**aberration**

*(n.)* something that differs from the norm (In 1974, Poland won the World Cup, but the success turned out to be an*aberration,* and Poland have not won a World Cup since).

**abhor**

*(v.)* to hate, detest (Because he always wound up getting hit in the head when he tried to play cricket, Marcin began to *abhor* the sport).

**acquiesce**

*(v.)* to agree without protesting (Though Mr. Pospieszny wanted to stay outside and work in his garage, when his wife told him that he had better come in to dinner, he*acquiesced* to her demands.)

**alacrity**

*(n.)* eagerness, speed (For some reason, Simon loved to help his girlfriend whenever he could, so when his girlfriend asked him to set the table he did so with *alacrity*.)

**amiable**

*(adj.)* friendly (An *amiable* fellow, Neil got along with just about everyone.)

**appease**

*(v.)* to calm, satisfy (When Jerry cries, his mother gives him chocolate to *appease*him.)

**arcane**

*(adj.)* obscure, secret, known only by a few (The professor is an expert in *arcane*Kashubian literature.)

**avarice**

*(n.)* excessive greed (The banker’s *avarice* led him to amass an enormous personal fortune.)

**brazen**

*(adj.)* excessively bold, brash, clear and obvious (Critics condemned the writer’s*brazen* attempt to plagiarise Frankow-Czerwonko’s work.)

**brusque**

*(adj.)* short, abrupt, dismissive (Simon’s *brusque* manner sometimes offends his colleagues.)

**cajole**

*(v.)* to urge, coax (Magda's friends *cajoled* her into drinking too much.)

**callous**

*(adj.)* harsh, cold, unfeeling (The murderer’s *callous* lack of remorse shocked the jury.)

**candor**

*(n.)* honesty, frankness (We were surprised by the *candor* of the politician’s speech because she is usually rather evasive.)

**chide**

*(v.)* to voice disapproval (Hania *chided* Gregory for his vulgar habits and sloppy appearance.)

**circumspect**

*(adj.)* cautious (Though I promised Marta’s father I would bring her home promptly by midnight, it would have been more *circumspect* not to have specified a time.)

**clandestine**

*(adj.)* secret (Announcing to her boyfriend that she was going to the library, Maria actually went to meet George for a *clandestine* liaison.)

**coerce**

*(v.)* to make somebody do something by force or threat (The court decided that David Beckham did not have to honor the contract because he had been *coerced* into signing it.)

**coherent**

*(adj.)* logically consistent, intelligible (William could not figure out what Harold had seen because he was too distraught to deliver a *coherent* statement.)

**complacency**

*(n.)* self-satisfied ignorance of danger (Simon tried to shock his friends out of their*complacency* by painting a frightening picture of what might happen to them.)

**confidant**

*(n.)* a person entrusted with secrets (Shortly after we met, he became my chief*confidant*.)

**connive**

*(v.)* to plot, scheme (She *connived* to get me to give up my plans to start up a new business.)

**cumulative**

*(adj.)* increasing, building upon itself (The *cumulative* effect of hours spent using the World English website was a vast improvement in his vocabulary and general level of English.)

**debase**

*(v.)* to lower the quality or esteem of something (The large raise that he gave himself *debased* his motives for running the charity.)

**decry**

*(v.)* to criticize openly (Andrzej Lepper, the leader of the Polish Self Defence party*decried* the appaling state of Polish roads.)

**deferential**

*(adj.)* showing respect for another’s authority (Donata is always excessively*deferential* to any kind of authority figure.)

**demure**

*(adj.)* quiet, modest, reserved (Though everyone else at the party was dancing and going crazy, she remained *demure*.)

**deride**

*(v.)* to laugh at mockingly, scorn (The native speaker often *derided* the other teacher’s accent.)

**despot**

*(n.)* one who has total power and rules brutally (The *despot* issued a death sentence for anyone who disobeyed his laws.)

**diligent**

*(adj.)* showing care in doing one’s work (The *diligent* researcher made sure to double check her measurements.)

**elated**

*(adj.)* overjoyed, thrilled (When he found out he had won the lottery, the postman was *elated*.)

**eloquent**

*(adj.)* expressive, articulate, moving (The best man gave such an *eloquent* speech that most guests were crying.)

**embezzle**

*(v.)* to steal money by falsifying records (The accountant was fired for *embezzling*€10,000 of the company’s funds.)

**empathy**

*(n.)* sensitivity to another’s feelings as if they were one’s own (I feel such *empathy*for my dog when she’s upset so am I!)

**enmity**

*(n.)* ill will, hatred, hostility (John and Scott have clearly not forgiven each other, because the *enmity* between them is obvious to anyone in their presence.)

**erudite**

*(adj.)* learned (My English teacher is such an *erudite* scholar that he has translated some of the most difficult and abstruse Old English poetry.)

