

A hot meal can **ameliorate** the
discomforts of even the
coldest days.

Ameliorate



(verb) to improve, make better, correct a flaw or shortcoming

Synonyms: amend, better

Antonyms: worsen, aggravate, exacerbate

1650s, from French *amélioration*,
from Old French *ameillorer*
(12c.), from a "to" (see [ad-](#)) +
meillior (Modern French *meilleur*)
"to better," from Late Latin
meliorare "improve," from Latin
melior "better," perhaps originally
"stronger," and related to Greek
mala "very, very much," from PIE
**mel-* "strong, great" (see [multi-](#)).

Considering the family's tense mood, you handled the situation with **aplomb**.

Aplomb



(**noun**) poise, assurance, great self-confidence;
perpendicularity

Synonyms: composure, self-possession,
levelheadedness.

Antonyms: confusion, embarrassment,
abashment

1828, from French aplomb
(16c.), literally
"perpendicularity," from
phrase à plomb "poised
upright, balanced," literally "on
the plumb line," from Latin
plumbum "(the metal) lead"
(see [plumb](#) (n.)), of which the
weight at the end of the line
was made.

He delivered a **bombastic** speech that did not address our problems.

Bombastic



(adjective) pompous or overblown in language; full of high-sounding words intended to conceal a lack of ideas

Synonyms: inflated, highfalutin, high-flown, pretentious

Antonyms: unadorned, simple, plain, austere

1560s, "cotton padding," corrupted from earlier bombace (1550s), from Old French bombace "cotton, cotton wadding," from Late Latin bombacem, accusative of bombax "cotton, 'linterum aut aliae quaevis quisquiliae,' " a corruption and transferred use of Latin bombyx "silk," from Greek bombyx "silk, silkworm" (which also came to mean "cotton" in Medieval Greek), from some oriental word, perhaps related to Iranian pambak (modern panba) or Armenian bambok, perhaps ultimately from a PIE root meaning "to twist, wind." From stuffing and padding for clothes or upholstery, meaning extended to "pompous, empty speech" (1580s).

They entered the army as
callow recruits and left as
seasoned veterans.

Callow



(adjective) without experience; immature, not fully developed; lacking sophistication and poise; without feathers

Synonyms: green, raw, unfledged, inexperienced

Antonyms: mature, grown-up, polished, sophisticated

Old English calu "bare, bald," from Proto-Germanic *kalwa- (cognates: Middle Dutch calu, Dutch kaal, Old High German kalo, German Kahl), from PIE root *gal- (1) "bald, naked" (cognates: Russian golyi "smooth, bald"). From young birds with no feathers, meaning extended to any young inexperienced thing or creature (1570s). Apparently not related to Latin calvus "bald."

To me, my dream made perfect sense, but when I told it to my friend it sounded like **drivel.**

Drivel



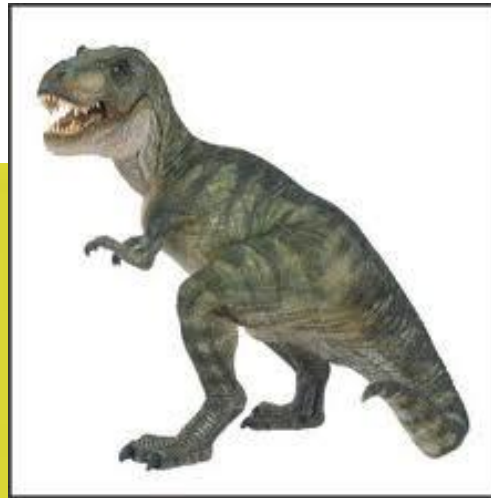
(noun) saliva or mucus flowing from the mouth or nose; foolish aimless talk or thinking; nonsense;
(verb) to let saliva flow from the mouth; to utter nonsense or childish twaddle; to waste or fritter away foolishly

Synonyms: balderdash, hogwash, tommyrot; slaver

Old English *dreflian* "to dribble or run at the nose, slobber," from Proto-Germanic **drab-*, from PIE **dher-* (1) "to make muddy, darken." Meaning "to speak nonsense" is mid-14c. Related: *Driveling*, *drivelling*.

Admitting when you have
been fairly defeated is the
epitome of sportsmanship.

