vuh lunt
simultaneously having opposing feelings; uncertain

She had ambivalent feelings about her dance class: On one hand, she enjoyed the exercise, but on the other hand, she thought the choice of dances could be more interesting.

apathetic a puh THEH tik
feeling or showing little emotion

When the defendant was found guilty on all charges, her face remained expressionless and she appeared to be entirely apathetic.

arbitrary AR bih trayr ee
determined by impulse rather than reason

The principal made the arbitrary decision that students could not wear hats in school without offering any logical reason for the rule.

capricious kuh PREE shus
impulsive and unpredictable

The referee's capricious behavior angered the players because he was inconsistent with his calls; he would call foul for minor contact, but ignore elbowing and kicking.

equivocate eh KWI vuh kayt
to avoid making a definite statement

On critical reading questions, I choose answers that equivocate; they use words such as *could* or *may* that make them difficult to disprove.

indifferent in DIF rent
not caring one way or the other

The old fisherman was completely indifferent to the pain and hunger he felt; his only concern was catching the enormous marlin he had hooked.

spontaneous spon TAY nee us
unplanned; naturally occurring

Dave is such a good musician that he can create a song spontaneously, without having to stop and think about it.

whimsical WIM zuh kul
subject to erratic behavior; unpredictable

Egbert rarely behaved as expected; indeed, he was a whimsical soul whose every decision was anybody's guess.

JUST A LITTLE BIT

inconsequential in kahn suh KWEN shul
unimportant

The cost of the meal was inconsequential to Quentin because he wasn't paying for it.

superficial soo per FISH ul
concerned only with what is on the surface or obvious; shallow

The wound on his leg was only superficial, even though it looked like a deep cut.

tenuous TEN yoo us
having little substance or strength; shaky; unsure, weak

Her grasp on reality is tenuous at best; she's not even sure what year it is.

trivial TRIH vee ul
of little importance or significance

Alex says he doesn't like trivia games because the knowledge they test is trivial; he prefers to spend his time learning more important things.

I WILL SURVIVE

assiduous uh SID yoo us
hard-working

Spending hours in the hot sun digging out every tiny weed, Sidney tended her garden with assiduous attention.

compelling kom PEL ing
forceful; urgently demanding attention

By ignoring the problems in the city, the mayor gave people a very compelling reason to vote him out of office.

diligent DIL uh jent
marked by painstaking effort; hard-working

With a lot of diligent effort, they were able to finish the model airplane in record time.

dogged DOG id
stubbornly persevering

Her first attempts resulted in failure, but her dogged efforts ultimately ended in success.

endure en DUR
to put up with; to survive a hardship

It was difficult to endure the incredibly boring lecture given in class the other day.

intrepid in TREH pid
courageous; fearless

The intrepid young soldier scaled the wall and attacked the enemy forces despite being outnumbered 50 to 1.