The Writer's Guide to Prepositions

"The one and only Prepositionaly"

Charles N. Prieur & Elizabeth Champion-Speyer

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“Many times one preposition might seem logically just as right as another. And it is only that tyrannical, capricious, utterly incalculable thing, idiomatic usage, which has decreed that this preposition must be used in the case, and that in another...”

LOGAN PEA R S A L L S M I T H - “W O R D S A N D I D I O M S”

“Prepositions... cause more difficulty... than any other aspect of the English language.”

J.B. HEAT ON - “P R E P O S I T I O N S A N D A D V E R B I A L P A R T I C L E S”

“No parts of speech must be used more exactly than connectives (prepositions)...”

R. V O O R H E E S - “H A N D B O O K O F P R E P O S I T I O N S”

“The proper preposition is a matter of idiom; and idioms, if they do not come “naturally”, must either be learned or looked up.”

T H E O D O R E M. B E R N T E I N - “T H E C A R E F U L W R I T E R”

Note: We are indebted to all those we have quoted in our 'prepositionary'. We have attempted to return the favour by not only mentioning the authors of the quotations, but the sources as well; thus encouraging our readers to read, or refer to, their works.
During his long career in advertising, much of it as a writer, Charles Prieur often reached in vain for an ‘instant help’ reference work on the use of English prepositions -- one of the trickiest aspects of the language. He began collecting examples of right preposition use in the course of his reading. And, as the file expanded to vast proportions, he asked himself: "Why not a book?"

But the book kept being deferred, until a mutual friend introduced him to Elizabeth Speyer, whose career was education. In her work at the Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing, at the Faculty of Education of McGill University, Elizabeth had found that preposition use baffled students, especially those new to the language. Preposition choice is capricious, related to meaning and nuance, and largely based on custom.

Together, Charles and Elizabeth decided to organize a guide to prepositions in a handy dictionary format, listing thousands of the most common words that present difficulty. The name "prepositionary," suggested itself.

Interspersed among the mundane examples in the Prepositionary are quotations from many sources: snippets of information, philosophy, and humour.

We are confident "The Writer's Guide to Prepositions" will prove both very helpful and very easy to use. It was designed to be so.
Abbreviations used for quick reference:

n = noun

a = adjective

v = verb

vv = versatile verb. In other words: the verb in question can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows. This is particularly true of any verb that suggests motion, such as walk, run, crawl, creep, inch, hide, etc.
THE world’s many languages are not the result of logical design. They evolved out of culture and tradition. Whenever linguists have tried to impose order on wayward usage, the vernacular has always won out in the end. Which perhaps explains the failure of Esperanto to take root. It was not born of the people. It has no music, no soul.

From approximately 50,000 words in the 16th century, English now greets the new millennium with an estimated 750,000 words. Although technology has prompted much of this increase, it is the readiness of the language to assimilate useful words from other cultures that has nourished its growth over the centuries.

The Writer’s Guide to Prepositions will prove invaluable, if good speech and lucid writing matter to you. Our ‘prepositionary’ offers you more than 10,000 examples of the right preposition, for the exact meaning you want to convey.

The word preposition itself says that it pre-positions the thought or action that follows. For a good example of this, consider the phrase: gathering in the corn. If gathering means harvesting, then in is an adverb, not a preposition, because it adds to the verb. If, however, gathering means assembling, then in is a preposition, because it pre-positions where people are meeting, i.e. in the corn.

Prepositions are not to be trifled with. The collision of two 747s in 1997, killing 583 people, resulted from a misunderstanding over the preposition at. "At take-off" was understood by the air controller to mean that the plane was waiting at the take-off point; and not that it was actually taking off.

Using a wrong preposition will not often have such tragic consequences. But using the right preposition will always be a source of satisfaction, and speak well of one’s writing competence.
ABATE
The cleaning women are abating the noise of their vacuum cleaners by plugging their ears with cotton batten.
We can abate the smoke nuisance by half.
His anger will abate in intensity when he learns of your cooperation.
Her pain was abated by a strong drug.
His voice suddenly abated to a whisper.

ABBREVIATE
She automatically abbreviates my written speeches by cutting out the first paragraph; almost always, for the better.
The exam was abbreviated by omitting an entire section.
She abbreviated his whole diatribe to one word: NO!
He was abbreviating the message with great skill.

ABHORRENCE
We share an abhorrence of sloppy writing.

ABHORRENT
This idea is abhorrent to reason.

ABIDANCE
Abidance by the regulations is obligatory.

ABIDE
She is abiding by (i.e. sticking to) our agreement.
He promised to abide by (i.e. adhere to) the rules of grammar.
Do you intend to abide (i.e. dwell) in this part of the country.
“Abide with (i.e. remain faithful to) me!” says the psalmist.

ABILITY
His ability at chess was exceptional.
His ability with darts was a byword in every pub in England.

ABOUND
“Colonialism . . abounded in flags, exotic uniforms, splendid ceremonies, Durbars, sunset-guns, trade exhibitions . . postage stamps and, above all, coloured maps.” (Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)
Rocks abound under the soil.
This lake abounds with fish.
I promise you: it is abounding with game of all sorts.

ABREAST
I like to keep abreast of the latest news.

ABSCOND
The boy absconded from the reformatory with the warden’s credit cards.
He will abscond with the funds; I guarantee it.

ABSENCE
The student’s absence from class resulted in a failing grade.
“The dolphin can report the absence of objects, as well as their presence.” (Louis Herman, Omni mag.)
“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear — not absence of fear.” (Mark Twain)

ABSENT
“God is absent from the world, except in the existence in this world of those in whom His love is alive . . Their compassion is the visible presence of God here below.” (Simone Weil, Gateway to God)
ABSENTEE
He was a conspicuous absentee from the morning drill.

ABSOLVE
She was absolved from her obligation.
The bishop absolved him of his sins. (rare)

ABSORB
Nutriment may be absorbed by plants into their system through their roots.
Plants absorb moisture from the air.
“When iron is absorbed in the small intestine, it is immediately joined to the protein transferrin, which shuttles it through the bloodstream, shielding tissues from its harmful effects.” (Terence Monmaney, Discover mag.)
She is absorbing all that information in small bites.
“Between 1867 and 1899, Canada absorbed 1.6 million immigrants into a population at Confederation of barely three million.” (Andrew Coyne, The Next City mag.)

ABSTAIN
True science teaches us to doubt and to abstain from ignorance.

ABSTINENCE
The negative side of virtue is abstinence from vice.

ABSTRACT (V)
To ascertain the truth, it was necessary to abstract (i.e. remove) a good deal from his account of the proceedings.

ABUT
The lane abuts against (i.e. runs alongside) the railroad.
The house abuts (i.e. fronts) on the street.
His property abuts (i.e. borders) upon mine.

ABUZZ
“The brain contains between 10 billion and 100 billion neurons, each forming bridges to so many others that the brain is abuzz with as many as 1 quadrillion connections.” (Sharon Begley with John Carey and Ray Sawhill, Newsweek mag., Feb. 7, ‘83)

ACCEDE
“There are over 60 covenants on human rights . . China has acceded to 17 and the United States to 15 of them.” (Qian Qichan, Time mag., Aug. 11, ’97)
When the monarch died, his eldest son acceded to (i.e. inherited) the throne.

ACCEPT
Having been accepted as an accountant, he ‘moled’ his way into the secret organization.
His credentials have been accepted by the company.
“The computer can accept data only in a highly structured (digital) form.” (British Medical Bulletin, Oxford English Dictionary)
I accept (i.e. agree) to do that, but on one condition.
“Legacies, or children of alumni, are three times more likely to be accepted (i.e. admitted) to Harvard than other high school graduates with the same (sometimes better) scores.” (Michael Lind, Harper’s mag.)

ACCEPTANCE
“The assertion finds acceptance in every rank of society.” (M. Faraday, Oxford English Dictionary)
“The only real freedom is in order, in an acceptance of boundaries.” (Peter Ustinov)

ACCESS (N)
“Each animal was kept in a small room, with access to an outdoor exercise area.” (National Geographic)

ACCESS (V)
He accessed (i.e. made his way into) the house by (or through) a window.
I know she will access (i.e. enter) his apartment with the stolen key.

ACCESSIBLE
The fortress was accessible (i.e. approachable) from the seacoast only.
He was as accessible (i.e. available) to the humblest as he was to his peers.

**ACCESSION (N)**
The accession (i.e. addition) of 90 new students overcrowded the school.
The populace rejoiced at the prince's accession to (i.e. assumption of) the throne.

**ACCESSION (V)**
“This skull was the oldest of its type ever found (2.5 to 2.6 million years old). It was accessioned (i.e. recorded) under the number KNM-WT 17000 in the National Museums of Kenya.” (Pat Shipman, *Discovery*)

**ACCESSORY**
A person who conceals a crime is an accessory after the fact.
A person who incites another to commit a felony is considered to be an accessory before the fact.
Though he escaped punishment, he was an accessory to the crime.

**ACCIDENT**
Her wealth was due to an accident (i.e. happenstance) of birth.
An accident (i.e. mishap) to the machinery halted production.

**ACCLIMATIZE**
She quickly became acclimatized to the new conditions.
He is acclimatizing himself to desert conditions.

**ACCOMMODATE**
They were accommodated (i.e. given lodging) at the newly-refurbished Ritz hotel.
His staff was usually accommodated (i.e. lodged) in motels.
We were forced to accommodate (i.e. adapt) ourselves to our circumstances.
She was always ready to accommodate (i.e. oblige) a friend with a loan.

**ACCOMPANY**
The child was accompanied (i.e. escorted) by her mother.
She accompanied (i.e. went with) him on all his travels.
Let me accompany (i.e. escort) you to the door.
He accompanied (i.e. supplemented) his speech with gestures.

**ACCOMPlice**
He was an accomplice (i.e. partner in crime) in the murder of the diplomat.
The police are searching for the two accomplices (i.e. associates in wrongdoing) of the thief.

**ACCOMPLISH**
She was accomplished (i.e. skilled) in all the social arts.
She accomplished (i.e. performed) the difficult task with speed and efficiency.

**ACCORD (N)**
They were all in accord with his decision.

**ACCORD (V)**
Wordsworth mentioned the glimpses of eternity accorded (i.e. granted) to saints.
The victim's account of the accident accords (i.e. agrees) with yours.

**ACCORDING**
“Corrosion costs America $70 billion each year, according to the National Bureau of Standards.”
(The Economist, 1988)

**ACCOUNT**
He gave an accurate account of his adventures.

**ACCOUNT**
“The Columbia (river) and its tributaries account for (i.e. produce) one-third of all hydroelectric power generated in the United States.”
(William Least Heat Moon, *Blue Highways*)
“The Higgs boson accounts (i.e. is responsible) for the origin of all mass in the universe.”
(Larry Gonick, Discover mag.)
The bank clerk had to account to (or with) his superiors every Tuesday.

ACCOUNTABLE
Man is accountable for his acts.
He likes to pretend that he is accountable to no one.

ACCRETE
“The poor live in . . . the makeshift, vertical barrio that has accreted to suspension cables of the bridge.”
(William Gibson)

ACCRETION
“They jettisoned . . . the embarrassing accretions from their past.” (Paul Johnson)
His book is an accretion of casual writings.

ACCRUE
Many advantages accrue (i.e. arise) from the freedom of the press.
All proceeds will accrue (i.e. accumulate and go) by natural advantage to him.

ACCUMULATE
“In August 1986, bubbles of carbon dioxide accumulating at the bottom of (Lake Nyos in Cameroon) . . . burst to the surface; a blanket of dense carbon dioxide and water vapor spread over nearby villages, killing cattle and 1,700 people.” (Discover mag., Oct. 1988)
I’m accumulating stamps for my nephew in a large album.
Your discards are accumulating into quite a pile.
The maple leaves had accumulated under the porch.

ACCURATE
You must be accurate in your calculations.
“Today’s best atomic clocks are accurate to one part in 10 to the 14th power; but a super-cooled atomic clock should be 10,000 times more accurate.”
(The Economist)
A part of the brain called the hypothalamus acts as the body’s thermostat.” (Robert M. Sapolsky, Discover mag., 1990) Why don’t you act for him?
You are acting in a manner that invites criticism.

“DNA is a long molecule that contains information on the way four different components are strung together like beads on a string. Thus, they act like letters in an alphabet. The sequence of those letters forms sentences called ‘genes’.” (David Suzuki, Montreal Gazette)

Interlukin-1 acts on the body’s central thermostat, causing a fever, which may depress viral activity and enhance the immune response.” (Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)

Act towards him as you do towards his sister.
The gastric juice acts upon the food we swallow.
He always acted with decision.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

ACTIVE

Storefront lawyers are active in the cause of justice.
Drug dealers are very active on that street.
Mother Theresa is active with her sister nuns in obtaining relief for the poor.
One gland in particular becomes active under stress.

ACTUATE

She was actuated by compulsive curiosity.
He actuates the light with a snap of his finger.
The boy was actuating the car’s starter with a stolen key.

ADAMANT

“Yes, he was adamant on that.” (John Le Carré)

ADAPT

The gun was adapted for use in hand-to-hand fighting.
His invention was adapted from an idea conceived by his father.

“Natural selection cannot anticipate the future and can adapt organisms only to challenges of the moment.” (Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)

A child adapts very quickly to his/her surroundings.
She was adapting unconsciously to his body language.

ADD

I will also add a ribbon for the effect.
“The burning of Earth’s rain forests . . not only adds carbon dioxide to the atmosphere but also removes the trees that would have absorbed it. The result is an accumulation of heat-reflecting gases and an overall warming of the planet — the greenhouse effect.” (Jonathan Schell, Discover mag.)

When she added baby’s breath to the bouquet of roses, the effect was magic.
He was adding insult to injury by not acknowledging her presence.
That adds up to an insult, my friend.

ADDICT (V)

She was addicted to the music of Mozart.
What kind of monsters addict children to nicotine?
They were addicting underage girls to morphine.

ADDICTION

I shared his addiction to Sherlock Holmes mysteries.

ADDRESS (N)

She showed great address in dealing with her opponents.
He exhibited the address of an accomplished intriguer.

ADDRESS (V)

“Eric Gill solaced himself by instructing his apprentices to address him as ‘Master’.” (The Economist mag.)
The president addressed (i.e. spoke to) the people in a voice laden with sorrow.
She addressed (i.e. directed) her remarks to the legislature.
He was addressing her as Mrs. Ames long before she married him.

ADEPT

She is adept at getting out of trouble.
The parliamentarian was adept in the cut and thrust of debate.
ADEQUATE
His skills are barely adequate for the job.
He proved adequate to the situation.

ADHERE
Paint adheres best to a clean, dry surface.
Some of this food is adhering to the pan like glue.
“Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.”
(Article 111, Section 3, Constitution of the United States)

ADHERENCE
His adherence to the cause proved to be his downfall.

ADHERENT
He is an adherent of the Conservative Party.
Adherents to Luther’s principles were called Protestants.

ADJACENT
The two men’s farms are adjacent to each other.

ADJUST
Just give me time and I’ll adjust to this new life.
She adjusted to theatrical life like a born trooper.
“Without gravity, the heart begins to relax, adjusting to its lower work load by slowing down and shrinking.”
(David Noland, Discover mag.)

ADMINISTER
She administered (i.e. dealt) a polite rebuff to the pushy salesman.
She administers (i.e. manages) our head office with a firm hand and an even temper.

ADORN
If you let him, he’ll adorn the statue of David with a fig leaf.
The emperor adorned his castle with the spoils of war.

ADRIFT
The boat was cut adrift from its moorings.
Our skiff is adrift on the lake.

ADVANCE (N)
“Every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination.”
(John Dewey, Forbes mag., 1970)
That’s certainly an advance on last year’s proposal.

ADVANCE (V)
He worked very hard to advance himself in his profession.
I regret to report they advanced on the city last night.
He kept advancing on her, and she kept backing away.
Our football advanced to the 30-yard line this time.
Let’s advance toward the town tonight.

ADVANTAGE
She has the advantage of Mrs. Jones, who is impoverished. (British)
I would take advantage of that situation, if I were you.
You have the advantage over me; I don’t know you.
(North American)
The advantage to him was plain.
ADVANTAGEOUS
It would be advantageous for them to buy time, but not for me.
That’s certainly advantageous to us.

ADVERSE
Being adverse to a person or a thing reflects opposition.

ADVERT
Mac then adverted to last year’s disaster.
I’m adverting to what you told me last night.

ADVERTISE
In the early 1930s, when Amtorg, the Soviet trading agency, advertised for 1000 skilled workers, more than 100,000 Americans applied.
She is now advertising her language school on Internet.
He took every opportunity to advertise her in Vogue magazine.
I would advertise this product to the 20-to-35 age group.

ADVICE
My advice to you is to avoid confrontation.

ADVISE
I will advise (i.e. inform) him by letter of the loss of the ship.
Our experts are here to advise (i.e. counsel) you on any computer problem.

ADVOCATE (N)
He was the principal advocate for the huge conglomerate.
The new political candidate is an advocate of electoral reform.
“We have an advocate with the Father.” (1 John ii.1.)

ADVOCATE (V)
As a lawyer, he advocates for (i.e. defends) a number of blue chip firms.
The soap box orator was advocating (i.e. recommending) group action to his only listener.

AFFECT
The vibrations are affecting her at night, after she has gone to sleep.
He is affected by bad weather.
“Psychological conditions affect the welfare of people through the immune system.” (Rita Levi-Montalcini)
Bach’s music affects me in my innermost being.

AFFILIATE (N)
The department store is an affiliate of a nation-wide chain.

AFFILIATE (V)
The group decided to affiliate with the national association.
Note: with (American); to (British)

AFFINITY
There is a strong affinity between music and dancing.
“An affinity for is confined to scientific usage. One substance is said to have an affinity for another when it has a tendency to unite with it.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms, published by MACMILLAN)
“When Père Armand David, the great French explorer-priest, acquired the Western world’s first great panda in 1869, he never doubted its evident affinity with bears.”
(Stephen Jay Gould, Discovery) Note: Never to

AFFIX
So why don’t you affix (i.e. attach) this to your will?
They’re affixing this warning sign to every trailer in the country.

AFFLICT
FM stereo was the only high-fidelity audio medium afflicted with background noise.
Afflicting us with his presence, the politician proceeded to monopolize the conversation.

AFOUL
He was often afool of the law.
AFRAID

He was afraid of his own shadow.
She was afraid to walk home in the dark.

AGE (N)

You can’t get married in that country under the age of eighteen.

AGE (V)

I have the Christmas pudding ageing in wine.
That meat is aged to perfection.

AGGRIEVED

She was aggrieved at being overlooked for the part.
They were aggrieved by the attitude of their relatives.

AGHAST

They were aghast at his negligence in the matter.

AGITATE

She spent her life agitating for equality.
We will agitate for a new contract starting tomorrow.

AGOG

They were all agog about the latest gossip.

AGONIZE

They are agonizing over the scathing review.
She agonized with him throughout the dismal third act.

AGREE

They agree about that, but nothing else.
They agreed among themselves.
“‘The principles to be agreed by all.’” (Bacon, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
He agrees on the course to be taken. We’re sure she will agree to that.
“History,” said Napoleon, “is a set of collectively agreed upon lies.”

AGREEABLE

I am agreeable to your plan of action.

AGREEMENT

I am in full agreement with you.

AIM

“As late as 1931, the United States had a war plan aimed at the British Empire, ‘Navy Basic Plan Red’.”
(Paul Johnson: A History of the Modern World)
The girl aimed for the target but broke a window instead.
“The reason laser light works so well in everything from CD players to surgery is that it’s ‘coherent’—that is, ordinary separate photons of light merge to make one powerful light wave that can be aimed with terrific precision.”
(Discover mag., July 1998)

AKIN

The tribes are akin in their warlike nature.
Your words were akin to a slap in the face.

ALARM (V)

I am alarmed at the present state of affairs.
The parents were alarmed by the rise in crime in their neighbourhood.
The child was constantly alarming us by running a fever.
Do not alarm me with these possible disasters.

ALARM (N)

My alarm at the news that soldiers were approaching spread like wildfire.

ALERT (A)

The squirrel is very alert in its movements.
“Phagocytes (white blood cells) constantly scour the territories of our bodies alert to anything that seems out of place. What they find, they engulf and consume.” (Peter Jaret, National Geographic/Reader’s Digest)

**ALERT** *(V)*

I had to alert him to the danger.

**ALIEN** *(A)*

The segregation of the blacks in South Africa was alien to democratic principles.

**ALIEN** *(N)*

They claimed to have seen an alien from the planet Venus.

**ALIENATE**

She was alienated from her own society by its treatment of the unfortunate.

He alienates (i.e., turns off) everyone by talking down to them.

They’re alienating (i.e., disaffecting) the whole world by bullying that small nation.

“Enemy property was alienated (i.e., transferred) during the war.” (World Book Dictionary)

**ALIGHT**

He is alighting (i.e., getting off) at every bus stop along the way.

She alighted from (i.e., got out of) her car and ran into the house.

The robin alights (i.e., lands) on that mailbox every morning.

**ALIGN**

Germany was aligned with Japan in World War II.

I think Jordan is aligning herself with Iraq this time.

He would rather align himself with me than against me.

**ALIKE**

The specimens are alike in kind.

**ALIVE**

The painter was at the top of his form, alive in every fiber of his being.

The missionary’s religion was founded on the conviction that we should be alive to every noble impulse.

Her eyes were alive with hope.

**ALLEGIANCE**

The leaders depended upon the allegiance of the citizens to the legitimate government.

**ALLIANCE**

The United Nations was designed to eradicate the need for military alliances between and among nations.

The Indian chief made an alliance with the neighboring tribe for the defense of their respective lands.

**ALLOCATE**

They allocated their resources to new tasks.

Canada is allocating her extra wheat to North Korea.

**ALLOW**

Astronomers, in their calculations, must allow (i.e., make provisions) for the pull of gravity.

The researcher is willing to allow of (i.e., permit) other hypotheses.

He allowed (i.e., granted) 10% of his annual income to each of his wives.
**ALLUDE**
This passage in the Bible evidently alludes to the Jewish Passover.

**ALLURE**
Allured by hope of gain, the prospectors risked their lives on the mountain pass.
It was hoped that the promise of heaven would allure people from evil to good.

**ALLY**
The quarreling states at last decided to ally against their common enemy.
In his mind, this treaty was allied to territorial expansion.
(Federico Garcia)
“Lorca understood that any artist who allied himself too closely with a political ideology died as an artist, became little more than a talented propagandist.”
(Neil Bissoondath, Montreal Gazette)
He is allying himself with anyone who buys him a drink.
You ally yourself to things, but with people.

**ALOOF**
He stood aloof from the rest of his family.
She used to be rather aloof with strangers.

**ALTERING**
“By 2040, the altering of genetic material in embryo could eliminate more than 3000 genetically-derived diseases.” (Life mag.)

**ALTERNATE**
He alternated between scolding and praising.
Here, floods alternate with droughts.

**ALTERNATIVE**
We were given the alternatives of leaving town or being shot.
“The alternative to functioning mitochondria (such as those in the human cell) is called death.”
(David Clayton, molecular biologist, Discover mag.)

**AMALGAM**
The plan was an amalgam of sound ideas and foolish notions.

**AMALGAMATE**
He amalgamated the gold and silver into an alloy.
They decided to amalgamate with the larger company.
She is amalgamating her plans with his.

**AMASS**
He amassed a large fortune by fair means and foul for the purpose of exerting political control.

**AMATEUR**
The boy was an amateur (i.e. not an expert) at chess.
He remained an amateur among professional athletes by never accepting a salary.
Although she has had every opportunity to study, she remains an amateur (i.e. a dilettante) in the arts.
He was an amateur of (i.e. had a fondness for) the more exotic sports.

**AMAZE**
He was amazed (i.e. surprised) at the crowd.
She was amazed (i.e. bewildered) by his magic skills.
The gymnast was constantly amazing us with his feats of contortion.

**AMAZEMENT**
I was filled with amazement at such reckless daring.

**AMENABLE**
The problem is not amenable to mathematical analysis.

**AMOUNT** (N)
What is the amount of her bill for groceries?

**AMOUNT** (V)
That amounts to very little in practical terms.
**AMPLIFY**

The professor was requested to *amplify* his lectures *by* illustrating them. 

The lecturer *amplified on* so many themes, that the audience lost the gist of his presentation.

**AMUSE**

He was *amused at* the bird’s efforts to escape 

The children were highly *amused by* the clown’s antics. 

*Amuse the baby* *with* that rattle.

**ANAGRAM**

His pen name is an *anagram of* his real name.

**ANALOGOUS**

“Einstein’s observations on the way in which, in certain circumstances, lengths appeared to contract and clocks to slow down, are *analogous to* the effects of perspective in painting.” 

(Paul Johnson, *A History of the Modern World*)

**ANALOGY**

There’s an *analogy* (i.e. equivalency) *between* the military careers of Hitler and Stalin. 

“The child is the *analogy* (i.e. simile) of a people yet in childhood.” (Lytton) 

He explained an electrical current by drawing an *analogy* (i.e. comparison) *with* a flow of water through a pipe. 

Some still bear a remote *analogy with* (resemblance to) their Mongolian ancestors.

**ANALYSIS**

They made an *analysis of* the situation before proceeding.

**ANATHEMA**

An unorthodox approach is *anathema to* many in the arts.

**ANCHOR**

After *anchoring* his boat *by* the buoy, he swam to shore. 

I will *anchor* the barge *near* the boathouse. 

The boat seemed to be *anchored to* its own shadow.

**ANGER**

Anger *at* the insult prompted his acid reply. 

Anger *toward* the offender exaggerates the offense.

**ANGLE** (N)

“The navigator sites himself in global terms, even universal ones, measuring the *angles between* his ship and the equator, the sun, the stars and the hypothetical meridian which stretches north and south from Greenwich to the poles.” (Jonathan Raban, *Coasting*)

**ANGLE** (V)

“I was too busy trying to angle (i.e. direct) the bow of the boat into the next wave to be frightened.”

(Jonathan Raban, *Coasting*)

“For some years now, the Soviet Union has been angling (i.e. trying slyly) to detach Japan from the western powers.”

(London Times, *World Book Dictionary*)

“Whether angling (i.e. fishing) for big ones or going after bream in a lake, good fishing is only minutes away from most Southern cities.”

(Time mag., *Oxford English Dictionary*)

**ANGRY**

I was not so much angry *with* her as *at* what she had done. 

Note: It’s angry *with* a person, but *at* a thing. 

Get angry *about* the political corruption you observe.

**ANIMADVERT**

The critic was wont to animadvert *on* (or *upon*) untrained performers.

**ANIMATE**

His remark was animated (i.e. motivated) *by* malice. 

The teacher animated (i.e. enlivened) the lesson *with* witty comments.

**ANIMUS**

His animus *against* the Church was obvious to everyone.
ANNEX
Britain annexed Labrador to Newfoundland on the flimsiest of pretexts.

ANNEXATION
Most were in favour of annexation to the larger neighbouring country.

ANNOUNCE
They are announcing it in the newspapers?
The butler was told to announce each guest in a loud voice.
I will announce it on (or over) the radio. (Note: but only on TV)
The birth of a grandchild was announced to the family by phone.

ANNOYED
She was extremely annoyed about the damage to her front door.
I was annoyed at him for arriving late.
They were annoyed by his persistent coughing.
He annoys her in church by praying aloud.
She was annoying him with her endless questions.
I was annoyed with him for bringing up the subject.

ANSWER
She had a different answer for everyone.
He refused to give a direct answer to my question.

ANSWER
I cannot answer (i.e. be responsible) for him.
“In every man’s heart, there is a secret nerve that answers (i.e. responds) to the vibrations of beauty.”
(Christopher Morley)
This man answers to (i.e. matches) your description.
You will have to answer to me, my boy (i.e. you are responsible to me).
She answered (i.e. replied to) my question with an insult.

ANSWERABLE
You are answerable to me for the safety of the ship’s crew.

ANTAGONISTIC
The nationalistic spirit was the main force antagonistic to (or towards) the ruler’s schemes.

ANTECEDENT
Contrary to the report, the tremors were antecedent to the quake.

ANTERIOR
They lived in ages anterior to the Flood.

ANTIDOTE
The public health authorities could find no antidote against the new mysterious malady.
Economic opportunity is a good antidote for social discontent.
Is there a universal antidote to snakebite?

ANTIPATHY
They shared an antipathy to the avant-garde novelist.

ANTITHESIS
Exploitation of one’s fellows is the very antithesis of Christianity.

ANTITHETICAL
The guild mentality of doctors is basically antithetical to their oath.

ANXIOUS
The mother was anxious about her child’s health.
She’s anxious at the delay involved in the processing of her passport.
The parents were anxious for the safety of their young in the sailboat.
**APATHY**

The students’ apathy toward their studies was justified by the limitations of the school program.

**APOLOGIZE**

You should apologize to the guest for your oversight.

**APOLOGY**

I think you should make an apology to your mother.

**APPAL**

They were appalled at the idea of being bussed to school. I was appalled by the prevailing conditions in the mine.

**APPARENT**

Their guilt is apparent in their every gesture. His guilt was apparent to all.

**APEAL (N)**

The householders who had lost everything in the flood made an appeal (i.e. a call) for assistance. The law provides for an appeal (i.e. a calling to account) from a lower to a higher court.

**APPEAL (V)**

“He (Gandhi) is a man of God. You (Winston Churchill) and I are mundane people. Gandhi appealed to religious motives. You never have. That is where you have failed.” (General Smuts)

She appealed to him with all the wiles she could muster.

**APPEAR**

He hopes to appear among the first names listed as passing with honours. The general will appear at the front with all the insignia of his rank. You are summoned to appear before the court. The submarine appeared below the surface near the harbour. It would appear (i.e. seem) from the reports that there are no survivors.

“Within just a few millions years (of the Cambrian explosion), nearly every major kind of animal anatomy appears in the fossil record for the first time.”

(Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., 1989)

“There are no street names (in Tokyo). All streets are anonymous: street names do not appear on any map.”

(Josh Freed, Montreal Gazette)

If you are patient, the sun will appear through the mist. The bacteria will appear to the eye through the microscope. The geologist was certain that rich mineral deposits would appear under the next layer of rock.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**APPEND**

The secret codicil was appended to the billionaire’s will. Why don’t you append that glossary to your Chronicles?

**APPENDAGE**

The tail is an appendage of the tadpole; it is gradually absorbed in the process of metamorphosis.

**APPENDIX**

The appendix (i.e. addition) to his book is detailed and helpful.

**APPETITE**

Emily Carr had an appetite for the beauty of the forests of British Columbia.

**APPLICATION**

All applications (i.e. requests) for tickets must be made to the Registry.

“The application (i.e. use) of what you know will enlarge your understanding.”

(John Le Carré, The little drummer girl)

**APPLY**

The idea was a clever one, but it would have to be applied (i.e. put into practice) by experts.
Equipped with his engineering degree, the young man was ready to **apply** (i.e. bid) for a position. Make sure you **apply** (i.e. direct) this cost to the right budget.

**APPOINT**
He was **appointed as** my assistant by the director. She was **appointed to** the position of Chairperson.

**APPOINTMENT**
His **appointment as** coach is the talk of the town. Their **appointment by** the mayor is questionable, to say the least. Her **appointment to** the Bench is effective January 1st.

**APPORTION**
The father tried to **apportion** his property equally among his heirs. King Solomon’s suggestion that a child be **apportioned between** two claimants was a clever ruse to identify the real mother. The relief worker was instructed to **apportion** an equal amount of food to each family.

**APPOSE**
He **apposed** a seal to the certificate.

**APPOSITE**
It is a perfect **apposite to** that simile.

**APPPOSITION**
The experiment he used in the course of his lecture was in **apposition to** his theory.

**APPRECIATION**
His sincere **appreciation of** my efforts encouraged me.

**APPRECIATIVE**
She was very **appreciative of** my tacit support.

**APPREHENSION**
Her **apprehension** (i.e. misgivings) **about** her stage performance undermined the whole company’s morale. He has an **apprehension** (i.e. perception) **of** the problem. The citizens were relieved to learn about the **apprehension** (i.e. arrest) **of** the thief.

**APPREHENSIVE**
I was **apprehensive about** (or for) the children travelling alone. The refugees were **apprehensive of** the future.

**APPRENTICE**
I want to be **apprenticed to** a super mechanic. I was **apprenticed to** the garage trade with a top mechanic.

**APPRISE**
Go ahead: **apprise** me of the details of this case.

**APPROACH**
The **approach of** dawn reminded us of our peril. The **approach to** the castle was a steep cliff.

**APPROBATION**
When did you get their **approbation of** this deal?

**APPROPRIATE**
Simple, comfortable clothing is **appropriate for** school children. “The air of mystery is **appropriate to** the popular mystique of the Rothschilds, but not to the history of a bank.” (The Economist)

**APPROPRIATE**
They have **appropriated** the idea of monarchy to their own ends. (The Economist)

**APPROVE**
I do not **approve of** your conduct.
APPROXIMATE (A)
Ten minutes of stretching exercises is approximate to hours on the golf course. (Brit.)

APPROXIMATE (V)
His methods of government began to approximate to his predecessor’s.

APPROXIMATION
Five hundred miles is an approximation of the distance between the two cities.
The prosecutor’s indictment was a close approximation to the truth.

APROPOS
Apropos of nothing, she suddenly interrupted the proceedings.

APT
She is very apt (i.e. skilled) at darning socks.
“The time was apt for (i.e. appropriate to) reminiscence.” (Evelyn Waugh)
He is apt (i.e. likely) to lose his temper.

ARCH
The darkening sky was arched with a shimmering rainbow.

ARGUE
In the Army, we were enjoined not to argue about religion or politics.
Instead of arguing against everything, why don’t you argue for something for a change?
“To argue that there is a guiding intelligence behind, above, or within the universe is not the same as arguing for a benign, personal Deity.” (Patrick Glynn, National Review mag.)
He spent his life in swivel chairs, arguing with dictating machines.

ARISE
“Cancer arises from a number of insults to the DNA (the master molecule of life). Viruses are one insult. They start the process rolling.” (Claudia Wallis, Time)
“What fascinates me is this (re human embryo) . . . The egg gets fertilized. The cells start dividing. Some end up as fingernails. Some end up as the liver. And then consciousness arises out of it. How?” (Dr.L.E.H.Trainor, professor emeritus, Univ. of Toronto)
Do you believe that trouble will arise over the final score?

ARM (V)
“A vaccine is a small dose of a natural (though dead or weakened) virus meant to stimulate the immune system to make antibodies, and thus to arm itself against later invasion by that virus.” (Cambridge University, Mass., The Economist)
He armed his men for an assault on the bridgehead.
“Trawler skippers, grand as kings, standing on bollards armed with whistles, raising a scratch crew for a voyage.”(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

ARMOUR, ARMOR
It’s the body’s armor against infection.

ARRAIGN
The felon was arraigned at the bar for his crime.
The young man was arraigned on a charge of vandalism.

ARRANGE
The wine bottles were carefully arranged around a pyramid of crystal wine glasses.
“There is a universal tendency for things to be arranged (i.e. constructed) in the least intricate, most probable way. The characteristic of life is that it works against this tendency, creating complexity where there was none.” (James Lovelock, The Economist)
Please arrange (i.e. plan) for the wedding on the last Saturday of this month.
Type: ‘a’ stands for adjective; ‘adv’ for adverb; ‘n’ for noun; ‘ppl.a.’ for past participle adjective; ‘v’ for verb; and ‘vv’ for Versatile Verb.
ARREST (V)
The youths were arrested by the police for the crime of arson.
He was arrested in school.
You cannot arrest a citizen on suspicion of a crime without a warrant.

ARRIVE
The wedding party arrived at the church in good time.
Will they arrive by plane?
“Board a Boeing 747 in New York and there is roughly a 99.9999% chance that you will arrive safely in London.” (The Economist)
The fire brigade arrived on (or upon) the scene and soon took charge.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

ASCEND
The rocket ascended beyond our view.
“The scientific establishment reveals its basic bias when it says that man descended, instead of ascended, from the monkey.” (Charles N. Prieur)
“In 1930, in (French) Indo-China alone, there were nearly 700 summary executions. If Gandhi had tried his passive resistance there, Ho Chi Minh wrote, 'he would long since have ascended into heaven'.” (Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)
The explorers will ascend the river to its source.

ASCENDANCY
She hated his ascendancy over her.

ASCRIBE
“Schizophrenics . . have . . an unfamiliar odor, recently ascribed to trans-3-methylhexanoic acid, in their sweat.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

ASK
The travel agent asked about our itinerary.

“Hoover had asked Rudy Vallee in 1932 for an anti-Depression song; the wretched fellow produced ‘Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?’”
(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)
Napoleon always asked of his generals, “I know he’s good. But is he lucky?”

ASPERSION
I can do without your aspersions on my reputation.

ASPIRANT
There are numerous aspirants for the post of theatre director.

ASPIRE
He aspires after (i.e. covets) fame, not truth.
“If you aspire to (i.e. reach for) the highest place, it is no disgrace to stop at the second, or even the third, place.” (Marcus Tullius Cicero)

ASSAULT (N)
“The assault on the truth by such propagandists as Goebbels can have tragic consequences. Words ought to be somewhat outrageous for they are, after all, assaults of thoughts on the unthinking.” (John Maynard Keynes)

ASSEMBLE
The hikers were instructed to assemble at a fork in the trail.
The teacher assembled all the children in the primary grades for a picnic.
“We haven’t yet learned how to stay human when assembled in masses.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)
“There is an inherent tendency of matter to assemble itself, in an orderly way, into more and more complex forms, as though the ‘desire’ to attain consciousness and personal relationship were built into the nature of matter itself.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)
The dancers have been requested to assemble on stage.

ASSENT
He nodded his assent to the task.
ASSENT
Would you please assent to our suggestions with a nod of your head?

ASSIDUOUS
I’ve always been assiduous in my duties.

ASSIGN
Why don’t you assign that work to me?

ASSIMILATE
He was careful to assimilate his behaviour (i.e. conform) to that of his neighbours.
“I am foreign material, and cannot assimilate with (i.e. become incorporated into) the Church of England.”
(J.H. Newman)

ASSIST
They assisted as spectators rather than as participants.
Cornelius Mussus assisted at the Council of Trent.
He wanted to assist me in my observations.
“Could you assist a poor man with a copper, Sir?”
(Oxford English Dictionary)

ASSOCIATE (N)
The chief engineer was an associate of the architect in the construction of the stadium.

ASSOCIATE (A)
“Many of the traits associated with Type-A behaviour, including fast-paced speech and eating, and a sense of urgency about time, do not seem to increase the risk of heart attack... Only hostility appears to be related to disease.”
(Redford Williams of Duke University)
Note: never associated to

ASSOCIATION
“Most of the associations between the living things we know about are essentially cooperative ones... It takes long intimacy, long and familiar interliving, before one kind of creature can cause illness in another.”
(Lewis Thomas, The lives of a Cell)

A university should function as an association of scholars for the advancement of knowledge.
Close association with good literature develops both the mind and the spirit.

ASSUMPTION
“Atheism is abnormality. It is not merely the denial of a dogma. It is the reversal of a subconscious assumption in the soul; the sense that there is a meaning and a direction in the world it sees.”
(G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man)
He dreamed of a sudden assumption (i.e. elevation) into the heady community of the elite.
The acting manager bustled about with an assumption (i.e. appropriation) of authority.

ASTERN
He maneuvered his sloop slightly astern of the leader’s.

ASTONISH
They were astonished at his doing such a thing.
“The people were astonished at his doctrine.”
(Bible: Matthew 7:28)
You will be astonished by the musical ability of this child prodigy.
The magician will astonish the audience with his tricks.

ASTONISHMENT
Imagine their astonishment at his sudden wealth and fame.

ASTOUND
Weren’t you astounded at their giving up so quickly?
I was astounded by his skills as a magician.
“He liked to astound his readers with paradoxes, such as the fact that, when the largest human cell (the female ovum) and the smallest (the male spermatozoon) meet and fuse, the biological miracle of conception occurs.”
(Mind Alive mag.)

ASTUTE
How very astute you are at leaving no trace of your passage.
Their were surprisingly astute in the way they solved that problem.

**ATONE**

“Nothing can atone for the insult of a gift, except the love of the person who gives it.” (Old Chinese proverb)

**ATTACH**

The notary instructed his clerk to attach (i.e. affix) the codicil at the top of the last page of the will.
A legal writ will attach him (i.e. make him liable) for the debt he owes.
No blame may attach on (or upon) (i.e. adhere to) her for the accident.
“Since it consists only of a relatively short strand of DNA protected by a shell of protein, a virus cannot eat or reproduce by itself. What it can do is attach itself to a host cell and inject its DNA inside.” (David H. Freedman, Discover mag.)

**ATTACHMENT**

The attachment (i.e. affection) between David and Jonathan in the Old Testament became a model for devoted friendship.
The machine had attachments for special cleaning tasks.
The attachment of a child to an animal (i.e. the bond between) can be profound.

**ATTACK** (N)

A night attack by long-range bombers destroyed the city.
Most of the household members suffered from an attack of the flu.
“R.L. Stevenson’s The Lantern-Bearers is an attack on realism that’s unreal.” (G.K. Chesterton, Generally Speaking)

**ATTACK** (V)

The intelligence agent informed us that the enemy planned to attack with tanks at dawn, against our weakest positions.
I will attack you on this bill, if you introduce it.
The cabinet member decided to attack the opposition through its waffling position on electoral reform.

I couldn’t attain to those heights of achievement in several lifetimes.

**ATTEMPT** (N)

At least make an attempt at it.
It wasn’t the first time they made an attempt on her life.

**ATTEND**

It’s your turn to attend to (i.e. take care of) him.

**ATTENDANT**

Debilitating weakness is one of the symptoms attendant to this particular disease.
“Historically, for each 1 percent increase in joblessness in the U.S. economy, the direct result has been 38,886 deaths, 20,240 cardiovascular failures, 494 cases of death from cirrhosis of the liver attendant to alcoholism, 920 suicides, and 648 homicides.” (Harvey Brenner)

**ATTENTIVE**

They were singularly attentive to his appeals for reform.

**ATTITUDE**

The actress assumed an attitude of mock despair.
“We cannot escape the Calvinist attitude to money — that it is something to be accumulated . . that it is naughty to spend it.” (Pierre Berton, The Smug Minority)
Her attitude toward the course of study changed as her knowledge increased.

**ATTRIBUTE** (N)

“But mercy is above this sceptred sway . . It is an attribute to God himself.” (Shakespeare)
Kindness is an attribute of the humane person.
“In his book, The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex, written 12 years after he published his more famous On the Origin of Species, Darwin attributed the origin of human races to our sexual preferences (the survival of the sexiest). Natural selection played no role, Darwin claimed.”

(Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)

“Christianity, one star commentator declared, quoting without attribution from Disraeli, “was completed Judaism or it was nothing”.”

(John Le Carré, The little drummer girl)

He was thoroughly attuned to their way of life.

“Lenders . . wish . . to have their assets as available as they can.” (Rogers, Oxford Universal Dictionary)

That book is available at your corner store.

The documents will be available for your perusal this afternoon.

Here, hospital care is available only in emergencies to insured persons.

“Experts agree that not more than 20% of all positions available on the job market are advertised through newspapers, employment centres or placement agencies. This means that over 80% of vacant positions are not advertised.” (Pointe-Claire Job Search Centre, funded by Human Resources Development Canada)

“Mental health is directly proportionate to the number of perceived options available to any individual. One who is mentally disturbed often lives in a world in which almost every door seems to be closed.”


This should be available to you within 5 days.

The father will avenge the murder of his son by bringing the criminal to justice.

Hitler’s victims seek to avenge themselves on (or upon) the Nazi perpetrators who have so far escaped punishment.

“The boy (Frederick William II) was of an easy-going and pleasure-loving disposition, averse from sustained effort of any kind.” (Encyclopedia Britannica)

“To be averse to something indicates opposition on the subject’s part.” (Michael Gartner: Advertising Age)

“Our advice is to use different from and averse to.”

(Fowler, The King’s English)

Note: Oxford’s King’s English finds from uncomfortable; prefers to in all instances.

She averted her eyes from the ghastly tableau.

The young campers awake at sunrise to the sound of the bugle.

He awoke from his stupor, but it was too late to catch the train.

“Scientists are awakening to its (Antarctica’s) critical importance as the storehouse of 70 percent of the world’s fresh water supply and the source of much of its weather.”

(Lennard Bickel, Antartica, at the other end of the world)

“In man, evolution became aware of self.” (Julian Huxley)
AWAY
Stay away from the fire.
The author decided to do away with (i.e. delete) his last chapter altogether.

AWKWARD
He proved awkward at the task of organizing the computer program.
Although awkward on land, the vehicle was efficient in the water.
The child was awkward in her gestures.
**Babble**

“He babbled, for a long time, about the generosity and goodness of his brother.” (Charles Dickens)

“I bubble in the eddying bays, I babble on the pebbles.”

(Tennyson, *Brook*)

“Griefs too sacred to be babbled to the world.”

(D. Mitchell, *Dream Life*)

**Back**

Make sure you back against the wall.

Our house backed onto a cliff.

Why don’t you back the car out of the garage?

OK, now back all the way to the street.

On a hot day, she backs her car under those trees.

**Baffle**

I am baffled (i.e. puzzled) by his position in this dispute.

The vessel baffled (i.e. struggled) with a gale throughout her voyage.

We can baffle (i.e. confuse) the enemy with this ruse.

**Bait**

The promise of riches was the bait for gold prospectors.

**Balance (N)**

“Balance of trade is . . . the estimation of the difference of value between the exports and imports of a country.”

(Oxford Universal Dictionary)

Try to strike a happy balance between capitalism and freedom in your speech.

**Balance (V)**

I’m trying to balance (i.e. weigh) his arguments against yours.

Can you balance (i.e. steady) yourself on one foot?

The seal was balancing (i.e. steadying) the ball on its nose.

Make sure this set of figures balances with (i.e. equals) that one.

**Balk**

The horse balked at the jump, unseating its rider.

**Bamboozle**

They were bamboozled by the con artist.

So the lawyer bamboozled him into accepting the politician’s rather weak defence.

**Ban (N)**

Individuals have always had to live under the ban of a society that could not tolerate dissent.

The city council placed a ban on parking cars on the street overnight.

**Ban (V)**

“Following a Prussian decree of 1816 which banned (i.e. barred) Jews from the higher ranks of law and medicine, he (the father of Karl Marx) became a Protestant and . . . had his six children baptized.”

(Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*)

Good air and sunny skies are banned (i.e. interdicted) to them for life.

**Bandy**

The ball was bandied (i.e. tossed) from one player to another with lightning speed.

Are you ready to bandy (i.e. exchange) words with me?

**Banish**

Romeo was banished from Verona.

I am banishing them from this country for life.

Napoleon was banished to Elba.
BAR

“At the Lateran Council in 1215, they (the Jews) were barred from owning land and all military and civil functions.”
(from Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 1974)

They are barring him from the next jazz festival.

BARE (A)

He swept the driveway bare of leaves.

BARGAIN (V)

The woman bargained (i.e. haggled) almost an hour with the merchant for the antique vase she wanted.

He is bargaining for (i.e. expecting) good weather.

BARK

The huge dog barked at every passerby.

The sergeant barked his orders to the company.

He is barking up the wrong tree.

BARRIER

The Rocky Mountains were a barrier between Canada’s coasts till the railway was built.

North America was a barrier to Europeans trying to reach Asia by sea.

BASE (N)

The financial experts outlined a sound base (i.e. program) for reform of the economy.

The climbers rested at the base (i.e. bottom) of the mountain.

BASE (V)

I am basing my conclusion on your behaviour up to now.

“Chinese medicine is based on the belief that a life force, or qi, flows through 14 channels in the body and can be stimulated by the insertion of needles (at the 360 acupuncture points).”
(George Howe Colt, Life mag.)

“Biologists don’t know how patterns are created on real mollusks. But mathematical models based on hypothetical interacting chemicals match them with uncanny accuracy.” (Carl Zimmer, Discover mag. 1992)

BASIS

“Isidore’s Etymologies . . became the basis for all teaching in the West for about 800 years.”
(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)

“It is necessary therefore to have a basis for our discussion (i.e. shared assumptions).”
(J. Bright, Oxford English Dictionary)

The prosecutor’s accusations had no basis (i.e. foundation) in fact.

The basis (i.e. principal ingredient) of this cosmetic preparation is a vegetable oil.

BASK

She loved to bask in the sun.

BATHE

“From sunrise to sunset, Mars bathes in dazzling lasershine.” (National Geographic)

He bathed the seedling with a secret chemical.

BATTEN

“Melancholy sceptics with a taste for carrion, who batten (i.e. glut) on the hideous facts of history — persecutions, inquisitions.” (Emerson, Oxford English Dictionary)

BATTER

She was battered by her husband at least twice last year.

“The sample was battered with beams of charged atoms.”
(The Economist mag.)

Sam wasn’t beating my rugs, he was battering them with a baseball bat.

BATTLE (N)

“Lymphocytes, the small white blood cells that lead the body’s battle against infection and cancer.”
(Rob Wechsler, Discover mag.)

The professors engaged in a battle of words over the precise meaning of a term.
“The revival has ignited a bitter lobbying battle between Big Steel and its customers.”
(Christine Gorman, Time mag.)

**BATTLE** *(V)*

“One should never put on one’s best trousers to go out to battle for freedom and truth.”
(Henrik Ibsen, An Enemy of the People)
The waves battled with the winds.

**BEAM** *(V)*

The madman wanted his manifesto beamed (i.e. broadcast) around the world.
Radio programs were beamed at (i.e. transmitted to) Eastern Europe from England.
His moon face beamed (i.e. smiled warmly) down at her from its great height.
“A compact disc (CD) stores music in digital form in some 15 billion microspic pits on its aluminum surface. A laser (then) scans the pits and beams (i.e. transmits) their information to a computer chip for conversion into sound.”
(Stephen Koepp, Time mag.)

**BEAR** *(V)*

Her song was borne (i.e. carried) on the wind.
Your complaint doesn’t bear on (i.e. has no relation to) the subject at all.
Our guns were brought to bear (i.e. bracketed) upon (or on) the enemy’s batteries.
“There is nothing in the world so much admired as a man who knows how to bear (i.e. suffer) unhappiness with courage.” (Seneca)
She bore (i.e. endured) her pain with great fortitude.

**BEARING**

How does that have a bearing on this case?

**BEAT** *(V)*

The rioters are beating (i.e. pounding) against their cell bars with their tin cups.
The ship beat (i.e. ploughed) along the rocky coast.

“Heir mission: to beat (i.e. best) the archetypal mind-polluters at their own game.” (James Geary, Time mag.)
“They shall beat (i.e. hammer) their swords into plowshares.” (Isaiah 2:4)
They beat (i.e. bared) a path to his door.
“And the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” (Matthew 7:25)
He had beaten (i.e. smashed) the poor animal to a pulp.
The mother’s heart beats (i.e. pounds) with joy at the news of her son’s success.
He was beaten (i.e. struck) with sticks till he lay senseless.

**BECKON**

She beckoned to him imperiously from the dais.
He is beckoning me with his finger.

**BECOME**

Don’t you care what becomes of (i.e. happens to) the valuable library book.
It does not become (i.e. befit) us to neglect our civic duty by failing to vote.

**BECOMING**

Her period costume was very becoming (i.e. flattering) to the aging actress.

**BEG**

He begged (i.e. asked) for alms from the people leaving church.
The nuns went door to door, begging food for the poor.
Please don’t beat him; I beg of (i.e. beseech) you.

**BEGIN**

I will begin after breakfast.
The blood drops began at the door.
I must begin by doing something. Anything.
“Professional pianists and violinists . . almost always begin to play by the age of seven or eight.”
(James Shreeve, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)
He had begun from a point directly north of here.
The war began on (or upon) a soft, sunny morning.
“Civilizations decay quite leisurely. For 250 years after moral weakening began in Greece with the Sophists, Hellenic civilization continued to produce masterpieces of literature and art.”
(Will and Ariel Durant, The Story of Civilization)

“The (American Civil) war began over the expansion westward of slavery, not its elimination.”
(The Economist)

I’m beginning to lose patience with you.
Don’t begin under any circumstances.
“If you would change the face of the world, begin with the face in the mirror.” (Anon.)

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**BEHALF**

The lawyer spoke eloquently on behalf of his client.

**BEHAVE**

“Electrons had been thought to exist only as subatomic particles until . . . the quantum theory suggested that electrons could behave as both particles and waves.”
(Jamie Murphy, Time mag.)

They behaved like madmen.
They behave ruthlessly toward (or to) their tenants.

**BEHAVIOUR**

The comedian’s behaviour before an audience commanded attention.

Children should be taught what is acceptable behaviour in a church, theatre or concert hall, as well as on public vehicles and on the street.

The behaviour of some individuals toward the elderly is inconsiderate.

**BELIEF**

There were numerous varieties of Christianity which . . . centred on belief in the resurrection.”
(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)

Strangely, sickness onto death causes most people to betray their belief in God.

(Walt) Whitman wanted his poems to embody “an implicit belief in the the wisdom, health, mystery, beauty of every process, every concrete object, every human and other existence, not only consider’d from the point of view of all, but of each.”
(Christopher Patton quoting Whitman)

**BELIEVE**

“Economists are one of the last groups of professionals on earth who still believe in perpetual motion machines.” (Paul Erlich)

**BELONG**

“The tensions in a harp are so tremendous and unrelenting that it becomes unplayable after fifty years, and belongs on a dump or in a museum.”
(Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Jailbird)

Your mother’s portrait belongs over the fireplace.

Most fruit trees belong to the rose family, including peach, apricot, plum, cherry, apple and pear trees. And - yes - the strawberry, which is considered a tree because it has a wooden stem.

That gift belongs under the Christmas tree.

His book belongs with the classics.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**BELOVED**

“It gave the rustic scenery the kind of self-contained serenity beloved of romantic painters of the nineteenth century.” (The Economist)

**BENEFICIAL**

Why are these tax breaks beneficial to everyone but me?

**BENEFIT (N)**

The actors staged a benefit for one of their fellow artists in distress.

You should give him the benefit of the doubt.
That is of very little benefit to me.

Note: “Benefits of the benefactor; benefits to the beneficiary” (Fowler, The King’s English)
That child is so ill, he’s unlikely to benefit by any kind of holiday.

“Only a few privileged individuals out of the total number of people who have a given disease ever benefit from the results of sophisticated medical technology, and even fewer doctors develop the skill to use them.”

(Ivan Illich, *Toward a History of Need*)

They all have a bent for (i.e. bias to) the obvious.

They left the bar bent (i.e. intent) on mayhem.

“It is this idolatry of self which they (the Romans) have bequeathed to us in the form of patriotism.”

(Simone Weil)

She was bereaved of three generations of her family in the Holocaust.

He was soon bereft of all his worldly goods.

He was beset (i.e. attacked) by his neighbours as soon as he stepped out the door.

She was beset (i.e. harassed) by problems all her married life.

He then besets (i.e. studs) the ring with priceless gems.

They were caught besetting (i.e. studding) jewelry with fake gems.

The next morning, besotted (i.e. stupefied) with drink, he took the ferry back to the mainland.

She was besotted (i.e. infatuated) with words.

He rashly bestowed the award on (or upon) his own brother.

There’s nothing big (i.e. elevating) about bigotry.

(Charles N. Prieur)

That’s big (i.e. generous) of you.

She is big with child (i.e. pregnant)

The vagrant bilked him of all his savings

They bound (i.e. covered) the volumes in red leather.

“Opiate drugs like morphine and heroin can bind (i.e. adhere) to cells in the brain.”

(Rob Wechsler, *Discover* mag.)

Make sure you bind (i.e. tie) their hands with those ropes.

She put the whole blame on me.

“Doppler radars will give pilots advance warning of wind shear conditions, which have been blamed for a number of plane crashes.”

(Gordon Graff)

He blamed the whole mess on his brother.

“I blame it on heredity.”

(Evelyn Waugh, *A little learning*)

The diplomat’s manner was a skilled blend of tact and good humour.

“The town and country met and blended (i.e. became one) in almost perfect harmony.”

(M. Moorcock, *Oxford English Dictionary*)
“Like chameleons, squid have chromatophores — pigment cells in their skin — that allow them to change colour to blend (i.e. melt) into their surroundings.”
(Mark Kemp, Discover mag.)

“Their manner was smoothly blended (i.e. was a smooth mixture) of graciousness and condescension.”
(World Book Dictionary)

The four escapees blended (i.e. mingled closely) with the crowd.

“Pleasant Spring scents . . to blend (i.e. mix in) with the robuster aroma of coffee and fried bacon.”
(P.G. Wodehouse, Oxford English Dictionary)

BLESS

They were blessed (i.e. prayed for) by the chaplain before going into battle.

She blessed (i.e. thanked) him for his kindness.

“The bellman’s drowsy charm to bless (i.e. protect) the doors from nightly harm.”
(Milton, Oxford English Dictionary)

“The Word liveth . . ; and the nations shall bless (i.e. sanctify) themselves in Him.”
(Jer. 4:2, Oxford English Dictionary)

I was blessed (i.e. endowed) with good health all my life.

We found him blessing (i.e. praying over) his congregation with all manner of wild incantations.

BLIND (A)

“Winston Churchill . . though alert to danger in India . . was always blind to perils further east.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

BLIND (V)

“Clouds blind (i.e. hide) the stars from my view.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)

His prejudice blinds him (i.e. closes his eyes) to the facts of the case.

She was suddenly blinded (i.e. made sightless) by the sun.

“Blind with (i.e. blinkered by) science.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)

BLOCK (V)

The whole street was blocked by the fallen crane.

At rush hours, the main arteries are blocked with traffic.

They blocked the road with their trucks.

BLOT (N)

After a lifetime of public service, his financial misdemeanour was a tragic blot on his reputation.

BLOW (N)

“It was like a blow to the pit of my stomach.”
(Anthony Hyde)

BLOW (V)

The old man watched the dry autumn leaves blow across the road.

The factory whistle blows at 7 a.m.

The innkeeper used a small bellows to blow the embers into flame.

The wind blew all the leaves into my garden.

It is not good table manners to blow on your food.

The sudden gust of wind blew my newspaper under the porch.

The wind is blowing through the cracks in the house.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BLUNDER

The horses had to blunder their way alongside the river.

The driver blundered into the wrong lane.

He blundered upon a scouting party and was taken prisoner.

BOARD (V)

I boarded (i.e. had my meals) with the sailors at the hostel.

He is boarding his windows against (i.e. shielding them from) the hurricane with barn siding.

BOAST (V)

He couldn’t help boasting about his deed.

To boast of a virtue is to hollow it with pride. (Anon.)
She boasted to him about her infidelities.

Note: Sometimes, ‘boast’ is a transitive verb and needs no preposition to pre-position the object. As in:

“Critic . . A person who boasts himself hard to please, because nobody tries to please him.”

(Ambrose Pierce, The Devil’s Dictionary)

**BOAT (V)**

They boated down the river, singing at the top of their lungs.

“Leopoldine, daughter of Victor Hugo, drowned with her young husband, while boating on the Seine . . His other daughter, Adèle, died mad.”

(Charles McCarr, National Geographic mag.)

**BOGGLE**

The mind just boggles at this concept of the universe.

**BOIL (V)**

Water deprived of its air will not boil at 212 °F.

“Martyrs were stoned, or crucified, or burned in fire, or boiled in oil.” (Tennyson, Oxford English Dictionary)

I want it boiled down (i.e. reduced to) a sentence.

The mob surged and boiled (i.e. stormed) through every room of the palace.

The revolutionaries boiled with rage at the injustices inflicted upon the hapless serfs.

**BOOK (V)**

Shall I book (i.e. charge) it to you or to your father? (British)

**BOOST (N)**

We’re relying on you to give a boost (i.e. encouragement) to your Alma Mater.

Inflation was increased by a boost (i.e. surge) in prices.

The child needed a boost (i.e. lift) over the fence.

**BORDER (V)**

“Goethe said that many of his best poems were written in a condition that bordered on (i.e. approximated) somnambulism.” (Lyall Watson, Supernature)

The garden is bordered with (i.e. hedged by) evergreens.

**BORN**

“We are born for cooperation, as are the feet, the hands, the eyelids and the upper and lower jaws.”

(Marcus Aurelius)

“Children born in Italy in 1348, the year of the Great Plague, grew no more than 24 teeth instead of the normal 32.” (Elwin Newman, Sunday Punch)

They were born into wealth.

“We are born of love. It is the only principle of existence and its only end.” (Benjamin Disraeli)

“It is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.” (St. Francis of Assisi)

“A baby is born with prefabricated flexure lines on its hand; and what can be the survival value of these?”

(Hugh Montefiore, The Probability of God)

**BORROW**

“The original idea of our civilization, the only one that we have not borrowed from the Greeks, is the idea of the spirituality of labour.” (Simone Weil)

**BOUNCE (V)**

She bounced (i.e. sprang) from her chair in a fury.

The children bounced (i.e. bounded) on the trampoline with great glee, until one of them bounced (i.e. rebounded) off the edge and fell to the floor.

“One (guard) even bounced upon the (King’s) bed and felt every inch for any threatening thing.” (George Garrett, Death of the Fox)

The ball bounces (i.e. bounds) over the wall occasionally.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**BOUND (V)**

The property was bounded (i.e. hemmed in) by the river on one side and woods on the other.

They left at dawn, bound (i.e. headed) for they knew not what adventure.

The dancer bounds (i.e. leaps) into the air as if free of gravity.

The retriever loved to bound (i.e. leap) through the tall grass.

She was bound (i.e. compelled) to go for it.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.
Note: If the ‘bound’ you’re looking for is the past tense of the verb ‘bind’, see ‘bind’.

BOUNDARY
“It also promises to resolve the boundary between people and animals.” (Matt Cartmill, Discover mag., Nov. ‘98)
Ideas are the boundaries of thought.

BOW (V)
The wreath-layers bowed to the Unknown Soldier.
The old lady’s back was bowed (i.e. arched) by age.
The boat’s bridge is bowed (i.e. bent) like an arch.
The Japanese lawyer bowed us (i.e. escorted us with bows) into his office.
Disgusted with the partnership, they bowed (i.e. backed) out of the agreement.
The whole crowd suddenly bowed (i.e. inclined their heads in reverence) as one to their sovereign.

BRAND (V)
“The remnants were eventually branded as (i.e. accused of being) heretics.”
(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)
The bulls were branded with hot irons.

BREACH (N)
“The breaking of that trust (in words) . . is symptomatic of breach of trust with God.” (The Economist)

BREAK (V)
“One of the extraordinary properties of holograms is their resistance to damage or loss of memory. A tiny fragment or chip broken anywhere from the plate essentially holds all the information of the whole plate.”
(Yatri, Unknown Man)
They broke (i.e. smashed their way) into the house while the owner was away on vacation.
The composer loved to listen to the sea break (i.e. crash) on the rocks.

“The classic example of entropy is a car rusting in a junkyard; entropy breaks down the orderly machinery into crumbling rust.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)
Without warning, King Charles the First broke in upon (or on) (i.e. interrupted unexpectedly) a sitting of the House of Commons, hoping to trap the leaders.
He decided to break with (i.e. sever himself from) the past and start afresh.

