

Words denoting Swiftness-Slowness

Avocabo Word List 1

CELERITY, CHECK, DAWDLE, DILATORY, DISPATCH, EXPEDITE, EXPRESS, FLIT, GRADUAL, HEADLONG, IMPETUOUS, INSTANTANEOUS, LAG, LANGUOR, LUMBER, MERCURIAL, NIMBLE, PLOD, RETARD, SPURT, TORRENT



Adagio for Hare and Tortoise

Even in our era of big hype, I haven't seen anything like the frenetic media circus I witnessed at the starting line of the Big Race. The otherwise sluggish tortoise displayed an agile mind in his responses to the mob of prating reporters beaming their interviews apace to a watchful world.

"How can a torpid tortoise possibly hope to match the blazing speed of a hurrying hare?" they enquired.

"*Vires acquirit eundo**," Tortoise explained deliberately. "Please understand that at this distance, this race becomes more a question of endurance than velocity. Hare has shown himself to be a skittish fellow. He actually gets bored with rapidity. Slow and steady wins the race."

Needless to say, the oddsmakers saw things differently. At 100-1, Tortoise was a longshot for victory. Nonetheless, we all love underdogs, and the expectant crowd seemed to side with Tortoise.

Hare darted from shoe company rep to shoe company rep, seeking just the right shoe that would give him acceleration off the line and thrust him along

to victory. If he were lucky, he'd get this dash out of the way and turn his attention to other, more leisurely, matters...

**Latin for "he acquires power or speed by going"*

Exercise 1-1 Tortoise or the Hare?

1. Sort this unit's words into columns, indicating whether you think the word denotes swiftness or slowness. (21 marks)

SWIFTNES

SLOWNESS

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2. Read **Adagio for Hare and Tortoise** at left and find as many words as you can (other than list words) that denote swiftness or slowness. List them below in the appropriate columns. (15 marks)

SWIFTNES

SLOWNESS

Exercise 1-2 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. (30 marks)

1. Julia Roberts has trouble with her **celerity** status in the movie *Notting Hill*. She seeks refuge from the press and her fans in the English community.
2. The medication was intended to **check** the course of the otherwise incurable disease.
3. The revolution could certainly have been **checked** with a few token concessions by the government.
4. Katherine **dawdled** over her chores, expecting to be relieved of her duties by her frustrated father.
5. My **dilatory** penpal makes it impossible to effectively carry on a meaningful or current correspondence.
6. Bobby kept his house key securely fastened to a thin leather **laggard** that he wore around his neck.
7. Susan's **impetuosity** cost her baseball team the ball game. Her coach later rebuked her decision to steal third on a 2-1 count.
8. Since starting her new regimen of healthy eating and daily exercise, Margaret had become very **flit**.
9. The gorge was etched into the rock by years of spring **torrents**, originating in the snowy mountaintops.
10. We are introduced to Daisy Fay and Jordan Baker in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as they lay on couches, **languorous** in the summer heat.
11. The **mercurial** indicated a temperature of 10 degrees Celcius on the morning of September 10.
12. A last minute **spurt** of energy at the end of an otherwise unproductive semester, equipped Terry sufficiently to write passing exams.
13. I traveled here **expressly**, hoping to see you before you returned to Europe.
14. Courier companies and the internet are **expeditors**, speeding the process of business transactions.
15. Allan was commended for carrying out his assigned tasks with **dispatch** and attention to detail.
16. The **graduals** sat in the stands, eagerly awaiting their turn to receive their diplomas.
17. The baseball coach favoured a **headlong** dive when stealing a base, arguing that a foot-first slide cost the base runner a stride.
18. Sally **nimbly** solved each of the problems on the test.
19. Our tedious walk through the muddy streets of London could better be described as a **plod**.
20. A nosy neighbour witnessed the criminal's attempted moonlight **flit** and he alerted the police to the imminent escape.

21. The **lumbering** gait of the giant man clearly disturbed the store manager, for fear that his thundering strides would upset her delicate wares.

22. Sean signed onto the eight-month Arctic **Expedite**, which sought to circumnavigate and study the receding Arctic polar ice cap.

23. The **celerity** of the cheetah in full flight is a wonder to behold.

24. The eccentric poet was too **mercurial** to focus her efforts on revising her promising first drafts.

25. The professor knocked the warm **dawdle** from his pipe and immediately refilled it from his pouch.

26. The Baffling Company of Maine made its millions by creating and installing sound-**retardant** fences that greatly reduced sound pollution in urban parks and schoolyards.

27. The end of the month-long rain was signalled by a seemingly **instantaneous** eruption of song from the region's birds.

28. The taxi driver's **torrents** of abuse, directed at any driver that got near his cab, made for an unsettling introduction to Montreal.

