

BHARAT SCHOOL OF BANKING – ENGLISH VOCABULARY

Word List - 36

philanthropistN. /lover of mankind; doer of good.

In his role as *philanthropist* and public benefactor, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., donated millions to charity; as an individual, however, he was a tight-fisted old man.

philistineN. /narrow-minded person, uncultured and exclusively interested in material gain.

We need more men of culture and enlightenment; we have too many *philistines* amongus.

philologyN. /study of language.

The professor of philology advocated the use of Esperanto as an international language.

phlegmaticADJ. /calm; not easily disturbed.

The nurse was a cheerful but phlegmatic person, unexcited in the face of sudden emergencies.

phobiaN. /morbid fear.

Her fear of flying was more than mere nervousness; it was a real *phobia*.

phoenixN. /symbol of immortality or rebirth.

Like the legendary *phoenix* rising from its ashes, the city of San Francisco rose again after its destruction during the 1906 earthquake.

phylumN. /major class of plants; primary branch of animal kingdom; division.

In sorting out her hundreds of packets of seeds, Katya decided to file them by *phylum*.

physiologicalADJ. /pertaining to the science of the function of living organisms.

To understand this disease fully, we must examine not only its physiological aspects but also its psychological elements.

picaresqueADJ. /pertaining to rogues in literature.

Tom Jones has been hailed as one of the best picaresque novels in the English language.

piebaldADJ. /mottled; spotted.

You should be able to identify Polka Dot in this race; it is the only *piebald* horse running.

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piecemeal **ADV.** /one piece at a time; gradually.

Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is too huge to finish in one sitting; I'll have to read it piecemeal.

pie **ADJ.** /variegated; multicolored.

The *Pied Piper* of Hamelin got his name from the multicolored clothing he wore.

piety **N.** /religious devotion; godliness.

The nuns in the convent were noted for their piety; they spent their days in worship and prayer. Pious, **ADJ.**

pigment **N.** /coloring matter.

Van Gogh mixed various pigments with linseed oil to create his paints.

pillage **V.** /plunder.

The enemy *pillaged* the quiet village and left it in ruins.

pine **V.** /languish, decline; long for, yearn.

Though she tried to be happy living with Clara in the city, Heidi *ined* for the mountains and for her gruff but loving grandfather.

pinnacle **N.** /peak.

We could see the morning sunlight illuminate the pinnacle while the rest of the mountain lay in shadow.

pious **ADJ.** /devout; religious.

The challenge for church people today is how to be pious in the best sense, that is, to be devout without becoming hypocritical or sanctimonious. piety,

piquant **ADJ.** /pleasantly tart-tasting; stimulating.

The piquant sauce added to our enjoyment of the meal. piquancy, **N.**

pique **N.** /irritation; resentment.

She showed her pique at her loss by refusing to appear with the other contestants at the end of the competition.

pique **V.** /provoke or arouse; annoy.

"I know something you don't know," said Lucy, trying to *pique* Ethel's interest.

pitfall **N.** /hidden danger; concealed trap.

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Her parents warned young Sophie against the many pitfalls that lay in wait for her in the dangerous big city.

pithy ADJ. /concise; meaningful; substantial; meaty.

While other girls might have gone on and on about how uncool Elton was, Liz summed it up in one pithy remark: "He's bogus!"

pittance N. /a small allowance or wage.

He could not live on the pittance he received as a pensioner and had to look for an additional source of revenue.

pivotal ADJ. /crucial; key; vital.

The new "smart weapons" technology played a pivotal role in the quick resolution of the war with Iraq.

placate V. /pacify; conciliate.

The store manager tried to placate the angry customer, offering to replace the damaged merchandise or to give back her money right away.

placebo N. /harmless substance prescribed as a dummy pill.

In a controlled experiment, fifty volunteers were given aspirin tablets; the control group received only *placebos*.

placid ADJ. /peaceful; calm.

After his vacation in this placid section, he felt soothed and rested.

plagiarism N. /theft of another's ideas or writings passed off as original.

The editor recognized the plagiarism and rebuked the culprit who had presented the manuscript as original.

plagiarize V. /steal another's ideas and pass them off as one's own.

The teacher could tell that the student had plagiarized parts of his essay; she could recognize whole paragraphs straight from Barron's *Book Notes*.

plaintive ADJ. /mournful.

The dove has a plaintive and melancholy call.

plasticity N. /ability to be molded.

When clay dries out, it loses its plasticity and becomes less malleable.

platitude N. /trite remark; commonplace statement.

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In giving advice to his son, old Polonius expressed himself only in *platitudes*; every word out of his mouth was a commonplace.

plauditN. /enthusiastically worded approval; round of applause.

The theatrical company reprinted the *plaudits* of the critics in its advertisements. **plauditory**, **ADJ.**

plausibleADJ. /having a show of truth but open to doubt; specious.

Your mother made you stay home from school because she needed you to program the VCR? I'm sorry, you'll have to come up with a more *plausible* excuse than that.

plenitudeN. /abundance; completeness.

Looking in the pantry, we admired the *plenitude* of fruits and pickles we had preserved during the summer.

plethoraN. /excess; overabundance.

She offered a plethora of excuses for her shortcomings.

pliableADJ. /flexible; yielding; adaptable.

In remodeling the bathroom, we have replaced all the old, rigid lead pipes with new, pliable copper tubing.

pliantADJ. /flexible; easily influenced.

Pinocchio's disposition was pliant, he was like putty in his tempters' hands.

plightN. /condition, state (especially a bad state or condition); predicament.

