

Words Coined by Shakespeare

Avocabo Word List 12

ABSTEMIOUS, BESMIRCH, DAUNTLESS, DIVEST, DOMINEERING, DWINDLE, FRUGAL, GNARLED, HOBNOB, LACKLUSTRE, MADCAP, PANDER, PERUSAL, PROMETHEAN, RANCOROUS, RUMINATION, SANCTIMONIOUS, TRANQUIL, TRANSCENDENCE, UNMITIGATED

If you cannot understand my argument, and declare "It's Greek to me", you are quoting Shakespeare; if you claim to be more sinned against than sinning, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you recall your salad days, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you act more in sorrow than in anger, if your wish is father to the thought, if your lost property has vanished into thin air, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you have ever refused to budge an inch or suffered from green-eyed jealousy, if you have played fast and loose, if you have been tongue-tied, a tower of strength, hoodwinked or in a pickle, if you have knitted your brows, made a virtue of necessity, insisted on fair play, slept not one wink, stood on ceremony, danced attendance (on your lord and master), laughed yourself into stitches, had short shrift, cold comfort or too much of a good thing, if you have seen better days or lived in a fool's paradise - why, be that as it may, the more fool you, for it is a foregone conclusion that you are (as good luck would have it) quoting Shakespeare; if you think it is early days and clear out bag and baggage, if you think it is high time and that that is the long and short of it, if you believe that the game is up and that truth will out even if it involves your own flesh and blood, if you lie low till the crack of doom because you suspect foul play, if you have your teeth set on edge (at one fell swoop) without rhyme or reason, then - to give the devil his due - if the truth were known (for surely you have a tongue in your head) you are quoting Shakespeare; even if you bid me good riddance and send me packing, if you wish I were dead as a door-nail, if you think I am an eyesore, a laughing stock, the devil incarnate, a stony-hearted villain, bloody-minded or a blinking idiot, then - by Jove! O Lord! Tut, tut! for goodness' sake! what the dickens! but me no buts - it is all one to me, for you are quoting Shakespeare.

--Bernard Levin in The Story of English. Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil.



"No they cannot touch me for coining, I am the King himself."

- King Lear (IV.vi.83-84)

Exercise 13-1: Fill-in-the-blanks

Complete each sentence with the most appropriate word from those following. Underline or circle your choice or write it in the space provided. (10 marks)

1. "Our gayness and our guilt are all _____
With rainy marching in the painful field."
--Henry VI, III.iii.16-18

abstemious besmirched madcap frugal

2. Yield not thy neck
To fortune's yoke, but let thy _____ mind
Still ride in triumph over all mischance.
--Henry VI, Part 3, III.iii.16-18

dauntless besmirched abstemious hobnob

3. With thy sharp and sulphurous bolt
Splits the unwedgeable and _____ oak."
--Measure for Measure, II.ii.15-16

rancorous sanctimonious hobnob gnarled

4. Well didst thou, Richard, to suppress thy voice;
For had the passions of thy heart burst out,
fear we should have seen decipher'd there
More _____ spite, more furious raging broils,
Than yet can be imagin'd or suppos'd.
--Henry VI, IV.i. 186-190

rancorous domineering gnarled transcendence

5. *Second Gent.* Amen.
Lucio. Thou concludest like the _____ pirate, that
went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one
out of the table.
--Measure for Measure, I.ii.7-9

abstemious sanctimonious dauntless gnarled

6. Tell me, my daughters,—
 Since now we will _____ us both of rule,
 Interest of territory, cares of state,—
 Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
 --*King Lear*, I.i.21-35

besmirch dwindle divest lacklustre

7. I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, which, by often _____, wraps me in a most humorous sadness.
 --*As You Like It*, IV.1.15-20

pander rumination transcendence frugal

8. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O! that I were a man. What! bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, _____ rancour,—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.
 --*Much Ado About Nothing*, IV.i.305-6

unmitigated dauntless tranquil promethean

9. That last is Berowne, the merry _____ lord: Not a word with him but a jest.
 --*Love's Labour Lost*, II.i.215

domineering unmitigated sanctimonious madcap

10. Farewell the _____ mind; farewell content!
 Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
 That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
 --*Othello*, III.iii.395-397

tranquil gnarled divest frugal

Exercise 13-2 Discriminating Appropriate / Inappropriate Usage

Indicate whether the sentences below use the list word (in italic boldface) correctly or incorrectly by circling or highlighting the appropriate icon. You will find explanations for incorrect usage in the answer portion of this workbook. (10 marks)

