

Lure means to attract or tempt someone or something—usually by offering a reward, promise, or something appealing. It often involves drawing someone toward a certain place or action by appealing to their desire or curiosity. Fishermen use shiny bait to lure fish to their hooks, and the bright lights of a city can lure young people away from quieter towns. So, lure means to entice or draw in by appealing to interest, desire, or temptation.

Lore means traditional knowledge, beliefs, or stories passed down through generations, often by word of mouth. It includes the wisdom, myths, and customs that shape a culture's understanding of the world. Villages rich in lore preserve old tales about heroes, spirits, or local legends. So, lore means the body of knowledge and stories that connect people through history and shared experience.

Folklore means the collection of traditional stories, songs, sayings, and customs of a community—passed down to explain their beliefs, values, and history. Many cultures have folklore about natural events, creation, or heroic figures, such as Paul Bunyan in American folklore. So, folklore means the shared storytelling and traditions that express a culture's imagination and identity.

Defiance means open resistance or bold disobedience—refusing to submit to rules, authority, or control. It often shows courage, pride, or conviction in the face of opposition. Protesters who refuse unjust laws act in defiance, as does a student who speaks up against unfair treatment. So, defiance means a deliberate stand against authority or expectation.

Brazen means bold and shameless—acting without embarrassment or regard for what others think. It describes fearless or audacious behavior that might shock or impress people. A student cheating in plain sight or a performer stealing the spotlight might both act in a brazen way. So, brazen means boldly unashamed and daring in action or attitude.

Brazen charisma means fearless charm—the kind of bold, confident presence that draws attention effortlessly. Someone with brazen charisma stands out without apology, commanding interest through self-assurance. An actor who dominates the stage or a leader who captivates a crowd can display brazen charisma. So, brazen charisma means powerful magnetism mixed with fearless confidence.

Threshold means the entrance or starting point of something new—a doorway to a different state, place, or stage of life. It can mean both a physical doorway and a symbolic moment of change. A person standing at the threshold of adulthood is about to begin a new phase. So, threshold means both an entryway and a point of beginning or transition.

Silhouette means the dark outline or shadow-like shape of a person or object seen against a lighter background. It shows the form without details. You might see the

silhouette of trees at sunset or recognize someone by their silhouette in a doorway. So, silhouette means a visible outline that defines shape through contrast.

Rock-a-baby means to gently move a baby back and forth to calm, comfort, or help them sleep. Parents and caregivers rock babies softly while humming or singing lullabies like “Rock-a-bye Baby.” So, rock-a-baby means soothing an infant through gentle, rhythmic motion that expresses care and affection.

A silhouette shows the outline of an object against light, while a shadow is the dark shape cast on a surface when something blocks light. You see a silhouette when looking at the object itself against brightness; a shadow appears on the ground or wall because of that light being blocked. So, a silhouette is the visible outline, and a shadow is the projection caused by it.

Gentrification means the transformation of a lower-income neighborhood when wealthier people move in—bringing new businesses and rising property values that often force longtime residents out. While gentrification can beautify and revitalize an area, it can also create inequality and displacement. So, gentrification means economic and social change that benefits some but harms others through rising costs and cultural loss.

Luminary means a person who inspires or influences others through their achievements or wisdom, or literally, a source of light like the sun or moon. Maya Angelou was a literary luminary whose words enlightened others. So, luminary means someone or something that shines brightly through brilliance, leadership, or inspiration.

Incantation means a spoken phrase, chant, or formula believed to have magical or spiritual power. It’s often used in rituals or ceremonies to bless, protect, or summon. Ancient priests or wizards recited incantations to call upon divine or supernatural forces. So, incantation means a powerful set of words spoken with intention or faith.

Purgatory means a state or place of temporary suffering or purification—especially in some Christian beliefs, where souls are cleansed before entering heaven. The word is also used metaphorically for waiting or struggling through hardship. So, purgatory means a stage of cleansing, endurance, or waiting before reaching peace.

Regulation means a rule or directive created by an authority to control or manage behavior, systems, or processes. Regulations keep order and fairness in society, such as safety laws or school policies. So, regulation means a structured rule meant to guide conduct and maintain standards.

Cortical means related to the cortex, the outer layer of an organ—most often the brain’s cerebral cortex, where thought, memory, and awareness occur. Cortical activity increases when we solve problems or make decisions. So, cortical means connected to higher-level brain functions and conscious thinking.

