

# **Essential SAT Vocabulary**

**D-E**

# DEBASE

The president's deceitful actions debased the stature of his office.

# DEBASE

- to degrade or lower in quality or stature

# DEBAUCH

After the unscrupulous count debauched the innocent girl, she was shunned by her fellow villagers.



# DEBAUCH

- to corrupt
- to seduce from virtue or duty
- to indulge

# DEBILITATE

Debilitated by the flu, the postman was barely able to finish his rounds.

# DEBILITATE

- to weaken
- to enfeeble

# DEBUNK

It was the teacher's mission in life to debunk the myth that girls are bad at math.

# DEBUNK

- to discredit
- to disprove

# DECIDUOUS

Deciduous trees are bare in winter, which is why coniferous trees such as evergreens are used as Christmas trees.

# DECIDUOUS

- losing leaves in the fall
- short-lived, temporary

# DECLIVITY

Because the village was situated on the declivity of a hill, it never flooded.



# DECLIVITY

- downward slope

# DECOROUS

The socialite trained her daughters in the finer points of decorous behavior, hoping they would make a good impression at the debutante ball.

# DECOROUS

- proper, tasteful
- socially correct

# DECRY

Governments all over the world decried the dictator's vicious massacre of the helpless peasants.

# DECRY

- to belittle
- to openly condemn

# DEFERENTIAL

The respectful young law clerk treated the Supreme Court justice deferentially.

# DEFERENTIAL

- respectful and polite in a submissive way

# DEFT

It was a pleasure to watch the deft carpenter as he repaired the furniture.



# DEFT

- skillful
- dexterous

# DELETERIOUS

If we put these defective clocks on the market, it could be quite deleterious to our reputation.

# DELETERIOUS

- harmful and destructive
- detrimental

# DELINEATION

Mrs. Baxter was satisfied with the artist's delineation of her new mansion.

# DELINEATION

- detailed depiction
- accurate representation

# DELUGE

The popular actor was  
deluged with fan mail.

# DELUGE

- to submerge
- to overwhelm
- to flood

# DEMUR

When scientific authorities claimed that all the planets revolved around the Earth, Galileo, with his superior understanding of the situation, was forced to demur.



# DEMUR

- to express doubts
- to utter objections

# DENIGRATE

The people still loved the president, despite his enemies' attempts to denigrate his character.

# DENIGRATE

- to slur or blacken someone's reputation
- to slander

# DEPOSE

After being deposed from this throne, the king spent the rest of his life in exile.

# DEPOSE

- to remove from a high position, as from a throne

# DEPRAVITY

The depravity of the actor's Hollywood lifestyle shocked his traditional parents.

# DEPRAVITY

- sinfulness
- moral corruption

# DEPRECATE

Ernest deprecated his own contribution, instead praising the efforts of his coworkers.



# DEPRECATE

- to belittle
- to disparage

# DEPRECIATE

The Barrettas sold their house, fearful that its value would depreciate due to the nuclear being built around the corner.

# DEPRECIATE

- to lose value gradually

# DEROGATE

The sarcastic old man never stopped derogating the efforts of his daughter, even after she won the Nobel Prize.

# DEROGATE

- to belittle
- to disparage

# DESECRATE

The archaeologist tried to explain to the explorer that he had deseccrated the temple by spitting in it, but to no avail.

# DESECRATE

- to abuse something sacred
- to disrespect holiness

# DESICCATE

After a few weeks of lying on the desert's baking sands, the cow's carcass became completely desiccated.



# DESICCATE

- to dry completely
- to dehydrate

# DESPONDENT

Mr. Baker was lonely and despondent after his wife's death.

# DESPONDENT

- feeling discouraged and dejected

# DESPOT

The despot executed half the nobles in his court on a whim.

# DESPOT

- tyrannical ruler

# DESTITUTE

After the stock market crash, Jeanette was destitute, forced to beg on the streets in order to survive.

# DESTITUTE

- extremely poor
- poverty-stricken

# DESULTORY

Diane had a desultory academic record; she had changed majors twelve times in three years.



# DESULTORY

- at random
- rambling and unmethodical

# DEXTEROUS

The gymnast who won the contest was far more dexterous than the other competitors.

# DEXTEROUS

- skilled physically and mentally

# DIABOLICAL

Sherlock Holmes's  
archenemy is the diabolical  
Professor Moriarty.

# DIABOLICAL

- fiendish
- wicked

# DIAPHANOUS

Ginny's diaphanous gown failed to disguise the fact that she was wearing ripped panty hose.

# DIAPHANOUS

- allowing light to show through
- delicate

# DIATRIBE

During the CEO's lengthy diatribe, the board members managed to remain calm and self-controlled.



# DIATRIBE

- bitter verbal attack

# DICHOTOMY

Westerns often feature a simple dichotomy between good guys and bad guys.

# DICHOTOMY

- division into two parts
- bifurcation

# DICTUM

Chris tried to live his life in accordance with the dictum “Two wrongs don’t make a right.”

# DICTUM

- authoritative statement
- popular saying

# DIDACTIC

The father was overly didactic with his children, turning every activity into a lesson.

