

PrepScholar's Top 150 ACT Vocabulary Words

Reading & Writing		Definition
adhere	verb	stick completely to a surface or substance* [or] believe in and follow the practices of
aloof	adjective	not friendly or forthcoming; cool and distant
ambiguous	adjective	open to more than one interpretation; having a double meaning
analyze	verb	examine in detail, typically for purposes of explanation and interpretation (analysis, analytical)
anecdote	noun	a short and amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person
antagonize	verb	cause someone to become hostile
anticipate	verb	regard as probable; expect or predict
apprehensive	adjective	anxious or fearful that something bad will happen
arcane	adjective	mysterious or secret
assert	verb	state a fact or belief confidently and forcefully
assess	verb	evaluate or estimate the nature, ability, or quality of
attribute	verb	regard something as being caused by someone or something
bear	verb	endure an ordeal or difficulty
befall	verb	(of something bad) happen to someone
burgeon	verb	begin to grow or increase rapidly; flourish
coherent	adjective	logical and consistent
compassion	noun	concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others
compensate (for)	verb	make up for something unwelcome or unpleasant by exerting an opposite force or effect
complement	noun	a thing that completes or brings to perfection a larger whole
compose	verb	1. write or create* 2. constitute, make up (composition, composed of)
condescending	adjective	having or showing a feeling of superiority
consecutive	adjective	following continuously; in unbroken or logical sequence
contour	noun	an outline, especially one representing or bounding the shape or form of something
contract	verb	decrease in size, number, or range
contradict	verb	be in conflict with
correlate	verb	have a mutual relationship or connection (corollary, correlated)
corollary	noun	a direct or natural consequence or result
critical	adjective	1. expressing adverse or disapproving comments or judgments 2. expressing or involving an analysis of the merits and faults of a work of literature, music, or art* 3. involving the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment* 4. (of a situation or problem) having the potential to become disastrous; at a point of crisis
cumbersome	adjective	1. large or heavy and therefore difficult to carry or use 2. slow or complicated and therefore inefficient*
deficit	noun	the amount by which something is too small
demean	verb	cause a severe loss in the dignity of and respect for someone or something
depict	verb	show or represent
determine	verb	1. cause (something) to occur in a particular way; be the decisive factor in 2. ascertain or establish exactly, typically as a result of research or calculation*

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devoid	adjective	entirely lacking or free from
differentiate	verb	1. recognize or ascertain what makes (someone or something) different* 2. (differentiate between) identify differences between (two or more things or people) 3. make (someone or something) appear different or distinct 4. make or become different in the process of growth or development
diffuse	adjective	spread out over a large area; not concentrated
digress	verb	leave the main subject temporarily in speech or writing
diminish	verb	make or become less
discrepancy	noun	a lack of compatibility or similarity between two or more facts
(dis)inclined	adjective	willing or positive about an action, belief, or attitude (disinclined: unwilling or negative about something)
dismay	verb	consternation and distress, typically that caused by something unexpected
disposition	noun	1. a person's inherent qualities of mind and character* 2. an inclination or tendency
dynamic	adjective	characterized by constant change, activity, or progress
eclipse	noun	a loss of significance, power, or prominence in relation to another person or thing
emerge	verb	become apparent, important, or prominent
eminent	adjective	famous and respected within a particular sphere or profession
engage	verb	1. occupy, attract, or involve (someone's interest or attention) 2. (engage someone in) cause someone to become involved in (a conversation or discussion) 3. (engage in) participate or become involved in*
engross	verb	absorb all the attention or interest of
ethereal	adjective	extremely delicate and light in a way that seems too perfect for this world
evolve	verb	develop gradually, especially from a simple to a more complex form
exploit	verb	1. make full use of and derive benefit from* 2. use a situation or person in an unfair or selfish way
facilitate	verb	make an action or process easy or easier
feign	verb	pretend to be affected by a feeling, state, or injury
fleeting	adjective	lasting for a very short time
glaring	adjective	extremely obvious or conspicuous
hardship	noun	severe suffering or deprivation
hurtle	verb	move or cause to move at a great speed, typically in an uncontrolled manner
immerse	verb	involve oneself deeply in a particular activity or interest* [or] dip or submerge in a liquid
imminent	adjective	about to happen
(im)mobile	adjective	able to move or be moved freely or easily (immobile: not able to be moved)
impervious	adjective	unable to be affected by
incendiary	adjective	1. tending to stir up conflict* 2. designed to cause fires
incompetent	adjective	not having or showing the necessary skills to do something successfully
(in)conceivable	adjective	capable of being imagined or grasped mentally (inconceivable: not capable of being imagined)
(in)dissoluble	adjective	able to be dissolved, loosened, or disconnected (indissoluble: solid, not able to be broken apart)
inevitable	adjective	certain to happen; unavoidable