Co-occurrence means two or more things happening or appearing together at the same time or place. In science, it describes conditions that often exist together, like anxiety and depression. So, co-occurrence means the simultaneous presence or happening of related events or characteristics.

Intervention means deliberately stepping in to change or improve a situation, often to prevent harm or guide a better outcome. A teacher might intervene in an argument, or a doctor might use medical intervention to save a patient. So, intervention means taking action to interrupt or improve circumstances.

Stimulation means something that activates or energizes the mind, body, or senses—causing increased alertness or activity. Bright colors, music, or caffeine can create stimulation by awakening physical or mental responses. So, stimulation means the spark that awakens energy, focus, or reaction.

Novelty means something new, original, or unusual—something that stands out because it's different from the ordinary. The novelty of a new experience or invention excites curiosity. So, novelty means freshness and uniqueness that captures interest because it breaks routine.

Immense means extremely large or powerful in size, amount, or importance. The ocean's immense depth or a person's immense joy both express something vast beyond measure. So, immense means overwhelmingly great in scale or intensity.

Neurochemistry means the science of chemicals in the brain and nervous system that affect how we think, feel, and act. Changes in neurochemistry can influence emotions and mental health. So, neurochemistry means the study of brain chemicals that shape thoughts, moods, and behaviors.

Coherent means clear, logical, and connected—when parts or ideas fit together smoothly. A coherent speech is easy to follow because it flows in an organized way. So, coherent means consistent and understandable because everything links together clearly.

Surrogate means a substitute or stand-in that takes the place of another person or thing. A surrogate mother carries a child for someone else, or a deputy may serve as a surrogate leader. So, surrogate means one who acts in place of another, fulfilling a role temporarily or by agreement.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) means a structured psychological method that helps people identify and change negative thoughts and behaviors. By altering how one thinks (cognitive) and acts (behavioral), CBT promotes emotional well-being. So, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy means a goal-based approach to improving mental health through mindful thinking and behavior changes.

Misaligned means not properly lined up, matched, or in agreement—physically or in purpose. Wheels, plans, or goals can be misaligned when they don't work together as

intended. So, misaligned means out of harmony or balance, causing friction or confusion.

Myelin means the fatty, protective coating around nerve fibers that helps electrical signals travel quickly through the nervous system. When myelin is damaged, nerve communication slows, leading to disorders like multiple sclerosis. So, myelin means the insulating layer that speeds up nerve communication throughout the body.

Sentient means capable of feeling, perceiving, or experiencing things consciously. Humans and many animals are sentient because they can sense, think, and feel emotion. So, sentient means having awareness and the ability to consciously experience life.

Commune means to share deep connection or understanding with someone or something—often spiritual, emotional, or intellectual. People commune with nature, prayer, or others to feel unity and peace. It can also mean a community where people share resources and live cooperatively. So, commune means to connect deeply or to live collectively in shared purpose.

Cantankerous means bad-tempered, irritable, or hard to please—someone who often complains or argues. A cantankerous neighbor might scold people for walking on their lawn. So, cantankerous means stubbornly difficult or cranky in attitude or behavior.

The Mason-Dixon Line means the historical boundary separating the northern and southern United States, especially before the Civil War. It symbolized the division between free and slave states. So, the Mason-Dixon Line means both a literal border and a lasting symbol of America's sectional divide.

Repression means holding back or suppressing feelings, desires, or memories—either consciously or unconsciously. Politically, it means silencing opposition; psychologically, it means burying painful thoughts. So, repression means forcefully controlling or hiding emotions, actions, or truths to maintain order or avoid pain.

Subordinate means lower in rank or importance, or under the authority of another. A soldier is subordinate to a commander; a task may be subordinate to a larger goal. So, subordinate means secondary or dependent, showing lesser rank or priority.

Peonage means being forced to work to pay off debt, often under unfair or exploitative conditions that make freedom nearly impossible. After slavery, peonage trapped many workers in endless debt cycles. So, peonage means debt-based labor that enslaves people through economic control and exploitation.

Complicity means being involved in wrongdoing—helping or allowing something bad to happen, even indirectly. Staying silent during a crime can show complicity, just as leaders who hide corruption share blame. So, complicity means shared responsibility in wrongdoing through participation, approval, or failure to act.

