

# GRE Prep

## Vocabulary Building



# Vocabulary Building

## Objectives:

- Role of words in GRE
- Methods to build GRE Vocabulary
- Total number of words to learn in GRE
- Number of words to learn daily
- Ways to keep a record of words
- High frequency words – pros and cons
- Words are not enough in GRE
- Reference materials to improve GRE vocabulary



# Vocabulary Building

## Role of Words in GRE



# Vocabulary Building

The Verbal Reasoning section of the *GRE*<sup>®</sup> contains three types of questions:

- Reading Comprehension
- Text Completion
- Sentence Equivalence



50%

- The Text Completion & the Sentence Equivalence are around 50% of the Verbal Section.
- Most Text Completion & Sentence Equivalence Questions are based on words.

However, a strong vocabulary plays a vital role in Reading Comprehension, too.\*\*

# Vocabulary Building

## Sentence Equivalence Sample Question:

Her \_\_\_\_\_ should not be confused with miserliness; as long as I have known her, she has always been willing to assist those who are in need.

A	stinginess
B	diffidence
C	frugality
D	illiberality
E	intolerance
F	thrift



# **GRE Vocabulary Quiz**

# Vocabulary Building

Quiz: For each capitalized word tick the word which is similar in meaning.

## 1. PREEMINENT

- A. half-hearted      B. talkative      C. outstanding      D. sociable

## 2. SATIATED

- A. elegance      B. satisfied      C. insignificant      D. tactful

## 3. AMNESTY

- A. pardon      B. suitable      C. revelry      D. sanctuary



# Vocabulary Building

## 4. PHONY

A. fake

B. windfall

C. largess

D. unnecessary

## 5. CATHARSIS

A. hint

B. cleansing

C. logical

D. sonorous

## 6. INCOGNITO

A. boastful

B. descent

C. betray

D. disguised

## 7. ENNUI

A. durability

B. boredom

C. obscure

D. implore





# Vocabulary Building

## 8. ESPOUSE

A. reject

B. remorse

C. sturdy

D. support

## 9. BEATIFIC

A. happy

B. devilish

C. wicked

D. rude

## 10. PROCLIVITY

A. acclaim

B. liking

C. provident

D. belief

## 11. MINION

A. follower

B. layman

C. maladroit

D. cunning



# **Methods to build GRE Vocabulary**

# Vocabulary Building

## **INSPIRUS Methods to Build GRE Vocabulary:**

1. Contextual Meaning
2. Roots/Etymology
3. Mnemonics
4. Connotation of Words
5. Word Groups
6. Secondary Meaning



# **1. Contextual Meaning**

# Vocabulary Building

Read a small passage or excerpt from a book, magazine, novel, newspaper, etc. and learn to understand the meaning of words from their context.

## Examples:

- Many politicians don't give *succinct* answers. They prefer long one that help them avoid the point.
  
- He had just recovered from a *debilitating* illness, and he looked pale and *listless*.



# Vocabulary Building

## Examples:

- Many politicians don't give *succinct* answers. They prefer long one that help them avoid the point.

If the politicians prefer long to succinct, “succinct” should be an antonym of “long”. Thus, it should be mean “brief & concise”.

- He had just recovered from a *debilitating* illness, and he looked pale and *listless*.

If it is an illness that made him look pale, “debilitating” should mean “weakening”, and “listless” should mean “weak or lacking energy”.



# Vocabulary Building

**Exercise 1: Read the following excerpt from *Ayn Rand – The Fountainhead* and guess the meanings of highlighted words:**

Heyer **stubbornly** refused to die. He had recovered from the stroke and returned to his office, ignoring the objections of his doctor and the **solicitous** protests of Guy Francon. Francon offered to buy him out. Heyer refused, his pale, watering eyes staring **obstinately** at nothing at all. He came to office two or three days.

He wondered dimly why he was no longer introduced to prominent clients. Francon puzzled him mildly. Peter **baffled** him. Peter barely bothered to greet him when they met. Heyer issued some minor order to one of the draftsmen, but it was not carried out and the draftsman informed him that the order had been **countermanded** by Peter. Heyer could not understand it; he always remembered Peter as the **diffident** boy who had hardly talked to him. Heyer excused Peter first; then he tried to **mollify** him, humbly and **clumsily**. He complained to Francon. He said, **petulantly**, assuming the tone of the authority he could never have **exercised**.

So next time when you read something, try to understand the meanings of words from the context.



# Vocabulary Building

## Words:

1. **stubborn** : .....
2. **solicitous** : .....
3. **obstinate** : .....
4. **baffled** : .....
5. **countermand** : .....
6. **diffident** : .....
7. **mollify** : .....
8. **clumsy** : .....
9. **petulant** : .....
10. **exercise** : .....





# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

1. **stubborn** : not willing to give up; rigid
2. **solicitous** : concerned, anxious
3. **obstinate** : headstrong, not flexible, rigid, stubborn
4. **baffled** : confused, puzzle
5. **countermand** : revoke or cancel
6. **diffident** : shy or lacking confidence
7. **mollify** : appease the anger or anxiety of someone
8. **clumsy** : lacking skill or tact
9. **petulant** : sulky or bad-tempered
10. **exercise** : use or apply



# Vocabulary Building

**Exercise 2 is based on the following words:**

1. mendacious: untruthful/dishonest
2. iconoclast: a person who attacks or criticizes cherished beliefs or institutions/ maverick
3. veracity: truthfulness
4. immutable: unchanging/fixed
5. moratorium: prohibition/ban
6. backslider: one who relapses into bad habits, sinful behavior, or undesirable activities
7. impervious: unaffected/immune/impenetrable
8. maladroit: inefficient/inept
9. detrimental: harmful
10. innocuous: harmless
11. quixotic: extremely idealistic/unrealistic/impractical
12. posterity: future generation of people/descendants of a person
13. cantankerous: bad-tempered/ argumentative /uncooperative
14. audacity: boldness/daring
15. bucolic: rural/rustic
16. consummate: skillful



# Vocabulary Building

## Exercise 2: Complete the below story using the words given in the previous slide.

There was once a very wise old man, Nicolas, who lived on top of a mountain in a village. He was \_\_\_\_\_ enough to turn \_\_\_\_\_ issues to \_\_\_\_\_ ones. He hated people who had \_\_\_\_\_ thinking as he himself was an \_\_\_\_\_. According to him, such \_\_\_\_\_ people would defend their \_\_\_\_\_ hardwired beliefs, hindering the progress of their own and their \_\_\_\_\_.

The villagers went to him for advice every time they had a problem as they trusted him for his \_\_\_\_\_; they were aware that he would give them the best solution; they knew that although he was \_\_\_\_\_, yet he was not mendacious. Sometimes, they would come to him complaining about the same problem. Even he was not \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid them for same problem they would bring to him.

One day, Lucy, a \_\_\_\_\_ villager, who never had the \_\_\_\_\_ to walk on the \_\_\_\_\_ paths of her village, went onto the top of the mountain where Nicolas used to live. She wanted to test his deftness to find a solution of a simple problem.