BREAKTHROUGH
“Breakthroughs in miniaturization could lead to robots the size of a flea.” (Philip Elmer De Witt, Time mag.)

BREATHE
“In every single breath of yours there are no less than 2 billion atoms that were once breathed by this great man (Leonardo da Vinci).”
(Heinz Haber, The Walt Disney story of our friend the atom)
“66 species of dolphins, porpoises, and other toothed whales inhabit the earth’s water . . breathing from openings on the tops of their heads.”
(Justine Kaplan, Omni mag.)

“Ideas are the mightiest influence on earth. One great thought breathed into a man may regenerate him.”
(Channing)
“The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.”
(Shakespeare)

BRIBE (V)
She bribed her dog with scraps from the table.

BRIDLE (V)
The young wife bridled (i.e. expressed resentment) at every criticism against her husband.

BRIEF (V)
He found himself briefed by the whole assemblage.
I was briefed on the subject as soon as I stepped into the office.
BRIGHTEN

“Only a very tired seagull would have brightened at the sight of its dank greenstone cliffs.”  
(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

The new owners brightened the old house with fresh paint.

BRIM (V)

“Current cosmology is brimming with exotic theories.”  
(The Economist)

BRING

The government intends to bring a court action against companies which pollute the environment.

“...the family of a landless Indian peasant now spends about six hours a day merely finding the firewood it needs for cooking and heating. Another four to six hours are spent bringing water from a well.”  
(Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)

BRUSH (V)

It is impolite to brush against someone on a bus, if this can be avoided.

He brushed by me as he left the house.

She brooded upon her child’s deathly pallor.

BUCKLE (V)

The mother buckled her child into the car seat.

BUILD

“Mitochondria, like chloroplasts, are built according to an elaborate blueprint.”  
(Life Science Library, The Cell)

“Build better schoolrooms for the boy than cells and gibbets for the man.”  
(Eliza Cook)

The robin had built its nest in the eavestrough.

“Nature has built its own carefully constructed electronic devices into all organisms.”  
(Life Science Library, The Cell)

“Nanoengineers believe in a ‘bottom-up’ approach. Take atoms and molecules and custom build them into larger objects — ultra-strong materials, designer foods, even tiny robots.”  
(Michael Krantz, Time mag.)

“Proteins are very large molecules built of simpler units called amino acids.”  
(Mind Alive mag.)
“Istanbul (known for 1600 years as Constantinople) is the only city in the world to be built on two continents.”
(James Stewart-Gordon, Reader’s Digest)
It was the first bridge built over that river.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BUILDUP (N)
“Glaucoma is the buildup of fluid in the eyeball, causing increased pressure and eventual damage to the optic nerve.” (Andrew Purvis, Time mag.)

BULK (V)
“The question of the Russian zone of occupation in Germany therefore did not bulk in our thoughts or in Anglo-American discussions, nor was it raised by any of the leaders at Teheran.”
(Winston Churchill about the Iron Curtain)

BURDEN (V)
“Let us not burden our remembrance with a heaviness that is gone.” (William Shakespeare)

BURN (VV)
She was burned brown by the sun.
“Thanks to electromagnetism, the sun does not explode, but burns smoothly for billions of years.”
(Sheldon Lee Glashow, Discover mag., 1989)
“Many people didn’t even know of the atom’s existence — until that day in 1945 when a frightful flash burned the word “atom” into the mind of modern man.”
(Heinz Haberb, The Walt Disney story of our friend the atom)
Candles burn in every corner of the church.
Lightning struck the old farmhouse, and it burned to the ground.
The cigarette had burnt through the upholstery.
She burned with desire.
“Oh, oh, oh,” Falstaff cries as the supposedly merry wives of Windsor burn him with tapers.”
(Otto Friedrich, Time mag.)

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

BURST (V)
With the sudden heat, the apple trees burst into bloom.
“The Fourth of July fireworks burst into being a second ahead of their muffled bangs.” (John Updike)
He suddenly burst (i.e. charged) through the doorway.
“In August 1986, bubbles of carbon dioxide accumulating at the bottom of (Lake Nyos in Cameroon) . . . burst to the surface; a blanket of dense carbon dioxide and water vapor spread over nearby villages, killing cattle and 1,700 people.”
(Discover mag., Oct. 1988)
The pantry was bursting (i.e. overloaded) with every kind of baked delicacy.

BURY (VV)
She was buried by the same priest who had married her only a few weeks before.
They buried their beloved father in a small orchard within sight of the homestead.
They are burying him under the bridge, where he died.

BUSY
I never thought I would be this busy in my old age.
I’m sorry, but I’m too busy to attend the meeting tonight.
He was busy with another set of problems.

BUY (V)
She ran out to buy cigarettes at the corner store.
I bought a doll for Anita and a teddy bear for Sue.
They always bought their fish from the same passing peddler.
They only buy fruit in season.
Consumers are buying too much on credit.
It was possible in the 19th century for a soldier to buy himself out of the army.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.
CALL (V)
I called (i.e. stopped for a short spell) at his shop on the way home.
Why don't you have her sister call for her (i.e. pick her up).
He called for (i.e. demanded) his morning cup of coffee.
“Americans must call on more brain space to learn a second language than they did to assimilate English.”
(Sharon Begley with John Carey and Ray Sawhill, Newsweek mag., 1983)
I called to her as she crossed the square.

CALVE
In 1982, an enormous chunk of freshwater ice calved from an ice shelf on Ellesmere Island.

CAPABLE
“Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom.”
(Benjamin Franklin)
“Stem cells (are) capable of generating an endless supply of red cells, white cells and platelets.”
(Peter Radetsky, Discover mag.)
“The new digital video disc (DVD) . . is capable of storing 4.7 gigabytes of data per side — enough to show a full-length feature film with stereo sound and a cinema-quality picture.” (The Economist mag, June 1, ’96)

CAPACITATE
“Current research shows the human brain to be marvelously designed and capacitated beyond the wonders with which it was invested by innocent imagination.” (Scientific American mag.)
“We are infinitely capacitated for the future.”
(Dr. Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

CAPACITY
“The human liver has a great capacity for regeneration (i.e. ability to regenerate) . . and can rebuild a large portion of itself within a month.”
The capacity (i.e. volume) of that reservoir is staggering.

CAPTURE (V)
“A newly discovered molecule is thought to be a component of interstellar dust. Its essence is better captured by R. Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic dome, the many-sided structure whose perfect symmetry ensures perfect stability.” (Sarah Boxer, Discover mag.)
He captures the spawning salmon with a net.

CARE (V)
I just don’t care (i.e. worry) about that.
It’s incumbent on the healthy to care for (i.e. look after) the sick.
She doesn’t care for (i.e. like) candies.
I think she is caring for his two children this afternoon.

CARELESS
He was careless about details.
“Yet a boy careless (i.e. having no care) of books.”
(Wordsworth, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CARRY
“One hair-thin strand of (pure glass fiber) can carry (i.e. transport) as many telephone conversations as 625 copper wires and with greater clarity.”
(Stephen Koepp, Reader’s Digest)
“Because babies usually carry (i.e. have) their mother’s antibodies for the first year or so of their life, all of them — even the perfectly healthy ones — will test positive using antibody tests.” (Yvonne Baskin, Discover mag, 1990)
“In four centuries, the European slave trade carried over ten million slaves from Africa, over sixty percent of them between 1721 and 1820.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)
“Mitochondrial DNA has a unique characteristic that makes it very useful for tracing lineages. It is *carried in* the egg, but not in the sperm, so it is passed on to children only from their mothers.”
(David Noonan, *Discover* mag., Oct. ’90)

They *carried* the old man *in* a chair *into* the garden.

“An endless supply of oxygen, amino acids, nitrogen, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sugars, lipids, cholesterol, and hormones surge past our (100 trillion) cells, *carried on* blood cell rafts or suspended in the (blood) fluid. Each cell has special withdrawal privileges to gather the resources needed to fuel a tiny engine for its complex chemical reaction.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, *In His Image*)

“Light is suited to *carring* enormous numbers of precise digital signals *at* high speed *over* long distances.”
(Stephen Koepp, *Reader’s Digest*)

“Human red-blood cells are saucer-shaped and fairly flat, permitting the ready transfer of the oxygen and carbon dioxide they *carry throughout* the body.”
(The Cell, *Life Science Library*)

“A complex protein, produced in a nasal gland, has been identified as the chemical messenger that *carries* aromas *to* the odor-sensing nerves in the nose.”
(AP Washington/Montreal Gazette)

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**CASE (N)**

It was a *case of* pure neglect.

“Paul, attempting to interpret Christ, did not even try to construct a *case for* the legitimate use of force.”
(Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity*)

That’s the whole *case in* question.

**CAST (V)**

They *cast* me *for* (i.e. chose me to play) the part.

“Horses *cast* (i.e. rejected) *from* the cavalry.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“A figure *cast* (i.e. formed) *in* soft wax.”
(Hogarth, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“To *cast* (i.e. thrown) *into* hell.”
(Jowett, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“The discovery in Antarctica of the fossil beak of a giant carnivorous “terror bird”, 10 to 12 feet tall and probably the most dangerous bird ever to have existed, is *casting* (i.e. shedding) new light *on* the role of that continent in the evolution and worldwide spread of species.”
(Walter Sullivan, *New York Times*)

“Cast (i.e. throw) thy bread *upon* the waters.”
(Ecclesiastes, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**CATALYST**

“In field after field — astronomy, quantum mechanics, nuclear physics, cosmology — (John) Wheeler’s ideas have been the *catalyst* *for* breakthroughs.”
(John Boslough, *Reader’s Digest*)

**CATER**

“He that . . providently *cater* *for* the Sparrow.”
(A.Y.L.II, iii, 44, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Most of the cells in the cortex (newest part of the brain) respond only to lines of a particular orientation, between them *catering for* orientations at all degrees from vertical to horizontal and back.”
(Hugh Monterfiore, *The Probabilities of God*)

More than 2000 galleries (in Japan in 1987) — 300 of them crowding Tokyo’s exclusive Ginza — *cater to* collectors.

**CAUSE (N)**

His sudden appearance was a *cause for* deep concern.

“God is the supreme and universal *Cause of* all things.” (Edmund Berkeley, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

**CAUSE (V)**

“It takes long intimacy, long and familiar interliving, before one kind of creature can *cause* illness *in* another.”
(Lewis Thomas, *The Lives of a Cell*)

“Fever and other flu symptoms are *caused by* the body’s efforts to rid itself of the (influenza virus) invader.”
(Robert M. Sapolsky, *Discover* mag., 1990)

“I will *cause* the sun *to* go down at noon.”
(Amos, *The Bible*)
CELEBRATE

“Until the first half of the 20th century, the conquest and colonization of a weaker nation was celebrated as a patriotic event. Today, even mild economic exploitations are loudly condemned across the world as imperialism.” (F.M. Esfandiary, *Optimism One*)

They are celebrating their release in a bistro in Montmartre.

They celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on Wednesday.

“Lord Manny Shinwell celebrated his 100th birthday with a good cigar and several flagons of whisky.” (James Brady, Advertising Age)

CENSOR

All references to actual persons were censored from his script.

CENTRAL

That was central to his debate.

CENTER, CENTRE

“Supreme authority was at last centred in a single person.” (Fowler’s Modern English Usage)

The eyes usually center on a point about one-third down the page. That’s why they call that point the ‘optical center’.

Note: NEVER centre about or around

CERTAIN

Are you certain about that?
I am certain of only one thing at the moment.

CHALK (V)

She quickly chalked her name on the blackboard.

“This difference has been chalked up to a presumed involvement in language processing.” (James Shreve, *Discover* mag., Oct. ’96)

CHAMPIONSHIP

“The majority (of the council of regency) deeply resented his championship (i.e. advocacy) of the poor against greedy landlords and capitalists.” (Encyclopedia Britannica re the Earl of Somerset)

They won the tennis championship (i.e. supremacy) of the world for the second year running.

CHANCE (N)

Her chance of succeeding was one in a million.

He had no chance (i.e. opportunity) to save himself.

CHANCE (V)

They chanced (i.e. happened) on (or upon) the fossil on the first day.

You never know; you might chance on the right number tomorrow.

CHANGE (N)

“A change in the weather is enough to renew the world and ourselves.” (Marcel Proust)

After a quick change of clothes, he returned to his office.

Each photo incorporates a small change to the original.

CHANGE (V)

“The basic idea is that synapses (in the brain) change in efficiency according to their frequency of use.” (The Economist mag., June 13, ’87)

His smile changed to fury at the mention of that name.

“Irradiation changes the molecular composition of food in unpredictable ways . . So does barbecuing.” (Dennis Demlinger)

The situation changed from bad to worse.

Plants can do something no animal can do: change nonliving substance into living substance, i.e. inorganic into organic.

She changed her confession under duress.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.
CHANNEL (V)
“The Protestant Ethic with its emphasis on thrift, unremitting toil, and the deferral of gratification . . . channeled enormous energies into the tasks of economic development.” (Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)
Isn’t it time you channelled your energy into something constructive?

CHARACTERISTIC (A)
“Nowhere more than here (at the front of the skull) has there been greater expansion of the brain matter during the transition from primate to man, and this accounts for the high forehead characteristic of homo sapiens.” (Hugh Montefiore, The Probability of God)

CHARACTERISTIC (N)
“Superstition is . . not the characteristic of this age.” (Junius, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CHARGE (N)
The charge (i.e. accusation) against them is vandalism.
That nurse is in charge of (i.e. responsible for) too many children!
Yes, there is a charge (i.e. price) on that item.
The judge’s charge (i.e. instructions) to jury members was to be thorough in weighing the evidence.
The two were charged with (i.e. accused of) theft.

CHARGE (V)
Why don’t you charge that against (i.e. deduct from) his salary?
I will only charge (i.e. invoice) you for the first two days.
The interest is charged (i.e. applied) only on the second part of the debt.
Should I charge (i.e. bill) that order to your room?
“A magnetron is a . . vacuum tube in which a wire coated with excess electrons gets charged (i.e. loaded) with electricity . . and generates electromagnetic waves.” (Mark Rowan, Discovery mag.)
They’ve been charged with the job (i.e. given the responsibility) of keeping the stadium clean.
I’m charged with (i.e. accused of) a crime I did not commit.

CHASTENED
“A nation with a low birth rate shall be periodically chastened by some more virile and fertile group.” (Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

CHEAT (V)
“Cheat me in the price, but not in the goods.” (Thomas Fuller)
“Cheating on a large scale is supposed to have something about it that’s imperial and therefore impeccable.” (G.K. Chesterton)

CHECK (V)
He checked (i.e. searched) his pockets for loose change.
Why don’t you check on his whereabouts (i.e. find him).
You check on (or upon) (i.e. investigate) the man, while I check his bank account. (American)
Are you checking (i.e. keeping tabs) on me again?

CHEER (N)
Three cheers for the winner.
There was a wild round of cheers from the bleachers.

CHINK
“As the wind veered, it discovered chinks in the landscape.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

CHOCKABLOCK
“At the beginning of the 20th century, Vienna was chockablock with giants of the age: Freud and Wittgenstein, Mahler, Berg and Schoenberg, Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka, Hoffman, Wagner, Loos — as well as the young Adolf Hitler.” (Kurt Andersen, Time mag.)

CHOICE
You have a choice between squealing on him or going to prison.
I’ll give you the choice of weapon.
CHOOSE

The writer chooses according to preferences learned from personal experience.
He chose among all the horses in that corral.
She is busy choosing between the three cookies on that tray.
“The average doctor (in 1990) has some 50,000 drugs to choose from when writing out a prescription. Bewildered by the choice, few doctors ever prescribe more than 100.” (Discover mag.)

CIRCULATE

“While T cells circulate in the blood, (our) body’s billions of macrophages (large scavenging white blood cells) tend to collect in organs and tissues such as the spleen, skin, and lining of the abdomen and lungs”
(Jeff Miller, Discover mag.)

CITE

You could cite all those as precedents.
“Well over half our total (English) vocabulary is foreign: of the five English words cited by Tovarish Vasilyev as ‘torturers’ of the Russian tongue, not one is ‘pure’ English.” “Boss” comes from Dutch, “plantation” from Latin, and “referee”, “office” and “service” from French.”
(Robert Claiborne, Our Marvelous Native Tongue)

CLAIM (N)

I’m afraid she has a claim on (or upon) my time.
“No law has any claim over us unless our conscience approves it as right and just.” (Roman Catholic Church)
He will lay claim to your property tomorrow.
“A claim to kindness.”
(Johnson, Universal English Dictionary)

CLASH (N)

The clash between the two families goes back to the Reformation.
“The clash of arguments and jar of words.” (Cowper)
The clash on that issue was heard around the world.

CLASH (V)

The new phisophy clashed against rooted tradition.
That clashes with everything I’ve ever learned.

CLASSIFY

“All viruses are named and classified according to the diseases they cause, and what they affect.” (Mind Alive mag.)
All these are classified as sponges.

CLAW (V)

The only thing I could do was claw at his eyes.
They clawed their way over the dead bodies, into a grotto.
She clawed through the sand, looking for her contact lens.
I clawed a path under the debris till I found daylight.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CLEAR (A)

“Clear as the sun.” (Song of Solomon, Old Testament)
Steer clear of (i.e. away from) that door!
That’s very clear to me!

CLEAR (V)

First, he cleared a path around the house.
The firemen cleared their way into the burning house.
Our job is to clear that bridge of the enemy.
“If your cholesterol-removal system is working well, it doesn’t matter if you eat cheeseburgers . . because you’re going to be able to clear the cholesterol out of the cells.”
(Larry Husten, Discover mag.)
They are clearing their way through the brush.
She cleared the debris under the porch, worried about what she might find.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CLEAVE

“Today . . the created world has lost its sacredness. Christians have abandoned it, not to paganism, but to physics, geology, biology, and chemistry. We . . have cleaved nature from the supernatural.”
(Philip Yancey, Fearfully & Wonderfully Made)
“Gravitational tides can cleave a giant star in two.”
(David H. Freedman, Discover mag., Nov. ’99)

CLEVER
He’s clever at math and with words.
That’s very clever of you.

CLIMB (V)
First, climb by him, then loosen that rope.
Young man, climb down that tree this minute.
He climbed into the foliage and waited patiently.
He is climbing over anyone who stands in his way.
Go ahead; climb through the window.
Life expectancy, just 20 years in Greek and Roman times, could climb to 90 by the year 2030 and 100 by the year 2050.
Climb up the trellis, boy.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

CLING
She is clinging to me for dear life.
“Adjectives — brilliant, egotistic, rude, unorthodox — clung to (Admiral Hyman G.) Rickover like barnacles to boats . . (He) first grasped the potential of nuclear power at sea.” (Michael Duffy, Time mag.)

CLOAK (N)
The dealer’s antique shop serves as a cloak for (i.e. conceals) his shady activities.
“Humility is made the cloak of pride.” (Robert Southey, World Book Dictionary)

CLOAK (V)
The novelist liked to cloak (i.e. disguise) his plots in obscurities and ambiguities.
Evil purposes can be cloaked under fine speeches.
“To cloak her guile with sorrow.” (Spenser, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CLOG
Ischemia (heart attack) happens when coronary arteries, either clogged with fatty deposits or temporarily contracted by stress, are contracted even more by spasms or are blocked by a clot; depriving the heart muscle of blood and thus oxygen.

CLOISTER (V)
“By afternoon, Loch Linnhe was arched and cloistered with rainbows.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

CLOSE (A)
“Mercury, the planet closest to the sun, is also the densest in our solar system: between 60 and 70% iron.”
(Robert Kunzig, Discover mag.)

CLOSE (V)
“Flowers . . expand at 6 or 7, and close at 2 in the afternoon.” (W. Withering, Oxford English Dictionary)
London’s Globe theatre, where Shakespeare opened his plays, was reduced to ashes in 1613. Though soon after rebuilt, it was closed by Cromwell in 1644.
The door closed on my foot.
That car is closing on (i.e. overtaking) us.
Close the doors to all reporters.
They closed with (i.e. neared) the other ship, then boarded it.

CLOTHE
“A good intention clothes itself with power.” (Emerson)

CLUE
It was the only clue I had to his character.

CLUMSY
He is clumsy at his job with whatever tool they give him.
He is even clumsy in the way he walks.

CLUSTER
In another classroom, children cluster around a computer.
CLUTTER (V)
The yard was cluttered with the debris of many years.

CO-OPT
They co-opted me to (or on to) the special commando force.

COAT
“One-foot-square panels, coated with amorphous silicon, (are) the most widely used thin-film material for converting sunlight to electricity.”
(Tony Baer, Discovery mag.)
Now she wants to coat the whole thing with boat varnish.

COEVOLVE
“Each type of bacterium has coevolved with its mammalian host.” (Sarah Richardson, Discover mag.)

COEXIST
“Suppose that there is an infinite number of universes coexisting with this one.” (The Economist)

COEXTENSIVE
“The Church . . was already coextensive with the empire.” (Paul Johnson)

COGNATE
He is cognate with the Royal family of England.

COGNIZANT
The police are cognizant of his every move.

COHERE
The new metal coheres with the wood underneath.

COINCIDE
“The birth of religion coincides with the appearance of humanity on the stage of history.” (Mind Alive mag.)

COLLABORATE
You collaborate with me and I’ll make you rich.
“Globally-linked computers . . allow investigators to collaborate or kibitz on experiments while continents apart.” (Gary Stix, Scientific American mag., Dec.’94)

COLLABORATION
She counted on the collaboration of everyone present.
Your collaboration with her on that job made all the difference.

COLLAPSE (V)
Grievously wounded, the man collapsed against me.
She collapsed in a heap.
After too many drinks, the writer’s discourse collapsed into incoherence.
The arena’s roof collapsed on the players inside.
The whole contraption is sort of collapsing onto itself.
There was great merriment when the chair collapsed under him.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

COLLABORATE
Try to collate your facts with mine.

COLLECT
We should all collect (i.e. gather) at her home.
The women were collecting the fabric for a quilt.
Radar images of the earth, collected from orbit by . . space shuttle, reveal our planet with startling clarity.
“Flower nectar is usually collected within one mile of the hive.” (Garner and Sue Wilson, Montreal Gazette)

COLLIDE
“In all materials, in solids as well as gases and liquids, the atoms are constantly in motion, vibrating and colliding with each other, creating thermal energy. The wilder the motion, the greater the heat.”
(William Booth, Washington Post)
The van collided with her car and she is badly hurt.
COLLISION

“The world before our time survived suffocating ice ages and cataclysmic collisions with meteors.”
(The Gazette, Montreal)

“The collision of harsh consonants.”
(Gray, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

COLOR, COLOUR (V)

The sea was colored red by the algae.
She then colours it for effect.
Colour it with any paints handy.

COMBINE (V)

“Combining antimatter with matter could be a way to lift future rockets into space.” (Tom Waters, Discover mag.)

COME

She came across his letter by accident.
He came at me before I had a chance to defend myself.
Don’t let anything come between you two.
I will come for you tomorrow.

“Every atom of gold on earth comes ultimately from supernovas.” (The Economist/Reader’s Digest)

“The oxygen people breathe originally came from (an) exploding star.” Claude Canizares, Dallas Morning News
Evil comes from enjoying what we ought to use and using what we ought to enjoy. (A great medieval philosopher)

“The common cold virus is troublesome, because it comes in at least 100 identifiable variations.”
(Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)

“99% of the creatures ever to have come into existence have vanished.” (Gregg Easterbrook, Newsweek mag.)

He came to grief before he was ten years old.
They came up with interpretations of their own.

COMFORTABLE

“It would be no sort of a life if we felt entirely comfortable in it.” (P.J. Kavanagh, Finding Connections)
Only one teacher in ten feels comfortable with that theory.

COMMAND (N)

They gave him command of (i.e. authority over) the regiment.
His command (i.e. mastery) of English was remarkable.
There were commands to stop at every junction.

COMMEND

I commend you to your principal for living up to your principles.

COMMENSURATE

He prayed for a punishment commensurate with the crime.

COMMENT (N)

I found his comments about me very hurtful.
If you have any comments on this subject, let’s hear them now.

COMMENT (V)

She commented on everything I said.

COMMENTARY

The scribes filled whole libraries with their commentaries on the Holy Scriptures.

COMMISERATE

He refused to commiserate with her.

COMMISSION (N)

His commission (i.e. appointment) as first officer had just come through.
I should get a commission (i.e. pro rata remuneration) for that sale.
He had to answer for the commission of (i.e. committing) a crime ten years ago.
There was a 15% commission (i.e. payment to middleman) on every copy.

“I have a commission (i.e. I am mandated) to find you.”
(J. Rathbone, Oxford English Dictionary)
COMMISSION (V)

He was commissioned by the art gallery to do a painting.

COMMIT

“Today (1986), all but seven of the world’s more than 170 nations are committed to a single written charter of rights. And every one of them owes something to the American model that turns 200 next year.”

(Richard Lacayo, Time mag.)

COMMON

“China’s plight was the result of the optimistic belief, common to intellectuals of the Left, that revolutions solve more problems than they raise.”

(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

“All the psychological evidence seems to suggest that an infant is predisposed to learn certain things — the classic example being the ‘deep structure’ that seems to be common to all language. This obviously implies that the genes contain instructions for wiring up brains.”

(The Economist mag., June 13, ’87)

COMMUNE

Aubrey needed to commune with his peers.

COMMUNICATE

“In telecommunications . . we are moving toward the capability to communicate anything to anyone, anywhere, by any form — voice, data, text, or image — at the speed of light.”

(J. Naishbitt & P. Aburdene, Megatrends 2000)

She communicated by semaphore.

“I’m much more interested in communicating (information) to dolphins and learning how they communicate with one another.”

(Louis Herman, Omni mag.)

“His (Shakespeare’s) genius resides in his mysterious ability to communicate with times, spaces and cultures far removed from his own.”

(Northrop Frye)

COMMUTE

He always liked to commute by train to his cottage up north.

Francois-Xavier Prieur’s death sentence for his leading part in Canada’s 1837 Rebellion was commuted to (i.e. exchanged for a lighter sentence) exile for life in Australia. They commuted (i.e. made regular trips) to and from New York every working day of the year.

COMPANION

Sandra is the companion of my friend Terry.

“Companions in sin.”

(Quarles, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

You are more of a companion to me than my own son.

COMPANY

She was in the company of a man who gave me the shivers.

He came in company with three other horsemen.

COMPARE

“(Stradivarius) produced perhaps 1500 violins . . He made a handful of great instruments, but there are an awful lot that sound feeble compared to modern ones.”

(Robert Teitelman quoting Norman Pickering, Forbes mag.)

“In England . . property stands for more, compared with personal ability, than in any other (country).”

(Emerson, Oxford English Dictionary)

Note: Use to for illustration, with to examine qualities.

COMPARISON

There was no comparison to last year’s record rainfall.

She suffered in comparison with the rest of her class.

COMPASSION

He has absolutely no compassion for the unemployed.

She took compassion on me.

COMPATIBILITY

There is simply no compatibility between their points of view.

“The compatibility of such properties in one thing.”

(Barrow, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

Frankly, my compatibility with you is minimal.
COMPATIBLE
This is compatible with your views.
“It is essential that we continue to respect freedom of thought and expression in so far as this is compatible with the laws of the state and national unity.”
(General de Gaulle)
“Our location in the Universe is necessarily privileged to the extent of being compatible with our existence as observers.”
(Brandon Carter, cosmologist, National Review mag.)

COMPENDIUM
His book was a compendium of all the current gossip.

COMPENSATE
“The right brain tends to compensate for left-brain damage.”
(Edwin M. Reingold, Time mag.)

COMPENSATION
“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”
(Charles Waldo Emerson)
His aggressive behaviour was compensation for his feelings of insecurity.

COMPETE
To a man, they refused to compete against me.
They are competing for the Stanley Cup.
I don’t intend to compete in any other race this year.
“Animals compete fiercely with men for their food in an overpopulated world, unless they are thistle eaters like donkeys and camels.”
(Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Needs)

COMPETENT
He is only competent at archery in sports.
She is very competent in her own field.
The student is competent enough to try her hand at it.

COMPETITION
“From competition among traders (comes) reduction of prices.”
(Bentham, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
There’s competition for land in every country.
“Competition to the Crown there is none, nor can be.”
(Bacon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“The Priesthood, which ever has been in some competition with Empire.”
(Bacon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

COMPLACENT
She’s so complacent about her state of health that she doesn’t even bother to take her medicine.

COMPLAIN
Why don’t you complain about me while you’re at it?
She complained of the scurrilous review.

COMPLAINT
I have no complaints whatever about his conduct.
There has been many a complaint against him.
There were a lot of complaints from the east end of the city.
“Complaints of lower back pain alone costs U.S. industry $4.6 billion in annual workers’ compensation payments.”
(Institute of Industrial Engineers, Atlanta,1988)

COMPLEMENT (N)
Justice is not always the complement (i.e. full amount) of the law.
The complement (i.e. full crew) of the ship was 118.

COMPLEMENTARY
That’s complementary to the money I gave you last month.

COMPLETE (A)
The hat came complete with feathers.
COMPLETE (V)
Try to complete your book for me by the end of the month. “The Mausoleum, the huge, marble temple . . completed in 350 B.C., in memory of King Mausoleus, “became one of the Seven Wonders of the World.” (Michael Gartner, Advertising Age)

COMPLIANCE
The stock exchange requires compliance with by-laws that are not always in the public interest.

COMPLIMENT (N)
Compliments of the season.
A compliment to one person may be an insult to someone else.

COMPLIMENT (V)
They complimented him for doing such a great job.
I complimented him on his appearance.

COMPLIMENTARY
That’s complimentary to my last letter.

COMPLY
You must either comply with the rules of this school or get out.
“When my hand surrounds an object — a ripe tomato, a ski pole, a kitten, another hand — the fat and collagen redistribute themselves and assume a shape to comply with the shape of the object being grasped.” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)

COMPOSE
“An apple is composed (i.e. consists) of seeds, flesh, and skin.” (William Stunk Jr. and E.B.White, The Elements of Style)
V.S. Naipaul is “one of the greatest living writers in the English language . . His themes, his vision of human destiny in our time, are composed (i.e. written) with a perfection of language, a flawless structure, and above all a profound knowledge of the world.” (Elizabeth Hardwick)

COMPOST
“In human affairs as in nature, decay is compost for new growth.” (Barbara W. Tuchman, History as Mirror)
A compost (i.e. combination) of leaves and grass.

COMPOUND (N)
It’s a compound of many chemicals.

COMPOUND (V)
It’s compounded of chalk and arsenic.
I will try to compound salt with sugar.

COMPRESS (V)
“Diesels rely on heat generated by compressing air in their cylinders in order to ignite fuel.” (The Economist)
I propose to compress air to the nth degree.

COMPRISED
That charge is comprised in the total.
It is comprised of the bats, the ball and the net.

COMPROMISE
He will compromise in some things and not in others.
I will compromise with you on any agreement but this one.

CONCEAL
He is concealing the kitten behind his back.
In Shakespeare’s play, As you Like It, Rosalind conceals her identity by dressing as a man.
I will conceal the money for you till tomorrow noon, but no longer.
I was told the loot is concealed somewhere in this house.
She concealed the packets of heroin on her person.
“Remember that what you are told is really threefold: shaped by the teller, reshaped by the listener, concealed from both by the dead man of the tale.” (V. Nabokov, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight)
CONCEIVE

“Only apes, it seems, alone among animals, can truly distinguish themselves from the world around them. But only the naked apes (man), apparently, can conceive of (i.e. grasp with the mind) not just ‘self’ but ‘others’.”
(Karen Wright, Discover mag., Nov. ‘96)

CONCENTRATE

They are concentrating (i.e. bunching up) at every crossroads and in every public square.

“During the past five million years, evolution seems to have concentrated (i.e. focused) most of its energy in the process of human development.”
(Lyall Watson, Supernature)

“Venture capital tends to concentrate (i.e. come together) near the coasts. (In 1986) 44% of all such funds (U.S.) went to California.” (Therese Engstrom)
Forget the frills; concentrate (i.e. focus) on the essentials.

CONCENTRATION

Her concentration on the work at hand was almost manic.

CONCERNED

I am very concerned (i.e. worried) about her.

He is very concerned for (i.e. disturbed about) the way this is going.

“H.G.Wells is concerned (i.e. involved) exclusively with external activity . . He doesn’t understand that interior recollection (is a) matchless force, even for natural human development.” (Teilhard de Chardin S.J.)
Whether he likes it or not, he is concerned (i.e. involved) in that very peculiar affair.

CONCLUDE

The politician’s harangue was concluded by a thump on the lectern.

It looks like the match will conclude in a tie.

“Both ceremonies concluded with the kiss of peace and High Mass.” (Paul Johnson)

CONCLUSION

It’s the obvious conclusion (i.e. inference) from everything said yesterday.

That’s the conclusion (i.e. deduction) of everyone there.

Write a conclusion (i.e. an end) to his unfinished story.

CONCUR

He concurred in the decision but not with the judge.

Note: To concur in an opinion or action, or with a person.

CONCURRENT

The cold spell was concurrent with the shortage of oil.

CONCURRENTLY

He visited us concurrently with the fall of the Berlin wall.

CONDEMN

He was condemned (i.e. censured) by his peers for breaking the curfew.

“Condemned (i.e. doomed) in business or in arts to drudge.” (Alexander Pope)

The spy was condemned (i.e. convicted) of treason and shot.

“Any of a thousand malfunctions in a space suit or the LM could condemn (i.e. doom) an astronaut to swift death.” (David R. Scott, National Geographic)

CONDENSE

The whole mess condensed into a revolting glob.

CONDESCEND

She condescended to enter my home.

CONDITION (N)

“Excessive forms of wealth and prolonged formal employment . . destroy the social, cultural and environmental conditions for equal, productive freedom.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)

“The air I breathe is the condition of my life, not its cause.” (Coleridge, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
CONDITION (V)
Too many people are conditioned to failure and dependent on public handouts.
I condition my travelling on the weather.

CONDITIONAL
That's conditional on (or upon) how much you pay back.

CONDOLE
“They are comforted and consoled by their fellow-citizens.” (Addison, Oxford English Dictionary)
I consoled (i.e. sympathized) with her till she burst into laughter.

CONDUCE
“A dull place, and very conducive to sleep.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)

CONFERENCE
“Islam conferred on (i.e. granted) women the right to education, to inherit and to divorce over 1000 years before the first European woman suffragette.”
(Akbar S. Ahmed, The Economist)
He confers (i.e. consults) with her every morning.

CONFESS
Only 19 years later did he confess (i.e. admit your guilt) to the police.
I confess my sins (i.e. acknowledge my sins orally) to whatever priest happens to be in the confessional.

CONFIDE
“He who most confides in the instructor will learn the sacred lesson best.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)
“Men do not confide themselves to boys . . but to their peers.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)
She is confiding in her best friend.

CONFIDENCE
I have confidence in them.
He enjoyed the confidence of the police in spite of his many clashes with them.

CONFIDENT
“I do not feel too confident about his chances of success.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
“Confident in the security of his position, he derided their threats and machinations.”
(Ainsworth, Tower Hill, OED)
“Were death never sudden, they who are in health would be too confident of life.”
(Paley, Natural Theology, OED)

CONFINE (V)
He was confined (i.e. cooped up) in his home for most of two years.
The sheriff confines him in a cell every weekend.
“Enthusiasm for ‘the spirit of the world’ is confined (i.e. restricted) to the Anti-Christ.”
(R.H.Benson, Lord of the World)

CONFIRM
“This suspicion is confirmed by the enquiry.”
(Arthur Koestler)
They were confirmed (i.e. firm) in their belief that the earth was flat.
“When Macbeth is confirming (i.e. strengthening) himself in the horrid purpose.”
(Johnson, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
Re the chairmanship, please confirm (i.e. affirm) this position to your brother.

CONFLICT (N)
It was a conflict of interest pure and simple.
“The conflicts of the ice-masses in their rotation.”
(Kane)

CONFLICT (V)
He held grimly to his views although they conflicted with his experience.

CONFORM
“The true freeman is he who conforms himself to his reason.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)
His behaviour conformed with their expectations in every respect.

CONFRONT
They were suddenly confronted by (i.e. faced with) a bunch of motorcyclists.
“The Romans were confronted with (i.e. challenged by) a stiffnecked, subordinate people (the Jews).” (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)
He met me at the door, confronting me with today's news headline.

CONFUSE
The little animal froze, confused by the car’s headlights.
I'm afraid you're confusing me with my twin brother.
Too many people confuse socialism with communism.
“The shift of linguistic usage, coupled (i.e. combined) with our own drive for self-regard, has meant that the concept (civilization) has become hopelessly confused with good table manners and polite conversation.”
(The Times of London, 1989)

CONFUSION
“Love is an ideal thing, marriage a real thing; a confusion of the real with the ideal never goes unpunished.”
(Goethe)
“The confusion of tongues.”
(Bacon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CONFUTE
The speaker confutes (i.e. overwhelms) his opponents by facts and logic.
The lawyer's defense was confuted (i.e. refuted) by the prosecution.
She was not an easy person to confute (i.e. confound) in an argument.

CONGENIAL
Hard work is simply not congenial to me.

CONGRATULATE
I congratulate you on (or upon) your remarkable success.

I should congratulate him for what? He has failed at everything.

CONJUNCTION
This situation must have originated in a strange conjunction of circumstances.
His great height, in conjunction with his unusual hairiness, often scared little children.

CONNECT
“Cancer cells require a generous supply of blood, to survive and grow. So they connect to nearby arteries and veins by encouraging angiogenesis, the proliferation of networks of tiny capillaries.” (Time mag.)
“The spinal cord is a cable-like bundle of nerves that connects the brain to the rest of the nervous system. It is protected by the bony spinal column, with 24 vertebrae stacked in a gentle S-curve between the skull and tailbone.” (Don Colburn, Washington Post)
The police are busy connecting him to last night's robbery.
“Joan of Arc was not a victim of English nationalism: only eight of the 131 judges, assessors and other clergy connected with her trial, were Englishmen.”
(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)

CONNECTION
“At the meeting of the Society of Neurosurgeons in Phoenix, Ariz., researchers confirmed the theory that the brain stores memories by ‘hardwiring’ new connections between groups of brain cells.”
(Thomas Maugh, Los Angeles Times)
In connection with that matter, I’ll call on her while I’m in Chicago.

CONNIVE
Politicians have always connived (i.e. winked) at infractions while pretending to correct them.

CONSCIOUS
Do you think she is conscious of the pain?
CONSENSUS
He wanted the consensus of the whole group.
The consensus of opinion was that it was the driver's fault.
Last year, we had a lot of controversy. This time around, we have a consensus on this matter.
Note: “Though generally current, (consensus of opinion) is avoided by some writers as redundant on the grounds that consensus means ‘general agreement of opinion’.” (World Book Dictionary)
After much debate, a consensus on budget priorities was reached by the council.

CONSENT (N)
I need the consent of the people.
“The Age of Consent: the age fixed by law at which a person's consent to certain acts (e.g. marriage, sexual intercourse) is valid in law.” (Universal English Dictionary)

CONSENT (V)
He will consent to that, if you cooperate with him on this.

CONSEQUENCE
The terrible consequences of his actions to his family did not deter him for a second.

CONSEQUENT
All his other problems are consequent on (or upon) his illness.

CONSIDERATE
That's not very considerate of you.
She was always very considerate to (or towards) her relatives.

CONSIDERATION
He doesn't show an iota of consideration for other people.

CONSIGN
Consigning (i.e. entrusting) her children to the care of a housekeeper, the young mother pursued her operatic career.
“Surgical trauma, the jarring aftermath of the surgeon's knife, may one day be consigned (i.e. relegated) to the annals of primitive medicine.” (National Geographic)

CONSIST
“Our greatest glory consists (i.e. resides) not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” (Oliver Goldsmith)
“The true miracle of modern medicine is diabolical. It consists in (i.e. is based on) making not only individuals but whole populations survive on inhumanly low levels of personal health.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)
“The Bahamas consist of (is composed of) 29 islands, 661 cays (islets) and 2387 rocks.” (Encyclopedia Britannica)

CONSISTENT
It's consistent with everything he said before.
“Morals are the rules by which a society exhorts . . its members and associations to behaviour consistent with its order, security and growth.” (Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

CONSONANT
It's consonant with his recent behaviour.

CONSPIRE
“The system as it stands conspires against the mothers among the poor: they are damned, if they stay, as parasites; they are damned, if they go to work, for neglecting their children.” (Pierre Berton, The Smug Minority)
“We all conspired not to tell him.”
(I. Murdock, Oxford English Dictionary)
“All things conspired to make her birthday a happy one.”
(World Book Dictionary)
“The private secretary, Joseph Tumulty, conspired with Woodrow Wilson (paralyzed by a third massive stroke) and his wife Edith to make her the president, which she remained for seventeen months.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

CONSTANCY

Constancy in love is a noble ideal.
“The secret of success is constancy to purpose.”
(Benjamin Disraeli)

CONSTANT (A)

He is constant (i.e. assiduous) in his devotion to his ailing wife.
I expect him to be constant (i.e. faithful) to his pledge.

CONSTITUENT

They have concocted primeval soups which yield constituents of living things.

CONSTRUCT (V)

The pyramids were constructed by slaves.
He constructed his home from things he salvaged here and there.
Come winter, a palace is constructed of blocks of ice.

CONSTRUE

Syntactically, the noun ‘aerodynamics’ is construed as a singular.
I construed from your remarks that you are not in favour of our plan.

CONSULT

He consulted with her about matters of law.
I will consult you on that matter next Wednesday.

CONSULTATION

“She established later, in consultation with me, that Aubry had been speaking of macroeconomics.”
(Edwin Newman, Sunday Punch)

CONSUMPTION

There is an increase in the consumption of oil for home heating purposes in sub-zero weather.
We brought extra food for consumption on our journey.
“One convincing measure of a nation’s development is its consumption of electricity. China consumed only 423 kilowatt hours of power per head in 1986, which compared with 3,327 Kwh for each person in Hongkong and 6,810 Kwh for each West German.”
(The Economist)

CONTACT (N)

Each time the astronauts circled behind the moon, their contact with the earth was interrupted.

CONTAMINATE

Their water is contaminated by the neighbouring mine with all kinds of impurities.
The prison is contaminating the town’s river with its sewage.

CONTEMPORANEOUS

His life was contemporaneous with Van Gogh’s.

CONTEMPORARY (A)

All three were contemporary with Henry Ford.

CONTEMPORARY (N)

He was a contemporary of my father.
“Writers contemporary with the events they write of.”
(M. Pattison, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

CONTEMPT

What you’ve done today has only added to my contempt for you.
You are fined $200 for contempt of court. (legal)
CONTEND

How can any form of democratic government contend (i.e. struggle) against the anarchy now reigning on the continent?

He will contend (i.e. strive) for fame to his dying breath.

“. . Carthage shall contend (i.e. contest) the world with Rome.” (Dryden)

CONTEND - CONTRAST

CONTENDER

“German was a strong contender for the position of leading European language in the nineteenth century.” (The Economist mag.)

CONTENT (A)

We are content to be alive.

All three are content with that arrangement.

CONTENT (V)

I contented myself with the dictionary.

CONTIGUOUS

Her property is contiguous to mine.

Every farm is contiguous with every other.

CONTINGENT

That is contingent on (or upon) keeping your end of the bargain.

CONTINUE

This highway continues for miles.

“The children must continue in school till the end of June.” (World Book Dictionary)

If I were you, I would continue on to the next town.

“Most people continue to be emotionally responsive to music throughout their lives.” (James Shreeve, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)

“Our friendship continued to his death.” (D. Carnegie, Oxford English Dictionary)

He continued with his work, ignoring the interruptions.

CONTINUE

The canal is continuous with the right fork of the river.

CONTRACT (N)

Your action yesterday makes the contract between us null and void.

My contract with you ends today.

CONTRACT (V)

“The alternative view is that a loan freely contracted (i.e. arranged) between consenting parties has the blessing of market forces.” (The Economist, May 28, ’88)

“He contracted (i.e. incurred) debts by buying things he could not afford.” (World Book Dictionary)

“The baker contracted for (i.e. signed to purchase) a load of flour.” (World Book Dictionary)

The whole thing contracted (i.e. shrank) into a ball.

I contracted (i.e. made a contract) with him yesterday to re-roof our house.

Note: Contract, as in contracting a disease, needs no preposition.

CONTRACT - CONTRAST

CONTRADICTORY

One statement is contradictory of another. (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

CONTRARY

“We hate Christianity and Christians. Even the best of them must be considered our worst enemies. They preach love of one’s neighbour and mercy, which is contrary to our principles. What we want is hate . . Only then will we conquer.” (Anatole Lunacharsky, Soviet Commissar of Education, Izvestia)

CONTRAST (N)

The contrast between the original and the fake is so striking, it’s a wonder anyone was fooled.

Her manner was mild and quiescent in contrast to her violent behaviour of recent days.

The contrast with his earlier conduct was remarkable.
CONTRAST (V)

“Methodism’s concentration on welfare and reform . . . contrasted with the more rigid, sin-oriented theology of the Baptists and Presbyterians.”
(Peter C. Newman, The Distemper of our Times).

CONTRIBUTE

They all contribute their share to the church. I’ve been contributing to that charity for years.

CONTRIBUTION

I saw him make a contribution of fifty dollars. Please make your contribution to the charity of your choice.
“This technique, of soliciting many modest contributions to the store of human knowledge, has been the secret of Western science since the seventeenth century, for it achieves a corporate, collective power that is far greater than one individual can exert.”
(Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

CONTROL (N)

“Executives who speak most warmly about the stern rule of the market usually have excellent control over the income that they get themselves.”
(John K. Galbraith, Guide to Economics)
The controls of the speeding truck were beyond the young boy’s reach.

CONVENIENT

Stopping here on the way to work is not convenient (i.e. practical) for me. His home is convenient (i.e. close) to the church.
(Oxford English Dictionary)

CONVERGE

“The sides of the ship converged into an angle.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“Footsteps were coming to the house, converging on it from different directions.”
(P. Pearce, Oxford English Dictionary)
The whole group suddenly converged on me.

“Every circumstance converges to the same effect on his mind.” (Hallam, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“The interest of all the students converged upon the celebration.” (World Book Dictionary)

CONVERSANT

“He is conversant in Sanskrit and in Syriac, and is deeply knowledgeable of Hindu tradition.”
(MacMillan Publishing edition of Don Bede)
She made sure all her pupils were conversant with world history.

CONVERSE (N)

The converse (i.e. the opposite) of heaven is hell.

CONVERSE (V)

I will converse (i.e. talk) with him on my return from Italy.

CONVERT (V)

“Every second, 4 million tons of (the sun’s) mass are converted into pure energy and poured into space.”
(Heinz Haber, The Walt Disney story of our friend the atom)
He’s spent most of his life trying to convert sunlight to electricity economically.

CONVERTIBLE

Is this bond convertible to cash?

CONVICT (V)

She has been convicted of manslaughter, not murder.

CONVINCE

“In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God’s existence.” (Isaac Newton)

COOPERATE

I promise to cooperate in every way possible.
“Large scavenger cells known as macrophages cooperate with T cells to sound the alarm when a virus or
bacterium invades the body and threatens to cause disease.” (Robert M. Sapolsky, Discover mag., 1990)

**COOPERATION**

“I’m asking for the cooperation of everyone here. Silence (when the lawyer knows his client is lying) is participation; it is cooperation with evil.” (Ellis Rubin, lawyer, Time mag.)

**COORDINATE**

Is there any way you can coordinate your arrival with mine?

**COPE**

“In 1971 Britain’s department of trade and industry thought that coping with (corrosion) cost Britain about 3 1/2% of its national income.” (The Economist)

**COPY (V)**

The painter was asked to copy his motif across (or on) the entire wall.

“Barbed wire was copied from osage orange thorns. Eli Whitney’s cotton gin was copied from the Indian charka.” (The Economist, Feb. 16, ’91)

**CORRELATE**

“In 1801 Sir John Herschel discovered an 11-year sunspot cycle, which correlates with the thickness of annual rings in trees, the level of Lake Victoria, the number of icebergs, the occurrence of drought and famine in India, and the great vintage years for Burgundy wines.” (Lyall Watson, Supernature)

**CORRELATION**

“Apart from predicting university results, school examination scores (have) no correlation with later success.” (Prof. Robert Sternberg, Yale U.)

**CORRESPOND**

“Locke and Newton had corresponded (i.e. exchanged opinions) on the prophecies of Daniel ..” (Brewster, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

“The patterns and shapes of living things correspond to (i.e. match) some of the most abstract ideas in math.” (Carl Zimmer, Discover mag., 1992)

“We have too many high-sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with (i.e. live up to) them.” (Abigail Adams)

**CORROSIVE**

“The lesson of the 30 years since (the Hungarian Revolution) is that humanity in all its ordinariness and contrariness is more corrosive to the totalitarianism ideal than heroism.” (Charles Krauthammer, Time mag.)

**COST (N)**

The cost in lives of the two world wars in the 20th century is mind-boggling.

“Extremes of privilege are created at the cost of universal enslavement.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)

The cost to me is minimal.

**COUCH**

Unfortunately, the proof is couched in the language of Einstein’s general theory of relativity.

**COUNT (V)**

That counts as (i.e. amounts to) a point in this game.

How I wish I could count (i.e. rely) on you!

If a person started counting at the moment of birth, and continued till the age of 65. he or she would still not have counted to a billion.” (David Louis, Fascinating Facts)

**COUPLE**

“Kings are coupled (i.e. sexually related) to divinity, but not so much in wedlock as by rude rape.” (George Garrett, Death of a Fox)

Her name has often been coupled (i.e. linked) with that of the verger.

“The shift of linguistic usage, coupled (i.e. combined) with our own drive for self-regard, has meant that the concept (civilization) has become hopelessly confused with good table manners and polite conversation.” (The Times of London, 1989)
COURSE (V)
The stream once coursed (i.e. flowed) around our house, by that barn and across the fields.
“One-fourth of the blood from each heartbeat courses (i.e. flows) down the renal artery to the twin kidneys.” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)
Rivers and streams that course (i.e. flow) through forests of conifers are more vulnerable to acidity.
Coursed (i.e. ran) like a colt across its lawns.
“Blood, five litres or so in a typical adult, is the river of life, coursing through close to 100,000 km of blood vessels to deliver oxygen and nutrients to and haul waste products from every part of the body.” (Roderick Jamer, CARP NEWS)
We know of two rivers that are still coursing under our city.

COURTENAYS
He was courteous to everyone but his wife.

COVER (V)
I asked my colleague to cover (i.e. substitute) for me, while I enjoyed a few hours away from the office.
He was covered from head to toe with mud.
“The implication of the Apollo findings was astonishing but unavoidable: the moon must once have been covered with an ocean of magma.” (Tom Waters, Discover mag.)
Alice is busy covering her baby brother with leaves.
“Beginning in 1885, the Czars commissioned Russian jeweler Carl Fabergé to create a series of egg-shaped treasures . . no two alike . . covered with jewels and gold . . (He) produced between 54 and 57 of these Imperial eggs.” (Gordon M. Henry, Time mag.)

CRAVE (V)
They were crammed like a swarm of bees.
“A room crammed with fine ladies.” (Pepys, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
She could cram all those chocolates into her mouth quite easily.

CRAVING (N)
I have an irresistible craving for chocolate.

CRAWL (VV)
They crawled along the ditch to the river.
I planned to crawl around the corner of the house, come darkness, and jump the guard.
Children love to crawl into, under, over and through things, anywhere.
She crawled for miles, it seemed, before she found someone who would help her.
“Pus . . is made of white blood cells that have crawled through the walls of your blood vessels to get at the site of infection.” (Gary Taubes, “The Cold Warriors”, Discover mag., Feb. ’99)

CRAZE (N)
There was a sudden craze for anything old-fashioned.

CRAZE (V)
“The surface of my coffee had crazed into a (i.e. formed a cracked) milky skin.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)
“. . crazed (i.e. driven insane) with care, or crossed in hopeless love.” (Thomas Gray, World Book Dictionary)

CREATE
“Proteins are created from amino-acid building blocks by the machinery of a living cell.” (Philip Elmer-De Witt, Time mag.)
“Without exception, every time a Southern nation develops and becomes a producer, it buys more, it creates more jobs in the North than it eliminates.” (Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, The World Challenge)
His aim: to create incredibly fine circuitry on electronic chips.

CREDIT (V)
The sum of $100.00 has been credited (i.e. added) to your account.
“Thomas Lovejoy, a Washington biologist, is credited with (i.e. given the credit for) bringing the plunder of the
rain forests to the attention of the world.” (Montreal Gazette)

CRITERION
That’s a criterion of his good intentions.

CRITICIZE, CRITICISE
It was criticized as too impractical.
She was criticized for her bad behaviour.

CROSS (A)
I’m very cross (i.e. somewhat angry) with you about that.

CROW (V)
You’re always crowing (i.e. boasting) about things you never did.
She crowed (i.e. exulted) over my bad luck.

CRUCIAL (A)
“DNA (is) the blueprint for producing all the proteins and chemicals that carry out the innumerable functions crucial for life.” (Business Week mag.)
Crucial to Napoleon’s grand design for Europe was the conquest of Russia.

CRUELTY
“Cruelty to animals is cruelty and a vile thing; but cruelty to a man is not cruelty, it is treason.” (G.K. Chesterton)

CRY (V)
I cry for you.
The baseball strike goes on, and fans are crying into their beer.
They’re crying over spilt milk again.

CULL
He culled most of his wisdom from Mark Twain’s books.

CULMINATE
“A series of stunning advances has culminated in microscopes able to distinguish individual atoms whose diameter is only about one angstrom — about four-billionths of an inch.” (Arthur Fisher, Discover mag.)

CURE (N)
“There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval.” (George Santayana)
The podiatrist had an excellent cure for sore feet.
DABBLE

Although talented, the artist merely dabbled at painting. Dabbling in social work doesn't bring satisfaction. Why do you dabble with something that is none of your business?

DAMAGE (N)

The damage by the hurricane is hard to compute. The damage is just from years of neglect. The damage in the downtown is beyond repair.

“China alone, by burning its dirty coal, and making polluting refrigerators, could torpedo everybody else's efforts to stop the build-up of atmospheric carbon and damage to the ozone layer.” (The Economist)

DAMN

He was damned by the evidence. The critic damned the author's new book with faint praise. She was damming the politicians without knowing the facts. “The system as it stands conspires against the mothers among the poor: they are damned, if they stay, as parasites; they are damned, if they go to work, for neglecting their children.” (Pierre Berton, The Smug Minority)

DAMPEN

His ardor was dampened (i.e. diminished) by her indifference. She was dampening (i.e. moistening) the leaves of the plant with a wet cloth.

DANCE (V)

She dances, as if weightless, across the stage. The children danced around the Christmas tree.

The boy sent a stone dancing (i.e. skipping) over the water. The firelight was dancing (i.e. reflected) on the wood panelling. The mother danced (i.e. bounced) her child up and down on her knee.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DANGER

“The average American household is in more danger from chemical germ-killers than from germs.” (Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made) There's always danger in taking your enemy too lightly. The danger of an explosion dogged his steps. The danger to me was palpable.

DANGEROUS

“Vance Packard believes . . that the excessive concentration of wealth among a cadre of megamillionaires . . is dangerous to the good health of capitalism.” (John Elson, Time mag.)

DANGLE

The prospect of great wealth is dangling (i.e. hovering) before his eyes. Expensive jewelry dangled (i.e. swung to and fro) from her ears.

DASH (V)

He dashed (i.e. ran quickly) across the road into the field. The ship was dashed on (i.e. slammed against) the rocks.
They dashed (i.e. sprinted) through the picnic crowd, upsetting tables.

She dashed (i.e. darted) under the bridge, when it began raining in earnest.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**DATE (V)**

“Carved jade pieces dating from (i.e. having their origin in) China’s new stone age (3000 B.C.) . . are so fine as to require the use of a magnifying glass to be seen properly.”

(The Economist mag.)

“It was Dionysius who invented the method of dating (i.e. setting the date) we still use in the West, that is from the birth of Christ.” (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

This fossil dates back to (i.e. originated in) the Pre-Cambrian period.

**DAUB**

It was the tribe’s custom to daub their bodies with blue paint.

Why don’t you daub the fresh paint on your door with a sponge?

**DAWLDE**

He liked to dawdle along the village street.

It’s time you stopped dawdling over your homework.

**DAWN (V)**

It was slowly dawning on me that their intentions were less than honourable.

It just dawned on (or upon) me that we never did visit Aunt Mary.

It suddenly dawned over the whole country that the dictator’s death meant freedom for all.

**DAZZLE (V)**

The heiress was dazzled by the size of her inheritance.

He dazzled the audience with his magic tricks.

She was dazzling him with her smile.

**DEAF**

When she was reading, she was deaf in both ears.

He stood there, deaf to the cries of his people.

**DEAL (V)**

He began to deal (i.e. portion out) the bread among the hungry crowd.

He began dealing in drugs from the age of 13.

She dealt (i.e. distributed) the cards to her sisters with a flourish.

I will deal with (i.e. turn my attention to) you later.

“The subatomic world has provided just the recipe to deal with mutually exclusive forces such as science and religion.” (K.C. Cole, Los Angeles Times)

**DEATH**

He was condemned to death by hanging.

“It is the virtual certainty of death from AIDS, once the syndrome has fully developed, that makes the disease so frightening.” (Time mag, 1985)

She was mourning the death of her beloved brother.

“Let me die the death of the righteous.” (Bible: Numbers 23:13)

Death on a beautiful day seems more terrible.

Death to you, man!

**DEBAR**

After 20 years as a lawyer, he was debarred from practising.

**DEBATE (N)**

“Most popular discussion of “debt” and the financial distress it can cause is at root a debate between two blind prejudices.” (The Economist)

A full debate on (or upon) the root cause of poverty would take months, if not years.

**DEBATE (V)**

They debated the subject amongst themselves till dawn.

Various theological constructs have been debated for centuries.
They debated long on what was to be done. (Tolkien, Oxford English Dictionary)

DEBIT (V)
I will debit that from your account. Should I debit this to your account or to your wife’s?

DEBRIS
“It is part of the law of life that cells die. Indeed the debris from dead organisms forms the food for new forms of life.” (Hugh Montefiore, The Probability of God)
The yard was cluttered with the debris of many years.

DECAMP
He decamped from town in a panic. On an impulse, he decamped to Mexico.

DECIDE
I will decide about that tomorrow. Why don’t you decide on the 15th of every month?

DEDICATE
I gratefully dedicate this book to you.

DEDICATION
She is also remembered for her lifelong dedication to good works.

DEDUCE
Can I deduce from your statement that you have no intention of cooperating?

DEDUCT
I will deduct a day’s pay from your wages.

DEEP
She sat deep in gloom. “Holograms and light pipes could bring daylight deep into building interiors, reducing the need for artificial illumination.” (Herb Brody)

DEEPEN
The mood in the room deepened into gloom.

DEFACE
The motto carved into the stone had been defaced by centuries of weathering. The metro car was defaced with crude slogans and cartoons.

DEFECT (N)
There’s a defect in the manufacture of that tool.

DEFECT (V)
He defected from his party over a misunderstanding. They defected en masse to the opposition.

DEFECTION
Their defection from the liberal ranks to the opposition happened during the last session.

DEFENCE, DEFENSE
The only real defence against ignorance is education.

DEFEND
They defended the town jail against the mob. I promise to defend you from his scurrilous attacks.

DEFER
“If the owner of a nose, that reports something smells awful, stays around for a few minutes anyway, the nose concludes that the smell isn’t so bad after all. It shuts itself off, deferring (i.e. yielding) to superior wisdom.” (Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Jailbird)
I will defer (i.e. delay) my decision till the court pronounces itself.

DEFICIENCY
There was a deficiency of red corpuscles in his blood. Her deficiency in serotonin made her unable to concentrate.
DEFICIENT

He is very deficient in common sense.

DEFINE

The outline of the bridge was starkly defined against the sunset.

“A despotism may almost be defined as a tired democracy.” (G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man)

DEFLECT

I will not let you deflect my attention from this task.
In Henry VIII’s time, they deflected the tennis ball on to a side-running roof.
He deflected the sunlight with a mirror.

DEFRAUD

“It is a psychological paradox that those who are most afraid to die are most afraid to live, and in seeking to cheat death, they defraud themselves of life.” (Sydney J. Harris, North American Syndicate)
They are defrauding old people of their life savings.

DEGENERATE

“Gods! how the son degenerates from the sire.” (Pope, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“As a man grows older, his behaviour tends to take exaggerated forms: fear becomes paranoia, single-mindedness degenerates into intolerance, willfulness sinks into obstinacy, and insecurity is more and more tied to the specter of mental and physical impotence and incompetence.” (Lacey B. Smith, Henry VIII: The Mask of Royalty)

DELEGATE (V)

Can’t you delegate your authority to me for this special occasion?

DELETE

Start by deleting one word from this sentence.

DELIGHT (V)

“The Fifties (proved) an extraordinary decade. Never before had we delighted in such a rain of innovations . . . Television took root everywhere. The Polaroid camera, the aqualung, the transistor radio . . . came on the market. The hi-fi and stereo industry sprang up. Commercial jet travel became standard. Polio was conquered . . . etc., etc.” (Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)

DELIVER

I will deliver the parcel at 6 p.m. sharp.
They always deliver the paper before breakfast.
She promised to deliver on her promise by noon.

“Capillaries, the tiniest of blood vessels, form terminal branches of the vast network that delivers blood-carrying oxygen and other nutrients to the body’s organs.” (Natalie Angier, Discover mag.)

DELVE

He never delves beneath the surface of events.
He’s delving in his personal affairs as we speak.
I will delve into the matter as soon as possible.

“Minerals, delved . . . out of the hearts of mountains.” (N. Hawthorne, Oxford English Dictionary)

DEMAND (N)

I will not comply with your demand for money.
Sleep is a demand of nature.
You are making too many demands on me at this juncture.

DEMAND (V)

They are demanding (i.e. asking for) still more taxes from us all.
I realize that obedience is demanded (i.e. required) of me.

“What about you?” I demanded of the second. “I’m Lutheran”, he said. “That’s a Catholic without guilt.” (James Brady, Advertising Age mag.)

That work is too demanding of (i.e. too hard on) me, I’m afraid.
DEMONSTRATE

“The existence of both capabilities, vocal and motor mimicry, has yet to be demonstrated in other species besides humans and dolphins.”
(Louis Herman, Omni mag.)
They wanted to demonstrate good-will to the world.
He is demonstrating his skill to the world.

DEMUR

The head nurse demurred (i.e. balked) at working a double shift.
You should demur (i.e. object) to that request.
“King Edwine demurred (i.e. hesitated) to embrace Christianity.” (Fuller)
I am demurring (i.e. objecting) to this new government policy.

DENIAL

“Atheism is abnormality. It is not merely the denial of a dogma. It is the reversal of a subconscious assumption in the soul; the sense that there is a meaning and a direction in the world it sees.”
(G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man)

DENIGRATE

“Catastrophism, once denigrated as an antiquated argument of miracle-mongers, has become respectable again.” (Stephen J. Gould, Discover mag., 1989)
The defendant’s character was denigrated by the prosecuting attorney.

DENOUNCE

He was denounced as a collaborationist.
This is the second time she has been denounced to the police.
I am denouncing him to the authorities forthwith.