Epitome



(noun) a summary, condensed account; an instance that represents a larger reality

Synonyms: abstract, digest, model, archetype

1520s, "an abstract; brief statement of the chief points of some writing," from Middle French *épitomé* (16c.), from Latin *epitome* "an abridgment," from Greek *epitome* "an abridgment, a cutting on the surface; brief summary," from *epitemnein* "cut short, abridge," from *epi* "into" (see [epi-](#)) + *temnein* "to cut" (see [tome](#)). Sense of "person or thing that typifies something" is first recorded c.1600.

Related: Epitomical.

With dramatic gestures, our fans vigorously **exhorted** the team to play harder.

Exhort



(verb) to urge strongly, advise earnestly

Synonyms: entreat, implore, adjure

c.1400, from Old French
exhorer (13c.) and directly
from Latin exhortari "to exhort,
encourage, stimulate"

The President is the **ex officio**
commander-in-chief of the
armed forces in time of war.

Ex officio



(adjective, adverb) by virtue of holding a certain office

Latin, "in discharge of one's duties," literally "out of duty," from ex "out of" (see [ex-](#)) + officio, ablative of officium "duty"

If you continue to **infringe** on my responsibilities, will you also take the blame for any mistakes?

Infringe



(**verb**) to violate, trespass, go beyond recognized bounds

Synonyms: encroach, impinge, intrude, poach

Antonyms: stay in bounds

mid-15c., enfrangen, "to violate," from Latin infringere "to damage, break off, break, bruise," from in- "in" (see [in-](#)(2)) + frangere "to break" (see [fraction](#)). Meaning of "encroach" first recorded c.1760. Related: Infringed; infringing.

It is not a good idea to
ingratiate oneself by paying
cloying compliments.

Ingratiate



SUCKING UP 101

Put up with same old costume for every Halloween, Sci-Fi convention and birthday party, get cheezburger.

ICANHASCHEEZBURGER.COM

(verb) to make oneself agreeable and thus gain favor or acceptance by others (sometimes used in critical or derogatory use)