She told him about a problem that was worrying her. She also told him how her problem was \_\_\_\_\_ her and her loved ones had started hating her because of that. Nicolas, after listening to her, assured her of finding a solution which would make her \_\_\_\_\_ to the problem as his solution would not give her a \_\_\_\_\_ on her troubles but a permanent solution.



# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

There was once a very wise old man, Nicolas, who lived on top of a mountain in a village. He was consummate enough to turn detrimental issues to innocuous ones. He hated people who had quixotic thinking as he himself was an iconoclast. According to him, such impractical people would defend their immutable hardwired beliefs, hindering the progress of their own and their posterity.

The villagers went to him for advice every time they had a problem as they trusted him for his veracity; they were aware that he would give them the best solution; they knew that although he was maverick, yet he was not mendacious. Sometimes, they would come to him complaining about the same problem. Even he was not cantankerous to avoid them for same problem they would bring to him.

One day, Lucy, a maladroit villager, who never had the audacity to walk on the bucolic paths of her village, went onto the top of the mountain where Nicolas used to live. She wanted to test his deftness to find a solution of a simple problem.

She told him about a problem that was worrying her. She also told him how her problem was backsliding her and her loved ones had started hating her because of that. Nicolas, after listening to her, assured her of finding a solution which would make her impervious to the problem as his solution would not give her a moratorium on her troubles but a permanent solution.



## **2. Roots/Etymology**

# Vocabulary Building

We can create many words from their roots. The roots are from Latin or Greek.

**Some GRE roots:**

fore

ben

loc/loq/log

mal

un

im

mis

dis

il

veritas

eu

voro

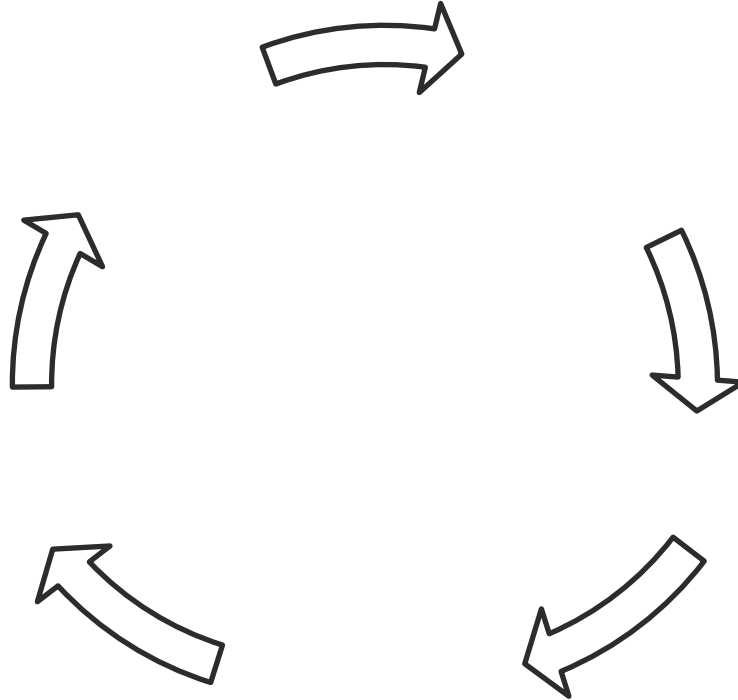
dict

pre

mor

# Vocabulary Building

fore:



# Vocabulary Building

predict

forecast

foreboding

Don't confuse with "forbid"!

advance feeling that something bad will happen

before / ahead

**fore:**

advance  
warning

forewarn

forestall

prevent from happening

Don't confuse with "forbear"!

