



# **chicanery (n.)**

**\*clever deception through the use of misleading or confusing words or acts**

**\*Suspect some kind of chicanery if the offer seems too good to be true.**

**\*syn.: deceit; duplicity; subterfuge; fraud**



# **contentious (adj.)**

**\*causing or marked by argument or conflict**

**\*Politics is a contentious subject in our house because my father is a Democrat and my mom's a Republican.**

**\*syn.: antagonistic; belligerent; aggressive; combative**



# **dissemble (v.)**

**\*to conceal with an intent to deceive**

**\*Rather than answer the reporter's questions directly, the politician chose to dissemble his responses.**

**\*syn.: feign; deceive; sham**



# **A sixth sense**

## **(informal)**

**\*an intuitive reaction or understanding that can't be explained logically**

**\*In my experience, not everything can be explained rationally. For example, twins often report having a sixth sense about each other—even if they are far apart.**

**\*syn.: instinct; clairvoyance; prescience**



**XXXX**

**MLK Holiday**

**MONDAY**

**January 15, 2024**



# **execrate (v.)**

**\*to utterly abhor; to denounce as detestable**

**\*History can provide examples of countries once execrated as enemies who are later accepted as allies.**

**\*syn.: condemn; vilify; loathe; revile**



# fealty (n.)

**\*faithfulness; allegiance**

**\*The knights of the Round Table pledged fealty to King Arthur.**

**\*syn.: loyalty; fidelity**



# **pecuniary (adj.)**

**\*having to do with money**

**\*The interests of the founders of the food co-op are more idealistic than pecuniary.**

**\*syn.: fiscal; financial; monetary; commercial**





# **let someone off the hook (informal)**

**\*release someone from responsibility; escape from a difficult situation**

**\*I promised my mother weeks ago that I'd help her clean out the garage this Saturday, and unfortunately, there's no way she'll let me off the hook.**



# **stratagem (n.)**

**\*a clever scheme for gaining an end**

**\*Lin's asking Tina to go to the movies was a stratagem to give us time to plan for Tina's surprise birthday party.**

**\*syn.: scheme; tactic; maneuver**



# **vendetta (n.)**

**\*a blood feud; a prolonged and bitter feud; an extended revenge taking**

**\*It took the deaths of Romeo and Juliet to end the vendetta between the Montagues and the Capulets.**

**\*syn.: feud; enmity; strife; dissonance**



# **actuate (v.)**

**\*1. to cause to put into mechanical motion**

**\*A thermostat is actuated by changes of temperature.**

**\*syn.: activate; initiate; trigger**

**\*2. to cause to take action**

**\*Telecasts of the grievances of Native American women actuated Wilma Mankiller, a Cherokee, to return to Oklahoma where she became the tribe's first female chief.**

**\*syn.: motivate; arouse; incite; impel**



# **brackish (adj.)**

- \*1. made up of a mixture of fresh water and seawater.**
- \*Crabs live in the brackish waters of the estuary.**
- \*syn.: briny; salty**
  
- \*2. having an unpleasant taste**
- \*The coffee had been brewed hours before and was now so brackish that it was undrinkable.**
- \*syn.: unsavory; unpalatable**



# **a red flag**



**\*a warning sign or signal**

**\*I should have realized that the rent on the apartment was too good to be true, but I overlooked the red flags in the advertisement.**

**\*syn.: alarm; forewarning; admonition; alert; urge**



# **dolorous (adj.)**

**\*causing or marked by pain, misery, or sorrow**

**\*Mexican artist Frida Kahlo used graphic imagery to express grief in her dolorous self-portrait.**

**\*syn.: morose; forlorn; doleful; mournful**



# **endemic (adj.)**

**\*widespread or peculiar to a certain place or among a certain people**

**\*Malaria is endemic to the tropics.**

**\*syn.: indigenous; prevalent**





# **fecund (adj.)**

**\*1. producing or capable of producing many offspring**

**\*Zebrafish are highly fecund; each female is capable of laying 200 eggs per clutch.**

**\*syn.: prolific; fertile; lush**

**\*2. intellectually or artistically productive; creative**

**\*Bach was a fecund composer, and among his many works are some 300 sacred cantatas.**

**\*syn.: cerebral; innovative; ingenious**



# **insidious (adj.)**

**\*1. seemingly harmless while actually being dangerous; treacherous or deceptive**

**\*The woman on the Dublin street appeared harmless but actually was an insidious informer for the enemy in Ireland's civil war.**