DENSE

The buttercups are dense on the lawn
The lawn was dense with dandelions.

DENUDE

The front yard was denuded of grass.
He’s denuding his front yard of all its trees.

DENY

I will deny help to those who refuse to work.

DEPEND

“I can think of no other instance in history where the future of the world depended on the courage of one man.” (Stalin speaking about Winston Churchill)
“Biologists divvy up all animals into 40 or so phyla, depending on the classification scheme.”
(Discover mag., April 1996)
“Every cell in our body depends upon water to function properly.” (Jane E. Brody, Family Circle mag.)

DEPENDENCE

“The absolute dependence of mass microprocessor technology on capitalist production and distribution methods could well be the first nail in the coffin of doctrinaire Marxist thinking.”
(Christopher Evans, The Micro Millennium)
“Living . . in dependence on the will of God.”
(Jowett, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“To free the Crown from its dependence upon Parliament.” (Green, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

DEPOSIT (V)

His father deposited (i.e. entrusted for safekeeping) five hundred dollars in his son’s account.
“A new way to coat materials with thin layers of artificial diamonds . . can deposit (i.e. precipitate) up to 20 microns per hour, which is 200,000 atomic layers, on (or upon) a 10-square-centimetre crosssection.”
(Carl Collins of UTD)

DEPRIVE

“Don’t deprive yourself of the joy of giving.”
(Father’s advice to Michael ‘Gloves’ Greenberg)
I’m afraid he’s depriving himself of a lot of pleasure.
DEPUTE
I will depute that task to the new boy.

DEPUTIZE
They will be deputizing (i.e. appointing) him as a special agent tomorrow.
He will deputize (i.e. act as a deputy) for the sheriff at this function.

DEPUTY
The lawyer will act as deputy for the absent delegate.
I am a deputy of the sheriff in this area.
She was a deputy to the district attorney.

DERIVATION
The word butcher is a derivation from the French word boucher.

DERIVE
“The term holistic . . derives from the philosophy that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In holistic medicine, a doctor . . takes into account all aspects of a patient’s life — physical, emotional, and social — in diagnosis and treatment” (Rob Wechsler, Discover mag.)
Every human cell derived from a fertilized egg (in the process of procreation) will have the same DNA.

DEROGATE
Why do you want to derogate from his fame?

DEROGATORY
Your words have been very derogatory of my friend’s good name.
Her conduct was very derogatory to her husband’s reputation.

DESCEND
“Bacteria are the earliest visible link in the great chain of being. Everything now living is descended from them.” (The Economist)

“The scientific establishment reveals its basic bias when it says that man descended, instead of ascended, from the monkey.” (Charles N. Prieur)
The stairs descended into a sculpture garden.
“We are descended of ancient families.” (Steele)
Relatives should not descend on us without notice.
She was too snobbish to descend to paid employment.

DESCENDANT, DESCENDENT
“The British royal family are descendants of Queen Victoria.” (Family Word Finder, Reader’s Digest)

DESCENT
Some people take pride in tracing their descent from illustrious ancestors.
To be sent to a concentration camp was a descent into hell.
He watched the erratic descent of the plane.
The paratroppers made their descent through heavy clouds.

DESCRIBE
“He (Jean-Jacques Rousseau) describes himself in odious colours to give his unjust and cruel imputations the semblance of truth.” (Diderot)
Please describe yourself to me.
She is describing her attacker to the police right now.

DESCRIPTION
“The genes that parents pass on to their offspring are descriptions, in code, of proteins — one gene for each protein an animal needs.” (The Economist mag.)
I gave a description of her car to the police.

DEScriptive
That is very descriptive of the accident I witnessed.

DESERT
He deserted from the army within a week of enlistment.
Iraki soldiers are deserting to Iran in droves.
DESERTION
His desertion from his post has haunted him all his life.

DESERVING
She was very deserving of that promotion.

DESIGN (V)
The lawyer’s terms were clearly designed (i.e. intended) as subterfuge.
“We even have folds of skin here and there designed (i.e. purposed) for the controlled nurture of bacteria.”
(Lewis Thomas, *The Lives of Cells*)

He has been designing (i.e. working as a fashion designer) for Dior in Paris for the past five years.

“A liquid solar cell designed (i.e. devised) in Israel has a built-in storage electrode that delivers power when the sun disappears.” (Dawn Stover, *Popular Science* mag.)

“Doctors (in U.S.) estimate that they now perform $15 billion worth of medically unnecessary tests, procedures and paperwork, all designed (i.e. intended) to combat possible lawsuits.”
(Otto Friedrich, *Time* mag.)

DESIRABLE
“Mammy . . laboured to inculcate in her the qualities that would make her . . desirable as a wife.”
(M. Mitchell, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

“Some experienced clinicians believe that less than two dozen basic drugs are all that will ever be desirable for 99% of the total population.”
(Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis*)

It’s often desirable to do things slowly.

DESIRE (N)
He had outlived his desire for mere things.

DESIROUS
“Man is not only desirous, but ambitious too, of happiness.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)

DESIST
Please ask her to desist from further prosecution.

DESPAIR (N)
In her despair over failing the first exam, she dropped out of the entire program.

DESPAIR (V)
I despair for him in this venture.
She despaired of ever meeting him again.

DESPATCH, DISPATCH (V)
The ambassador was despatched (i.e. sent) to Paris.
He despatched (i.e. disposed of) his opponent with one powerful blow.

DESPATCH, DISPATCH (N)
The captain gave the order for the despatch of the launch.
His dispatch to the boondocks was long overdue.

DESTINE
She was destined for better things.
They will destine the computer resources to their own programs.

DESTITUTE
He had left her destitute of any means of support.

DESTRUCTIVE
“The colonizing procedure involved human engineering, and was therefore destructive of the individualistic principle which lies at the heart of the Judaeo-Christian ethic.”
(Paul Johnson, *A History of The Modern World*)

DETACH
“A lean and dingy man in a flapping overcoat detached himself from the crowd.”
(Jonathan Raban, *Coasting*)

DETECT
“The Eskimo has 100 words for snow — such are the subtleties he detects in its color and tone and depth and temperature.”
(Lance Morrow, *Time* mag.)
“Until arsenic became easy to detect in an autopsy, it was a fairly common means of offing one’s enemies.”
(Discover mag.)

DETER
“Do not seek to deter me from my purpose.”
(Johnson, Rasselas)

DETERMINANT
“The environment is the primary determinant of the state of general health of any population.”
(Ivan Illich, Medical Nemesis)

DETERMINE
“For evil is determined (i.e. ordained) against our master.” (1 Samson, XXV, 17, The Bible)
“Experts can determine (i.e. figure out) a skeleton’s age by how hard or “ossified” the cartilage has become.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and wonderfully Made)
They are determining (i.e. deciding) on an itinerary.
I’m determined (i.e. resolved) to do it right.
Accidental impulses determine (i.e. direct) us to different paths.” (S. Johnson)
He was determined on learning the truth.

DETRACT
The scar detracted from his handsome features.

DETRIMENT
He supported his workers throughout the Great Depression, to the detriment of his family fortune.
The ceaseless gossip proved a detriment to his peace of mind.

DETRIMENTAL
His past record is detrimental to the party’s future prospects.

DEVELOP
“Once (human brain) cells differentiate and develop into mature neurons, they stop growing.”
(Peter Radetsky, Discover mag., April '91)
They are both developing into beautiful women.
“The stem cell . . can develop into any kind of blood cell, including red cells, white cells and platelets. Some experts believe it may be able to create whole organs.”
(Brad Evenson, National Post)
All plants will develop under the proper conditions.

DEViate
He deviated from his course of action, to indulge a sudden fancy.

DEVOID
My life is devoid of interest.

DEVOLVE
Stress devolves on (or upon) a culture when foreign elements encroach on its values and nature.

DEVOTE
“Huge companies devote great energies to buying and selling one another. The American genius for commerce has discovered a method for generating vast profits without the inconvenience of making anything of value.” (Paul Gray)

DEVOTEE
She was a devotee of the arts all her life.

DICHOTOMY
“The dichotomy between subject and object . . has been the central characteristic of Western thought for the past four centuries.” (Rollo May, The Courage to Create)
The astrophysicist is constantly reminded of the dichotomy in the cosmos of the known and the unknown.

DICTATE (N)
Follow the dictates of your heart.
DICTATE (V)
Are you trying to dictate to me?

DIE (V)
They died at the hands of the mob.
He is dying slowly, terribly, by degrees.

“ar the rich could hire other people to die for them, the poor would make a wonderful living.” (Jewish proverb)

“They died at the hands of the mob.”

“More men drown in the Sahara than die of thirst, because of the flash floods from the mountains.” (Desmond Bagley, Flyaway)

“In the fantasy your die in your own home, of old age, and in character. In reality, in the hospital, death is rarely serene.” (Dr. Perri Klass, Discover mag.)

DIFFER
“Men at most differ as heaven and earth, but women, worst and best, as heaven and hell.” (Tennyson)

“The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense.” (Tom Clancy, via www.ESLcAfe.com)

“Startlingly, the genetic difference between humans and chimpanzees turned out to be less than one percent.” (David Noonan, Discover mag., Oct. ’90)

“ar it is a mere difference of degree that separates any (surgical) operation from any torture.” (G.K. Chesterton, Essays)

DIFFERENCE (N)
The chef and his employer were having a major difference about something.

There are certainly differences among human races.

“The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense.” (Tom Clancy, via www.ESLcAfe.com)

Startlingly, the genetic difference between humans and chimpanzees turned out to be less than one percent. (David Noonan, Discover mag., Oct. ’90)

“The difference in molecular structure explains why one type of pure carbon (graphite) is a lubricant, and the other (industrial diamond) an abrasive.” (The Economist mag.)

“ar it is a mere difference of degree that separates any (surgical) operation from any torture.” (G.K. Chesterton, Essays)

DIFFERENCE (V)
“Every individual has something that differences it from another.” (Locke, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

DIFFERENT
“This creature (man) was truly different from all other creatures; because he was a creator as well as a creature.” (G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man)

“Our advice is to write different from.” (Fowler, The King’s English)

“How different things appear in Washington than in London.”

Note: As British author Bill Bryson points out in his acclaimed book ‘Mother Tongue’: “Far from being a regrettable Americanism, “different than has been common in England for centuries and used by such exalted writers as Defoe, Addison, Steele, Dickens, Coleridge and Thackeray.”

DIFFERENTIATE
It was impossible to differentiate between the twins.

“It differentiated Christianity decisively from Judaism.” (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

This suite by J.S. Bach differentiates into many dance forms.

DIFFICULT
“Arithmetic is difficult for some pupils.” (World Book Dictionary)

The high cliffs made the castle difficult of access.

“One of the most difficult of our poets.” (H.T. Buckle, Oxford English Dictionary)

“The chemical bonds between the molecules of liquids continuously shift position, and are therefore difficult to examine . . A molecule changes partners ten billion to a hundred billion times a second.” (W. Drost-Hansen and J. Lin Singleton, The Sciences mag.)

The director was very difficult with actors and film crew alike.

DIFFICULTY
We had to acknowledge the difficulty of achieving the goal.
DIFFIDENT
He was diffident of even opening the door.

DIFFUSE
“In the forests of the River Amazon, as on the crest of the High Andes, I realized how, from pole to pole, as though animated by a single breath, one life alone is diffused among stones, plants, animals, and in the swelling breath of man.” (Alexander Van Humbolt)
The sunlight was diffused by the smog.
The toxic gas was diffusing into the atmosphere.

DIG (VV)
“Clumps of fleshy-leaved Alpine Penny-Cress can reveal where to dig for lead and zinc.” (The Economist)
They started digging for gold under the first outcropping.
Many gardeners like to dig in the earth.
The cat’s claws dug into my flesh.
I dug through the rubbish with my bare hands.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DILATE
It was time to dilate (i.e. enlarge) on (or upon) the objection they faced.

DILIGENCE
Your diligence in caring for your old mother is very commendable.

Diligent
You are very diligent in your work until 3 p.m., then you become negligent. Why?

DILUTE
He diluted the rare wine with water, to everyone’s consternation.

DIN
I intend to din that truth in your ears till (or until) I die.

DINE
I dined on sausages and sauerkraut with my friend Albert every Tuesday for nearly ten years, and always at the same restaurant.
Can you believe it? He dined off that pig for weeks after it had saved his life.

DIP (N)
He liked to take a quick dip (i.e. swim) in the lake.
A brief dip (i.e. cursory glance) into this novel will capture your interest.

DIPLOMA
I earned a diploma in marketing after my discharge from the army.

DIRECT (V)
“Pregnant women report that, while in the water with dolphins, they feel blasts of energy directed (i.e. aimed) at their wombs.” (Justine Kaplan, Omni mag.)
Why not direct your efforts into this channel?
Please direct (i.e. address) your questions to the Speaker.
“It is a great mistake to suppose that love unites and unifies men. Love diversifies them, because love is directed (i.e. tends) towards individuality. The thing that really unites men and makes them like to each other is hatred.” (G.K. Chesterton)
He is directing (i.e. leading) his orchestra with great sensitivity this evening.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DISABLE
Th fireman was disabled (i.e. crippled) by a falling chimney.
That crash into the boards disabled him from (i.e. rendered him incapable of) ever playing again.
“Papists, by the Act of Settlement, are disabled (i.e. legally unable) to inherit the Crown.”
(Luttrell, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

DISABUSE
That one remark disabused him of all his theatrical ambitions.

DISADVANTAGEOUS
It would prove disadvantageous for me to join a secret society. This is obviously disadvantageous to me, as you intended it to be.

DISAGREE
They disagree on many things, but not about their love for each other. Sorry, but I disagree with you on every point.

DISAGREEMENT
There’s disagreement on that subject and about everything else. My disagreement with you is profound.

DISAPPEAR
“Particles of anti-matter . . have one spectacular property: If they ever touch their ordinary twins (particles with a positive charge), both disappear in a blast of energy.” (Tom Waters, Discover mag.) Any reference to the evidence had disappeared from the files. The great ship disappeared into the fog. “In the 4th century A.D., the busy Roman port town of Kourion, on the southern coast of Cyprus, disappeared under the ground, buried by a massive earthquake.” (Jamie James, Discovery mag.)

DISAPPOINTED
After years of devoted study, the pianist was disappointed (i.e. cheated) of international success. I couldn’t be more disappointed in you. They were disappointed with my plan.

DISAPPROVE
“Sir William Osler . . disapproved of people who spoke of the agony of death, maintaining that there was no such thing.” (Dr. Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

DISARM
First, let me disarm you of that knife.

DISASSOCIATE
“Paul was anxious to disassociate Christ’s teaching from Judaism.” (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

DISBELIEF
I learned my disbelief in UFOs from my father. His disbelief of her testimony demoralized her. “Our belief or disbelief of a thing does not alter the nature of the thing.” (J. Tillotson, Oxford Universal Dictionary)

DISBELIEVE
He plainly disbelieved in ghosts.

DISCARD
The teacher discarded all the compact disks from my locker.

DISCHARGE
I was discharged from the Navy the same day.

DISCONNECT
Would you disconnect that extension from the wall plug now?

DISCOURAGE
She was discouraged by a host of happenings to her. “Science has traditionally been presented in schools as a stereotypically male realm that girls are subtly discouraged from entering.” (Judith Stone, Discover mag.) You’re discouraging him from ever trying again.
DISCOVER

“A brain chemical (dynorphin), 200 times more powerful than morphine and 50 times more powerful than any previously known substance of its kind, has been discovered by scientists at Stanford University and the California Institute of Technology in the U.S.”

(Medical News, England/Reader’s Digest)

“All five of the chemical bases for a human gene have been discovered in a meteorite.”

(Cyril Pannamperuma, University of Maryland)

I’m discovering in her a real talent for portraiture.

DISCOVERY

“Love is but the discovery of ourselves in others, and the delight in the recognition.” (Alexander Smith)

DISCREDIT

I have to say it: you’re a discredit to this family.

DISCREDITABLE

She thinks it was discreditable of you to attend that show. That was very discreditable in a person of your age.

DISCREPANCY

They found a serious discrepancy between what he collected and what he turned over to us.

DISCRIMINATE

“If tomorrow morning everyone woke up looking exactly alike, in features, complexion and stature, by tomorrow afternoon we would begin discriminating (i.e. acting with prejudice) against someone on the basis of posture, gesture and odor.” (Sydney Harris, syndicated columnist)

Man’s eyes can discriminate (i.e. distinguish) among almost 8 million gradations of colour.

King Lear was wrong to discriminate (i.e. play favourites) between his daughters.

“Studying literature helps a person to discriminate (i.e. distinguish) good books from poor ones.”

(World Book Dictionary)

It is unjust to discriminate (i.e. be partial) in a matter of civil rights.

DISCRIMINATION

There’s a lot of discrimination against Indian merchants here.

Discrimination is rampant amongst that crowd.

Discrimination between the major parties is the law of this land.

DISDAIN (N)

They evinced a disdain for everything foreign.

DISDAINFUL

She was disdainful of me from the time I set foot in her house.

DISEMBARRASS

The politician made strenuous efforts to disembarrass (i.e. detach) himself from any association with the opposition party.

Why don’t you disembarrass (i.e. relieve) him of his parcels.

DISENCHANTMENT

“Most men live in a state of confusion and disenchantment with their Creator, if they believe in him at all.”

(The Economist)

DISENGAGE

She disengages from one cult only to join another.

DISFAVOUR, DISFAVOR

The teenager was in disfavour with her whole family.

DISFIGURE

They disfigured the front of the building by crashing a tank into it.

He is disfiguring the famous statue with a hammer.

DISFIGUREMENT

The disfigurement of that church dates back to Cromwell’s Roundheads.
The new building is a disfigurement to the whole neighbourhood.

DISGRACE
You have been a disgrace to your country all your adult life.

DISGRACEFUL
Don’t you find it disgraceful for a policeman to behave in that manner?
That remark is disgraceful of you.
His drunken countenance proved disgraceful to all members of his union.

DISGUISE
“We are continually faced by great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.”
(The Gazette, Montreal)
The sergeant’s animosity was disguised by an appearance of geniality.
The spy was disguised in a military uniform.
I am disguising the wall safe with panelling.

DISGUST (N)
My disgust at the vandalism prompted me to leave the team.
Her disgust for him knew no bounds.
His disgust with the results of the fund-raising was obvious to all.

DISGUST (V)
I am disgusted at (or with) your behaviour.
Even the mother was disgusted by the boy’s manners.
How come you’re not disgusted with Tom, too?

DISILLUSION
Do not disillusion her of her high ideals.

DISILLUSIONMENT
There was general disillusionment at the rampant vandalism.

Your disillusionment over this event reveals a lack of faith on your part.
His disillusionment with his protégé was the talk of the company.

DISINCLINE
Your attitude inclined me from trying to make friends with you.
You will have to disincline him from climbing that wall.
I have been disinclined to do that from the start.

DISJOIN
That locker has been disjoined from the others with a crowbar.

DISLODGE
He was trying to dislodge the squirrel from its nest, but in vain.

DISLOYAL
Why are you so disloyal to your country?

DISMISS
This doesn’t mean it should be dismissed as uncreative.
My child was dismissed by the school principal this morning.
I will dismiss him from this school right now.

DISPARITY
The disparity between the two of them was obvious.
The disparity in their wages was tantamount to injustice.

DISPENSE
I will be pleased to dispense with your services.
“Dispensed from all necessity of providing for himself.”
(S. Johnson, World Book Dictionary)

DISPERSE
The North American Indian was dispersed from his ancestral lands.
The races of mankind have been dispersing into all parts of the globe since recorded history.

The general dispersed his army over the countryside. They soon dispersed throughout the country.

DISPLEASE
I am displeased at your display of anger. You greatly displease me by your actions. She was very displeased by the whole business. He was displeasing her simply by being there. Such conduct is most displeasing to me. I can’t remember when I was so displeased with someone.

DISPLEASING
You are very displeasing to me.

DISPOSE
“It is estimated that by 1992, Americans will be spending $90 billion disposing (i.e. ridding themselves) of, and treating, the nearly 600 million tons of waste they generate annually.” (Susan Chollar, Discover mag.) I eat an apple to dispose (i.e. inclined) myself to sleep.

DISPOSSESS
Either you vote with us, or I’ll see to it that you are dispossessed of everything you own.

DISPROPORTION
The disproportion between these two grants is embarrassing.
“Let there be no great disproportion in age.” (Fuller, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

DISPROPORTIONATE
Don’t you think that the interest is disproportionate to the amount I borrowed from you?

DISPUTE (N)
“Theyir dispute about (or over or concerning) the inheritance went on for years.” (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

DISPUTE (V)
“Simon felt a momentary terror, lest he should have to dispute (i.e. fight) for his life with the youth.” (Scott, F.M.Perth)
“No one will dispute to (i.e. refuse) Johnson the title of an admirer of Shakespeare.” (J.S. Mill, English Oxford Dictionary)

DISQUALIFICATION
His disqualification was for drug-taking. Her disqualification from the exam by her teacher was totally justified.

DISQUALIFY
Do that once more, and I will disqualify you from the Olympic Games. She was disqualified from racing for a previous infraction. They are disqualifying players for trivialities.

DISQUISITION
The members of the House of Commons found the Minister’s disquisition on the new bill enlightening.

DISREGARD (N)
“It isn’t necessary to be a bastard to be a genius, but a disregard for others does seem necessary.” (Howard Gardner, Harvard U.)

DISRESENT (N)
“I like the disrespect which survives the pomp of Washington . . I mean the older, deeper disrespect for circumstance in general, which used to be, for half the world, the very meaning of this republic.” (Jan Morris, Destinies)

DISSATISFY
He was dissatisfied with their latest recommendation.

DISSATISFY
He was dissatisfied with their latest recommendation.

DISSEMINATE
The mass of the Fulani population . . is disseminated (i.e. distributed) among diverse black populations in Africa.
He managed to disseminate (i.e. spread) pleas for pardon from his cell to all the important media.

“Missionaries disseminate (i.e. spread) Christian beliefs all over the world.” (World Book Dictionary)

DISSENT (V)

“The Dissenters were so called because they dissented from the doctrines of the Church of England.” (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

DISSERTATION

Her dissertation on public hygiene was a great success.

DISSIMILAR

This is dissimilar to what you showed me yesterday.

DISSIMILARITY

The dissimilarity between those two siblings is striking. Their dissimilarity of taste was a source of conflict. The dissimilarities of counterfeit bills to real money bills are obvious.

DISSIPATE

“Others (legends) are quite different from it and more difficult to dissipate into daylight.” (G.K. Chesterton)

Factories have been dissipating noxious gases into the countryside for generations.

DISSOCIATE

I must dissociate myself from you, given your stand.

DISSOLVE

“Onions contain a volatile compound called propanethial S-oxide. When released by the peeling and slicing of an onion, the chemical dissolves in the small quantities of water in the eyes, producing sulfuric acid, an irritant that causes tears.” (Jack Denton Scott, Reader’s Digest)

She quickly dissolved into tears.

DISSUADE

I don’t see much chance of dissuading her from leaving home.

He dissuaded her from going to Mass within a month.

DISTANCE (V)

What else can she do? She has to distance herself from you.

DISTANT

That town is so distant from here that we have to start at dawn.

DISTASTE

His distaste for any and all work was proverbial.

DISTASTEFUL

This new law should be distasteful to you, too.

DISTINCT

His manner is distinct from everyone else’s.

DISTINCTION

“For us convinced physicists the distinction between past, present, and future is an illusion, although a persistent one.” (Tony Rothman, Discover mag.)

She ruled her little fiefdom without distinction of persons.

DISTINCTIVE

His costume is distinctive of that particular tribe.

DISTINGUISH

These phagocytes go back in evolution a very long time. And they can distinguish (i.e. tell the difference) between self and nonself. (Discover mag.)

The building was distinguished (i.e. made notable) by an exceptionally large dome.

“In . . images produced by . . brain scans, false memories can be clearly distinguished (i.e. discerned) from those that are true.” (Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)
“Given the Scots’ major contributions to British culture in medicine, technology, science and government, it’s hard to believe that they could not have distinguished (i.e. made a name for) themselves equally in letters had they cared to.”

(Robert Claiborne, Our Marvelous Native Tongue)

“Things are commonly distinguished (i.e. divided) into animal, vegetable and mineral.” (World Book Dictionary)

“He had distinguished himself (i.e. served outstandingly) on every frontier of the empire.”

(Gibson, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

DISTINGUISHABLE
His house is barely distinguishable from all the other row houses.

DISTRACT
It will be easy to distract the enemy by pretending to retreat.
I’m afraid you’re distracting him from his task.

DISTRACTION
She was bothered by all the distractions from the street.
“In the distraction of this madding fever.” (Shakespeare)

DISTRIBUTE
She distributed the flowers about (or around) the room.
The nuns distribute the food among (or to) the poor.
We do not distribute our magazine in Canada.
“When elephants encounter the skeleton of an elephant out in the open, they methodically take up each of the bones and distribute them, in a ponderous ceremony, over neighbouring acres.”

(Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

DISTURBING
“The idea that order can arise spontaneously is disturbing to scientists conditioned by the second law of thermodynamics.” (The Economist)

DIVIDE (V)
A civil war in a country may be compared to a house divided against itself.
“By the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, Britain and France agreed to strip Turkey of its Arab provinces and divide them between themselves.”

(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)
OK, now divide that sum by three.
“This 1,500-mile-wide sphere, made not of rock but of solid iron, is divided from the rest of the planet by the outer core — a moat of churning liquid iron, 1,300 miles thick.” (Tim Appenzeller, Discover mag.)

“(Our) auditory system is responsive from 20 to approximately 10,000 hertz — vibrations per second. That range is divided into about 25 frequency bands, each a third of an octave wide.” (Discover mag.)
DIVISIBLE
“A prime (number) is a number divisible only by 1 and itself” i.e. 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, etc. (I. Peterson, Science News)

DIVISION
“The degrading division of labour into intellectual and manual labour.” (Karl Marx)

DIVORCE (N)
Modern man is raised on an almost complete divorce between the arts and sciences.
The new law enabled her to obtain a divorce from her abusive husband.
In this country there is a divorce (i.e. separation) of government and religion.

DIVORCE (V)
I’m divorcing myself completely from this debate.

DIVVY UP
(Slang. Short for divide up)
“Biologists divvy up all animals into 40 or so phyla, depending on the classification scheme.” (Discover mag., March 1996)

DO (Vv)
You’ve done very well by (i.e. been good to) me.
“When Stalin said that he did not know what France had done for civilization, Winston (Churchill) felt bewildered. In his eyes, France is civilization.” (Lord Moran, Churchill’s physician)
“That which the fool does in the beginning, the wise man does in the end.” (Richard Trench, Forbes mag.)
Why don’t you do something to correct this deplorable situation?
What are you doing with your sister’s watch?
The reeves of Scotland (tax collectors) sometimes did away with (i.e. killed) a taxpayer, presumably one in default; hence the word ‘bereaved’.
Addendum: The verb “do” is especially flexible and takes many colloquial forms. Viz. He was hard done by (i.e. badly treated) . . Could you do with (i.e. use) a couple of plums? . . He was done in (i.e. exhausted) by his exertions. Etc.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DOCUMENT (V)
The archeologist hopes to document religious customs from pre-history.
“Referential reporting has been documented in dolphins, apes and man.” (Justine Kaplan, Omni mag.)

DOMINATE
The farm house was dominated (i.e. towered over) by an enormous tree.
She never stopped trying to dominate over (i.e. control) me. (Note: Better used in this sense without a preposition.)

DOMINEER
He considered domineering over people the best perk of his presidency.
It was in her nature to domineer over others.
He domineered over me with sadistic delight.

DONATE
That sculpture was donated by the Optimists Club.
The children are donating their lunch money to the old people’s home.
I’ll be glad to donate my spare time to this wonderful cause.

DORMANT
“The challenge is to figure out how to reawaken this genetic potential (of growing new nerve cells in the brain) that may be lying dormant within (or in) ourselves.” (Geoffrey Montgomery, Discover mag.)

DOSE (V)
I dose my dog with cod liver oil. He loves it.
DOTE
“Still in her 30s, she (Margaret Atwood) was hailed as the ‘queen bee’ of Canadian letters, and was doted upon (or on) by a host of academic drones.”
(Richard Marin, Montreal Gazette)

DOUBLE (V)
The car doubled (i.e. also served) as a delivery van.
The consequences of our mistake were doubled (i.e. multiplied by two) by the delay that followed.
The joggers doubled on their tracks (i.e. returned the same way).
The page was doubled over (i.e. folded) at the most important paragraph.
The athlete’s legs were doubled (i.e. collapsed) under him.
She doubled up (i.e. bent over) with pain.

DOUBT (N)
I admit it; I have doubts about every claim made.
The scientists still had doubts on the subject.

DOUBTFUL
She was extremely doubtful of (or about) my excuse for being late.

DOUSE
The boys are dousing their hot faces in the cool stream.
“In Seveso, Italy, where an entire population was doused with dioxin (the most toxic substance ever made by man) in 1976, no birth defects, reproductive failures, or other long-term health effects have yet appeared.”
(William Tucker, National Review mag., 1986)

DRAG (V)
What did you drag in this time?
He dragged the body into the brush.
Let’s drag this carpet through the doorway and onto the driveway.
The dog dragged the doll under the porch.
They dragged the deer’s carcass up the path to their car.

DRAIN
First, drain the oil from your tank.
Your constant bickering drains me of energy.

DRAPE
A large shawl was draped around her shoulders.
The thick fog draped itself over the city.
They are draping the stage with red velvet.

DRAW (V)
“There is life on earth — one life, which embraces every animal and plant on the planet . . A rose is a rose, but it is also a robin and a rabbit. We are all one flesh, drawn from the same crucible.”
(Lyall Watson, Supernature)
Unwillingly, they were drawn into a quarrel.
“Music as we know it today is a cultural creation that draws on many neural systems.”
(James Shreeve, Discover mag., Oct. ‘96)
The boy was preparing to draw a sling-shot out of his pocket.
The actor drew his cloak over his face.

DREAM (V)
I dreamt about (also of) you last night.
You’re dreaming in colour.
“The canary has powers we can only dream of: its brain can grow new nerve cells.”
(Geoffrey Monthomery, Discover mag.)
Dream with me a little.

DRENCH
The violets were drenched by the rain.
The entire landscape was drenched in golden light.
I woke up drenched with perspiration.

DRESS (V)
I will dress (i.e. clothe myself) in black for the occasion.
The antique four-poster bed was dressed (i.e. adorned) with white silk.
DRIFT (VV)
The overturned canoe drifted down the river, under the bridge, around the island and into the lake.
“Squids’ huge eyes glow spookily as they drift through the ocean’s darkness.” (Mark Kemp, Discover mag.)
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DRILL (V)
The students had been well drilled (i.e. instructed) in grammar.
“Petroleum companies can (now) travel farther out to sea for their oil. But, when they drill (i.e. bore) in deeper water, they take more chances with our very fragile ocean environment.” (Phil Scott, Omni mag., May ’91)
He drilled (i.e. rammed) the concept into their minds.

DRINK (V)
Sheep will not drink from running water.
He drank himself into a stupor.
That little lady is drinking him under the table (i.e. is remaining sober longer).
Drink to me only with thine eyes.
They drink to (i.e. salute) every member of the Royal Family.
He drinks till (or until) he’s fall-down drunk.

DRIVE (VV)
I think I will drive (i.e. motor) along the waterfront.
They drove (i.e. forced) him from the hall.
You cannot drive into (i.e. enter) the parking lot without paying first.
“Their ships were driven on (i.e. propelled onto the) shore.” (The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
They simply drove (i.e. rolled the wheels) over him.
After enthroning King Charles at Reims, Joan of Arc proceeded to drive (i.e.) the English out of (i.e. oust the English from) France.
She drove me out of my mind (i.e. made me crazy).
“All front-ranked physicists these days are studying theology. It seems that the unashamed individuality inside the atom . . . the splendid balance of it all, and the H-bomb power . . . that makes everything hang together — it seems that these visions are driving (i.e. forcing) the laboratory men to their knees.” (Wm. F. Rickenbacker)
“It’s much more dangerous to drive to the beach than to venture into the water once you get there.” (Michael D. Lemonick, writing about sharks in Time mag.)
“A straw can be driven (i.e. thrust) through a fencepost by a tornado.” (The Economist mag.)
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DROP (VV)
“Under parts of the north China Plain, around Beijing and Tienjin, the water table is dropping by one to two metres a year.” (The Economist)
“(Elephants) can easily lift a 2-ton rhino with their trunk and slam it to the ground . . . and they can drop their body temperature 16 degrees just by flapping their ears.” (Hammond Innes, The Big Footprint)
The balloonist dropped from the sky.
The exhausted actor dropped into his chair.
“We are in a world with 50,000 nuclear warheads — each one, on average, some 30 times the destructive power of that dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” (Robert AcNamara, Christian Science Monitor)
The parachutists dropped over New York’s Central Park.
“As long as we rule India, we are the greatest power in the world. If we lose it, we shall drop straight away to a third-rate power.” (Lord Curzon, 1917)
The smaller berries dropped through the sieve.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DROWN
“500,000 Northern fur seals are drowned each year by lost plastic fishing nets.” (Cathy Spencer, Omni mag.)
“He went on to guess that, when the history of the Third Reich was written, it would be said that it drowned in a sea of alcohol.” (J.K. Galbraith, Albert Speer)
DRUDGE (V)
He has been drudging at this job since the theatre opened.
She had drudged for her snobbish husband since they married.
They drudge day and night for a pittance.

DRY
Our wet clothes will dry in the sun.
The tomato dried to a crisp.
It should dry over the next 24 hours.

DUBIOUS
You should be dubious of (or about) any suggestion he makes.

DUCK
He ducked (i.e. dove) behind the wall.
The fugitive ducked (i.e. plunged) into the nearest cellar.
She tried to duck out of (i.e. avoid) taking the course.
They ducked (i.e. hid) under the bridge.

DUE (A)
“If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your own estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.” (Marcus Aurelius)

DUMP (VV)
They dumped the earth along the side of my driveway.
“With all the pollution man dumps in the ocean, the populations of whales may well continue to decline. Why add outright slaughter to their demise?”
(Dr. Paul Spong, Greenpeace bulletin)

Because nobody was looking, they dumped the chemicals into the lake.
Laughing, he dumped the leaves over me.
He was dumping the body under the bridge, when caught by the police.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

DUTY
A barge did duty for (i.e. served as) a dock for years.
It’s the duty (i.e. obligation) of all citizens to vote.
Many believe it is their duty to the future of humanity to raise a family.

DWELL
They dwell (i.e. live) by the bend in the river.
She dwelled (i.e. resided) at that address almost a decade.
He dwelled (i.e. lived) in that house virtually all his life.
We dwelled (i.e. lived) near each other most of our lives.
Do not dwell on (or upon) (i.e. linger over) your faults, but seek to correct them.
She is dwelling (i.e. living) with two old ladies in the next town.
“There is no witness so terrible — no accuser so powerful as conscience which dwells within us.” (Sophocles)

DWINDLE
“The planet’s natural resources will dwindle into oblivion.” (James Geary, Time mag.)
She watched helplessly as her family fortune dwindled to nothing.
EAGER
I am eager for a fight.
She was eager to get going.

EAR
She had an ear for foreign accents.
“Mother . . kept an alert ear on the way we talk, correcting our grammar.” (C. Chaplin)
I put my ear to the wall and heard footsteps.

EASY
That’s easy for you to say.
“Electronically-boosted Mozart isn’t any easier on the ears than rock (music).”
(Univ. of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter)
It’s easy to say, but hard to do.

EAVESDROP
She was eavesdropping at the bedroom door.
He sidled up to the hedge to eavesdrop on the party next door.

ECHO (V)
The scream echoed down the hall.
I heard my name echo from the barn down the hill.
Christmas carols echoed through the village streets.
“The old house echoed to the children’s laughter.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
The hills echoed with shouts.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

ECONOMIZE
She economizes by making her own clothes.
They economized on nails with sad results.
The parents are economizing for the sake of their children.

EDUCATE
He simply was not educated (i.e. trained) for the job he had to do.
Advertising educates women in (i.e. informs women about) the possibilities of life.
Her ears were educated to (i.e. familiar with) Eastern music.
The art school is educating its students to the glories of Impressionism.

EFFACE
It is as if they had been effaced from the surface of the earth.
He was made to efface the shocking word from the blackboard.

EFFECT (N)
This new law takes effect from the 20th of the month.
His effect on the crowd was instantaneous.
“Speeches which will have an effect upon the courts.”
(Jowett, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
EFFECTIVE

“Immune cells (in the aged) . . may not be as effective against armies of invading organisms.”
(Katherine Johnston, Good Times mag.)
Some artillery pieces are effective (i.e. deadly) within a 30-mile radius.

EGRESS

The egress from this place is to the right of that shed.

EJECT

They ejected him from the stage the minute he opened his mouth.
I will eject you from this classroom and this school, if you do that again.

ELBOW

They elbowed their way down the stairs.
Go ahead; elbow him out of the way.
She elbowed her way through the throng.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

ELECT

He was elected three times to Parliament as a Conservative.
She was elected by acclamation.
They were elected in a rather dubious manner.
E lecting him to the presidency is a serious mistake.

ELEGANT

You look elegant in your new uniform.

ELEGY

His elegy on death frightened me to death.
Thomas Gray wrote a famous elegy on rustic life inspired by gravestones in a church yard.

ELEVATE

“He could elevate my simple art . . into a prodigy.”
(Conan Doyle, Oxford English Dictionary)
They were elevated to the cardinalate last year.

ELICIT

Elicit all the information you can from him.

ELIGIBLE

To be eligible for this job, you must meet two conditions.
He is eligible to compete in this race.

ELIMINATE

First, eliminate all the duplications from that script.

ELOPE

She decided to elope with Bill.
I am eloping with Cathy tomorrow morning.

EMANATE

“Changes in the cocktail of gases emanating from a volcano may signal an imminent eruption.”
(Tobias Fischer, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)
Those rumours always emanate from the servants’ quarters.

EMANCIPATE

He was one of the first emancipated from slavery.
“We saw it in the ’60s in the hippie movement, when tens of thousands of young people quite purposely emancipated themselves from ordinary rules.”
(Tom Wolfe, Time mag.)

EMBARGO

There's been an embargo on (or upon) alcohol for almost five years.
EMBARK
He will embark at Tunis for the Azores on a rather rickety sloop.
I expect to embark on my new mission by Christmas.

EMBARRASS
She was embarrassed at the fuss they made of her.
Her young relative is sure to embarrass his hostess by criticizing something.
This case will not be embarrassed (i.e. complicated) by that decision.
“We may be embarrassed (i.e. disconcerted) in feeling or in action.”
(The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)
I am embarrassed (i.e. encumbered) with debts.

EMBARRASSING
Your stand in this matter is very embarrassing to me.

EMBARRASSMENT
There is an embarrassment of bad literature.
“The verse . . became a perennial embarrassment to their elders.” (Bill Bryson, “Mother Tongue”)

EMBED
He found the car embedded in mud.
The French always embedded their customs and language in their colonies, through marriage or dalliance.
“You and the world are embedded within each other.”
(Gerald Edelman, New York Times mag.)

EMBELLISH
How about embellishing your front door with this charming wreath?
He embellished his story with fantasy.

EMBODY
I promise to embody your suggestion in my next report.

EMBOSS
He had his name embossed in red on the jacket of his book.
I will emboss it with my family crest.

EMBOIL
Every time he goes there, he gets embroiled in an argument with his sister.

EMERGE
“Male red-sided garter snakes in Manitoba, Canada, wait in groups of thousands for females to emerge, one at a time, from hibernation.” (Billy Allstetter, Discover mag.)
The lunar module emerged from darkness into light.
“The photons in conventional lasers are emitted in all directions; only a few — focused by mirrors — emerge in a useful beam.” (Discover mag.)

EMIGRATE
He emigrated from Canada to England right after the war.

EMISSION
“Formaldehyde emissions from plywood and particleboard are one of the primary causes of indoor air pollution today.” (Cathy Spencer, Omni mag.)
Computer terminals, particularly older ones, emit EMFs (ElectroMagnetic Fields) from all sides. So you may be exposed not only to emissions from your own terminal, but also from co-workers’ monitors around you.

EMIT
Black smoke emitted from the building into the air.
“All objects with a temperature above absolute zero emit some radiation. Objects hotter than 1000o C (1800o F) emit radiation in the visible wavelength — light.”
(Air & Space Museum, Washington)
EMMESH
They were emmeshed in a web of intrigue.

EMPATHIZE
No one can empathize with her plight.

EMPATHY
“My rereading of (Dr.) Spock’s advice confirms for me his great love and understanding of children and his real empathy towards parents’ frailties.”
(Eve McBride, The Gazette, Montreal)
The gentle doctor was known for his remarkable empathy with his patients.

EMPHASIS
His emphasis on (or upon) economics won the election.
“The emphasis in Axworthy’s paper is on the need for individual responsibility — something very close to a user-fee democracy.”
(Peter C. Newman, Maclean’s, Oct. 17, ’94)

EMPLOY (V)
“I believe that water will one day be employed as a fuel; that hydrogen and oxygen, which constitute it, used singly or together, will furnish an inexhaustible source of heat and light.” (Jules Verne in 1874)
I’ve been employed by the state since 1957.
They were only employed for the summer.
They employ students for the day at the minimum wage.
She was employed in (i.e. busy) painting the fence.
“We find him employing his considerable energies on such matters as horse-breeding.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)
I was employed to do a job; please let me do it.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

EMPLOYMENT
My employment by the state has come to an abrupt end.
The professor desired employment in his special field.

Employment of women and visible minorities is only beginning.
Employment on the docks was dangerous and difficult.

EMPTY
The Dutch empty the canals of Amsterdam into the sea every single day.
“The seas began to empty of other craft.”
(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

ENACT
“We live in an age in which it is no longer possible to be funny . . There is nothing you can imagine . . that will not promptly be enacted before your very eyes.”
(Malcolm Muggeridge)
“The scene enacted in the great awe-stricken house.”
(Henry James, Oxford English Dictionary)

ENAMORED, ENAMOURED
“We . . are a dull people enamoured of childish games.”
(Irving Layton)

ENCAPSULATE
“Nearly two-thirds of the human body, by volume, consists of water — about ten gallons of it, encapsulated in trillions of cells.”
(Walter Drost-Hansen and J. Lin Singleton, The Sciences mag.)

ENCASE
“In 1904, Eugène Freyssinet, devised prestressed concrete, in which steel wires are stretched before being encased in concrete.”
(Reader’s Digest Library of Modern Knowledge)
I’m thinking of encasing this crest in lucite.

ENCHANT
“I was enchanted by the river and its activities.”
(R. Church, Oxford English Dictionary)
He enchants her with tales of distant lands.
They were enchanted with their new home.
ENCHANTMENT

The enchantment of the good fairy enabled Cinderella to go to the ball.
My enchantment with her lasted all my married life.

ENCLAVE

“For sixteen centuries the Jewish enclaves in Christendom maintained their continuity and internal peace by a strict and detailed moral code, almost without help from the state and its laws.”
(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

ENCLOSE

The small park was enclosed by shrubbery.
His fear of all outsiders prompted him to enclose (i.e. fence in) his whole property with an 8-foot-high brick wall.
She enclosed (i.e. included) a note with her remittance.

ENCODE

“Mitochondrial DNA encodes for only 13 of the proteins needed to carry out its vital energy-producing functions . . The nucleus is responsible for the remaining 50 or so proteins needed for cellular respiration.”
(Edwin Kiester Jr., Discover mag.)

“Although 99.9% of the genetic information encoded in a person’s cells is not unique, one thousandth of it is.”
(The Economist)

“A fiber-optic transmitter encodes information (computer data, human voices, text or pictures) into modulated light waves.”
(Herb Brody)

“Proteins are made according to instructions encoded in DNA, through the intermediary messenger RNA.”
(Judith Stone, Discover mag., 1988)

ENCOUNTER (N)

Our chance encounter with the neighbour started the whole chain of events.

ENCOURAGE

Instead of encouraging him in his evil ways, you should encourage him instead to mend those ways.

ENCROACH

Foreign elements encroach on (or upon) its values.

ENCROCIMENT

They resist encroachment from anyone outside their families.
They cannot stand encroachment on (or on) their preserves.

ENCUMBER

She came in encumbered with Christmas gifts.

ENCUMBRANCE

I’ve been an encumbrance to my family since I was born.

END (V)

He ended his career as a bishop in York.
“Khalkhali . . was Ayatollah Khomeini’s hanging judge. It was Khalkhali who had conducted many of those swift Islamic trials that had ended in executions.”
(V.S. Naipaul, Among the believers)
Only St. Matthew’s Gospel does not end with the word: Amen.
“For Hegel, history “ended with Napoleon’s triumph over the Prussian forces . . in 1806” (John Elson, Time mag.)

ENDEAR

My mother’s sheer good humour endeared her to everyone.
Even her son’s lisp was endearing to her.

ENDOW

“They were enormously endowed in (i.e. enriched with) land.”
(Paul Johnson)

“The Japanese invented paper folding (origami) more than a thousand years ago and endowed (i.e. invested) it with aesthetic principles at the heart of their culture.”
(Peter Engel, Discover mag.)

ENEMY

I am an enemy of anyone who is not a friend of hers.
This is a poor time to be an enemy to change.
ENGAGE

He was engaged (i.e. hired) as a guide. I engaged (i.e. employed) him for the day.

“Green plants engage in photosynthesis: they take carbon dioxide from the air and convert it into organic carbon, the stuff of which we are all built.”
(Anne Fausto-Sterling, Discover mag., April ’93)
She was engaged (i.e. betrothed) to two men at the time.

Note: The adjective ‘engaging’ needs no preposition.

ENGAGEMENT

“We daily expect to hear of an engagement (i.e. battle) between the Swedish and Danish Fleets.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
Her engagement (i.e. betrothal) to the famous conductor was the talk of the musicians in his orchestra.

ENGRAVE

My intentions are not engraved in stone.
I shall have that engraved on my tombstone.
He is engraving his name on the boulder in his backyard.

ENGROSS

The story-teller was able to engross his listeners for hours.
She found him engrossed in a book about entropy.

ENJOIN

The teacher enjoined good conduct on the students.
She enjoined upon me not to whisper a word of it.
The court enjoined her to keep the peace.

ENLARGE

You enlarge on (or upon) everything I say.

ENLIST

I enlisted in the army as soon as I turned 18 years of age.

ENMITY

She soon earned the enmity of everyone there.
His enmity towards her was palpable.

ENOUGH

I have had enough of your cheek for a lifetime.
He had enough money to retire in comfort.

ENQUIRE

He enquired (i.e. tried to find out) about my whereabouts.
Was she enquiring (i.e. asking) after my health?
She is enquiring (i.e. looking) for Mr. Elms.
They were enquiring into (i.e. investigating) my personal business.
“If you enquire of the . . bellman about Hemmingway ..”
(James Brady, Advertising Age mag.)

ENRICH

“Owen has . . enriched science with contributions of his own.” (R.W. Emerson, Oxford English Dictionary)
“The hilt and scabbard were gold enriched with diamonds.” (Swift)

ENROL

“They were enrolled amongst those who had given their lives for their fellow men.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
Why don’t you enrol him in the third grade and see how he fares?

ENSHROUD

She was enshrouded in a very large shawl.

ENSLAVED

He was enslaved by his hatred.
“The brain-washed mind is utterly enslaved through terror and manipulation.” (Charles Krauthammer, Time mag.)
“The shattered society leaves atomized individuals enslaved to the all-powerful state.”
(Charles Krauthammer, Time mag.)
ENSUE
The trouble that ensued from his return home chased him off again.

ENSURE
Why shouldn't she ensure a good income for herself? He was ensured of a good pension after only ten years of service.

ENTAIL
A lot of hardship is entailed in that job on (or upon) anyone who does it.

ENTANGLE
“The villain tried to entangle the hero in an evil scheme.”
(Work Book Dictionary)
She got thoroughly entangled in her web of lies.
My arm became entangled with the telephone wire.

ENTER
He entered into (i.e. joined) the debate almost against his will.
“Cohabitation . . increases the odds of divorce. Women who have lived with a man out of wedlock are 80% more likely to eventually divorce or separate than are women who have never entered into a live-in relationship . . Men who have lived in common-law unions are 150% more likely.” (Elena Cherney, National Post — from a study published in the Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology)
If you don’t enter your name on (i.e. add your name to) that list today, you’re out of luck.
He entered upon (i.e. started in on) the task with gusto.
Those purchases were entered (i.e. charged) to your name.

ENTHRALL
“A man should not . . enthrall (i.e. enslave) his credit and honour to harlots.”
(T. Newton, Oxford English Dictionary)
Not everyone is enthralled (i.e. enchanted) with the decline of ideology.

ENTHRONE
“The Bishop of Norwich . . was enthroned as Primate.”
(Universal Oxford English Dictionary)
After enthroning King Charles at Reims, Joan of Arc proceeded to drive the English out of France.
“There pride, enthroned in misty errors, dwells.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

ENTHUSE
“They were very enthused by the idea.” (Tam Deachman)

ENTHUSIASM
Your enthusiasm about sports is rather tepid.
“No one I had met so far showed a fraction of Mr. Lwanson’s enthusiasm for my journey.”
(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

ENTHUSIASTIC
I’m not very enthusiastic about the conditions here.
“Some of those who came to Paris are less than enthusiastic for the venture.” (The Economist)

ENTITLE
You’re entitled to three passes.
This entitles you to a season ticket.

ENTRANCE
Entrance to the tunnel is barred to vehicles.
The entrance of the building is blocked with debris.

ENTREAT
She went to the local jail to entreat (i.e. plead) for her brother.
They are entreating (i.e. begging) you to help them now.

ENTRUST
“Like all Communist regimes, Hungary has a Secretariat for Religious Affairs, which is entrusted with the surveillance and ultimately the liquidation of churches and religious beliefs.” (Time mag., 1989)
I would like to entrust this key to you.
ENTRY

The entry of (i.e. opening into) the cave was tangled with vines.
I will have to cancel my entry (i.e. application) for that test.
His entry (i.e. name and address) in the book was highlighted.
Someone had crossed out my entry (i.e. name) on the list.
Entry to the tunnel was barred.

ENVELOPE

First, I envelope him in a blanket, then I carry him to the car.
Enveloped in flames, he jumped out of the window.

ENVIOUS

She was envious of her friend’s success throughout their school years.

ENVISAGE

“The kind of personal dictatorship (Karl Marx) envisaged for himself . . . was actually carried into effect, with incalculable consequences for mankind, by his three most important followers: Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung.” (Paul Johnson, Intellectual)

ENVY

“I envied him . . . for walking with you.”
(Middleton, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
She was envied on account of her wealth.

EPILOGUE

That’s the epilogue to one of Chaucer’s tales.

EQUAL

They are equal (i.e. on a par) in size but not in skill.
Are you equal (i.e. up) to the job?
The child’s height is just equal (i.e. even) with the edge of the table.

EQUATE

I will equate your salary to the effort you put in your job.

“A devotion to Humanity . . is too easily equated with devotion to a Cause; and Causes, as we know, are notoriously bloodthirsty.”
(James Baldwin, Everybody’s Protest Novel)

EQUATION

“. . Hoover’s effortless equation of the gospel-singing civil rights marches with the godless communists.”
(The Economist)

EQUIP

He equipped his barn as a shelter for itinerants.
While his nation sinks into poverty, he is equipping his army with high-tech weapons of all kinds.

EQUIPMENT

“The ancestors of bees . . had the equipment for perceiving flower color 400 million years before the first flower bloomed.”
(Kathleen Spiessbach, Discover mag., Sept. ‘96)

EQUIVALENT (A)

“Absolute zero equivalent to -460oF or -273oC, represents a total absence of heat; it is the coldest temperature conceivable.”
(Michael D. Lemonick, Time mag.)
“3 billion pairs of chemical bases that make up the spiraling DNA strands inside the nucleus of our cells . . spell out a fantastically long message — equivalent in length to 13 sets of the Encyclopaedia Britannica — programming the birth, development, growth, and death of a human being.”
(Jerold M. Lowenstein, Discover mag., 1992)
“The use of the microchip technologies in large businesses alone produces an output equivalent to three trillion clerical workers each day! Clearly, there would be no business as we know it today, without the mighty microprocessor chip.”
(Walter Perry, Microchips Now, 1984)

EQUIVALENT (N)

“An optical disc 4.7 in. in diameter can store the equivalent of 250,000 pages of typewritten information.”
(Stephen Koepp, Reader’s Digest)
ERADICATE
I want to eradicate from my mind all traces of my years with her.

ERASE
Don’t dwell on that; erase it from your memory.

ERR
She erred in her decision to leave home.
Banks seem to always err on the right side: their side.

ESCAPE (N)
“Comedy is an escape, not from truth but from despair; a narrow escape into faith.” (Christopher Fry)
An escape of methane gas caused the explosion.

ESCAPE (VV)
“The best way to escape from a problem is to solve it.”
(Brendan Francis)
The frightened deer escaped into the park.
I escaped through the window.
They escaped with only seconds to spare.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

ESCORT
I will send someone to escort him to jail.

ESSENTIAL (A)
“Soybean meal is about 50 percent protein (3 times more than meat) and contains all the amino acids essential to human nutrition.”
(Jack Denton Scott, The Reader’s Digest)
Sunshine is essential to my well-being.

ESTABLISH
Massive speculation is establishing his position in the city.
“Richelieu established the first professional police under Louis XIV.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)

ESTEEM (N)
Your esteem for him is unfounded.

ESTRANGE
I have been estranged from my family for years.
He soon became estranged from his wife.

EULOGY
To speak or write a eulogy about (someone).
(The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)
He pronounced a eulogy upon his best friend.
(The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

EUPHEMISM
That’s a euphemism for a very vulgar word.

EVEN
I expect to get even with (i.e. take revenge on) him soon.
The window-washers are now even (i.e. on a level) with the third floor of that building.

EVICT
She was evicted from her apartment last October.
I am evicting them from that location tomorrow morning.

EVIDENCE
“It provides further evidence for the proposition that most of Britain’s best political scientists . . . are, for some reason, journalists.” (Anthony King, The Economist)
There’s evidence of bigotry in his every statement.
You’ll find evidence under every tree.

EVIDENT
“It was evident from his manner that I had offended him.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
“You don’t have to go to a factory to see why (Japan) has achieved such great industrial success. The reasons are evident in the thoroughness, efficiency, and resourcefulness that pervade Japanese society.” (Herb Brody)
It was evident to her that her mother had left in a hurry.
EVOKE

“He evokes the small societies of town or village with an acid incisiveness.” (Colin Thubron, The Times)

EVOLVE

“The solid-state integrated circuits and chips that evolved from the transistor are the essential ingredients of today’s electronic products.” (Jamie Murphy, Time mag.)

“They must . . have evolved late into sea-creatures.” (L. MacNeice, Oxford English Dictionary)

The sculptor’s technique evolved into a recognizable style.

“About 535 million years ago . . in a relative flash called the Cambrian explosion, almost all the basic body plans of animals living today seem to evolve out of nowhere.” (Karen Wright, Discover mag., March ‘97)

EXAMINE

I was examined on the subject by the teacher in my native tongue.

She examined him from head to toe.

He examined me with total dispassion, as if I were a bug.

EXAMPLE

The example of Mother Theresa is a rebuke to those who are indifferent to the needy.

You should be an example to your little brother.

EXASPERATION

My exasperation with him knew no bounds.

EXCEL

He excelled as a basketball player in high school.

You will excel at that game, I promise.

She excels in just about every subject.

EXCEPT

You’re excepted from this class session.

I except you from this chore.

EXCISE (V)

OK, I’ll excise that chapter from my manuscript.

EXCISION

He made an excision from the roster.

EXCLUDE

As a child, I was always excluded from adult conversations.

I intend to exclude you from the next meeting.

EXCLUSION

My exclusion from the school was the last straw.

Their exclusion of non-whites was a scandal.

EXCLUSIVE

The price is one hundred dollars, exclusive of taxes.

“Our grounds . . not exclusive of each other.”

(Burke, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

It was agreed that the journalist’s weekly column would be exclusive to the Times.

EXCUSE (N)

What’s your excuse for being late?
EXCUSE (V)
Excuse me to your sister for being late.
I want to be excused from that task.

EXECUTE
“The third incarnation of London’s Globe theatre, in Tokyo, is executed (i.e. realized) in grey and dominated by the stage.” (The Economist)
“Execute a warrant, a writ, a sentence on (or upon) a person.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
He was executed (i.e. put to death) with dispatch.

EXEMPT
The benefits were exempted from the man’s income tax.
He was exempted from active service for reasons of health.

EXEMPTION
I resented my exemption from the proceedings.

EXERCISE (V)
He exercised total control over her.
“The only purpose for which power can be rightly exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others . . . Over himself, over his own mind and body, the individual is sovereign.” (John Stuart Mill, On Liberty)
That power should be exercised under the King’s authority.

EXERT
“Apple trees . . exerted themselves (i.e. thrust themselves out) in air.” (Dryden, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
They exerted (i.e. applied) tremendous pressure on him.

EXHALE
“With every breath, you inhale hundreds of millions of atoms of air exhaled yesterday by someone in China.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

EXHIBIT
He exhibited his carvings at the museum.
They exhibited the Holy Shroud to the congregation.

EXHORT
“Morals are the rules by which a society exhorts . . . its members and associations to behaviour consistent with its order, security and growth.”
(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

EXILE (N)
My long exile from the world of music was about to end.

EXILE (V)
“You are fitted for society and it is shameful you should be exiled from it.” (Jane Austen, Oxford English Dictionary)
He found himself exiled to a very inhospitable island.

EXIST
“The Seven Wonders of the ancient world — the pyramids at Giza, the hanging gardens of Babylon, the statue of Zeus at Olympia, the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Helicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes and the Pharos at Alexandria — probably existed together for little more than 30 years and only the pyramids survive.”
(Lufthansa advertisement, The European magazine)
“The quantum field exists in, around, and through you.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)
“Cheese does not exist in China.”
(Paul Theroux, Sailing through China)
I exist on a stipend from my father, and also by guile and cunning.

EXPAND
The sweat stains expanded (i.e. spread) across the back of his shirt.
“Flowers . . expand (i.e. open up) at 6 or 7, and close at 2 in the afternoon.”
(W. Withering, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Our country expanded (i.e. enlarged) by adding new territory.” (World Book Dictionary)
“The mind, once expanded (i.e. stretched) to the dimensions of larger ideas, never returns to its original size.” (Oliver Wendell Holmes)

“The single organism (man) can expand (i.e. grow) into dimensions of worlds and times without moving a physical limb; it can take eternity into itself even as it gaspingly dies.” (Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death)

“My heart expanded (i.e. swelled) with joy at the thought.” (J. Dickey, Oxford English Dictionary)

A child’s self-confidence expands (i.e. increases) with praise.

EXPECT
“A nation expects support from its allies.”
(World Book Dictionary)

“What others are expecting of us, that is what God expects.” (Bernanos)

“The decline of vigor in old age is largely the result of people expecting to decline.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

EXPEL
He was expelled from every school he ever attended.

EXPEND
I expended all my strength on that project.

EXPENDITURE
The expenditure of our tax money on that monument is a scandal.

EXPERIENCE
His experience of life in a commune was very sobering. I have little experience in management.

EXPERIMENT
“Several new studies have suggested that most, perhaps even all, of Ediacaran creatures are not related to modern forms. They may even represent an entirely separate experiment in multicellular life.”
(Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., 1989)

Don’t let that surgeon experiment on you.

He experimented with three kinds of fuel.

EXPERT
I am an expert at retrieving golf balls.

“A Militia . . expert in war.”
(Petty, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

“Nothing can happen so fast that there is not a microinstant of realization . . Ten trillion cells exchanging coded information every instant. The brain has time to release the news of its own dissolution, time to factor a few questions about why, what, who . . and what is happening to me . . We’re each expert in our own death.” (John D. MacDonald, Cinnamon Skin)

We [www.goodenglish.com] are experts on prepositions.

I am an expert with a bow and arrow.

EXPLAIN
Now explain your conduct to me.

EXPLODE
“You should see the bag (deep-fishing net) surface with a big load of cod. It explodes from the water when the fish blow their pokes. Their air sacs burst like balloons — and all at once.”
(William Least Heat Moon, Blue Highways)

“Booklets may be broken down or exploded into separate sheets.”
(David Potter, Oxford English Dictionary)

“Every year shallow pools in northern California explode with plants and creatures found nowhere else in the world.” (Glen Martin, Discover mag.)

EXPLOITED
“Arsenic is actually being exploited in energy generation.” (Dianne Ahmann, Discover mag.)

EXPORT
Heroin is exported from Iran to many countries around the world.

“Ireland began ’exporting’ scholars to the continent (as well as to Britain) at a very early stage.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)
EXPOSE

His paintings are exposed in every second-rate art gallery in America.

“We live in a world that exposes us to danger at every moment from conception onward.”

(Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)

Computer terminals, especially older models, emit EMFs (Electro Magnetic Fields) in all directions. You're exposed to emissions from your own terminal AND from co-workers’ monitors near you.

“Almost everybody who was a 10-17-week foetus when exposed to Hiroshima’s radiation was mentally retarded.”

(The Economist mag., June 13, ’87)

EXPOSTULATE

He would expostulate about anything and everything.

Ask him to expostulate on the massacre of whales.

I could expostulate with my teacher till I was blue in the face, but it was useless.

EXPOSURE

The exposure of the real thief cleared the suspect.

His exposure to that bitter, cold weather proved his undoing.

EXPONENT

Russia’s leader expounded to attentive ears his latest ideas on East-West arms control.

EXPULSION

His expulsion from school scarred him for life.

EXPURGATE

I want you to expurgate your book of all slang.

EXTEND (VV)

“Twelve is the age during which the range of sympathy suddenly extends far beyond those nearest to us.”

(Karl Stern, The Pillar of Fire)

“The Kuiper belt is thought to extend from just beyond the orbit of Neptune to a few hundred times Earth’s distance from the sun. It contains hundreds of millions of comets.”

(Sam Flamsteed, Discover mag.)

The corner of my house extended into the town square.

His personal influence extended over the whole realm.

Their liberalism did not extend to civil rights for others.

EXTENT

Thank goodness they never learned the extent of his duplicity.

EXTERNAL

That’s external to the problem we are facing.

EXTINCT

“Sea otters were slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by American and Russian fur traders; by 1910 they were nearly extinct over their entire range, from California to Alaska.”

(Glen Martin, Discover mag. 1990)

EXTIRPATION

He was busy with his extirpation of dissidents.

EXTORT

He extorted money from a dozen widows.

EXTRA

That, my friend, is extra to your wages.

EXTRACT (N)

Do you like this extract of mint?

EXTRACT (V)

DNA can be extracted from bloodstains that are years old.

EXTRAVAGANT

I believe that material is extraneous to the matter at hand.
**EXTRAVAGANT**

You are very extravagant in your ways.  
Why shouldn’t I be extravagant of my leisure time?  
I wish you were not so extravagant with my allowance.

**EXTRICATE**

I wish I could extricate myself from this mess.