forebear

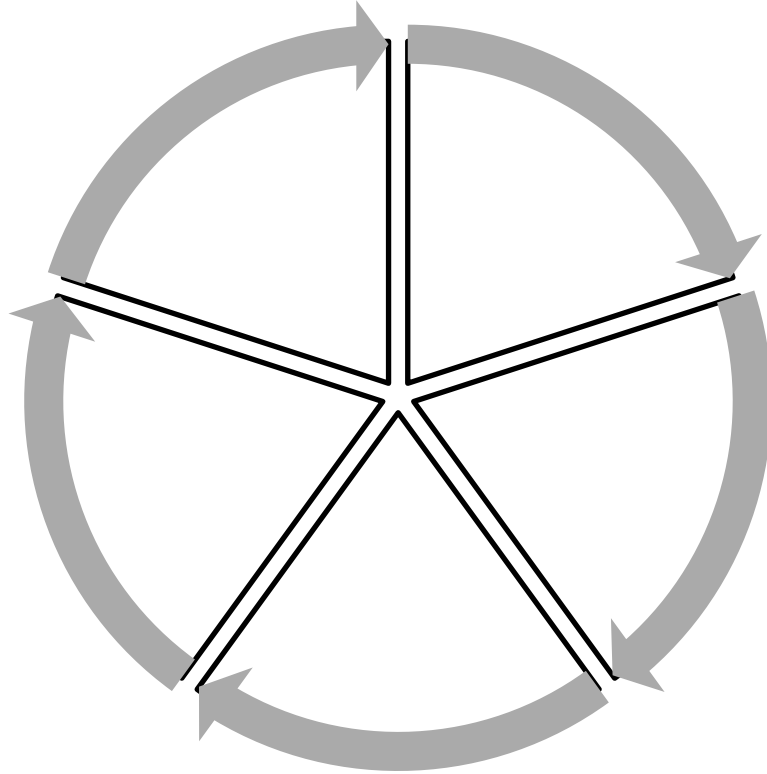
ancestor



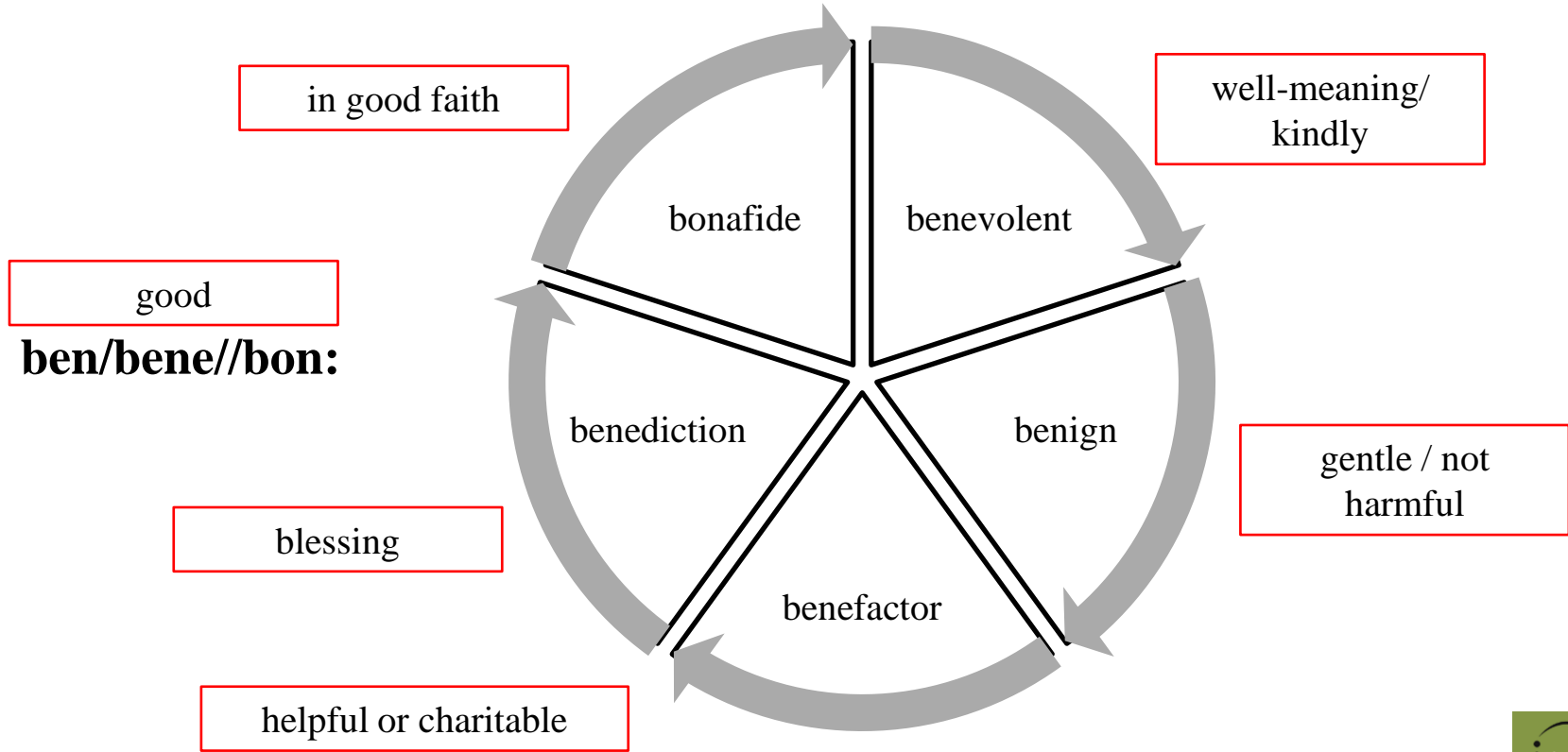


# Vocabulary Building

**ben/bene//bon:**

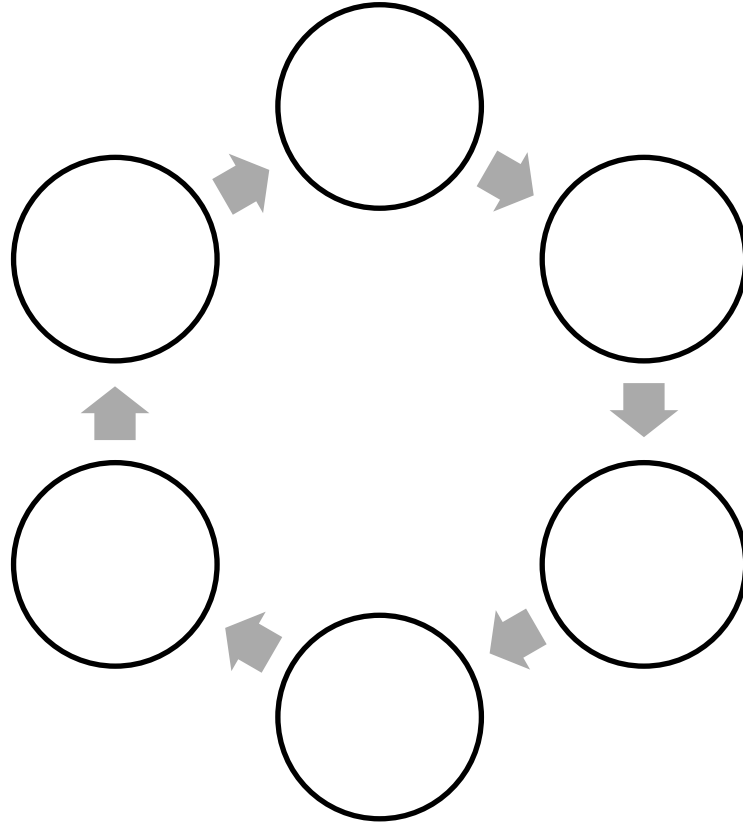