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infer	verb	deduce or conclude (information) from evidence and reasoning rather than from clear statements (inference)
integrate	verb	combine one thing with another so that they become a whole
intuition	noun	the ability to understand something immediately, a 'gut feeling'
justify	verb	1. show or prove to be right or reasonable* 2. be a good reason for
lack	verb	be without or deficient in
latent	adjective	existing but not yet developed or obvious; hidden; concealed
lethargic	adjective	sluggish and apathetic
mere	adjective	used to emphasize how small or insignificant someone or something is
minute	adjective	extremely small (pronounced MY-noot)
mishap	noun	an unlucky accident
nostalgia	noun	a sentimental longing or affection for the past
notion	noun	a conception of or belief about something
obsolete	adjective	no longer produced or used; out of date
obstruct	verb	to be or get in the way of; prevent; hinder
omit	verb	leave out or exclude (someone or something), either intentionally or forgetfully
orient	verb	align or position something relative to a known point or landmark
paradox	noun	an idea that, despite sound (or apparently sound) reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory
pensive	adjective	engaged in, involving, or reflecting deep or serious thought
peril	noun	serious and immediate danger
perpetual	adjective	occurring repeatedly; so frequent as to seem endless and uninterrupted
ponder	verb	think about something carefully
potent	adjective	having great power, influence, or effect
precede	verb	1. come before (something) in time 2. come before in order or position* (preceding)
predate	verb	exist or occur at a date earlier than something
principle	noun	a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior
proficient	adjective	competent or skilled in doing or using something
profound	adjective	1. very great or intense* 2. having or showing great knowledge or insight
pungent	adjective	having an intensely strong taste or smell
redundant	adjective	not or no longer needed or useful
reflect	verb	1. (of a surface or body) throw back (heat, light, or sound) without absorbing it 2. (of a mirror or shiny surface) show an image of 3. embody or represent (something) in a faithful or appropriate way 4. (reflect well/badly on) bring about a good or bad impression of: the incident reflects badly on the operating practices of the airlines. 5. (reflect on/upon) think deeply or carefully about*
relevant	adjective	closely connected or appropriate to the matter at hand (antonym: irrelevant)
resent	verb	feel bitterness or slight anger at a circumstance, action, or person
revive	verb	1. to regain life, consciousness, or strength 2. restore interest in or the popularity of*

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rudimentary	adjective	1. involving or limited to basic principles 2. of or relating to an immature, undeveloped, or basic form*
sensory	adjective	of or relating to sensation or the physical senses; transmitted or perceived by the senses
skeptical	adjective	not easily convinced; having doubts or reservations
solemn	adjective	formal and dignified; serious
static	adjective	lacking in movement, action, or change
superlative	adjective	of the highest quality or degree
sustainable	adjective	1. able to be maintained at a certain rate or level 2. conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources*
trait	noun	a distinguishing quality or characteristic
trivial	adjective	of little value or importance
(un)realized	adjective	give actual or physical form to (unrealized: not given form to, such as 'unrealized plans' to have a picnic on a rainy day)
void	noun	a completely empty space
wholly	adverb	entirely; fully
		<i>A blue background indicates a high-frequency word.</i>
		<i>An asterisk (*) indicates the definition of the word that is more/most likely to appear on the ACT.</i>
Science		Definition
abundant	adjective	existing or available in large quantities; plentiful
altitude	noun	the height of an object or point in relation to sea level or ground level
attribute	noun	a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something
characteristic	adjective	typical of a particular person, place, or thing
combustion	noun	the process of burning something
conduct(ivity)	verb	transmit a form of energy such as heat or electricity (conductivity: the effectiveness of a material at conducting energy)
correspond	verb	have a close similarity; match or agree almost exactly
decelerate	verb	reduce the speed of; lose velocity; move more slowly
deposition	noun	the process of some substance being naturally deposited somewhere
distinguish	verb	recognize or treat (someone or something) as different
efficient	adjective	being effective without wasting time or effort or expense; able to accomplish a purpose; functioning effectively
emit	verb	give off, send forth, or discharge; as of light, heat, or radiation, vapor, etc.
erode	verb	remove soil or rock; become ground down or deteriorate
evolution	noun	a process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage (especially a more advanced or mature stage)
exert	verb	put to use; make a great effort at a mental or physical task
exhibit	verb	show an attribute, property, knowledge, or skill; to show, make visible or apparent
fuse	verb	mix together different elements; join
gauge	verb	measure precisely and against a standard; determine the capacity, volume, or contents of by measurement and calculation
generalize	verb	draw from specific cases for more general cases

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given	adjective	specified or stated: Students' understanding of any given topic.
hypothesis	noun	a tentative theory about the natural world; a concept that is not yet verified but that if true would explain certain facts or phenomena
incremental	adjective	increasing gradually by regular degrees or additions
intact	adjective	undamaged in any way; whole
interval	noun	the distance between things; a definite length of time marked off by two instants
larvae	noun	the active immature form of an insect, especially one that differs greatly from the adult and forms the stage between egg and pupa, e.g., a caterpillar or grub.
latter	noun	the second of two or the second mentioned of two
mass	noun	the quantity of matter that something contains
maturation	noun	coming to full development; becoming mature
onset	noun	the beginning or early stages
precipitation	noun	the falling to earth of any form of water (rain or snow or hail or sleet or mist)
prolong	verb	lengthen or extend in duration or space
directly proportional	adjective	a relationship between two connected amounts, factors or quantities in which an increase in one causes an increase in the other;
inversely proportional	adjective	a relationship between two connected amounts, factors or quantities in which an increase in one causes a decrease in the other
residual	adjective	relating to or indicating a remainder; something left after other parts have been taken away
solution	noun	a homogeneous mixture of two or more substances; frequently (but not necessarily) a liquid solution
substrate	noun	any substance or layer lying underneath another; a surface on which an organism grows or is attached; the substance that is acted upon by an enzyme or ferment
trial	noun	a specific experiment or set of experiments within a larger context
uniform	adjective	evenly spaced; always the same; showing a single form or character in all occurrences
variable	noun	in an experiment: an element, feature, or factor that is changed within the experiment to determine its effects