

# BHARAT SCHOOL OF BANKING – ENGLISH VOCABULARY

## Word List 43

**sequester V. /isolate; retire from public life; segregate; seclude.**

Banished from his kingdom, the wizard Prospero *sequestered* himself on a desert island. To prevent the jurors from hearing news broadcasts about the case, the judge decided to sequester the jury.

**serendipity N. /gift for finding valuable or desirable things by accident; accidental good fortune.**

Many scientific discoveries are a matter of serendipity. Newton was not sitting under a tree thinking about gravity when the apple dropped on his head.

**serenity N. /calmness; placidity.**

The sound of air raid sirens pierced the serenity of the quiet village of Pearl Harbor. **serpentine ADJ.** winding; twisting. The car swerved at every curve in the serpentine road.

**serrated ADJ. /having a sawtoothed edge.**

The beech tree is one of many plants that have serrated leaves.

**servile ADJ. /slavish; cringing.**

Constantly fawning on his employer, humble Uriah Heap was a servile creature.

**servitude N. /slavery; compulsory labor.**

Born a slave, Frederick Douglass resented his life of servitude and plotted to escape to the North.

**sever V. /cut; separate.**

The released prisoner wanted to begin a new life and sever all connections with his criminal past. Dr. Guillotin invented a machine that could neatly sever an aristocratic head from its equally aristocratic body. Unfortunately, he couldn't collect any severance pay. **severance, N.**

**severity N. /harshness; intensity; sternness; austerity.**

The severity of Jane's migraine attack was so great that she took to her bed for a week.

**shackle V. /chain; fetter.**

The criminal's ankles were *shackled* to prevent his escape. also **N.**

**sham V. /pretend.**

He *shammed* sickness to get out of going to school. also **N.**

**shambles N. /wreck; mess.**

After the hurricane, the Carolina coast was a *shambles*. After the New Year's Eve party, the apartment was a *shambles*.

**shard N. /fragment, generally of pottery.**

The archaeologist assigned several students the task of reassembling earthenware vessels from the *shards* he had brought back from the expedition.

**sheaf N. /bundle of stalks of grain; any bundle of things tied together.**

The lawyer picked up a *sheaf* of papers as he rose to question the witness.

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**shear V. /cut or clip (hair, fleece); strip of something.**

You may not care to cut a sheep's hair, but Sarah shears sheep for Little Bo Peep.

**sheathe V. /place into a case.**

As soon as he recognized the approaching men, he *sheathed* his dagger and hailed them as friends.

**sheer ADJ. /very thin or transparent; very steep; absolute.**

Wearing nothing but an almost *sheer* robe, Delilah draped herself against the *sheer* temple wall. Beholding her, Samson was overcome by her *sheer* beauty. Then she sheared his hair.

**shimmer V. /glimmer intermittently.**

The moonlight shimmered on the water as the moon broke through the clouds for a moment. also N.

**shirk V. /avoid (responsibility, work, etc.); malingering.**

Brian has a strong sense of duty; he would never *shirk* any responsibility.

**shoddy ADJ. /sham; not genuine; inferior.**

You will never get the public to buy such *shoddy* material.

**shrewd ADJ. /clever; astute.**

A *shrewd* investor, he took clever advantage of the fluctuations of the stock market.

**shroud V. /hide from view; wrap for burial.**

Fog *shrouded* Dracula's castle, hiding the ruined tower beneath sheets of mist.

**shun V. /keep away from.**

Cherishing his solitude, the recluse *shunned* the company of other human beings.

**shyster N. /lawyer using questionable methods.**

On *L.A. Law*, Brackman is horrified to learn that his newly-discovered half brother is nothing but a cheap shyster.

**sibling N. /brother or sister.**

We may not enjoy being siblings, but we cannot forget that we still belong to the same family.

**simian ADJ. /monkeylike.**

Lemurs are nocturnal mammals and have many simian characteristics, although they are less intelligent than monkeys.

**simile N. /comparison of one thing with another, using the word like or as.**

"My love is like a red, red rose" is a *simile*.

**simper V. /smirk; smile affectedly.**

Complimented on her appearance, Stella self-consciously *simpered*.

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**Simplistic** ADJ. /oversimplified.

Though Jack's solution dealt adequately with one aspect of the problem, it was simplistic in failing to consider various complications that might arise.

**simulate** V. /feign.

He simulated insanity in order to avoid punishment for his crime.

**sinecure** N. /well-paid position with little responsibility.

My job is no sinecure; I work long hours and have much responsibility.

**sinewy** ADJ. /tough; strong and firm.

The steak was too sinewy to chew.

**singular** ADJ. /unique; extraordinary; odd.

Though the young man tried to understand Father William's singular behavior, he still found it odd that the old man incessantly stood on his head. singularity, N.

**sinister** ADJ. /evil.

We must defeat the sinister forces that seek our downfall.

**sinuous** ADJ. /winding; bending in and out; not morally honest.

The snake moved in a sinuous manner.

**skeptic** N. /doubter; person who suspends judgment until the evidence supporting a point of view has been examined.

I am a *skeptic* about the new health plan; I want some proof that it can work. skepticism, N.

**skiff** N. /small, light sailboat or rowboat.

Tom dreamed of owning an ocean-going yacht but had to settle for a *skiff* he could sail in the bay.