**extol**

*(v.)* to praise, revere (Kamila *extolled* the virtues of a vegetarian diet to her meat-loving boyfriend.)

**fabricate**

*(v.)* to make up, invent (When I arrived an hour late to class, I *fabricated* some excuse about my car breaking down on the way to work.)

**feral**

*(adj.)* wild, savage (That beast looks so *feral* that I would fear being alone with it.)

**flabbergasted**

*(adj.)* astounded (Whenever I read an Agatha Christie mystery novel, I am always*flabbergasted* when I learn the identity of the murderer.)

**forsake**

*(v.)* to give up, renounce (I won't *forsake* my conservative principles.)

**fractious**

*(adj.)* troublesome or irritable (Although the child insisted he wasn’t tired, his*fractious* behaviour - especially his decision to crush his jam sandwiches all over the floor - convinced everyone present that it was time to put him to bed.)

**furtive**

*(adj.)* secretive, sly (Claudia’s placement of her drugs in her sock drawer was not as*furtive* as she thought, as the sock drawer is the first place most parents look.)

**gluttony**

*(n.)* overindulgence in food or drink (Helen’s fried chicken tastes so divine, I don’t know how anyone can call *gluttony* a sin.)

**gratuitous**

*(adj.)* uncalled for, unwarranted (Every evening the guy at the fish and chip shop gives me a *gratuitous* helping of vinegar.)

**haughty**

*(adj.)* disdainfully proud (The superstar’s *haughty* dismissal of her co-stars will backfire on her someday.)

**hypocrisy**

*(n.)* pretending to believe what one does not (Once the politician began passing legislation that contradicted his campaign promises, his *hypocrisy* became apparent.)

**impeccable**

*(adj.)* exemplary, flawless (If your grades were as *impeccable* as your brother’s, then you too would receive a car for a graduation present.)

**impertinent**

*(adj.)* rude, insolent (Most of your comments are so *impertinent* that I don’t wish to dignify them with an answer.)

**implacable**

*(adj.)* incapable of being appeased or mitigated (Watch out: once you shun Grandmother’s cooking, she is totally *implacable*.)

**impudent**

*(adj.)* casually rude, insolent, impertinent (The *impudent* young woman looked her teacher up and down and told him he was hot.)

**incisive**

*(adj.)* clear, sharp, direct (The discussion wasn’t going anywhere until her *incisive*comment allowed everyone to see what the true issues were.)

**indolent**

*(adj.)* lazy (Why should my *indolent* children, who can’t even pick themselves up off the sofa to pour their own juice, be rewarded with a trip to Burger King?)

**inept**

*(adj.)* not suitable or capable, unqualified (She proved how *inept* she was when she forgot two orders and spilled a pint of cider in a customer’s lap.)

**infamy**

*(n.)* notoriety, extreme ill repute (The *infamy* of his crime will not lessen as time passes.)

**inhibit**

*(v.)* to prevent, restrain, stop (When I told you I needed the car last night, I certainly never meant to *inhibit* you from going out.)

**innate**

*(adj.)* inborn, native, inherent (His incredible athletic talent is *innate*, he never trains, lifts weights, or practices.)

**insatiable**

*(adj.)* incapable of being satisfied (My *insatiable* appetite for blondes was a real problem on my recent holiday in Japan!)

**insular**

*(adj.)* separated and narrow-minded; tight-knit, closed off (Because of the sensitive nature of their jobs, those who work for MI5 must remain *insular* and generally only spend time with each other.)

**intrepid**

*(adj.)* brave in the face of danger (After scaling a live volcano prior to its eruption, the explorer was praised for his *intrepid* attitude.)

**inveterate**

*(adj.)* stubbornly established by habit (I’m the first to admit that I’m an *inveterate*cider drinker—I drink four pints a day.)

**jubilant**

*(adj.)* extremely joyful, happy (The crowd was *jubilant* when the firefighter carried the woman from the flaming building.)

**knell**

*(n.)* the solemn sound of a bell, often indicating a death (Echoing throughout our village, the funeral *knell* made the grey day even more grim.)

**lithe**

*(adj.)* graceful, flexible, supple (Although the dancers were all outstanding, Joanna’s control of her *lithe* body was particularly impressive.)

**lurid**

*(adj.)* ghastly, sensational (Barry’s story, in which he described a character torturing his neighbour's tortoise, was judged too *lurid* to be published on the English Library's website.)

**maverick**

*(n.)* an independent, nonconformist person (John is a real *maverick* and always does things his own way.)

**maxim**

*(n.)* a common saying expressing a principle of conduct (Ms. Stone’s etiquette*maxims* are both entertaining and instructional.)

**meticulous**

*(adj.)* extremely careful with details (The ornate needlework in the bride’s gown was a product of *meticulous* handiwork.)