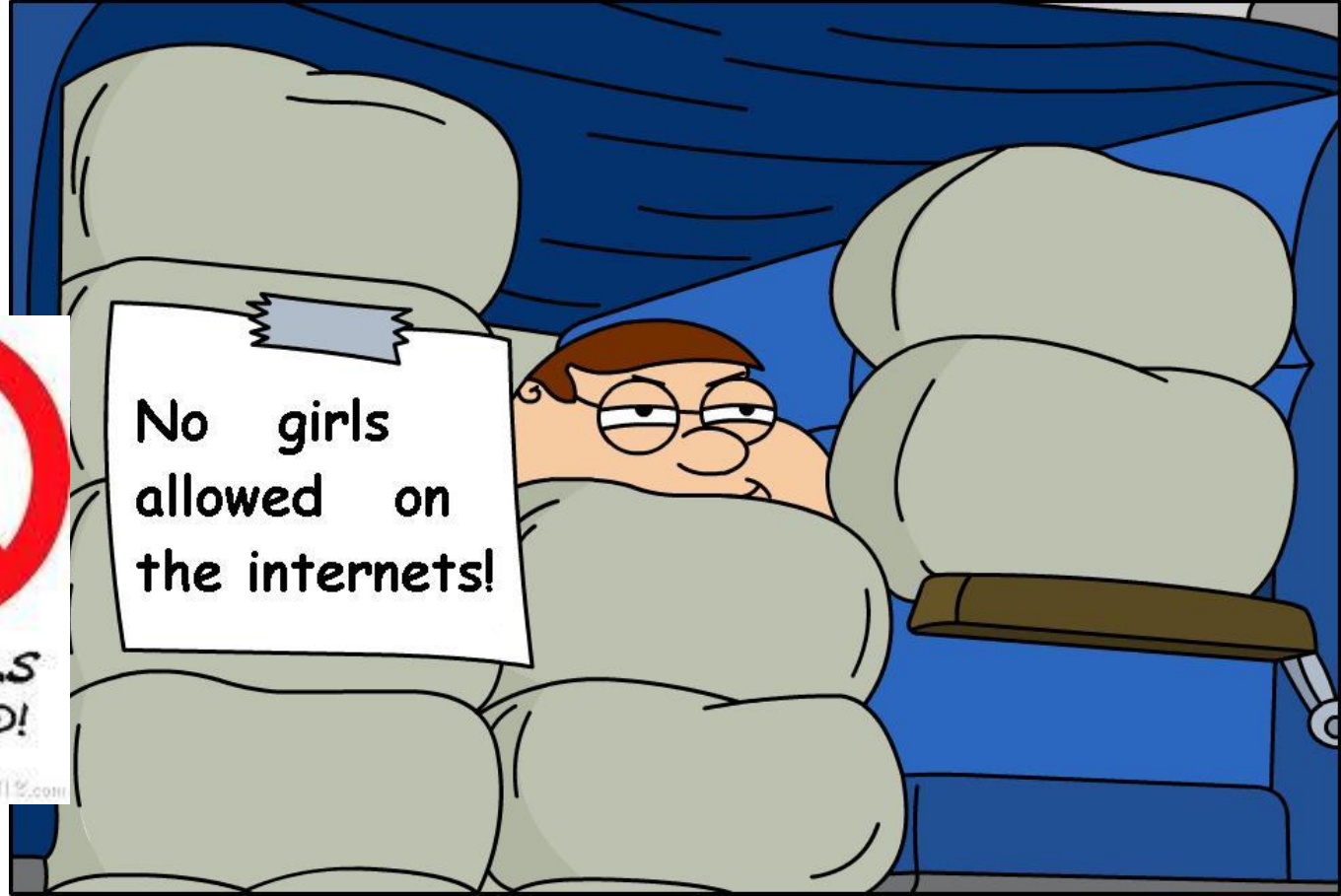
Synonyms: cozy up to, curry favor with

Antonyms: alienate, humiliate oneself, mortify

1620s, possibly via 16c. Italian
ingraziarsi "to bring (oneself)
into favor," from Latin in
gratiam "for the favor of," from
in "in" (see [in-](#) (2)) + gratia
"favor, grace" (see [grace](#)).

The crowd was so eager to see the band perform that they resented the opening singer as an **interloper**.

Interloper



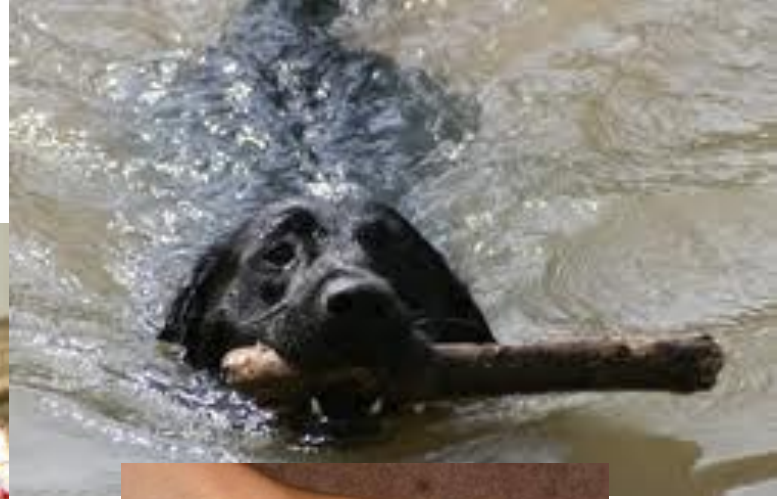
(noun) one who moves in where he or she is not wanted or has no right to be, an intruder

Synonyms: trespasser, meddler, buttinsky

1590s, enterloper, "unauthorized trader trespassing on privileges of chartered companies," probably a hybrid from inter- "between" + -loper (from landloper "vagabond, adventurer," also, according to Johnson, "a term of reproach used by seamen of those who pass their lives on shore"); perhaps a dialectal form of leap, or from Middle Dutch loper "runner, rover," from lopen "to run," from Proto-Germanic *hlaupan "to leap" (see leap (v.)). General sense of "self-interested intruder" is from 1630s.

It had been my father's favorite book when he was my age, but for me it held little **intrinsic** interest.