**skimp** V. /provide scantily; live very economically.

They were forced to skimp on necessities in order to make their limited supplies last the winter.

**skinflint** N. /stingy person; miser.

Scrooge was an ungenerous old *skinflint* until he reformed his ways and became a notable philanthropist.

**skirmish** N. /minor fight.

Custer's troops expected they might run into a *skirmish* or two on maneuvers; they did not expect to face a major battle. also V.

**skulk** V. /move furtively and secretly.

He *skulked* through the less fashionable sections of the city in order to avoid meeting any of his former friends.

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**slacken V. /slow up; loosen.**

As they passed the finish line, the runners *slackened* their pace.

**slag N. /residue from smelting metal; dross; waste matter.**

The blast furnace had a special opening at the bottom to allow the workers to remove the worthless slag.

**slake V. /quench; sate.**

When we reached the oasis, we were able to slake our thirst.

**slander N. /defamation; utterance of false and malicious statements.**

Considering the negative comments politicians make about each other, it's a wonder that more of them aren't sued for *slander*. alsoV.

**slapdash ADJ. /haphazard; careless; sloppy.**

From the number of typos and misspellings I've found in it, it's clear that Mario proofread the report in a remarkably *slapdash* fashion.

**sleeper N. /something originally of little value or importance that in time becomes very valuable.**

Unnoticed by the critics at its publication, the eventual Pulitzer Prize winner was a classic *sleeper*.

**sleight N. /dexterity.**

The magician amazed the audience with his *sleight* of hand.

**slight N./insult to one's dignity; snub.**

Hypersensitive and ready to take offense at any discourtesy, Bertha was always on the lookout for real or imaginary *slights*. alsoV.

**slipshod ADJ. /untidy or slovenly; shabby.**

As a master craftsman, the carpenter prided himself on not doing *slipshod* work.

**slither V. /slip or slide.**

During the recent *ice* storm, many people *slithered* down this hill as they walked to the station.

**slothful ADJ. /lazy.**

Lying idly on the sofa while others worked, Reggie denied he was slothful: "I just supervise better lying down."

**slough V. /cast off.**

Each spring, the snake *sloughs* off its skin.

**slovenly ADJ. /untidy; careless in work habits.**

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Unshaven, sitting around in his bathrobe all afternoon, Gus didn't seem to care about the slovenly appearance he presented. The dark ring around the bathtub and the spider webs hanging from the beams proved what a slovenly housekeeper she was.

**sluggard N. /lazy person.**

"You are a *sluggard*, a drone, a parasite," the angry father shouted at his lazy son.

**sluggish ADJ. /Slow; lazy; lethargic.**

After two nights without sleep, she felt *sluggish* and incapable of exertion.

**slur V. /speak indistinctly; mumble.**

When Sol has too much to drink, he starts to slur his words: "Washamatter? Cansh you undershtand what I shay?"

**slur N. /insult to one's character or reputation; slander.**

Polls revealed that the front-runner's standing had been badly damaged by the slurs and innuendoes circulated by his opponent's staff. also V. (secondary meaning)

**smelt V. /melt or blend ores, changing their chemical composition.**

The furnaceman smelts tin with copper to create a special alloy used in making bells.

**smirk N. /conceited smile.**

Wipe that smirk off your face! alsoV.

**smolder V. /burn without flame; be liable to break out at any moment.**

The rags *smoldered* for hours before they burst into flame.

**snicker N. /half-stifled laugh.**

The boy could not suppress a snicker when the teacher sat on the tack. alsoV.

**snivel V. /run at the nose; snuffle; whine.**

Don't you come *sniveling* to me complaining about your big brother. sobriety N. moderation (especially regarding indulgence in alcohol); seriousness. Neither falling-down drunks nor stand-up comics are noted for sobriety. sober,ADJ.

**sodden ADJ. /soaked; dull, as if from drink.**

He set his *sodden* overcoat near the radiator to dry.

**sojourn N. /temporary stay.**

After his *sojourn* in Florida, he began to long for the colder climate of his native New England home.

**solace N. /comfort in trouble.**

I hope you will find solace in the thought that all of us share your loss.

**solder V. /repair or make whole by using a metal alloy.**

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The plumber fixed the leak in the pipes by *soldering* a couple of joints from which water had been oozing.

**solecism N. /construction that is flagrantly incorrect grammatically.**

I must give this paper a failing mark because it contains many solecisms.

**solemnity N. /seriousness; gravity.**

The minister was concerned that nothing should disturb the solemnity of the marriage service.  
solemn, ADJ.

**solicit V. /request earnestly; seek.**

Knowing she needed to have a solid majority for the budget to pass, the mayor telephoned all the members of the city council to solicit their votes.

**solicitous ADJ. /worried; concerned.**

The employer was very solicitous about the health of her employees as replacements were difficult to get.

**soliloquy N. /talking to oneself.**

The soliloquy is a device used by the dramatist to reveal a character's innermost thoughts and emotions.

**solitude N. /state of being alone; seclusion.**

Much depends on how much you like your own company. What to one person seems fearful isolation to another is blessed *solitude*.

**soluble ADJ. /able to be dissolved; able to be explained.**

Sugar is *soluble* in water; put a sugar cube in water and it will quickly dissolve.

**solvent ADJ. /able to pay all debts.**

By dint of very frugal living, he was finally able to become *solvent* and avoid bankruptcy proceedings.