29. The young man **languored** across the room and flung himself on the sofa, falling asleep at once.

30. Sally opted for the **expressive** train, that would get her to her destination hours before the milk run.

Exercise 1-3 Synonyms

From the three choices, circle the one that is *closest in meaning* to the list word (in boldface) in the context shown. (21 marks)

1. the **celerity** of the pickpocket's movements
(a) swiftness (b) cruelty (c) secrecy

2. kept my temper in **check**
(a) confidence (b) restraint (c) inside

3. **dawdled** on the way to school
(a) played (b) loitered (c) skipped

4. he's **dilatory** in his work habits
(a) slow (b) meticulous to a fault (c) efficient

5. the author writes his novels with **dispatch**
(a) sincerity (b) haste (c) clarity of vision

6. **expedite** my boss's directives
(a) speed (b) enable (c) inherit

7. **express** delivery of packages
(a) take receipt of (b) track or inspect (c) direct

8. the **flitting** of the hummingbird
(a) darting movement (b) singing (c) smallness

9. **gradual** slope to the beach
(a) precipitous (b) stepwise (c) lengthy

10. **headlong** rush into danger
(a) reckless (b) considered (c) tragic

11. the daredevil shows an **impetuous** disdain of death
(a) limited (b) heedless (c) egotistical

12. relief was **instantaneous**
(a) immediate (b) slow in coming (c) intense

13. the injured animal **lagged** dangerously
(a) limped (b) darted (c) trailed

14. the intense heat made us **languorous**
(a) lethargic (b) sweaty (c) quick-witted

15. she **lumbered** through the halls
(a) swept (b) careened (c) lurched

16. a **mercurial** personality
(a) skittish (b) warm and convivial (c) nasty

17. **nimbly** playing the piano
(a) ponderously (b) carefully (c) dexterously

18. **plodding** in circles in the paddock
(a) thinking (b) trudging (c) racing

19. **retard** the project's progress
(a) impede (b) guarantee (c) accelerate

20. **spurt** of energy
(a) lack (b) diminishment (c) sudden burst

21. caught in a **torrent**
(a) downpour (b) intense eddy (c) depression

Exercise 1-4 Antonyms

From the three choices, circle the word that is *opposite* in meaning to the list word (in boldface). (21 marks)

1. **retard**
(a) resist (b) expedite (c) parachute

2. **plod**
(a) plow (b) slog (c) flit

3. **check**
(a) rebuff (b) dampen (c) admit

4. **celerity**
(a) expedition (b) hurry (c) slowness

5. **dawdle**
(a) wing (b) dally (c) lollygag

6. **dispatch**
(a) alacrity (b) quash (c) expedite

7. **dilatory**
(a) slow (b) speedy (c) lagging

8. **expedite**
(a) hurry (b) send (c) stay

9. **spurt**
(a) shoot (b) gush (c) deceleration

10. **torrent**
(a) trickle (b) blizzard (c) gulch

11. **flit**
(a) flutter (b) twinkle (c) plod

12. **express**
(a) direct (b) rapid (c) roundabout

13. **gradual**
(a) stepwise (b) sudden (c) piecemeal

14. **headlong**
(a) reckless (b) deliberate (c) pell-mell

15. **impetuous**
(a) abrupt (b) impulsive (c) considered

16. **instantaneous**
(a) immediate (b) delayed (c) in a flash

17. **lag**
(a) lead (b) trail (c) dally

18. **languor**
(a) enthusiasm (b) lethargy (c) torpor

19. **mercurial**
(a) changeable (b) skittish (c) stable

20. **lumber**
(a) plod (b) flit (c) lurch

21. **nimble**
(a) awkward (b) spry (c) lissome

Exercise 1-5 Making connections.

In a few sentences, describe the relationship between each pair of words. Use a good dictionary to clarify unclear words. The website <http://www.bartleby.com> can be a great help! (30 marks)

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|------------------|------------|
| 1. check | tourniquet |
| 2. Fabian | dilatory |
| 3. bundle | expedite |
| 4. plunge | headlong |
| 5. quicksilver | mercurial |
| 6. parachute | retard |
| 7. clever | nimble |
| 8. sfumato | gradual |
| 9. baksheesh | expedite |
| 10. spring fever | languor |

Exercise 1-6 Researching Unfamiliar Words

Still unfamiliar with some of this unit's list words? Look them up in a good dictionary. Note the definitions for each word, and determine which parts of speech these words may take. Depending on your dictionary, you may also note the plural forms of nouns, verb inflections, sample sentences, synonyms, antonyms, easily confused words and the etymologies.

Exercise 1-7 Crossword

There is an optional crossword puzzle based on this unit. It can prove helpful as a study aid prior to the test on this chapter. Visit the website to download the crossword in PDF format.