# Vocabulary Building

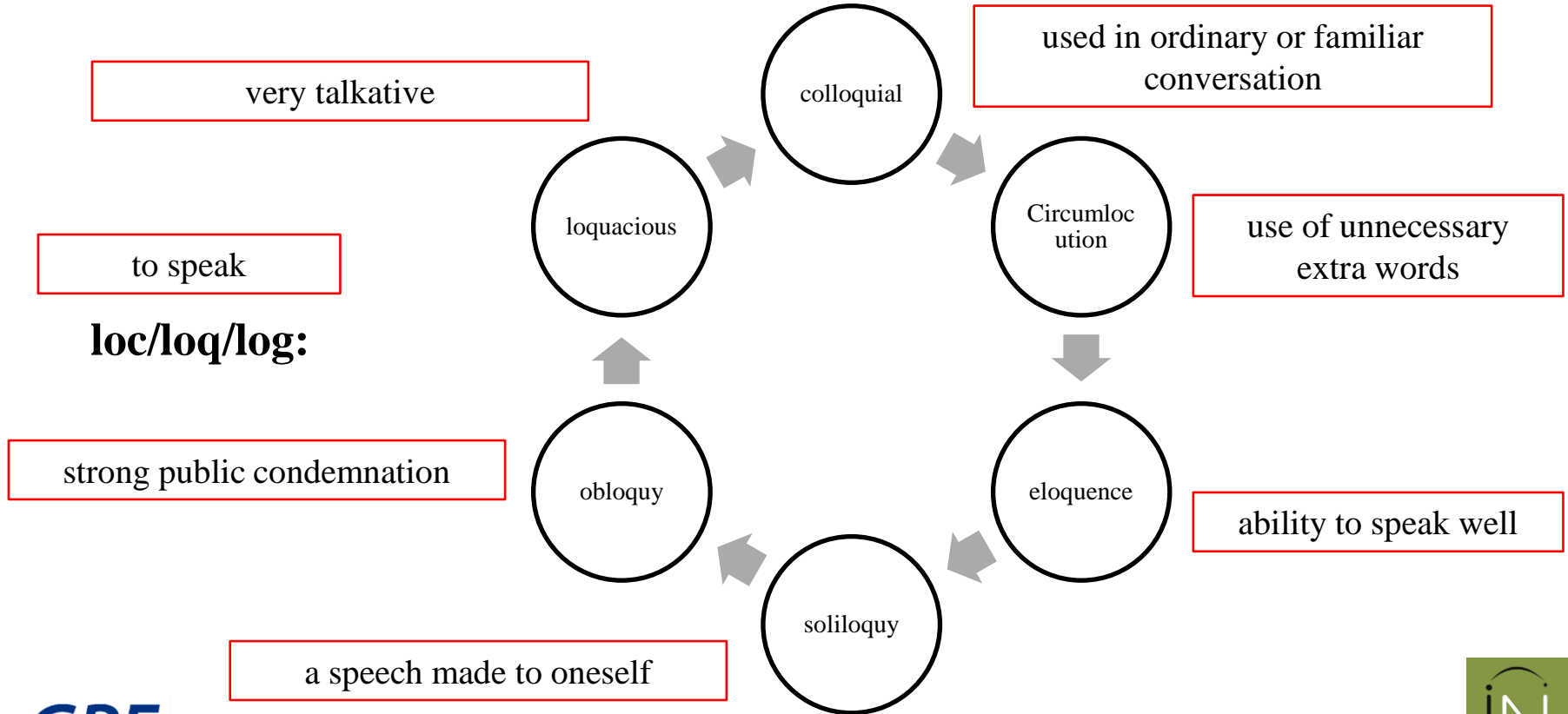


# Vocabulary Building

loc/loq/log:

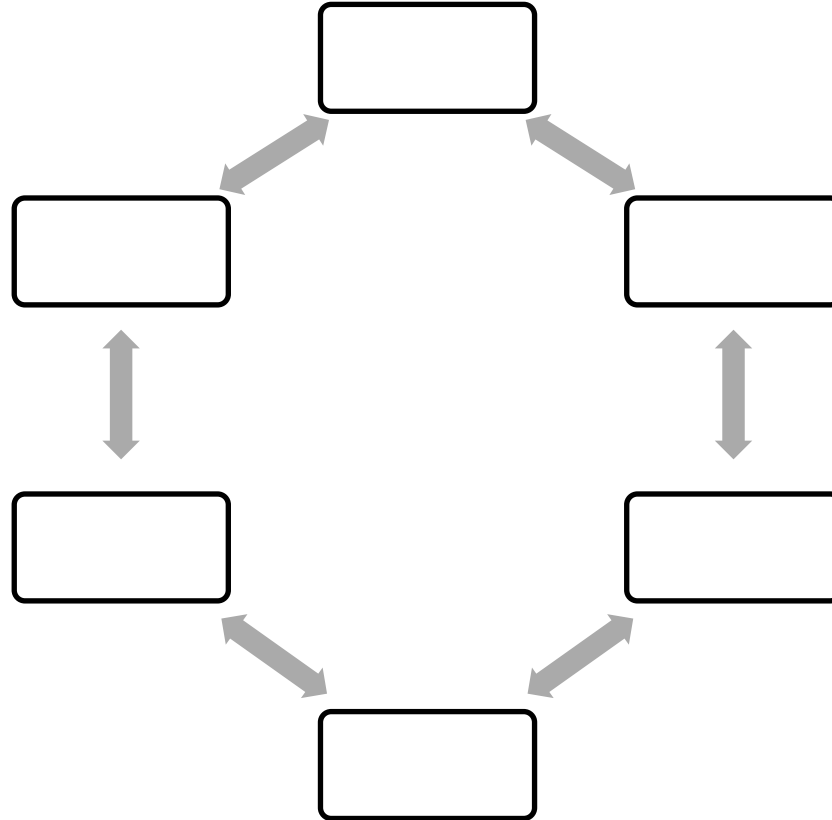


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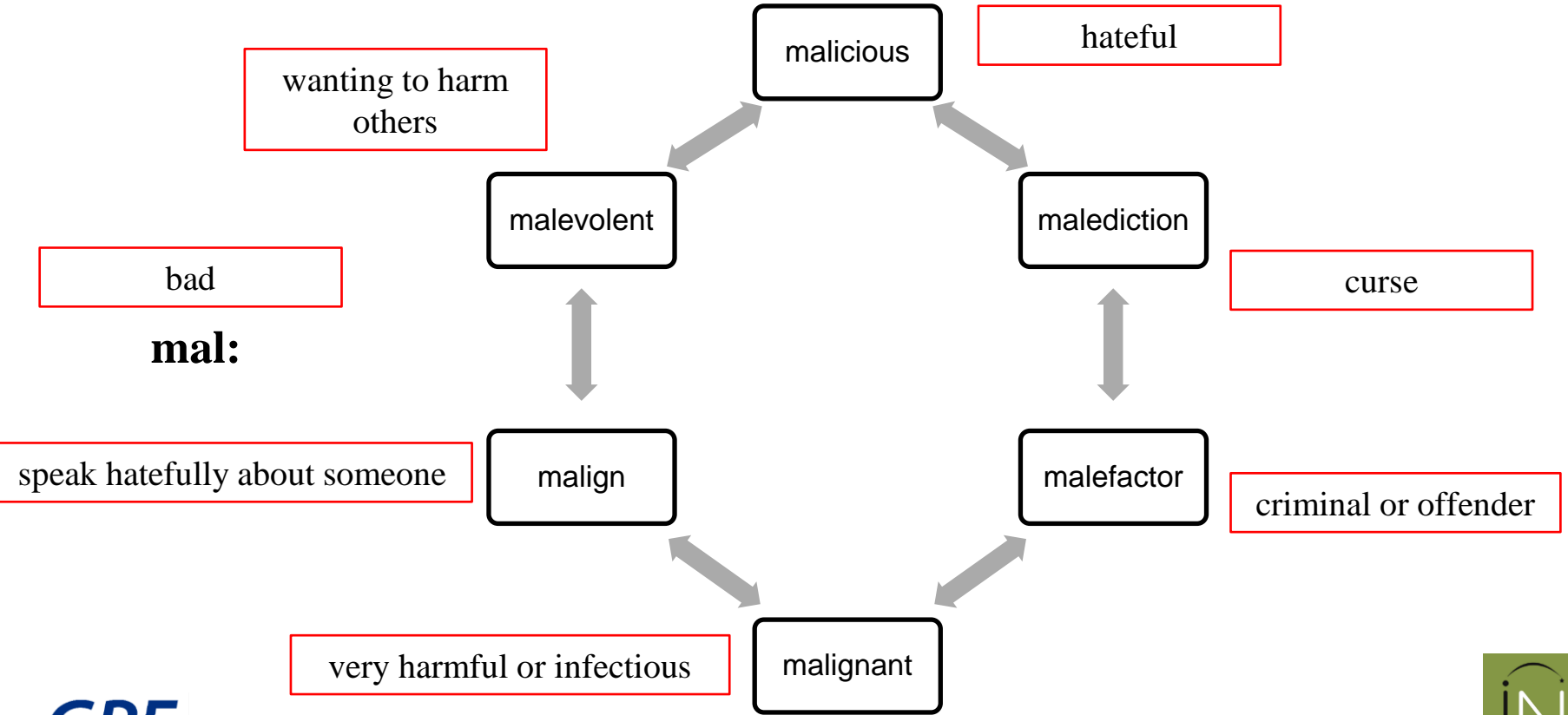