**EXTRINSIC**

“Merits extrinsic to his character as a gentleman.”  
(Frederick T. Wood, *English Prepositional Idioms*)

**EXTRUDE**

A filthy handkerchief extruded from his pocket.

**EXUDE**

Moisture exuded from the walls.

**EXULT**

She exulted at his good luck.  
They exulted over his embarrassment.

**EYE** (N)

He had a keen eye for beauty.  
In the eye of the law, you’re guilty.  
Keep an eye on my purse, please.  
To see eye to eye.  
“With an eye to (i.e. looking out for) one’s own interests.”  
(Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)

**EYE** (V)

He eyes them carefully from the upper balcony.  
She eyed the other woman’s state of undress with disgust.
FACE (V)
After hours on the trail, the campers were faced (i.e. confronted) by a formidable wall of rock.
Their house faced (i.e. fronted) on (or onto) the river. Every home in the village faces to the south. They all turned, facing (i.e. fronting) toward the setting sun.
You'll have to face up to (i.e. deal with) it sooner or later.
The whole upper floor was faced (i.e. covered) with stucco.
She was faced (i.e. confronted) with the end of all her dreams.

FACILITY
Facilities (i.e. equipment, supplies, etc.) for health care and education seldom equal the need.
He had a facility (i.e. aptitude) for the quick rejoinder.
She had a facility (i.e. suppleness) of movement that was quite extraordinary.

FACT
The pertinent facts about the case were mailed to all concerned.
The fact of the matter is that you lied.

FACTOR (N)
“In 1848, (gynecologist I. Samuelweis) reduced mortality from puerperal fever by a factor of 15 . .” (Ivan Illich, Medical Nemesis)

FACTOR (V)
“As old bone is renewed, Blast (cells) factor into their design necessary adjustments for stress.” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)
The engineers had factored in all the water stresses that affect a bridge.

FAIL
You have failed in your duty as an officer.
“For once the charm of hot food . . failed to cheer me.”
(L. Van Der Post, Oxford English Dictionary)

FAIR (A)
“All’s fair in love and war.” (Francis Edward Smedley)
That’s very fair of you.
You’re not being fair to me.
Be fair with me and I’ll be fair with you.

FAITH
“There has never been another town . . quite like El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles (Los Angeles’ full name), where the lost American faith in machines and materialism built its own astonishing monument.” (Jan Morris, Destinies)
They did not pass on the faith of their ancestors.

FAITHFUL
They’ve been faithful in some things, but not in others.
I’ve been faithful to her all my married life.

FALL (V)
I fell for (i.e. lost my heart to) her the first time I saw her.
I have fallen for (i.e. fallen in love with) a rascal.
The child fell (i.e. tumbled) from the second-storey balcony.
“To fall in love is awfully simple, but to fall out of love is simply awful.” (Bess Myerson)
“Barred from most professions and deprived of the right to own or rent land, they (the Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe) fell into (i.e. had to opt for) a fatally unstable position as overseers and rent collectors to the feudal nobility.” (John Hersey, Esquire)
“Until a freak storm in 1971, not a single drop of rain had fallen on Chile’s Atacama desert in 400 years.” (Omnibus mag., April ‘92)

She fell over herself (i.e. was very eager) to spread the news.

It fell to me (i.e. was my lot) to give her the bad news.

“When an assassin struck down Czar Alexander II, frustrations from all quarters fell heavily upon (i.e. was directed at) the Jews.” (John Hersey, Esquire mag.)

“When the state considers that taste and style fall within its jurisdiction, and links culture to the preservation of national values, it does not create, it embalms.” (Sanche de Gramont)

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

FALSE
She was false both of heart and mind.
How can someone be false in word and true in deed? You’ve been false to your word from the very start.

FALTER
She faltered at the sudden interruption.
The debate falters for a moment.
He faltered in intent during his eulogy.

FAMED
He was famed for his great strength.
“His deeds were famed in song and story.” (The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)

FAMILIAR
His face is familiar (i.e. known) to me. Why can’t I think of his name?
You are being far too familiar (i.e. intimate) with me.

FAMILIARITY
Your familiarity (i.e. being known) to me is disquieting.
I don’t like such familiarity (i.e. intimacy) with the guests.
“Familiarity with danger makes a brave man braver, but less daring.” (Melville)

FAMOUS
“California’s Silicon Valley (is) famous for the densest concentration of high-technology companies in the world.” (Discovery mag.)

“They (elephants) are famous for their fondness for liquor and are great guzzlers.” (Mahendra Pande, Indian forest official, Time mag.)

FANCY (N)
His fancy for chocolate has taken a toll on his waistline.
I rue the day he took a fancy to my car

FANTASIZE
She could fantasize about anything and everything.

FAR
I don’t like to go too far from home.
This is far from what you promised me.
How far is it to your house?

FARM (V)
They have been farming in this area longer than I can remember.
The peasants had to farm with primitive implements.

FASCINATE
She was fascinated (i.e. captivated) by his accent
I am fascinated with (i.e. captivated by) his laptop computer.

FASTEN
She fastened (i.e. seized) on the fact that we were distant cousins.
He fastened upon me as I came aboard, and never let go.
“Twenty years ago (1960s) American doctors began using staples to fasten grafts to burned skin (etc.) . . Now two surgeons (are) using glue.” (Discover mag.)

FATAL
“Belief in celibacy necessarily proves fatal to a heretical movement.” (Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)
FATHER

“(Jean-Jacques Rousseau) is the father of the cold bath, systematic exercise, sport as character forming, the weekend cottage ..” (Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)
You have been a father to me since the death of my own father.

FAVOUR, FAVOR (V)

“A suitcase . . of a type favoured (i.e. preferred) by such unpersons as guestworkers and Turks.”
(John Le Carré, The Little Drummer Girl)
How about favouring (i.e. blessing) me with your smile?

FAVOUR, FAVOR (N)

“It is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favours from another.” (George Washington)
The student enjoys great favor in his teacher’s eyes.
The courtier stood high in the favour of the king.
The strikers were out of favour with their employers.

FAVOURABLE, FAVORABLE

This heavy rain is not favorable (i.e. appropriate) for a troop movement.
That verdict was not favourable to me (i.e. in my favour).

FAWN

He fawned on (or upon) the judge throughout the court session.

FEARFUL

I am fearful of the outcome.
She was fearful for the child in that crowd.

FEAST (V)

My cat spends the summer feasting on birds.

FEED (V)

They fed the incriminating papers into a shredder.
I fed on carrots and fed the leftovers to my hamster.

“China is feeding one-fifth of the world’s population with produce grown on only 7% of the planet’s arable land.” (Michael S. Serrill, Time mag., Nov. 7, ’94)

FEEL (V)

“Every cell in your body is totally aware of how you think and feel about yourself.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)
She felt (i.e. groped) for her keys in the dark.
I feel for (i.e. commiserate with) you in that dank cell of a room.
It feels like (i.e. promises to be) a storm coming on.

FEND

It was fend for yourself or die of starvation.

FIDELITY

His fidelity to her was legendary.

FIGHT (N)

“Life’s fight against probability goes on at many levels.”
(The Economist)
It boiled down to a fight for my life.
“There is fight in the old dog yet.”
(World Book Dictionary)
The rich man’s heirs were locked in a fight over his estate.
The soldiers were ready for a fight to the bitter end.

FIGHT (V)

“It is often easier to fight for a principle than to live up to it.” (Adlai Stevenson)
180,000 African Americans fought in the (American) Civil War.
Soldiers in “that terrible exercise called war, fight over land that doesn’t care and for ideas soon forgotten.”
(Gregory Jaynes, Life mag.)
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.
FIGURE (V)
He wanted to design a computer that would figure out (i.e. deduce) for itself what some of the rules of composition are.

“The conspiratorial strain, like the violent strain, has figured largely in the American past.”
(Jan Morris, Destinies)

FILL (V)
Fill the pool up to this mark.
The scribes filled whole libraries with their commentaries on the scriptures.

FILTER (V)
The oil filtered through the floor into the basement.

FINANCE
“He financed himself through college.”
(World Book Dictionary)
Can you finance that purchase with the help of a bank loan?
All those initiatives should be financed by business.

“In Britain, the creation in 1948 of a national health service (was) financed from taxation.” (The Economist)

FIND
The jury decided to find for (i.e. express a decision in favour of) the accused, against the prosecution.
I’m finding (i.e. discovering) everything but drugs in this man’s pockets.

FINE (N)
He imposed a fine of fifty dollars on every person there.

FINE (V)
Are you going to fine me for walking across my own lawn?

FIRE (V)
Damn if he didn’t fire at me!

He fired at the intruder with an old army rifle.
We were ordered to fire tear gas into the crowd.
They must have fired from that hedge.

“The neuron is the brain’s relay station. When it receives an electrical signal, it fires neurotransmitters to receptors on the next neuron, triggering another electrical impulse that carries on the message.” (Sharon Begley with John Carey and Ray Sawhill, Newsweek mag., Feb. 7, ‘83)

FIRM
I was firm (i.e. stubborn) in my resolve to pursue the matter.
Make sure that machine is firm (i.e. solid) on its foundation.
He was very firm of purpose (i.e. determined).
I shall have to be firm (i.e. forceful) with you.

FIT (A)
I am not fit (i.e. qualified) for that job.
She is not fit to live (i.e. worthy of living) in our home.

FIT (V)
“You are fitted (i.e. possess the proper qualifications) for society and it is shameful you should be exiled from it.”
(Jane Austen, Oxford English Dictionary)
Can you fit (i.e. measure) me for a new overcoat?

“The DNA is so narrow and compacted that all the genes in all my body cells would fit into an ice cube; yet if the DNA were unwound and joined together end to end, the strand could stretch from the earth to the sun and back more than four hundred times.” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)

“The invaders (bacteria, protozoa, fungi and viruses) are too tiny to see. Indeed some are so small that more than 200 million would fit (i.e. find room) on the period at the end of this sentence.”
(Peter Jaret, National Geographic/Reader’s Digest)

Why not fit the hose bracket (i.e. affix) to the side of the house?

“Why do you laugh? It fits not with (i.e. is not suitable to) this hour.” (Shakespeare, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
I should fit (i.e. furnish) that room with cupboards.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

**FITNESS**

His fitness for this job is in question.

**FITTING**

It is not fitting for him to enter the church.

**FIX (V)**

“Atoms are considerably more dependable (as timekeepers), because the frequencies at which they can emit and absorb electromagnetic energy are fixed by the laws of quantum mechanics.”

(Gary Taubes, Discover mag.)

“Nothing fixes a thing so intensely in the memory as the wish to forget it.” (Montaigne)

“Broken genes cause a variety of illnesses. Genetic surgeons can now go into a cell and fix those genes with an unlikely scalpel: a virus.”

(Geoffrey Montgomery, Discover mag.)

Note: Can also be followed by on, near, over, to, under, etc., according to what follows. For example: The wasp nest was fixed to the wood, in the corner, under the porch, near the entrance.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), it can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**FIXED**

“He remained fixed in his integrity.” (Hilaire Belloc)

**FLATTER**

“Flatter my sorrows with report of it.”

(Shakespeare, Richard III, Oxford English Dictionary)

Do not flatter me with vapid compliments.

“More people are flattered into virtue than bullied out of vice.” (Robert Smith Surtees)

**FLAVOUR, FLAVOR (V)**

I like to flavour my milk with a little chocolate.

**FLEECE (V)**

He fleece his mother of everything she owned.

**FLIRT (V)**

He flirted outrageously with me.

**FLOAT (V)**

“Mitochondria are long, skinny bundles of enzymes that float around your cells, turning chemicals into energy.”

(Paul Hoffman, Discover mag.)

“Were it not for tiny plants floating in the sea, we would be smothered by a thick cloud of carbon dioxide.”

(Robert Kunzig, Discover mag.)

Kozo Ishizaki, a Japanese inventor, has “made tiny, perfect spheres of polyethylene simply by heating a rough chunk of polyethylene as it floats in compressed argon.” (Discover mag., 1992)

They swam in the Dead Sea, floating like corks.

“The treasures of Africa were floated on rafts to the mouth of the Euphrates.”

(Gibbon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**FLOOD (V)**

The fields were flooded with icy water by the spring melt-off.

**FLOURISH (V)**

“The Netherlands, after all, has flourished more than 12 feet below sea level for hundreds of years.”

(Philip Elmer-Dewirt, The Economist)

“.. Protective bacteria have long been known to flourish in the colon.” (Sarah Richardson, Discover mag.)

“They can flourish on many different foods.”

(The Economist)

**FLOW (V)**

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.”

(Bishop T. Ken, Doxology)
“When developing intuition, the goal is to create ways to allow information to flow from the super conscious to the conscious.” (Bill Cautz, Omni mag., April ’92)

“In the universes of both Newton and Einstein, time flows backward into the past as readily as it does forward into the future.” (Rob Wechsler, Discover mag.)

The stream is in flood and flowing over the dam. The river flows all the way to the sea.

FLY (V)

“5000 million birds fly across the Mediterranean in the Fall, from Europe to Africa.” (Richard Attenborough)

She flew (i.e. sprang) at my face, fingers curled like claws.

“Research & Development has begun on hypersonic craft that would take off from a runway and fly into orbit.” (Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)

First, he flew over the bridge, then circled back to bomb it. He flew his plane under the bridge, and was promptly cashiered.

“Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you’re aboard, there is nothing you can do.” (Anon.)

FOAM (V)

“Ross Clark foams with rage at the absurdities of the British quarantine system.” (The Spectator, Aug.20, ‘94)

FOB (V)

I fobbed off (i.e. sold) a worthless watch on the poor unsuspecting fool.

He fobbed her off (i.e. got rid of her) with a rather vague promise.

FOCUS (N)

He adjusted the focus of the lens for a clearer image.

FOCUS (V)

“The photons in conventional lasers are emitted in all directions; only a few — focused by mirrors — emerge in a useful beam.” (Discover mag.)

“The Berkeley team . . . focused its efforts on (or upon) the bacterium Pseudomonas syringae which lives on the leaves of many plants and actually promotes the formation of frost.” (Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)

Why don’t you focus your attention on your homework instead of on the TV?

FOIST

The forged confession was foisted at him for his signature.

They foisted a self-serving clause into the document.

“It was the South’s attempt to foist the slave system on (or upon) the free territories that led to the Civil War.” (Alfred Kazin)

FOLLOW

It follows from your behaviour tonight that you can’t be trusted.

Almost a decade of prosperity followed on that discovery.

FONDNESS

She developed an overweaning fondness for chocolate.

FOOL (V)

“You and I . . . go foolish about (i.e. wasting time) with him, and get rusticated.” (Thomas Hughes)

“Strontium-90, a product of nuclear reactors, fools’ (i.e. tricks) the body into thinking it is calcium; and concentrates in bone, where it can cause leukemia.” (Paraphrasing Patrick Moore, PhD.)

FORBID

I forbid you to go out tonight.

You are forbidden to go into his house.

FORCE (V)

I was forced against the wall by the crowd.

“The U.S. is a consumption-oriented society that systematically rewards borrowers and penalizes savers. Until recently, banks were forced by law to pay artificially low interest rates . . . and even this return was taxed 50%. (And) the government paid up to 50% of the cost of a loan. Is it surprising that so many Americans borrowed more than they saved?” (Robert Haavind)

They were forcing him down the shaft.

The whole mob was forced into the tunnel.
That was forced on me.
He was forced to make restitution.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

FOREIGN
“A purpose foreign from his pursuits helps.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
Such behaviour is foreign to me.

FOREST (V)
The small cove was forested with masts and derricks.

FORGETFUL
He’s often forgetful of good manners.

FORM (V)
“In 1979, (Thomas) Gold published the first of a series of papers contending that on Earth, as on other planets, most hydrocarbons (including oil) were formed from nonbiological sources.”
(David Osborne, National Geographic mag.)
“A ridge of rocky peaks, forming into two ridges about its centre.” (L. Stephen, Oxford English Dictionary)

FORMULA
“He drew up the standard formulae for papal correspondence.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)
It was a formula for disaster.

FORTIFY
They fortified the coast against an invasion.

FORTUNATE
They were very fortunate in their choice of friends.
They’ve been very fortunate with their inheritances.

FORTUNATELY
“Fortunately for human health: both X-rays and gamma rays are filtered out by the earth’s atmosphere.”
(The Economist)

FORUM
“A quarterly forum for viewpoints on the current state of the English language.” (Word Watching, Elan Bulletin)

FOSSICK (V)
He fossicked (i.e. searched) for gold in abandoned mines.
She fossicked (i.e. rummaged) about (or around) the room for the lost bracelet.

FOSSIL
They are exhibiting fossils from the Burgess Shale of Canada, the most famous of all Cambrian fossil sites.
It is the fossil of a plant long extinct.
In her views and values, her aunt was a fossil of a bygone age, an anachronism.

FOSTER (V)
That whole political mess was fostered by the mayor’s intractable attitude.
The painter tried to foster creativity in his disciples.

FOUND
Note: If the ‘found’ you have highlighted is the present tense of the verb ‘to found’, then the following prepositions apply:
“That you will undertake the instruction of the young clerk . . with the end in view of founding him (i.e. giving him basic training) in . . Penmanship.”
(H.Allen, Oxford English Dictionary)
“He founded his claim on facts.”
(World Book Dictionary)
“Our traditional psychology has been founded upon this dichotomy, ‘the cancer of all psychology and psychiatry up to now.’” (Rollo May, The Courage to Create)
“The conspiratorial strain, like the violent strain, has figured largely in the American past, not least because it
has so often been *founded upon* hard fact.”
(Jan Morris, *Destinies*)

Note — If the ‘found’ you have highlighted is the past tense of the verb ‘to find’, then the following prepositions apply.

The jury found *for* (i.e. expressed a decision in favour of) the accused, against the prosecution.

I’ve *found* (i.e. discovered) everything but drugs *in* this man’s pockets.

“At least 55 different amino acids have been *found* (i.e. discovered) *in* meteorites. Only 20 of those are used by living organisms on Earth to build proteins.”
(Tom Waters, *Discover* mag.)

If drugs are *found* (i.e. discovered) *on* a person there, he or she is immediately shot.

He plans to *found* (i.e. establish) his Church *on* a godless philosophy.

**FRAUGHT**

“Of all the problems faced by Jews since their earliest days in America, the endless struggle over identity seems most *fraught with* anguish.”
(Hirsch Goldberg, *The Jewish Connection*)

**FREE (A)**

All I want is to keep my mother *free from* pain.

“Honey is one of the few foods *free of* bacteria, because it absorbs the moisture essential to their life.”
(Fred McGuinness, *Reader’s Digest*)

“Error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left *free to combat* it.” (Thomas Jefferson)

She’s very free (i.e. carefree) *with* my money.

**FREE (V)**

“When the states of Europe *freed* themselves *from* papal lordship and protection, each state encouraged nationalism as a supplement to its army and navy.”
(Fred McGuinness, *The Reader’s Digest*)

“The astronauts in outer space, *freed from* gravity, lost up to 20 percent of their calcium.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*)

**FREEDOM**

“I know but one freedom and that is the *freedom of the mind.*” (Antoine de Saint-Exupery)

“The State’s . . . civic creed left ample *freedom for* the psyche *within* the empire.” (Paul Johnson)

“Complete *freedom from* stress is death.”
(Dr. Hans Selye)

**FREEHOLD**

“No generation has a *freehold on* this earth. All we have is a life tenancy with a full repairing lease.”
(Margaret Thatcher, *The Economist*)

**FREIGHT (V)**

“The Holocaust and Auschwitz are so *freighted with* significance that we must let this story tell itself.”
(Willem Dafoe, actor)

**FRET**

“A scant 20,000 years ago, the rivers and lakes we now fret about preserving did not exist.”
(Gregg Easterbrook, *Newsweek* mag.)

The ship was fretting *at* her chains.

Her mind was fretted (i.e. vexed) *by* the problems of her irresponsible family.

“This majestical roof, fretted (i.e. adorned) *with* golden fire.” (Shakespeare)

**FRICION**

She loved to cause *friction between* her friends.

There’s a lot of *friction in* this family.

**FRIEND**

He’s a *friend of* Mrs. Baker.

She was a *friend to* the downtrodden.

I wish I could be *friends with* my ex-wife.

**FRIENDLY**

That article is very *friendly to* our cause.

He’s been *friendly with* James since school days.
FROWN (N)
He came in with a frown on his face.

FROWN (V)
“He was still frowning at the engine noise.”
(Paul Théroux)
I thought you liked me. Why are you frowning upon me?

FRUITFUL
His missionary work was always fruitful of good results.

FULL
She brought a paper bag full of apples.
The bucket of wild strawberries was full to the brim.
The basket was so full with apples, it was spilling over.

FUMBLE
He fumbles at any manual task.
She is fumbling for the earrings in her purse.
They fumbled with their citizenship documents.

FUNCTION (N)
The functions of the brain are impaired by alcohol.

FUNCTION (V)
“These three systems (the immune system, the nervous system and the endocrine system) are now known by physiologists to function as the master controls of the body.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

“Most (of our) critical organs can function well at 30 percent of peak capacity.”
They may have functioned like kelp.
A robot can function (i.e. perform) like a human in certain prescribed ways.

FUNDAMENTAL
This procedure is fundamental to the whole process.

FURIOUS
I’m furious at that, of course, but I’m more furious with you.
He’s furious about everything this morning.

FURNISH
The whole lobby was furnished (i.e. embellished) in art deco fashion.
I promise to furnish (i.e. give) the proof to you first thing tomorrow morning.
“The Catholic Church has long furnished mankind with its brightest dreams.”
(Winston Churchill)

FUSE (V)
“The unborn baby has 350 bones which will gradually fuse together into the 206 carried by most adult humans.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)

FUSS (V)
You are fussing about silly details again.
She always fusses over me.
**GAIN (N)**

It's a net gain for democracy.
She had to admit a gain of four pounds in one week.

**GAIN (V)**

He gains weight by eating too much.
“Too many parents have forgotten that freedom gains meaning from restraint.” (Roger Rosenblatt, Time mag.)
“Politics is the only profession in which mediocrities can gain the world's attention through slander.” (Gore Vidal)

**GAMBLE (V)**

She gambles (i.e. invests) in stocks and bonds for a living.
They prefer to gamble (i.e. bet) on greyhounds.
I'm gambling (i.e. relying) on his going to the tavern this evening.
He likes to gamble with other people's money.

**GAME (A)**

Are you game (i.e. eager) for a few sets of tennis?

**GAP**

“A persistent gap between interest rates and income growth . . serves warning of insolvency.”
(The Economist)
“The path led me . . through a gap in a high elder hedge.”
(J.T. Story, Oxford English Dictionary)
“One of those narrow rocky gaps . . over the line of ranges.” (R. Boldrewood, Oxford English Dictionary)

**GASP (V)**

They gasped in amazement at his antics
He was gasping for breath.

**GATHER**

The children gathered around the maypole.
The Hindu worshippers are gathering by the Ganges.
The crowd gathered in a clearing on the mountaintop.
“Herrerasaurus, the most ancient dinosaur discovered to date, flourished 230 million years ago . . when most of the earth's landmasses were gathered into a single supercontinent, now called Pangea.” (Time mag.)
Note: As for all VVs (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

**GAZE (V)**

She just sat there and gazed at the moon.
She was gazing into the mirror, delighted with her new hat.
“You may not, cannot, appropriate beauty. It is the wealth of the eye, and a cat may gaze upon a king.”
(Theodore Parker)
They spend their last days gazing through the windows.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

**GENERATE**

“Antibodies are generated by the immune system in response to an antigen (a foreign cell or chemical).”
(Ricki Lewis)
“Some 76% of Britain's electricity is generated from coal.” (The Economist, 1988)
“An adult bird can generate up to 20,000 new neurons in a single day.” (Geoffrey Montgomery, Discover mag.)

**GENEROSITY**

He's shown great generosity of spirit.
GENEROUS
He’s generous in his relations with people. That’s very generous of you. Why are you always so generous to me? You’re so generous with my money.

GENIUS
He had a genius for finding oil.

GENUFLECTION
“The public sacrifices were simply a routine genuflection to government.” (Paul Johnson)

GET
I’m trying to get at (i.e. reach) that big apple up there. First, let me try to get by (i.e. past) you. Get in the house or get out of my yard. “Clichés” he said, “are the best way to get simple ideas into the heads of idiots.” (Len Deighton, Berlin Game) He got round (i.e. circumvented) that problem first. I’ll get through (i.e. complete) this work by evening. We’re finally getting to the bottom of (i.e. finding out about) this thing. You’re getting under his skin (i.e. really bothering him). “In the U.S.A., we get on or off a train; in Great Britain, we get in or out of a train.” (Logan Pearsall Smith, Words and Idioms) Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

GIBE (V)
He is always gibing at me.

GIFT (N)
I have a gift for you from your sister. The magi made a gift of myrrh and incense. “The weakest among us has a gift however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him and which worthwhile used will be a gift also to his race.” (Ruskin)

GIFT (V)
“You can . . be gifted (i.e. given) up to 90,000 pounds before you become liable to tax.” (Daily Telegraph, Oxford English Dictionary) He is gifted (i.e. endowed) with great skills.

GIVE
What I would give for a glass of beer right now! He gave in (i.e. surrendered) to her wiles reluctantly. “Nietzsche worshipped the warrior. He said that the only role for man was fighting, and the only role for women, giving birth to warriors.” (Len Deighton, Winter) Give with grace or not at all.

GLAD
They were all glad for me. I’m glad of this chance to help you. We’ll be glad to do it.

GLIMMER (V)
“The idea of ever recovering happiness never glimmered in her mind for a moment.” (George Eliot, Oxford English Dictionary) “The light of a lamp glimmered through the cracks.” (W. Cather, Oxford English Dictionary) “Chartres is famed for . . windows deemed incomparable by many experts, glimmering with blues so deep that they were once said to consist of sapphires.” (Marcy Heidish, GEO mag./Reader’s Digest)

GLOAT
“Never did miser gloat on his money with more delight.” (W. Irving) The warrior gloated over his fallen foe. He gloated upon my discomfiture with malevolent pleasure.
GLORY (V)
He gloried (i.e. took pride) in the chaos he had created.

GLUE (V)
“CAMs (cell-adhesion molecules) are the proteins that glue individual cells to one another to make tissues.”
(New York Times mag.)

GO
That goes against the grain.
He went at (i.e. attacked) the task with a vengeance.
Why don’t you go (i.e. travel) by bus.
If you go by (i.e. bank on) appearances, you’ll be in for a shock.
Go for it (i.e. pursue it with vigor), my boy.
They’ve gone in for (i.e. favour) silks and satins.
“Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” (Dylan Thomas)
“Hydrogen has a lower energy content than gasoline: in fact, a car can go (i.e. travel) some 3,000 times farther on a gallon of gasoline than it can on a gallon of hydrogen.”
(Sam Flamsteed, Discover mag.)
Just go to the next street and turn left.
I think I’ll go out for a drink.
“Most of the vast bulk of War and Peace went through (i.e. was subjected to) at least seven drafts.”
(Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)
“Something is very wrong about a free enterprise system in which we bail out a huge corporation with enormous sums of government money, but a poor fisherman often cannot go to the bank and get $500 to repair his boat.”
(Walter J. Hickel, U.S. Interior Secretary)
“Wherever a thought goes, a chemical goes with it.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)
Yellow goes (i.e. harmonizes) with many colours.
I went (i.e. lived) without food for five days

GOOD
Let me do it; I’m good (i.e. skilled) at that.
This must be good (i.e. useful) for something.
That’s very good (i.e. kind) of you.

That ticket is good (i.e. valid) in all respects and under all conditions.
You are being very good (i.e. helpful) to me.
He’s good (i.e. skilled) with tools.

GOOD-NATURED
“The world is good-natured to the people who are good-natured.” (William Makepeace Thackeray)

GORGEOUS
“To . . . gorge upon the Church.”
(Milton, Oxford Universal Dictionary)
She gorged herself with chocolate-coated cherries.
“During excessive laughter, the head and face become gorged (i.e. suffused) with blood.”
(Darwin, Oxford Universal Dictionary)

GOSSIP (V)
She loved to gossip with her friends about other friends.

GRAB (V)
The passing bicyclist grabbed at her purse.
He was grabbing for the brass ring.
She grabbed me with all her strength.

GRADUATE (V)
“To say ‘I graduated college, rather than I graduated from college, is to be a language slob.”
(William Safire, On Language)

GRAFT (V)
“Graft a damson on a plum tree; graft a plum tree with a damson.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

GRANT (V)
He granted his money to a foundation.
GRAPPLE
“Generations of emperors grappled with the problem of the Christian deity.” (Paul Johnson)

GRASP (N)
The lecturer had a firm grasp of his subject.

GRASP (V)
The baby grasped at everything within reach.
The poet grasped the crag with tired hands.

GRATE
His voice grated on my ears.

GRATEFUL
I’m grateful to you for all your trouble.

GRATITUDE
I was pleased to show my gratitude to him for all his kindnesses.

GREAT
“Mr Harrison is great on (i.e. very fond of) D.H. Lawrence.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

GREET
The guests were greeted at the door by a butler.
The young girl greeted her father with a sunny smile.

GRIEF (N)
My grief at the loss of my business almost ruined my life.

GRIEVE (V)
I grieve at your loss.
They were grieving for all their lost relatives.
He grieved over (or about) his life all his life.

GRIND (V)
He’s been grinding at (i.e. sweating over) math all year with little success.
“It takes some 140,000 insects, ground into a fine powder, to produce one kilogram of cochineal, a natural, intense, scarlet food dye.”
(Noel Vietmeyer, International Wildlife/Reader’s Digest)

GROW
“Character grows from circumstance acting on that which is within.” (Hilaire Belloc, Cromwell)
“Most of the world’s top-quality vanilla, from the vanilla orchid, is grown in Madagascar. . . Cheap artificial vanilla contains only 1 of more than 150 components of natural vanilla.” (J. Naisbitt & P. Aburdene, Megatrends 2000)
“The true miracle (is), as always, the union of egg and sperm and the emergence of a cell that can grow into a human brain.” (Dr. Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)
“70% of the world’s commercial crop of mustard (the world’s most popular condiment) is grown on about 170,000 hectares in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta (Canada).”
(W. Collins, Harrowsmith mag./Reader’s Digest)
“I had grown (i.e. learned) to love the place.”
(A. Greene, Oxford English Dictionary)
“His red-gold pair of horizontal moustaches had grown (i.e. increased) to really noble proportions.”
(J. Conrad, Oxford English Dictionary)
“The garden could be begun . . and grow (i.e. increase) with the membership of the community.”
(I. Murdock, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Sugar-canês grow without planting.”
(F. Brooke, Oxford English Dictionary)

GROWTH
Unemployment can stunt the growth of a nation.
GUARANTEE (V)
The British Empire did not guarantee free trade to the colonies. (Paul Johnson, *A History of the Modern World*)

GUARD (V)
You will have to guard against over-exertion.

GUARDING
“Guarding realms and kings from shame.” (Tennyson)

GUESS (V)
I’ll guess at it, but I won’t bet on it.

GUIDE (V)
I promised to guide the children around the museum.
“She dropped her things and, guided by George’s voice, found the bedroom.”
(R.H. Mottram, *Oxford English Dictionary*)
“Good advice guided him in the choice of a career.”
(Oxford English Dictionary)
He took her by the elbow and guided her into the room.
“He took her arm to guide her through the Saturday evening crowds.”
(N. Shute, *Oxford English Dictionary*)
I will guide you to the pass, then you’re on your own.

GUILTY
Was this woman guilty of cruelty?
HAGGLE
If you haggle with me about the price, I’ll take the painting off the market.
They haggle over every item in their booth.

HAIL (V)
“Still in her 30s, she (Margaret Atwood) was hailed (i.e. acclaimed) as the ‘queen bee’ of Canadian letters, and was doted upon by a host of academic drones.”
(Richard Marin, Montreal Gazette)
I hail (i.e. come) from the Buda side of Budapest.
It suddenly hailed (i.e. rained ice pellets) on our picnic.

HALLOW
“A place hallowed (i.e. consecrated) by memories.”
(World Book Dictionary)
Cap-de-la-Madeleine in Quebec is hallowed (i.e. made holy) to millions by the miracle of the “Bridge of Ice”.

HAMMER (V)
The lawyers hammered at him till he pleaded guilty.
First, they hammer the spikes into the ground.
The boxer was hammering him on the head with his huge fists.

HAND (V)
“He handed (i.e. helped) her into the carriage.”
(A. Trollope, Oxford English Dictionary)
You have to hand it to him (i.e. give him credit), he is clever.
Hand that ball to your brother, now!

HANDLE (V)
“To deliver a perfect picture, a color-video signal requires about 90 million bits per sec. Optical fibers can handle that with several hundred million bits of capacity to spare” (Stephen Koepp, Time mag.)
Handle it with care.

HANDY
Some men are handy about the house.
The whole village of Saint-Jean-Port-Joli in Quebec seems to be handy at woodcarving.
This tool will be handy for repairing the fence.
She’s surprisingly handy with a hockey stick.

HANG
You should not hang about (or around) that place.
You should hang it from that hook.
They hanged (i.e. lynched) the poor slave from a nearby tree.
“Even land viruses hang out in (i.e. live in) the sea, patiently waiting in limbo for a shot at their targets.”
(David H. Freedman, Discover mag.)
She hung (i.e. draped) her clothes on the branches of a tree.
The children hung onto (i.e. focused totally on) the storyteller’s every word.
They hung the painting over the fireplace.
“The Trinity Episcopal Cathedral (in Miami) . . the hall of which is hung (i.e. adorned) with the massed tartans of the Scottish clans.” (Jan Morris, Journeys)
“Sometimes (in Houston) you can taste the old spite and coarseness of the South. Macho rednecks ride ostentatiously around with guns hanging in their pickup cabs.” (Jan Morris, Journeys)
They found him hanging from a tree limb.
He was found hanging on to the chimney of his flooded home.
I found my towel hanging over the fence.
The boy found his jacket hanging under the bridge.
HANKER

Even from his prison cell, he hankered after power.

“Hanker for a glimpse of home.”
(Fowler, Modern English Usage)

HAPPEN

“Worse than the clear-cutting of the Earth’s forests . . . bottom trawling (of the ocean floor) happens around the world . . . there are nearly 89,000 trawlers (in operation in 1998) . . . Researchers said 5.9 million square miles of ocean floor are scraped each year, about twice the area of the contiguous United States.”
(Seth Borenstein, Knight Ridder Newspapers)

“I believe Bergson once said towards the end of his life that everything good that happened in the world since Christ has happened through Him.”
(Karl Stern, The Pillar of Fire)

I happened (i.e. came by chance) on (or upon) the accident at a turn in the trail.

Aldous Huxley said: “Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

HARD

You will find him hard at (i.e. concentrated on) his task.
The old dear is very hard of hearing (i.e. deaf).
Walking on cobblestones is hard (i.e. punishing) on one’s feet.
He’s very hard up for (i.e. short of) photos of that period.

HARMFUL

“The ambition, greed, tyranny . . . negligence and brutal insensitivity (of fathers) are a hundred times more harmful to children than the unthinking tenderness of mothers.”
(Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile)

HARNESS

“Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love; and then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will discover fire.”
(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin)

Modern totalitarianism is harnessed to high technology and mechanized power.

HARP

Don’t harp on (or upon) the subject; drop it.
Why do you keep harping on (or upon) that subject?
He had harped on the subject till I wanted to hit him.

HARVEST (V)

“With just one application of 16 percent methanol, Nonomura harvested an additional 12 tons of watermelons from two and a half acres.”
(Discover mag., April ’93)

HATEFUL

“Smoking: A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain and dangerous to the lungs,” wrote James I, King of England, in 1604. “Too few listened to the ‘wisest fool in Christendom’ then or since.”
(The Economist)

HAUL (V)

“Blood, five litres or so in a typical adult, is the river of life, coursing through close to 100,000 km of blood vessels to deliver oxygen and nutrients to and haul waste products from every part of the body.”
(Roderick Jamer, CARP NEWS)

Most of the wheat is hauled by freight train to the coast.
HEAD (V)
She will head down the aisle sooner or later.
“In the middle of West Berlin there is no darkness, at the edges no light. They were heading for the light.”
(John Le Carré, The little drummer girl)
She headed in the wrong direction.
Our plane is heading right into storm clouds.
The ship finally headed out to sea.
Finally, they headed toward me.

HEAL
She was healed of her disease by chemotherapy.

HEAR
“In a sense, we doctors are like employees at the complaint desk of a large department store. We tend to get a biased view of the quality of the product (the human body) when we hear about its aches and pains all day.”
(Dr. Paul Brand, Fearfully & Wonderfully Made)
We have not heard from him since last Tuesday.
“12% of all adults living in New York City (late in 1965) never heard of the 1964-65 New York World’s Fair.”
(Charles F. Adams, Common Sense in Advertising)

HEARKEN
“She hearkens (i.e. listens) for his hounds and for his horn.”
(Shakespeare)
Harken (i.e. pay heed) to (or unto) my words, pilgrim.

HEART
The women had no heart for fox hunting.
It was a strange feeling to hold the heart of a man in my hands.
The two chatted heart to heart till darkness invaded the room.

HEAVE
The ships hove into view (i.e. appeared) with the dawn.
“In the end, (Sao Paulo) will have no choice but to heave (i.e. raise) that other Brazil up to their level.”
(The Economist)

HEEDFUL
She was heedful of my warning and lived to tell her tale.

HEEDLESS
They drove heedless of all the stop signs.

HEIR
He was the only legitimate heir of the baronet.
I was the sole heir to my family’s fortune.

HELL-BENT
The cowboy was hell-bent for the rodeo prize.
“Few tasks are more daunting than standing in the path of a charging theoretical physicist who is hell-bent on getting funding for the next particle accelerator.”
(Eugene Linden, Time mag.)

HELP (N)
There’s just no help for it.
She got through the day with the help of a couple of aspirins.
You’ve been a great help to him.

HELP (V)
Two volunteers helped him down the stairs.
She helped him in the most difficult period of his life.
A neighbour helped him into his wheelchair.
“He did not help himself to any food.”
(Scott, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
Would you help her over that fence.
Just help him through the worst part of the swamp.
Please help him with that heavy lawnmower.
Exercise helps with circulation.(modern)
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

HERALD (V)
(ERIC) “Gill’s strong uncomplicated lines and wide-eyed primitive heads seemed to have been heralded in the
works of Gauguin and Cézanne.”
(Fiona MacCarthy, Eric Gill)

HIDE
The three-year-old liked to hide behind the cupboard.
“The great secret, known to internists and learned early in marriage by (their) wives, but still hidden from the general public, is that most things get better by themselves . . (usually) by morning.”
(Dr. Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)
Hide your purse from view at the first opportunity.
The plane climbed till it was hidden in the clouds.
He hid under the bed.

HINDER
They were hindered from doing a good job in every way possible.
The foreman seemed to take pleasure in hindering me in my work.

HINDRANCE
He has been a hindrance to his party from the start.

HINGE
“Creative invention almost always hinges on creative observation.” (Robert Friedel, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)
The debate in court hinged upon the fact that he was seen in the neighbourhood that night.

HINT
He hinted at violence with a smile on his face.
I am reluctant to hint to the mother that her child has misbehaved.

HITCH
Hitch your wagon to a star. (Emerson)

HITCHED
“The famous naturalist John Muir declared, ‘Whenever we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe’.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

HITCHHIKE
If you think you can hitchhike (i.e. build) on (or onto) this idea, you’re welcome to try.
I proposed to fly to Vancouver, then hitchhiked (i.e. thumbed a ride) from Vancouver to Alaska.

HOICK
“(It) transformed the French theater, hoicking it out of the noble stasis of Corneille and Racine.”
(Time mag., April 27, ’98)

HOISTED
“With a little brown backpack hoisted on his shoulders, Paul Theroux was on his travels.”
(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)
“To have the engineer hoist with his own petard.”
(Shakespeare)

HOLD
They’re holding him for ransom.
Just hold on to me till I get you to shore.
Well, they held me to my word, so I had to do it.
I don’t hold (i.e. agree) with your insane plan.

HOLLOW
They found the tree stump hollowed by rot and ants.
“A Grotto hollowed in the Rock.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
I hollowed the log with an axe.

HOME
Millions of birds home in on their small island every spring.

HOME
I took her to a home for the aged.
“A mere 33 of 30,000 known oil fields hold half the world’s known reserves. The Middle East is home to 25 of these giant fields, and to 60% of known oil reserves.”
(David Osborne, National Geographic mag.)
HONEST
“Being entirely honest with oneself is good exercise.”
(Sigmund Freud)

HONOUR, HONOR (V)
He was honored by his peers.
She was honored in absentia.
“Students liked to honour him (Ibsen) with torchlight processions.”
(Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)

HONOUR, HONOR (N)
It’s an honour for him just to be here.
We should do something in honor of that deed.
That’s a big honour to me.

HOOK (V)
His golf ball hooked (i.e. curved) to the right and into the woods.
Why don’t we hook (i.e. attach) your car onto my trailer till we find a garage?

HOP (V)
The kangaroo hopped over the fence.
The wallaby hopped across the lawn, around that tree, over the hedge, and through the park.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

HOPE (V)
They hoped against hope for a reprieve.
He hoped for rain, but refused to pray for it.

HOPE (N)
There’s hope for me yet.
You haven’t a hope in hell of making that jump.

HOPEFUL
I am not very hopeful about the outcome; are you?
How hopeful are you of a victory today?

HORRIFY
She was horrified at his intention.
I was horrified by his tale of woe.

HORROR
I’ve had a horror of dentists since I was a child.
The horrors of hell.

HOSPITALIZE
“In 1985 . . thirty-five thousand (Americans) were hospitalized with salmonellosis, which killed more than 1,000 people and left 120,000 others with chronic crippling diseases like arthritis.”
(Penny Ward Moser, Discover mag.)

HOSTILE
Why are you so hostile to me?

HOSTILITY
Her hostility to me was obvious to everyone in the room.

HOUSE (V)
We were housed in a trailer truck for the better part of a year.

HUNGER (V)
She hungered after sainthood.
He hungered for love all his young life.

HUNGRY
“People are hungry for marvels, and the world is full of them. People don’t see them even though they are right under their noses.”
(Robertson Davies, What’s Bred in the Bone)

HUNGRY
They hunt by night.
“Some (seals) routinely forgo breathing for as long as 20 minutes, while plunging thousands of feet below the ocean’s surface to hunt for fish and squid.”
(Discover mag.)
He hunted in the reserve till he was shot to death himself.
They hunted in vain through the night. Why shouldn’t he hunt with binoculars only?

HURL

“Franz Liszt’s ambition: to hurl my lance as far as possible into the boundless realm of the future.”
(Christopher Porterfield, Smithsonian)

HURRY (v)

They were hurrying across the bridge, as if afraid it would collapse.
He hurried to the station for the afternoon train.
I want you to hurry into the room and begin dusting everything in sight.

HURT (v)

“I have never been hurt by anything I didn’t say.”
(Calvin Coolidge)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEA</th>
<th>IDEAL (A)</th>
<th>IDEAL (N)</th>
<th>IDENTICAL</th>
<th>IDENTIFY</th>
<th>IDEOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you any idea of the damage you’ve just caused?</td>
<td>This place is ideal for a picnic.</td>
<td>He couldn’t live up to her ideal of justice.</td>
<td>“Brain waves of hypnotized persons . . are identical with the waking state.” (Lyall Watson, Lifetide) Note: Never to.</td>
<td>“A complex protein, produced in a nasal gland, has been identified as the chemical messenger that carries aromas to the odor-sensing nerves in the nose.” (AP Washington/Montreal Gazette) I just identified (i.e. put the finger on) the criminal for the police. “Biometric security systems . . identify a person by his or her voice, fingerprint, hand geometry, or retinal pattern.” (Sam Diamond) “Seventy percent of the 3,000 plants identified to date by the National Cancer Institute (U.S.) as offering potential cures for cancer are indigenous to tropical rain forests.” (Omni mag., May ’91) “To Hitler, the nuclear field was identified with Einstein and Jewish physics.” (The Economist mag.)</td>
<td>“Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.” (Edward Abbey, The Nine Nations of North America)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGNORANCE</td>
<td>IGNORANT</td>
<td>ILL</td>
<td>IMBED</td>
<td>IMBUE</td>
<td>IMITATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His ignorance of their customs got him into deep trouble.</td>
<td>They are ignorant of the most basic hygiene.</td>
<td>The news is that things are going desperately ill (i.e. badly) for him. She became ill (i.e. sick) with fever.</td>
<td>“Beams of reinforced concrete, in which iron (and later steel) rods or mesh were imbedded to provide strength, were introduced by the French engineers Joseph Monier and François Hennebique.” (Reader’s Digest Library of Modern Knowledge) I found my favorite shovel imbedded in the manure pile.</td>
<td>“Marshall Lyautey, the great French Governor-General of Morocco, described (French) colons as ‘every bit as bad as the Boches, imbued with the same belief in inferior races whose destiny is to be exploited.’” (Paul Johnson, A history of the Modern World) He has imbued all his children with a strong desire to help.</td>
<td>He was famous for his imitation of Winston Churchill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMMERSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>She was totally immersed in her book.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMMIGRATE
They’re immigrating into Canada in search of a better life.
“The expense of immigrating (i.e. bringing in) coolie labour from the East Indies.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

IMMUNE
I’m now immune against malaria.
“The monarchy cannot be immune from the extraordinary change in British Society.” (The Economist mag.)
“In addition to offering much greater transmission capacity than metal cable, fiber optics are immune to electrical noise, such as the switching on of a large electric motor.” (Robert Haavind)

IMMUNITY
He paid the witch doctor a princely sum for immunity against all tropical diseases.
“He was drunk . . with the drunkard’s sublime immunity to the hazards of the world.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

IMMUNIZE
The mercenaries were immunized against every known tropical disease.

IMMURE
She virtually immured herself in (or within) that one room for almost 40 years.

IMPACT (N)
“The emergence of Einstein as a world figure . . is a striking illustration of the dual impact of great scientific innovators on mankind. They change our perception of the physical world and increase our mastery of it. But they also change our ideas.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)
His impact upon (or on) me is immeasurable.

IMPATIENT
You’re far too impatient about her idiosyncrasies.
They were impatient at being held up so long.
He stood hatless in the rain, impatient for news of her condition.
Her children were impatient of her constant corrections.
She was so impatient with my child that I scolded her about it.

IMPEACH
They were impeached of misdemeanor. (British)
He was finally impeached with tax evasion.
They intend to impeach him with treason.

IMMIGRATE - IMPINGE

The terrible noise caused a permanent impairment (i.e. deterioration) of her hearing.

IMPART
He was able to impart both life and interest to botany.

IMPATIENCE
Her impatience at delays grew day by day.
My impatience for her to come home grew by the minute.
His impatience of continuous correction finally grew explosive.
The judge’s impatience with law clerks was famous.

IMPATIENT
IMPEACH

IMPERVIOUS
He proved impervious to my broadest hints.

IMPINGE
The rock impinged against the wire fence where it had fallen.
“The scientific genius impinges on humanity, for good or ill, far more than any statesman or warlord.” (Paul Johnson, The History of the Modern World)

You're impinging upon my concentration.

**IMPLANT** (V)

“The sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul.” (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

**IMPLANTATION**

“The notions of political and economic freedom both spring from the workings of the Christian conscience as a historical force; and it is thus no accident that all the implantations of freedom throughout the world have ultimately a Christian origin”.
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

**IMPLICATE**

There’s no question she was implicated in that scam.

**IMPLICATION**

“That the human brain functions by selection without a prewritten program has ‘the deepest implications for individuality, and for why we object to the idea of people as machines.” (Gerald Edelman, New York Times mag.)
The shadow cabinet’s implication in the affair was obvious.
The story suggested the implication of many people.

**IMPLICIT**

The man is implicit in the child.
(The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)

**IMPLY**

What are you trying to imply by that remark?
So let’s figure out what’s implied in that statement.

**IMPORT** (V)

Everything seems to be imported from China these days.
They’re actually importing coal into Newcastle.

**IMPORTANT**

“In right-handed people, the left half of the brain is far more important to language use than the right half.”
(Geoffrey Montgomery, Discover mag.)

**IMPOSE**

“In 1916 (John Meynard Keynes) argued that the 1871 indemnity Germany had imposed on France had damaged both countries and was largely responsible for the great economic recession of the 1870s.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

I don’t want to impose upon you.

**IMPOVERISH**

Emigration is impoverishing our country of artists.

**IMPREGNATE**

“Lasers, made of glass impregnated with neodymium ions, are the most powerful source of near-infrared light.” (High Technology mag.)

**IMPRESS**

It was obvious; they were most impressed by (i.e. filled with admiration for) him.
The blast was impressed (i.e. indented) into the concrete wall.
The young men were impressed into (i.e. forced to serve in) the Navy.
If you don’t impress it on (or upon) (i.e. convince) her now, you never will.
I was impressed with (i.e. struck by) her performance.

**IMPROVE**

“There’s no point in speaking, unless you can improve on silence.” (Edward Muskie quoting a Maine saying)
I simply cannot improve upon that.

**IMPROVEMENT**

“The only real revolution is in the enlightenment of the mind and the improvement of character, the only real emancipation is individual, and the only real revolutionists are philosophers and saints.”
(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)
The food was a great improvement on our regular kind of fare.

**IMPUTE**

They impute a nobility of intent to me that I didn’t deserve.

**INACCESSIBLE**

The cave was inaccessible to mere mortals.

**INADEQUATE**

While this salary is clearly inadequate for me in this job, it’s not inadequate to my simple needs.

**INCAPABLE**

“Even the most brilliant scientists in the best equipped laboratories are still incapable of copying even the simplest cells.”

(Dr. Boris P. Dotsenko, *Scientists Who Believe*)

**INCENSE (V)**

“Each land shall be full of you and each sea; and every one shall be incensed at your customs.”

(Apocryphal prophecies about Jews)

U.S. president Woodrow Wilson “was, in particular, incensed by the torpedoing of the Irish civilian ferry Leinster, with the loss of 450 lives .. on 12 October (1918), more than a week after the Germans had approached him for an armistice.”

(Paul Johnson, *A History of the Modern World*)

She was incensed with him; even he could tell.

**INCENTIVE**

There is simply no incentive for us to save.

What is the incentive to hard work?

**INCIDENTAL**

He enjoyed all the perks incidental to being a sports star.

Our participation in this political movement is incidental upon its goals.

**INCLINATION**

There’s a strong inclination (i.e. penchant) among them for the religious life.

**INCLINE (V)**

Look. I could swear that house inclines to the right.

I’m afraid they strongly incline towards neo-Facism.

**INCLUDE**

“If freedom has no restraints and embraces everything, then it risks becoming tyranny, since logically it must include tyranny among the things it embraces.”

(Roger Rosenblatt, *Time* mag.)

Is that tax included in the price?

How about including a dollar with every promotion.

**INCLUSION**

“American, British and French conservatives who talk about the great postwar success of Germany never mention the inclusion of union representatives on the boards of directors as a reason.”

(John K. Galbraith, *Guide to Economics*)

**INCLUSIVE**

The price is inclusive of all taxes.

**INCOMPATIBILITY**

There is deep incompatibility between our daughters.

**INCOMPATIBLE**

That’s incompatible with my express desire.

**INCOMPETENT (A)**

He’s incompetent as a doctor, let alone a surgeon.

He has proved incompetent in everything he has ever tried.

**INCONGRUOUS**

Your casual dress is incongruous to the occasion.

(Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)

The general’s plan was incongruous with reason.
INCONSIDERATE
That is most inconsiderate of you.

INCONSISTENT
“One of the most fundamental principles of physics — the conservation of energy — is inconsistent with an expanding universe.” (Tim Folger, Discover mag.)

INCONVENIENT
Your office hours are too inconvenient for me most of the week.
If that date is inconvenient to you, try coming Saturday.

INCORPORATE
Why don’t you incorporate (i.e. integrate) that item into your manuscript?
“Grace can no more incorporate (i.e. mix) with sin, than oil with water.” (Flavel)

INCREASE (N)
“The Richter scale is the most common measure of the magnitude or strength of earthquakes . . Each whole-number increase represents a tenfold rise in the size of earthquake waves and a thirty-one fold increase in the energy released.” (Shannon Browlees, Discover mag.)
That was an increase of at least thirty pounds.
The new figures showed a marked increase over last year's.

INCREASE (V)
“That commandment which Christ did so often try to inculcate unto Peter.” (Hooker, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“Mammy . . laboured to inculcate in her the qualities that would make her . . desirable as a wife.” (M. Mitchell, Oxford English Dictionary)
Why do you try to inculcate your beliefs on (or upon) me?

INCUMBENT
All the duties incumbent on him left no time for personal pursuits.

INDEBTED
I will always be indebted to you for saving my life.

INDEBTEDNESS
My indebtedness to him is boundless.

INDEFATIGABLE
She is indefatigable in her quest for stardom.

INDEMNIFY
I want to be indemnified against even the slightest possibility of loss.
She expects you to indemnify her for her lost ring.

INDEPENDENT
“Dr. Wilder Penfield concluded, after studying thousands of patients, that the mind is totally independent of the brain” (Bookjacket comment: The Mystery of the Mind by Dr. Penfield)

INDICATIVE
Isn’t his suicide plainly indicative of his guilt?

INDICT
“They indicted our friends as rioters.” (Ellwood, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
He was indicted of a criminal act twenty years ago.
INDIFFERENCE
They have shown complete indiffERENCE to the laws of the land.

INDIFFERENT
“He is (or appears to be) indifferent to the content of the policies he is pursuing.”
(Anthony King, The Economist mag.)

INDIGENOUS
The kangaroo is indigenous to Australia.
“Seventy percent of the 3,000 plants identified to date by the National Cancer Institute (U.S.) as offering potential cures for cancer are indigenous to tropical rain forests.” (Omnì mag., May ‘91)

INDIGNANT
Frankly, I’m indignant about many things.
He was rightly indignant at his mistreatment because of his race.
I am indignant with you for behaving so uncivilly.

INDISPENSABLE
Your being here is indispensable for the success of our festival.
“A fixed creed is absolutely indispensable to freedom.”
(G.K. Chesterton, Essays)

INDISPOSE
“The long habit of living indisposes us to dying.”
(Thomas Browne)

INDISTINGUISHABLE
“Its purpose and style were indistinguishable from those of the State.” (Paul Johnson)

INDIVISIBLE
“Man seems indivisible from mankind. In the natural wild, a solitary primate is invariably a dead primate.”
(Yatri, Unknown Man)

INDOCTRINATE
They were indoctrinated with the thought that they were inferior.

INDUCT
I was inducted into the army two days after my eighteenth birthday.

INDUCTION
My induction into the navy proved a disaster.

INDULGE
“The more you indulge in anything, good or bad, but especially bad — in drugs, casual sex, violence, idiot music, stupidity, driving too fast, bad manners, rage — the more you lose. The more you abstain, the more you gain.” (Lance Morrow, Time mag.)
The operatic diva was indulged with special privileges by the director.

INDULGENT
They were the most indulgent (i.e. lenient) of landlords.
“The feeble old, indulgent (i.e. self-indulgent) of their ease.” (Dryden)

INELIGIBLE
I’m sorry, but you are ineligible for that award.

INFATUATED
He is plainly infatuated with her.

INFERT
What can you possibly infer from my last remark?

INFER
The natural inference from this would be: avoid its use.

INFERIOR
That performance is clearly inferior to your previous one.
INFEST
My whole backyard is infested with ants.

INFILTRATE
“Education infiltrates from the upper and governing classes to the lower.” (The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
“Carbonized remains (are) often infiltrated with mineral matter.” (Huxley)

INFIRM (A)
The poor man is infirm of mind, body and spirit.

INFIRMITY
His infirmity of purpose is legendary.

INFLECT
“She (the Titanic) was invulnerable if as many as four of her watertight compartments were flooded. But the 300-ft. gash inflicted by an iceberg inundated five compartments.” (Otto Friedrich, Time mag.)
I intend to inflict pain on (or upon) anyone who insults my wife.

INFLUENCE (N)
“The brain has a civilizing influence on primitive parts.” (Sir Charles Sherrington)
“Our particular reader is most usually a wife and mother — the central radiating influence over an American family.” (Good Housekeeping mag.)
“Have you any influence with any of the electors?” (Oxford English Dictionary)

INFLUENCE (V)
“All of us possess creative talent. The difference is only in degree, and that degree is largely influenced by effort.” (Alex Osborne, Your Creative Power)

INFORM
I will inform her of that fact tomorrow morning.

INFUSE
“The power to create and the power to love, that’s what sex is about, not orgasms. It is about creating a life which God will infuse into an infinite soul.” (Dr. Gordon McCoy, surgeon)
“At his peak, Horowitz had it all flawless technique, physical power, unearthly control, heightened and amplified by a daredevil recklessness that infused every performance with an exhilarating, unabashed theatricality.” (Michael Walsh, Time mag.)

INGRATITUDE
Her ingratitude for all their help is a bad omen.
His ingratitude to his parents is hard to understand.

INHERENT
“Inherents in the Darwinian theory of selection, in (H.B.) Barlow’s opinion, is the idea that the better adapted types in a species multiply more successfully.” (David Hellerstein, N.Y. Times mag.)

INHERIT
“Regions of DNA . . . are as distinctive as individual fingerprints. People inherit their DNA pattern from their parents, so the (so-called) fingerprints can settle paternity cases with virtual certainty.” (Dr. Alec Jeffreys, New Scientist mag.)

INHIBITION
“He (Henrik Ibsen) had deep inhibitions about sex.” (Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)

INIMICAL
She was very inimical to my ideas from the start.
I feel very inimical toward you today.

INITIATE
He wanted to be initiated into a secret society. Any secret society.
INJECT
Injecting a foreign protein into a person or animal usually triggers a strong immune response.
He was injected with a lethal dose of the chemical.

INKLING
“Crucial though the blood-brain barrier may be, doctors long had no inkling of its existence.”
(Natalie Angier, Discover mag.)

INNOCENT
“To confess a folly freely is the next thing to being innocent of it.” (Publius Syrus)

INOCULATE
“In 1796, Edward Jenner proved people inoculated with cowpox-infected material would fail to develop smallpox even when directly exposed to it.” (Man Alive mag.)

INQUEST
There should be an inquest into the circumstances of that death. (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
An inquest on the victim is planned for next week.

INQUIRE
He inquired (i.e. tried) to find out about my whereabouts.
Did she inquire (i.e. ask) after my health.
She is inquiring (i.e. looking) for Mr. Parsons.
They were inquiring into (i.e. investigating) my personal business.

INQUIRY
An inquiry into her death is set for next Monday.

INQUISITION
I don’t like this inquisition into my business.

INQUISITIVE
She is so inquisitive about my business.

INROAD
She planned to make a considerable inroad into his privacy.
You are making a lot of inroads on (or upon) my time these days.

INSCRIBE
My father’s words are inscribed in (i.e. engraved on) my memory.
“Francesca . . inscribed (i.e. wrote) the figure 4 on the margin of her theatre programme.”
(Saki, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Archeologists have discovered a 2,000-year-old clay wine jug inscribed (i.e. engraved) with the name of King Herod.”
(Associated Press, The Gazette, Montreal, July 9, ’96)
“A super-powerful scanning transmission electron microscope . . can punch a trillion tiny holes in a pinhead, or inscribe it (i.e. engrave on it) the entire contents of the Encyclopedia Britannica’s 29 volumes.”
(Arthur Fisher, Discover mag.)

INSCRUTABLE
“The ways of Providence are inscrutable to man!”

INSENSIBLE
He is totally insensible to their toadying.
“Insensible to, but unconscious of; indifferent to, but oblivious of.” (Fowler, The King’s English)

INSENSITIVE
He is insensitive to her needs.

INSEPARABLE
“In man, the whole biological evolution is inseparable from cultural evolution.” (Yatri, Unknown Man)

INSERT (V)
The caretaker tried to insert the key in the rusty lock.
“Take the Bacillus thuringiensis (BT) toxin, the gene for which has been inserted into a number of plants to make them unattractive to scavenging caterpillars.”
(The Economist)
INSIGHT
“We have an insight into the Church’s view of secular sanctity.” (Paul Johnson)

INSINUATE
“When it infects a cell, the AIDS virus needs to insinuate (i.e. insert) a copy of its own genes into the genes of its host.” (The Economist mag.)

INSIST
“If mankind insists on antagonizing it, the planet Earth will be the most dangerous and determined opponent ever to face the human race.” (Robert Musel, Montreal Star newspaper)

INSPECT
I inspected the whole house for ants.

INSPIRATION
“This is the first time I’ve heard of anybody getting inspiration from an office building.” (Edwin Newman)
“The names of (Eric Gill’s) 13 children were intended to serve as an inspiration to their lives.” (Fiona MacCarthy, Eric Gill)

INSPIRE
“I was inspired by a mighty faith in the marvellousness of everything.”
(Charles Dickens, Memories of His Childhood)
They inspire hope in me.
I was inspired with hope.

INSTALL (VV)
I had a new phone installed in my office last week.

INSTILL
“We unless parents instill a love of learning in their kids, the best schools in the world will only be playing catch-up from the first day of class.”
(Anthony W. Hanson, Time mag.)
We tried our best to instill ambition into our children, but with little success.

INSTINCT (A)
The whole affair was instinct (i.e. filled) with promise.

INSTINCT (N)
“The French instinct has been more for conquest and exploration than for settlement.”
(Sanche de Gramont, The French)
“The true instinct of genius.”
(Hamerton, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

INSTRUCT
I was instructed in all the varieties of self-defence.

INSTRUCTION
“All the psychological evidence seems to suggest that an infant is predisposed to learn certain things — the classic example being the ‘deep structure’ that seems to be common to all languages. This obviously implies that the genes contain instructions for wiring up brains.”
(The Economist mag., June 13, ‘87)
Instructions for assembling the table are included.

INSUFFICIENT
Her plans were insufficient for the occasion.

INSULATE
He insulates himself from distractions with loud music.
“So many members of his class (the oligarchy) are safely insulated from the effects of racial preference by the largest affirmative-action program in the United States: legacy preference.” (Michael Lind, Harper’s mag.)
Politicians become insulated from reality.
The attic was insulated with fiberglass batting.

INTEGRATE
“Gaia . . . integrates living things and inanimate forces into a unified system, allowing both science and religion to look at life as something more than a mere accident.”
(Eugene Linden, Time mag.)
“It was Benny (Goodman) who broke the color line in music by integrating his band with the likes of Lionel
Hampton and Teddy Wilson. ‘I’m selling music, not prejudice,’ he said.” (Michael Walsh, *Time* mag.)

**INTENT (A)**

She was *intent* on (or *upon*) carrying out her threat.

**INTENTION**

The *intention* of the government is to eliminate our enormous public debt in the next five years.

It’s my *intention* to hire you at the first opportunity.

**INTERACT**

“Recent research suggests that at least 6,000 fungal species can *interact with* more than 300,000 types of higher plants.” (*The Economist*, Jan. 4, ’92)

**INTERACTION**

“There’s a need for *interaction between* the two parties.

Quantum mechanics (is) the science that describes the *interactions of* subatomic particles.”

(Tony Rothman, *Discover* mag.)

“Like everything else in the body, the immune system must reach a balance, and that balance must be maintained by *interaction with* the brain.”

(H. Besedovski, quoted by Rob Wechsler, *Discover* mag.)