**\*syn.: cunning; deceitful; clandestine; covert**

**\*2. spreading harmfully in a subtle or gradual way**

**\*Watching too much television has an insidious effect on the minds of young children.**

**\*syn.: furtively; perilous; adverse**



# **change of heart (informal)**

**\*a change in attitude or preference**

**\*When I was in high school, I couldn't wait to go to a university far away from home, but I had a change of heart during the pandemic and decided to apply to schools close to home.**

**\*syn.: reversal; revision; revise**



# **egregious (adj.)**

**\*conspicuously bad; flagrant**

**\*He is an egregious liar, and I would not be surprised if he lied about everything.**

**\*syn.: atrocious; heinous; intolerable; appalling**



# **rectitude (n.)**

**\*high moral character**

**\*The teen's love of reckless pranks is not a reflection of his rectitude.**

**\*syn.: integrity; principle; decency; probity**



# **cognitive (adj.)**

**\*relating to mental processes such as awareness, remembering, reasoning**

**\*A person's cognitive skills can be evaluated using psychological tests.**

**\*syn.: discernible; corporeal; rational**



# **interloper (n.)**

**\*someone who intrudes on or interferes in the affairs of others**

**\*The locals considered the tourists interlopers and resented their interactions.**

**\*syn.: trespasser; encroacher; meddler**



# **rock the boat**

## **(informal)**

**\*behave in a way that could cause problems or upset people**

**\*There was much drama in my office a few months ago, but things have really calmed down recently. I'm hesitant to do anything that might rock the boat.**

**\* syn.: dissent; disturb; challenge**





# **precursor (n.)**

- \*a person or thing that comes before and indicates the approach of another; a forerunner**
- \*Aching muscles can be the precursor of a bout of the flu.**
- \* syn.: harbinger; progenitor; predecessor; trailblazer; forerunner**



# **presentiment (n.)**

**\*a feeling something is about to happen**

**\*When the telephone rang, I had a presentiment that Uncle Jack had bad news.**

**\*syn.: premonition; foreboding**



# **ramification (n.)**

**\*an outgrowth of a simple idea or plan; a resulting development or consequence**

**\*Have they considered the ramifications of moving to another school district?**

**\*syn.: consequence; implication; impact; result**



# **torpor (n.)**

- \*a state of mental or physical sluggishness or inactivity**
- \*Extreme heat often induces torpor in those uncustomed to the tropics.**
- \*syn.: lethargy; languor; weariness; fatigue; enervation**



# **see the writing on the wall**

**(very informal; used in speaking)**

**\*understand something (negative) clearly, usually an unspoken meaning**

**\*No one told him he would be fired, but he could see the writing on the wall.**

**\*syn.: portent; harbinger; omen; foreshadowing**



# **abjure (v.)**

**\*to renounce or give up formally**

**\*Galileo was forced by the Catholic Church to abjure his belief that Earth circled the sun.**

**\*syn.: renounce; disavow; repudiate**



# **amorphous (adj.)**

**\*without a definite shape, boundary, or character**

**\*The amoeba's lack of a fixed structure gives it an amorphous shape.**

**\*syn.: nebulous; obscure; formless; inchoate**



# **dichotomy (n.)**

**\*division into two distinct parts or groups**

**\*She argues that moral relativism blurs the dichotomy between good and evil.**

**\*syn.: chasm; polarity; divergent**





# **herculean (adj.)**

**\*of extraordinary size, power, or difficulty**

**\*Plowing the city streets after the blizzard of 1996 was a herculean task.**

**\*syn.: arduous; onerous; colossal; gargantuan**



# **make light of**

**(formal or informal)**

**\*joke about; not take seriously**

**\*I think it's very important to have a sense of humor about things—it's actually one of the traits I most appreciate in a person. But there are definitely some things that are too serious to be made light of, and it's important to recognize what they are.**

**\*syn.: downplay; trivialize; devalue**



# **nefarious (adj.)**

**\*very wicked**

**\*The nefarious practice of enforced of child labor is rampant in many poor countries.**

**\*syn.: heinous; abhorrent; vile; depraved; iniquitous**



# **nihilism (n.)**

- \*a viewpoint that denies any meaning or value to life**
- \*His cynicism was so extreme that it bordered on nihilism.**
- \*syn.: denial; renunciation; abnegation**



