

# **Essential SAT Vocabulary**

**R-S**

# RACONTEUR

The raconteur kept all the passengers entertained with his stories during the six-hour flight.

# RACONTEUR

- witty and skillful storyteller
- clever speaker

# RECALCITRANT

The recalcitrant mule refused to go down the treacherous path, however hard its master pulled at its reins.

# RECALCITRANT

- resisting authority or control
- obstinately defiant

# RECANT

The statement was so damning that the politician had no hopes of recovering his credibility though he tried to recant the words.

# RECAAT

- to retract a statement or opinion

# RECONDITE

The ideas expressed in the ancient philosophical treatise were so recondite that only a few scholars could appreciate them.

# RECONDITE

- relating to obscure learning
- difficult to comprehend for one of ordinary understanding

# RECTITUDE

Young women used to be shipped off to finishing schools to teach them proper manners and rectitude.

# RECTITUDE

- moral uprightness
- righteously correct in judgment

# REDRESS

Seeking redress for the injuries she had received in the accident, Doreen sued the driver of the truck that had hit her.

# REDRESS

- relief from wrong or injury
- to set right or compensate

# REJOINDER

Patrick tried desperately to think of a clever rejoinder to Marcy's joke, but he couldn't.

# REJOINDER

- response or reply
- comeback

# REMEDIAL

In the belief that the juvenile delinquent was remediable and not a hardened criminal, the judge put him on probation.

# REMEDIAL

- capable of being corrected
- redeemable and reparable

# REPROBATE

If you ignore your society's accepted moral code, you will be considered a reprobate.

# REPROBATE

- morally unprincipled person
- depraved individual

# REPUDIATE

The old woman's claim that she was Russian royalty was repudiated when DNA test showed she was not related to the tsars.

# REPUDIATE

- to reject as having no authority
- to refuse to accept as true

# RESTIVE

The passengers became restive after having to wait in line for hours and began to should complaints at the airline staff.

# RESTIVE

- impatient
- uneasy and restless

# RETICENT

Physically small and reticent,  
Joan Didion often went  
unnoticed by those upon  
whom she was reporting.

# RETICENT

- not speaking freely
- reserved

# RETINUE

The nobleman had to make room in his mansion not only for the princess but also for her entire retinue.

# RETINUE

- group of attendants of an important person
- entourage

# RETIRING

A shy and retiring man,  
Chuck was horrified at the  
idea of having to speak in  
public.

# RETIRING

- shy, modest, and reserved

# RETRENCH

After their humiliating defeat, the troops retrenched back at the base to decide what to do next.

# RETRENCH

- to regroup
- to reorganize

# REVELRY

An atmosphere of revelry filled the school after its basketball team's surprising victory.

# REVELRY

- boisterous festivity
- merrymaking

# RIBALD

The court jester's ribald brand of humor delighted the rather uncouth king.

# RIBALD

- humorous in a vulgar way
- coarse and indecently comic

# RIDDLE

The helicopter was riddled with bullet holes after its flight into the combat zone.

# RIDDLE

- to pierce with many holes
- to permeate

# RUMINATE

The scholars spent days at the retreat, ruminating upon the complexities of the geopolitical situation.

# RUMINATE

- to contemplate
- to reflect upon
- to think deeply about

# SACROSANCT

Many people considered Mother Teresa to be sacrosanct and would not tolerate any criticism of her.

# SACROSANCT

- extremely sacred
- beyond criticism or judgment

# SAGACIOUS

Owls have a reputation for being sagacious, perhaps because of their big eyes which resemble glasses.

# SAGACIOUS

- shrewd
- discerning and insightful

# SALUBRIOUS

Rundown and sickly, Rita hoped that the fresh mountain air would have a salubrious effect on her health.

# SALUBRIOUS

- healthful
- beneficial to mind and body

# SANGUINE

A sanguine person thinks the glass is half full, while a depressed person thinks it's half empty.

# SANGUINE

- cheerfully confident and optimistic
- ruddy

# SARDONIC

Denise was offended by the sardonic way in which her date made fun of her ideas and opinions.

# SARDONIC

- cynical
- scornfully mocking

# SCINTILLA

The poison is so powerful that no more of a scintilla is needed to kill a horse.

# SCINTILLA

- trace amount
- smidgen

# SCINTILLATE

The society hostess was famous for her great wit and scintillating conversation.