**INTERCEDE**

I want you to *intercede for* me with my father.

**INTERCHANGE**

Gifts were *interchanged between* the two teams.

“Those insects that *interchange from* worms to flies.”

(Bacon, *Universal Oxford Dictionary*)

**INTEREST (N)**

“To appreciate nonsense requires a serious *interest in* life.” (Gelett Burgess)

**INTEREST (V)**

Why don’t you try to *interest* him in portrait painting?

I *interested* her in art at the museum last summer.

**INTERESTED**

“Albert Einstein once remarked that there were more clergymen than fellow-physicists *interested in* his theory of relativity.” (K.C. Cole, *Los Angeles Times*)

People are far more *interested in* people than in *in* things.

**INTERFERE**

“Lead *de-activates* vitamin D and *interferes with* the body’s use of calcium.” (*The Economist* mag.)

Please don’t *interfere in* my business.

**INTERMARRY**

They *intermarried with* the people on the next island.

**INTERMEDIATE**

He built his shopping mall at a point exactly *intermediate between* the two highways.

**INTERMIX**

We *intermixed* the blue tiles *with* the white ones.

**INTERPOLATE**

He *interpolated* the quote *in* his speech.

**INTERPOSE**

He *interposed* (i.e. placed) the maple leaves *between* the pages of his book.

“I shall not *interpose* (i.e. interfere) *in* their quarrel.” (Addison)

**INTERRUPTION**

“Dr. Vreeland and myself witnessed repeated *interruptions of* their continuity.” (*Kane, Oxford English Dictionary*)

**INTERSPERSE**

He *interspersed* jokes *in* his talk.

Why don’t you *intersperse* your talk *with* some risqué stories?
INTERVENE
“Only three generations (of Kings of France) intervened (i.e. elapsed) between “L’État c’est moi” and “Après le déluge.”” (Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)
The police intervened (i.e. interfered) in the riot with tear gas.

INTERVIEW (N)
“The interview of Satan with the Lord (appears) in the first and second chapters of Job.” (B. Taylor, Faust)

INTIMATE (A)
I was never intimate with her.

INTIMATE (V)
She intimated to me that her marriage was not a bed of roses.

INTRIGUE (V)
They were intrigued (i.e. fascinated) by her lies. She intrigued (i.e. plotted) with my competitor.

INTRODUCE
“The Julian calendar was introduced (i.e. brought into use) in the year 44 B.C.” (Lockyer)
“I realized that human beings were introduced into the universe for an important reason. They’re like bees who go out and get honey without realizing they’re performing cross-pollination.” (Buckminster Fuller, on his 86th birthday)
“I was whirled around the hall and introduced (i.e. presented) to everybody.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

INTRODUCTION
“The introduction of realism into literature in the eighteenth century by Richardson, Fielding and Smollett was like the introduction of electricity into engineering.” (Tom Wolfe)

INTRUDE
She didn’t intrude into the party; I invited her.

“IT was almost as if he had intruded upon his own thoughts.” (John Le Carré, The Night Manager)

INUNDATES
She inundated me with facts.

INURE
They shall be inured by force, if need be.
We shall try to inure them to sin for the salvation of their soul.
The have-nots who are inured to misery.
“Only older North American drivers, with the long distances they habitually travel on good roads with competent machines, have become inured to the automobile as toy and as manhood metaphor.” (Trevanian, Shibumi)

INVEIGH
He inveighed against my every plan.

INVEIGLE
She inveigled me into stealing her brother’s watch.
He inveigled the poor girl into his home.

INVENT
“Anti-matter was invented by Paul Dirac in 1930.” (The Economist, Jan. 4, ’92)

INVENTIVE
“He was miraculously inventive with sea and shore descriptions.” (Rachel Billington, Financial Times)

INVEST
“In 1960, Theodore M. Maiman invested (i.e. introduced) the glare of a flash lamp in a rod of synthetic ruby; from that first laser on earth he extorted a burst of crimson light so brilliant it outshone the sun.” (Allen A. Boraiko, Lasers)
“Invest in inflation. It’s the only thing going up.” (Will Rogers)
It wasn't much of a job, but it invested (i.e. endowed) him with a little authority.
He was invested with (i.e. awarded) the Order of Canada.

INVESTIGATION
There was simply no time for an investigation of the whole matter.
An investigation was ordered into the whole sordid affair.

INVESTMENT
“Amount of direct (Canadian) investment in the United States: $43.3 billion. Of direct American investment in Canada: $75.2 billion.” (Maclean’s mag., 1989)
It’s well worth the investment of my time.

INVISIBLE
The house was invisible from the road.
It was invisible to the naked eye.

INVITATION
Somebody once said that mistakes are simply invitations to try again.

INVOLVE
“Genetic diseases are involved in most human deaths. We are all of us time bombs, differing from one another only in the triggering agent, the length of the fuse, and the inevitability of the explosion.” (Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)
“He was thoroughly involved with the triggering mechanism, and forgot his fear.

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INVESTIGA
JAM (V)
They jammed (i.e. squeezed) the truck against the great doors. The place was jammed (i.e. crammed) to the doors with revelers.
“The ship, stuck fast . . jammed (i.e. wedged) in between the two rocks.”
(DeFoe, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
A child is reputed to have jammed his finger into (i.e. blocked) the hole in the dike.
Hats are jammed tightly on (i.e. squeezed onto) the head.
(The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

JAUNT (N)
He went for a jaunt through the park in his neighbourhood.

JEALOUS
“He was “jealous for the good name of the family.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
I’ve always been jealous of their prerogatives.

JEER (V)
They spent most of lunch hour jeering at her.
He jeers at the crowd at every town meeting.

JEST (V)
Please jest about anything but that.
“Verily I do not jest with you.” (Shakespeare)

JOIN (V)
“DNA, the basic material of genes, consists of two strands of nucleic acids, sense and antisense, joined in the familiar double helix.”
(Geoffrey Montgomery, Discover mag.)

JOKE (V)
I wouldn’t joke about that if I were you.
You are joking with me.

JOURNEY (V)
I journeyed across the Sahara in my sturdy Jeep.
They journeyed in London till they ran out of money.
He journeyed through life as if on a perpetual holiday.

JUDGE (V)
Do you feel competent to judge between our two submissions?
“Since the self judges itself by its own standards, it finds itself good.” (Reinhold Neibuhr)
“From its form and colour, he could . . judge of its condition.” (Tyndall, Oxford English Dictionary)

JUDGMENT
In the judgment of his neighbours he was guilty of theft.
That lightning strike on his barn was considered a judgment on him.

JUGGLE
He juggled (i.e. maneuvered) for a place in the cabinet.
He’s been juggling (i.e. playing around) with the statistics ever since he took over as mayor.
JUMP
You can believe I jumped at the chance (i.e. seized the opportunity).
‘Leapfrog’ technologies will enable business to jump beyond (i.e. leap ahead of) the current state of the art.
“What if their new genes somehow jumped into other living things?” (The Economist)
“And the cow jumped over the moon.”
He taught his cat to jump through a hoop.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

JUNIOR
“His junior she by 30 years.” (Byron)
I was junior to him when we fought in Sicily.

JUSTIFY
“The narratives of antiquity are justified by the experience of modern times.”
(Gibbon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
Are we justified in resorting to violence?
Don’t try to justify yourself to me!
KEEN

She was never keen (i.e. enthusiastic) about fox hunts. They were keen (i.e. eager) for the morning’s first news.

“He is very keen (i.e. sharp) of hearing.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

“I wasn’t particularly keen on (i.e. interested in) children — and I’m still not.” (Princess Anne, American Press)

You don’t seem very keen to try on your new clothes?

KEEP (V)

“The relationship between all the living and non-living parts of the Earth organism are a complex of self-stabilizing systems with the inbuilt goal of keeping (i.e. maintaining) planetary conditions at an optimum for the maintenance of life.” (Robert Muse)

There’s an enormous backup system working to keep a mitochondrial defect from harming the individual.
(W. Davis Parker, pediatric neurologist, Discover mag.)

“A man should keep his friendship in constant repair.”
(Samuel Johnston)

Keep your bananas in the refrigerator; they won’t ripen so fast.

We expect you to keep on with (i.e. persist in) the good work.

Keep to the subject, please!

I don’t think you can keep up with me (i.e. match my speed).

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

KEY (N)

“Love, the key of hearts, will open the closest coffers.”
(Fuller, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Poetry is the key to the hieroglyphics of nature.”
(Hare, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

KEY (V)

Why don’t you key (i.e. focus) onto that target?

KIBITZ

Never kibitz (i.e. give unasked advice) from a standing position, because that confuses the players.

“Globally-linked computers . . . allow investigators to collaborate or kibitz on (i.e. trade information about) experiments while continents apart.”
(Gary Stix, Scientific American mag., Dec. ‘94)

KILL (V)

Some men kill just for the thrill of it.

“A computer model suggests that the AIDS virus kills us with sheer diversity, throwing more virals strains at our immune system than it can handle.”
(Rachel Nowak, Discover mag., 1992)

“Peptide antibiotics are rapid response troops, killing bacteria within minutes of encounter. They line every body surface — eyes, skin, lungs, tongue, intestinal tract.” (Josie Glausiusz, Discover mag., Nov. ‘98)

“We kill more Americans with our mines than we do anyone else.” (Gen. Alfred Gray, Time mag., Aug. 11, ‘97)

KIN

She was kin to the Prince of Wales.

KIND

That was very kind of you.
You are being very kind to me.

KNACK

He has the knack of painting what is popular.

“Chomski compares a child’s inherent knack for language learning to puberty: a distinct, genetically programmed phase of life.” (David Berreby, Discover mag., April 1992)
There’s a knack in using the old-fashioned fountain pen.

KNOW

I’ve only known about that since breakfast.

“TIME’s first overseas editions, produced for U.S. forces during World War II, were known as pony editions.”
(Time mag.)

“The man of destiny knows it before anyone else.”
(Gen. Charles De Gaulle)

“We know from physics that the earth rises infinitesimally to meet my step, as any two bodies attract each other.”
(Rollo May, The Courage to Create)

I know of him, but we’ve never met.

“Coal tar is one of the most potent cancer-causing substances known to man.”
(Joel Gareau, The Nine Nations of North America)

“The brain has a unique defense system known as the blood-brain barrier that shuts out most chemicals and toxins floating in the blood.”
(Natalie Angier, Discover mag.)

“Large scavenger cells known as macrophages cooperate with T cells to sound the alarm when a virus or bacterium invades the body and threatens to cause disease.”
(Robert M. Sapolsky, Discover mag., 1990)

“Our present computers are less complex than the brain of an earthworm, a species not known for its intellectual powers.”

“The Orchidaceae (orchids) constitute the largest, most advanced flower family known to science. Experts estimate there are 25,000 species.”
(Ogden Tanner, Smithsonian mag./Reader’s Digest)

KNOWLEDGEABLE

“He is conversant in Sanskrit and in Syriac, and is deeply knowledgeable of Hindu tradition.”
(from MacMillan Publishing’s edition of Don Bede)

KOWTOW

You are always kowtowing to him. It’s disgusting.
LACK (N)
Your lack of patience is going to wreck our plans.

LACK (V)
Now I’m rich, I do not lack for friends.
He is certainly lacking (i.e. deficient) in taste.

LADEN
The truck was laden (i.e. loaded) with fruit from his orchard.
“The camels were laden with bundles of silk and rice.”
(Tennyson, World Book Dictionary)

LAMENT (N)
“This is a layman’s lament about linguistic anarchy.”
(Bob Blackburn, Words fail us: Good English and other lost causes)
Her life was a long lament for her lost child.

LAMENT (V)
She was lamenting (i.e. uttering cries) for her whole family at the camp’s gate.
They lamented over (i.e. mourned) their lost ones.

LAND (V)
She landed at Montreal two months before I did.
The plane is landing in a field of turnips.
I saw the car land on its side, then burst into flames.
When he dies, I’m going to be landed with (i.e. inherit) this wreck of a house.

LANGUISH
She languished (i.e. pined) for home.
“The flowers languished (i.e. wilted) from lack of water.”
(World Book Dictionary)

LASH (V)
“A strong sea wind lashed at (i.e. whipped) his city suit.”
(J. Le Carré, Oxford English Dictionary)
“In his latest article, he lashes out at (i.e. rebukes) modern historians.”
(World Book Dictionary)
Marc Anthony lashed (i.e. incited) the mob into a fury.
I will lash (i.e. fasten) the broken mast to the deck.
I caught him lashing (i.e. whipping) his dog with a strand of heavy wire.
“The youthful charioteers . . stoop to the reins, and lash (i.e. whip) with all their force.”
(John Dryden, World Book Dictionary)
LAST (V)
“The most turbulent period of solar activity since records began is about to start and last for around four years.” (The Economist, Jan. ‘89)
He is sure he won’t last till the year 2000.
“The rat-skin grafts lasted until the mice died a natural death at the ripe old mouse age of a year and a half.” (Mark Caldwell, Discover mag., April ‘92)

LATENT
The whole situation was latent with disaster.

LAUGH (V)
We laughed about his escapade all night.
“No one should ever laugh at (i.e. scorn) the Jews . . . When a man starts trying to define a Jew, he defines humanity.” (Gabriel Fielding, Eight Days)
“Earth laughs in flowers.” (Ralph E. Emerson)
We laughed to scorn (i.e. ridiculed) his plea of innocence.

LAUNCH (V)
The writer’s latest novel is to be launched by his publisher (i.e. introduced for sale to the public) next week.
“He was going to put up the money to launch (i.e. start) Sally upon a stage career.” (C. Isherwood, Oxford English Dictionary)

LAVISH (A)
They were too lavish (i.e. extravagant) in their habits.
He was much too lavish (i.e. wasteful) with his inheritance.

LAVISH (V)
She lavished all her love on a childhood doll.

LAX
I was lax in morals, training and behaviour; at least I was consistent.

LAXITY
My laxity in training proved my undoing.
His laxity of purpose was legendary.

LAY

Note — When ‘lay’ means ‘place’ or ‘set’ or ‘depend on’ or ‘settle’ or ‘attack’ or ‘be in the field of’, the following prepositions apply:
I know he will lay (i.e. place) a charge against me.
“A human brain’s architecture is laid between the eighth and fifteenth week of pregnancy.” (Discover mag.)
The children were asked to lay (i.e. set) the table for supper.
“They had laid (i.e. placed) their fallen comrades in a mound.” (Tolkien, Oxford Universal Dictionary)
He laid into (i.e. attacked) me with a vengeance.
I laid (i.e. placed) the newspaper on the counter.
His future lies with (i.e. is in the field of) words.
“See how I lay (i.e. settle) the dust with my tears.” (Shakespeare)

Note — When ‘lay’ is the past tense of ‘to lie’ and means ‘recline’ or ‘spread out’ or ‘be located’ or ‘not be picked up’, the following prepositions apply:
A small village lay (i.e. was situated) at the head of the lake.
What a future lay (i.e. was spread out) before him!
The boy lay asleep (i.e. was asleep) in his teak bunk.
And there they lay in rows, both the wounded and the dead.

**LEAD** (V)

I was led down the street, then across a field to a tall stand of trees.

“The Gruccis of southern Italy began working with fireworks in the nineteenth century; now the close-knit clan is leading the industry into the twenty-first.” (Alex Kozlov, Discover mag., 1990)

“The path led me . . through a gap in a high elder hedge.” (J.T. Story, Oxford English Dictionary)

“There is only one way which leads upward, the one which, through greater organization, leads to greater synthesis and unity. (So) down with the pure individualists, the egoists, who expect to grow by excluding or diminishing their brothers, individually, nationally or racially.” (Teillard de Chardin)

Greed is leading us all to destruction.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

**LEAGUE**

First, there was the League of Nations; now we have the United Nations.

He was accused of being in league with the devil.

**LEAN** (V)

She leaned across my lap to pick up the book.

“Lean (i.e. prop) the ladder against the wall until I am ready for it.” (World Book Dictionary)

The child had developed the habit of leaning on (or upon) his older brother for advice.

“Trainees . . often lean too heavily (i.e. depend too much) upon the advice or comments of a supervisor.” (Oxford English Dictionary)

Many leaned out of the window to watch the parade.

He leant (i.e. bent) over the ship’s rail and stared at the water.

The foundation was sinking and the building leaned to the right.

The broken pole was leaning dangerously towards the house.

**LEAP** (V)

He leapt across the creek.

Ten thousand swords will be leaping from their scabbards. She wanted her horse to leap over the fence, but it balked.

He leaped through the window and cut himself badly.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

**LEARN**

“The more we already know about some area of knowledge . . the easier it is for us to learn even more about it.” (Ian M.L. Hunter, Mind Alive mag.)

“We learn by trial and error. Why do we always say that? Why not trial and rightness, or trial and triumph? The old phrase puts it that way because that is, in real life, the way it is done.” (Lewis Thomas, The Medusa and the Snail)

“The press has learned from experience that there are two kinds of expensive libel suits: the ones it loses and the ones it wins.” (Richard Lacayo, Time mag.)
“Listen to a man of experience: Thou wilt learn more in the woods than in books.” (St. Bernard)
She wants to learn to sew.
He was very learned in matters military.

LEASE (V)
“We have leased (i.e. rented) an apartment for one year.”
(The farm was leased from (i.e. rented to them by) the owner.
I want to lease (i.e. rent) the house to my brother.
“Our landlord was planning to lease out (i.e. rent out) our apartment to the two families.”
(A. Miller, Oxford English Dictionary)

LEAVE (V)
They are leaving (i.e. departing) at dawn.
She left two cats in the house (i.e. did not take them out).
Leave (i.e.place) those files on my desk.
Why don’t you leave that book with (i.e. entrust it to) me?
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

LECTURE (V)
They are being lectured (i.e. reprimanded) by the teacher.
He lectured (i.e. spoke) from the podium.
“She is lecturing (i.e. giving a course) in Chemistry.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
He lectured (i.e. gave a discourse) on a subject that was of no interest to me.
The world-famous author was asked to lecture (i.e. give a talk) to the students.

LEGISLATE
The new government legislated on everything: economics, family relationships, even sex.

LEISURE
I used to play billiards, but I don’t have the leisure for it now.
He enjoys enough leisure to go fishing once a week.

LEND
Would you lend me your canoe for the afternoon?
He lent his power saw to Harry last year.

LENGTHEN
“The awkward pause lengthened between them.”
(Dennis Potter, Oxford English Dictionary)
“A blue-whale calf lengthens by five centimetres a day and gains an average of three kilograms an hour.”
(Noel Vietmeyer, Reader’s Digest)
“A garrulous chairman lengthened out a . . meeting into nearly three hours.” (J. Wain, Oxford English Dictionary)
The rope was lengthened to its fullest extent.

LENIENT
She was lenient in all her caricatures of the president.
The judge was lenient to me because it was my first offense.

LESSON
A new lesson in diagnosis was impressed on the surgical staff.
There’s a lesson in that for you.

LETTER
“Letter your answers from A through H.”
(World Book Dictionary)
The graffiti were lettered in red.
“He drove an old blue chevy truck with his name and phone number lettered on the door.”
(J. Gardner, Oxford English Dictionary)

LEVEL (A)
Brick it up level with the rest of the wall.

LEVEL (V)
Level the wet concrete (i.e. make it even) with your trowel.
Now level with me (i.e. tell me the truth).
LEVY (N)

There was even a levy on drinking from the creek.

LIABILITY

“(American companies’) collective liability for health care for retired workers could exceed $200 billion.” (The Economist, 1992)

“Liability (i.e. being subject) to error.” (Froude, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

LIABLE

I am liable (i.e. responsible) for any accident on my property.

They are liable (i.e. open) to lung infection in this hovel.

LIBEL (V)

“Publish a libel on (or upon) him.” (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

LIBERAL

He’s very liberal (i.e. broad-minded) in his philosophy.

She’s very liberal (i.e. open-handed) with her inheritance.

LIBERATE

I want you to liberate him from those chains right now.

He was one of the relatively few liberated from Dachau.

LIBERTY

“Liberty of thought means liberty to communicate one’s thought.” (Salvador de Madariaga)

LICENSE, LICENCE

“Others would confine the license (i.e. liberty) of disobedience to unjust laws.” (Mills, Universal English Dictionary)

Why don’t you try and get a licence to that patent?

Monopolies are licences to print money (i.e. open sesames to wealth).

LIE

Note: When lie (or lies, lied, lying) means ‘to tell an untruth’, the prepositions are:

You lie (i.e. tell an untruth) at every opportunity about your past.

Lying about his past, he ingratiated himself with his new friends.

“He . . indited a proud and lofty letter . . declaring that whoever charged him with the plot lied in his heart.” (Washington Irving, World Book Dictionary)

“It seems so terrible to lie to him . . about things which just aren’t true.” (I. Murdock, Oxford English Dictionary)

Note: When lie (or lies or lying or lain) means lay (or lays or laid or laying or laid) the prepositions are:

“The necessity to produce life lies (i.e. is) at the centre of the universe’s whole machinery and design.” (John Wheeler quoted by John Boslough, Reader’s Digest)

This library book has lain there (i.e. not been picked up) for a week.

“In Emeishan, the holiest of China’s five holy mountains, (pilgrims) are ambushed by the half-tame monkeys that lie in wait (i.e. crouch in ambush) along the ascent, demanding food. (The Economist)

“In the liquid-crystal display of a laptop computer . . glass sheets constrain the fluid’s long molecules so that they lie in fixed directions.” (Madhusree Mukerjee, Scientific American mag.)

“All the main holy sites for Jews lie within the post-1967 municipal borders of Jerusalem.” (Martin Gilbert, The New Republic mag.)

LIFE (N)

The so-called nine lives of a cat.

There’s nothing like life in the country.

Yes, there is still some life in that battery.

He spent his life under cover.

Life with you is certainly exciting.

“Read no history, only biography, for that is life without fiction.” (Benjamin Disraeli)

LIFT (V)

“It is only once in a generation that a people can be lifted above material things.” (Woodrow Wilson)
He is lifting the pup gently over the fence.

“(Elephants) can easily lift a 2-ton rhino with their trunk and slam it to the ground . . and they can drop their body temperature 16 degrees just by flapping their ears.” (Hammond Innes, The Big Footprint)

LIGHT (V)

“The scene was lit by oil lamps.” (I. Murdoch, Oxford English Dictionary)

She lighted (i.e. descended) from her horse.

“ Luck had lighted on our shoulders (i.e. favoured us).” (P. Scott, Oxford English Dictionary)

His eye lighted upon (i.e. spotted) a coin in the road.

“Edison’s plan to light (i.e. illuminate) a city with electricity was called ‘impossible’ by a panel of top British scientists.” (Rev. Webb Garrison)

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LINK (N)

“Dark Age scholars believed that God had imposed limits on what knowledge man might acquire in this world without sin.” (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

“There’s a limit to our energy, but none to our desires.” (The Golden Lotus)

LIMIT (V)

His powers are limited by the new by-law.

I was limited to two slices of bread and one cup of foul coffee.

Limited for funds, she borrowed a lot from friends.

Of course he was the last to admit he was limited in talent.

LIMITATION

“(Liberty) has never come from the government. The history of liberty is the history of the limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it.” (Woodrow Wilson, U.S. President)

LINE (N)

Well, I have to admit that report is in line with what he said yesterday.

The target was outside my line of sight.

Face it, you’re out of line with family tradition.

LINE (V)

The writing pad is lined (i.e. has lines traced) in blue.

The guests were lining up (i.e. queuing) for the buffet.

The coffin was lined (i.e. faced inside) with white satin.

LINGER

“Honfleur, that lovely port which lingers like a dream of the 16th century at the mouth of the River Seine.” (Charles McCarry, National Geographic mag.)

They lingered over their meal well into the night.

LINK (N)

“I believe I’ve found the missing link between animal and civilized man. It is us.” (Konrad Lorenz)

“It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at a time.” (Sir Winston Churchill)

“We can speak of man’s natural rights only if we recognize the truth of man’s divine origin and his link with the eternal.” (Philip Murray, pres. of the C.I.O.)

LINK (VV)

Link it onto the neighbour’s fence.

She was linked to the crime by a fingerprint.

“By comparing the genes of modern people, one research team has linked everybody to a fully human common ancestor — a woman who lived in Africa 100,000-300,000 years ago.” (The Economist)

They were linked through a long-dead, distant cousin.

“The industries of the future will have no national boundaries. They will exist wherever human brains link up with computer terminals.” (J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, The World Challenge)
We linked up with their group in Madrid.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

LIST (V)

His name was listed among the fallen.
“A dictionary lists words in alphabetical order.”
(Word Book Dictionary)
“I tried to list the quotations on an interminable amount of stock.” (Scott Fitzgerald, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Sauntering about with the baby on her hip, listing (i.e. learning) to one side.”
(J.C. Oates, Oxford English Dictionary)
The doctor is listed “Physicians” in the directory.
“The deck listed (i.e. tilted) with the weight of passengers.” (A. Schlee, Oxford English Dictionary)

LISTEN

I want you to listen for the doorbell.
“If your wife is short, bend down and listen to her.”
(The Talmud)

LITTER (V)
The child’s clothes were littered (i.e. strewn) about his room.
“He littered (i.e. scattered) the Sunday paper all over the floor.”
(Word Book Dictionary)
“He littered (i.e. scattered) the Sunday paper all over the floor.”
(Word Book Dictionary)
“Do not litter (i.e. mess up) your room with books and papers.”
“Even small (American) hospitals are littered (i.e. replete) with sparkling new scanners and lithotripters.”
(The Economist)

LIVE (V)

“Some of the earth’s strangest creatures live around hydrothermal vents — hot springs that bubble from volcanic fissures in the ocean depths.”
(Discover mag., Oct. ’96)
“Young women living at close quarters in dormitories tended to undergo spontaneous synchronization of their menstrual cycles.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of Cells)

“I am living so far beyond my income that we may almost be said to be living apart.” (Saki, a.k.a. H.H. Munro)
“Borya mirabilis is a rare Australian plant that can live for years with no water.”
(The Economist/Reader’s Digest)
“I’d like to live like a poor man — only with lots of money.” (Pablo Picasso)
They lived in the jungle for almost four years.
“We all live on islands and language is what helps us to build bridges.”
(Northrop Frye)
“Wherever you live on the earth there is a region nearby where diamonds abound — but it is out of sight 100 miles underground.”
(Robert M. Hazen, The New Alchemists: Breaking Through The Barriers Of High Pressure)
“I live by living with them.”
(Florida Scott-Maxwell, The Measure of My Days)
You have never lived within your means.
I simply could not live without you.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

LOAD (V)

“The chauffeur loads the suitcases into the car.”
(A Brooker, Oxford English Dictionary)
The secretary was inclined to load her tasks on others.
“Paving asphalt is only 5 percent asphalt; the remainder is a combination of sand and rock loaded with microorganisms.”
(Omni mag., May ’91)
Do not load (i.e. burden) your mind with worries.

LOAN (N)

I made him a loan of my best carving knife.

LOAN (V)

Would you believe I loaned $10 to a complete stranger?
(U.S.)

LOATHSOME

“Smoking: A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain and dangerous to the lungs,” wrote James I, king of England, in 1604. “Too few
listened to the “wisest fool in Christendom” then or since.” (The Economist)

LOCALIZE, LOCALISE

“Simply by localizing your awareness on a source of pain, you can cause healing to begin, for the body naturally sends healing energy wherever attention is drawn.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

LOCATE

The gunboats yesterday located the enemy’s position at Kerreri. (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“The Green Tree Frog is a ventiloquist. It throws its voice so predators can never locate it by its croaking.”
(W. Allen, Saturday Review of the Society/Reader’s Digest)

I plan to locate my business in a large mall.

“Flies have 1500 taste buds — all located on their feet.”
(Omni mag., April ’92)

We finally located him under a bridge.

LOCK (V)

He always locks his house against unexpected visitors.

“To feel in tune with that Supreme Power, (God) makes you feel content because you realize that you have something that is so big it isn’t locked in your body. It doesn’t matter that you’re lonely or bald or fat.” (Kent Lane)

LODGE (V)

I have been lodging (i.e. residing) at that address almost a year.

The ball finally lodged (i.e. got stuck) in a crevice in the old wall.

“The hunter lodged (i.e. placed) a bullet in the lion’s heart.” (World Book Dictionary)

Come darkness, he lodges (i.e. takes shelter) on the sidewalk under some cardboard. His private papers are lodged with (i.e. entrusted to) his lawyer.

“We lodged a complaint with (i.e. complained to) the police.”

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

LOG (V)

It’s time to log on to your computer.

Log into POP serve.

LOGGERHEADS

They were at loggerheads with each other most of their married life.

LONG (A)

He's quite long in the tooth (i.e. old).

They’re both long in the arm like apes.

LONG (V)

I have longed (i.e. yearned) for her all summer.

“Millions of people who long for immortality don’t know what to do with themselves on a rainy afternoon.”
(Susan Ertz, The Gazette, Montreal)

She longs (i.e. wishes earnestly) to return to the old country.

LOOK (V)

“We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking (i.e. gazing) at the stars.” (Oscar Wilde)

“It has been said that Whitman created the nation America sees when it looks at itself.”
(Christopher Patton about Walt Whitman)

“If you look for (i.e. seek) a pleasure nerve in the human body, you will come away disappointed; there is none.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)

“The brain is a master of the tiniest details. In rats it even devotes a special cluster of neurons to look out for a single whisker.” (Newsweek amg., Feb. 7, 1983)

The mother looked into (i.e. searched) her purse for a dollar.

“Three feet long and trailing fernlike leaves, this tropical algal plant (Caulerpa) looks like (i.e. resembles) an ordinary clump of seaweed, but is actually a single gigantic cell.” (W. P. Jacobs, Scientific American mag.)

We looked (i.e. glanced) over the fence.
One must look (i.e. see) through the facade to those inner qualities that make us all human. 
She looked (i.e. peered) under the table in search of the ring.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

LOOSE
The dogs were loosed among us in the living room.

LOSE
“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in data?” (T.S. Elliot)
“Southern Louisiana (U.S.A.) is losing land to the Gulf of Mexico at the alarming rate of one acre every 16 minutes.” (Philip Elmer-Dewitt, The Economist)
“The astronauts in outer space, freed from gravity, lost up to 20 percent of their calcium.” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)
I am lost without you.

LOVE (N)
They seem to have no love for each other.
His love for his children exceeds his love of money.
“Marina’s interest in gypsies was part of her love of everything exotic.” (Oxford English Dictionary)

LOVE (V)
“No one loves his country for its size or eminence, but because it is his own.” (Seneca)
I love you in spite of your poor prospects.
He loves her to distraction.

LOWER (V)
“Two ounces a day of oatmeal or oat bran can lower blood cholesterol by almost five percent in a matter of weeks.” (Tufts University Diet & Nutrition Letter)
I can lower my voice to basso profundo.

LOYAL
I can’t complain; he has been very loyal to me.

LUCKY
I am very lucky at poker.
It’s lucky for me that he did not see me go in the house.
He’s very lucky in most of his dealings.
They are very lucky with their investments.
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

LURCH (VV)
The teenager lurched against me, but did not apologize.
He is lurching up the street towards the pub.

LURE (V)
“Bees are lured (i.e. attracted) by the scent of flowers.” (World Book Dictionary)
She refused to be lured (i.e. tempted) away from her studies.
“The flashlight fish . . lures (i.e. decoys) luminescent bacteria into chambers inside its body, and then uses the cultures to light its way through the dark ocean.” (Anne Fausto-Sterling, Discover mag., April ’91)
“It was a mistake to be drawn or lured out of his taciturnity.” (S. Bellow, Oxford English Dictionary)

LURK (VV)
Strange shadows lurked beyond the garden, behind the poplars, and near the edge of the lake.
Danger lurked in the shadows.
“Fifty thousand invaders (bacteria) may lurk on the rim of a drinking glass, and a billion can be found in a half-teaspoon of saliva.” (Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)
“Scorpions lurk under loose stones.” (A. Sillitoe, Oxford English Dictionary)

LUST (N)
The painter, Van Gogh, had a lust for life.
The lusts of the flesh.

LUST (V)
He lusted after fame all his life.
They lusted for the old man’s money to no avail.
MAD
I am mad about (i.e. infatuated with) you.
She is mad at you. (American)
We were mad (i.e. avid) for a night on the town.
She is mad on (i.e. wildly enthusiastic about) sports of all kinds. (Brit.)
I’m mad (i.e. frantic) with pain.
I am still mad (i.e. angry) with you for causing it. (Brit.)

MAINTAIN
He maintained himself in (i.e. kept himself supplied with) cigarettes by running errands.
She maintains herself (i.e. keeps herself going) on less than twenty dollars a week.
Maintaining (i.e. sticking to) his policies with intransigence, the mayor refused to resign.

MAKE (V)
He elected to make for (i.e. try to reach) the shore and drowned.
“If you wish to make an apple pie truly from scratch, you must first invent the universe.” (Carl Sagan)
“Cloning a bit of DNA once took weeks of meticulous toil. Now almost anyone can make billions of copies of it in hours.” (Yvone Baskin, Discover mag., 1990)
What do you make (i.e. think) of that?
“Blood is 83 percent water; muscles 75 percent; bone 22 percent. In fact, 55 to 65 percent of a woman’s body and 65 to 75 percent of a man’s body is made . . of water.” (Reader’s Digest)
“In the 1950s, he (Sir Fred Hoyle) helped to show that we are made, literally, of stardust.”
(John Horgan, Scientific American mag.)
They made off (i.e. ran off) with all her money.
“There is a ritual moment when the (sea) voyager makes friends with a gannet, or a pigeon, or a pilot fish, or a dolphin.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

MANAGE
Did you manage about (i.e. solve the problem of) the cat, or are you giving up on the weekend?
However are you managing for funds? (i.e. where are you finding the money?)
You will have to manage (i.e. make do) on that amount.
Are you managing (i.e. able) to save any money?
We can manage it (i.e. succeed) with that ladder.

MANEUVER, MANOEUVRE
“The howitzen (a bird) has claws on its wings for about a month as a baby. These help it maneuver around the branchy nest.” (Anon.)

MANIA
He has a mania for limericks.
The tulip mania in Holland. (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
The mania of land speculation.
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

MANIFEST (A)
“The hundreds of thousands of lakes manifest in the summer of the far north (of North America) are the result of only four inches of moisture a year — less than that in the Sahara.”
(Joël Gareau, The Nine Nations of North America)
“Calisto there stood manifest of shame.”
(Dryden, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

MARCH (Vv)
They marched against their city of birth.
They gathered around him and marched him from the hall.
We will march through the fields, along the base of the hill to the clearing, then on (i.e. invade) the town.

“If all the Chinese in the world were to march four abreast past a given point, they would never finish passing, though they marched forever and ever.” (William Allen, Saturday Review of the Society/Reader’s Digest)

They marched to the beat of a hundred drums.

MARK (V)

His speech was marked (i.e. characterized) by disagreement with his opponent’s position.

“Antibodies are proteins which recognize undesirable substances invading our bloodstream, bind to them, and mark (i.e. designate) them for destruction.” (Shawna Vogel, Discover mag)

The threatening logo was marked in blood on the wall.

That’s not the way it was marked on the map.

“If we are marked to die ...” (Shakespeare)

Mark your ballot with an X.

MARKET (N)

“I think there is a world market for about five computers.” (Thomas J. Watson Jr. (subsequently chairman of IBM, 1943)

The market in drugs is booming and cannot be controlled.

MAROON (V)

They were marooned in the border village for almost three months.

He was marooned on an island longer than he liked to remember.

MARRIAGE

Her marriage to a king was her crowning achievement.

His marriage with her lasted much longer than expected.

MARRY

Marrying into wealth can bring problems as well as benefits.

She was married to that cad over 15 years.

MARTYR (N)

She was a martyr for love.

He was a martyr to the cause.

MARVEL (V)

“She marvelled at the self-regarding irrelevance of the ruling English mind.” (Le Carré, The little drummer girl)

MASK

“These few principles are masked . . by the world’s bewildering array of 6,000 languages, each with its own history and culture.” (David Berreby, Discover mag., April 1992)

She was already masked for the evening’s costume party.

Her depression set in . . masked from friends and acquaintances, but painfully communicated to Shelley.” (R. Christiansen, O.E.D.)

MASTER (N)

“The brain is a master of the tiniest details. In rats it even devotes a special cluster of neurons to look out for a single whisker.” (Newsweek mag., Feb. 7, 1983)

MASTERY

Mastery of any subject demands dedication.

His mastery over her was the talk of the town.

MATCH (V)

Why don’t you match Harry against their defenceman?

“The amount of energy contained in visible light is perfectly matched to the energy needed to carry out most chemical reactions.” (Lyall Watson, Supernature)

“Biologists don’t know how patterns are created on real mollusks. But mathematical models based on hypothetical interacting chemicals match them with uncanny accuracy.” (Carl Zimmer, Discover mag., 1992)

MATE (V)

Many animal species mate for life.

“People tend to mate with individuals who resemble themselves in every conceivable way.” (Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)
MATERIAL (A)
It is just not material (i.e. relevant) to the situation.

MATERIALIZE, MATERIALISE
“We expect it (an underground city) to materialize in the early part of the next century.” (Time mag.)
According to legend, Merlin materialized into a raven.
A huge cat seemed to materialize under the tree.
Suddenly, a large balloon materialized over the crowd.

MATTER (V)
Save her; it doesn't matter (i.e. forget) about me.
The broken crockery doesn't matter to me (i.e. I don't care).
It mattered not a bit (i.e. was of no concern) to me what she thought.

MEAN (N)
This is his only means of making a living.

MEASURE (N)
“In the 12th century, the word ‘faethm’ meant the ‘embracing arms’. If a man straightened those embracing arms out, they would stretch about 6 feet. Thus did the word ‘fathom’ come to mean a measure of about 6 feet.” (Michael Gartner: Advertising Age)
“The Richter scale is the most common measure of the magnitude or strength of earthquakes . . Each whole-number increase represents a tenfold rise in the size of earthquake waves and a thirty-one fold increase in the energy released.” (Shannon Browlees, Discover mag.)

MEASURE (V)
“A human scream . . measures about 3000 hertz.” (vibrations per second) (Discover mag.)
“About 0.1 percent of all material which has ever fallen on earth is organic. By comparison, if we measure the total weight of all organic matter on earth against the mass of the planet itself, only 0.0000001 percent is of living origin. This means that meteors are coming from somewhere that is a million times more organic than earth itself.” (Lyall Watson, Lifetide)

MEMORIAL
Even today, distances from Paris to the borders of France are measured from the Notre Dame parvis (church square).” (Sanche de Gramont, The French)
“The frequencies of electromagnetic waves are measured in hertz (Hz) . . One hertz means one wave each second.” (The Economist mag.)
How could I ever measure up to your standards?

MEDDLE
I won't let you meddle in my affairs.
Don't meddle with me.
You are meddling with my mind.

MEDIATE
I refuse to mediate between those two.
Should you have mediated in that quarrel?

MEDITATE
I will meditate on that.

MEDIUM
Let's settle for the medium between what they wanted last week and what they want now.
Send it through the medium of e-mail.

MEET (V)
“When someone says I'll meet you between 3 and 4 p.m., it means our relationship is finished.” (V.S.Naipaul, Time mag., July 10, ‘89)
We are meeting for lunch next Wednesday.
“Only in Judaeo-Christianity do Time and Eternity meet in History.” (Karl Stern, The Pillar of Fire)
I met (i.e. talked) with him just before he entered the church.

MEMBER
I was a member of the Board for ten years.

MEMORIAL
“The pyre (of 2400 tusks) was a memorial to the hundreds of thousands of elephants slaughtered in
Africa by poachers (from 1979 to 1989).” (Time mag., July 31, ‘89)

MEMORY
She’s lost all memory of that day.
I wish I had a better memory for faces.

MENACE (N)
The menace in his eyes was almost tangible.
He’s a menace to himself.
That child is a menace with a fork.

MENACE (V)
He menaced her with dire consequences.
“The solitary dissentent was menacing to leave the meeting-house.” (J. Martine, Oxford English Dictionary)

MENTION (V)
That accident was mentioned by the police.
He was twice mentioned in dispatches.
“The Virgin (Mary) is . . . mentioned 34 times in the Koran.” (Robert Sullivan, Life mag., Dec. ‘96)
“In the Old Testament, Jerusalem is mentioned on 656 occasions.” (Martin Gilbert, The New Republic mag., as abridged by the Reader’s Digest, Sept. ’95)
Did you mention me to her last night?

MERCEFUL
Be merciful in your treatment of the aged.
You should be merciful to your enemy.

MERCY
When he landed, he found himself at the mercy of the villagers.
To have mercy on (or upon) me.

MERGE (V)
After dark, all the trees merge (i.e. combine) into one giant mass.
When we travelled at top speed, one house seemed to merge (i.e. become one) with the next.

He is merging (i.e. uniting) his business with Terry’s next month.

MESH (V)
“The rules of quantum mechanics do not mesh well with (i.e. seem to contradict) the laws of Newton and Einstein.” (Eugene Linden, Time mag.)
If you watch closely, you’ll see the small gear meshing (i.e. engaging) with the larger one.

MESSENGER
“Messengers of war.” (Shakespeare)
“The mind stands above the content of consciousness at any moment. It is an independent entity. The mind directs, and the brain executes. The brain is messenger to consciousness.” (Dr. W. Penfield, The Mystery of the Mind)

METABOLIZE
“By the time you reach 70, your cells will look unique, mirroring the unique experiences you processed and metabolized into your tissues and organs.” (Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

METHOD
There is method in his madness.
The method of doing that can be quickly learned.

MIDWAY
The town is midway between Montreal and Boston.

MILESTONE
It proved an important milestone in medical history.

MILITATE
That militates against (i.e. contradicts) everything I have ever learned.

MILK (N)
“Alcohol is milk for the elderly.” (Sir William Osler, MD)
There is milk in a coconut.
“Milk of human kindness.” (Shakespeare)

MINDFUL
Be mindful of their customs.

MINGLE
“It was a reminder of the Arab glory of a thousand years before, when the Arab faith mingled with Persia, India and the remnant of the classical world it had overrun, and Muslim civilization was the central civilization of the West.” (V.S. Naipaul, Among the believers)
At last, she is mingling with the rest of her classmates.

MINISTER (V)
He ministered to his flock.

MISTAKE (V)
He was mistaken about her height.
Don’t mistake her for a person of weak will.
She mistook me for someone else.
In his disguise, he was mistaken for a vagrant.
I was mistaken in my hope that she cared.

MISTRUSTFUL
I am mistrustful of everything she does.

MITIGATION
He gave the preacher a fortune in mitigation of his past sins.

MIX (V)
He disappeared by mixing in the crowd.
“The great (Antoine) Lavoisier . . was arrested, during the French Revolution, on the trumped-up charge that he had mixed water into the tobacco of the soldiers . . (and) sentenced to die on the guillotine.” (Heinz Haber, A Disney story of our friend the atom)
A spritzer effectively mixes water with wine.

MOAN (V)
She was always moaning about her aches and pains.
He moaned with pain.

MODEL (V)
“Robots might be better off modelled on insects rather than on people.” (The Economist)
The poor girl is trying to model herself on some actress or other.

MOIST
The grass was still moist from last evening’s rain.
Her little handkerchief was moist with tears.

MOMENT
Take a moment for reflection.
There was a moment of sheer wonder, then joy set in.

MONITOR (V)
The general was able to monitor troop movements from an observation tower.
“How far do pandas roam? We need to monitor them with radio-equipped collars.” (George B. Schaller, National Geographic)

MONOPOLY
“Neither side has a monopoly of right . . or wrong.” (Freeman)

MOOD
“(The French) are not in a mood for trivia these days. If, individually, they are as pesky, as charming, as irreverent, as bloody-minded, as profoundly conservative as ever, corporately they have become forceful and rather flashy.” (Jan Morris, Journeys)
The mood of the country is pessimistic.

MOORING
Science helped to cut us adrift from our traditional moorings in our faith and morals.

MORAL
There is a moral in that story; can you find it?
The moral of the story is: ‘beware!’
‘If there’s a moral to your story, it escapes me.’
MORTALITY
Mortality from AIDS is still not much reduced.

MORTGAGE (N)
I just increased the mortgage on my house.

MORTGAGE (V)
I am mortgaged up to my ears.
My car is mortgaged with the bank.

MOTIVE
“It must be a sociological fact that prejudice is a more common motive for emigration than poverty.”
(Paul Theroux, The Great Railway Bazaar)

MOUNT (V)
“The AIDS virus is unique in that it can mount a speedy and lethal attack on helper T cells, which cripples the immune system before it can counterattack.”
(Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)

MOURN
How can I mourn his loss yet not mourn for him.
She never stopped mourning over her bad luck.

MOVE (V)
“When you’re reading, your eyes do not move continually across the page. They move from one clump of words to another, in a series of jumps.” (Anon.)
No material object can move at the speed of light (i.e. reach that limit). (Hans Christian Von Baeyer, Discover mag.)
“Two thousand times smaller than the atom itself, the electron can, under the impulse of a weak current, move in the circuits of calculators in a to-and-fro movement to simulate 0 and 1. This permitted the birth of ‘electronics’.”
(J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, The World Challenge)
“Laser communications . . are moving into space . . Future satellites will exchange information by transmitting modulated laser beams across thousands of miles of empty space.” (Jonathan B. Tucker)
“In telecommunications we are moving to a single worldwide information network . . We are moving toward the capability to communicate anything to anyone, anywhere, by any form — voice, data, text, or image — at the speed of light.”
(J.Naisbitt & P. Aburdene, Megatrends 2000)
“Laser beams move through empty air without dispersing, and they can pass close to and even through one another without interference.” (Alex Kozlov, Discover mag.)

MOVEMENT
There is some movement in that direction.
I note some movement to the left.
“Our entire earthly existence is but a transitional stage in the movement toward something higher.”
(Alexander Solzhenitsyn, National Review mag.)

MULTIPLE
One hundred is a multiple of ten.

MULTIPLY
OK, multiply two by two.
“Everyone knows our brain can’t grow new nerve cells. So why are human neurons happily multiplying in a plastic lab dish at Johns Hopkins?”
(Peter Radetsky, Discover mag., April ‘91)

MURMUR (V)
He neither murmured about the pain nor about the cost.
The gossip-mongers murmured against him at every opportunity.
She murmurs at having to go to school or church.

MUSE (V)
I can’t help but muse on (or upon) her visit this evening.
She is always musing over the bad things in her life.

MYSTIFY
“Mrs Margaret Thatcher is mystified by Scotland.”
(The Economist mag.)
NAG (V)
He's been nagging at me to complete the assignment.

NAIL (N)
“The absolute dependence of mass microprocessor technology on capitalist production and distribution methods could well be the first nail in the coffin of doctrinaire Marxist thinking.”
(Christopher Evans, The Micro Millennium)

NAIL (V)
They nailed Him on the cross.
He always nails his colours to the mast (i.e. becomes unyielding).
They nailed me down (i.e. held me) to my promise.

NAME (V)
“Hood is the most notable American mountain named after an enemy leader (Admiral Samuel Hood), second in command of the British fleet during the Revolutionary War.”
(W. Least Heat Moon, Blue Highways)
Her parents will name her for her grandmother (i.e. give her her grandmother’s name); you can bet on it.
(American)
The town was named in honour of its founder.
He was named (i.e. appointed) to the Senate.

NATIVE (A)
He is native to the jungles of Borneo.

NATIVE (N)
They are natives of Ireland.

NATURAL
It is natural for people to want a modicum of security.

Fighting seems to be natural to men.
It is natural for a girl to play with dolls at that age.

NATURE
“It is in the nature of German syntax that you have to compose the sentence in your mind before you start to say it.” (Len Deighton, Berlin Game)

NEAR
“English is the nearest thing to (a world language) that has ever existed.”
(Robert Claiborne, Our marvelous native tongue)

NECESSARY
Patience is necessary for all nurses.
Discretionary income is necessary to the good life.

NECESSITY
I resent the necessity of these half-measures.
There never was any necessity for his declaration of bankruptcy.
As you get older, there’s a necessity to water your wine.

NEED (N)
“Men — and possibly chimpanzees and dolphins — have acquired a need for things that satisfy none of the normal, natural hungers. We have developed a taste for the mysterious.” (Lyall Watson, Supernature)
I have no need of your bitching.

NEGLECT (N)
My neglect of my children haunts my old age.

NEGLECTFUL
I have been very neglectful of my wife lately.
NEGLIGENCE
The boy scouts were made to smart for their negligence in losing their equipment.
Her negligence of her wards was the talk of the town.

NEGLIGENT
He had long been negligent of his business.
She was lovable, but negligent in her duties.

NEGOTIATE
“The car negotiated (i.e. managed) the sharp curve by slowing down.” (World Book Dictionary)
He always negotiates (i.e. bargains) in good faith.
I have been negotiating (i.e. doing business) with him on the same contract for some forty years.

NEGOTIATION
My negotiations with him on the right of way are almost complete.

NEIGHBOUR, NEIGHBOR
I’ve always been a good neighbour to them; but I can’t say that of a neighbour of mine.
“Which now of these three . . . was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?” (Bible: Luke 10, 36)

NERVE
I don’t have the nerve for that anymore.
The nerve of that man!
Do you think you have the nerve to do it?

NERVOUS
She has always been very nervous about flying.
He is very nervous around strangers. (American)
He is very nervous of strangers. (British)
He was too nervous to pull the plug.

NEW
That face is new to me.

NEWS
What’s your news about your coming trip?
I have not had any news of him since he left for Chicago in 1988.
Well, that’s news to me.

NIGGARDLY
He is niggardly of his praise.
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)
He is very niggardly with the wine when he’s entertaining, but not when he’s helping himself to yours.

NIMBLE
Chess made him very nimble of mind.
She is very nimble on her feet; she must be a dancer.
Look how nimble he is with his hands.

NOMINATE
He is nominating her as his successor.
Why don’t you nominate him for the position?
She was nominated to the Cabinet last fall.

NOTABLE
He is notable as the first man to reach the top of Everest.
She is notable for her opposition to the mayor last year.

NOTE (N)
Please make a note of that.
My notes on the professor’s lectures were much in demand by other students.

NOTION
I don’t have the faintest notion about that.
They had no notion of impending doom.

NUMB (A)
My whole leg was numb to the touch.
She came in numb with cold.
**NURSE** (V)

“He nursed (i.e. coddled) his sore arm by using it very little.” (World Book Dictionary)

“The fierce savage nursed (i.e. nurtured) in hate.” (Shelley, Oxford English Dictionary)

It is destructive to nurse (i.e. foster) a hatred in one’s heart.

“Kindness was employed to nurse (i.e. encourage) them into mischief.” (Oxford English Dictionary)

“Mrs. Bolton had once nursed (i.e. tended) him through scarlet fever.” (D.H. Lawrence, Oxford English Dictionary)

(Captain Michael Hatcher’s) “divers nursed (i.e. gentled) 23,000 pieces of late Ming and Transitional Period Chinese porcelain to the surface . . They came from a Chinese junk wrecked in the 1640s.” (John Dyson, Reader’s Digest)

—- He is nursing (i.e. pampering) that poor child back to health.

She nurses (i.e. ministers to) all her patients with tender, loving care.

**NUTS** (A)

They’re nuts (i.e. mad) about football. (American)

He is nuts (i.e. skilful) at cricket. (British)

**NUZZLE** (V)

The dog nuzzled gently against my leg, then ran off.

The cat nuzzles up to me, curls up in my lap, and goes to sleep.
OBEDIENT
Should we be blindly obedient to the dictates of the law?

OBJECT (V)
I object to that on principle.
He objects to my presence.

OBLIGATED
She said she was obligated to me for a favour I had long since forgotten.

OBLIGE
I am obliged to you (i.e. I am in your debt).
I am obliged (i.e. forced) to retire now.
I felt obliged (i.e. compelled) to do something.
Could you oblige me (i.e. make me your debtor) with a cigarette?
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

OBLITERATE
We will all be obliterated from the face of the earth, if we do not abandon nuclear weapons.
A heavy fog is obliterating the whole crowd from my view.

OBLIVIOUS
They sat there vacant-eyed, oblivious of their surroundings.

OBNOXIOUS
You’re being obnoxious to me again.

OBSCURE (A)
That passage of the Bible is obscure to me.

OBSCURE (V)
Suddenly, a passing car obscures him from sight.

OBSESS
“Chronic lead insult (poisoning) now affects all mankind. Biological disfunctions, especially observable in the most advanced populations, must be considered among the causes of wars and revolutions.”
(Saul Bellow, The Dean’s December)

OBSERVE
“The cells observed (i.e. studied) in laboratory culture . . . stop dividing.”
He observed (i.e. commented) on her lecture.

OBSESSED
Americans are obsessed about their health.
I was obsessed by her beauty.
He was obsessed with the thought of death.

OBTRUDE
“Subordinate officials who . . . obtruded (i.e. thrust) themselves into matters beyond their office.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
He obtrudes (i.e. forces) his advice on (or upon) everyone.

OBVIOUS
That has to be obvious to anyone with half a mind.

OCCASION
Every funeral was an occasion for a family get-together.

OCCUPY
She occupied herself by knitting me a sweater.
“If we discovered that we had only five minutes left to say all we wanted to say, every telephone booth would be
occupied by people calling other people to stammer that they loved them.” (Christopher Morley)
I will occupy my time with a few visits to the neighbours.

OCCUR
“It was found that 91 percent of serious complications during pregnancy occurred (i.e. happened) among those (women) who said that they led stressful lives and had little social support.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)
“There are 92 chemical elements that occur (i.e. can be found) in nature, but the same small selection of 16 form the basis of all living matter.”
(Lyall Watson, Supernatural)
Did it ever occur to you (i.e. cross your mind) that you might be bigoted?

ODDS
The odds against (i.e. probability of) winning the major prize in a lotto are mind-boggling.
We are all at odds (i.e. in conflict) with each other.

ODIOUS
Even her scent had become odious to him.

OFFEND
“In 1848, I. Semnelweis, the first gynecologist to use antiseptic procedures, reduced mortality from puerperal fever by a factor of 15, and was . . ostracized by his colleagues, who were offended at (i.e. angered by) the idea that physicians could be carriers of death.”
(Ivan Illich, Medical Nemesis)
I was offended (i.e. annoyed) by everything about him.
“Perhaps he was offended with me.”
(John Gielgud speaking of Orson Wells)

OFFER (N)
I made an offer of a box of Cuban cigars to every politician in the room.

OFFER (V)
They refused the freedom offered to them.

Why do you refuse it? Is it because I am the one offering it to you?

OLD
You’re much too old for that kind of conduct.
He is old in appearance for his age.

OMEN
He thought it was a clear omen of good fortune.
That should be an omen to him not to proceed.

OMINOUS
Their death is ominous for him.
That’s ominous of disaster.

OMISSION
That’s another omission from your guest list.
“To supply the omission in the preceding narrative.”
(Paley, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
The omission of his name on the scholarship list was rectified by the dean.

OMIT
You omitted my name from your column again. Why?

OOZE (VV)
“Macrophages are . . amoeba-like, and they ooze around the site of an infection, rebuilding damaged tissues and devouring bacteria, viruses, etc.”
(Rob Wechsler, Discover mag.)
The muddy waters are oozing out of the riverbank, into the basement and over the carpet.
The oil spill is oozing down the channel and under the bridge.

OPEN (A)
I am open for business tomorrow.
She was open to my suggestions till he came into the picture.
OPEN (V)
The company opened its books for scrutiny.

They are opening (i.e. starting to) fire on the attacking enemy.

Her window opens on to (i.e. overlooks) the river.

“Talking about heart disease, there is something very fitting in the fact that the less you open your heart to others, the more your heart suffers.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

They opened (i.e. began) the ceremony with a trumpet blast.

OPERATE
“Militate means . . ‘to operate against or for, usually against.”’ (Howard Richler, “Speaking of language” in The Gazette, Montreal)

“AAfter 1792, the French dropped out, and the British took up the slack, making 1798 a record year, with 160 British slaving ships operating, mostly from Liverpool.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

“At least 12 different transport systems are now known to operate in the brain capillaries, each one custom-tailored to accept a particular water-soluble molecule.”
(Natalie Angier, Discover mag.)

She will be operated on for a tumour on the brain tomorrow.

“Society operates on the theory that specialization is the key to success, not realizing that specialization precludes comprehensive thinking.”
(Buckminster Fuller, Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth)

They are operating under a mistaken set of rules.

OPINION
What is your opinion about this?
They have a very poor opinion of you.
She would volunteer an opinion on any subject whatsoever.

OPPONENT
I am an opponent of all dictatorships.

OPPOSE
I will oppose (i.e. set) good judgment against his irrational ideas.

She was opposed by the town gentry.

He was opposed to (i.e. against) every initiative.

I am opposed to (i.e. against) every form of elitism.

She opposes (i.e. counters) malice with love.

OPPOSITION
The opposition of my own family is hard to bear.

His opposition to reform was legendary.

OPRESSED
She was oppressed by the early darkness of the winter afternoon.

Oppressed with feelings of guilt, he took his own life.

OPT
“Shakespeare was a likable man, quite well educated for his time: he worked hard from his late ‘20s to mid-‘40s, after which he opted for (i.e. decided on) early retirement and went home to Stratford.”
(Northrop Frye, Northrop Frye on Shakespeare)

Let’s make him opt (i.e. choose) for one of two alternatives.

“Even those colonies which choose to stay within the French community . . will have the chance to change their minds later and opt for independence.”
(Observer, World Book Dictionary)

OPTION
My only option is between giving in to your whims or leaving you.

She has the option of retiring or continuing for another year.

Do you want first option on that job?

ORDER (V)
What will you order (i.e. ask for) for lunch? An egg sandwich again?

The first ghetto was Campo del Guetto Nuovo in Italy.

Ghetto means foundry in Italian. In 16th-century Venice, Jews were ordered (i.e. directed) to live in an area around a foundry.
“He was ordered by his doctor to (i.e. the doctor prescribed) a warmer climate.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**ORGANIZATION**

“Design means the organization of all elements into a unified whole . . to gain dramatic power and aesthetic pleasure through the sense of sight.”
(Ralph M. Pearson, Design mag.)

**ORGANIZE, ORGANISE**

“A formidable conspiracy was organized against him.”
(W.S. Churchill, Oxford English Dictionary)

“I had organized among the railroad men a club of a hundred.” (A. Carnegie, Oxford English Dictionary)

“Innovative companies might build morale and a sense of belonging by asking groups of workers to organize themselves into mini-companies or cooperatives, and contracting directly with these groups to get specific jobs done.” (Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)

“We spent the rest of the day organizing a car to take us to Mexico City.” (G. Durrell, Oxford English Dictionary)

**ORIGINATE**

“Most of our best ideas are originated by amateurs.”
(Stuart Chase)

More than 80,000 products originate (i.e. derive) from oil.

“Every major flu epidemic known has originated in South China.” (John Langone, Discover mag., Dec. ’90)

All our immune cells originate in our bone marrow.

Gun powder originated with the Chinese.

**OSTRACIZE, OSTRACISE**

“In 1848, I. Semmelweis, the first gynecologist to use antiseptic procedures, reduced mortality from puerperal fever by a factor of 15, and was . . ostracized by his colleagues, who were offended at the idea that physicians could be carriers of death.”
(Ivan Illich, Medical Nemesis)

He was ostracised from society because of his wild lifestyle, so he joined the Foreign Legion.

My government will ostracize you from this state, and from this country if possible.

**OUST**

She was ousted from the class on the first day.

The children are ousting the teacher from their classroom.

**OUTFIT (V)**

I want you to outfit him for a week in the bush.

We were outfitted from head to foot by the army.

“Your immune cells and endocrine glands are outfitted with the same receptors for brain signals as your (brain) neurons are; therefore, they are like an extended brain.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

**OUTLINE (N)**

He left a rough outline (i.e. silhouette) of his body in the sand.

“Two playscripts and an outline for (i.e. a quick summary of) a short play.”
(Plays International, Oxford English Dictionary)

**OUTLINE (V)**

How about outlining your plans for me?

The rationale of the company’s policy was clearly outlined to employees.

**OUTLOOK**

Exactly a year ago, the outlook for the world economy was alarming. (The Economist)

**OUTSTANDING**

She is outstanding for her flower arrangements.

He is outstanding in the field of mathematics.

**OVERCOME**

Overcome by the enemy, he simply gave up.

She was overcome with joy.

**OVERSEER**

“Overseer of the poor.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
"Barred from most professions and deprived of the right to own or rent land, they (the Jews) in Russia and Eastern Europe) fell into a fatally unstable position as overseers and rent collectors to the post-feudal nobility."
(John Hersey, Esquire mag.)

**OVERTURE**

My **overture** (i.e. act) of friendship to him was summarily dismissed.
He wrote the **overture** (i.e. instrumental prelude) to his opera in one afternoon.

**OVERTURN**

The man's cart was **overturned** by a passing truck.
"In 1830, 4,150 stagecoaches overturned in France, causing more than a thousand deaths."
(Ivan Illich, Toward a history of needs)
This vehicle might **overturn on** a rough country road.

**OWE**

I still **owe** you for those theatre tickets.
How much is still **owed on** that house?
"We **owe** the revival of the atomic theory to a man who . . was more a philosopher than a scientist: Pierre Gassendi, of France." (Heinz Haber, The Walt Disney story of our friend the atom)

**OWN**

This house is **owned** (i.e. possessed) by a couple of spinsters.
"He **owns** (i.e. admits) to disliking the doctor."
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
You should **own up to** (i.e. admit) your mistakes.
PACK (V)
We hurried to pack for our trip.
Pack (i.e. store) your clothes in this trunk.
She certainly packs (i.e. crams) a lot of living into her life.
“The heavy trucks packed (i.e. hard-layered) the snow on the highway.” (World Book Dictionary)
“Put three grains of sand inside a vast cathedral, and the cathedral will be more closely packed with sand than space is with stars.” (Sir James Jeans)

PACT
“South Africa has recently concluded a trade pact with Japan and declared, business being business, that all Japanese are white.” (Studs Terkel, Talking to Myself)

PAIR
“A new age in the treatment of diseases may be upon us. Artificial strings of nucleic acids can pair with RNA, or wind around the double helix of DNA, and in effect silence the genes responsible for many illnesses.” (J. S. Cohen and M. E. Hogan, Scientific American)
“It is further alleged that one Conservative saw fit to pair with two Labour members.” (New Statesman, Oxford English Dictionary)

PALL (V)
Even semi-classical music has begun to pall on me.

PANDER
“These abbreviators harm both knowledge and love . . pandering to impatience, the mother of stupidity.” (Leonardo da Vinci)

PANEGYRIC
His panegyric on his company president was too saccharine for my taste.

PANT
He pants for a drink of gin and lime like a dog for water.
I’m so worried: he is panting from just going up the two steps to the kitchen.

PAR
His new TV show is not on a par with his last hit series.

PARACHUTE (V)
“Governor (of Alaska) Cooper called out the Air National Guard to parachute supplies into remote villages.” (Time mag.)
She parachuted over (or beyond) the landing zone and splashed into the lake.

PARALLEL (N)
He drew parallels between the two happenings.
Parallels with the 1930s came readily to mind. (The Economist)

PARAMOUNT
“Theyir first duty is paramount to all subsequent engagements.” (Oxford Universal Dictionary)
To him, Mozart is paramount over all other composers.