# ratify (v.)

**\*to approve, confirm, or verify**

**\*In a citywide referendum, voters ratified the ban on smoking in restaurants.**

**\*syn.: endorse; formalize; sanction**



# **abrogate (v.)**

**\*to put an end to; to abolish or repeal**

**\*Often, one of the first acts of a dictator is to abrogate the powers of the press.**

**\*syn.: revoke; rescind; nullify; eradicate**



# **wait for the other shoe to drop**

## **(informal)**

**\*waiting for an expected or inevitable (negative) event to occur**

**\*Rents have been rising really quickly in my city. I've been lucky in that my landlord has traditionally kept things affordable, but the building was recently sold. The new owners are doing all sorts of renovations and upgrades, and now I am just waiting for the other shoe to drop (waiting for rents to increase).**



# **venerable (adj.)**

**\*given a great deal of respect, especially because of age, wisdom, or character**

**\*The president was a venerable old man, full of wisdom and with a gracious manner.**

**\*syn.: august; respected; venerated; revered; honorable**





# decry (v.)

**\*to criticize strongly; to denounce**

**\*Many citizens of the world still decry the failure of stronger nations to intervene in the genocidal civil war that, in the 1990s, raged in Rwanda, Africa.**

**\*syn.: criticize; censure; belittle**



# **leviathan (n.)**

**\*anything that is of enormous size**

**\*The cruise ship was a leviathan with luxury accommodations for over two thousand passengers.**

**\*syn.: colossal; humongous; mammoth; goliath**



# **mawkish (adj.)**

**\*excessively sentimental**

**\*Because today's greeting-card verses are so mawkish, I often select a humorous one instead.**

**\*syn.: maudlin; cloying; saccharine; overemotional**



# walking on eggshells (informal)

**\*behave very cautiously in order to not anger / bother someone who is easily upset**

**\*My living situation is a little awkward right now. Two of my housemates had an argument several weeks ago, and everyone has been walking on eggshells around them since then.**

**\*syn.: avoiding; wary; heedful**



# XXXX

## SPRING HOLIDAY

**MON.-FRI.**

**March 11-15, 2024**



# **misapprehend (v.)**

# **misapprehension (n.)**

**\*to fail to understand correctly**

**\*So that no one misapprehends the conditions of the agreement, let's put them in writing.**

**\*syn.: misinterpret; misconstrue**



# **recourse (n.)**

**\*1. a turning to someone or something for aid**

**\*You have no other recourse than to speak to the police.**

**\*2. a source of help or support**

**\*Reading was his usual recourse during period of insomnia.**

**\*syn.: option; resort; refuge**



# **replete (adj.)**

**\*well-supplied; full**

**\*His memoir is replete with amusing anecdotes.**

**\*syn.: copious; abound; overflowing; abundant; plenteous**





# **waive (v.)**

**\*to give up as a right; to forgo**

**\*The town waived a portion of property taxes for senior citizens.**

**\*syn.: relinquish; cede; concede**



# **let something slide**

## **(very informal)**

**\*overlook a (minor) wrongdoing**

**\*I have a bad habit of forgetting my family members' birthdays. Usually, they let it slide, but last year my sister was very angry with me when I forgot to take her to lunch to celebrate.**

