



Advanced Placement Summer Institute
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Vocabulary Study: A Guide

Use two reference works:

- a dictionary, one that includes etymologies .
- a dictionary of synonyms and antonyms

1. Transitive / Intransitive Verbs:

Note carefully whether a verb is transitive or intransitive. Remember, a transitive verb must be completed by a direct object; an intransitive verb does not take a direct object.

(The verb 'renounce,' for instance, is transitive. Someone renounces 'something'; people don't just go around 'renouncing'.)

2. Grammatical Patterns / Related Prepositions:

If your dictionary gives citations as examples, study carefully which prepositions are associated with the word under study. The dictionary will usually give the prepositions, sometimes in parentheses with the word, more often as part of the definition. Most dictionaries of synonyms list the prepositions clearly.

A dictionary of synonyms gives for the word 'impute' the following citation from Shaw: 'how dare you, sir, 'impute' such monstrous intentions to me?' You know from that line that the verb is transitive and that the grammatical pattern is <to impute something to someone.>

3. Pronunciation

Know how to say the word. Use the dictionary's pronunciation key, listen for the word, play the sound file on a computer dictionary, or ask. The word is not yours until you can, and do, say it.

4. Grammatical Patterns / Redundant Prepositions:

Note from the definition which prepositions are built into the word and avoid repeating them when you use the word.

The dictionary defines 'traverse' as 'to pass or move over, along, or through.' Those prepositions ('over,' 'along,' and 'through') are already included in the meaning of the word 'traverse,' so you do not want to repeat them by writing such redundancies as 'to traverse across.' (*Remember the prefix trans— ?*)

5. Synonym study

Find the words the dictionary identifies as synonyms for your word. Then find out how the new word is *different* from its synonyms. No two words have identical meanings. You must know the new idea your new word brings to your knowledge store.

6. Words Used In Definitions:

Be wary of words that appear familiar when they appear in a definition. Look them up just as you would the word under study.

The dictionary says that 'reprimand' means 'to reprove,' and, indeed, it does. But 'reprove' does not mean 'to prove again,' even though it looks as if it should. 'Reprove' means to scold or to chide; so does 'reprimand.' Watch out.

7. Etymologies:

Read carefully the etymology of each word you are trying to learn. You will quickly begin to see patterns that tie new words to words you already know. You'll learn a lot of good stuff, too.

Force-Feeding Vocabulary

The question of vocabulary may have become our greatest concern with the students, and it appears to have got measurably more serious over the past five or six years. It slows their reading and it makes their writing sound infantile, even for those with perceptive minds.

Most of our AP students have proved excellent at memorizing words from lists--they've had eleven years of practice and know how to play the game. They devote one small area on their brain's hard disk to "vocabulary storage." It holds 20-25 words with a synonym for each. They score high on vocabulary quizzes. That's another game they play well. After the quiz, they replace the 25 old words with the 25 new words. And so it goes. The result of all this is that by the time they are graduated, they have acquired 25 new words, the ones for that final quiz, still sitting in that small space in their brain.

We've come to think that they are, as Mr Boffo says, 'not clear on the basic concept.' They make a distinction between the English they hear, speak, read, and write on one hand, and "vo-cab" on the other. The phrase that turns our blood cold is "SAT words." Students who use it are telling us that they are not adding these words to the vocabulary they use for communication; they are adding them to their Test Toolbox, and they do not see any connection between the two groups.

We spend a great deal of time feeding words to our students at all levels. They get used to our interrupting them, even come not to notice it any more. We "feed" them during private conversations, class discussions, and while they're talking with teammates. We do it to introduce them to words we suspect they do not know and to get them to be more specific with the words they do. With a new word, it might sound like this:

Student: ...and then what she says might mean yes and it might mean no, and he gets all confused.

Teacher: ...and her ambiguous answer confuses him.

Student: Her ambiguous answer confuses him.

We've found it essential that the student repeat what the teacher says. At first some resist, and we have to tell them that they learn the words by hearing them echo in their own mouths and heads.

Student: ...and then what she says might mean yes and it might mean no, and he gets all confused.

T: Her ambiguous answer confuses him.

S: Yeah, whatever.

T: No, not whatever, Her ambiguous answer confuses him. Repeat that so that your mouth learns the word.