# DIDACTIC

- excessively instructive

# DIFFIDENCE

Steven's diffidence during the job interview stemmed from his nervous nature and lack of experience.



# DIFFIDENCE

- shyness
- lack of confidence

# DILATORY

The congressman used dilatory measures to delay the passage of the bill.

# DILATORY

- slow and procrastinating
- tending to cause delay

# DIMINUTIVE

Napoleon made up for his diminutive stature with his aggressive personality, terrifying his courtiers.

# **DIMINUTIVE**

- exceptionally or notably small

# DISCONCERTING

Brad found his mother-in-law's hostile manner so disconcerting that he acted like a fool in her presence.

# DISCONCERTING

- bewildering, perplexing,  
and slightly disturbing

# DISCURSIVE

The teacher, known for her discursive speaking style, covered everything from armadillos to zebras in his zoology lecture.



# DISCURSIVE

- wandering from topic to topic

# DISGORGE

The man suffering from food poisoning disgorged huge quantities of food, and then collapsed in illness.

# DISGORGE

- to vomit
- to discharge violently

# DISPARAGE

Gregorio loved to disparage his brother's dancing skills, pointing out every mistake he made on the floor.

# DISPARAGE

- to belittle
- to speak disrespectfully about

# DISSEMBLE

The villain could dissemble to the police no longer—he finally had to confess to the forgery.

# DISSEMBLE

- to pretend
- to disguise one's motives

# DISSEMINATE

The wire service disseminates information so rapidly that events get reported shortly after they happen.



# DISSEMINATE

- to spread far and wide
- to disperse throughout

# DISSENSION

The government was forced to abandon the extensive reforms it had planned, due to continued dissension within its party ranks about the form these reforms should take.

# DISSENSION

- difference of opinion

# DISSIPATE

The fog gradually dissipated, revealing all the ships docked in the harbor.

# DISSIPATE

- to spread thin or scatter
- to use up wastefully or foolishly

# DISTEND

Her stomach was distended after she gorged on the six-course meal.

# **DISTEND**

- to swell, inflate, or bloat

# DITHER

Ellen dithered around her apartment, uncertain how to tackle the family crisis.



# DITHER

- to move confusedly
- to act without clear purpose

# DIURNAL

Diurnal creatures tend to become inactive during the night.

# DIURNAL

- occurring daily
- active in the daytime

# DIVINE

The fortune-teller divined from the pattern of the tea leaves that her customer would marry five times in his life.

# DIVINE

- to foretell or know by inspiration

# DIVISIVE

The leader used divisive tactics to pit his enemies against each other.

# DIVISIVE

- creating disunity or conflict

# DOGMATIC

The dictator was dogmatic—he, and only he, was right.



# DOGMATIC

- rigidly fixed in opinion
- adamant and inflexible

# DOLEFUL

Looking into the doleful eyes of the lonely puppy, the girl decided to take him home with her.

# DOLEFUL

- mournful
- expressing grief

# DROLL

Although the play couldn't be described as hilarious, it was certainly droll.

# DROLL

- amusing in a wry, subtle way

# DULCET

The dulcet tone of her voice lulled me to sleep.

# DULCET

- pleasant sounding
- soothing to the ear

# DURESS

Under duress, the political dissident revealed the names of others in her organization to the secret police.



# DURESS

- threat of force or intimidation
- forcible restraint or restriction

# DYSPEPTIC

The dyspeptic young man  
cast a gloom over the party  
the minute he walked in.

# DYSPEPTIC

- suffering from indigestion
- gloomy and irritable

# EBB

Melissa enjoyed watching the ebb and flow of the tide from her beachside balcony.

# EBB

- the reflux of the tide toward the sea
- to fade away; to recede

# EBULLIENT

The ebullient child exhausted the baby-sitter, who lacked the energy to keep up with her.

# EBULLIENT

- exhilarated
- full of enthusiasm and high spirits

# EDICT

Pedestrians often disobey the edict that they should not jaywalk.



# EDICT

- law or command
- official public order

# EDIFY

The guru was paid to edify the actress in the ways of Buddhism.

# EDIFY

- to instruct morally and spiritually
- to enlighten and inform

# EFFACE

Benjamin attempted to efface all traces of his troubled past by assuming a completely new identity.

# **EFFACE**

- to erase or make illegible

# EFFICACIOUS

Penicillin was one of the most efficacious drugs on the market when it was first introduced; the drug completely eliminated almost all bacterial infections for which it was administered.

# EFFICACIOUS

- effective, efficient
- having the power to produce the desired effect

# EFFIGY

The anti-American militants burned Uncle Sam in effigy during their demonstration.



# EFFIGY

- stuffed doll
- likeness of a person

# EFFFRONTERY

The receptionist had the efffrontery to laugh out loud when the CEO tripped over a computer wire and fell flat on his face.

# EFFRONTERY

- impudent boldness
- audacity

# EFFULGENT

The effulgent stars that filled the dark evening sky dazzled the sharecroppers.

# EFFULGENT

- brilliantly shining

# EFFUSIVE

The teacher praised Brian effusively for his brilliant essay.