PARANOID
The politician was paranoid about any dissent in the party’s ranks.

PARCHED
I came back from our drive parched with thirst.

PARDON
I ask your pardon for that rude remark.
PARITY
She insists on parity of respect.
In English education it was not until recently that modern languages enjoyed parity of esteem with the classics. (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

PARK (V)
Tell them to park their trailer trucks alongside the church.
He parked his car by the house.
I am parking my truck in his backyard.
Tell her to park her limo next to mine.
She parked her Corvette under the tree.

PARODY
It was a devastating parody of my favorite poem.

PART (N)
She wanted to take part in every activity.
I was given the part of Hamlet in our school play.

PART (V)
I always hate to part from (i.e. leave) my ailing wife.
How much cash are you parting with (i.e. relinquishing)?

PARTAKE
“Bred in a luxurious court, without partaking in its effeminacy.” (Goldsmith, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
In spite of his physical handicap, he was able to partake (i.e. participate) in the Games.
He generally partakes of (i.e. eats) his snack by the pool.

PARTIAL
She's very partial to the downtrodden.

PARTICIPANT
“This time the furor is over the revelation that MI5, Britain's domestic counterintelligence service, has for decades been a secret participant in decisions to hire, fire and promote BBC employees.” (Time mag.)

PARTICIPATE
This is the last time I will participate in these games.
Although language was a barrier, our foreign visitors were able to participate in the festivities with us.

PARTICULAR
He is very particular about the way he looks.
She is particular in all things.
“Never suffer this fellow to be particular with you again.” (Fielding, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

PARTNER (N)
We've been partners in this business since 1949.

PARTY (N)
I refuse to be a party to your connivances.

PASS (V)
“Stones such as chrysoprase, jasper and serpentine are passed off as jade, but only two minerals correctly bear the label: jadeite and nephrite.”
(Timothy Green, Smithsonian/Reader’s Digest)

“Many modern critics have passed (i.e. moved) from the proposition that a masterpiece may be unpopular to the proposition that unless it is unpopular it cannot be a masterpiece.” (G.K. Chesterton)
I used to pass myself for (i.e. pretend to be) an engineer.
“The banalities of a great man pass for (i.e. are accepted as) wit.” (Alexander Chase, The Gazette, Montreal)
“Very little is required. You will easily pass (i.e. go unnoticed) in a crowd.”
(C.M. Young, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Both men passed (i.e. slipped) into perfect unconsciousness.”
(D.H. Lawrence, Oxford English Dictionary)
The judge will pass (i.e. pronounce sentence) on (or upon) that matter tomorrow.
“How can a wing ever be constructed if evolution must pass through a long series of intermediary stages — for 5 percent of a wing confers no benefit whatsoever in flight.” (Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)
“Trillions of them (neutrinos) pass through every human being on Earth every second (fortunately
PASSION - PEER

without doing any damage).”
(Mitochondrial DNA) “is passed (i.e. transferred) to a child by the mother’s egg only, and not by the father’s sperm.” (Edwin Kister Jr., Discover mag.)
She passed the exam (i.e. successfully met the test) with distinction.

“The spontaneous generation of life on the earth . . . would have been as likely as the assembling of a 747 aircraft by a tornado passing (i.e. flying) through a junkyard.” (Sir Fred Hoyle, Scientific American mag.)

“Establishing title (to real estate) is very important in Quaker thinking. A Friend always tries to pass (i.e. bequeath) to his heirs more land than he began with.”
(William Least Heat Moon, Blue Highways)

They’re passing under the bridge right now.
She passed the exams (i.e. graduated) with distinction.

PASSION

“If the anti-Dreyfus agitators and clerics represented France at its worst, the Dreyfusards, most of them Christian, demonstrated the nation’s passion for justice and equality.” (Jean-Denis Bredin, The Affair)

“Ambition is so powerful a passion in the human breast, that however high we reach we are never satisfied.”
(Niccolo Machiavelli)

PATIENCE

He has the patience of a saint.
She doesn’t have the patience to take care of old people.

PATIENT (A)
Be patient with me.

PAUSE (V)

He paused at the public fountain, then continued on his way.
She is just pausing for breath.

“A Russian drill has paused for the winter 250 metres above what is now called Lake Vostock — 200 kilometres long, 125 metres deep on average and comparable in size to Lake Ontario . . . (The lake) is 4 kilometres under the Antarctic icecap.” (Tim Radford, The Guardian, London)

They paused under the bridge to wait out the shower.

“Other offenders we will pause upon.” (Shakespeare)

PAW (V)

Stop your dog from pawing at me like that.

PAY (V)

Are you paying in cash or by cheque?
You will pay (i.e. make retribution) for that, I promise you.
Why don’t you pay that money directly into my account?
He will make you pay through the nose (i.e. excessively).

“Hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue.”
(Chris Humfrey)

(Oliver Wendell) “Holmes used to say that the only debt he paid with pleasure was his taxes, for with them he bought civilization.” (The Economist mag.)

PAYMENT

This is in payment for all you have done for us.
I want your payment in cash.
They made all their payments to the local registrar.

PECK (V)

“Why do chicks peck at the one place in an egg where there is an air space?”
(Hugh Montefiori, The Probability of God)

PECULIAR

I find something peculiar (i.e. strange) about her.

“He is very peculiar in his behaviour.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

“The weakest among us has a gift however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him and which worthily used will be a gift also to his race.” (Ruskin)

PEER (V)

“The amoeba has one cell. Inside my human eye, peering at it, are 107,000,000 cells. Seven million are cones which . . . give me the full band of color awareness . . . The other hundred million are rods, backup cells for use in low light.” (Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)
“Leaning into the shaft, peering down into the darkness.” (P. Dickinson, *Oxford English Dictionary*)
The sun was peering from behind a cloud.
The old woman peered from the window.
The ship’s captain peered into the night.
“Already streaks of blue peer through our clouds.” (Carlyle, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

**PENALTY**
There’s a penalty for strewing garbage.

**PENCHANT**
He has a penchant for trouble.

**PENETRATE**
The drizzle is penetrating right through my clothes.
Finally, the drill penetrated to the durum mater, and brain matter welled up.

**PERCOLATE**
“The worship of Isis had percolated (i.e. seeped) . . . into the Greek Peninsula.” (Gladstone, *Universal Oxford Dictionary*)
The rain had percolated (i.e. trickled) through the ceiling.

**PERFECT** (A)
That actress is perfect for the part.
Her drawings are perfect in every detail.

**PERFECT** (V)
He wants to perfect himself in the martial arts.
“Perfecting herself in French, which she already knows very well.” (H. James, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

**PERIL**
“At the peril of his life.” (Paley)
She is a peril to me.

**PERMISSION**
Have you permission from your mother to go on this excursion?

“Do as thou find’st permission from above.” (Milton, *Universal Oxford Dictionary*)
“The article is published by permission of the Director of the Physics and Engineering Laboratory.” (Physics Bulletin, *Oxford English Dictionary*)
(Actor and director Sam) “Wanamaker .. was given permission to construct an $18 million replica of the playhouse where King Lear and Macbeth were probably first performed, a stone’s throw from its original site along the south bank of the Thames River.” (J.D. Reed, *Time* mag.)

**PERMIT** (V)
That passage in the Bible permits of (i.e. allows) no other interpretation.
You are not permitted (i.e. allowed) to smoke in here.

**PERPETRATE**
“The violin is the most astounding acoustical phenomenon ever perpetrated . . . on the human nervous system.” (Carleen Maley Hutchins, *Discove* *r* mag.)
“The most horrific excesses have been perpetrated with sincere moral conviction.” (B. Magee, *Oxford English Dictionary*) (Note: not from)

**PERSEVERE**
She is persevering in her fruitless efforts to change him.
If you persevere with me, you will be amply rewarded.

**PERSIST**
“Why do scientists persist in saying that we descend from the apes, instead of ascend?” (Charles Prieur)

**PERSUADE**
She is persuaded of the rightness of his cause.
“One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears — by listening to them.” (Dean Rusk)
PERTAIN
“Twenty-seven different government agencies (in U.S.) monitor some 5,600 federal regulations that pertain to the manufacture of steel alone.” (Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)

PERTINENT
Make sure it’s pertinent to your basic argument.

PERTURBED
She is very perturbed at (or about) the turn of events.
I am very perturbed by the report I’ve received.

PESSIMISTIC
They are very pessimistic about the future.

PESTER
She always pesters me about the clothes I wear.
His son and heir continually pestered him for money.
Stop pestering me to do this; it’s plain wrong.
The Customer Service Office is pestered with complaints.

PHONE (V)
Please phone me at six o’clock sharp.
She phones me at the house after supper.
I ran to the drugstore and phoned for a taxi.
My daughter is phoning from her friend’s home.

PIECE
“He’s only son . . was pierced through the heart by a javelin.” (Gibbon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

PILE
He piled one brick onto another without mortar.
They knocked me down, then piled on (or onto) me.
His desk was piled high with books.

PINCH
She was pinched (i.e. squeezed) for money to buy clothes.
He pinches (i.e. saves) on everything but his cigars.
They came in, their faces pinched with cold.

PINE (V)
He pined for her the rest of his life.

PIONEER (N)
He was a pioneer of the minimalist school.

PIPE (VV)
“It is about one-fourth as expensive to pipe hydrogen across long distances as it is to transmit electricity the same distance.” (Joan Ogden, physicist, Discover mag.)
They are piping the natural gas to all the major cities in the country.

PIT (V)
I would pit my dog against yours any day.
The argument that pits him against most scientists concerns evolution.

PITY (N)
“The practical weakness of the vast mass of modern pity for the poor and the oppressed is precisely that it is merely pity; pity is pitiful, but not respectful.” (G.K. Chesterton)
Please have pity on me.

PLACE (VV)
I will place it at your feet.
“Treat your friends as you do your pictures, and place them in their best light.” (Jennie Jerome Churchill)
“For reasons that are still a puzzle, the (Statue of Liberty’s) head was not placed directly on the pylon’s central axis, nor was (its) arm properly positioned. As a result, the head and arm are about two feet to the right of where they should be.” (Anon.)
He carefully placed the Bible on the table.
“The body’s 5 million sweat glands are packed so tight that a green pea placed on the skin’s surface would cover more than 100.” (Eric Adler, Kansas City Star)
She is placing the flower bush right under my window.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.
PLAN (N)
“The crisis of modern society is precisely that the youth no longer feel heroic in the plan for action that their culture has set up.” (Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death)
I suggest you change your whole plan of battle.

PLAN (V)
“The future that we study and plan for begins today.”
(Chester O. Fischer)
“He planned for the future of his empire.”
(M. Puzo, Oxford English Dictionary)
I’m planning on a scholarship.
“Do you plan on staying with Muriel forever?”
(A. Tyler, Oxford English Dictionary)
She plans to leave tomorrow.

PLANT (V)
“In response to the Earth Day message, as many as 1 billion trees will be planted across the continents.”
(Cathy Spencer, Omni mag.)
I planted a number of these in my window boxes and they are flowering very nicely.
Why don’t you plant a bomb (i.e. place a bomb) surreptitiously under his window?
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

PLASTER (V)
“Rags of foam, torn off the wavetops, were plastering themselves against the wheelhouse window.”
(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)
I will plaster his photo all over the fence.
The whole fence was plastered with posters.

PLAY (V)
“The actors were not inclined to play for laughs.”
(The Economist mag.)
“There are more good pianists playing in New York every evening than in the whole of Europe.” (Jan Morris)

PLEASURE (N)
I get great pleasure from this computerized game of chess.
A good cook, she takes pleasure in watching me eat.
“The pleasure of pale colours.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
It’s a pleasure to meet you again.

PLENTY
We have plenty of time to get there.
There’s plenty for me to enjoy right here.

PLOW (V)
She plowed (i.e. crashed) into my car when I was parked.
He never clears his driveway; just ploughs through the snow.
“Fiddler crabs plow (i.e. claw) through the soil, aerating it and making it easier for grass roots to establish themselves.”
(Anne Fausto-Sterling, Discover mag., April ’93)

PLUG (V)
“When it comes to biopolymers like DNA, the biologists can synthesize most of what Mother Nature has made. I foresee computers that plug into the brain and copy it.”
(Richard Wolkomir, Amazing Superstuff)

PLUNGE (VV)
He plunged (i.e. thrust) his dagger into the beast’s heart.
The little dog plunged (i.e. dove) into the icy lake without a moment’s hesitation.
“Each year, the movement of Earth’s crust plunges more than a billion tons of water into the mantle, where it is mostly absorbed into the rocks.” (Discover mag.)

PLY (V)
She plied me with martinis all evening.

POINT (V)
She is pointing her finger at me.
I point to the tallest man in the line-up, who promptly faints.
‘He pointed toward a corner with his left hand, to a short, heavily muscled, glaring man.” (Edwin Newman, Sunday Punch)

POISONOUS
“Arsenic, though highly poisonous to most forms of life, is food for some microbes.” (Scientific American mag.)

POLLUTE
“By the time my infant sons reach retirement age, half the world’s species will be extinct, the air radioactive, the seas polluted with oil.” (Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)

PONDER
I had all night to ponder over the problem.

POOR
He was poor as a church mouse.
She was strong in body but poor in spirit.

POPULAR
He was popular among his peers.
“Colonialism was seldom popular in France with the government, intellectuals, and the masses.” (Sanche de Gramont, The French)

PORE (V)
She pored over (i.e. studied closely) her topographical maps for a noise-free location.

POSE (V)
I will be posing as (i.e. pretending to be) a beggar for that photo?
She will pose (i.e. model) for you, if you like.

POSSESSED
She is possessed by (i.e. in the grip of) a multitude of fears.
They are possessed of (i.e. command) both money and power.
“Every human being possessed (i.e. in possession) of reason.” (Coleridge, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

POSSSESSION
He has possession of my credit card.

POSSIBILITY
I like the possibility of making a fortune in this country.
Note: not to

POSTERIOR
That was posterior to my leaving the country.

POTENT
It’s the first drug that’s proved potent against this disease.
It was very potent, too, in side-effects.
Her reasoning proved potent with the rest of the family.

POUNCE
He pounced on the grenade before anyone else could move, and saved our lives.
He pounces upon my opinion almost before I can speak.

POUR (VV)
“30,000 doctoral theses in literature pour from the universities of the West and Russia every year.” (George Steiner, Real Presences)
Language (the gift of gab) . . “lets us cheat death by pouring out our knowledge, dreams, and memories into younger people’s minds.” (Matt Cartmill, Discover mag., Nov. ’99)
“In the time it takes to read this sentence, millions upon millions of neutrinos, pouring in from outer space, will zip through the body of every human being on earth.” (Michael D. Lemonick, *Time* mag., April 8, 1996)

“Every day the earth collides with more than a hundred million meteors, and something like a hundred million tons of extraterrestrial material comes pouring into our atmosphere.” (Lyall Watson, *Life tide*)

“Pouring molasses into the tritium injection hole in a warhead would make it nuclear safe.” (Discover mag., April 1992)

“Of all the discoveries that have poured out of neuroscience labs in recent years, the finding that the electrical activity of brain cells changes the physical structure of the brain is perhaps the most breathtaking.” (J. Madeleine Nash, *Time* mag., June 9, ‘97)

She poured the wine over his head.

He poured all the leftover cream onto the pudding.

The sea poured through the break in the dike.

Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

**POWER (N)**

He has power of attorney.

“The power of heat to burn.” (Jowett, *Universal Oxford Dictionary*)

“We have gained the power to contaminate not only a river, neighborhood, or city; we have the power to poison the entire planet.” (Bruce Babbitt, *Omni* mag.)

“More power to your elbow.” (Lowell, *Universal Oxford Dictionary*)

**PRACTISE, PRACTICE**

“... lest some treachery should be suddenly practised by the enemies.” (II Maccabees 14:22, *World Book Dictionary*)

He is practicing for a concert.

She was very practised in subterfuge.

The athlete practised daily with his coach.

**PRAISE (V)**

“She had been good at art as a schoolgirl, often praised by her art master.” (M. Amis, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

“No member of a crew is praised for the rugged individuality of his rowing.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

The actor’s performance was praised to the skies for its brilliance.

**PRAPE**

He prates endlessly of his conquests.

**PRAY**

I prayed to God for forgiveness.

**PRE-EMINENT**

He was pre-eminent among men for his holiness.

She was pre-eminent in all matters medical.

**PREACH**

He was preaching straight at his son in the first pew.

Go ahead. Preach on any subject you wish.

I would like you to preach to my congregation this evening.

“You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips.” (Oliver Goldsmith)

**PRECAUTION**

This herb is a precaution against disease.

**PRECEDE**

“The car-bombing had been preceded by no warning.” (John Le Carré, *The little drummer girl*)

D precedes E in the alphabet.

He preceded his companion to the door.

**PRECEDENCE**

This concern must take precedence over all others.

Note: precedence on — British

You must give precedence to this matter.

**PRECIPITATE**

Minerals are precipitating from gases dissolving in the water forced from the volcano’s fissures.
“No alternative but to perish by the . . sword, or to precipitate (i.e. throw) themselves into the ocean.” (Listener, Oxford English Dictionary)

PRELUDE
I’m precluded from attending the town meetings

PRECURSOR
“Cowper . . by his genuine love of nature was a precursor of Wordsworth.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

PREDILECTION
She has a predilection for chocolate, and it shows.

PREDISPOSED
He is predisposed to fits of temper.

PREDISPOSITION
He has a predisposition to violence.

PREDOMINATE
“There are some areas where immigrants predominate over the natives of the place by almost two to one.” (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

PREEN
“The gentlemen . . preened (i.e. flaunted) themselves in front of the admiring ladies.” (K. Mansfield, Oxford English Dictionary)
“He preened (i.e. admired himself) before a mirror. The peacock was preening (i.e. smoothing its feathers with its beak) right on our doorstep. “He preened (i.e. congratulated) himself on a purely spontaneous discovery of his own.” (E. Jones, Oxford English Dictionary)

PREFACE (N)
“This superficial tale, is but a preface of her worthy praise.” (Shakespeare, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
You should read the preface to his book first.

PREFACE (V)
She prefaced her talk with a tale of woe.

PREFER
I preferred to go to church on weekdays. She prefers cream to milk in (or on) her cereal.

PREFERENCE
“A child’s preference for the right or left hand is set even before birth.” (Discover mag., March ’91)

PREFIX (V)
Why don’t you prefix your name to mine instead?

PREGNANT
She is pregnant by him, but he refuses to marry her. You’re pregnant with my child, so why won’t you marry me? Their meeting was pregnant (i.e. rife) with menace.

PREJUDICE (N)
His prejudice against blacks demeans all his good works. Her prejudice in favour of her family is sheer nepotism. This leave of absence will enable you to go there without prejudice to your career.

PRELUDE
The orchestra played the prelude to his last oratorio.

PREOCCUPIED
He is preoccupied with other concerns than mine.

PREPARATION
My preparations against the storm did not help a bit. I am making preparations for my long trip.

PREPARATORY
He bought himself a new suit, preparatory to his discharge from the army.
PREPARE
The food was prepared by my mother.
You should prepare for this test.
He should be preparing to meet his maker.

PREREQUISITE
Changes were prerequisite to the theatre company’s survival.

PRESCRIPTION
“The attempt to preserve . . blue-collar jobs is actually a prescription for unemployment.”
(Peter Drucker, Time mag.)

PRESENT (A)
“This universe around us is made up of mind materially present (i.e. existing) in our flesh.”
(Simone Weil, The need for roots)
“The legends of the place are present to the imagination throughout the discourse.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

PRESENT (N)
I have two presents (i.e. gifts) for you, dear.
Now that you have won a new car, make me a present of your old one.
This is my present to you for being so kind.

PRESENT (V)
She was presented (i.e. introduced) to the queen.
“When a man retires and time is no longer a matter of urgent importance, his colleagues generally present (i.e. gift) him with a clock.” (R.C.Sherriff)

PRESERVATION
“When the state considers that taste and style fall within its jurisdiction, and links culture to the preservation of national values, it does not create, it embalms.” (Sanche de Gramont)

PRESERVATIVE
It’s usually used as a preservative against (or from) rust.

PREPARE
I tried to preserve it against (or from) rust, but to no avail.
“Miraculously preserved from the developers, . . Rye is arguably the most enchanting town in the British Isles.”
(Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

“Peace is an unstable equilibrium, which can be preserved only by acknowledged supremacy or equal power.” (Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)
I am preserving one of the flowers you gave me in lucite.
“The pattern of growth preserved in the annual rings of the bristlecone — the oldest living organism on earth — is an excellent record of past weather conditions. Bristlecones can survive more than 4500 years.”
(Allan Chen, Discovery mag.)

PRESIDE
I’m presiding at the next meeting.
He presided over his class with gentle firmness.

PRESS (V)
He was pressing (i.e. forcing) me against the wall.
She told me to press for (i.e. insist on) an interview.
I spent my whole stay in Africa either pressed (i.e. squeezed) for time or money.
He pressed drinks upon me (i.e. urged me to drink) all evening.

PRETEND
She is pretending to be a princess.
He pretends to (i.e. claims) vast scholarship.

PRETENDER
He’s been a pretender to the throne since 1968.

PRETENSION
My pretension to broad learning didn’t fool him for a minute.
PREVAIL

“If a sense of justice prevails (i.e. wins out) among the real estate magnates who run Broadway these days, before too long there will also be a Cronyn-Tandy Theatre.” (William A. Henry III, Time mag.)
His way will likely prevail (i.e. win out) in the sports world.
Her good humour will prevail over (i.e. overcome) your sulky moods.
He is prevailing upon (i.e. convincing) her to mend her ways.

PREVENT

“The great thing about human language is that it prevents us from sticking to the matter at hand.” (Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

PREVENTATIVE, PREVENTIVE (N)
It’s a very effective preventative against rust.

PREVENTATIVE, PREVENTIVE (A)
“Statutes preventive of blasphemy and profaneness.” (1822, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

PREVENTION
It is recommended for the prevention of nausea.

PREVIOUS
Previous to his illness, he travelled widely.

PREY (N)
She was a perfect prey for sociopaths.
We were the prey of a business shark.
She was a prey to every passing salesman.

PREY (V)
“Viruses. The word comes from the Latin for slimy liquid, stench, poison — and the connotation is appropriate . . . for the untold number of . . . varieties that have been preying on animals and plants since long before (man) appeared on earth.” (Claudia Wallis, Time essay)
“Let no feeling of discouragement prey upon you, and in the end you are sure to succeed.” (Abraham Lincoln)

PRICE (N)
The price of that book is ridiculous.
All six had a price on their heads.

PRICE (V)
He is pricing his home for a quick sale.
The stadium seats were priced to sell quickly.

PRIDE (N)
I always did take pride in my job.
He was a poet and the pride of his village.
Too much pride of family can be resented.
A pride (i.e. group) of lions.

PRIDE (V)
I pride myself on my honesty.

PRINT (V)
I had her book printed for her birthday.
“In the bar code . . . printed on . . . packages, the codes identify a product, and provide such information as its color, expiration date, batch number and origin.” (Peter C. Doyle)
“Most experts have awarded the honour of being the first book printed with movable type to Gutenberg’s two-volume, 1282-page Bible, printed with 42 lines of type a page.” (Joseph Wisnovsky, Time mag.)

PRIOR
She left the country just prior to my arrival.

PRIORITY
The traffic cop has priority over the traffic lights.
I’m giving priority to this investigation.

_PRIVILEGE (N)
It’s a privilege to be your friend.
I had the privilege of a private audience with the pope.

PRIVY
I am privy to his final request.
PROBLEM
Is that a real problem for you?
“How does an embryo grow from a featureless blob of cells into a critter with a front, middle and rear? Every cell in your body has the same genes . . Yet some cells become eyes, others become legs, etc. Answer: Certain cells are master switches which govern structures. They’re called homeotic genes. But here’s a problem for evolutionists: Each homeotic gene governs a slice of our body from front to rear. (Or a micro-thin slice of our heads from top to bottom!) The homeotic genes themselves are all bunched together — and they lie in the same front-to-back order as the slices they regulate. Another problem: How do homeotic genes regulate brain growth?” (Larry Gonic, Discover mag.)

PROCLAIM
“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”
(Inscription on Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, U.S.A.)

PROCLIVITY
He has a marked proclivity for wild generalizations.
“This natural proclivity of men to hurt each other.” (Hobbs)

PRODIGAL
She is prodigal of her time and talent.

PRODIGY
“This bird . . is a prodigy of understanding.”
(Goldsmith, Oxford Universal Dictionary)

PRODUCE (V)
That film was produced (i.e. brought to performance) by a very famous actor.
“One tree produces (i.e. yields) oxygen for 400 people.” (Irwin Block, The Gazette, Montreal)
“The gadget (PCR or polymerase chain reaction) can automatically produce (i.e. generate) a billion faithful copies from one small piece of DNA, in just three hours.” (Yvonne Baskin, Discover mag.)
“The body produces up to three trillion cells a day.” (Brad Evenson, National Post)

PRODUCTIVE
“It may be productive . . of incalculable good.” (Oxford Universal Dictionary)

PROFESSOR
He is a professor at McGill University.

PROFICIENT
The whole family is proficient at tennis.
He’s very proficient in mathematics.

PROFIT (N)
My company could make a profit of about one million dollars.
She made a big profit on the sale of her car.
You could stop smoking with great profit to yourself and those around you.

PROFIT (V)
They stand to profit by the sale of their uncle’s art collection.
Why can’t you profit from your sister’s experience?
“We could watch teachers at work, and profit from doing so.” (E. Blishen, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Mrs Burke . . has not profited of the bathing.” (Burke, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
PROFUSE
It was profuse of vegetation
He was profuse in compliments.

PROGENITOR
“Lord Longford, the progenitor of Britain’s fabled Literary Longfords, a family unmatched — possibly in history — for its eight esteemed writers in three generations publishing contemporaneously.”
(Bonnie Angelo, Time mag.)

PROGRESS (V)
I am progressing in this silly venture against my better judgment.
He progressed beyond the island into uncharted waters.
How are you progressing with that book of yours?

PROHIBIT
They were prohibited from ever building war planes.
Note: not to

PROJECT (V)
They projected the photo (i.e. caused it to appear) against (or on or onto or upon) the wall.
300 million tons of hazardous waste are projected (i.e. planned) for 1986.
Can we not project (i.e. propel) ourselves into the future?
(The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
“The booths projected (i.e. protruded) far into the streets.” (Macauley)
He was projected (i.e. hurled) over a wall and into a swamp.

PROLIFIC
“Monarchy . . when it is hereditary is likely to be more prolific of stupidity, nepotism, irresponsibility, and extravagance than of nobility or statesmanship.”
(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

PROLOGUE
It was a dramatic prologue to a long and dull play.

PROMPT (A)
He was too prompt in arriving at conclusions.
She was prompt to obey.

PROMPT (V)
Prompted by feelings of compassion, the couple adopted the young orphan.
“Exposure to a single chemotherapeutic agent often prompts a tumour to fight off a wide range of drugs.”
(Discover mag.)

PRONE
“Buddhist precepts (hold) that women (are) fundamentally more prone to sin than men, and that their only path to expiation lay in total subservience to the male.” (Jack Seward, The Japanese)

PRONENESS
He evinces a proneness to vulgarity.

PRONOUNCE
Are you expecting me to pronounce (i.e. to declare) for or against the decision of the panel?
The judge will be pronouncing on the validity of this municipal by-law tomorrow morning.

PROP (V)
Why don’t you just prop it against the fence?
The patient was propped up in bed.
“Prop (i.e. propped) on a staff, a beggar old and bare.”
(Pope)

PROPEL
“Galaxies are still being propelled away from each other by the force of the colossal explosion that triggered the universe's birth about 15 billion years ago.”
(T. Dickinson, Maclean's, quoted by Reader's Digest)
“A rejection . . propelled her toward study.”
(S. Quinn, Oxford English Dictionary)
“He propelled her . . up the . . ramp.”
(B. Bainbridge, Oxford English Dictionary)
PROPENSITY
She showed a propensity for fast driving.
“A natural propensity in us to do evil.”
(DeFoe, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
He had a propensity to (or towards) uncouth behaviour.

PROPER
The ceremony was proper to my rank.

PROPINQUITY
“One of the attractions of the place is its propinquity to the hunting districts of Leicestershire.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

PROPORTIONAL
“The severity of an itch is inversely proportional to the reach.” (quoted by Allison Sanders, Houston Chronicle)

PROPORTIONATE
“Mental health is directly proportionate to the number of perceived options available to any individual. One who is mentally disturbed often lives in a world in which almost every door seems to be closed.”

PROSECUTE
I will have you prosecuted (i.e. arraigned) for defamation.
He prosecuted (i.e. carried on) an enquiry into all documents related to the fiscal scandal.
“Obliged to prosecute (i.e. wage) the war with greater vigour.” (J. Colville, Oxford English Dictionary)

PROSPECT (N)
There is just no prospect of better times ahead.
“Seeing no prospect of fine weather, I descended to Saas.”
(Oxford Universal Dictionary)
“The Tory beast bleeding from all pores, ravaged and perspiring, a pitiful prospect to the eyes.”
(Allan Fotheringham)

PROTECT
“A geneticist named Alfred Knudson (has discovered that) genes that normally protect against the cancer (retinoblastoma, for example), somehow get damaged or lost.” (Time mag.)
“The spinal cord is a cable-like bundle of nerves that connects the brain to the rest of the nervous system. It is protected by the bony spinal column, with 24 vertebrae stacked in a gentle S-curve between the skull and tailbone.” (Don Colburn, Washington Post)
“Saint Vitus’s Dance (Sydenham’s chorea) refers to the Sicilian youth who, as he was about to be martyred in A.D. 303, beseeched the Lord to protect from the miseries of the ‘dancing mania’ all those who commemorated the day of his death.”
(Tony Dajer, Discover mag.)
“To be protected like a child.”
(Shakespeare: Henry VI, Oxford English Dictionary)

PROTEST
(V)
It’s high time you protested against his mistreatment of you.

PROTRUDE
A strange growth protruded (i.e. projected) from his right ear.
One claw of the baby chick protruded through (i.e. jutted out from) the shell.
“Critics . . who protrude (i.e. impose) their nonsense upon the town.” (Thackeray, Oxford English Dictionary)

Proud
How could you be proud about that?
“The intelligent man who is proud of his intelligence is like the condemned man who is proud of his large cell.”
(Simone Weil)
Are you too proud to ask for help?
PROVIDE

We provided against that eventuality. I will provide for you, I promise.

“Without cholesterol we would surely die — every cell in our body depends on the waxy substance to provide strength and resilience to its outer membrane.” (Larry Husten, Discover mag.)

“Nature creates ability; luck provides it with opportunity.” (François de la Rochefoucauld)

PUNISHABLE

“In England, as late as the 18th century, women, and little children ten years old, were hanged for petty theft. More than 300 ‘crimes’ were punishable by death.” (F.M. Esfandiary, Optimism One)

PURGE (V)

The scientist purged it of all contamination.

PURSUANT

Pursuant to my letter yesterday, have you learned anything more about the fellow.

PUSHER

He was killed in pursuit of a lawbreaker.

PUT (V)

I am putting in for (i.e. requesting) a raise, but I don’t think I’ll get it.

“Put (i.e. place) all the world’s land animals on a pair of scales and 10% of the weight would be ants.” (Dr. Edward O. Wilson and Dr. Bert Holldobler)

I put (i.e. presented) the case to him with all the ardor I could muster.

Who put you up to (i.e. suggested you do) this? He doesn’t think he can put up with it (i.e. suffer it) much longer.
QUALIFY

He was qualified as an army scout.

“The propositions ... have been qualified (i.e. designated) as heretical.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Anyone who wants the job (of U.S. president) isn’t qualified (i.e. fitted) for it.” (Lawrence Sanders, The Passion of Molly T)

She is qualified (i.e. competent) in a number of disciplines.

“I am qualifying myself (i.e. making myself competent) to give lessons.” (Charles Dickens, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

QUARREL (N)

I thought your quarrel about this house would be over by now.

“In the quarrel between the Jesuits and the Papacy over the missions in China, it was the Jesuits who were carrying out the words of Christ.” (Simone Weil, Gateway to God)

What is your quarrel with him?

QUARREL (V)

They’re quarreling among themselves again!

What are you quarreling about (or over) now?

I quarrel over principle; never about money.

“He (Jean-Jacques Rousseau) quarreled with Diderot to whom he owed most of all.” (Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)

QUEST (N)

She is indefatigable in her quest for stardom.

He’s in Africa again, in quest of that missing link.

He quested his whole life for the Holy Grail.

He acknowledged the question from the floor (i.e. from a member of the House of Commons).

“It was a question (i.e. problem) of time.” (Freeman, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

You should question him about that accident.

Why should you quibble about such a trivial matter?

He quibbled with her over details the whole day long.

And be quick about it (i.e. hurry).

She is quick at learning languages.

He is very quick of foot (i.e. moves fast).

Those dancers are quick in their movements.

She is quick to criticize.

He is quick with a pun.

I’m glad to be quit (i.e. rid) of him.

That quotation is not from the Bible. It is from the Koran.
The actor offered a very pertinent quote from Shakespeare.

He quoted (i.e. cited words) from Shakespeare at every opportunity.
She is quoted (i.e. her words are repeated) in yesterday's newspaper.

“The largest number of English words lies somewhere between 400,000 . . and 600,000 — the largest figure that any expert is willing to be quoted on. By comparison, the biggest French dictionaries have only about 150,000 entries; the biggest Russian ones, a mere 130,000.”
(Robert Clayborne, Our marvelous native tongue)

I will give you the statistics, but I do not wish to be quoted on them.
I quoted (i.e. stated a price) on this fabric, not on that one.
**RACE (N)**

It was a race against the clock.

“Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.” (H.G. Wells)

“They’re in a race for the biggest prize of all: life. It will be a race to the finish. Every creature is in a perpetual arms race with its diseases, worms and genes.” (The Economist)

**RACE (V)**

She was racing against the clock.

Why do you race down the street instead of playing in the park?

They raced for the beach.

The men raced into the barn, looking for the escapee.

The dark river raced over the shallows.

The fire engine raced to the fire.

The children raced through the house.

**RACKED**

“She was racked by a . . . feeling of . . . loss.”

(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Body all aching and racked with pain.”

(from the song Old Man River)

**RADIATE**

Roads radiate (i.e. fan out) from the town to all points of the compass.

The new lamp radiated (i.e. spread) its light to every corner of the room.

**RAGE (V)**

“The gale . . . raged above our heads.”

(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” (Dylan Thomas)

“She . . . raged at the world that had killed him so needlessly.” (A. Cross, Oxford English Dictionary)

“The passion for play raged in him without measure.”

(Macauley, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**RAIL (V)**

Rail against injustices, not against the people who suffer them.

You can rail at me all you want, it won’t change my verdict.

**RAISE (V)**

“In Massachusetts, at the New Alchemy Institute, chickens are being raised (i.e. bred) atop fish tanks. Their droppings fertilize algae, which the fish then eat.”

(Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)

“Trawler skippers, grand as kings, standing on bollards armed with whistles, raising (i.e. mustering) a scratch crew for a voyage.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)

Rome claimed that Romus and Remulus were raised (i.e. reared) by wolves.

“Several twin studies have reported that identical twins reared apart are actually more alike than those raised (i.e. brought up) in the same home.” (John Leo, Time mag.)

“The progress of science raised (i.e. elevated) the authority of the test tube over that of the crosier.”

(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

He raised (i.e. lifted) the baby up to the waiting hands.

**RAMPANT**

“Snobbishness has this peculiar and devilish quality of evil, that it is rampant (i.e. widespread), among very kindly people, with open hearts and houses . . . It is our great English vice.” (G.K. Chesterton)

All neighbourhoods, rich or poor, are now rampant with drugs.

**RANGE (V)**

Their ages ranged between 30 and 50.
“The mid-water of the ocean ranges from just below the surface to 6000 feet or more. It contains the greatest number of organisms in the sea, great numbers of which have never been seen.”
(Shannon Brownlee, Discovery mag.)

The students were ranged in rows according to age.
The investigation ranged over the entire department.
“The Betelgeuse (star), part of the Orion (constellation), is among the giants of the universe. Estimates of its diameter range up to an incredible one billion kilometres.” (Doris Hoppe, Reader’s Digest)

RANK (V)
“Dawn’s followers wanted to show that the Lord’s battalions had been ranked (i.e. marshalled) against them from the start.” (The Economist mag.)
He was ranked (i.e. rated) among the top scholars in his field.
That last storm ranks (i.e. is classified) with the worst I have ever seen.

RANKLE
His father’s abuse of him has been rankling in his memory since childhood.
She rankled under the domination of her stepmother.
I guess discrimination has been rankling with me all my life.

RAPT
She stood before the Venus de Milo rapt in awe.

RATE (V)
The youth rates high (i.e. is highly valued) as a mechanic.
That lovely cottage is rated at (i.e. rented or leased for) 100 pounds a year. (British)
“The beer, Alsatian and icy, comes in steins rated (i.e. assigned a value) from ‘sérieux’ to ‘distingué’.”
(James Brady)

RATIONALE
He wrote a rationale about business principles for his company.

“RANK - REACT”

THE PRECAMBRIAN RATIONALE
The Precambrian record is now sufficiently good that the old rationale about undiscovered sequences of smoothly transitional forms will no longer wash.”
(Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., 1989)

“RATIONAL”
“The main rationale for promoting rapid educational expansion was . . an economic one.”
(R.G. Myers, Oxford English Dictionary)
The rationale of the company’s policy was clearly outlined to employees.

RAVE (V)
He came back raving (i.e. enthusing) about his trip to Ireland.
She raved (i.e. screamed imprecations) at me all the way down the block.

RAW
Three days later, my feet were still raw from the climb.
Her poor hands were raw with blisters.

REACH (VV)
He reached around the corner and grabbed my arm.
Why not reach for the stars?
She reached over the fence and pulled the child to safety.
His ape-like arms almost reached down to his ankles.
He reached under his jacket and pulled out a gun.

REACTION
There was a strong public reaction against the new law.
“Every year, a million people — that is, 3 to 5% of all hospital admissions (in U.S.) are admitted primarily because of a negative reaction to drugs.”
(Ivan Illich, Medical Nemesis)

REACT
They reacted (i.e. responded) violently against the new edict.
Acetic acid reacts (i.e. induces chemical change) on (or upon) copper to produce verdigris.
I did not like the way he reacted (i.e. responded) to that announcement.
“When a liquid reacts with (i.e. induces chemical change in) a metal to cause corrosion, electrons pass from one to the other, making an electric current.” (The Economist)

READ

What have you read (i.e. found out) about me this time?
What I read between the lines (i.e. thought was implied) disturbed me no end.
He read (i.e. studied) for an exam virtually all week.
Don’t read more into (i.e. see more in) it than is baldly stated.
I read (i.e. was informed) of his accident only last evening.
“St. Ambrose “read to himself, a habit unknown to the classical world.” (St.Augustine)

READINESS

His readiness for any eventuality was a comfort.
Their readiness to fight was legendary.
Her readiness with a quip was a delight.

READY

I was ready for anything.
“The female octopus has her vagina in her nose. If the male octopus approaches the female when she is not ready for mating, the female octopus will bite off his penis (one of eight) and swim away with it.” (Omni mag., May ’91)
They said they were ready to go anywhere with me.
She was always ready with a witty reply.

REAPPEAR

“... that odd Gallic power of assimilation which, after centuries, has reappeared in the relations between the modern French and the Mohammedan world.”
(Hilaire Belloc, The Crusades)
The Virgin Mary reappeared to the little girl the next day.

REAR (V)

The child was reared (i.e. brought up) by foster parents.
Too many parents are rearing (i.e.raising) their children on junk food.
She rears all her children with the same infinite patience.

REASON (N)

I’m sure there’s a good reason for his being late.
You have ample reason to proceed with that project.

REASON (V)

You have too few facts to reason about that subject.
It was a waste of time to reason with him on any subject.

REBEL (N)

She is a rebel against anything her father stands for.
He is a rebel to God and Country.

REBEL (V)

Why rebel against (i.e.object strenuously to) this law; most people approve of it.
“We rebelled at having to stay in on so fine a day.”
(World Book Dictionary)

REBUKE (V)

“He rebuked (i.e. reprimanded) them for their cowardice and want of faith.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
The congregation was rebuked (i.e. chided) into silence.

RECEDE

“In 1927 the astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that the universe really is expanding: galaxies at the farthest reaches of the universe are receding from our own at near-light speeds.”
(David H. Freedman, Discover mag., 1990)
His memory of the event had receded into the mists of the past (i.e. had been forgotten).

RECEIPT

I want a receipt for that payment.
When will you acknowledge receipt of my donation?

RECEIVE

The courtier was received by the king with courtesy.
“Men will not receive the truth from their enemies, and it is very seldom offered to them by their friends.”
(Alexis de Tocqueville)
“The human brain receives millions of simultaneous reports from eye cells.”
(Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)

**RECIPE**
That is a recipe for disaster.

**RECIPROCITY**
“It is also worth noting that American business enjoys much greater economic reciprocity with Europe than with Japan.” (Daniel Burnstein, New York mag.)

**RECKLESS**
He charged on, reckless of the peril.

**RECKON**
I reckoned (i.e. counted) on (or upon) at least three days of grace.
“God . . will reckon (i.e. deal) with us roundly for the abuse.” (Cowper, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
Well, for a start, reckon without (i.e. don’t count on) me.

**RECLINE**
She reclined against an enormous cushion.
“His public works in marble and bronze . . recline on their plinths in cities from London to Chicago, from Melbourne to New York . . No other major artist in the past century, not even Rodin, completed as many . . as (Henry) Moore.” (Robert Hughes, Time mag.)

**RECOGNITION**
“The new club member sought recognition by the chair.”
(World Book Dictionary)
“I have done special . . courses, yet there’s no recognition for this.” (Oxford English Dictionary)
“The actor soon won recognition from the public.”
(Woman mag., Oxford English Dictionary)
His lone medal was in recognition of a rather dubious exploit.

**RECOGNIZE, RECOGNISE**
She recognized him as the man who had followed her around the shopping centre.
“T cells (a type of white blood cell or lymphocyte) recognize an invader (virus) by telltale molecules on its surface called antigens, then instruct other lymphocytes called B cells to unleash a flood of antibodies.”
(Jeff Miller, Discover mag.)
“He recognized in the other’s . . smile that the time had come for politicking.”
(G. Vidal, Oxford English Dictionary)

**RECOIL**
At first his intuition recoiled from the thought. I saw him recoil from her.
“The good or evil we confer on others, very often . . recoils (i.e. comes back) on ourselves.”
(Fielding, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**RECOMMEND**
I recommend (i.e. prescribe) garlic as a cure for a cold.
She was recommended for (i.e. praised as worthy of) the job by a number of people.
“Asked once what three novels he would recommend (i.e. mention with approbation) to a creative writing student, Faulkner said: ‘Anna Karenina, Anna Karenina, Anna Karenina’.”

**RECOMPENSE**
“The length of the journey will be recompensed (i.e. made up for) by the goodness of the way.”
(Fuller, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
Why should you recompense him merely for doing his job?

**RECONCILE**
How can you reconcile yourself to (i.e. accept) this sorry state of affairs?
“I could never have become reconciled (i.e. acquiesced) to the blind adulation of the leader.”
(S. Rosenberg, Oxford English Dictionary)
I find it hard to reconcile (i.e. harmonize) what you said last night with what you did this morning.
Try to reconcile (i.e. balance) those figures with last year’s report.

**RECORD** *(V)*

“French Canada possessed an indomitable will to live, witnessed in the first decade after the conquest by the attainment of the highest birthrate (65.3 per 1000) ever recorded for white people.”

(Mason Wade, *The French Canadians*)

“Word for word . . . their conversation had been recorded . . . in the fluent writing.”

(E. Bowen, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

“Data storage, holographic style, could, in theory, record all the material in the Library of Congress (U.S.) on a medium about the size of a sugar cube.”

(National Geographic mag.)

**RECUMBENT**

He stood recumbent against his front door.

I found her recumbent on the neighbour's lawn.

**REDOLENT**

Her winter coat was still redolent of mothballs.

**REDOUND**

If that doesn’t redound (i.e. accrue) to my credit, what will?

**REDUCE**

“Under the Treaty (of Versailles) . . . Hungary’s population was reduced from 20 million to 8 million, its carefully integrated industrial economy was wrecked and 3 million Hungarians handed over to the Czechs and Romanians.”

(Paul Johnson, *The History of the Modern World*)

If you stand back from the crowd, you’ll see how it reduces to the lowest common denominator.

**REEK** *(V)*

Whenever she gets a cold, she reeks of her garlic remedy. The town reeks with despair.

**REFER**

“Sam was fourteen when he was referred (i.e. sent) for treatment.” (R.F. Hobson, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

“Classical refers (i.e. is related) specifically to ancient Greek and Roman art and literature or European music of the latter half of the 18th century, music by such men as Haydn and Mozart.”

(Michael Gartner, *Advertising Age* mag.)

“The King referred (i.e. handed over) the matter to the council.”

“When the poet Swinburne wrote of ‘a small sweet world of wave-encompassed wonders,’ he was referring to the Channel Island of Sark — the smallest independent British state in the Commonwealth.”

(John Gatrell, *This England* mag.)

“I must . . . refer you back to him for further consideration.”

(G.B. Shaw, *Oxford English Dictionary*)

**REFERENCE**

His reference to my past misdeeds was uncalled for.

Note: Never about

**REFINE**

Let me refine on (or upon) (i.e. clarify) your last statement.

**REFLECT**

“The light reflected (i.e. bounced back) by our planet (earth) illuminates the sleeping moon much more brightly than moonlight silvers our own night.”

(David R. Scott, National Geographic mag.)

His bias is reflected (i.e. implied) in his every statement.

I am reflecting (i.e. thinking) on (or upon) that for a bit.

**REFRAIN** *(V)*

Please refrain from smoking.

He refrained from kicking me at the last second.

**REGALE**

The party regaled themselves on strawberries and cream. She regaled me with stories throughout the evening.

He likes to regale me with his misadventures.
REGARD (N)
He has no regard for the feelings of others.
With regard to the latest happening, I think we should forget it.
Give my regards to your sister.

REGARD (V)
“In Victorian England, the intelligentsia regarded (i.e. considered) Dickens as ‘the author of the uneducated, undiscriminating public’.” (Tom Wolfe, Harper’s mag.)
They regarded (i.e. observed) me with profound suspicion.

REGENERATE
“The severed fingertips of a young child can regenerate in about 11 weeks.” (Omni mag., April ‘92)
It regenerates the spirit in me.

REGRET (N)
His lack of regret at abandoning the farm surprised me.
She showed absolutely no regret for her past life.

REGULAR (A)
He’s most regular in his habits.

REIGN (V)
Queen Victoria reigned over Britain more than 62 years.
“Let peace, concord and unanimity reign among all Christian people . . for without peace we cannot please God.” (Charlemagne, Article 62)

REJECT (V)
I rejected his application for several good reasons.
He is rejecting Helen in favour of Pauline.

REJOICE
She rejoiced at (or in) my good fortune.
“Love rejoices not over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth.” (1 Corinthians 13: 1-7, The Bible)

RELAPSE (V)
She relapsed into a deep coma.

RELATE
That is not the story you related to (i.e. told) me yesterday.
This by-law relates (i.e. refers) only to homeowners.
“Basque (is) Europe’s most ancient language . . and no more related (i.e. connected) to any language in the world than the Basque people, with their peculiar blood type distribution and cranial formation, are related to any other race.” (Travanian, Shibumi)
You’ll find my story relates closely with (i.e. is much the same as) hers.

RELATION
I’m sure there’s a relation between those two incidents.
She was a relation (i.e. relative) of George Washington, the first president of the United States of America.
“The relation of every man to his Lord.” (Freeman)
We have always had good relations with our union.

RELATIONSHIP
“The relationship between all the living and non-living parts of the Earth organism are a complex of self-stabilizing systems with the inbuilt goal of keeping planetary conditions at an optimum for the maintenance of life.” (Robert Muse, The Montreal Star)
His relationship to her was rather tenuous.

RELATIVE (A)
Relative to that particular charge, I must plead guilty.

RELATIVE (N)
He’s a relative of my wife.

RELAX
You should relax from your chores every half-hour.
“The most exciting world I know,” says (A.K.) Dewdney, as he relaxes in his small campus office, “is the universe of the mind.” (Peter Stoler, Time mag.)
RELAY (V)
She relayed every detail of the happening to her friends by phone.

RELEASE (V)
She released (i.e. ‘fired’) the arrow at the target.

"According to figures released (i.e. divulged) by American Banker, Dai-Ichi Kangyo, is now the largest banking company in the world.” (Gordon M. Henry, Time mag. 1989)

"Carbon dioxide levels have increased 25 percent since 1958 — with 5 billion tons of carbon released (i.e. let out) into the atmosphere each year from the burning of fossil fuels.” (Robert Keating, Omni mag.)

The terrorists said the captives would be released (i.e. freed) in three days, certainly within the next week, into the custody of the court.

“Nuclear reactors produce plutonium which can cause cancer if inhaled. It has a half-life of 24,000 years, and therefore causes permanent contamination once released to (i.e. let out into) the environment.” (Patrick Moore, Ph.D., Some facts about Chernobyl)

RELEGATE

After that latest escapade, he was relegated to a job in the laundry room.
I think I will relegate this so-called antique to the attic.

RELEVANCE

“The dolphin is capable of remembering totally arbitrary events of no relevance to its natural world, of no relevance to what is biologically important.” (Louis Herman, Omni mag.)

RELENTANT

That is not relevant to the subject under discussion.

RELIEF

Do you know of any relief for a leg cramp?
I wish I could find some relief from this terrible headache.
He has dedicated his life to the relief of the poorest of the poor.

Her resignation proved a relief to her whole staff.

RELIEVE

Can you do anything to relieve me from (i.e. free me of) these damn hiccoughs?
“Neither trees nor bushes to relieve the eye from the russet . . of absolute sterility.” (Sir W. Scott, Oxford English Dictionary)

Yesterday, I was relieved of (i.e. freed from) a chore that’s been the bane of my life.
“Your coming relieves me of the bother of writing a long letter.” (World Book Dictionary)

RELISH (N)

She had no relish (i.e. desire) for the task ahead.
I have an insatiable relish of (i.e. delight in) the fragrance of roses.

RELUCTANT

She was reluctant to try again.

RELY

You should rely on (or upon) your instincts.

REMAIN

He was remaining (i.e. staying) in office in spite of the scandal.
That’s all that remains (i.e. is left) of the cheese you sent us.
Now it remains (i.e. belongs) to me to finish the job.
That’s all that remains (i.e. is left) to me of my father’s fortune.
He insisted that his aunt remain (i.e. stay) within the family.

REMAND

She was remanded in (i.e. recommitted to) custody.
The officer remanded the soldier (i.e. sent the soldier back) to his post. (The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)
**REMARK** (N)

“Perhaps the most frequently quoted remark about dance in recent years is George Balanchine’s maxim, ‘Ballet is woman.’” (Martha Duffy, *Time* mag.)

I agree with your remarks on the significance of this play.

**REMARK** (V)

He remarked on (or upon) my habit of answering a question with a question.

I was remarking to him how well he looked when he told me of his recent serious illness.

**REMARKABLE**

Montreal is remarkable for the number of its churches.

There are more than in Rome.

**REMEDY** (N)

Garlic is his remedy for just about every ailment.

A remedy of this kind will do more social harm than good.

**REMEMBER**

“George Bernard Shaw is ‘best remembered (i.e. recalled) as an inexhaustible source of good lines.”

(The Economist mag.)

She remembers (i.e. recalls) me for the wrong reason.

Please remember (i.e. mention) me to him.

Now, remember (i.e. do not forget) to wipe your feet.

**REMIND**

Remind me tomorrow about the gloves you left in my office.

“They remind me of English people in South Africa, caught between the awful passions of blacks and Afrikaners, feeling themselves at once superior, superfluous and ill done by.” (Jan Morris, *Destinations*)

**REMINISCENT**

Their views are reminiscent of the nineteenth century.

**REMISS**

“Remiss in the duties . . . of Religion.”

(Bentley, *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*)

It is very remiss (i.e. negligent) of me.

**REMONSTRATE**

You should remonstrate against that by-law.

The taxpayers will remonstrate (i.e. object) to their MP about this new levy.

I remonstrated with him again and again, but to no avail.

“The teacher remonstrated with (i.e. reproved) the boy about his low grades.” (World Book Dictionary)

**REMORSE**

He showed absolutely no remorse for his heinous crime.

**REMOTE** (A)

He exiled himself to a place very remote from his hometown.

**REMOVE**

“A single protein, called P-glycoprotein, in the membrane of a cancer cell, acts like a pump, removing lethal chemicals from the cell’s interior.” (Discover mag.)

He was removed to the prison during the night.

**RENDER**

“Render (i.e. give) . . . unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.”

(Matthew 22:21)

“We win justice quickest by rendering (i.e. giving) justice to the other party.” (Mohandas K. Ghandi)

**RENOVED**

She was renowned for her charitable work.

“Newton, in his own day, was renowned as a theologian.”

(William F. Rickenbacker)

**RENT** (V)

“They would sometimes rent a cottage at Sizewell.”

(Oxford English Dictionary)
“UCLA study of poverty finds it now costs as much per square foot to rent an apartment in L.A.’s worst ghettos as it does to rent in Beverly Hills.”

(James Brady, Advertising Age mag.)

“The sea captains’ houses were rented out for the season.”

(R.P. Jhabvala, Oxford English Dictionary)

“I persuaded her to rent their potato barn to me.”

(K. Vonnegut, Oxford English Dictionary)

REPAIR (V)

He repaired (i.e. betook himself) in shame to the next village.

Note: Repair, when it means fix up, needs no prepositions.

REPEAT

“Repeat the pledge after me.” (World Book Dictionary)

He repeated the warning for effect.

“You can repeat poems from memory.”

(World Book Dictionary)

“We are quirky, if glorious, accidents, not to be repeated on this planet.” (Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., Oct. ’96)

“A . . rugged . . shape tends to repeat throughout the picture.” (Listener, Oxford English Dictionary)

Please don’t repeat that rumour to my brother.

REPENT

“You must repent of obstinate opinion.”

(from A Man for all Seasons)

REPENTANCE

He never showed any repentance for his crimes.

I expect repentance of your misdeeds.

REPLACE

“When death is imminent, the brain apparently realizes that pain can no longer be useful as an alarm to spur escape. So the pain is turned off and replaced by a kind of blissful surrender.” (Dr. Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)

“(Our) individual cells . . are continually being replaced, not just on the skin . . but in the bones. Friends may look unchanged to you . . but, if several years have elapsed, there will not be a single cell present that was there last time you met.” (Lyall Watson, Supernature)

“The Roman Catholic Church labored to reduce slavery, family feuds, and national strife, to extend the intervals of truce and peace, and to replace trial by combat or ordeal with the judgments of established courts. It softened the penalties exacted by Roman or barbarian law, and vastly expanded the scope and organization of charity.”

(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

Starting in 1950, “a titanic double rush replaced nearly 100,000 Jews with blacks in Lawndale, Chicago.”

(John Hersey, Esquire mag.)

REPLENISH

We replenished our garden with enriched soil.

REPLETE

He sat there smiling, eyes half-closed, replete with good food and wine.

REPLY (N)

She still has not received a reply from her sister in Italy.

I’m waiting for a reply to my last letter.

REPLY (V)

The sooner you reply to my last letter, the better.

He will be replying to the mayor on Sunday.

He replied to me with vehemence.


REPORT (N)

“This squares with some reports from Russia of artificial diamonds that can scratch real ones.”

(The Economist mag.)

REPORT (V)

I am reporting at noon sharp.

They reported for duty within two days.

The journalist enjoyed a stint abroad reporting (i.e. news-gathering) for the New York Times.

I suggest you do not report on him till Monday.

When are you expected to report to the commission?
REPOSE (V)
The cat is reposing beneath the porch.
She reposed in the wing chair like a cast-off doll.
The photographer insisted that the rajah’s daughter repose on a bed of rose petals.
“Almost every glacier reposes upon an inclined bed.” (Tyndall, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
They would repose every afternoon under the chestnut tree.

REPRESENT
Although a broad-minded man, he was represented (i.e. portrayed) as a wild-eyed bigot by the tabloids.
He is representing (i.e. serving as an elected member for) the Toronto constituency in the House of Commons.
She represents (i.e. speaks for) Labour on that committee.

REPRESENTATIVE (A)
His art was representative of his era.

REPRESENTATIVE (N)
He is a representative for the mining industry.
She is a representative of the Museum Association.

REPROACH (N)
Their scandalous behaviour was a reproach to the union movement.

REPROACH (V)
“He reproached Fitzurse for ingratitude for past kindness.” (Froude)
She is reproaching him with intolerance.

REPUGNANCE
“A deep repugnance (i.e. antipathy) against ecclesiastical tyranny.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“In it there is more than the usual repugnance (i.e. inconsistency) between the title and the purport.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“There is buried deep in him a profound and stubborn repugnance (i.e. aversion) to the trouble of following anybody else’s argument.” (G.K. Chesterton, Generally Speaking)

REPUGNANT
His unrelieved pessimism was repugnant to her.

REPUTATION
He has a reputation for stylishness.
“This very old woman had the reputation of a Witch all over the country.” (Addison, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

REQUEST (N)
Please overlook all requests for money.

REQUIRE
“The brain is best understood in terms of three functioning units: alertness, information processing, and action. While each has its own role . . the harmonious interaction of all three is required for optimal functioning.”
Why is so much required of me?
(Dr. Richard Restak, The Brain: The Last Frontier)
Here’s what I require of you.
I am required to do many things I do not like doing.

REQUISITE (A)
Punctuality and neatness are the only virtues requisite for this job.
“There are . . two points requisite unto salvation.” (Thomas More, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

REQUISITE (N)
The only requisites for this job are commonsense and a will to work.

RESCUE (V)
I’m counting on you to rescue me from that dance tomorrow evening.

RESEARCH (N)
His research in electromagnetism won him great fame.
In all Karl Marx’s “researches into the inequities of British capitalists . . he never succeeded in unearthing one (worker) who was paid literally no wages at all, Yet such a worker did exist in his own household.”
(Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)
Should research on human embryos be banned?

RESEMBLANCE
His resemblance to the President is uncanny.

RESEMBLE
“People tend to mate with individuals who resemble themselves in every conceivable way.”
(Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)
The two little girls resembled each other like two peas in a pod.

RESENTMENT
His resentment of the slight fisted his hands.

RESERVE (V)
None of the most productive land was reserved for new immigrants.
I will reserve that table for you.
The use of this men’s room is reserved to the staff. (British)

RESIDE
“(Umbilical) cord blood is a rich source of blood cells, (especially) stem cells, the immature cells that after birth reside only in bone marrow and give rise to all blood cells.” (Shawna Vogel, Discover mag.)
He resides on that spit of land over there.
She is residing in a large cardboard box under the bridge.

RESIGN
I’ll resign from (i.e. quit) this job tomorrow.
The writer was resigned to (i.e. had accepted) his obscurity.

RESISTANCE
“One of the extraordinary properties of holograms is their resistance to damage or loss of memory. A tiny fragment or chip broken anywhere from the plate essentially holds all the information of the whole plate.”
(Yatri, Unknown Man)

RESISTER
“The Holocaust of 1942-45, in which Jews died by the millions, and Germans and resisters to Nazism by the hundreds of thousands.” (The Economist mag.)

RESOLUTE
She was most resolute of purpose.
They were resolute in their intention to reach the top.

RESOLVE (V)
The dark mass resolves into (i.e. proves to be) an army truck careering towards us.
Once they were resolved (i.e. decided) on a course of action, there was no stopping them.
I resolve to make my application tomorrow.

RESORT (N)
It’s a resort (i.e. refuge) for fallen dictators.
That’s the last resort (i.e. recourse) of thieves.

RESORT (V)
Bereft of an income, he resorted to busking in the metro.
He is resorting to a life of crime.

RESOUND
“And echoing praises . . resound (i.e. ring) at your return.”
(Cowper, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“There resounded (i.e. echoed) from the smithy the ring of a hammer.” (T. Hardy, Oxford English Dictionary)
“A name to resound (i.e. be praised) for ages.”
(Tennyson, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“His last words . . resounded through (i.e. echoed down) the narrow passage.”
(G. Santayana, Oxford English Dictionary)
My ears resounded (i.e. echoed) to the beat of my heart.
Our family meals always resound (i.e. are filled) with laughter.
RESPECT (N)

“Man is still a savage to the extent that he has little respect for anything that cannot hurt him.” (Ed Howe)

They keep silent to show respect to the dead.

RESPITE

I enjoyed the respite from the noise.

RESPOND

“The defendant is held to respond (i.e. give satisfaction) in damages.” (U.S., Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“Most of the cells in the cortex (newest part of the brain) respond (i.e. answer) only to lines of a particular orientation, between them catering for orientations at all degrees from vertical to horizontal and back.”
(Hugh Montefiore, The Probabilities of God)

I’m sure he will eventually respond (i.e. act in response) to your plea.

He is responding (i.e. giving a reply) with great energy.

RESPONSE

“The responses from 137 people to the questionnaire . . indicate that healthy men and women cry more often . . than do sick ones.”
(Samuel A. Schreiner, Jr., Reader’s Digest mag.)

“The response of the mainstream scientific and philosophical communities to the challenge posed by the Anthropic Revolution (based on the Anthropic Principle) has been . . something of an intellectual scandal.”
(Patrick Glynn, National Review, May 6, 96)

The response of the crowd was almost frightening.

My response to you is very simple: No!

“In response to stress, biological survival requires genetic change; it necessitates a turning away from doomed replication.” (William L.H. Moon, Blue Highways)

RESPONSIBLE

“Doctor Wilder Penfield started out to prove that the brain is responsible for the mind. As he studied thousands of patients . . he finally concluded that the mind is totally independent of the brain.”
(Bookjacket comment: The Mystery of the Mind by Dr. Penfield)

From now on, you’re only responsible to me.

RESPONSIVE

“(Our) auditory system is responsive from 20 to approximately 10,000 hertz — vibrations per second. That range is divided into about 25 frequency bands, each a third of an octave wide.” (Discover mag.)

“Most people continue to be emotionally responsive to music throughout their lives.”
(James Shreeve, Discover mag.)

REST (V)

The ashes of Héloïse and Abélard rest (i.e. repose) in the same grave, near the Seine in Paris.

“The basis of optical technology rests (i.e. is based on) on the behavior of the infinitesimal packets of radiant energy known as photons.” (High Technology mag.)

“The whole case for the defence rests (i.e. depends) on the evidence of one person.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

Like it or not, the final decision rests with me (i.e. is mine to make).

RESTORE

“The quiet place, the pure air . . will restore you (i.e. bring you back to health) in a few days.”
(Charles Dickens, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“We have to restore (i.e. give back) dignity to all the occupations. There is nothing above anything. A great dinner is as good as Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.”
(Mason Williams)

“The innocent were restored (i.e. reinstated) to their rank and fortunes.” (Gibbon, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

RESTRAIN

Can’t you restrain him from messing up my room?

RESTRAINT

He shows restraint in eating, but not in drinking.