S: Her ambiguous answer confuses him.

T: Good!

S: She has this idea that she wants to give him to do but it, like, isn't probably going to work, you know?

T: Her suggestion seems impractical.

S: Her suggestion seems impractical.

We do it with literary terms as well:

S: The way she picks the words helps her meaning.

T: Her diction reinforces her meaning.

S: Her diction reinforces her meaning.

But often just to get them to use words they already know instead of others that are too vague:

S: So this thing she has about ...'

T: (interrupting) So this concern she has...

S: So this concern she has...

Rarely, we stop for a fast explanation...

S: But he's prejudice for lower class people.

T: He's prejudiced against lower class people. Prejudice is a noun, as in 'a prejudice is a preformed opinion.' The adjective you want here is 'prejudiced.' And it governs the prepositions 'against' and 'in favor of.' It's not a bad idea to be prejudiced against black widow spiders. Some might feel a referee is prejudiced in favor of the other team.

T: He's prejudiced against the lower classes.

S: He's prejudiced against the lower classes.

T: Exaggerate that 'D' on the end for me so that I can hear that you're saying it, OK?

S: He's prejudiceD against the lower classes.

When we do assign words, it's almost always from the reading, and we reinforce them orally in this same way, making the kids repeat them.

T: You have 90 seconds. Each one of you tell your teammates one thing you are apprehensive about. You must use the word apprehensive in your sentence. (Then we listen to see if any are misusing the word. We don't catch them all, but we try.)

It all takes time and alert ears, especially in classes of 30-40, and it keeps us moving around the room, but we find it helps.

S: So anyone could see through his lie.

T: His lie is transparent.

S: Yeah, whatever.

T: No, not whatever, His lie is transparent.

Sometimes it's sense discrimination we're after:

S: Laura is shy.

T: Do you mean she's timid or introverted or reclusive? Or something else?

We may stop here if the word is one we suspect is one most of the students don't use and if it isn't going to break the flow of a good discussion.



VOCABULARY



word	p.o.s.	in context
1 consular	adj	This is a consular ship. Were on a diplomatic mission.
2 diplomatic	adj	This is a consular ship. Were on a diplomatic mission.
3 restricted	adj	Hey, you're not permitted in there. It's restricted
4 alliance	n	You're a part of the Rebel Affiance
5 desolate	adj	What a desolate place this is.
6 counterpart	n	I am See-Threepio, human-cyborg relations, and this is my counterpart, Artoo-Detoo.
7 score	v	You've got a lot of carbon scoring here
8 malfunction	v	I told him not to go, but he's faulty, malfunctioning.
9 remnant	n	The last remnants of the Old Republic have been swept away.
10 exploit	v	It is possible, however unlikely, that they might find a weakness and exploit it.
11 conjure	v	Your sad devotion to that ancient religion has not helped you conjure up the stolen data tapes...
12 clairvoyance	nor given you clairvoyance enough to find the Rebels' hidden fort...
13 villainy	n	You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy.
14 hokey	adj	Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid

Vocabulary study

Some steps that will help:

- First study the line from *Star Wars* and use the context to help you take a guess at the word's meaning.
 - Look the word up in a college dictionary.
 - Use the pronunciation guide to see how the word is pronounced. Have someone say the word for you. Then say it aloud—twice.
 - Read the definition in the dictionary. Most words will have more than one sense. Decide in which sense the word is used in the line from the movie.
 - Look at the word's etymology. It will probably help you learn the meaning. Then list words you already know that use the same root or prefix or suffix as the new word.
 - Check to see if the word is listed in a dictionary of synonyms. If it is, read carefully how it differs from other words with nearly the same meaning.
 - Use the word in a real conversation within twenty-four hours.
 - Write the word in a real sentence.
 - Work through the questions below.
- To what **restricted** areas do you have access? If you could be admitted to one **restricted** area anywhere, what would it be?
 - With what one country do you think the U.S. should maintain its strongest **alliance**? Why? What is the difference between an **alliance** and a confederation?
 - Name one place you consider geographically **desolate** and tell why you think so. Then name one place you consider spiritually, socially, or emotionally, or intellectually **desolate** and tell why you think so.
 - Consider the words **malfunction**, malnourished, malignant, malpractice, malicious, malcontent, and malediction. What does the prefix *mal-* indicate?
 - What do we call the student body's **counterpart** to the president of the U.S.? to the U.S. secretary of the treasury?
 - For what purpose might a machine **score** a piece of cardboard?
 - A **remnant** is an object; from what verb does it clearly come?
 - What two special talents or traits might you best **exploit** in your personal life?
 - What symbolic beast could Merlin **conjure** in Malory's *Morte Darthur*?
 - Why might a **clairvoyant** come in handy the day before a lottery drawing?
 13. How is the word **villainy** differ nom its synonyms iniquity, corruption, and degeneracy?
 - From what material would **hokey** pearls most likely be made?