# EFFUSIVE

- expressing emotion without restraint

# EGREGIOUS

The English textbook contained several egregious errors; for example, “grammar” was misspelled as “gramer” throughout.



# EGREGIOUS

- conspicuously bad
- flagrant

# EGRESS

Airplanes should have points of convenient egress so that passengers can escape in the event of a crash.

# EGRESS

- exit
- the action of going out

# ELUCIDATE

The teacher elucidated the reasons why she had failed the student to his upset parents.

# ELUCIDATE

- to explain or clarify
- to shed light

# ENDEMIC

The health department determined that the outbreak was endemic to the small village, so they quarantined the inhabitants before the virus could spread.

# ENDEMIC

- belonging to a particular area
- inherent to a environment

# ENERVATE

The guerrillas hoped that a series of surprise attacks would enervate the regular army and lead them to give up.



# ENERVATE

- to weaken
- to sap strength from

# ENGENDER

His fear of clowns was engendered when he witnessed the death of his father at the hands of a clown.

# ENGENDER

- to produce
- to cause or bring about

# ENMITY

After Adams was killed by Bell, the enmity between their families continued for hundreds of years.

# ENMITY

- hostility and antagonism
- ill will

# ENNUI

Joe tried to alleviate the ennui he felt while doing his tedious job by flirting with all his coworkers.

# ENNUI

- boredom
- lack of interest and energy

# ENSCONCE

Wayne sold the big, old family house and ensconced his aged mother in a cozy little cottage.



# ENSCONCE

- to settle comfortably into a place

# ENTREAT

I entreated him to just tell me what the problem was instead of bottling it up inside, but he refused.

# ENTREAT

- to plead or beg

# EPHEMERAL

The lives of mayflies seem ephemeral to us, since the fly's average life span is a matter of hours.

# EPHEMERAL

- momentary
- transient and fleeting

# EPICURE

Restaurant critics should be epicures, as people rely on their judgments in choosing where to eat.

# EPICURE

- person with refined taste in food and wine

# EPIGRAM

The poet was renowned for his skill in making up amusing epigrams.



# EPIGRAM

- short, witty saying or poem

# EQUANIMITY

- Kelly took the news that she had been fired with outward equanimity, though she was crying inside.

# EQUANIMITY

- calmness
- composure

# ERUDITE

The annual meeting of professors brought together the most erudite, respected individuals in the field.

# ERUDITE

- learned and educated
- scholarly

# ESOTERIC

Only a handful of experts are knowledgeable about the esoteric world of particle physics.

# ESOTERIC

- understood by only a learned few

# ETHEREAL

Her delicate, ethereal beauty made her a popular model for pre-Raphaelite artists.



# ETHEREAL

- not earthly and spiritual
- delicate

# ETHOS

In accordance with the ethos of his people, the teenage boy underwent a series of initiation rituals to become a man.

# ETHOS

- beliefs of a group
- moral nature of a people

# EVANESCENT

It is lucky that eclipses are evanescent, or the world would never see sunlight.

# EVANESCENT

- momentary and fleeting
- transitory and short-lived

# EVINCE

The new secretary evinced impressive typing and filing skills.

# EVINCE

- to show clearly or display
- to signify

# EXACERBATE

It is unwise to take aspirin to relieve heartburn; instead of providing relief, the drug will only exacerbate the problem.



# EXACERBATE

- to aggravate
- to intensify the negative qualities of an entity

# EXCULPATE

The adversarial legal system is intended to convict those who are guilty and to exculpate those who are innocent.

# EXCULPATE

- to clear of blame or fault
- to vindicate

# EXECRABLE

The stew tasted execrable after the cook accidentally dumped a pound of salt into it.

# EXECRABLE

- utterly detestable
- abhorrent

# EXHORT

Rob's friends exhorted him to beware of ice on the roads when he insisted on driving home in the middle of a snowstorm.

# EXHORT

- to urge or incite by strong appeals

# EXHUME

The murder victim's corpse was exhumed, but no new evidence was discovered and it was reburied the following day.



# EXHUME

- to remove from a grave
- to uncover a secret

# EXIGENT

The patient was losing blood so rapidly that it was exigent to stop the source of the bleeding.

# EXIGENT

- urgent
- excessively demanding

# EXONERATE

The fugitive was exonerated when another criminal confessed to committing the crime.

# EXONERATE

- to clear of blame
- to absolve

# EXPEDIENT

It was considered more expedient to send the fruit directly to the retailer instead of through a middleman.

# EXPEDIENT

- convenient
- efficient and practical

# EXPIATE

The nun expiated her sins by scrubbing the floor of the convent on her hands and knees.



# EXPIATE

- to atone for
- to make amends for

# EXPURGATE

Government propagandists  
expurgated all negative  
references to the dictator from  
the film.

# EXPURGATE

- to censor
- to eliminate offensive material

# EXTEMPORANEOUS

Jan gave an extemporaneous performance of a Monty Python skit at her friend's surprise birthday party.

# EXTEMPORANEOUS

- unrehearsed
- on the spur of the moment

# EXTRICATE

The fly was unable to  
extricate itself from the  
flypaper.

# EXTRICATE

- to free from
- to disentangle