**\*syn.: neglect; overlook; disregard; ignore**



# **enervate (v.)**

**\*to lessen the vigor or strength of; to enfeeble**

**\*Sitting too long in the hot whirlpool at her health club  
enervated my cousin.**

**\*syn.: exhaust; fatigue; devitalize; prostrate**



# **epicure (n.)**

**\*one with discriminating taste, especially but not exclusively relating to good food and drink.**

**\*Epicures gathered at Le Crillon in Paris to name the chef of the year.**

**\*syn.: gourmet; connoisseur**



# **exculpate (v.)**

**\*to clear from alleged guilt or fault**

**\*Through her diligence and knowledge of the law, the young attorney exculpated the defendant.**

**\*syn.: absolve, acquit, exonerate, vindicate**



# **heterogeneous (adj.)**

**\*differing in kind or parts; varied**

**\*The college students in this older neighborhood help make the community more heterogeneous.**

**\*syn.: diverse; disparate; diversified**



**XXXX**

**GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY**

**FRIDAY**

**March 29, 2024**



**XXXX**

**EASTER MONDAY**

**MONDAY**

**April 01, 2024**





# **infinitesimal (adj.)**

**\*extremely small size or quantity**

**\*Quarks are infinitesimal subatomic particles that make up protons and neutrons.**

**\*syn.: minute; minuscule; miniature**



# **lateral (adj.)**

**\*of, at, from, or towards the side**

**\*The tree assumed a more upright form once some of the lateral branches were removed.**

**\*syn.: flank; slanting**



# **primeval (adj.)**

**\*of or relating to the earliest ages; primitive**

**\*The dinosaur whose bones we uncovered may have died in a primeval swamp a hundred million years ago.**

**\*syn.: prehistoric; antediluvian; primordial; primal**



# **The status quo**

## **(formal or informal)**

**\*the accepted way of doing things**

**\*Politicians often gain popularity by positioning themselves as outsiders who rebel against the status quo.**

**\*syn.: routine; conventional**



# **quintessence (n.)**

**\*the best or most typical example**

**\*Ballet dancer Vastov Nijinsky (1890-1950) was said to be the quintessence of grace and beauty.**

**\*syn.: exemplar; epitome; embodiment; paragon**



# **serrated (adj.)**

**\*having a saw-toothed or notched edge**

**\*The linden tree has serrated leaves.**

**\*syn.: jagged**



# **veritable (adj.)**

**\*being, in fact, the thing named or described; literally so.**

**\*The sound system failed, making the concert a veritable disaster.**

**\*syn.: authentic; actual; utter**



# **acumen (n.)**

**\*keenness of the mind; shrewdness**

**\*Ruth Bader Ginsberg's legal acumen led to her appointment to a position on the Supreme Court.**

**\*syn.: astuteness; acuity**





# **look the other way**

**(formal or informal)**

**\*deliberately ignore bad behavior**

**\*When celebrities or other people in high positions behave in ways that are inappropriate or even illegal, society often chooses to look the other way.**

**\*syn.: whitewash; disregard**



# **askew (adj.)**

**\*turned or twisted to one side; out of line**

**\*The gate to the cow pasture had been knocked slightly askew and didn't close properly.**

**\*syn.: tilted; oblique; awry; misaligned; askance**



# chasten (v.)

**\*to correct or improve by disciplining; to cause to be more careful or restrained.**

**\*The boy's parents chastened him for arriving home after his curfew.**

**\*syn.: admonish; berate; chide; tame; curb; subdue;**



# **demarcation (n.)**

**\*1. the act or process of setting a boundary; the boundary itself**

**\*According to the 1953 armistice, the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) is the demarcation between North Korea and South Korea.**

**\*syn.: bound; confine; delineate; barrier**

**\*2. separation; distinction**

**\*In the summer haze, there was no clear line of demarcation between sea and sky.**

**\*syn.: differentiation; discreteness**



# **dictum (n.)**

**\*a statement or pronouncement**

**\*The gym instructor's dictum was "No pain, no gain."**

**\*syn.: assertion; mandate; edict; adage**



# **on a shoestring budget (informal)**

**\*on a very tight budget; using very little money**

**\*I'll admit that I enjoy staying in nice hotels now, but I actually think that some of our best vacations were planned on a shoestring budget.**

**\*syn.: minimal; scant**



# **erstwhile (adj.)**

**\*of an earlier time; former**

**\*My erstwhile companions have all gone their separate ways.**

**\*syn.: previous; quondam**



# **forte (n.)**

**\*an activity at which a person excels**

**\*Tennessee Williams was a poet and short story writer, but his forte was playwriting.**

**\*syn.: aptitude; genius**





# **nonplus (v.)**

**\*to cause to be at a loss as to what to say or do next**

**\*The guest's continuing reticence nonplussed the talk show host.**

**\*syn.: confused; bewildered; perplexed**



# **peripatetic (adj.)**

**\*of or relating to going from place to place, especially on foot**

**\*The peripatetic life of those in the military does not appeal to those who like living in one place.**

**\*syn.: nomadic; itinerant; ambulatory; wayfaring**



# **a dead-end job**

## **(informal)**

**\*a job that does not offer any opportunity for advancement**

**\*When I joined the company, I thought there would be room for me to grow, but after five years without a promotion, I feel as if I'm stuck in a dead-end job.**