Some questions on the words: (Be certain to use the word in your response.)

- What would be the purpose of a **consular** ship? What is the relationship between a **consul** and a consulate? What is the difference between a **consul** and a **consul-general**? The government of another country would send an ambassador to Washington, D.C., but a **consul** to Los Angeles. Why not the other way around?
- What might be the purpose of a **diplomatic** mission? Under what circumstances might you want to give a diplomatic answer to a question?

Adjectival Forms

Knowing the adjective form of a noun will often help you eliminate unnecessary words and write with more economy and directness. For the italicized nouns or nominal phrase in each of the following, decide what you think the adjectival form should be. Then substitute the adjective for the phrase in which the noun appears and combine the two sentences into one. Use a dictionary *only after* you have made your own decisions. There are right answers for the adjective forms, but you will come up with differing changes in the structure of the sentences. No. 0 is done as an example.

- o. She is a scholar of *literature*. She has published two books on Pushkin.

A literary scholar, she has published two books on Pushkin.

1. His writing is *like poetry*. It uses many figures of speech.
2. Her life was like a *drama*. It had a happy ending.
3. We are finishing a study of the *theme* of Hamlet. We are studying the madness in the play.
4. The sea here is a *symbol*. It stands for the dangers of the unknown.
5. There are clues in the *context*. They suggest the writer owes a debt to Milton's Paradise Lost.
6. She uses two devices as transitions. They are conjunctions and word repetition.
7. King Arthur may have been a person from history or a character from *fiction*. He has inspired many stories.
8. This whole scene has *irony*. It suggests that Kate may have done some taming of her own.
9. This novel is written in the form of *letters*. It follows Kim's life over sixty-five years. (*This one's a trick; you'll have to go back to the Latin word for 'letter.'*)
10. The scenery looks very *real*. It stands in contrast to the events of the plot.
11. This story is an *allegory*. It would speak to people of nearly all cultures.
12. Her speech features many examples of *hyperbole*. As a result, she becomes comical.
13. The situation here contains a *paradox*. It is that inaction becomes a form of action.
14. The poem has a pattern of *rhythm*. The pattern reinforces the theme.
15. The verse is made up of *syllables*. It is not metrical in the traditional English way.
16. Many Victorian novelists used direct comment by the *author* in their novels. The comment seems intrusive to many modern readers.

Remember: A thesaurus is a great place to meet friends, not to pick up strangers.

Use a dictionary or a thesaurus to find a synonym for each 'Word to Own' below, and write the synonym in the space provided. Next, write a complex sentence using context clues that make the synonym's meaning clear. An example is provided.

Words to Own

WORD	Synonym	Sentence (underline dependent clause.)
vermillion	red	<u>When the wind blew,</u> the ibis, as red as a cherry, fell from the tree red with a thud.
1. imminent		
2. infallibility		
3. doggedness		
4. precariously		
5. reiterated		

Identifying Antonyms

For each item below, choose the word or phrase from column B that is the antonym or opposite of the word in column A. Write the letter of the antonym in the blank provided. Use a dictionary or thesaurus if necessary.