Many people feel that the federal government should do more to alleviate the plight of the homeless. Loggers, unmoved by the plight of the spotted owl, plan to continue logging whether or not they ruin the owl's habitat.

plumbADJ. /checking perpendicularity; vertical.

Before hanging wallpaper it is advisable to drop a plumb line from the ceiling as a guide.

plumageN. /feathers of a bird.

Bird watchers identify different species of bird by their characteristic songs and distinctive plumage.

plummetV. /fall sharply.

Stock prices *plummeted* as Wall Street reacted to the crisis in the economy.

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plutocracyN. /society ruled by the wealthy.

From the way the government caters to the rich, you might think our society is a plutocracy rather than a democracy.

podiatristN. /doctor who treats ailments of the feet.

He consulted a podiatrist about his fallen arches.

podiumN. /pedestal; raised platform.

The audience applauded as the conductor made his way to the podium.

poignancyN. /quality of being deeply moving; keenness of emotion.

Watching the tearful reunion of the long-separated mother and child, the social worker was touched by the poignancy of the scene. poignant, ADJ.

polarizeV. /split into opposite extremes or camps.

The abortion issue has polarized the country into pro-choice and anti-abortion camps. polarization, N.

polemicalADJ. /aggressive in verbal attack; disputatious.

Lexy was a master of polemical rhetoric; she should have worn a T-shirt with the slogan "Born to Debate."

politicADJ. /expedient; prudent; well advised.

Even though he was disappointed by the size of the bonus he was offered, he did not think it politic to refuse it.

polygamistN. /one who has more than one spouse at a time.

He was arrested as a polygamist when his two wives filed complaints about him.

polyglotADJ. /speaking several languages.

New York City is a polyglot community because of the thousands of immigrants who settle there.

pomposityN. /self-important behavior; acting like a stuffed shirt.

Although the commencement speaker had some good things to say, we had to laugh at his pomposity and general air of parading his own dignity. POMPOUS, ADJ.

ponderousADJ. /weighty; unwieldy.

His humor lacked the light touch; his jokes were always ponderous.

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pontificalADJ. /pertaining to a bishop or pope; pompous or pretentious. From his earliest days at the seminary, John seemed destined for a high pontifical office. However, he sounded so pompous when he *pontificated* that he never was chosen *pontiff* after all.

poreV. /study industriously; ponder; scrutinize.

Determined to become a physician, Beth spent hours poring over her anatomy text.

porousADJ. /full of pores; like a sieve.

Dancers like to wear porous clothing because it allows the ready passage of water and air.

portendV. /foretell; presage.

The king did not know what these omens might *portend* and asked his soothsayers to interpret them.

portentN. /sign; omen; forewarning.

He regarded the black cloud as a portent of evil.

portlyADJ. /stately; stout.

The overweight gentleman was referred to as portly by the polite salesclerk.

poseurN. /person who pretends to be sophisticated, elegant, etc., to impress others.

Some thought Salvador Dali was a brilliant painter; others dismissed him as a poseur.

posterityN. /descendants; future generations.

We hope to leave a better world to posterity.

posthumousADJ. /after death (as of child born after father's death or book published after author's death).

The critics ignored his works during his lifetime; it was only after the posthumous publication of his last novel that they recognized his great talent.

postulateN. /essential premise; underlying assumption.

The basic postulate of democracy, set forth in the Declaration of Independence, is that all men are created equal.

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potableADJ. /suitable for drinking.

The recent drought in the Middle Atlantic states has emphasized the need for extensive research in ways of making sea water *potable*. also N.

potentADJ. /powerful; persuasive; greatly influential.

Looking at the expiration date on the cough syrup bottle, we wondered whether the medication would still be *potent*. potency, N.

potentateN. /monarch; sovereign.

The *potentate* spent more time at Monte Carlo than he did at home on his throne.

potentialADJ. /expressing possibility; latent.

This juvenile delinquent is a *potential* murderer. also N.

potionN. /dose (of liquid).

Tristan and Isolde drink a love *potion* in the first act of the opera.

practicableADJ. /feasible.

The board of directors decided that the plan was *practicable* and agreed to undertake the project.

practicalADJ. /based on experience; useful.

He was a practical man, opposed to theory.

practitionerN. /someone engaged in a profession (law, medicine).

In need of a hip replacement, Carl sought a *practitioner* with considerable experience performing this particular surgery.

pragmaticADJ. /practical (as opposed to idealistic); concerned with the practical worth or impact of something.

This coming trip to France should provide me with a pragmatic test of the value of my conversational French class.

pragmatistN. /practical person.

No pragmatist enjoys becoming involved in a game he can never win.

prankN. /mischievous trick.

Is tipping over garbage cans on Halloween merely a childish *prank*, or is it vandalism?

prateV. /speak foolishly; boast idly.

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Let us not prate about our good qualities; rather, let our virtues speak for themselves.

prattleV. /**babble**.

Baby John *prattled* on and on about the cats and his ball and the Cookie Monster.

preambleN. /**introductory statement**.

In the *Preamble* to the Constitution, the purpose of the document is set forth.

precariousADJ. /**uncertain; risky**.

Saying the stock would be a precarious investment, the broker advised her client against purchasing it.

precedentN. /**something preceding in time that may be used as an authority or guide for future action**.

If I buy you a car for your sixteenth birthday, your brothers will want me to buy them cars when they turn sixteen, too; I can't afford to set such an expensive *precedent*. The law professor asked Jill to state which famous case served as a *precedent* for the court's decision in *Brown II*