Intrinsic



(Adjective) belonging to someone or something by its very nature, essential, inherent; originating in a bodily organ or part

Synonyms: immanent, organic

Antonyms: extrinsic, external, outward



Stupid Face

Intrinsic to Labradors



Roscoe

Bella

late 15c., "interior, inward, internal," from Middle French *intrinsèque* "inner" (13c.), from Medieval Latin *intrinsecus* "interior, internal," from Latin *intrinsecus* (adv.) "inwardly, on the inside," from *intra* "within" (see [intra-](#)) + *secus* "alongside," originally "following" (related to *sequi* "to follow;" see [sequel](#)). Meaning "belonging to the nature of a thing" is from 1640s. Related: *Intrinsically*.

You should not **inveigh**
against the plan with quite so
much vigor until you have
read it.

Inveigh



(verb) to make a violent attack in words, express strong disapproval

Synonyms: rail, harangue, fulminate, remonstrate

Antonyms: acclaim, glorify, extol

late 15c., "to introduce," from Latin *invehi* "to attack with words," originally "carry oneself against," passive infinitive of *invehere* "bring in, carry in," from *in-* "against" (see [in-](#) (1)) + *vehere* "to carry" (see [vehicle](#)). Meaning "to give vent to violent denunciation" is from 1520s. Related: *Inveighed*; *inveighing*.

On some days I am overcome
by **lassitude** at the thought of
so many more years of
schooling.

Lassitude



(noun) weariness of body or mind, lack of energy

Synonyms: fatigue, lethargy, torpor, languor

Antonyms: energy, vitality, animation, liveliness

early 15c., from Middle French
lassitude (14c.), from Latin
lassitudinem (nominative
lassitudo) "faintness, weariness,"
from lassus "faint, tired, weary,"
from PIE *led- "slow, weary"
(source also of Old English læt
"sluggish, slow;" see [late](#) (adj.)),
from root *le- "to let go, slacken"
(see [lenient](#)).

In 1999 an argument raged over whether 2000 or 2001 would mark the beginning of the new millennium.

Millennium



(noun) a period of one thousand years; a period of great joy

Synonyms: chiliad, golden age, prosperity, peace

Antonyms: doomsday, day of judgment

1630s, from Modern Latin millennium, from Latin mille "thousand" (see [million](#)) + annus "year" (see [annual](#)); formed on analogy of biennium, triennium, etc. For vowel change, see [biennial](#). First in English in sense of "1,000-year period of Christ's anticipated rule on Earth" (Rev. xx:1-5). Sense of "any 1,000-year period" first recorded 1711. Meaning "the year 2000" attested from 1970.

One need not rely on **occult**
knowledge to grasp why
things disappear in a house
where two dogs live.

Occult

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(adjective) mysterious, magical, supernatural; secret, hidden from view; not detectable by ordinary means.
(verb) to hide, conceal; eclipse. **(noun)** matters involving the supernatural

Synonyms: supernatural, esoteric, abstruse, arcane

Antonyms: mundane, common, public, exoteric



I eat stuff

Roscoe

Bella



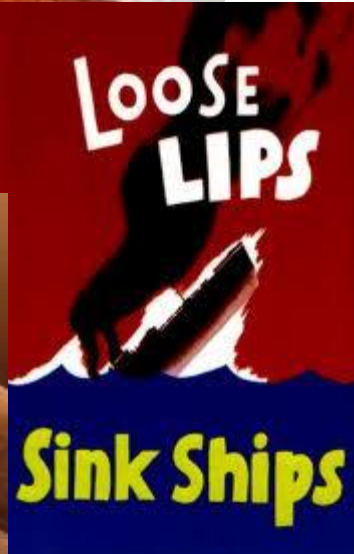
**We eat your
Stuff, but**

**Always give it back.
...in the yard.**

1530s, "secret, not divulged," from Middle French *occulte* and directly from Latin *occultus* "hidden, concealed, secret," past participle of *occulere* "cover over, conceal," from *ob* "over" (see [ob-](#)) + a verb related to *celare* "to hide," from PIE root **kel-* (2) "to cover, conceal" (see [cell](#)). Meaning "not apprehended by the mind, beyond the range of understanding" is from 1540s. The association with the supernatural sciences (magic, alchemy, astrology, etc.) dates from 1630s.