# Vocabulary Building

mal:

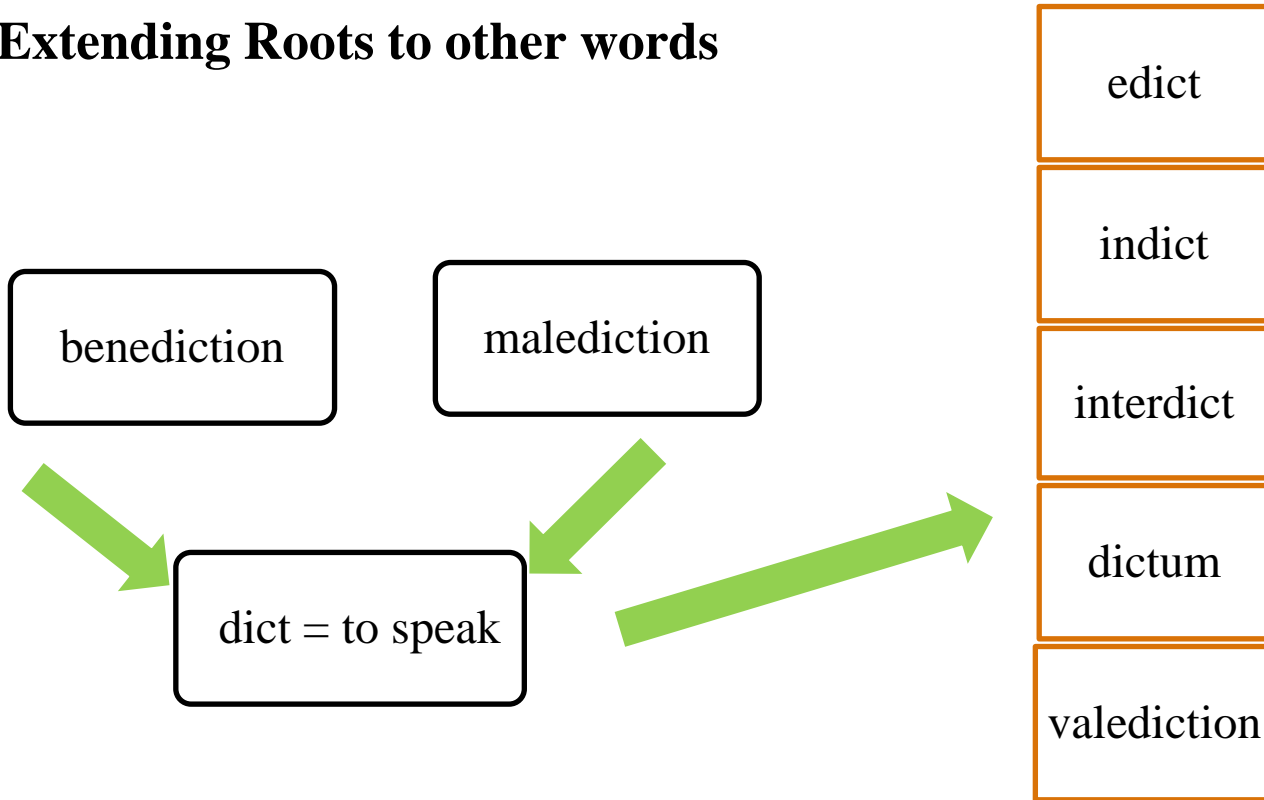


# Vocabulary Building



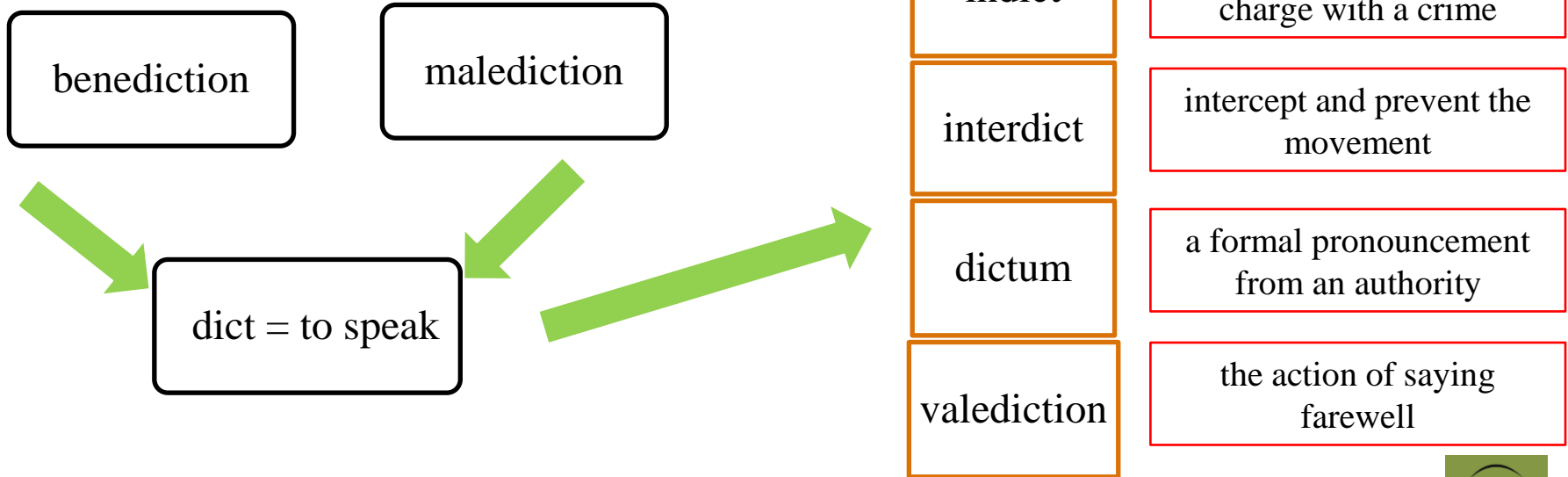
# Vocabulary Building

## Extending Roots to other words



# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:





# Vocabulary Building

**Exercise 3: Make words from the following roots.**

eu				
pre				
im				

# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

<b>eu</b>	eulogy	euphemism	euphonious	euthanasia
<b>pre</b>	precursor	preclude	predilection	premonition
<b>im</b>	immutable	impervious	impecunious	impenitent



# Vocabulary Building

## **A word of caution:**

Don't take each root literally. Words with a seemingly common root may have different meanings.

## **Examples: A/An = Not / Without**

- anaerobic = not using oxygen
- anachronistic = not in the correct time
- anagram = not written in the correct order
- analogous = comparable in certain respects



# **3. Mnemonics**

**A system such as a pattern of letters, ideas, or associations which assists in remembering something.**

# Vocabulary Building

**dawdle**



# Vocabulary Building

## dawdle

be slow / waste time

A tortoise dawdles; hence,  
cannot win the race.