**\*syn.: impasse; standstill**



# **sycophant (n.)**

**\*one who uses flattery to win favor or to ingratiate him-or herself.**

**\*the Emperor's sycophants would not dream of telling him the truth about his "new clothes."**

**\*syn.: toady; fawner; minion**



# **vacuous (adj.)**

**\*lacking intelligence or ideas; intellectual emptiness**

**\*I couldn't wait to leave the dinner because of the vacuous conversation at the table.**

**\*syn.: inscrutable; impassive; insipid; vapid**



# wraith (n.)

**\*a shadowy or ghostlike figure**

**\*In the film, a wraith appeared out of the mist, pointed an accusing finger, and then was gone.**

**\*syn.: specter; apparition; manifestation**



# **cacophony (n.)**

**\*harsh or jarring sound**

**\*A cacophony of sirens heralded the approach of the fire engines.**

**\*syn.: dissonance; stridency; discordance; clamor; jangle**



# **a lost cause**

**(formal or informal)**

**\*a problem that cannot be fixed; something that should be given up on; hopeless undertaking**

**\*It rained all weekend, so painting the house was a lost cause.**

**\*syn.: futile**





# **filial (adj.)**

**\*of or relating to, or befitting a son or daughter**

**\*The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius taught the importance of cultivating virtues such as righteousness, integrity and filial piety.**

**\*syn.: dutiful; compliant; respectful; fraternal**



# **fractionous (adj.)**

**\*tending to be troublesome; irritable and quarrelsome; difficult to control**

**\*What may appear to be simply fractionous behavior in a child may actually be a symptom of parental neglect.**

**\*syn.: cantankerous; recalcitrant; intractable; querulous; refractory**



# **jocular (adj.)**

**\*given to or characterized by joking; playful; jolly**

**\*The children laughed with delight at the appearance of Santa Claus, with his jocular “Ho, Ho Ho!”**

**\*syn.: humorous; droll; jovial**



# parity (n.)

**\*equality of rank or value**

**\*Lightning reflexes and superhero strength gave her parity with the vampires she met in combat.**

**\*syn.: equity; consistency; uniformity**



# **hardwired**

## **(informal)**

**\*inborn or innate; occurring without thought; automatic**

**\* Human beings are hardwired to interact and connect with others.**

**\*syn.: inherent; intrinsic**



# **supplicate (v.)**

**\*to ask for humbly; to plead or beg**

**\*The defendant supplicated the jury for compassion.**

**\*syn.: beseech; solicit; entreat; adjure**



# **temporize (v.)**

**\*to act evasively in order to achieve a compromise or to gain time**

**\*Unwilling to vote the measure up or down, Congress temporized.**

**\*syn.: procrastinate; defer; balk**



# **apprise (v.)**

**\*to make aware of; to inform**

**\*Marcia apprised her employer of her desire to leave at the end of the year.**

**\*syn.: disclose; divulge; enlighten**





# **beatific (adj.)**

**\*marked by a joyful appearance; blissful**

**\*The beatific expression of a child at play is captured in this series of photographs.**

**\*syn.: rapturous; serene; euphoric**



# **have an inkling**

**(informal)**

**\*have a vague or preliminary sense**

**\*I think my boss might have an inkling that I'm behind on the project.**

**\*syn.: daresay; deem; surmise**



# **cogent (adj.)**

**\*forceful, to the point, and convincing**

**\*The reporter's cogent argument convinced the editor to give her the investigative assignment.**

**\*syn.: potent; pertinent; puissant**



# **depraved (adj.)**

**\*morally corrupt**

**\*The story's villain was a wicked, greedy, and depraved criminal.**

**\*syn.: perverted; deviant; debased; reprobate; vile**



# **discrete (adj.)**

**\* Do not confuse “discrete” with “discreet.”**

**\*unconnected to other parts; separate and distinct**

**\*Sand is composed of tiny, discrete particles of rock.**

**\*syn.: detached; disjunct; individual**



# **elucidate (v.)**

**\*to make clear by explanation; to clarify**

**\*The professor elucidated Bohr's theory so well that the structure of the atom became quite clear to the class.**

**\*syn.: illuminate; explicate; annotate; expound**



# XXXX

## END of SEMESTER

**FRIDAY**

**May 24, 2024**