

## WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

**convoluted**      kon vuh LOO tid

*intricate; complex*

The directions were so convoluted that we drove all around the city and got lost.

**cryptic**      KRIP tik

*difficult to comprehend*

The writing on the walls of the crypt was cryptic; none of the scientists understood it.

**futile**      FEW tul

*having no useful purpose; pointless*

It is futile to try to explain the difference between right and wrong to your pet.

**impede**      im PEED

*to slow the progress of*

The retreating army constructed barbed-wire fences and destroyed bridges to impede the advance of the enemy.

**obscure**      ub SKYUR

*(adj.) relatively unknown, (v.) to conceal or make indistinct*

Scott constantly makes references to obscure cult films, and no one ever gets his jokes. The man in front of me was so tall that his head obscured my view of the movie.

**quandary**      KWAHN dree

*a state of uncertainty or perplexity*

Ann was in a quandary because she had no soap with which to do her laundry.



## I'M A LOSER, BABY

**indolent**      IN duh lunt

*lazy*

Mr. Lan said his students were indolent because they had not done their homework.

**insipid**      in SIP id

*uninteresting; unchallenging*

That insipid movie was so boring and predictable.

**listless**      LIST luss

*lacking energy*

Because he is accustomed to an active lifestyle, Mark feels listless when he has nothing to do.

**torpor**      TOR per

*laziness; inactivity; dullness*

The hot and humid day filled everyone with an activity-halting torpor.



## REVOLUTION

**alienated** AY lee en ay tid  
*removed or disassociated from (friends, family, or homeland)*

Rudolph felt alienated from the other reindeer because they never let him join in their reindeer games.

**alliance** uh LY uhns  
*a union of two or more groups*

The two countries formed an alliance to stand against their common enemy.

**disparity** dis PAR uh tee  
*inequality in age, rank, or degree; difference*

There is a great disparity between rich and poor in many nations.

**servile** SER vile  
*submissive; like a servant*

Cameron's servile behavior finally ended when he decided to stand up to his older brother.

**suppressed** suh PREST  
*subdued; kept from being circulated*

The author's book was suppressed because the dictator thought it was too critical of his regime.



## YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL

**embellish** em BELL ish  
*to make beautiful by ornamenting; to decorate*

We embellished the account of our vacation by including descriptions of the many colorful people and places we visited.

**florid** FLOR id  
*describing flowery or elaborate speech*

The candidate's speech was so florid that although no one could understand what he was talking about, they all agreed that he sounded good saying it.

**opulent** AHP yuh lunt  
*exhibiting a display of great wealth*

Dances at the king's palace are always very opulent affairs because no expense is spared.

**ornate** or NAYT  
*elaborately decorated*

The carved wood was so ornate that you could examine it several times and still notice things you had not seen before.

**ostentatious** ah sten TAY shus  
*describing a showy or pretentious display*  
Whenever the millionaire gave a party, the elaborate decorations and enormous amounts of food were always part of his ostentatious display of wealth.

**poignant** POYN yunt  
*profoundly moving; touching*  
The most poignant part of the movie was when the father finally made peace with his son.

## OVERKILL

**ebullience** ih BOOL yuns  
*intense enthusiasm*  
A sense of ebullience swept over the crowd when the matador defeated the bull.

**effusive** eh FYOO siv  
*emotionally unrestrained; gushy*  
Gwyneth Paltrow was effusive in her thanks after winning the Oscar; she even burst into tears.

**egregious** uh GREE jus  
*conspicuously bad or offensive*  
Forgetting to sterilize surgical tools before an operation would be an egregious error.

**flagrant** FLAY grunt  
*extremely or deliberately shocking or noticeable*  
His throwing the pie at his teacher was a flagrant sign of disrespect.

**frenetic** freh NEH tik  
*wildly excited or active*  
The pace at the busy office was frenetic; Megan never had a moment to catch her breath.

**gratuitous** gruh TOO ih tus  
*given freely; unearned; unwarranted*  
The film was full of gratuitous sex and violence that was not essential to the story.

**superfluous** soo PER floo us  
*extra; unnecessary*  
If there is sugar in your tea, adding honey would be superfluous.

## IT'S GETTING BETTER

**alleviate** uh LEEV ee ayt  
*to ease a pain or burden*  
John took aspirin to alleviate the pain from the headache he got after taking the SAT.

**asylum** uh SY lum  
*a place of retreat or security*  
The soldiers sought asylum from the bombs in the underground shelter.