# Vocabulary Building

**sanguine**



# Vocabulary Building

## **sanguine**

optimistic / hopeful

The bountiful crops made the farmer sanguine of good profits.





# Vocabulary Building

**gauche**



# Vocabulary Building

## gauche

awkward / clumsy

People laughed at the gauche teenager who tripped over the banana peel.



# Vocabulary Building

**promulgate**



# Vocabulary Building

## **promulgate**

spread / make widely known

The new law was promulgated in December 19.



# Vocabulary Building

**parry**



# Vocabulary Building

## parry

avoid / dodge

He parried the blow by holding his sword vertically.



# Vocabulary Building

**prattle**



# Vocabulary Building

## prattle

foolish talk

He began to prattle on about his visit to an abandoned building.





# Vocabulary Building

**propensity**



# Vocabulary Building

## propensity

inclination / natural tendency

Like iron has a natural tendency to incline towards magnet, violent people have propensity for violence.



# Vocabulary Building

**tortuous**



# Vocabulary Building

## **tortuous**

having twist and turns/ excessively lengthy and complex

Travelling through the tortuous roads for hours made me feel nauseous.



# Vocabulary Building

**lithe**



# Vocabulary Building

## lithe

flexible / thin supple and graceful  
She is able to bend her body easily and move gracefully because her body is lithe.



# Vocabulary Building

**seethe**



# Vocabulary Building

## seethe

very angry

He was seething because he was fired despite being an honest man.





# Vocabulary Building

**daft**



# Vocabulary Building

**daft**

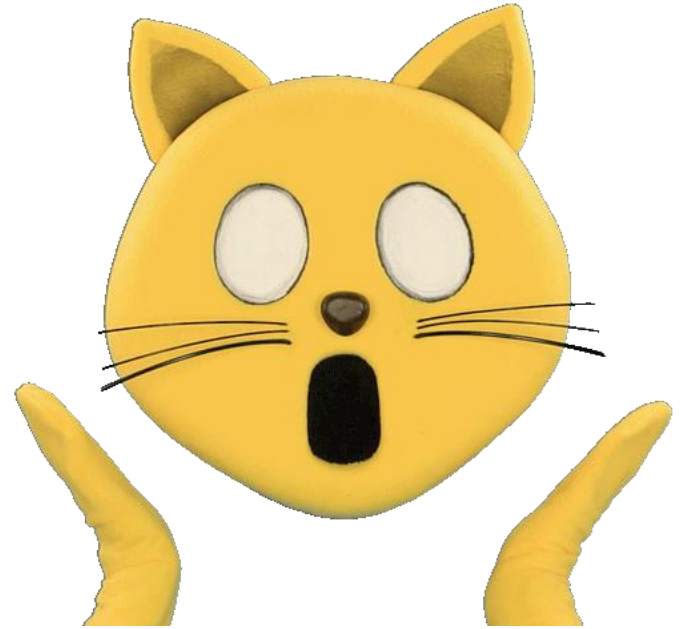
silly, foolish

He was so daft that he cut the branch which he was sitting on.



# Vocabulary Building

**egregious**

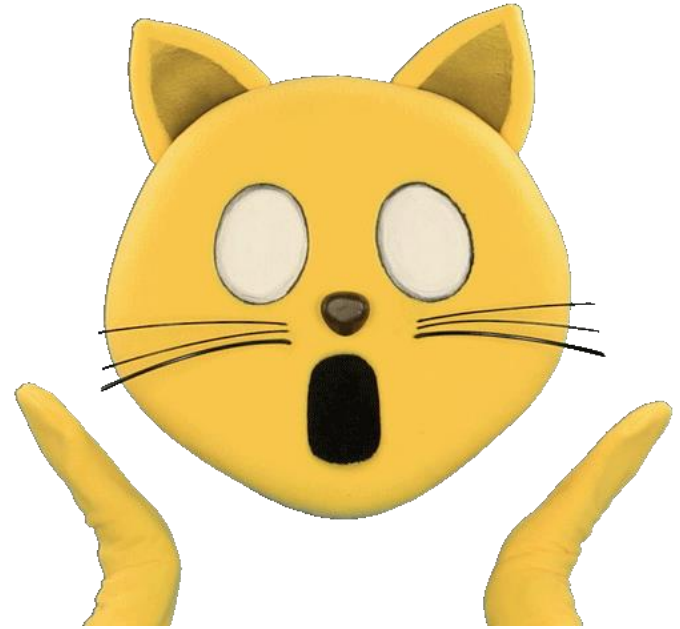


# Vocabulary Building

## egregious

horrifying / shocking

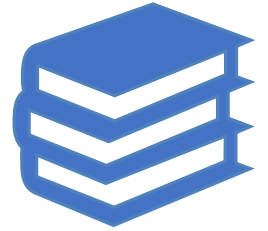
Her behaviour was so egregious that even her former friends abandoned her.



# Vocabulary Building

## Exercise 4: Match the Words with their respective Meanings

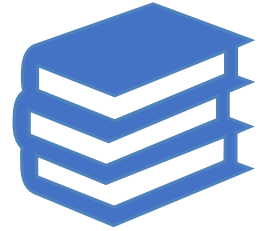
- |               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1. dawdle     | A. optimistic              |
| 2. sanguine   | B. horrifying/shocking     |
| 3. gauche     | C. be slow/ wasting time   |
| 4. promulgate | D. very angry              |
| 5. parry      | E. silly/foolish           |
| 6. prattle    | F. spread                  |
| 7. propensity | G. flexible                |
| 8. tortuous   | H. inclination             |
| 9. lithe      | I. avoid/dodge             |
| 10. seethe    | J. having twists and turns |
| 11. daft      | K. awkward/clumsy          |
| 12. egregious | L. foolish talk            |



# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

1. dawdle (C)
  2. sanguine (A)
  3. gauche (K)
  4. promulgate (F)
  5. parry (I)
  6. prattle (L)
  7. propensity (H)
  8. tortuous (J)
  9. lithe (G)
  10. seethe (D)
  11. daft (E)
  12. egregious (B)
- A. optimistic
  - B. horrifying/shocking
  - C. be slow/ wasting time
  - D. very angry
  - E. silly/foolish
  - F. spread
  - G. flexible
  - H. inclination
  - I. avoid/dodge
  - J. having twists and turns
  - K. awkward/clumsy
  - L. foolish talk



## **4. Connotation of words**

# Vocabulary Building

**Exercise 5: Divide the following words into “positive” or “negative” category.**

elated

bereaved

jocular

euphoria

jocund

glum

desolate

felicity

melancholy

gaiety

forlorn

regale

despondent

plaintive

anguish

Positive	Negative





# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

elated

bereaved

jocular

euphoria

jocund

glum

desolate

felicity

melancholy

gaiety

forlorn

regale

despondent

plaintive

anguish

Positive	Negative
elated, regale, jocular, felicity, euphoria, jocund, gaiety	glum, forlorn, bereaved, desolate, despondent, melancholy, plaintive, anguish