A

1. imminent
2. precariously
3. reiterated
4. doggedness
5. infallibility

B

- A. compliance
- B. distant
- C. faultiness
- D. securely
- E. stated once

Literary Terms: an incomplete list

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. allegory | 31. exposition | 61. personification |
| 2. alliteration | 32. farce | 62. plot |
| 3. allusion | 33. figurative language | 63. point of view |
| 4. ambiguity | 34. first person (point of view) | 64. prosody |
| 5. antagonist | 35. fixed form | 65. protagonist |
| 6. apostrophe | 36. flashback (~forward) | 66. purpose |
| 7. archetype | 37. foil | 67. quatrain |
| 8. aside | 38. foreshadowing | 68. realistic |
| 9. assonance | 39. free indirect style | 69. resolution |
| 10. audience | 40. free verse | 70. reversal |
| 11. ballad | 41. hyperbole | 71. rhyme (interior, slant) |
| 12. blank verse | 42. iambic pentameter | 72. rhythm |
| 13. cæsure | 43. image | 73. romantic |
| 14. central idea (theme) | 44. <i>in medias res</i> | 74. satire |
| 15. characterization | 45. irony | 75. scan |
| 16. climax | 46. literal language | 76. sestet |
| 17. comedy | 47. litotes | 77. simile |
| 18. conceit | 48. lyric | 78. soliloquy |
| 19. concrete poetry | 49. metaphor | 79. sonnet |
| 20. connotation | 50. meter (iamb, trochee, dactyl, anapest) | 80. speaker |
| 21. consonance | 51. narrator | 81. stage direction |
| 22. convention | 52. naturalistic | 82. stock character |
| 23. couplet | 53. octet | 83. stream-of-consciousness |
| 24. denotation | 54. ode | 84. symbol |
| 25. <i>deus ex machina</i> | 55. omniscient (point of view) | 85. syntax |
| 26. detail | 56. overstatement | 86. theme |
| 27. diction | 57. oxymoron | 87. tone |
| 28. elegy | 58. paradox | 88. tragedy |
| 29. epic | 59. parody | 89. understatement |
| 30. epiphany | 60. persona | 90. unreliable narrator |

VOCABULARY FOR WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

(an incomplete list)

WRITER OR NARRATOR

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ alludes to | ▪ demonstrates | ▪ heightens/lessens | ▪ refutes |
| ▪ alters | ▪ depicts | ▪ hints at | ▪ repudiates |
| ▪ asserts | ▪ describes | ▪ ignites | ▪ reveals |
| ▪ changes | ▪ differentiates | ▪ implies | ▪ shifts |
| ▪ clarifies | ▪ dispels | ▪ inspires | ▪ shows (<i>weak</i>) |
| ▪ compares | ▪ elicits | ▪ invokes | ▪ solidifies |
| ▪ conjures up | ▪ elucidates | ▪ juxtaposes | ▪ stirs |
| ▪ connotes | ▪ emphasizes | ▪ maintains | ▪ suggests |
| ▪ constrains | ▪ enhances | ▪ manipulates | ▪ tackles |
| ▪ construes | ▪ enunciates | ▪ masters | ▪ transcends |
| ▪ conveys | ▪ evokes | ▪ paints | ▪ twists |
| ▪ creates | ▪ explains | ▪ portrays | ▪ uses (<i>weak</i>) |
| ▪ delineates | ▪ explores | ▪ produces | ▪ utilizes (<i>über-weak</i>) |

TOOLS

- comic details
- details
- diction
- figurative language
- foreshadowing
- imagery
- irony
- plot details
- point of view
- setting
- symbols
- syntax
- tone

EFFECTS ON A READER

- anger
- awareness
- connections
- contrasts
- empathy
- imagery, images
- impact
- intensity
- laughter
- mood
- pathos / bathos
- shock
- lassitude/tedium

Synonyms

from a dictionary of synonyms:

foretell, predict, forecast, prophesy, prognosticate mean to tell before hand.

Foretell applies to the telling of a future event by any procedure or from any source of information <seers *foretold* of calamitous events.>

Predict commonly implies inference from facts or from accepted laws of nature <astronomers *predicted* the return of the comet.>

Forecast adds the implication of anticipating eventualities and differs from *predict* in being usually concerned with probabilities rather than certainties <*forecast* a snowfall of six inches.>

Prophesy connotes inspired or mystic knowledge of the future, especially as the fulfilling of divine threats or promises, or implies great assurance in predicting <preachers *prophesying* a day of divine retribution>.

Prognosticate suggests prediction based on the learned or skilled interpretation of signs or symptoms <economists are *prognosticating* a slow recovery>.

caustic, mordant, acrid, scathing mean stingingly incisive.

