missile N. / /object to be thrown or projected.

After carefully folding his book report into a paper airplane,

Beavis threw the missile across the classroom at Butthead. Rocket scientists are building guided

missiles; Beavis and Butthead can barely make unguided ones.

missive N. / /letter

. The ambassador received a missive from the secretary of state.

mite N. / /very small object or creature;

small coin. Gnats are annoying mites that sting.

mitigate V. / appease; moderate.

Nothing Jason did could mitigate Medea's anger; she refused to forgive him for betraying her.

mnemonic ADJ. /pertaining to memory.

He used *mnemonic* tricks to master new words.

mobile ADJ. movable; not fixed.

The *mobile* blood bank operated by the Red Cross visited our neighborhood today. mobility, **N.**

mock V. //ridicule; imitate, often in derision

. It is unkind to mock anyone; it is stupid to mock anyone significantly bigger than you. mockery, $\bf N$.

mode N. /prevailing style; manner; way of doing something

. The rock star had to have her

hair done in the latest mode: frizzed, with occasional moussed spikes for variety. Henry plans to

adopt a simpler mode of life: he is going to become a mushroom hunter and live off the land.

modicum N. / **limited quantity**. Although his story is based on a modicum of truth, most of the events he describes are fictitious.

modulate V. / tone down in intensity; regulate; change from one key to another. Always singing at the top of her lungs, the budding Brunhilde never learned to modulate her voice.

molecule N. smallest particle (one or more atoms) of a substance, having all the properties of that

substance. In chemistry, we study how atoms and molecules react to form new substances.

mollify V. / **/soothe.** The airline customer service representative tried to mollify the angry passenger by offering her a seat in first class.

molt V. / /shed or cast off hair or feathers. When Molly's canary molted, he shed feathers all over the house.

molten ADJ. / **melted**. The city of Pompeii was destroyed by volcanic ash rather than by molten lava flowing from Mount Vesuvius.

momentous ADJ. / **very important**. When Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium, they had no idea of the momentous impact their discovery would have upon society.

momentum N. / /quantity of motion of a moving body; impetus. The car lost momentum as it tried to ascend the steep hill.

monarchy N. / /government under a single ruler.

Though England today is a *monarchy*, there is some question whether it will be one in twenty years, given the present discontent at the prospect of Prince Charles as king.

monastic ADJ. / /related to monks or monasteries;

removed from worldly concerns.

Withdrawing from the world, Thomas Merton joined a contemplative religious order and adopted the monastic life.

monetary ADJ. //pertaining to money

. Jane held the family purse strings: she made all monetary decisions affecting the household.

monochromatic ADJ. / having only one color.

Most people who are color blind actually can distinguish several colors; some, however, have a truly *monochromatic* view of a world all in shades of gray.

monolithic ADJ. / solidly uniform; unyielding.

Knowing the importance of appearing resolute, the patriots sought to present a *monolithic* front.

monosyllabic ADJ. / /having only one syllable.

No matter what he was asked, the taciturn New Englander answered with a *monosyllabic* "Yep" or "Nope." monosyllable, **N.**

monotony N. / /sameness leading to boredom.

could be more deadly dull than the *monotony* of punching numbers into a computer hour after hour?

montage N. / /photographic composition combining elements from different sources.

In one early montage,

Beauchamp brought together pictures of broken mannequins and newspaper clippings about the

Vietnam War.

monumentalADJ. / /massive.

Writing a dictionary is a monumental task.

moodiness N. / /fits of depression or gloom.

Her recurrent moodiness left her feeling as if she had fallen into a black hole.

moratorium N. / /legal delay of payment. If we declare a moratorium and delay collection of debts for six

months, I am sure the farmers will be able to meet their bills.

morbid ADJ. / /given to unwholesome thought; moody; characteristic of

disease. People who come to disaster sites just to peer at the grisly wreckage are indulging their morbid curiosity.

mores N. / /conventions; moral standards; customs. In America, Benazir Bhutto dressed as Western

women did; in Pakistan, however, she followed the mores of her people, dressing in traditional veil and robes.

moribund ADJ. / **dying**. Hearst took a *moribund*, failing weekly newspaper and transformed it into one of the liveliest, most profitable daily papers around.

morose ADJ. / /ill-humored; sullen; melancholy. Forced to take early retirement, Bill acted morose

for months; then, all of a sudden, he shook off his sullen mood and was his usual cheerful self.

mortician N. / /undertaker. The mortician prepared the corpse for burial. mortify V. /侮辱; 体罚/humiliate; punish the flesh. She was so mortified by her blunder that she ran to her room in tears.