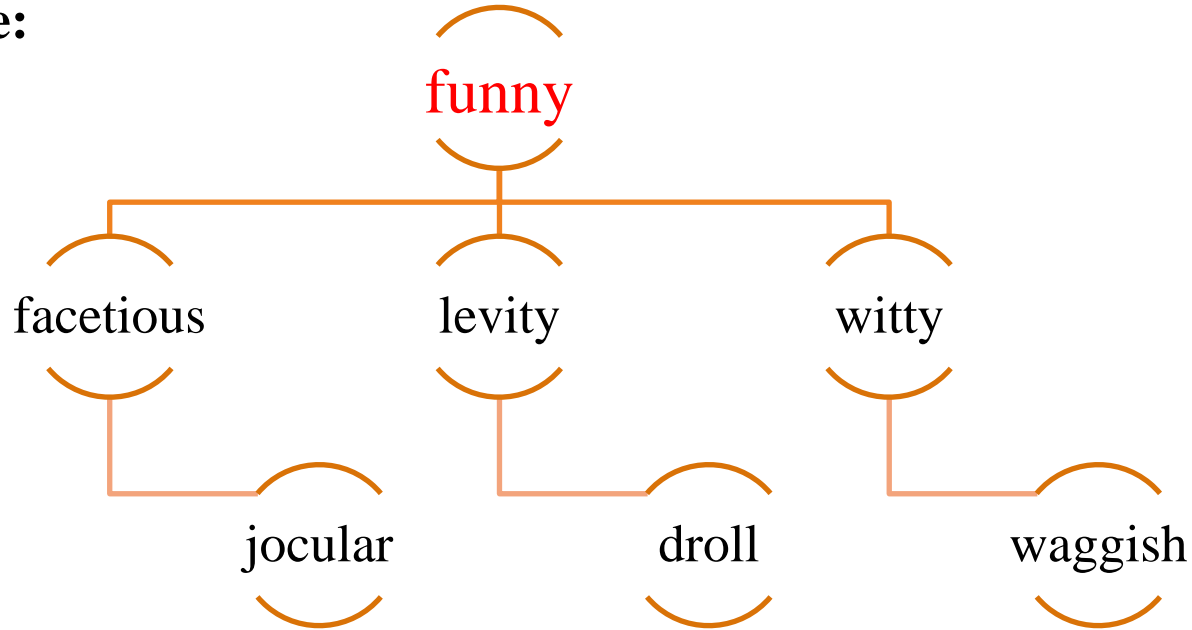


# **5. Word Groups**

# Vocabulary Building

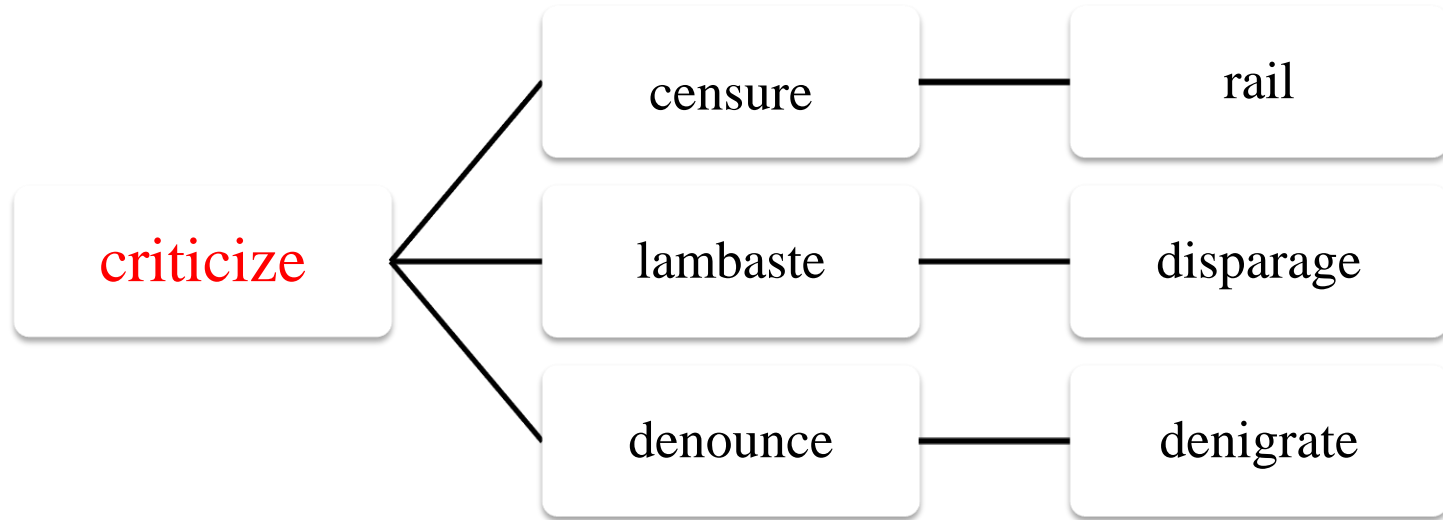
Similar meaning words can be grouped together and learnt easily. You don't need to spend time to know the meaning of individual words.

**Example:**



# Vocabulary Building

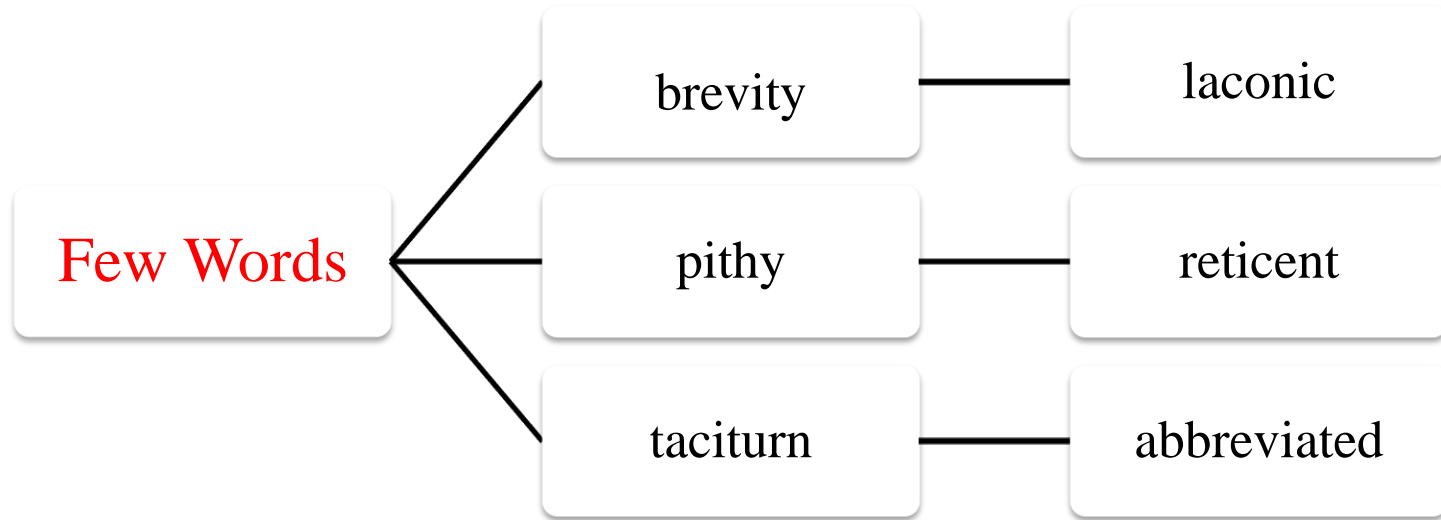
Example:



Begin learning words in groups. You can learn synonym and antonym together.

