
WORDS AND PHRASES

Major (noun)

the most important subject that a college or university student is studying, or the student himself or herself

- What is your major, English or French?
- She was a philosophy major at an Ivy League college.

Ace (verb)

to do very well in an exam

- I was up all night studying, but it was worth it - I aced my chemistry final.

Probability

the study of mathematics of calculating the likelihood that particular events will happen, the likelihood of something happening or being true

- There's a higher probability of now having a state income tax (= the tax is more likely now).
- In all probability he would never see her again (= very likely he would not see her again)

Equivalent

having the same amount, value, purpose, qualities, etc.

- She's doing the equivalent job in the new company but for more money.
- Is \$50 equivalent to about £30?

Affinity

a liking or sympathy for someone or something, especially because of shared characteristics

- Many people really feel an affinity for/with dolphins.
- We have a deep affinity formed through many years of friendship.

Counterintuitive

Something that is counterintuitive does not happen in the way you would expect it

- He steered the company in a surprising direction and made some counterintuitive choices.
- This decision might sound counter-intuitive now, but it worked.

Occur

Happen, take place, exist or be found to be present in a place or under a particular set of conditions

- The accident occurred at about 2:00 am.
- If any of these symptoms occur while you are taking the medication, consult your doctor.

Subset

a set of numbers or things that is part of another, larger set

- subsets of the population such as men, women, ethnic groups, etc.

Vice versa

used to say that what you have just said is also true in the opposite order

- He doesn't trust her, and vice versa (= she also doesn't trust him).
- If they go away, we have their children and vice versa.

fallacy

an idea that a lot of people think is true but is in fact false

- It is a common fallacy that women are worse drivers than men.
- It's a fallacy that all fat people are fat simply because they eat too much.

Phenomenon

something that exists and can be seen, felt, tasted, etc., especially something unusual or interesting

- Gravity is a natural phenomenon.
- There's evidence to suggest that child abuse is not just a recent phenomenon.

plausible

seeming likely to be true, or able to be believed

- His story certainly sounds plausible.
- I need to think of a plausible excuse for not going to the meeting.

regardless

without being affected or influenced by something

- The law requires equal treatment for all, regardless of race, religion, or sex.
- The plan for a new office building went ahead regardless of local opposition.

hypothetical

based on a situation that is not real, but that might happen

- The question is purely hypothetical.
- Theoretical explanations in the sciences tend to be of an essentially hypothetical nature.

conspiracy

a secret plan made by two or more people to do something that is harmful or illegal

- He was charged with conspiracy to commit criminal damage.
- There were many conspiracy theories (=beliefs that something is the result of a conspiracy) surrounding Princess Diana's death.

credible

deserving or able to be believed or trusted

- He was unable to give a credible explanation for his behaviour.
- Her excuse was barely credible.

Outlandish

strange and unusual and difficult to accept or like

- She liked to dress in outlandish clothes.
- Her story seemed so outlandish.

likelihood

the chance that something will happen

- This latest dispute greatly increases the likelihood of a strike.
- There was very little likelihood of her getting the job.

component

one of several parts that together make up a whole machine, system etc., constituent

- companies that make electronic components for computer products
- Fresh fruit and vegetables are an essential component of a healthy diet.

consensus

an opinion that everyone in a group agrees with or accepts

- a lack of consensus about the aims of the project
- Could we reach a consensus on this matter? Let's take a vote.

unanimous

a unanimous decision, vote, agreement etc. is one in which all the people involved agree

- The decision to appoint Matt was almost unanimous.
- After a lengthy discussion we reached a unanimous decision on the proposal.