**modicum**

*(n.)* a small amount of something (Refusing to display even a *modicum* of sensitivity, Magda announced her boss’s affair to the entire office.)

**morose**

*(adj.)* gloomy or sullen (David’s *morose* nature made him very unpleasant to talk to.)

**myriad**

*(adj.)* consisting of a very great number (It was difficult to decide what to do on Saturday night because the city presented us with *myriad* possibilities for fun.)

**nadir**

*(n.)* the lowest point of something (My day was boring, but the *nadir* came when my new car was stolen.)

**nominal**

*(adj.)* trifling, insignificant (Because he was moving the following week and needed to get rid of his furniture more than he needed money, Kim sold everything for a*nominal* price.)

**novice**

*(n.)* a beginner, someone without training or experience (Because we were all*novices* at archery, our instructor decided to begin with the basics

**nuance**

*(n.)* a slight variation in meaning, tone, expression (The *nuances* of the poem were not obvious to the casual reader, but the teacher was able to point them out.)

**oblivious**

*(adj.)* lacking consciousness or awareness of something (*Oblivious* to the burning smell emanating from the kitchen, my father did not notice that the rolls in the oven were burned until much too late.)

**obsequious**

*(adj.)* excessively compliant or submissive (Donald acted like Susan’s servant, obeying her every request in an *obsequious* manner.)

**obtuse**

*(adj.)* lacking quickness of sensibility or intellect (Political opponents warned that the prime minister’s *obtuse* approach to foreign policy would embroil the nation in mindless war.)

**panacea**

*(n.)* a remedy for all ills or difficulties (Doctors wish there was a single *panacea* for every disease, but sadly there is not.)

**parody**

*(n.)* a satirical imitation (A hush fell over the classroom when the teacher returned to find Magdalena acting out a *parody* of his teaching style.)

**penchant**

*(n.)* a tendency, partiality, preference (Fiona’s dinner parties quickly became monotonous on account of her *penchant* for Indian dishes.)

**perusal**

*(n.)* a careful examination, review (The actor agreed to accept the role after a three-month *perusal* of the movie script.)

**plethora**

*(n.)* an abundance, excess (The wedding banquet included a *plethora* of oysters piled almost three feet high.)

**predilection**

*(n.)* a preference or inclination for something (James has a *predilection* for eating toad in the whole with tomato ketchup.)

**quaint**

*(adj.)* charmingly old-fashioned (Mary was delighted by the *quaint* bonnets she saw in Romania.)

**rash**

*(adj.)* hasty, incautious (It’s best to think things over calmly and thoroughly, rather than make *rash* decisions.)

**refurbish**

*(v.)* to restore, clean up (After being *refurbished* the old Triumph motorcycle commanded the handsome price of $6000.)

**repudiate**

*(v.)* to reject, refuse to accept (Tom made a strong case for an extension of his curfew, but his mother *repudiated* it with a few biting words.)

**rife**

*(adj.)* abundant (Surprisingly, the teacher’s writing was *rife* with spelling errors.)

**salient**

*(adj.)* significant, conspicuous (One of the *salient* differences between Alison and Helen is that Alison is a couple of kilos heavier.)

**serendipity**

*(n.)* luck, finding good things without looking for them (In an amazing bit of*serendipity*, penniless Mark found a $50 bill on the back seat of the bus.)

**staid**

*(adj.)* sedate, serious, self-restrained (The *staid* butler never changed his expression no matter what happened.)

**superfluous**

*(adj.)* exceeding what is necessary (Samantha had already won the campaign so her constant flattery of others was *superfluous*.)

**sycophant**

*(n.)* one who flatters for self-gain (Some see the people in the cabinet as the Prime Minister’s closest advisors, but others see them as *sycophants*.)

**taciturn**

*(adj.)* not inclined to talk (Though Magda never seems to stop talking, her brother is quite *taciturn*.)

**truculent**

*(adj.)* ready to fight, cruel (This club doesn’t really attract the dangerous types, so why was that bouncer being so *truculent*?)

**umbrage**

*(n.)* resentment, offence (He called me a lily-livered coward, and I took *umbrage* at the insult.)

**venerable**

*(adj.)* deserving of respect because of age or achievement (The *venerable* High Court judge had made several key rulings in landmark cases throughout the years.)

**vex**

*(v.)* to confuse or annoy (My boyfriend *vexes* me by pinching my bottom for hours on end.)

**vociferous**

*(adj.)* loud, boisterous (I’m tired of his *vociferous* whining so I’m breaking up with him.)

**wanton**

*(adj.)* undisciplined, lewd, lustful (Joanna’s *wanton* demeanor often made the frat guys next door very excited.)

**zenith**

*(n.)* the highest point, culminating point (I was too nice to tell Emily that she had reached the absolute *zenith* of her career with that one top 10 hit of hers.)