

## Learning GRE Vocabulary

Every review book has lists of vocabulary that appears most frequently on the GRE; here are some words that appear most frequently on those lists:

Abstain	Dessicate	Ingenuous	Pedant
Adulterate	Dissonance	Laconic	Philanthropic
Advocate	Enervate	Laudable	Placate
Anomaly	Engender	Lethargic	Pragmatic
Antipathy	Enigma	Loquacious	Precipitate
Apathy	Ephemeral	Lucid	Prevaricate
Assuage	Equivocal	Malleable	Prodigal
Audacious	Erudite	Misanthrope	Propriety
Bolster	Eulogy	Mitigate	Vacillate
Cacophony	Fervid	Obdurate	Venerate
Capricious	Garrulous	Opaque	Volatile
Corroborate	Gullible	Ostentations	Waver
Deride	Homogenous	Paradox	Zeal

These words are just a starting point. You'll also want to notice words you hear in class or find in your reading. Focus on the kind of vocabulary used in articles written for a broad college-educated audience: articles like those could easily include any of the words above. Don't worry about technical vocabulary (*spectrometer*, *soteriology*) from specialized classes.

To study for the test, therefore, you'll want to

- get used to reading words like these in context, if you aren't already. Consider reading articles, columns, and editorials in magazines like the *Smithsonian*, the *New Yorker*, or *Time* or newspapers like the *Wall Street Journal* or *Christian Science Monitor*. If you're not used to reading online, start practicing: that's the way you'll need to do it on the test.
- get familiar with common prefixes and suffixes. Even if you don't know a word, recognizing its beginning or ending may help you eliminate some wrong choices.
- study each word together with related words. **You'll want to learn more than a definition.** What other words mean more or less the same thing? What else can this word mean? If you study a word's synonyms together with its definition, then you're also prepared if one of those synonyms shows up on the test instead.

## Learning GRE Vocabulary, cont.

To study vocabulary, you can buy new and used review books online, and you can find them in the reference section of most libraries. You can also buy, download, or make flashcards. If you make your own, make sure you include

- ✓ your word's main definition (obviously)
- ✓ your word's secondary definitions, if any. Don't go crazy: if a word has six definitions listed, the GRE isn't likely to test you on the last three or four. But if the second definition is really different from the first, you probably want to include it.
- ✓ your word's synonyms—both ones you know (to help you understand the word) and ones you don't know (in case they come up on the test)
- ✓ “real” example sentences using each word. Don't make up your own, because it's easy to make small mistakes with words you don't know well. Many GRE questions now test you on words in context, so you want to see how your word is actually used and what words it's typically used with.

Your flashcards, therefore, might look like these:

### laudatory

- containing or expressing praise
- *The reviews of his performance were laudatory, describing it as his best ever.*
- complimentary, commendatory, adulatory, approving, eulogistic

### qualified

- (1) having the qualities that fit a person for some function or office
  - *She is fully qualified to do the job*
  - accomplished, adequate, capable, adept
- (2) limited or modified in some way, made less strong or positive
  - *I gave his project my qualified approval*
  - limited, restricted