You cannot put any restraint on an inveterate gambler, short of locking him up in jail.
RESTRIBUTE
The athlete’s career was restricted (i.e. limited) by a knee injury. To restrict (i.e. keep) anyone from participating in politics is undemocratic. Laws were passed to restrict (i.e. limit) citizens in their movements. This snobbish club restricts (i.e. limits) memberships to the very rich. You could have been the greatest novelist in America, if you could have come to know just one man who wasn’t restricted (i.e. limited) to boozing and womanizing. “Please quit saving Spain and start saving Ernest Hemingway.” (Sinclair Lewis, about the book To have and have not)

RESULT (V)
“In language, a beautiful and desirable simplicity is but an appearance, and results (i.e. arises) only from the good order and sovereign economy of the various parts of speech.” (Anatole France) His profligate spending will result (i.e. end) in bankruptcy. “The huge round stone resulting with a bound (i.e. rebounding) thunders impetuous down.” (Pope, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

RETAIN
The lawyer was retained (i.e. engaged) by the company for an annual fee. The author decided to retain (i.e. keep) chapter four in his final draft. Some species have retained (i.e. held on to) primordial characteristics throughout billions of years of evolution.

RETIRE
The company president decided to retire (i.e. resign from the business world) at the age of 65. “The task of a rear guard retiring (i.e. retreating) before a victorious enemy . . is one of the most delicate of operations.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary) The athlete retired from (i.e. quit) the race. The prima donna retired in high dudgeon from the operatic production.

“Diogenes retired into a tub and St. Jerome into a cave.” (G.K. Chesterton, Generally Speaking) “Shakespeare . . retired (i.e. withdrew) to his native place before he was old.” (L. Hunt, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

RETRIEVE
He tried desperately to retrieve (i.e. recall) his wife’s face from his failing memory.

RETROACTIVE
He received compensation retroactive to the date of his application.

RETURN (V)
“Weight is returned (i.e. given back) for weight to any person who carries their gold and silver to the Tower.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary) When did you return (i.e. come back) from England? “The only way to eliminate the greenhouse problem completely would be to return (i.e. restore) the world to its pre-industrial state.” (Andrew C. Revkin, Discover mag.)

RE-USE
“If organisms could not re-use old material in strikingly new ways, how could evolution ever produce anything novel.” (Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., Oct. ‘96)

REVEAL
“DNA, an enormously complex molecule that has revealed less than 1 percent of its secrets to geneticists.” (Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind).

REVEL (V)
Stalin seemed to revel in mass murder.

REVENGE (N)
She took revenge on me for all the unhappiness I caused her.

REVENUE
The revenues from this province have declined since 1981.

“Please quit saving Spain and start saving Ernest Hemingway.” (Sinclair Lewis, about the book To have and have not)
“This . . supplied a revenue to the Crown.”  
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**REVERENCE**

His reverence of the Middle Ages is legendary.  
She shows great reverence for Christian beliefs.

**REVIVE**

He revived (i.e. brought back) Lazarus from the grave.  
“There is one problem and only one in the world: to revive (i.e. restore) in people some sense of spiritual meaning.”  
(Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Wartime Writings)  
“Even as a dying coal revives (i.e. flares up again) with the wind.”  
(Shakespeare)

**REVOLVE**

Soon, the juggler had ten plates revolving on swaying poles.  
They thought the sun revolved around (or round) the earth.

**REWARD (N)**

That’s my reward for your being so reliable.  
Why should you not reap the reward of your hard labour?

**REWARD (V)**

I would like to reward you for all your years of faithful service.  
“Service to a just cause rewards the worker with more real happiness and satisfaction than any other venture in life.”  
(Carrie Chapman Catt)

**RHYME (V)**

“The couplet where a stick rhymes to Ecclesiastick.”  
(Steele, Universal Oxford Dictionary)  
Time rhymes with clime.

**RICH**

“Comets are known to be rich in organic matter.”  
(Tom Waters, Discover mag.)

**RID**

“Emotional tears may rid the body of toxic substances . . and relieve stress.”  
(W. H. Frey II, Medical World News/Reader’s Digest)  
“They (Venetian artisans) were the first ones to use manganese to rid glass of its greenish tinge.”  
(Johanne Durocher Norchet, The Gazette, Montreal)

**RIDDANCE**

Good riddance to the whole lot of you!

**RIDE (V)**

“The tradesman . . is ridden (i.e. controlled) by the routine of his craft.”  
(Emerson, World Book Dictionary)  
“The novel rode out of Spain on the horse and donkey of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and the modern short story had its early masters in Russia, France and England. But the hard-boiled detective was born in America.”  
(R.Z. Sheppard, Time mag.)  
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(R.Z. Sheppard, Time mag.)  
“You’re riding for a fall (i.e. heading for trouble), my friend. The youngster loved to ride (i.e. be driven around) in her father’s car.  
The ship rode (i.e. sailed) into port.  
(World book Dictionary)  
“We ride to hounds (i.e. go hunting with the dogs) this afternoon; will you join us?

**RIFE**

“The activity and noise of a city day were rife in the street.”  
(Dickens, Universal Oxford Dictionary)  
“Language rife with rugged maxims hewn from life.”  
(Tennyson, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**RIGHT (N)**

“Leading families claimed proprietary rights (i.e. claims) over early saints.”  
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)  
“Bill of Rights, a Bill declaring the Rights and Liberties of England, and the Succession to the Crown.”  
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)  
“I have no right (i.e. obligation) to maintain idle vagrants.”  
(Smollett, Universal Oxford English Dictionary)
RIPE
These times are ripe for revolution.

RISE (N)
“The capital market’s failure was that it did not anticipate a historically outlandish rise (i.e. increase or jump) in interest rates.” (The Economist, May 28, ’88)
(Umbilical) “cord blood is a rich source of blood cells, (especially) stem cells, the immature cells that after birth reside only in bone marrow and give rise to (i.e. originate) all blood cells.” (Shawna Vogel, Discover mag.)

RISE (V)
“Even the historian who thinks to rise above betrays his secret predilection in his choice of materials, and in the nuances of his adjectives.”
(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)
The townspeople rose up against oppression.
My gorge rises at this unjust edict.
“If your core (body) temperature rises beyond 105 degrees Fahrenheit, you’re talking kidney disfunction, muscle breakdown, disruption of brain functions, even death.” (Eric Adler, Kansas City Star)
The general rose from the ranks on sheer ability.
It was his ambition to rise in the banking world.
The glider rose on a cushion of air.
“U.S. industry rose to world leadership by shamelessly borrowing and refining British and German innovations.”
(Louis S. Richman, Fortune mag.)

RISK (N)
To travel to exotic climates and countries without inoculations is to incur the risk of serious infections, chiefly malaria.
The woman rescued her cat at the risk of her own life.
“If you drive carefully, there is no risk of being fined.”
(World Book Dictionary)
He proved a risk to everyone around him.

RISK (V)
“To risk the certainty of little for the chance of much.”
(Johnson)

RIVAL (N)
We were rivals for the same girl’s hand.
I am the rival of my brother.
There have been few rivals in history to Hitler as a demagogue.

ROB
“No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.” (Edmund Burke)

ROISTER
He roistered happily with the town’s most disreputable elements.

ROLL (VV)
The swarm of skateboarders rolled by the church into and across the square, through the park, over the culvert, down the lane, and under the bridge.

ROOM (N)
“The environment is not in any danger: the threat is that we’ll sour the conditions that support human life. Is there room (i.e. space) for mankind on planet Earth? It’s up to us.” (Gregg Easterbrook, Newsweek mag.)
We need to reserve more rooms (i.e. lodgings) for our guests.
Rooms (i.e. lodgings) to let.
There are ten rooms in that house.

ROOT (V)
“Massive works of intellect do not spring from the abstract workings of the brain and the imagination; they are rooted (i.e. have their roots) in the personality.”
(Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)
The scream rooted (i.e. nailed) her to the spot.
“The reedy mudbanks opened into a broad mall of moored yachts, every one rooted (i.e. anchored) to its own reflection.” (Jonathan Raban, Coasting)
ROUGH
Aren't you being too rough on your sister? She was only trying to help.
That man is being too rough with (i.e. abusive to) his child.

ROUND (V)
She rounded on me in sudden anger.

ROUSE
He was suddenly roused from a deep sleep.

ROUT
The cavalry was routed by the cannonade.
“He is being routed from a stage in Harlem by a group of demonstrators.” (Tom Wolfe)

ROW (V)
I’m just going to row to (i.e. use oars to reach) the island.
“Everyone must row (i.e. stroke) with the oars he has.” (English proverb)
Do you want me to row (i.e. quarrel) with you about (or over) that silly business?

RUDE
You are being very rude about my small mental lapse.
That’s very rude of you, I must say.
Why are you being so rude to me?

RULE (V)
The Supreme Court ruled against the widow’s wish to give her husband a Christian burial.
“The world can only be ruled by fear.” (Adolf Hitler)
“What madness rules in brain-sick men.” (Shakespeare)

RUSSIA (N)
There was a long-standing rupture between them.
You're causing a rupture with your dad.

RUSH (V)
He is rushing across the lobby to greet me.
When the soldiers found themselves badly outnumbered, they began to rush (i.e. make a beeline) for the bridge.
They rushed (i.e. ran) into the house and hid in the closet.
She rushed (i.e. hurried) to the defence of her son.

RUST (V)
Uncoated iron rusts in the rain.
“When the bracken rusted (i.e. turned to the color of rust) on their crags.” (Tennyson)
SACCHARINE
His panegyric on his company president was too saccharine for my taste.

SACRED
Symbols are sacred to tribal peoples.

SACRIFICE (N)
They made a sacrifice of their lives.
“The religion of patriotism: the worship of the Nation as the supreme object of affection: the sacrifice of general unity to local feeling.” (Hilaire Belloc, Richelieu)

SACRIFICE (V)
They're sacrificing their present comfort for their long-term security.
He refused to sacrifice objectivity to the flow of his narrative.

SAD
I'm sad about that turn of events.

SADDLE (V)
Don't saddle me with your problems.

SAFE
I really thought my house was safe against fire.
Granny was safe at home.
Please keep me safe from all harm.
His money was safe in his pocket.
I think it's safe to go on.
The child felt safe with her elder sister.

SAIL (V)
I'm sailing (i.e. leaving by ship) for England tomorrow.
“Then all the great people sailed in state (i.e. went in a dignified manner) from the room.” (C. Bronte, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
They sail (i.e. travel the sea) on a gorgeous yacht.
She sailed (i.e. navigated) solo to Liverpool, then to Amsterdam.

SAKE
“Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.” (Edward Abbey quoted in The Nine Nations of North America)

SALE
The sale of that famous painting was an even more famous scam.
I would have forbidden that sale to her for any of a dozen reasons.

SANCTION (N)
So far, that's the most effective sanction against crime.
I'm sure they will give their sanction for this hospital to be built.

SANGUINE
His character was sanguine by nature.
I'm sanguine of (or about) my chance to win office.

SATE
“Hunger that wouldn't be sated by anything less than a full investigation.” (G. Kendall, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Will ravenous hunger be sated with a meager pill?” (Gregory Jaynes, Life mag.)
He sates his pangs of hunger with junk food.
SATIATE

They satiated them with food and drink.

SATIRE

“He made books out of his intellectual satires against intellectuals.” (Alfred Kazin)
“Their very names are a satire upon all governments.” (Junius Letter, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

SATISFACTION

“I demand satisfaction for all the wrongs you’ve done me. Satisfaction of all desires is not conducive to well-being.” (Eric Fromm, Oxford English Dictionary)

SATISFACTORY

Well, that’s most satisfactory to me.

SATISFY

The committee satisfies itself by inquiry that no wrongdoing has occurred. Will you never be satisfied with what you have?

SATURATE

The bedding was saturated by the rain leaking through the tent.
“One of the most important functions of the nose in modern humans is to modify (wet) the air that we breathe in. Air has to be ninety-percent saturated with water . . by the time it reaches the lungs.” (Robert Franciscus, Discover mag.)

SAVE

I’m saving (i.e. putting money aside) for a rainy day. The smallness of the country saved it from (i.e. spared it) the temptations of aggressive nationalism. I save (i.e. economize) on the return trip.

SAVING (N)

“Potentially huge savings in health-care costs are engendered. One estimate puts medical bills avoided by pollution control (in the U.S.) at $40 billion per year.” (Gregg Easterbrook, Newsweek mag.) And that, my friend, is a saving of almost 30 percent.

SAVOUR, SAVOR

That savours of malice. I savoured (i.e. imparted a flavour to) the rice with saffron.

SAY (V)

“If the makers of technology mean what they say about sophistication, the next stage beyond high tech will be clean tech.” (Gregg Easterbrook, Newsweek mag.) I’ll say this much for you: you’ve got a lot of nerve. Don’t say such terrible things to me. What do you say to (i.e. think of) a walk in the park?

SCAN

“Bars and stripes of the Universal Product Code, or UPC, flag the identity of groceries when scanned by a laser linked to a computer.” (National Geographic)

SCANTY

He’s scanty of hair and very pale.

SCARE (V)

I was scared by the slightest noise. He’s scared of his own shadow. He will scare him to death.

SCATTER

“Lymph nodes (are) bits of tissue scattered (i.e. strewn) about (or around) the body where white blood cells and other immune cells exchange the signals that promote healthy immune function.” (Daniel C. Weaver, Discover mag.)

Those billions of galaxies scattered across the far reaches of the visible universe.
“The small shot . . scattered (i.e. dispersed) among them.” (DeFoe, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

She wants me to scatter (i.e. sprinkle) her ashes around the backyard.
Pieces of the plane were scattered (i.e. dispersed) over the countryside.
“”The ground was scattered (i.e. strewn) with elephant’s teeth.” (DeFoe, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

SCEPTICAL
I’m very sceptical about that.
Aren’t you sceptical of his sudden friendliness?

SCHEDULE (V)
He’s scheduling that for next week.
The ship is scheduled to make five cruises this season.

SCHOOL (V)
How about schooling (i.e. instructing) her in the right procedures?
Both boys were schooled (i.e. educated) at home.

SCOFF (V)
Only the ignorant scoff at the religious beliefs of others.

SCORE (V)
The ground was scored (i.e. marked) by a hayrick.
The concerto was scored (i.e. composed) for two pianos.
“Scoring (i.e. drawing a line through) the lease from corner to corner with his pen.”
(H. Martineau, Oxford English Dictionary)
Her name had been scored on (i.e. carved in) the bark of a tree.
His face was scored with (i.e. deeply etched by) worry lines.
He was severely scored (i.e. criticized) for his antisocial behaviour.
“In debate he was quick to score off (i.e. get the better of) an opponent.”
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

SCORN (V)
His speech was marked by disagreement with and scorn for his opponent’s position.
“A Briton’s scorn of arbitrary chains.”
(Cowper, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

SCORNFUL
I am very scornful of his latest claims.

SCOURGE (V)
He was scourged by the guard with a whip.

SCOWL (V)
She scowled at the face in her mirror.
He scowled on her suggestion to dine early.

SCRAMBLE (N)
There was a scramble for the door.
The scramble of European nations for parts of Africa in the 19th century led to war.
“A brisk scramble (i.e. ramble) to the top.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)

SCRAMBLE (VV)
They scrambled through the house, up the stairs, into the bedroom, and over and under the bed.
You had better scramble for cover.
The baby scrambled to his feet.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SCRATCH (V)
The berry pickers were scratched (i.e. wounded superficially) by the bushes.
His name was scratched off (i.e. eliminated from) the list.
The hen scratched (i.e. clawed) the ground for the corn.
The child scratched (i.e. scored) her name on her pencil box.
They were reduced to scratching (i.e. raking) the earth with their fingernails.

SCREECH (V)
She was screeching like a banshee.
The old car screeched to a stop.
SCRUNGE (V)
“They scrounged for new products.” (Time mag.)
“Employers are scrounging technical whizzes from wherever they can find them.” (The Economist)
He scrounged off her friends.

SCULPTURE (V)
The figure had been sculptured (i.e. carved) by a great artist.
They who sculptured (i.e. carved) loveliness in stone.
Sculptured (i.e. carved) on the frieze was the story of the Nativity.
There’s an ‘iron age’ factory in New York whose fire escapes are sculptured (i.e. decorated) with the figures of athletes.

SEAL (V)
He sealed his letter with wax.

SEARCH (N)
The search after knowledge is a lifetime occupation.
“For decades astronomers have been searching for lasers in space . . . clouds of gas where the conditions are right for light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation.” (Discover mag., Dec. 1995)
Ahab roamed the seas in search of his enemy, the white whale, Moby Dick.

SEARCH (VV)
A worker bee, searching for nectar, may visit 800 blossoms in one hour.
The investigator began to search into every detail of her testimony.
They searched for her in the house, under the porch, even inside the fireplace.
Note: As for all VVs, this versatile verb can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SEASON (N)
There was even a season for volunteer work.
“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!” (John Keats)
SECURE (V)
The burghers of the medieval town felt safe in the knowledge that its fortifications secured (i.e. safeguarded) it against attack.
The money was secured (i.e. backed up) by bonds.
She was able to secure (i.e. obtain) tickets for the ballet.
To what extent is the commercial venture secured (i.e. protected) from loss?

SECURITY
A good alarm system is security (i.e. protection) against thieves.
A pension fund offers security for (i.e. freedom of care in) one's old age.

SEE (VV)
Would you see after (i.e. look out for) my things?
He will see you after business hours.
It takes human eyes one hour to adapt completely to seeing in the dark.
With uncanny ability, the psychiatrist was able to see into the patient's hidden motives.
Much work remains to be done, but he promises to see to (i.e. do) it.
I will see (i.e. escort) you to the door.
“What seems to distinguish (Thomas Gold) from the average scientist . . is an uncanny ability to see through the surface of phenomena to their basic workings.”
(David Osborne, National Geographic)
That should see you through (i.e. meet your needs) till tomorrow.
“Viruses are 10 to 100 times as small as the typical bacterium, and in fact far smaller than the wavelength of visible light. That makes them too diminutive to be seen with the most powerful optical microscopes.”
(Claudia Wallis, Time mag.)
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SEEK
They professed to be seeking after (i.e. searching for) wisdom and truth.
A clear answer is what I seek from (i.e. ask of) you.
A fitting tribute to the regiment was being sought of (i.e. asked of) the President.
“Every cell in your body is seeking (i.e. looking for) fulfillment through joy, beauty, love, and appreciation.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)

SEIZE
The parent was seized by remorse for abandoning his child.
They would seize (i.e. fasten) on (or upon) any excuse to get drunk.
She was suddenly seized (i.e. frozen) with terror.

SELECT (V)
He was selected by the draft board for military duty.
I hope the director will select me for the next play.
“Antibody response (immune system) occurs when one antibody type is selected from millions of pre-existing antibody types . . That cell type then rapidly multiplies, so that the body can mount a swift and forceful response to its invaders.”
(Sir Macfarlane Burnet)
She hopes you enjoy the strawberries; they were selected with care.

SELL (V)
“In the (celebrated Children’s Crusade) . . thousands of children were sold, the boys as slaves, the girls into brothels in North Africa, and even in Europe at Brindisi. None ever reached the Holy Land.”
(James Brady, Advertising Age)
“Cheap oil, and the billions of barrels extracted and sold at prices that actually dropped in value between the 1950s and the 1970s, completely subsidized the rise of industrial societies in Europe and America.”
(J.-J. Servan-Schreiber, The World Challenge)
His paintings sold for peanuts (i.e. very little) before he died.
I sold my watch to a friend last night.

SEND (VV)
The evangelist was sent among the people to convert them.
I sent the letter by air mail.

“Without the (the blood-brain barrier), the simple act of eating or exercising would send so many hormones and neurotransmitter-like chemicals into the brain that the neurons would fire uncontrollably, resulting in seizures and even death.” (Natalie Angier, Discover mag.)

The little girl was sent on an errand.

“Years later, R. Buckminster Fuller was to send a famous cable to the Japanese artist Isamu Noguchi explaining Einstein's key equation in exactly 249 words, a masterpiece of compression.” (Paul Johnson, A history of the modern world)

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SENIOR
I am senior to you by a decade.

SENSIBILITY
Although endowed with every blessing, she lacked sensibility (i.e. appreciation) of her good fortune.
Wordsworth possessed a fine sensibility to (i.e. awareness of) the beauties of nature.

SENSIBLE
I am deeply sensible of this honour, your lordship.

SENSITIVE
“Males are more sensitive to bright light and can detect more subtle differences in light. Women have a more acute sense of smell and are more sensitive to loud noises.” (Omni mag., May '91)

Human brains have no nerve endings sensitive to pain (the pain of a headache comes not from the brain, but from the constriction of blood vessels in the scalp. (Sharon Begley with John Carey and Ray Sawhill, Newsweek mag., 1983)

SENSITIVITY
Dickens revealed great sensitivity to the suffering of the poor in Victorian England.

SENTENCE (V)
Writer Edmund Wilson believed that life was one elaborately constructed sentence after another, and that he had been sentenced to the sentence.
I sentence you to ten years in prison.

SENTIMENT
Do you have any sentiment for the past at all?
“A sentiment of bitterness rose in his mind against the government.”
(Sir Walter Scott, Oxford English Dictionary)

SEPARATE
“The United States and Britain are two nations separated by a common language.”
(George Bernard Shaw, Time mag.)

“Semi-porous plastic films are being engineered to separate virtually any type of molecule from a complex solution.” (Gordon Graff)

“The illusion that we are separate from one another is an optical delusion of our subconscious.” (Einstein)
A custom of the tribe was to separate the hair into braided strands.

SEQUEL
The sequel of his visit was death.
There should be a sequel to that play.

SERVE (V)
“The horse . . was of incalculable military value, serving (i.e. acting) as the tank, the truck and the jeep of warfare until the twentieth century.”
(Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)

“His grown-up sons . . served at the counter inside.”
(R. Campbell, World Book Dictionary)

“His monasteries were served (i.e. attended to) by priests from without.” (K.H. Digby, World Book Dictionary)

“During World War I, nearly a fifth of Germany's Jews served in the German armed forces (92,000, with 78 percent at the front and 12,000 killed in action). Eleven thousand five hundred were awarded Germany's Iron Cross.” (Hirsch Goldberg, The Jewish Connection)
To serve on a jury is one of the obligations of citizenship.
“Instead of stopping the movement, the opposition’s tactics had only served to give (i.e. was instrumental in giving) it greater momentum.”
(M. W. King, Oxford English Dictionary)
In his youth, he served under two flags.
The clerk served (i.e. waited on) her customers with courtesy and skill.
“He had served with distinction in the war against Napoleon.” (Lytton Strachey, World Book Dictionary)

SERVICE (N)
“He was allowed the service of a boy.”
(Universal Oxford Dictionary)
My services to this company have been forgotten.

SET (VV)
The director was set against (i.e. opposed to) having the actress play the leading role.
The old woman set her house in order (i.e. made all the necessary arrangements) and prepared for death.
The dogs were set upon (or on) (i.e. ordered to attack) the criminal.
They are set apart by red hair.
She set forth (i.e. started out) with grim determination.
He set himself up (i.e. posed) as an expert on antiques.
Because of the boy’s tragic deformity, he was set apart (i.e. isolated) from the other children.
The gem was set (i.e. embedded) in gold.
A small statue had been set (i.e. placed) on top of the bookcase.
The youth’s bad behaviour was set down to (i.e. blamed on) ignorance.
The agent set (i.e. established) the price of the house well under its true value.
In self-defense, the man set (i.e. unleashed) his fierce dog upon the intruder.
The rules were set down (i.e. detailed) with unmistakable clarity.
He set out (i.e. started out) to find the dogs.
The two boxers set to (i.e. began fighting) with a will.

The craftsman was instructed to set (i.e. encrust) the bracelet with diamonds.
Note: The word ‘set’ has over 200 different meanings. It’s impossible to cover them all with examples, except for the most common usages. However, in the vast majority of cases, the verb set is transitive and requires no preposition. So the examples set are transitive and require no preposition.

SETTLE (VV)
“Biology has settled for observing how life works, without asking often enough what life actually is.”
(The Economist)
“There is no businessman sharper than your Indian (from India), when given half a chance to make a fortune . . Wherever they settle (i.e. alight) in the world outside . . Indian capitalists easily outsmart the local competition.” (Jan Morris, Journeys)
The young couple gradually settled into their new way of life.
We settled (i.e. agreed) on (or upon) a method of dealing with the problem.
A heavy fog settled over (i.e. covered) the countryside.
Under threat of legal action, the company settled (i.e. came to an understanding) with the union.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SEVER (VV)
The judge was reluctant to sever (i.e. part) the child from her mother.
Watch me sever (i.e. cut) that pumpkin in two.
The party severed (i.e. divided) into two political factions.
“King William was able to sever (i.e. cut) diplomatic relations with France.”
(W.S. Churchill, Oxford English Dictionary)

SEVERE
You are being altogether too severe for my liking.
Aren’t you being too severe in your judgment?
He was terribly severe on the poor man. (British)
She was too severe with her brood.
SHAKE (V)
The bare branches shook in the wind.
The hurricane is shaking his home to pieces.
“Alone among the animals, he (man) is shaken with the beautiful madness called laughter.”
(G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man)

SHAMBLE (VV)
She shambled across the floor, then settled into her wheelchair.
The two shambled down (or up) the crooked lane.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SHAME (V)
Leave it to me; I'll shame him into coming to visit his mother.
I shamed him into a confession.
He was shamed out of his bad habits by his hero's example.
I will shame him with photos of his misconduct.

SHAPE (V)
He is shaping (i.e. forming) some snow into a ball.
“The Milky Way is shaped (i.e. formed) like a phonograph record with a tennis ball stuck in the center.”
(Marcia Bartusiak, Discover mag.)
The employee could not shape up (i.e.measure up) to the demands of the job.

SHARE (N)
If I can't have a share of your fortune, at least I can have a share in your enjoyment of it.

SHARE (V)
She made sure I shared in her good fortune.
“Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others.”
(Robert Louis Stevenson)

SHATTER
The whole window shattered into pieces.
That stuff shatters like glass.
“In the seventeenth century . . iconoclastic Puritans . . shattered their way through the nation's (England's) cathedrals.”
(The Economist)

SHEATHE (V)
The deep-sea diver was sheathed in rubber from head to toe.
Why don't you sheathe the roof with copper?

SHEEN
The sideboard glowed with the sheen of old silver.
The child's hair had a golden sheen on (or upon) it.
Buff it till there's a sheen to it.

SHELTER (N)
They ran for shelter beneath the eaves of the church.
“This the true nature of home — it is the place of Peace; the shelter not only from injury, but from all terror, doubt and division.”
(John Ruskin)
We found shelter from the rain under a porch.
The fugitives found shelter in a barn.
The boys built a snow fort and took shelter within its walls.

SHELTER (V)
We sheltered the calves beneath (or under) the porch.
Sheltered by his diplomatic immunity, the representative acted without concern for the consequences.
She sheltered her flowers from the icy wind.
They sheltered the vintage car in a barn.

SHIELD (V)
The protein transferrin shields tissues from iron's harmful effects.

SHIFT (N)
There's a shift in the wind.
SHIFT (V)
You’re being over-protective; let her shift (i.e. fend) for herself.
He shifted (i.e. switched) from one extreme to the other in a matter of minutes.
I am shifting (i.e. moving) this stack of papers over to the window.

SHINE (N)
That’s quite a shine (i.e. gloss) you put on your shoes.
He took a shine (i.e. a liking) to me.

SHINE (V)
“Nor did he shine (i.e. excel) in conversation, as Italians must.” (Alfred Kazin)
At last, fortune is beginning to shine on (i.e. favour) her.
“IT is galaxies that shine out from the gravitational potholes in our cosmos.” (Nigel Henbest and Heather Couper, The Guide to the Galaxy)
“The light from the candlesticks shone upon her golden head.” (I. Murdock, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Few people know that the moon can create rainbows . . . so they rarely look for them on nights when a full moon shines (i.e. glows) through a light mist.” (James C. Simmons, American Way/Reader’s Digest)

SHIP (V)
Shipping cargo around the Cape can still be a dicey venture.
“I shipped (i.e. embarked) at Rye, in Sussex.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
As far as I know that order was shipped from Atlanta last Saturday.
Between 1870 and 1880, approx. 20 million “bison were slaughtered, and their bones shipped to a factory in Michigan (U.S.A.) where they were ground into fertilizer.” (Hollie Watson, The Chronicle, Montreal)
The army reinforcements were shipped through the Suez Canal.

SHOP (V)
I am shopping for a new pair of pants at the local mall.

She shops in halter and shorts late at night; that’s asking for trouble in this neighbourhood.
We shopped for high-tech products in about 20 countries.
Are you shopping with your mother this week?

SHORT (A)
Isn’t this suit rather short in the sleeves?
I’ve been short of breath lately.
I’m afraid he is short on talent.

SHORTEN
“Floating-point operations per second is a measure of arithmetic speed (in computers) that is usually shortened to ‘flops’.” (Russell Mitchell/John W. Verity, BusinessWeek mag.)

SHOT (N)
“Even land viruses hang out in the sea, patiently waiting in limbo for a shot at their targets.” (David H. Freedman, Discover mag.)
Although his remark was a shot in the dark, it was right on target.

SHOW (N)
A show of hands revealed support for the resolution.

SHOW (VV)
Her paintings were shown at the museum.
She showed by her manner that she was displeased.
Don’t let your anger show in your face.
Please show (i.e. usher) him into the house.
Under these trying conditions, his abilities do not show to advantage (i.e. shine forth).
“ITs bright surface showed against (i.e. reflected on) the dark material of her dress.” (I. Murdock, Oxford English Dictionary)
“We are showing (i.e. performing) at the Orpheum” (World Book Dictionary)
He showed (i.e. revealed) his hostility to the proposal by his manner.
What do you have to show for (i.e. what are the results of) all that work?
“I had meant to . . pivot about and show (i.e. display) myself from every side to papa.”
(M. Keane, Oxford English Dictionary)
“A fellow in white showed (i.e. led) us into the ward where Lewis was.” (J. Dickey, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Small ruffians . . had . . bottoms showing through ragged trousers.” (J. Moore, Oxford English Dictionary)
Show that ring to me.
“Her imperfect and unequal gait . . showed to peculiar disadvantage.” (Scott, World Book Dictionary)
Her evening gown did not show to advantage (i.e. look its best) in the poor light.
“If the observer is ‘above’ the sun, say, in an airplane, the rainbow will show up (i.e. appear) as a perfect circle.”
(James C. Simmons: American Way/Reader’s Digest)
The athlete failed to show up (i.e. present himself) for the contest.
The singer did not show up (i.e. perform) well in the competition.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

**SHOWDOWN**

“A showdown with a virulent pathogen (bacterium or virus) can require as much energy as a showdown with a rhino. Immune activity does not come cheap.”
( Discover mag.)

**SHOWER (V)**

Then flower petals will shower down on her.
They showered ticker tape onto the returning soldiers.
“Honours began to shower upon him.”
(N. Annan, Oxford English Dictionary)
He showered his fellow-actors with his spittle.

**SHREWDNESS**

“There was in Beth a mixture of the novelist’s narcissism and infernal shrewdness about others.” (Alfred Kazin)

**SHRINK (V)**

“In (what was) the Soviet Union, the area covered by the Aral Sea has shrunk by 40% since 1960.”
(The Economist mag.)
Indian chiefs taught their warriors not to shrink from pain or danger.
The cloth shrunk to half its size.
My sweatshirt shrunk in the wash.
My socks shrunk with each washing.

**SHROUD (V)**

“Like all (electric) currents, (corrosion) shrouds (i.e. wraps) itself in a magnetic field.” (The Economist)

**SHRUG (V)**

The doctor shrugged tiredly into his white coat.

**SHUDDER (V)**

They shuddered at the sight of the utter devastation.
She shuddered with fright.

**SHUT**

The doors of the college were shut against any who disagreed with its official policy.
The farmer shut his cattle in the barn for the night.
We were unable to shut our eyes to the grim facts of the scandal.
Because he did not submit his application in time, he was shut out of (i.e. barred from) the competition.

**SHUTTLE (V)**

“The little steamboat . . shuttled back and forth across the lake.” (G. Huntington, Oxford English Dictionary)
“Perdita was . . shuttled back and forth from Kenwin to London.” (B. Guest, Oxford English Dictionary)
The protein transferrin shuttles iron through the bloodstream.
Mission control shuttled two astronauts to the Russian space station.

**SHY (A)**

She's shy (i.e. wary) of strangers.
The result was only 3 points shy (i.e. short) of theoretical perfection.
He is shy on (i.e. lacking) good manners.
He's always been shy (i.e. bashful) with people.

**SHY (V)**

That horse shies (i.e. rears) at its own shadow.
Most men still shy from (i.e. avoid) kitchen chores.

**SICK**

I'm sick at (or of) the sight of you. (i.e. you make me ill.)
They were sick (i.e. yearning) for their homeland.
The refuges arrived sick (i.e. ill) in mind and body.
We're sick (i.e. tired) of the same menu every day of the week.
She was sick to death of his inane remarks.
He was sick with fear.

**SIDE (V)**

In the event of a party split, they may side with or against the radical wing.

**SIEGE**

They laid siege to the town at least three times.
The siege of the city lasted many long months.

**SIGHT (N)**

Just wait till she catches sight of him.
The sight of you makes me sick.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

“The significance of that concert for what’s going on here tonight is incalculable.” (Patrick Watson)

**SIGNPOST**

“X-ray indications of gas across the top of the liver and under the diaphragm (are) a clear signpost to any perforated ulcer.” (Arthur Hailey, The Final Diagnosis)

**SIMILAR**

That's very similar to your last painting.
“Computers’ speed and complexity double every 18 months, and this will probably continue until computers have a similar complexity to the human brain.” (Stephen Hawking, world-famous scientist, London Daily Telegraph, Jan., 2000)

**SIMILARITY**

There is a similarity between the needs and habits of infancy and extreme old age.
In demonstrating the similarity of sound to light, the teacher wished to stress the dynamic nature of the universe.
A family bears a striking similarity to a state.

**SIMULTANEOUS**

The ringing of the church bell was simultaneous with my ringing of the door bell.

**SIMULTANEously**

The lightning strike happened simultaneously with the clap of thunder.

**SIN (V)**

“To sin against a fellow human creature is also to sin against God.” (G.K. Chesterton)

**SINCERE**

She was sincere in her belief that it was all for the best.

**SINK (V)**

The ship struck a rock and slowly sank beneath the waves (i.e. foundered).
The sun sinks (i.e. goes down) in the west.
The city sank into wickedness.
The beast sank its fangs (i.e. bit) into my arm. He sank to (i.e. collapsed onto) the floor under the weight of his woes.

SIT
Churchill sat (i.e. posed) for Karsh's most famous portrait. It behooves us not to sit in judgment of (i.e. judge) others. “When you plant a bamboo tree, for the first four years nothing happens. A bulb sits (i.e. lies buried) in the ground for four years, sending everything down into its root structure. Then, in the fifth year, it shoots up to 80 feet.” (Chinese proverb)
The old couple liked to sit near (or by) the fire and chat about bygone days.

“On the highest throne in the world, man sits on his arse.” (Montaigne)
The congregation found it hard to sit through (i.e. endure) their pastor's sermons.
A kind soul will sit with a neighbour (i.e. keep him or her company) in times of trouble.

SIT - SLOW

The prisoner slashed at the guard with a knife. He was slashed (i.e. cut to ribbons) with a scourge.

SLATED
He's slated (i.e. destined) for a fall. The building is slated (i.e. scheduled) to be completed by 1999.

SLEEP (VV)
Most people are able to sleep at night. Bats sleep by day and hunt for food by night. “How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!” (Shakespeare)
They slept in full battle gear, and with their helmets on. I slept under the bridge that night.

GLIDE (VV)
I slid the money across the table. The wheels-up plane slid along the runway. I slid the puck by the defence. He slid down the hill and into the pond. Go on, slide it past the post. “In a strike-slip fault (San Andreas), plates move sideways. In a thrust fault (such as Davis's), one slides under the other. An earthquake results when the plates lock and then break free” (Mark B. Roman, Discover mag.)

SLIP (VV)
“Transparent, bristling with weapons and possessing a Houdini-like ability to slip between other cells, the white cells are the body's chief fighters” (against disease). (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)
She slipped down the steps, breaking her arm. I want to slip (i.e. change) into something comfortable. He slipped on a banana peel and fell heavily. The spy somehow managed to slip past the sentry. They are slipping through the curtains onto the stage. She slipped gratefully under the covers.

SLOW (A)
Although slow in (or of) speech, his mind worked quickly.
We should be slow to anger and tolerant of human frailty.

SLUR (N)
There's a bit of a slur (i.e. a defect) in his speech.
You're casting a slur (i.e. disparaging remark) on (or upon) his character.

SMART (V)
The boy scouts were made to smart (i.e. feel remorse) for negligence in losing their equipment.
The firemen's eyes are smarting (i.e. stinging) from the intense smoke.
“This rankled and smarted (i.e. festered) in her breast, like a poisoned arrow.” (Charles Dickens)
The slaves smarted (i.e. suffered) under the yoke of the pharaoh's tyranny.

SMASH (V)
The vessel smashed against the rocks.
“NASA (has) revealed the chilling truth: at best, the crew of the doomed shuttle (the Challenger) knew, if only for a few seconds, that something was terribly wrong. At worst, they remained conscious for two minutes and 45 seconds, until the crew compartment, still largely intact, smashed into the Atlantic.”
(Micheal D. Lemonick, Time mag.)
He smashed (i.e. banged) his fist on the table.
The sculpture had been smashed to pieces.

SMELL (V)
The administrator could smell trouble from an angry community.
The great open reading room somehow always smelled of fresh varnish.
We could smell whisky on his breath.
The deal smelt to high heaven.
“Snakes smell with their tongues.”
(David Louis, Fascinating Facts)

SMILE (V)
The baby smiled at her mother.
She smiled into my eyes.

Thinking of her forthcoming vacation, the secretary smiled to herself.
Let us hope the sun smiles on our picnic.
Fortune has smiled upon him since his arrival in this country.

SMITE
“I am so deeply smitten thro' (through) the helm That without help I cannot last till morn.” (Tennyson)
He was smitten with (or by) her beauty.

SMOTHER
The soft music was smothered (i.e. stifled) beneath the roar of city traffic.
The child actor felt smothered (i.e. overwhelmed) by excessive public adulation.
The whole room was smothered in (i.e. filled with) flowers.
She smothered (i.e. covered) her baby with kisses.
He smothered (i.e. suffocated) his wife with a pillow.

SNAP (V)
This guard dog will snap at (i.e. try to bite) any intruder.
Be careful.
That tree branch will surely snap (i.e. break) under your weight.
Her eyes snapped (i.e. flashed) with anger.

SNARL (V)
The senator is snarling (i.e. growling angrily) at the witness.
“The human desire for security . . can so easily become snarled (i.e. ensnared) by panic.” (O.E.D.)
We became snarled (i.e. entangled) in the traffic.
Grandmother's knitting snarled (i.e. became entangled) into knots.

SNEER (V)
The sisters sneered at (i.e. looked down on) anyone not as privileged as themselves.
SNEEZE (V)
He dared to sneeze (i.e. sneer) at my offer.
The little girl sneezed into his large handkerchief.

SNIFF (V)
The dog sniffed around the building as if searching for something.
He sniffed at the bottle, then drank it down.
“It is not only Rome that sniffs heresy in independent thought or action.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
The bloodhounds sniffed through the dense brush till they caught the scent of their prey.

SNIFF (A)
Snug as a bug in a rug. (Old saying which means feeling very comfortable.)
“The children were tucked all snug in their beds.”
The town lay snug under its blanket of snow.
Snug within its cave, the bear hibernated.

SOAK (V)
The occupants of the sailboat were soaked by the squall.
She soaks in the bathtub till she is as wrinkled as a prune.
The sherry is soaking into the trifle.
The rain soaked through the overhanging branches.

SOAR (VV)
A plane soars above the clouds.
The mighty rocket thundered, then soared into space.
The eagle is soaring over the mountain.
The towers of the great cathedral soared to heaven.
The flames soared up in a sudden gust of wind.
Her mood soared with the change in her circumstances.

SOLACE (N)
Money is a solace for the loss of youth.
He found solace in the promise that she would come home soon.
Well that’s a solace to me.

SOLUBLE
It’s even soluble in milk.

SOLUTION
She wanted a solution by that evening.
“For every problem, there is a solution that is simple, plausible and wrong.” (Otto, Bishop of Bansberg)
The simple solution for him is to stop drinking.
I want a solution of (or to) that problem by tomorrow.

SOP (V)
The boy is sopping the doughnut in his hot chocolate.
“The water just sops through the turf.” (The Oxford Universal Dictionary)
The floor was sopped with waste from the plugged drain.

SORE
You’re either sore about something or at me.
The writer’s eyes were sore from overwork.
The athlete’s feet were sore with overexertion.

SORRY
I’m sorry about that.
She was actually sorry for me.
They were sorry to hear that.

SORT (V)
The books had been sorted into six categories.
I am sorting through all that mess.
The weather sorted (i.e. harmonized) well with his present mood.

SOUND (V)
“His real purpose was to sound (i.e. query) the . . governor about the political situation.”
(J. Carey, Oxford English Dictionary)
“A gun sounded (i.e. boomed) from the bank.”
(A. Schlee, Oxford English Dictionary)
Some of the compositions sound (i.e. echo) like pastiches of past composers.
“The music . . sounded (i.e. reverberated) in his head with a steely tone.”
(J. Steinbeck, Oxford English Dictionary)
The reporter sounded me out (i.e. queried me) on the subject, but I disclosed nothing.
“The street sounds (i.e. reverberates) to the soldiers’ tread.” (H.E. Housman, Oxford English Dictionary)

SOURCE (N)
“He cannot find any source for his nagging doubts.”
(George Garrett, Death of a Fox)
Can you find the source of those rumours?
“Religion was an anchor and a source of strength and guidance.” (E. Roosevelt, O.E.D.)

SOW (V)
The seeds of conflict were sown (i.e. planted) in an ancient injustice.
Why don’t you sow (i.e. seed) the whole field with daisies?

SPAR (V)
You’re sparring with me (i.e. contesting my words) again.
Why spar (i.e. joust) with windmills.

SPARKLE (V)
The lake is sparkling in the sun.
A diamond necklace sparkled on her bosom.
The river sparkles through the countryside.
The cast of the musical sparkled with energy and verve.

SPEAK (VV)
The member of the caucus said he intended to speak against the bill, and without notes.
Although her views were controversial, the sociologist was often invited to speak at meetings about social problems.
“Children have a fairly easy time learning a second language if they hear it spoken frequently before puberty, allowing them the chance to speak it themselves.”
(Geoffrey Montgomery, Discover mag.)
He was speaking for (i.e. on behalf of) the classical world against its barbarian invaders.
She spoke from the depths of her sorrow.

“One can never speak enough of (i.e. extol enough) the virtues, the dangers, the power of shared laughter.”
(Françoise Sagan)
The professor has read widely and is ready to speak on (i.e. discuss) any topic.
If I speak to the dog, he obeys instantly.
The M.P. caught the Speaker’s eye and spoke to (i.e. addressed) the question.
“The stories spoke to (i.e. were related to) the difficulties with his father and to his feelings after the death of a brother.” (Robert Wright, Time mag.)
Speak with her and try to change her mind.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SPECIAL
You’re very special to me.

SPECIALIZE, SPECIALISE
“Paul Goodman . . specialized in the short, sharp, jabbing, personal style even when he wrote about housing problems.” (Alfred Kazin)
The factory’s assembly line has been specialized into a dozen different operations.

SPECIFIC
You had better be very specific to the question.

SPECULATE
He speculated (i.e. gambled) in stocks and bonds all his life.
It is foolish to speculate on (i.e. try to guess) the length of one’s life.

SPECULATION
There’s a lot of speculation (i.e. conjecture) about that just now.
Speculation in (i.e. buying and selling of) stocks and bonds is growing by leaps and bounds.
Speculation on (i.e. trying to guess) the length of one’s life is a waste of time.
SPEED (VV)
He is speeding across the state to his ailing mother.
They speed along this road, then cut through the park.
“We sped along . . . at 50 miles an hour.”
(Scott Fitzgerald, O.E.D.)
He sped down the road, around the bend and out of sight.
We were speeded in a taxi towards a hotel.
He loved speeding through the night.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SPEND
The millionaire spends his wealth for the good of the community.
“In 1970, U.S. drug companies spent $4,500 in advertising per doctor to reach each of the 350,000 practitioners.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)
“Money spent on ourselves may be a millstone about the neck; spent on others, it may give us wings like eagles.” (Raymond Hitchcock)

SPEW
She spewed the champagne all over her dress.
The yellow press is spewing invectives at the social reformers.
“Sulphur and nitrogen oxides spew from power plants and cars, producing the acid rain that is destroying our lakes and trees.” (Robert Keating, Omni mag.)

SPILL (V)
The rats spilled from the stricken ship onto the dock like an unfurling carpet.
The invaders spilled (i.e. poured) through the mountain pass and laid waste the countryside.

SPIT (V)
She spat at his portrait on the wall.
How can I not hit him? He just spat in my face.
“One new study . . . discovered that an exploding star 200,000 light-years from Earth is spitting huge amounts of oxygen into space.”
(Alexandra Witze, Dallas Morning News)
The boy spat over the neighbour’s fence.

SPRING (V)
She parachuted beyond the landing zone and splashed (i.e. fell with a splash) into the lake.
A passing car splashed (i.e. splattered) mud on her new dress.
You’re splashing paint all over me.

SPONGE (V)
The name had been sponged (i.e. wiped) from the blackboard.
You’ve been sponging on (i.e. exploiting) me since last June.
She sponges (i.e. moistens) her cheeks with cold water.

SPRAY (V)
Lethal chemicals are spraying from the wrecked truck.
The hose suddenly sprays water into the air.
“60 to 90 percent of the chemicals sprayed on crops are used only to beautify produce, not to improve its quality.” (Cathy Spencer, Omni mag.)
They’re spraying chemicals all over the countryside.
The painting was sprayed with a fixative.

SPREAD (VV)
“A quarter of a billion years ago . . . volcanic eruptions in Siberia disgorged more lava than a million Mount Saint Helenses, enough to form a layer ten feet deep if it were spread around the globe.” (Discover mag., Dec. 1995)
Rumors were spread by the refugees fleeing from the war zone.
The news spread from one village to the next.
“In zero-g (no gravity) space flight, body fluids spread more evenly into the upper extremities. The result is stuffy sinuses, puffy eyes, and shrunken legs.” (David Noland, Discover mag.)
The children spread (i.e. smeared) the honey on their toast.
“In August 1986, bubbles of carbon dioxide accumulating at the bottom of the lake (Lake Nyos in
Cameroon). Burst to the surface; a blanket of dense carbon dioxide and water vapor spread over nearby villages, killing cattle and 1,700 people.” (Discover mag., Oct. 1988)

Low morale has spread throughout the workforce.

“Originating on the eastern rim of the Mediterranean nearly 2,000 years ago, Christianity spread rapidly to Syria, and thence Paul took it to his native land, present-day Turkey.” (Richard N. Ostling, Time mag.)

The fire spread with great speed.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SPRING (VV)

Most people would spring at the opportunity to tour the world.

A strong friendship had sprung up between them.

“The notions of political and economic freedom both spring from the workings of the Christian conscience as a historical force; and it is thus no accident that all the implantations of freedom throughout the world have ultimately a Christian origin”.

(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

The new growth had sprung up over the ashes of the old forest.

The doe sprang to its feet and vanished in the woods.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

SPUR (N)

The decision was made on the spur of the moment.

It proved a spur (i.e. prod) to me.

SPUR (V)

“He spurred his horse into the waves.”

(Gibbon, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

“Ire, that spurred him on to deeds unjust.”

(Cary, The Oxford Universal Dictionary)

He is spurging his steed to a last, desperate effort.

SPURT (N)

A spurt of steam came from the engine.

SPURT (V)

Oil from the car’s engine suddenly spurts out at the mechanic.

“I walked about wartime London . . with that everlasting cold damp on my skin and the sweet smell of soft coal spurting into the air from all the chimneys.”

(Alfred Kazin)

Imports from Asia spurted to unprecedented levels.

SPY (V)

I have a feeling I am being spied upon by agents

He spies for a huge conglomerate.

Stop spying into my affairs.

I hated the way my neighbour was forever spying on me through her curtains.

I spy with my little eye...

SQUARE (V)

“This squares with some reports from Russia of artificial diamonds that can scratch real ones.”

(The Economist mag.)

SQUEAL (V)

“Ghosts did shriek and squeal about the street.”

(Shakespeare) Note: about in the sense of ‘up and down’.

Pigs either squeal in pain or with fright.

You would not squeal on (i.e. betray) me, I know.

SQUEEZE (V)

They squeezed (i.e. pressed) around him, not wanting to miss a word.

The farmers were squeezed (i.e. hard-pressed) between low prices and high freight rates.

The horse trader always tried to squeeze (i.e. press) a buyer for more money.

We managed to squeeze (i.e. save) a few dollars from our budget.

“By czarist ukase, some five million Jews were squeezed (i.e. crammed) into a region of the sub-Baltic provinces..."
SQUINT - STARE

known as the Pale of Settlement.”
(John Hersey, Esquire mag.)
The child squeezed the paste out of the tube.
They squeezed (i.e. forced their way) through the fence and escaped.

SQUINT (V)
He squinted at me as I walked by.
The clown squinted through his fingers at the audience.

STAFF (V)
“The secretary's office was staffed by some 50 clerks.”
(J.P. Hennessy, O.E.D.)
His army headquarters is staffing with misfits and incompetents.

STAGGER (VV)
Both were staggering along the sidewalk.
I want you to stagger across the room, then collapse on the couch.
He staggered down the walk.
My dad staggered into the house.
She staggered over to me.

STAKE (V)
I am staking (i.e. betting) my last dime on his coming through.
Would you stake (i.e. treat) me to a meal?

STAMP (V)
The boy refused to stamp on (i.e. crush) the spider.
“He stamped the mud off his boots before entering the house.” (Graham Greene, O.E.D.)
She is stamping (i.e. printing) the company name over the entire surface of the lid.
Thousands of boxes sat on the dock, stamped (i.e. marked) with the names of world-famous manufacturers.

STAND (VV)
“There are men and classes of men that stand (i.e. tower) above the common herd.” (R.L. Stevenson)
The Indian tribes were unable to stand (i.e. defend themselves) against the European invasion of their ancestral lands.
She will stand by (i.e. support) you, never fear.
Women are no longer prepared to stand for (i.e. endure) wage discrimination.
You stand (i.e. are) in great danger of being hurt.
“3-D copies of artifacts could stand in (i.e. substitute) for the real thing.”
(Paul Wallich, Scientific American mag., Dec. ‘94)
To a man, they are ready to stand up for (i.e. defend) their rights.
“It is as though the British Isles are tilted permanently to one corner — the southeast corner, bottom right, where London stands seething upon the Thames.”
(Jan Morris, Journeys)

“Being a nation means standing up to (i.e. confronting) your equals, whereas being an empire only means kicking your inferiors.” (G.K. Chesterton)
If you stand back (i.e. keep your distance) from the crowd, you’ll see how it reduces to the lowest common denominator.
The captain stood out (i.e. kept his distance) from the shore, till he was sure his ship would not run aground.
The actress wore a flame-red gown that would stand out (i.e. be eye-catching) in the crowd.

“Newton once said that to make his discoveries, he stood on the shoulders of giants.”
(Hirsh Goldberg, The Jewish Connection)

“Tennyson’s feet were set on things transitory and untenable. . . Yet he was so perfect a poet that I fancy he will still be able to stand even upon such clouds.”
(G.K. Chesterton, Essays)
We will stand with you to the end, whatever the danger.

STARE (V)
We stared after him in utter disbelief.
The glass eyes of the idol stare at you with unblinking malevolence.
“He stared down the length of the train.”
(O. Manning, O.E.D.)
Death is staring the besieged garrison in the face.
“A Chicago hotel porter can produce photographs by staring into cameras.” (Lyall Watson, Supernature)
START (V)
The performance is scheduled to start at 8 p.m., and we hope it starts on time.
She started (i.e. reacted visibly) at the sight of him.
We should start by noon.
The teenager started for home early.
“Science starts, not from large assumptions, but from particular facts discovered by observation or experiment.” (Bertrand Russell)
His father gave him $10,000 to start in business.
The sun's heat on the stone bench made him start (i.e. jump) to his feet.
It's the only way you can start (i.e. begin) that job with a clean slate (i.e. make a fresh start).
“It starts with the heart, 8 to 15 ounces of hard-working, hollow muscle that beats three million times a year, pumping a million barrels of blood — enough to fill three supertankers — over the average lifetime.” (Roderick Jamer, CARP news)
STARVE
Are you starved for (i.e. deprived of) good company?
They are starving their people into submission.
“The (human) fetus produces an enzyme that starves the mother’s immune system of an essential nutrient.” (Discover mag., Feb. '99)
“The total (world) panda population today may not exceed 1,000. More than 100 starved to death in the mid-1970s.” George B. Schaller, National Geographic

STAY (N)
Their stay (i.e. sojourn) in the resort hotel was unsatisfactory.
The judge granted a stay (i.e. reprieve) of execution.

STAY (VV)
We decided not to stay (i.e. remain) for the second act.
“Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays (i.e. stops) these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.” (Inscription on the Main Post Office, New York City, adapted from Herodotus)
“He is in perfect peace whose mind is stayed (i.e. fixed) on Thee.” (The Bible)

She stayed (i.e. waited) to the end.
The babysitter will stay (i.e. remain) with the child till you return.
“Calories are both biologically and socially healthy only as long as they stay within the narrow range that separates enough from too much.” (Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

STEADFAST
She remains steadfast in her belief that you are innocent.
“You must be steadfast to your principles.” (Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

STEAL (V)
“The law locks up both man and woman who steals the goose from off the common; but lets the greater felon loose who steals the common from the goose.” (Anon.)
He stole (i.e. sneaked) into the kitchen.
The cat would steal (i.e. creep) round the porch after dusk.

STEAL (V)
She is steeping (i.e. soaking) the tea bag in boiling water for two minutes.
“The whole of modern thought is steeped in (i.e. imbued with) science.” (Huxley, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
He is steeped (i.e. thoroughly involved) in crime.
Let the tea bag steep till the tea is quite dark.
“The scholar . . steeped (i.e. immersed) to the lips in Greek.” (W. Irving, Oxford English Dictionary)

STEER (VV)
The boy steered (i.e. directed) his bicycle around the sharp curve.
Seamen in ancient times were able to steer (i.e. navigate) by the stars.
In the rising gale, the captain steered (i.e. headed) for the harbour.
You would be wise to steer away from (i.e. avoid) flattery. Children need to be steered (i.e. guided) in the right direction.
The policeman steered us through the unruly crowd.

STEM (V)
“No hate is ever as strong as that which stems from love.”
(German saying, People mag.)
“Intuition stems from knowledge.” (Bill Bernbach)
This is a custom that stems back to very early times.

STEP (N)
Well, it’s a step in the right direction.
He hit the man before he took one step into the room.
She sat down on the bottom step of the long staircase.

STEP (VV)
A few large stones enabled the visitors to step across the stream.
“Alice was drunk and she stepped carefully along the passage.” (J. Carew, Oxford English Dictionary)
Shall we step out for a breath of fresh air?
“You can never step in the same river twice.” (Heraclitus)
“I caught him as he was stepping into a taxi.” (L. Hellman, Oxford English Dictionary)
The young actress stepped (i.e. slipped) deftly into the role.
The old woman stepped off the sidewalk, not noticing the light had changed to red.
If you don’t look sharp, you’ll step on the violets in the grass.
The little boy had to step onto a stool to reach the cookies.
The elderly man always made sure he stepped over the potholes in the sidewalk.
Alice stepped through the looking-glass into Wonderland.
The soldiers stepped (i.e. marched) smartly to the beat of the drums.
She avoided stepping under the mistletoe.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions, whichever best describes the action that follows.

STEW (V)
Trust me: stew (i.e. cook) it in orange juice for ten minutes.
It is futile to stew (i.e. fret) over traffic congestion.
Stew (i.e. cook on medium heat) the meat until tender, then add the vegetables.

STICK (V)
You’ve got to stick at it (i.e. persevere), if you want to succeed.
A true friend will stick by (i.e. not leave) you in an emergency.
His car is stuck in the mud about a mile back.
The campaign workers were asked to stick (i.e. glue) labels on envelopes.
“A Greek bas-relief to stick over my chimney-piece.” (H. James, O.E.D.)
“The great thing about human language is that it prevents us from sticking to the matter at hand.”
(Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

STICKLER
I’m a stickler for neatness.

STIGMA
That one small misdemeanor has cast a stigma on me for life.

STIGMATIZE, STIGMATISE
He stigmatized that new car as a lemon.
“Ill-dressing, over-dressing she stigmatized (i.e. branded as ignominious . . with impatient movements of the hands.” (V. Woolf, Oxford English Dictionary)
STIMULATE

“An algae extract stimulates animals’ immune systems by 225%, and cells in culture by 2000%.”
(Ricki Lewis, Discover mag.)
“(Dr. Steven) Rosenberg . . used a natural body chemical to stimulate cells from the immune system to destroy human cancers.” (Joe Levine, Time mag.)
His writing stimulates your brain to the nth degree.

STINK (V)

His house stinks of cigarette smoke.
The gym stank with the sweat of two generations of athletes.

STIPULATE

The judge stipulated one week of public service for every parking ticket.

STOCK (V)

“Housewives stocked up against a shortage.”
(Times, O.E.D.)
The whole warehouse was stocked with flowers.
They are stocking the warehouse to the ceiling with rolls of newsprint.

STOOP (V)

The poor light made her stoop (i.e. bend) over her work.
She would not stoop (i.e. lower herself) to dishonesty.
“The youthful charioteers . . stoop (i.e. bend down) to the reins, and lash with all their force.”
(John Dryden, World Book Dictionary)

STOP (VV)

He stopped his car against the curb.
“If you aspire to the highest place, it is no disgrace to stop at the second, or even the third, place.”
(Marcus Tullius Cicero)
Let us stop by the edge of the stream.
I will not stop you from doing that.
They stopped right on the line.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

STORE (V)

“Lead isn’t excreted but is stored for many years in tissue, chiefly in the bone, from which it is released back into the blood stream to wreak cellular havoc.”
(Michael Weisskopf, Discover mag.)

STORM (V)

Yesterday, he was storming (i.e. raging) about the size of his bed; today, who knows?
She would storm (i.e. rage) at me for days on end.
He stormed (i.e. hastened in anger) down to the lawyer’s office.
The team stormed back (i.e. resurged) for a winning goal.
Don’t storm (i.e. burst angrily) into my office like that.
Listen to her storming (i.e. stomping) up and down the stairs.

STRAIN (V)

She can relax now that she no longer has to strain after fame.
I never saw a cat strain at its leash.

STRANGLEHOLD

The Nazis established a stranglehold on education.
(Not over)

STRAY (VV)

The artist liked to stray (i.e. wander) about the city in search of subjects to paint.
The children strayed (i.e. wandered) among the flowers in the park.
Do not stray (i.e. go) beyond this point.
“Only the human mind is designed to . . drift away in the presence of locked-on information, straying (i.e. drifting) from each point in a hunt for a better, different point.”
(Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell)
The child was apt to stray (i.e. wander) off the playground and into the street.
The disbanded soldiers strayed back to their homes.
STRESS (N)

“Though the faculties of the mind are improved by exercise, yet they must not be put to a stress beyond their strength.” (Locke, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

The stress on you these days is enough to make you ill.

“I always put a great deal of stress upon his judgment.” (DeFoe, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

STRETCH (VV)

“It would take about 250 million atoms laid side by side to stretch across a distance of only 1 inch. And it would take about 100,000 nuclei, side by side, to stretch across the width of a single atom.” (I. Asimov, Twentieth Century Discovery)

She stretched the facts beyond credibility.

“The capillaries that interweave a human brain occupy less than 5 percent of the organ’s volume, but if laid end to end they’d stretch for 400 miles.” (Natalie Angier, Discover mag.)

“The DNA is so narrow and compacted that all the genes in all my body cells would fit into an ice cube; yet if the DNA were unwound and joined together end to end, the strand could stretch from the earth to the sun and back more than four hundred times.” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made)

The clothesline stretched from porch to fence.

“The Amazon forest (Brasil) is the largest in the world. It stretches over an area ten times the size of France.” (Thomas Sterling, The Amazon)

“We (astronauts) are on a still and arid world (the moon) where each blazing day and each subfreezing night stretch through 355 earth hours.” (David R. Scott, National Geographic)

The legs of the oilrig seemed to stretch under the ice like the tentacles of a giant octopus.

STREW (VV)

He is strewing the garbage across his driveway.

All his books were strewn around the room.

Old tires were strewn behind the shed.

More laundry was strewn in the lane.

She strewed her beachwear on the sand.

“The newspapers which were strewn upon the table.” (Charles Dickens)

The river was strewn with islands.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

STRICT

I thought you were very strict about that.

She was very strict in her Lenten duties.

Your are being very strict with me.

STRIKE (VV)

“Lightning strikes the earth about 100 times every second.” (David Louis, Fascinating Facts)

The coal miners plan to strike against their employers (i.e. stop working) on Thursday.

Blindly, she struck (i.e. swung her fist) at me.

He was struck (i.e. hit) a glancing blow by the falling tree.

At least a third of that nation is stricken by AIDS.

They’re always striking for (i.e. stopping work to obtain) higher wages.

We must strike off (i.e. remove from) our list any member who refuses to pay his dues.

Why should they strike (i.e. stop work) over that?

He was so struck with (i.e. captivated by) her beauty, that he asked to meet her.

That weekend, I was stricken with the flu.

Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

STRIP (V)

He climbed into the ring and stripped for action (i.e. removed excess garments).

“Much harsher terms were agreed to after World War I, including a ‘big’ Poland which cut Prussia in two and stripped (i.e.divested) Germany of its Silesian industrial belt . . ” (Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

He stripped (i.e. undressed) down to his underwear.
It is futile to strive against the tide of public opinion. Why strive after such an impossible goal? “Often . . it is the most talented engineers who have the hardest time learning when to stop striving for perfection.” (Tracy Kidder, The soul of a new machine)

It is foolish to strive over trivial matters. “Strive not with a man without cause.” (The Bible)

It is useless to struggle (i.e. try to go) against the tide. He is a man who struggles (i.e. works hard) for everything he gets. The relatives struggled (i.e. fought) fiercely over the division of the estate.

Have courage, we will struggle through (i.e. cope with) this crisis.

She struggled (i.e. tried desperately) in vain to free herself.

The boxer struggled to his feet (i.e. stood up with effort).

“Freda, whose perfume was struggling with (i.e. failing to overcome) the building’s resident odors.” (Edwin Newman, Sunday Punch)

He was a student of history.

Bill, a graduate student in history, could not get a job.

She stumbled across (i.e. happened on) my diary last Sunday.

The child stumbled (i.e. fell) against the top of the staircase.