Caustic suggests a biting wit <caustic comments about her singing ability>. **ant.** genial

Mordant suggests a wit that is used with deadly effectiveness <*mordant* reviews put the play out of its misery>.

Acrid implies bitterness and often malevolence <a speech marked by *acrid* invective>. **ant.** benign, kindly.

Scathing implies indignant attacks delivered with fierce or withering severity <a *scathing* satire of corporate life>.

proud, arrogant, haughty, lordly, insolent, overbearing, supercilious, disdainful mean showing superiority toward others or scorn for inferiors.

Proud may suggest a feeling or attitude of pleased satisfaction in oneself or one's accomplishments that may or may not be justified and may or may not be demonstrated offensively <a *proud* man, unwilling to admit failure>. **ant.** humble, ashamed

Arrogant implies a claiming for oneself of more consideration or importance than is warranted and often suggests an aggressive, domineering manner <an *arrogant* business executive used to being kowtowed to>. **ant.** meek, unassuming

Haughty suggests a blatantly displayed consciousness of superior birth or position <a *haughty* manner that barely concealed his scorn>. **ant.** lowly

Lordly implies pomposity or an arrogant display of power <*lordly* indifference to the consequences of their carelessness>.

Insolent implies insultingly contemptuous haughtiness <suffered the stares of *insolent* waiters>. **ant.** deferential

Overbearing suggests a tyrannical manner or an intolerable insolence <wearied by demands from her *overbearing* in-laws>. **ant.** subservient

Supercilious implies a cool, patronizing haughtiness <*supercilious* parvenus with their disdainful sneers>.

Disdainful suggests a more active and openly scornful superciliousness <*disdainful* of their pathetic attempts>. **ant.** admiring, respectful

adapted from *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms*,
Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1992. Print.

TONE: Some words to describe the tone of a work or passage

accusing	derisive	gloomy	mock-serious	scornful
admonitory	derogatory	grave	moralistic	selfish
affectionate	desolate	greedy	mournful	sentimental
allusive	despairing	grim	mysterious	serene
ambivalent	desperate	gushy	nervous	serious
amused	detached	happy	nostalgic	shocked
angry	diabolic	haughty	objective	silly
annoyed	didactic	hilarious	ominous	simpering
anxious	diffident	holier-than-thou	optimistic	sinister
apprehensive	disappointed	hopeful	outraged	skeptical
audacious	disbelieving	hopeless	outspoken	sober
authoritative	disdainful	horrific	paranoid	solemn
baffled	disgusted	humorous	passionate	somber
bantering	disinterested	impartial	pathetic	staid
benevolent	dispassionate	impatient	patronizing	stirring
bewildered	distressed	incisive	pedantic	stoic
bitter	disturbed	incredulous	pensive	straightforward
blunt	doubtful	indignant	persuasive	strident
bossy	dramatic	inflammatory	pessimistic	suspenseful
brusque	ebullient	informative	petty	suspicious
burlesque	effusive	insipid	pithy	sympathetic
candid	elated	insolent	playful	taunting
casual	elegiac	instructive	pompous	tender
ceremonial	empathetic	intimate	pretentious	tense
cheerful	encouraging	introspective	proud	terse
cheery	enraged	ironic	provocative	thoughtful
choleric	enthusiastic	irreverent	psychotic	threatening
clinical	euphoric	irritated	questioning	timorous
cold	excited	jocund	reflective	turgid
colloquial	expectant	joyful	regretful	uncaring
compassionate	exuberant	laidback	relaxed	unconcerned
complimentary	facetious	learned	reminiscent	uneasy
conceited	factual	lethargic	remorseful	unhappy
concerned	fanciful	lighthearted	resigned	unsympathetic
conciliatory	fatalistic	loving	restrained	urgent
condemnatory	fearful	lugubrious	reticent	vibrant
condescending	fervent	matter-of-fact	reverent	vitriolic
confident	flippant	measured	romantic	whimsical
confused	foreboding	meditative	rousing	wistful
contemptuous	formal	melancholic	sad	worried
contentious	frantic	melancholy	sanguine	wrathful
critical	frightened	mirthful	sarcastic	wry
cynical	frustrated	miserable	sardonic	zealous
delightful	furious	mock-heroic	satiric	
depressed	gleeful	mocking	scared	