# Vocabulary Building

**Example:**



Begin learning words in groups. You can learn synonym and antonym together.

# Vocabulary Building

**Exercise 6: Divide the following words into 3 categories – “praise”, “hardworking” and “friendly/talkative”.**

assiduous      venerate      sedulous      exalt      unflagging  
garrulous      indefatigable      effusive      prolix      revere  
eulogize      voluble      lionize      painstaking      verbose

<b>Praise</b>	<b>Hardworking</b>	<b>Friendly/Talkative</b>



# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

assiduous

venerate

sedulous

exalt

unflagging

garrulous

indefatigable

effusive

prolix

revere

eulogize

voluble

lionize

painstaking

verbose

<b>Praise</b>	<b>Hardworking</b>	<b>Friendly/Talkative</b>
eulogize	assiduous	garrulous
venerate	indefatigable	voluble
lionize	sedulous	effusive
exalt	painstaking	prolix
revere	unflagging	verbose



## **6. Secondary Meanings**



# Vocabulary Building

Some words may seem familiar and commonplace, but they mean something totally different in another context.

## Example:

- The higher court *railed* at the police for a shoddy investigation.
- It is not *appropriate* to *appropriate* someone else's hard-earned money.
- The party is *qualified* to support us, but it cannot give a *qualified* support.



# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

### Example:

- The higher court *railed* at the police for a shoddy investigation.  
criticise severely (complain / protest)
- It is not *appropriate* to *appropriate* someone else's hard-earned money.  
take (something) for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission
- The party is *qualified* to support us, but it cannot give a *qualified* support.  
not absolute, restricted, limited, conditional



# Vocabulary Building

## Words with their secondary meanings:

<b>flag</b>	: decline	<b>negotiate</b>	: find a way
<b>wanting</b>	: lacking	<b>toll</b>	: death
<b>ground</b>	: reason	<b>sap</b>	: weaken
<b>commute</b>	: reduce punishment	<b>concert</b>	: agreement
<b>patent</b>	: clear	<b>plastic</b>	: malleable
<b>wax</b>	: increase	<b>green</b>	: inexperienced
<b>frustrate</b>	: prevent	<b>telling</b>	: 1. persuasive 2. impressive
<b>pan</b>	: criticize	<b>involved</b>	: complicated
<b>skirt</b>	: evade	<b>posture</b>	: position or stand
<b>duck</b>	: evade	<b>fleece</b>	: cheat

Pay attention to meaning of words



# Vocabulary Building

brook waffle husband intimate pedestrian singular alloy tender fell august

## Exercise 7: Fill in the blanks with the words given above:

1. I was obligated to \_\_\_\_\_ my resignation two months in advance.
2. We toured the \_\_\_\_\_ chambers of the great Supreme Court.
3. Her scathing tone could \_\_\_\_\_ the happiness of even the optimists.
4. She would rather die than \_\_\_\_\_ any criticism of her work.
5. Atilla was a \_\_\_\_\_ warrior who plundered every city he visited.
6. We must \_\_\_\_\_ the citizens about the possible terror attack.
7. The firms must learn to \_\_\_\_\_ their resources during recession.
8. If you don't know the answer, don't \_\_\_\_\_ on for pages and pages.
9. Her books, with few exceptions, are \_\_\_\_\_ and boring.
10. The Taj Mahal is a building of \_\_\_\_\_ grace and beauty.



# Vocabulary Building

brook waffle husband intimate pedestrian singular alloy tender fell august

## Answer Key:

1. I was obligated to tender my resignation two months in advance.
2. We toured the august chambers of the great Supreme Court.
3. Her scathing tone could alloy the happiness of even the optimists.
4. She would rather die than brook any criticism of her work.
5. Atilla was a fell warrior who plundered every city he visited.
6. We must intimate the citizens about the possible terror attack.
7. The firms must learn to husband their resources during recession.
8. If you don't know the answer, don't waffle on for pages and pages.
9. Her books, with few exceptions, are pedestrian and boring.
10. The Taj Mahal is a building of singular grace and beauty.



**Total words to learn in GRE**

# Vocabulary Building

**1500 – 1800**



**Number of words to learn daily**



# Vocabulary Building

GRE in 3-4 months

1 wordlist  
(20 words)  
daily

GRE in 5-6 months

1 wordlist  
(20 words)  
in 2 days

GRE vocabulary learning must be an active exercise.  
So, practice GRE words with a companion.



# **Ways to keep a record of words**

# Vocabulary Building

Write unfamiliar words in a diary/notebook and revise them at regular intervals.  
Make your own flash-cards.



# **High frequency words (HFWS)**

## **pros & cons**

# Vocabulary Building

## Pros

- Facilitates quick learning
- Builds confidence
- Easily available

## Cons

- No official or reliable list
- A small sample (300-350)
- Very high risk

Learn 1500-1800 words  
and revise HFWs one  
week before the exam



**Words are not enough**

# Vocabulary Building

## Words are not enough:

GRE® Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions do not mean cramming words; these questions involve more of your understanding of the context and answering the questions than the knowledge of your words. The application of the words is emphasized.

**Example:** The notion that a parasite can alter the behavior of a host organism is not mere fiction; indeed, the phenomenon is not even \_\_\_\_\_.


A	imaginable
B	observable
C	real
D	frequent
E	rare



# Vocabulary Building

## Answer Key:

**Example:** The notion that a parasite can alter the behavior of a host organism is **not mere fiction** indeed, the phenomenon is **not even** \_\_\_\_\_.

A	imaginable
B	observable
C	real
D	frequent
	rare

“not mere fiction” implies that it is ‘true/real’.  
If it is ‘true/real’, it should be also be common or prevalent. Because of the “not”, the word in the blank should be an antonym of “common/prevalent”.





**Reference materials to improve  
GRE vocabulary**

# Vocabulary Building

## Books and Quizzes

- Inspirus Vocabulary Building Book
- Webster's word quiz
- Thesaurus.com

## Dictionaries

- Webster's Advanced Learner's Dictionary
- Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
- Collins Advanced Learner's Dictionary





*Thank you*