mosaic N. / /picture made of colorful small inlaid tiles. The mayor compared the city to a beautiful mosaic

made up of people of every race and religion on earth.

mote N. //small speck. The tiniest mote in the eye is very painful.

motif N. / **/theme.** This simple motif runs throughout the entire score.

motley ADJ. / /multi-colored; mixed. The jester wore a motley tunic, red and green and

blue and gold all patched together haphazardly. Captain Ahab had gathered a motley crew to sail the

vessel: old sea dogs and runaway boys, pillars of the church and drunkards, even a tattooed islander

who terrified the rest of the crew.

mottled ADJ. / /blotched in coloring; spotted. When old Falstaff blushed, his face was mottled

with embarrassment, all pink and purple and red.

muddle V. / confuse; mix up

. His thoughts were muddled and chaotic. also N.

muggy ADJ. //warm and damp.

August in New York City is often muggy.

multifacetedADJ. / /having many aspects.

A multifaceted composer, Roger Davidson has recorded original pieces that range from ragtime tangos to choral masses.

multifarious ADJ. / /varied;

greatly diversified. A career woman and mother, she was constantly busy with the multifarious activities of her daily life.

multiform ADJ. //having many forms

. Snowflakes are multiform but always hexagonal.

multilingual ADJ. / /having many languages.

Because they are bordered by so many countries, the Swiss people are multilingual.

multiplicity N. / state of being numerous.

He was appalled by the multiplicity of details he had to complete before setting out on his mission.

mundane ADJ. / /worldly as opposed to spiritual; everyday.

Uninterested in philosophical or spiritual

discussions, Tom talked only of *mundane* matters such as the daily weather forecast or the latest

basketball results.

munificent ADJ. / /very generous.

Shamelessly fawning over a particularly generous donor, the dean kept on referring to her as "our *munificent* benefactor." munificence, **N.**

mural N. / /wall painting.

The walls of the Chicano Community Center are covered with murals painted in the style of Diego Rivera, the great Mexican artist.

murky ADJ. / /dark and gloomy;

thick with fog; vague. The murky depths of the swamp were so dark that one couldn't tell the vines and branches from the snakes.

muse V. / /ponder.

For a moment he mused about the beauty of the scene, but his thoughts soon changed as he recalled his own personal problems. also N.

mushroom V. / /expand or grow rapidly.

Between 1990 and 1999, the population of Silicon Valley *mushroomed;* with the rapidly increasing demand for housing, home prices skyrocketed as well.

musky ADJ. / having the odor of musk.

She left a trace of *musky* perfume behind her.

muster V. / gather; assemble.

Washington mustered his forces at Trenton. also N.

musty ADJ. / stale

; spoiled by age. The attic was dark and musty.

mutability N. / /bility to change in form; fickleness.

Going from rags to riches, and then back to rags again, the bankrupt financier was a victim of the mutability of fortune.

muted ADJ. / /silent; muffled; toned down

. Thanks to the thick, sound-absorbing walls of the cathedral, only muted traffic noise reached the worshippers within.

mutinous ADJ. / /unruly; rebellious.

The captain had to use force to quiet his *mutinous* crew. mutiny, **N.**

myopic ADJ. / /nearsighted;

lacking foresight. Stumbling into doors despite the coke bottle lenses on his glasses, the nearsighted Mr. Magoo is markedly *myopic*. In playing all summer long

and ignoring to store up food for winter, the grasshopper in Aesop's fable was *myopic* as well.

myriad N. / /very large number.

Myriads of mosquitoes from the swamps invaded our village every twilight. also**ADJ**.

mystify V. / bewilder purposely.

When doctors speak in medical jargon, they often mystify their patients, who have little knowledge of medical terminology.

nadir N. / /lowest point

. Although few people realized it, the Dow-Jones averages had reached their *nadir* and would soon begin an upward surge.

naiveté N. / /quality of being unsophisticated; simplicity; artlessness; gullibility. Touched by

the *naivetd* of sweet, convent-trained Cosette, Marius pledges himself to protect her innocence.

naive, ADJ.

narcissist N. /conceited person

; someone in love with his own image. A narcissist is her own best friend.

narrative ADJ. //related to telling a story.

A born teller of tales, Tillie Olsen used her impressive narrative skills to advantage in her story "I Stand Here Ironing." narrate, **V.**

nascent ADJ. / incipient; coming into being. If we could identify these revolutionary movements in their nascent state, we would be able to eliminate serious trouble in later years.

natty ADJ. //neatly or smartly dressed.

Priding himself on being a natty dresser, the gangster Bugsy Siegel collected a wardrobe of **imported suits and ties**.