# SCINTILLATE

- to sparkle and flash
- to emit sparks

# SCURRILOUS

The decadent aristocrat took part in scurrilous activities every night, unbeknownst to his family.

# SCURRILOUS

- vulgar and low
- indecent

# SECTARIAN

Since the fall of Communism in the former Yugoslavia, its various ethnic groups have plunged into sectarian violence.

# SECTARIAN

- narrow-minded
- relating to a group or sect

# SENESCENT

Fearful of becoming senescent, Jobim worked out several times a week and ate only healthful foods.

# SENESCENT

- aging
- growing old

# SENTENTIOUS

The pastor took on a sententious tone when he lectured the teenage couple on their loose morals.

# SENTENTIOUS

- having a moralizing tone
- didactic and preachy

# SENTIENT

The anesthetic didn't work and I was still sentient when the surgeon made her cut, so the operation was agony for me.

# SENTIENT

- aware and conscious
- able to perceive

# SERAPHIC

Selena's sweet, seraphic appearance belied her nasty, bitter personality.

# SERAPHIC

- angelic
- pure and sublime

# SIMPER

The spoiled girl simpered as her mother praised her extravagantly to the guests at the party.

# SIMPER

- to smirk in a silly way
- to smile foolishly

# SINUOUS

Thick, sinuous vines wound around the trunk of the tree.

# SINUOUS

- serpentine or wavy
- winding
- intricate and complex

# SOLECISM

The applicant's letter was filled with embarrassing solecisms, such as "I works here at 20 years."

# SOLECISM

- ungrammatical construction
- breach of decorum

# SOLIPSISM

Arthur's solipsism annoyed others, since he treated them as if they didn't exist.

# SOLIPSISM

- belief that oneself is the only reality
- extreme egocentrism

# SOMNOLENT

Carter became somnolent after taking a couple of sleeping pills.

# SOMNOLENT

- drowsy or sleepy
- inducing sleep or relaxation

# SONOROUS

The sonorous blaring of the foghorn woke up Lily at 4:30 in the morning.

# SONOROUS

- producing a full, rich sound

# SOPHISTRY

The politician used sophistry to cloud the issue whenever he was asked a tough question in a debate.

# SOPHISTRY

- deceptive reasoning or argumentation
- manipulative use of learning and knowledge

# SOPORIFIC

The movie proved to be so soporific that soon loud snores were heard throughout the theater.

# SOPORIFIC

- sleepy
- tending to cause sleep

# SPURIOUS

Quoting from a spurious bible, the cult leader declared that all property should be signed over to him.

# SPURIOUS

- lacking authenticity
- counterfeit or false

# STAID

The lively young girl felt bored in the company of her staid, conservative date.

# STAID

- self-restrained to the point of dullness

# STOIC

While most of the mourners wept, the dead woman's husband kept up a stoic, unemotional facade.

# STOIC

- indifferent to or unaffected by emotions

# STOLID

The prisoner appeared stolid and unaffected by the judge's harsh sentence.

# STOLID

- having or showing little emotion
- impassive

# STULTIFY

The company's leadership was stultified by its practice of promoting the owner's dimwitted children to powerful positions.

# STULTIFY

- to impair or reduce to uselessness

# SUBJUGATE

The Romans made a practice of subjugating all the peoples they conquered, often enslaving them.

# SUBJUGATE

- to conquer
- to subdue
- to enslave

# SUBTERFUGE

Spies who are not skilled in the art of subterfuge are generally exposed before too long.

# SUBTERFUGE

- trick or tactic use to avoid something
- use of clever, underhanded acts to achieve one's goals

# SUPERANNUNATED

The manual typewriter has become superannuated, although a few loyal diehards still swear by it.

# **SUPERANNUNATED**

- outdated
- obsolete
- too old

# SUPERCILIOUS

She was a shallow and scornful society woman with a supercilious manner.

# SUPERCILIOUS

- arrogant and haughty
- overbearing
- condescending

# SURFEIT

Because of the surfeit of pigs, pork prices have never been lower.

# SURFEIT

- excessive amount
- surplus
- overabundant supply

# SURREPTITIOUS

The queen knew nothing of the surreptitious plots being hatched against her at court.

# SURREPTITIOUS

- characterized by secrecy
- clandestine and stealthy

# SYCOPHANT

Dreading criticism, the actor surrounded himself with fawning admirers and sycophants.

# SYCOPHANT

- self-serving flatterer
- lackey, sponge, or parasite