The rain permeated all of my clothing and reduced the map in my pocket to a pulpy mess.

permeate



(verb) to spread through, penetrate, soak through

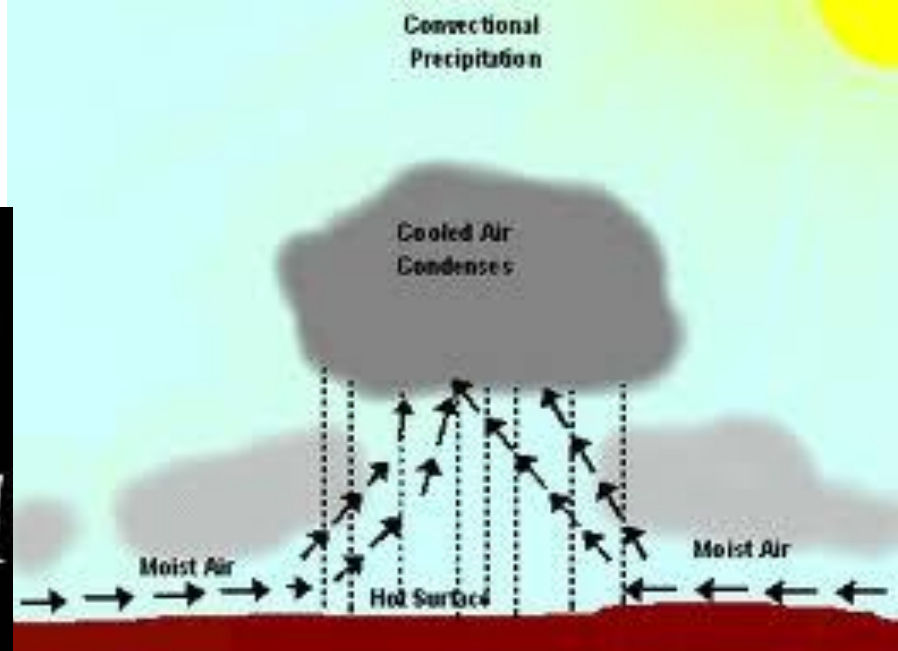
The rain permeated everything.



1650s, from Latin permeatus, past participle of permeare "to pass through" (see [permeable](#)). Related: Permeated; permeating

Scholars often disagree over
which event or events
precipitate an historic
moment.

precipitate



(**Verb**) to fall as moisture; to cause or bring about suddenly; to hurl down from a great height; to give distinct form to; (**adjective**) characterized by excessive haste (**noun**) moisture; the product of an action or process

Synonyms: provoke, produce, reckless, impetuous

Antonyms: wary, cautious, circumspect

"to hurl or fling down," 1520s, a back formation from [precipitation](#) or else from Latin praecipitatus, past participle of praecipitare "to throw or dive headlong," from praecipus "steep, headlong, headfirst" (see [precipice](#)). Meaning "to cause to happen, hurry the beginning of" is recorded from 1620s. Chemical sense is from 1620s; meteorological sense first attested 1863. Related: Precipitated; precipitating.

Some argue that more
stringent laws against
speeding will make our streets
safer.

Stringent



(adjective) strict, severe; rigorously or urgently binding or compelling; sharp or bitter to the taste

Synonyms: stern, rigorous, tough, urgent, imperative

Antonyms: lenient, mild, lax, permissive

c.1600, "astringent," especially with reference to taste, from Latin stringentem (nominative stringens), present participle of stringere (2) "to compress, contract, bind or draw tight" (see [strain](#) (v.)). Of regulations, procedures, etc., 1846.

I cannot be sure, but I **surmise** that she would not accept my apology even if I made it on my knees.

Surmise



(verb) To think or believe without certain supporting evidence; to conjecture or guess;
(noun) likely idea that lacks definite proof

Synonyms: infer, gather, inference, presumption

c.1400, in law, "to charge, allege," from Old French surmis, past participle of surmettre "to accuse," from sur- "upon" (see [sur-](#) (1)) + mettre "put," from Latin mittere "to send" (see [mission](#)). Meaning "to infer conjecturally" is recorded from 1700, from the noun. Related: Surmised; surmising.