- 1. Dr. Schwarz's **domineering** efforts in the field of chemistry earned him the Nobel Prize at the age of sixty.
- 2. The lake became a river, the river a stream, the stream a creek, until finally the last little trickle of water **dwindled** away into nothingness.
- 3. The actor's **lacklustre** performance in the film met with poor reviews from critics and fans alike.
- 4. In a town infamous for its debauchery, the upstanding production was a breath of fresh air for its refusal to **pander** to the masses.
- 5. A quick **perusal** of the document revealed an egregious error in its formatting
- 6. The beauty of the scene which lay out before them **transcended** reality.
- 7. The expedition turned out to be very **frugal**, with the discovery of several new Egyptian tombs in the matter of days.
- 8. Despite her wild reputation, the actress actually led a rather **abstemious** life in her Montana ranch.
- 9. The **Promethean's** enormous stature dwarfed the tallest buildings in the city.
- 10. The wealthy banker was reviled by the lower classes as an imposter for his inclination to **hobnob** with the rich and famous.



HOW MANY WORDS HAS SHAKESPEARE ADDED TO ENGLISH? GUESSES HAVE RANGED FROM A FEW HUNDRED WORDS TO MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND. THESE INCLUDE: **academe, alligator, bloodstained, fashionable, fortune-teller, gossip, hobnob, hurry, launder, leapfrog, lonely, mountaineer, premeditated, reinforcement, torture, unreal, viewless, watchdog and xantippe (a shrewish and scolding housewife)**

Exercise 13-3 Synonyms

From the three choices, circle the one that is *closest in meaning* to the list word (in boldface) in the context shown. (20 marks)

1. an **abstemious** nature
(a) moderate (b) excessive (c) sparing
2. the careful **perusal** of the proposal
(a) reading (b) destruction (c) preservation
3. his reputation was **besmirched**
(a) sullied (b) advanced (c) laughable
4. the **dauntless** warrior set forth
(a) discouraged (b) tame (c) intrepid
5. the **domineering** husband had complete control over his wife
(a) weak (b) overbearing (c) adventurous
6. He was **divested** of lands and title
(a) dispossessed (b) granted (c) robbed
7. the mother's **dwindling** control over her children
(a) increasing (b) firm (c) diminishing
8. the **frugal** peasant
(a) thrifty (b) inexpensive (c) perceptive
9. her **gnarled** fingers
(a) knobby (b) long (c) delicate
10. He frequently **hobnobs** with royalty
(a) negotiates (b) socializes (c) argues
11. the **lacklustre** dramatic performance
(a) lifeless (b) dark (c) vibrant
12. A **madcap** rescue in broad daylight
(a) incautious (b) planned (c) violent
13. lotteries **pander to** our dreams
(a) determine (b) discourage (c) indulge

14. a **Promethean** life force
(a) vivifying (b) mythical (c) extinguishing
15. the king's **rancour** was fearsome to behold
(a) stench (b) noisemaker (c) bitterness
16. he **ruminated upon** the past
(a) chewed (b) reflected (c) regretted
17. embarked on a **sanctimonious** trade mission
(a) approved (b) hypocritically pious (c) sacred
18. the pond's **tranquil** waters
(a) placid (b) flowing (c) ruffled
19. her **transcendent** beauty
(a) surpassing (b) imperceptible (c) artificial
20. **unmitigated** gall of the golfers trailing us
(a) unobstructed (b) weighted (c) untempered

Exercise 13-4 Word Etymologies

1. Which list word derives from Latin words for "off, away" and "intoxicating drink"

2. Which list word meant "hit and miss" in Chaucer's day and was used to describe the social practice of alternating in the buying of drinks, where one has, then has not the honour of treating... The word evolved to mean social interaction.

3. Which list word is derived from a Middle English word meaning "to waste away"?

4. Which word is taken from Pandarus, the name of a character in Homer's epic poem, *The Iliad* who breaks the truce between the Trojans and Greeks by wounding Menelaus, King of Sparta

5. Which word is derived from a Latin root meaning "to stink" or "be rotten"?

Exercise 13-5 Making Connections:

In a few sentences, describe the relationship between each pair of words. Use a good dictionary to clarify unclear words.

1. Prometheus fire
2. frugal Ebenezer Scrooge
3. continent abstemious
4. Seth Pecksniff sanctimonious
5. brainwork rumination

This Avocabo Unit, *Words Coined by Shakespeare*, was produced by Craig M. of Waterloo, Ontario.