“In case the Prelacy for England should stumble at (i.e. not be able to accept) the Supremacy of Rome.” (Bacon, Oxford English Dictionary)

“The proud possessor of a cut-and-dry creed will be stumbled (i.e. shaken) by this new milestone.” (W.G. Collingwood, Oxford English Dictionary)

“The Post Office . . continues to stumble (i.e. blunder) from one . . disaster to another.” (Precision Marketing, Oxford English Dictionary)

The path in the forest was rough and the campers often stumbled (i.e. fell) into holes.

“If a detective investigating a crime . . stumbles (i.e. chances) on a series of mysterious coincidences, he will look for a human hand behind them.” (Patrick Glynn, National Review mag.)

“Pepy’s knack for stumbling (i.e. happening) upon psychological truths.” (T. Mallon, Oxford English Dictionary)

He stumbled upon this discovery by accident.

“There should be as little merit in loving a woman for her beauty, as a man for his prosperity, both being equally subject to change.” (Alexander Pope)

Anti-vivisectionists believe animals should not be subjects for medical experiments.

The subject of his thesis is the impact of acid rain on deciduous trees.

They are subjecting him to one humiliation after another.

The broken ship was submerged beneath ten fathoms of water.

The land was quickly submerged by the invading sea.

Just submerge it in water.

The whole meeting was submerged in controversy.

This is submitted for your approval.

Do you wish to submit your case to arbitration?

“They will subordinate goodness to efficiency; though the very name of good implies an end, and the very name of efficiency implies only a means to an end.” (G.K. Chesterton, Generally Speaking)
SUBSCRIBE

“I subscribe to Einstein’s religion. It’s an oceanic feeling; there’s that great big thing out here that’s pretty marvelous.” (Lawrence Krauss, astrophysicist)

“By 1919 virtually all European intellectuals of the younger generation . . subscribed to the proposition that the right to national self-determination was a fundamental moral principle.” (Paul Johnson: The History of the Modern World)

SUBSERVIENCE

“According to Buddhist precepts, women’s only path to expiation (for their greater proneness to sin) lays in total subservience to the male.” (Jack Seward, The Japanese)

SUBSERVIENT

“Temporal matters were of necessity subservient to the spiritual.” (Paul Johnson)

SUBSIST

The survivors subsisted (i.e. lived) on roots, nuts and berries.

“Which charter subsists (i.e. continues to exist) to this day and is called Magna Carta.” (Chesterfield, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

A club cannot subsist (i.e. survive) without membership fees.

SUBSTITUTE (V)

A novel about the U.S. must substitute status for class.

“The Pope substituted John de Columna, a Cardinal Legate in place of (or in lieu of) Pelagius.” (Fuller, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

SUBTRACT

Her new job has subtracted a dozen years from her appearance.

SUCCEED

I never succeeded (i.e. had success) as a writer.

He never succeeded at anything.

The new play succeeded beyond all expectations.

“In all Karl Marx’s researches into the inequities of British capitalists . . he never succeeded in unearthing one (worker) who was paid literally no wages at all. Yet such a worker did exist in his own household.” (Paul Johnson, Intellectuals)

In a dynastic system, the first-born son must succeed (i.e. come next in order) to the throne.

Try it; you won’t succeed with me.

SUCCESSFUL

“While capitalist nations, including the U.S. and the emerging countries of Asia, have been highly successful at creating wealth, socialism has largely proved an economic drag.” (John Greenwald, Time)

She was successful in all her endeavours.

I promise you; you won’t be successful with me.

SUCCUMB

“During the Middle Ages . . the accumulation of more money than one needed was considered the lowest form of avarice. This approach to life continued to be held in the Catholic countries of Europe which did not succumb to the Reformation.” (Pierre Berton, The Smug Minority)

He is succumbing to her charms.

SUCK

“Black holes . . and wormholes are cousins . . A traveler sucked into one mouth of a wormhole and down the throat might emerge from the second mouth only a few moments later, but halfway across the cosmos.” (David H. Freedman, Discover mag.)

SUE

I intend to sue him for all he’s got.

We intend to sue the columnist for defamation of character.

SUFFER

I will go on suffering for my beliefs.

“Beer drinkers suffer abnormally from rectal cancer.” (Leonard Gross: How Much Is Too Much?)

I refuse to suffer in silence.
“Will he suffer (i.e. permit) us to leave.”
(Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)

**SUFFICE**
That will suffice for the moment.

**SUFFUSE**
Her poor face was suffused with sorrow.

**SUITABLE**
That movie was suitable for adults only.
Make it suitable to the occasion.

**SUIT (V)**
“Freud’s methods of therapy have proved, on the whole, costly failures, more suited to cosset the unhappy than cure the sick.”
(Paul Johnson, The History of the Modern World)

“Light is suited to carrying enormous numbers of precise digital signals at high speed over long distances.”
(Stephen Koepp, Reader’s Digest)

**SUPERIOR (A)**
The Sherpa is superior in his capacity to tolerate reduced amounts of oxygen at great heights.
You act as if you’re superior to me.

**SUPERIOR (N)**
He’s considered the superior of Rabelais.

**SUPPLEMENT (N)**
It came as a weekend supplement to the newspaper.

**SUPPLEMENT (V)**
They supplement my salary by giving me a bonus.
They supplemented my salary with some stock in the company.

**SUPPLEMENTARY**
That file is supplementary to the docket I gave you yesterday.

**SUPPLY (N)**
“Blood-forming stem cells . . can both renew themselves and produce trillions upon trillions of blood cells, an inexhaustible supply for the life of their host body.”
(Peter Radetsky, Discover mag.)
A generous supply of candied fruit is needed for this cake recipe.

“An endless supply of oxygen, amino acids, nitrogen, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sugars, lipids, cholesterol, and hormones surge past our (100 trillion) cells, carried on blood cell rafts or suspended in the (blood) fluid. Each cell has special withdrawal privileges to gather the resources needed to fuel a tiny engine for its complex chemical reaction.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)

**SUPPLY (V)**
Money was donated to supply books for the children’s library.

“Parkinson’s disease casts its imprisoning spells by slowly destroying a tiny section of the brain, the size and shape of a quarter called the substantia nigra. The substantia nigra supplies the neurotransmitter dopamine to a larger area in the center of the brain, the striatum, which controls movement.”
(Jeff Goldberg, Discovery mag.)
He supplies milk to our neighbourhood schools for free.
India supplies us with much of our tea.

**SUPPORT (N)**
Believing the amendments to be retrogressive, the M.P. withdrew his support for (i.e. backing of) the legislation.
He garnered support (i.e. backing) from unexpected quarters.
His support (i.e. backing) of the candidate was unwavering.

**SUPPORT (V)**
The roof is supported (i.e. held up) by this bearing wall.

“This luxury was supported (i.e. sustained) by a thriving trade.”
(Macauley, Universal Oxford English Dictionary)
I expect you to support (i.e. encourage) me with your applause.
SUPREME
His idea proved supreme over all others.

SURE
Everybody's crazy except the two of us, and I’m not so sure about you.
“I wanted to change the world. But I have found that the only thing one can be sure of changing is oneself.” (Aldous Huxley)
He is sure to make a fool of himself.

SURETY
Stand surety for someone.
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

SURGE (VV)
They surged around the church, through the cemetery, down the village’s main street, and into the stables.
“An endless supply of oxygen, amino acids, nitrogen, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sugars, lipids, cholesterols, and hormones surge past our (100 trillion) cells, carried on blood cell rafts or suspended in the (blood) fluid. Each cell has special withdrawal privileges to gather the resources needed to fuel a tiny engine for its complex chemical reaction.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)

SURPRISE (N)
That was no surprise to me.

SURPRISE (V)
She was surprised at him for bringing up the subject.
She surprised me by walking into the house at that exact moment.
“I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a naked foot on the shore.”
(DeFoe, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

SURRENDER (V)
“Boabdil El Chico surrendered the Kingdom of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabella on January 2, 1492, bringing to a close over 780 years of Islamic power in Spain.” (John McBride, Mankind)
Two of the enemy surrendered to our chaplain.

SURROUND (V)
“If the planet Neptune . . be surrounded by an atmosphere.” (Tyndall, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“Gregory surrounded himself with hard-working monks.” (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)
He is surrounding his property with a hedge.
He looked out to find himself surrounded by the border patrol.
She sat there surrounded with flowers.

SURVIVE
“For two decades now (1977) about fifty languages have died each year; half of those spoken in 1950 survive only as subjects for doctoral theses.”
(Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)
He survived by sheer strength of will.
Artifacts that survive from prehistoric times tell archeologists much about early humans.
Camels can survive in the desert on very little water.
“The true miracle of modern medicine is diabolical. It consists in making not only individuals but whole populations survive on inhumanly low levels of personal health.”
(Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)

SUSCEPTIBILITY
“Researchers have identified patterns of genes that raise a person’s susceptibility to heart attacks, emphysema, insulin-dependent diabetes, multiple sclerosis and certain cancers.”
(Kathleen McAuliffe, U.S. News & World Report)

SUSCEPTIBLE
She was susceptible to wild fantasies.
The weather was susceptible of sudden change.
SUSPECT (V)
I would suspect you of anything and everything.

SUSPEND
The boy was suspended (i.e. dismissed) from school for destructive behaviour.
The smoke from the tall factory chimney remained suspended (i.e. hanging) in the sultry air.
“An endless supply of oxygen, amino acids, nitrogen, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sugars, lipids, cholesterol, and hormones surge past our (100 trillion) cells, carried on blood cell rafts or suspended in the (blood) fluid. Each cell has special withdrawal privileges to gather the resources needed to fuel a tiny engine for its complex chemical reaction.”
(Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)
The crane operator suspended the car over the man’s head.
Work on the highway must be suspended (i.e. delayed) till (or until) more funds are made available.

SUSPICIOUS
Americans have always been more suspicious of government.

SWAP (V)
“Every few years, the flu virus shows up in humans with a new protein coat. Meanwhile, it hangs out in pigs — where it can swap mild genes for deadly ones.”
(John Langone, Discover mag., Dec. ‘90)
I will swap my watch for your football helmet.

SWARM (VV)
“The crowd were swarming (i.e. thronging) now . . about the garden rails.”
(Tennyson, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“The ideas swarming (i.e. teeming) in men’s minds.”
(Jowett, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“Native doctors swarm (i.e. abound excessively) in Mongolia.”
(Netral Oxford Dictionary)
The men of the neighbouring tribe swarmed (i.e. clambered) up the hill.
“Although continually bombarded by solar radiation, the sturdy fullerenes (60-atom geodesic spheres of carbon) would survive and prosper, ultimately swarming through the cosmos.”
(Gary Taubes, Discover mag., Sept. ’90)
The great square swarmed with students.

SWATHE (V)
She was swathed in silk.
The girls were swathed round with ribbons.

SWEAR
Swearing (i.e. cursing) about breaking a cup won’t mend it.
Don’t you dare swear (i.e. curse) at me.
I swear (i.e. take an oath) by all that’s sacred.
Garlic? I swear by (i.e. have every confidence in) it.
Are you willing to swear (i.e. testify) to that on the Bible?

SWEEP (V)
The bride swept (i.e. glided) down the aisle like a ship in full sail.
A walk along the seashore will sweep (i.e. remove) the cobwebs from your brain.
“Change — dazzling, dizzying, dumbfounding change — is sweeping you into a world different from any in history.”
(High Technology mag.)
The sailor was swept off the ship’s deck in a storm.
The bay sweeps to the north for over a hundred miles.
It was necessary to sweep a passage through the minefield before the army could advance.

SWEET
I am sweet on (i.e. enamoured of) that girl.
His breath was sweet (i.e. redolent of) with the fragrance of wine.

SWIM (VV)
He swam along the side of the pool, through the underwater passage into the next pool, and then under the raft.
They were able to swim to shore.
Note: As for all VV (versatile verbs), they can be followed by a variety of prepositions; whichever best describes the action that follows.

**SWINDLE** (V)
“Lamotte . . had . . swindled a sum of three hundred livres from one of them.”  
(Carlyle, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
He swindled the old lady out of her pension by playing on her credulity.

**SWIRL** (VV)
Autumn leaves swirled against the windows.
“Starlings swirling from the hedge.”  
(M. Arnold, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“Continents of cloud were . . swirled from peak to peak.”  
(W.T. Watts-Dunton, Oxford English Dictionary)
“At absolute zero (−459.67 °F or 0 K) atoms still vibrate. Electrons still swirl in a cloud around the nucleus . . But the atomic order is perfect . . all atoms are in the same quantum state.” (William Booth, Washington Post)
The swollen river swirled over the dam and under the bridge.

**SWITCH** (V)
The fastest electronic transistors take only a few picoseconds (trillionths of a second) to switch between on and off states.
He switched from a smile to a scowl in the blink of an eye. She switched to English without a pause.

**SWOOP**
“Sea-gulls were swooping down and around the tall masts.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
The eagle swooped down from his lofty crag.
The bluejay swooped upon the shelled peanut before it hit the ground.

**SYMBOL**
They’re making a mockery of that symbol of peace.
The symbol for that is a circle with a bar through it.

**SYMBOLIC**
That’s symbolic of death in battle.

**SYMPATHIZE, SYMPATHISE**
While I sympathize with him, I can’t condone his action. I’m afraid he sympathises with her schemes.

**SYMPTOMATIC**
“The breaking of that trust (in words) . . is symptomatic of breach of trust with God.” (The Economist)

**SYNCHRONIZE**
Let me synchronize my watch with yours.

**SYNONYM**
A synonym for happy is joyful.
“Hobbism . . became the popular synonym for irreligion and immorality.” (Green, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**SYNONYMOUS**
“Silicon Valley (is) a name synonymous with computers.” (Discovery mag.)
**TACK** *(V)*
The captain was *tacking around* the end of the island. He somehow *tacked by* our rowboat without hitting it. The pilot *tacked through* the ships at anchor.

**TAINT** *(V)*
Our family reputation is now *tainted* (i.e. besmirched) *by* your misconduct. A lot of farm soil is now *tainted with* (i.e. contaminated by) selenium. She is now *tainting* (i.e. tincturing) her doll *with* raspberry juice.

**TAKE** *(V, VV)*
“With the Fall of New France, and the commencement of British rule, the Jesuits in Canada were forbidden to recruit any new members. They dwindled away. Their *property was taken over by* the Crown.”
(Edgar Andrew Collard, *Of Many Things*)

“Ambulances *take clinics* (i.e. extend the reach of the clinics) *beyond the few miles a sick child can be carried.*”
(Ivan Illich, *Towards a History of Needs*)

They *took the town by* storm (i.e. proved wildly popular). The grandmother was much *taken by* (i.e. attracted to) the child’s personality. She *took me for* (i.e. thought me) a fool. You will be sorry you *took me for* granted (i.e. treated me too casually).

They *took everything from* (i.e. robbed) me. He *took her in* (or *into*) his arms (i.e. embraced) ever so gently.

She was *taken in* (i.e. fooled) *by* his honest face. She *took him into* her confidence (i.e. she confided in him).

They *took his words on* faith. (i.e. they believed him) The children *took to* her (i.e. accepted her) at once. I will *take it under* advisement (i.e. think about it). She *took it upon* herself (i.e. presumed) to inform his wife of his infidelity.

That last swim sure *took it out of* (i.e. exhausted) me. Your decision to *take up* (i.e. join forces) *with* this radical group was a mistake.

“You can’t *take it with* you. (i.e. you leave this world without possessions).”
(George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart)

**TALK** *(V)*
“(Dr. Larry Scherwitz) found that the more a man habitually *talked about* himself, the greater the chance he would actually have a coronary.”
(Dr. Deepak Chopra, *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*)

“It is, perhaps, the strongest mark of the divinity of man that he *talks of* this world as a ‘strange world,’ though he has seen no other.” (G.K. Chesterton)

“By making an array of hormones, the immune system can *talk to* practically every other system in the body.”
(Ed Blalock, *Discover mag.*)

You’re talking *through* your hat (i.e. talking nonsense). Please talk *to* (or with) me; I’m lonesome.

**TALLY** *(V)*
That simply doesn’t *tally* (i.e. agree) *with* what you told me yesterday.

**TAMPER**
There are natural misgivings about *tampering with* a person’s genetic make-up.

**TANTAMOUNT**
This act of yours is *tantamount to* murder.
TARGET (V)
He was targeted (i.e. singled out) as the next victim.
“The ocean may be a holding tank for viruses targeted at every form of life on the planet, wet or dry— including human beings.” (David H. Freedman, Discover mag.)
“The airline industry was being targeted (i.e. singled out) for a recruiting drive.”
(S. Brill, Oxford English Dictionary)

TASTE (N)
“We have developed a taste for the mysterious.”
(Lyall Watson, Supernature)
“The poems leave a nasty taste in the mouth; the taste of a snarl and a sneer.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
Add just a taste of honey to that recipe.

TAUNT (V)
She taunted (i.e. provoked) him with racial slurs.

TAX (N)
They were declared non-exempt from tax on their private property.
“A tax on German linen encourages home manufactures.”
(Hume, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

TAX (V)
She was taxed (i.e. burdened) by her heavy responsibilities.
I should tax you with (i.e. accuse you of) plagiarism.

TEACH
I prefer to teach my children by example.
Religion isn’t for children. Instruction is for children.
“This is the great, great difference between the Jewish children and the other children. The Jewish people have instructed their children, while the Christians have always taught religion to their children.”
(Julius Horowitz, The W.A.S.P)

TEAM (V)
They teamed up (i.e. joined forces) for action.

“Teamed (i.e. working) with a laser, a single fiber (of glass or plastic) can, in one second, transmit 200 books letter by letter.” (Allen A. Boraiko, National Geographic mag.)

TEASE (V)
All the children teased him about his shaved head.
“Every spare day that I could tease (i.e. comb) from the calendar has been spent afloat.”
She teased (i.e. tickled) her sleeping husband’s ear with a feather.

TEEM
The small pond teemed with goldfish.

TEETER
“The peetweets... teeter along its stony shores all summer.” (Thoreau)
He spent his life teetering on the brink of disaster.

TELL
When are you going to tell me about your trip to Spain?
He told me of his grief at his wife’s death.
Jealous, she told (i.e. snitched) on her older sister at every opportunity.
Don’t go around gossiping; tell it to my face.

TEMPER (V)
The climate of the east coast is tempered by the Gulf Stream.
She tempered her scolding of the child with a kiss.

TENACIOUS
He is very tenacious of his young wife’s right to speak.

TEND
“In ancient China, the Tao Te Ching proclaimed the same truth: “Whatever is flexible and flowing will tend to grow, whatever is rigid and blocked will wither and die.” (Dr. Deepak Chopra, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind)
“People *tend* to mate with individuals who resemble themselves in every conceivable way.”
(Jared Diamond, Discover mag.)
Frankly, I am tending *towards* his version of the event.

**TENDENCY**

There is a tendency of a few of us *to* sloth.

**TERRIFY**

She is terrified *at* the prospect of her first flight.
The old man is now terrified *even by* a clap of thunder.
Truth is, I’m terrified *of* his Great Dane.

**TERROR**

She ran, in terror *of* her life (i.e. of being killed).
Their terror (i.e. abject fear) *of* the king was palpable.
He is a terror (i.e. embarrassing) *to* his friends when he’s drunk.

**TEST** *(V)*

Though tested *by* endless misfortunes, he never succumbed to discouragement.

“Only 10 percent of the 35,000 pesticides introduced since 1945 have been tested for potential health effects.”
(Cathy Spencer, Omni mag.)

He was a grizzled veteran, tested *in* war *on* the battlefields of Europe.
She says she will not test me *in* grammar, but *on* my command of English.
Let me test it *with* a hammer blow.

**TESTIFY**

She will testify (i.e. give evidence) against her husband, if guaranteed protection.
I will gladly testify *to* the truth of his statement.

**TESTIMONIAL**

“He exposed the testimonials *to* patent medicines *from* senators and congressmen.”
(Bok, Americanization of Edward Bok)

**TESTIMONY**

In testimony of his lifetime of service to the company, they presented him with a new car.
My friends bore testimony *to* my good reputation.

**TETHER** *(V)*

They tethered him *with* a chain *to* the flagstaff.

**THANKFUL**

I will be thankful *to* you *for* the rest of my life.
She was extremely thankful *for* his support during that period of her life.

**THICK**

They were thick (i.e. close in association) *as* thieves.
The great hall was thick (i.e. crowded) *with* people.

**THINK**

I will give you plenty of time to think *about* your crime.
It’s about time you think *for* yourself.
Did you think *of* me when you decided to do this?

“Every time a man puts a new idea across, he faces a dozen men who thought of it before he did. But they only thought of it.”
(Oren Arnold, Forbes mag., 1970)

**THIRST** *(N)*

(Robert Louis Stevenson) had not only a thirst *for* happiness, but a faith in the possibility of happiness.
(G.K. Chesterton, Generally Speaking)

**THIRST** *(V)*

“Blessed are they who . . *thirst* after righteousness.”
(Matthew)

They were thirsting *for* knowledge about the rest of the world.

**THORN**

The poor boy has a thorn *in* his foot.
THOUGHT (N)
How about a thought for those who died on this battlefield.
The very thought of appearing on stage terrifies me.
We never gave a thought to the people below our apartment.

THOUGHTFUL
It was very thoughtful of your brother to meet me at the airport.

THREAT
The threat of immediate punishment kept them at bay.
“The greatest threat to dolphins is the tuna net.”
(Justine Kaplan, Omni mag.)

THREATEN
The sheriff threatened to put me in jail.
He threatened her with all manner of mayhem.

THRILL (V)
They thrilled at the idea of visiting Ireland in the spring.
We were thrilled by the light and sound presentation.
I thrill to the song of the nightingale.

THRIVE
Inventiveness thrives on freedom.

THROUGH
Don’t go; I’m not through with you yet.

THROW (VV)
“A computer model suggests that the AIDS virus kills us with sheer diversity, throwing more virals strains at our immune system than it can handle.”
(Rachel Nowak, Discover mag., 1992)
I am throwing my hat into the ring (i.e. offering myself as a candidate)
Why not throw that fish back into the lake?

Mommy, Jack threw my hat over the fence!
Throw all the small, rounded stones under the porch.
“He was thrown (i.e. brought down) at football and hurt his knee.”
(British Medical Journal, Oxford English Dictionary)
“The fuzzy shadows thrown (i.e. cast) by the nightlamp.”
(J. Gardner, Oxford English Dictionary)
She was thrown (i.e. catapulted) from her horse.
“A quiet stretch of water that, below zero, freezes in a few instants if a pebble is thrown into it.”
(Primo Levi, Discover mag.)
Caution was thrown to the winds.
“They are thrown upon Rocks and Sands.”
(D. Pell, Oxford English Dictionary)

THUMB (V)
You’re thumbing your nose at me again.

TIDE (V)
This purchase should tide me over the next few days till payday.

TIE (V)
“Coke’s (i.e. cocaine’s, crack’s) high is directly tied to dopamine levels.”
(J. Madeleine Nash, Time mag., May 5, ‘97)
The poor man is tied to his wife’s apron-strings.
She tied her hair back with a yellow ribbon.
The bad news tied in (i.e. was connected) somehow with the trouble the night before.

TILT
Don Quixote is famous for tilting (i.e. charging) at windmills.
“It is as though the British Isles are tilted (i.e. inclined) permanently to one corner — the southeast corner, bottom right, where London stands seething upon the Thames.”
(Jan Morris, Journeys)
“He tilts (i.e. lunges) with piercing steel at bold Mercutio’s breast.” (Shakespeare)
TIME

“The time to relax is when you don’t have time for it.”
(Sydney J. Harris)

“The old castle has stood here time out of mind” (i.e. longer than one can remember).
(Frederick T. Wood, English Prepositional Idioms)

TINKER (V)
He tinkered with the problem at every opportunity.

TIPPLE (V)
He was tippling from a mug.

TIRE (V)
She quickly tires of playing cards.
“Pessimism is not in being tired of evil, but in being tired of good.” (G.K. Chesterton, The Everlasting Man)
They found they were tired by the massaging that was meant to relax them.
I am tired from too much partying and not enough sleep.
She is tired of his constant carping.

TOAST (N)
She is the toast of the season in Cannes.
Why don’t we propose a toast to him at our next luncheon meeting?

TOGETHER

“Oh communist instructions, the Duce (Mussolini) and his mistress were taken out . . and shot. Their bodies, together with others, were strung up head downward on meathooks in a petrol station.”
(Winston Churchill, The Iron Curtain)

TOLERANCE

“Many patients develop a tolerance for . . drugs and must switch medications.” (Andrew Purvis, Time mag.)

He showed a marked tolerance in his views.
“Optical discs, which combine the advantages of very large data-storage capacity, tolerance of rough handling, and very low error rates, are on the verge of catalyzing a new market for mass computer storage.”
(Steven Weissman, 1989)

TOLERANT

He is tolerant in his approach to the subject of treason.
“France . . especially between the wars, was the most agreeable country in the world in which to live, and in many ways the most tolerant of foreigners; provided they did not cause trouble.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

“Rome was tolerant towards the two great philosophical and religious cultures which confronted it: Hellenism and Judaism.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)

TOLL (N)
“Britain’s 5 million cats wreak an annual toll of some 70 million animals and birds.” (Time mag.)
It would take weeks to assess the toll of this earthquake on the state.

TOUCH (V)
They touched him for (i.e. made him part with) more than he could afford.
He hardly touched on the subject.
She was touched with genius.

TOUT (V)
The athlete was touted (i.e. promoted) as the next Olympic star.
The hustler was touting (i.e. soliciting) for the circus event all over town.
He touted (i.e. canvassed) the whole neighbourhood for votes.
“Touted on his talent by several dubious sources I wrote what could only be termed a ‘puff piece’” about another young designer. (James Brady)
TOWER (V)
He towered above the crowd.
She towers over me.

TOY (V)
She toyed with me, like a cat with a mouse.

TRACE (V)
The criminals were traced (i.e. tracked down) by the detective through their associates.

“When DNA from cellular structures that are only passed on through the mother’s egg is examined, all racial groups can be traced (i.e. tracked) back to a common female ancestor only about 200,000 years ago.” (David Suzuki, Down to Earth/Montreal Gazette)

“To trace (i.e. draw) with his pencil a path to the centre of the maze.” (G. Greene, Oxford English Dictionary)

TRACK (V)
You’re tracking (i.e. leaving a trail of) dirt over my clean floor, and all through the house.
I tracked (i.e. followed the marks of) the lion back to its lair.

TRADE (V)
I will trade (i.e. exchange) my Mercedes for your membership in that club.
They trade in (i.e. barter with) alcohol and gun powder, oblivious of the resulting mayhem.
He traded on (i.e. took advantage of) my respect for his father.
He will trade (i.e. do business) with me, but with no one else.

TRAFFIC (N)
The traffic (i.e. trade) in land mines is growing, in spite of warnings by the U.N.
I refuse any traffic (i.e. dealings) with you.

TRAFFIC (V)
He trafficked in (i.e. bought and sold) anything and everything.

I will not traffic (i.e. do business) with that man!

TRAIN (V)
She was training as a nurse when I met her.
They are training for the next Olympic Games.

“The corpus callosum, the bundle of nerve fibers that connects the two halves of the brain, is larger in musicians who have trained from an early age.”
(Discover mag., Oct. ’96)

We should all be trained in the martial arts.

TRAITOR
She is a traitress to her country.

“Unless I prove false traitor to myself.” (Shakespeare)

TRANSCRIBE
“The Agamemnon . . transcribed (i.e. translated) by Robert Browning.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“For any protein to be synthesized, the gene that specifies its composition must be transcribed (i.e. converted) from DNA into molecules of messenger RNA. Then the RNA must be translated into copies of the protein.”
(J. S. Cohen and M. E. Hogan, Scientific American mag.)

“A few plain, easy rules, chiefly transcribed (i.e. copied) from Dr. Cheyne.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“His entire speech was transcribed in the newspapers, word for word.” (World Book Dictionary)

TRANSFORM
“A government that governed least was admirably suited to liberate the individualistic energies that transformed America from a wilderness to a material utopia, and from the child and ward to the rival and guardian of Western Europe.” (Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

“Now . . even an amateur can transform a modest machine (computer) into an Alexandria of facts, an Athens of wisdom.”
(Sana Siwolop, Touching All The Bases)

TRANSLATE
He spent his life translating books from French into English.
“The Bible has been translated into over 1,000 languages.” (Hirsch Goldberg, The Jewish Connection)

Her faith was such that her mother’s death simply meant that she had now been translated (i.e. elevated) into a better world.

“For any protein to be synthesized, the gene that specifies its composition must be transcribed from DNA into molecules of messenger RNA. Then the RNA must be translated into copies of the protein.”

(S. Cohen and M. E. Hogan, Scientific American mag.)

Someone is now translating my book into Greek.

He was translated (i.e. elevated) to a much higher position upon his return from active service overseas.

TRANSLATION

The prince paid for the translation of the Bible into Urdu.

TRANSLATOR

“These intermediary programs, which serve as translators of user programs, are known as ‘system software’.” (Tracy Kidder, The Soul of a New Machine)

TRANSMISSION

“Poisons, such as cocaine, bolulinus, and atropine, can jam the chemical transmission across synapses (in the brain).” (Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey, In His Image)

That first transmission through a glass fiber was startlingly clear.

They finally made the transmission over phone lines.

TRANSMIT

We will be transmitting this message across the U.S.A. by next spring.

“We have cracked the DNA core . . We have learned how DNA transmits its instructions to the cell.”

(Reported by Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave)

“Fiber-optic technology makes it possible to transmit 10,000 simultaneous conversations through a single pair of glass ‘wires’.”

(Allen A. Boraiko, National Geographic mag.)

TRANSMUTE

They dreamt of transmuting lead into gold.

TRANSPLANT

“Within the next two months, medical researchers at the National Institutes of Health (U.S.A.) will perform the first authorized gene transplants into humans.”

(Dick Thompson, Time mag., 1995)

TRANSPORT (V)

“Before World War II, less than 4 percent of all food was transported into the region from abroad.”

(Ivan Illich, Toward a History of Need)

“Water, as an essential component of blood, transports oxygen as well as infection-fighting cells and antibodies to where they are needed in your body.”

(Jane E. Brody, Family Circle mag. & Reader’s Digest)

TRAP (V)

She found herself trapped (i.e. wedged) between the cliff and the incoming tide.

He was trapped (i.e. caught) by an off-duty policeman.

“Fortunately for man’s survival . . germs are repelled by the tough barrier of the skin, overcome by the natural pesticides in sweat, saliva and tears, dissolved by stomach acids or trapped in the sticky mucous of the nose or throat before being expelled by a sneeze or cough.”

(Leon Jaroff, Time mag.)

His jack collapsed and trapped (i.e. imprisoned) him under the car.

TRAVEL (VV)

“Unlike electrons, which . . often interfere with one another as they travel along a medium like copper wire, photons can easily travel in parallel straight lines and even pass through one another undisturbed.”

(Stephen Koepp, Reader’s Digest)

He has been travelling for a beer company for years.

“To achieve the simultaneous contraction of these muscles (the powerful muscles in its cone-shaped mantle), electric signals must travel from the brain down the entire length of the squid’s body — as far as 12
inches — less than a hundredth of a second, an astounding feat of neurotransmission.”
(Mark Kemp, Discover mag.)
I met my wife the last time I traveled through Spain.
She always travels under an assumed name.
Don't you remember? I vowed never to travel with you again.

TREACHEROUS
He proved treacherous to all the members of his sect.

TREASON
“Treason against the United States shall consist only in
levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.”
(Article 111, Section 3, Constitution of the United States)

TREASURE (V)
“Spectators dipped pieces of cloth in the blood and
treasured them as relics.” (Paul Johnson)
These books are treasured by artists and collectors for
their beautiful graphics.

TREAT (V)
They were treated (i.e. dealt with) as pariahs.
I was treated to a superb dinner.
He deserves to be treated (i.e. regarded) with respect.
They treated the paper with (i.e. subjected the paper to)
a variety of chemicals.

TREMBLE
I tremble at the thought of his coming to my home.
She trembles for my safety whenever I travel.
He trembled with anger when she walked into the room.

TREND
There is a trend to (or towards) multi-coloured hair just now.

TRESPASSER
I want all trespassers on my property to be prosecuted.

TRIBUTE
All the newspapers in town published tributes to the
courage of the city's mayor.

TRICK (V)
“Pierre Givaudon bathed a wheat-rye seedling with . .
colchicine, which somehow ‘tricked’ (i.e. deceived) its
(combined) 21 chromosomes into doubling. The hybrid
produced some fertile kernels (triticale). Man had
broken a genetic barrier.” (Reader's Digest, Dec. 1975)
That child tricked (i.e. conned) me into giving her a
second lollipop.

TRIFLE (V)
Please don't trifle with me.

TRIGGER (V)
“Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, one of 3000 known genetic
disorders, is triggered by a defect in a single gene out of
the 100,000 in the chromosomes.” (Time mag.)
I can't help it anymore; that bell triggers me into action.

TRIM (V)
She trimmed (i.e. decorated) the dress with lace.
I trimmed (i.e. pruned) the tree with a pair of long-
handled shears.

TRIUMPH (N)
“For Hegel, history ended with Napoleon’s triumph over
the Prussian forces . . . in 1806.” (John Elson, Time mag.)

TRIUMPH (V)
The battle lasted well into the afternoon, but he finally
triumphed over his enemies.

TRIUMPHANT
He proved triumphant over all the difficulties that beset
him.

TROUBLE (N)
He was trouble to me from the time he was born.
I have a feeling you’re in trouble with the law.

**TROUBLE (V)**
I did not want to trouble (i.e. worry) you about that.
May we trouble (i.e. inconvenience) you for another drink?
Why should she trouble you (i.e. involve you in) her problems?
Aren’t you troubled about his physical condition?
Why is it that I am only troubled by beggars when I am at peace with myself?
She is troubled with a pain in her chest.

**TRUCK (N)**
I will have no truck (i.e. have nothing to do) with the likes of you.

**TRUE**
“While electronic devices (in integrated circuits) speed up as they shrink, that’s not true of the wires that connect them.” (Jeff Hecht)
You have not been true (i.e. faithful) to me.
True (i.e. according) to habit, he took his tea with lemon.

**TRUST (N)**
I want you to put your trust in him; he’s a good person.

**TRUST (V)**
He will lie; you can trust him for that.
“For great art, God is necessary. Artist and audience alike must either trust in the presence of the divine to give validity to the work, or, failing that, they must at least struggle to come to terms with His absence.”
(The Economist, paraphrasing George Steiner)
You must trust me to pay you back in full.
They trusted their child to behave properly.

**TRY (N)**
May I have a try at cutting that cloth.

**TRY (V)**
They want you to try (i.e. apply) for that job.
She will be tried (i.e. prosecuted) for leaving her child unattended.

**TUG (V)**
The desperately sick child tugged at my heart.
He tugged at my sleeve, begging for money.
They tugged with all their might.

**TUMBLE (V)**
He hurt himself tumbling down those stairs.
They tumbled out of the house and into a waiting car.
She tumbled over me as I lay prone on the grass.
When did you tumble to (i.e. realize) what he was trying to do?

**TUNE (V)**
Please tune in to station CKOX.

**TURN (N)**
Now you take a turn at driving the car.
She has taken a turn for the worse.
Isn’t this your turn to speak?
It’s my turn with the computer.

**TURN (V)**
The whole world will turn against him.
“Acid pollution is devouring the treasures of Venice, turning stone into crumbling gypsum.”
(David Ansley, Discover mag.)
“This distributors’ margin — turning $1 million of raw material (poppies and coca leaves) into $5 billion of revenue — makes drug smuggling the world’s most profitable business.” (The Economist)
“Prefrontal lobotomy turned 50,000 Americans into human vegetables before this form of surgery was discredited.” (Newsweek mag.)
“A man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd.” (James Cook)
Are you going to turn upon (i.e. against) me now?
She turned to me in desperation.
She turned to a life of crime.
He seemed to turn to stone.

TYPE (V)
The play’s protagonist was typed (i.e. categorized) as evil incarnate.
She types (i.e. typewrites) at a great rate of speed.
“Just as red blood cells can be typed (i.e. categorized) according to their trademark surface proteins as being A, B, AB, or O, white blood cells can be similarly typed.”
(Terence Monmaney, Discover mag.)

TYPICAL
The ‘epicanthic fold’ is a small fold of skin over the inner corner of the eye, typical of Mongoloid peoples, Chinese, etc.

TYRANNIZE
In spite of the terrible mauling of his army during the Gulf War, Hussein still tyrannizes over his people in Irak.
UNACCUSTOMED

Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking...

UNAFFECTED

“Everything which is related to beauty should be unaffected by the passage of time. Beauty is eternity here below.” (Simone Weil, Waiting on God)

UNANIMOUS

“Both the Soviet Union and China are unanimous in their condemnation of artificial methods (of birth control).”
(Dr. John Billings, developer of the WHO Ovulation Method)
The police are virtually unanimous on the death penalty for premeditated murder.

UNAWARE

He was totally unaware of my presence.

UNCERTAIN

You can be uncertain of your audience, but never be uncertain of your facts.

UNCONCERNED

He was totally unconcerned (i.e. not worried) about my state of health.
They were totally unconcerned at (i.e. indifferent to) the panic they were generating.
They proved unconcerned (i.e. uninvolved) in the machinations to unseat the mayor.
You seem unconcerned with the competition.

UNCONNECTED

In spite of his claims, he was unconnected to the family.
Are you pretending to be unconnected with this matter?

UNCONSCIOUS

She walked through the house unconscious of the mess the vandals had left.
“Insensible to, but unconscious of; indifferent to but oblivious of.” (Fowler, The King’s English) (italics, ours)

UNCOPLED

“Malarmé (was the) first to uncouple words from any necessary relation to the world.”
(George Steiner, The Economist)

UNCOUTH

He was uncouth in dress and speech.

UNDESERVING

I’ve got to say I’m undeserving of your kind words.

UNEASY

Paul was very uneasy about his friend’s sudden appearance at the scene.
I was uneasy at the thought of crossing him.

UNEQUAL

He proved unequal to the demands on him.

UNFAITHFUL

You have been unfaithful to me since the day we married.

UNFAMILIAR

I’m sorry, but that flag is unfamiliar to me.
They were unfamiliar with computers.
UNFAVORABLE, UNFAVOURABLE
The rough sea is unfavourable for a boat race.
The final vote was unfavorable to me.

UNFIT
The weather is unfit for man or beast.
You are unfit to wear that uniform.

UNFRIENDLY
You have been unfriendly to me from the start.
Try to not to be so unfriendly with my family.

UNGRATEFUL
Why are you so ungrateful to your mother for everything she has done?

UNHAPPY
I am very unhappy about your conduct last night.
“All happy families resemble one another, but every unhappy family is unhappy in its own individual way.”
(Tolstoy)

UNIFORM (A)
That window should be uniform with the one on the other side of the door.

UNINTELLIGIBLE
Your message is completely unintelligible to me.

UNINTERESTED
Forgive me, but I am totally uninterested in your politics.

UNION
A union between the two mammoth corporations ended their fierce rivalry.
The union of those two nations bodes ill for Europe.
My country's union with yours would make me very happy.

UNIQUE
“All DNA is structurally unique to its owner — whether a human, a flower, or a bacterium.”
(David Holzman)

UNITE
My family is united to yours by marriage.
“We were born to unite with our fellowmen, and to join in community with the human race.”
(Cicero)

UNKNOWN
He was unknown to everyone but his immediate family.

UNLEASH
“Isaac Newton published his monumental Principia and unleashed on the world the science of mechanics.”
(Tony Rothman, Discover mag.)

UNLUCKY
My brother is unlucky at both cards and love.
That's unlucky for me!
I have been unlucky in everything I have tried.
She has always been unlucky with bulk purchases.

UNMOVED
“The mountain remains unmoved at seeming defeat by the mist.”
(Rabindranath Tagore)

UNPERCEIVED
They sneaked past the gate, unperceived by the guards.

UNPOPULAR
She was very unpopular, particularly amongst the students in her class.
I was very unpopular at parties.
They were unpopular because of (or on account of) their prison records.
He was very unpopular with the unions.

UNPRACTISED, UNPRACTICED
He was too young, too unpractised in the arts of love.
**UNPREPARED**
I was totally **unprepared** for the raw beauty of Spain.

**UNQUALIFIED**
He couldn’t have been more **unqualified** for the job.
I am **unqualified in** virtually all the arts of peace; that’s why I stayed in the army.

**UNRELATED**
“Dyslexia is **unrelated to** intelligence. Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill and Woodrow Wilson are all believed to have been dyslexic.”
(New York Times)

**UNROLL**
“The present is the past rolled up for action, and the past is the present **unrolled for understanding.”**
(Will and Ariel Durant, The Lesson of History)

**UNSAFE**
That swimming pool is **unsafe** for small children.

**UNSATISFACTORY**
Your pledge of support is **unsatisfactory to** me.

**UNSOUND**
He was **unsound in** his arguments.
Are you trying to say I am **unsound of** mind?

**UNSTEADY**
I wish you were not so **unsteady of** purpose.
He was so **unsteady on** his feet, I thought he was drunk.

**UNUSABLE**
You are **unsuitable for** duty in my regiment.
So what are you saying? That my dress is **unsuitable to** the occasion?

**UNTIRING**
Gilles was **untiring in** his pursuit of my daughter.

**UNTRUE**
That is **untrue** (i.e. false) **of** all the members of my family.
Why do you think I am being **untrue** (i.e. unfaithful) **to** you?

**UNUSED**
I am **unused to** that sort of treatment.

**UNWILLING**
They were **unwilling for** their families to be seen in public. (British)
I was **unwilling to** be punished for something I had not done.

**UNWITTING**
They walked into the mall, **unwitting of** the bomb scare.

**UNWORTHY**
What you did yesterday is truly **unworthy of** you.

**UPBRAID**
I was **upbraided** (i.e. reproached) **for** leaving the church halfway through the sermon.
She **upbraids** me (i.e. finds fault) **with** my customary lack of punctuality. (British)

**UPSET (A)**
She was very **upset about** their loss of the precious stamps.
I was **upset by** his demeanor.

**USE (N)**
I have no **use for** you or your silly prattle.
They should be able to find some **uses for** your invention.
May I have the **use of** your lawnmower for about half an hour?

**USE (V)**
“For the sole purpose of transporting people, 250 million Americans allocate more fuel than is **used by** 1.3 billion Chinese and Indians for all purposes.”
(Ivan Illich, Towards a History of Needs)
They were free to use the earth’s riches for good or evil.

“There are now about 200,000 chemical compounds used commercially in North America.”
(Globe & Mail, 1980)

“Hebrew was considered so important in early America that three major universities (Yale, Columbia and Dartmouth) used it on their seals.”
(The Jewish Connection)

They were not used (i.e. accustomed) to such poverty.
I am not used to working with my hands.

**USEFUL**

“Mitochondrial DNA has a unique characteristic that makes it very useful for tracing lineages. It is carried in the egg, but not in the sperm, so it is passed on to children only from their mothers.”
(David Noonan, Discover mag., Oct. ’90)

That shovel should be very useful to me.

**USELESS**

It’s a good knife, but useless for this task.
Sorry, but you’re useless to me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VACATION (V)</strong></th>
<th>VENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We always vacation in Florida. I vacationed in Tadoussac with my friends for two weeks.</td>
<td>She vented her displeasure on her sisters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VAIN</strong></td>
<td><strong>VERSED</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was exceedingly vain of her blond good looks.</td>
<td>He is well versed in everything that’s impractical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VALUE (V)</strong></td>
<td><strong>VEST</strong> (V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He was valued as a guide throughout Africa. “The world’s largest marketplace for securities is the New York Stock Exchange, which last year traded shares valued at 970 billion vs. $392 billion for the runner-up Tokyo Exchange.” (Time mag., 1986) The agricultural college was highly valued for its progressive approach.</td>
<td>“Not all governments vest the power in the people.” (Michael Gartner) “A Christian Church vested with the plenitude of Christ’s teaching.” (Paul Johnson, A History of Christianity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VANISH</strong></td>
<td><strong>VETO (N)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lead, a potent poison, has nearly vanished from the U.S. sky.” (Mark Roman, Discover mag.) “If the cock be heard to crow, the charm will vanish into air.” (Hogg, Universal Oxford Dictionary) “The three imperial monarchies of east and central Europe (Hohenzollerns, Habsburgs and Romanovs) all vanished within a year (1918).” (Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)</td>
<td>You can expect me to place a veto on that crazy motion of yours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VARIANCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>VEXED</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am at variance with him on virtually every subject.</td>
<td>He is either vexed about something or at someone. I can tell that you’re vexed with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VARY</strong></td>
<td><strong>VIE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their conduct clearly varied from the norm. The new shipment of socks varied in colour, size, length and, of course, price.</td>
<td>The whole family vies with me for the last piece of chocolate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VENGEANCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>VIGILANT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He exacted his vengeance on everyone who passed by.</td>
<td>“It was Dwight D. Eisenhower, a general and a Republican, who gave us the term military-industrial complex and told us to be vigilant about this unlicensed and uncontrolled power in our society.” (John K. Galbraith, Guide to economics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VISIBLE</strong></td>
<td><strong>VISIBLE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lake is visible to us from the top of the hill. “When we look at the faintest galaxies visible with current telescopes, we see them as they were about</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 billion years ago, when the universe was already a few billions of years old.” (Mitchell Waldrop, Discover mag.)

VISIT (V)
She was visited by more friends than she knew she had.
Why is every misfortune visited upon me?
He is visited by every variety of flu that comes along.

VITAL
“Colonies were never vital to France’s survival, as they were to England’s.” (Sanche de Gramont, The French)

VOGUE
There was a short-lived vogue for tattoos.
The vogue of torn jeans persists to this day.

VOID
His whole speech was void of meaning.

VOLUNTEER (V)
He volunteers for work every morning.
They volunteered to paint the barn for him.

VOTE (V)
You can vote for or against me, I don’t really care.
They voted on the issue just before the House adjourned.
I voted to have him removed from office.

VOUCH
I need someone to vouch for me.

VOUCHSAFED
“We came together with a closeness seldom vouchsafed to friends.”
(Gen. Jan Christian Smuts, speaking about Churchill)

VULNERABLE
Streams and rivers that course through forests of conifers are more vulnerable to acidification.
“Cancer cells are particularly vulnerable to health . . Healthy tissue protects itself.”
(Mark Roman, Discover mag.)
**WAIT (V)**

Wait for me, please!

“The universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.” (Eden Phillpotts)

“Electronics (computers) takes over much of the intellectual slog, and releases the mind for higher flights. There is much freedom waiting in those machines.” (Lance Morrow, Time mag. essay)

“Even land viruses hang out in the sea, patiently waiting in limbo for a shot at their targets.” (David H. Freedman, Discover mag.)

She waits on him hand and foot.

He waited up for her till long after midnight.

**WAKE (V)**

“They cannot . . be waking (i.e. be still up and about) at this late hour.” (Charles Dickens, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

I like to wake to the songs of the birds.

She finally woke up to the fact that her husband is unfaithful.

She woke with a start.

“You promised to wake (i.e. stay up) with me the night before my wedding.” (C. Bronte, Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**WALLOW**

She seemed to like to wallow in despair.

**WANDER (V)**

“There was no evidence . . but strange whispers wandered about the camp.” (Macauley, The Universal Oxford Dictionary)

“They said he was wandering in his head yesterday.” (Dickens)

They wandered into our courtyard by mistake.

My eyes wandered over the lovely countryside.

“In some the gout wanders through the whole body.” (The Universal Oxford Dictionary)

**WANT (V)**

I’m afraid that child is wanting in (i.e. short of) intelligence.

The museum never wants for money (i.e. is never short of funds).

“He is . . wanted (i.e. under warrant for arrest) internationally for theft.” (S. Pritchett, Oxford English Dictionary)

**WAR (N)**

“The war against Iraq was over in weeks.” (The Economist)

It boiled down to a war of words.

“27,000 official forms have been scrapped in a Whitehall war on red tape.” (Daily Mail, Oxford English Dictionary)

**WAR (V)**

In such a big tribe, they warred among themselves.

They have warred on their neighbours throughout history.

“To live is to war with trolls in heart and soul.” (Bjornson to Ibsen)
WARM (A)
She came into my arms still warm from the sun.

WARM (V)
She was warmed by his smile, even before she walked into his room.
The young mother is warming her child by the fire.
He might have warmed to (i.e. felt more kindly towards) her paintings, if he hadn’t disliked her so.

WARN
They were warned against leaving their trash around.
I will warn him of her coming.
The child was warned by his mother not to climb the cliff.

WARNING (N)
It stands as a warning against all wife beaters.
The prophet Jeremiah gave advance warning of dire things to come.

WARRANT (N)
I’m afraid there’s a warrant out for him.
The constable has a warrant for his arrest.

WARY (V)
I am not only wary of her dog, I am also wary of her.

WASH (V)
She liked to wash her clothes in the lake.
Say that again, and I’ll wash out your mouth with soap.
You had better wash up for the pastor’s visit.
He washed every wood panel with care.

WASTE (V)
“In 1936 in the U.S., free competition had given way to oligopoly and monopolistic competition and, because of the latter, too many resources were being wasted on advertising and salesmanship.”
(John K. Galbraith, A Life In Our Times)

WATCH (V)
“We could watch teachers at work, and profit from doing so.” (E. Blishen, Oxford English Dictionary)
She watched (i.e. stood guard) at the window for him all day.
Watch (i.e. be on the lookout) for me at 3 o’clock tomorrow afternoon.
Watch out for (i.e. guard against) the vagrants when you walk down that street.
She was watching me through the back window.
Drunk out of his mind, the old actor watched from the wings, as his young stand-in performed brilliantly.

WAVER
“He never wavered in his conviction that God looked down on Eric Gill and saw that he was good.”
(Fiona MacCarthy, The Economist)

WEAN
The farmer weaned the tiny colt from the mare.
I am weaning these kittens from the mother right now.

WEAR (V)
The youth liked to wear (i.e. sport) his hair in a pony tail.
The habitués of the pub liked to wear away (i.e. spend) the night in song.
“Autumn wore (i.e. lasted) into winter.”
(D. Madden, Oxford English Dictionary)
“The New England winter had begun to wear (i.e. weigh heavily) on her.” (M. Piercy, Oxford English Dictionary)
She was worn out (i.e. debilitated) by drink and drugs.
They were worn out from (i.e. exhausted by) the long trip.
“She would wear a gown to rags, because he had once liked it.” (Thackeray, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“Steyne wore (i.e. bore) the scar to his dying day.” (Thackeray, Oxford English Dictionary)
He was worn out with (i.e. drained by) worry.

WEARY
I am weary of your incessant complaints.
WEAVE (V)
“He wove (i.e. wended) his way through the endless swindles and machinations of the railway rings.”
(Alastair Sweeny, George-Etienne Cartier)
“Untruth is so maliciously weaved (i.e. intertwined) with untruth.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

WEDGE (V)
I will wedge our car between the hedge and the house, and leave the driveway free.
They found him wedged between the roots of a giant tree.
He was wedged in the space between the fireplace and the sideboard.

WEEP
She weeps at the strains of violins.
The old man wept about anything and everything.
I weep for her every night.
He wept like a child.
She wept over the grave till darkness fell.

WEIGH
“The hummingbird . . a wisp of a bird weighing about 1/15 of an ounce.”
(Gladys Francis Lewis, The Reader’s Digest)
“Anticipating the discovery of pulsars, Thomas Gold had written about the possible existence of stars so dense that one cubic centimeter of their mass would weigh over a billion tons.” (David Osborne, National Geographic mag.)
She weighed under 90 pounds soaking wet.
That pumpkin could weigh up to 100 lbs.
“The girl’s testimony weighed heavily with (i.e. proved important to) the jury.”
(The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)
He weighed in at 240 lbs.

WELCOME (A)
You are welcome at my home anytime!
If you want this photo of mother, you are welcome to it.

WELCOME (V)
You welcomed me into your family, and I’ll always be grateful.
Welcome to my home, dear friend.
They welcomed me with open arms.

WEND
Wend your way (i.e. travel) north by familiar trails.
“Wend on your way (i.e. depart), in the name of God and St. Dunstan.” (Sir W. Scott, Oxford English Dictionary)
Many cases are now wending their way through the courts.
The river wended its way (i.e. flowed) towards the ocean.

WET (A)
I was wet from head to toe.
The boys were wet with sweat from all their exertions.

WET (V)
“The red hot clinker . . was wetted down by the trimmer.”
(Ships Monthly, Oxford English Dictionary)
“House-broken dogs wet on the parlor rug.”
(John Steinbeck, Oxford English Dictionary)
“They kissed his feet, and wetted them with tears.”
(John Bunyan, Oxford English Dictionary)
She was wetting the counter top with a sponge.

WHET
“Poor Mikhail Gorbachev: the minute his back is turned, one of his supposedly loyal lieutenants whets a knife for it.” (The Economist mag.)

WHIRL (V)
He whirled her around the room.

WHISTLE (V)
Why did I slap his face? Because he whistled at me.
She is whistling in the dark (i.e. trying to bolster her courage).
As far as I’m concerned, he can whistle for (i.e. go without) his supper.
His refusal to acknowledge the crisis was like whistling past the graveyard.

WHIZ (VV)
He ducked as the stone came whizzing by his ears.
She is constantly whizzing (i.e. bustling) off to meetings.
A bullet whizzed past his head.
“The exploded cork whizzed through the air.” (Disraeli, Oxford English Dictionary)
The children enjoyed watching the fireworks whizz up into the night sky.

WIDE
He fired three times, but always wide of the mark.

WILD
To tell the truth, I’m wild about you.
He was wild with enthusiasm about her scheme.

WILL (N)
“Oppression and extermination can repress the will to freedom for decades, sometimes generations, but inevitably it reappears.” (Charles Krauthammer, Time mag.)
I have the will to do it, but not the strength.

WIND
“He . . winds (i.e. wends) . . his oblique way amongst innumerable stars.” (Milton, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“A new age in the treatment of diseases may be upon us . . Artificial strings of nucleic acids can pair with RNA, or wind (i.e. coil) around the double helix of DNA, and in effect silence the genes responsible for many illnesses.” (J.S. Cohen and M.E. Hogan, Scientific American mag.)
“There were queues winding out from the platform barriers.” (O. Manning, Oxford English Dictionary)
The opportunist is able to wind (i.e. insinuate) himself into a position of influence.
“Thread comes wound on (i.e. coiled around) spools.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)
“The lowing herd winds (i.e. meanders) slowly o’er the lee.” (Oxford English Dictionary)

“Today’s American Jew is about 2 1/2 times as likely to wind up (i.e. end up) in Who’s Who as the population at large.” (Charles E. Silberman, A Certain People)
Wind (i.e. wrap) this scarf round your neck; it’s very cold outside.
A path winds (i.e. turns and twists) through the park.
The parade wound (i.e. wended) its way to the stadium.
The Egyptian mummy was wound (i.e. wrapped) with bandages.

WINDED
He was badly winded (i.e. had his breath knocked out of him) by a blow to the stomach.
Winded (i.e. made breathless) by his exertions, the athlete collapsed.

WINK (V)
Why do you have to wink at me every time you look at me?
They winked at (i.e. shut their eyes to) the illegality of it.
“Davis winked to (i.e. signaled) his friends that it was all right.” (Universal Oxford Dictionary)

WINKLE
“Japan spends four times more each year buying American technology than America manages to wink out of (i.e. delicately pry out, bit by bit from) Japan.” (The Economist)

WIPE
He always wipes his boots on the mat before entering.
She is wiping the tears from her baby’s face.
The waitress wiped the table with a soiled cloth.
He is wiping his boots on (i.e. humiliating) the poor girl.
That brute is wiping the floor with (i.e. inflicting a crushing defeat on) his opponent.

WISH (V)
“Freedom is a powerful animal that fights barriers, and sometimes makes people wish for higher fences.” (Lance Morrow, Time mag.)
I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy.
Wish on a lucky star.

WIT
Careful now! You must have your wits about you at all times.
“Uncle Bill . . . is evidently the wit of the party.”
(Charles Dickens)

WITHDRAW
I have to withdraw (i.e. remove myself) from the team for the rest of the summer.
She withdrew (i.e. retired) to the library.

WITHHOLD
She withheld the news from him until the day he left.

WITNESS (N)
Please don’t bear witness against me.
I was a witness of the court.
They need two witnesses of the event
Through TV, millions were witnesses to his heroism.

WONDER (V)
I sometimes wonder about you.
They wondered at her patience under the circumstances.

WORK (V)
“There is a universal tendency for things to be arranged in the least intricate, most probable way. The characteristic of life is that it works against this tendency, creating complexity where there was none.”
(James Lovelock, The Economist mag.)
They have been working at that hospital since it was built.
She first worked for him as his secretary.
“Natural selection has no consciousness and cannot work for future benefits.”
(Stephen Jay Gould, Discover mag., Oct. ‘96)
“As late as the 1950s, out of 170 million Africans south of the Sahara, only 8 million worked for wages at any one time in the year.”
(Paul Johnson, A History of the Modern World)

“As every Kipling reader knows, many Indian elephants work for their living. African elephants cannot be trained.”
(The Economist mag.)
The headboard of the king’s bed “is a marvel of beasts and nymphs and satyrs, leaves, flowers and fruits worked (i.e. carved) into the wood.”
(George Garrett, Death of a Fox)
Cadherins (calcium-dependent adhesion molecules) keep, for example, a human embryo from falling apart by gluing similar cells together. But, it turns out, they don’t work like glue at all. They work like a zipper.”
(Josie Glausiusz, Discover mag.)
“Children of four worked in the mines (of Britain) and mill women gave their infants opium to keep them quiet.”
(John W. Dodds, Age of Paradox)
“Home is where the harbour is for the 6000 or so barge families who live, work, and play on the Seine and its system of canals.”
(Charles McCary, National Geographic mag.)
“A study in California found that pregnant women, who worked on video-display terminals for 20 hours or more a week, had twice the risk of miscarrying as other clerical workers.”
(Anastasia Toutefix, Time mag.)
“The Spirit took over and worked through many people.”
(Paul Johnson, The History of Christianity)
She worked under the illusion that what she was doing mattered.
I worked under him (i.e. he was my superior) about 20 years.
“We know in our hearts that we are in the world for keeps, yet we are still tackling 20-year problems with 5-year plans staffed by 2-year personnel working with 1-year appropriations.”
(H. Cleveland, Minnesota’s Institute of Public Affairs)
“Italian artisans working with the famous Murano glass in the 16th century were forbidden under pain of death to leave their Venetian island, so precious and guarded were the secrets of glass-making.”
(Dorota Kozinska, The Gazette, Montreal)

WORM (V)
He is worming himself into the old man’s confidence.
She wormed it out of him, kiss by kiss.
WO R RY (N)
It’s the worry of it all, my dear.
He’s been a worry to her all his life.

WO R RY (V)
“One reason for worrying about deforestation is that it adds to the carbon in the earth’s atmosphere. Growing trees lock up carbon; burning or rotting trees release it.”
(The Economist)
“I am worried for your dignity.”
(John Le Carré, The Night Manager)
She worries over him till he’s ready to scream.

WO RT H Y
She’s worthy of every compliment.

WR ANG L E
They wrangle about money on every payday.
If they’re not wrangling over the menu, they’re wrangling about the seating.

WRAP (V)
“Again she wrapped her arms about me.”
(Richardson, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
He found the flag wrapped around a tree.
I will wrap it in foil.
“The house is wrapped in slumbers.” (Charles Dickens)
“Wrap (i.e. absorbed) in a pleasing fit of melancholy.”
(Milton, Universal Oxford Dictionary)
She was completely wrapped up (i.e. engrossed) in her work.

WR A T H
Her wrath about that failure was boundless.
They let their wrath at the failings of a few affect their attitude to the whole Church.
He vented his wrath on everyone around him.

W R E A K
Terrorists wreak havoc on the whole community.

W R A N T L E
She wrestled against the thought all night long.
I’d wrestle with the devil for a living wage.

W R I N K L E (V)
Her skin was deeply wrinkled by years of chain-smoking.
She wrinkled her eyes against the sun.
“The finest skin wrinkles in a few years.”
(Addison, The Universal Oxford Dictionary)

W R I T E
“Anticipating the discovery of pulsars, Thomas Gold had written about the possible existence of stars so dense that one cubic centimeter of their mass would weigh over a billion tons.” (David Osborne, National Geographic mag.)
“History is written by the victor.”
(The Economist)
“When the poet Swinburne wrote of ‘a small sweet world of wave-encompassed wonders,’ he was referring to the Channel Island of Sark — the smallest independent British state in the Commonwealth.”
(John Gatrell, This England mag.)
“An estimated 70% of the world’s mail is written in English as is 80 percent of electronic information.”
(Reuter/The Economist)
“The Oath of Strasbourg is the oldest known text written in French.”
(Arthur Kaptainis, The Gazette, Montreal)
“How did the ageing process become written into living cells? Nobody knows.”
(Hugh Montefiore, The Probability of God)
“Colonial history has been written with a white hand.”
(Leonardo Boff, Brazilian theologian)

W R O T H
She couldn’t be more wroth about her loss of privilege.
They were wroth even at the house he lived in.
I am wroth with you for telling her.
YEARN (V)
I have been yearning after her since I was six years old. “Some corner of the psyche . . yearns for high kings and heroes on flying horses.” (James Walsh, Time mag., Dec. 5, ‘94)

YEARNING (N)
Expatriated since childhood, she has a strong yearning for things English. Nostalgia is a yearning for the past.

YEN
She had a yen (i.e. longing) for travel.

YIELD
She yielded willingly to his greater strength.

ZEAL
Their zeal for the New Order led to terrible excesses. She showed great zeal in the pursuit of her career.

ZEALOUS
I wish you were as zealous for my cause. You would not be so zealous in support of my interests.

ZERO (V)
He zeroed in on the target and released the bomb.

ZEST
Her new zest for life surprised everyone.

ZIGZAG (V)
She zigzagged her way through the traffic.

ZIP
“In the time it takes to read this sentence, millions upon millions of neutrinos, pouring in from outer space, will zip through the body of every human being on earth.” (Michael D. Lemonick, Time mag., April 8, 1996)

ZONE (V)
They zoned (i.e. designated) the neighbourhood as commercial. “‘Little Bit’, a dolphin, zoned in on him (a quadraplegic boy) and nuzzled him gently.” (Justine Kaplan, Omni mag.)

ZOOM
I want to zoom in (i.e. focus) on that ship out there. The tiny, remote-controlled plane zoomed (i.e. flew) through my open window and into my room. The missile zoomed out of the sky.
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SUZANNE HARTUSCH, TEACHER, CANADA

About the authors . . .

In my work with students from many parts of the world at the Centre for the Development of Writing at the Faculty of Education, McGill University, I had difficulty explaining why one preposition was used and not another -- the reason being that there is rarely a 'why'.

So, when Charles introduced me to his preposition project, I recognized that a resource of this kind would be the answer to every writer's prayer.

Elizabeth Champion Speyer,
M.A. Education, McGill;
M.A. History, Concordia

My mother tongue is English, but all my formal education was in French. With the result that, when I began my writing career in English, I faced most of the problems that plague those for whom English is the second language. Should I write different from? than? or to? Should I say exempt from? empathize with? cater to?

Such questions dogged me throughout my 47 years in advertising. And I searched in vain for help. I wish someone had compiled a guide to prepositions like this one -- in time for me to use.

Charles N. Prieur,
President of GoodEnglish.com