

# BHARAT SCHOOL OF BANKING – ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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**somber ADJ.** /gloomy; depressing; dark; drab.

From the doctor's grim expression, I could tell he had *somber* news. Dull brown and charcoal gray are pretty *somber* colors; can't you wear something bright?

**somnambulist N.** /sleepwalker.

The most famous somnambulist in literature is Lady Macbeth; her monologue in the sleepwalking scene is one of the highlights Shakespeare's play.

**somnolent ADJ.** /half asleep.

The heavy meal and the overheated room made us all *somnolent* and indifferent to the speaker.

**sonorous ADJ.** /resonant.

His *sonorous* voice resounded through the hall.

**sophisticated ADJ.** /worldly-wise and urbane; complex.

When Sophie makes wisecracks, she thinks she sounds *sophisticated*, but instead she sounds sophomoric. The new IBM laptop with the butterfly keyboard and the built-in quadspeed FAX modem is a pretty *sophisticated* machine.

**sophistry N.** /seemingly plausible but fallacious reasoning.

Instead of advancing valid arguments, he tried to overwhelm his audience with a flood of *sophistries*.

**sophomoric ADJ.** /immature; half-baked, like a sophomore.

Even if you're only a freshman, it's no compliment to be told your humor is *sophomoric*. The humor in *Dumb and Dumber* is *sophomoric* at best.

**soporific ADJ.** /sleep-causing; marked by sleepiness.

Professor Pringle's lectures were so *soporific* that even he fell asleep in class.

**sordid ADJ.** /filthy; base; vile.

The social worker was angered by the *sordid* housing provided for the homeless.

**sovereign ADJ.** /efficacious; supreme or paramount; selfgoverning.

Professor Pennywhistle claimed his panacea was a *sovereign* cure for all chronic complaints. In medicine the *sovereign* task of the doctor is to do no harm. Rebellious against the mother country, the onetime colony now

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proclaimed itself a *sovereign* state.

**spangle N.** /small metallic piece sewn to clothing for ornamentation.

The thousands of *spangles* on her dress sparkled in the glare of the stage lights.

**sparse ADJ.** /not thick; thinly scattered; scanty.

No matter how carefully Albert combed his hair to make it look as full as possible, it still looked *sparse*.

**spartan ADJ.** /avoiding luxury and comfort; sternly disciplined.

Looking over the bare, unheated room, with its hard cot, he wondered what he was doing in such *spartan* quarters. Only his *spartan* sense of duty kept him at his post.

**spasmodic ADJ.** /fitful; periodic.

The spasmodic coughing in the auditorium annoyed the performers.

**spat N.** /squabble; minor dispute.

What had started out as a mere *spat* escalated into a full-blown argument.

**spate N.** /sudden flood or strong outburst; a large number or amount.

After the *spate* of angry words that came pouring out of him, Mary was sure they would never be reconciled.

**spatial ADJ.** /relating to space.

NASA is engaged in an ongoing program of *spatial* exploration. When Jay says he's studying *spatial* relations, that doesn't mean he has relatives in outer space.

**spatula N.** /broad-bladed instrument used for spreading or mixing.

The manufacturers of this frying pan recommend the use of a rubber *spatula* to avoid scratching the specially treated surface.

**spawn V.** /lay eggs.

Fish ladders had to be built in the dams to assist the salmon returning to *spawn* in their native streams.

**specious ADJ.** /seemingly reasonable but incorrect; misleading

To claim that, because houses and birds both have wings, both can fly, is extremely *specious* reasoning.

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**spectrum N.** /colored band produced when beam of light passes through a prism.

The visible portion of the spectrum includes red at one end and violet at the other.

**spendthrift N.** /someone who wastes money.

Easy access to credit encourages people to turn into *spendthrifts* who shop till they drop.

**sphinx-like ADJ.** /enigmatic; mysterious.

The Mona Lisa's *sphinx-like* expression has intrigued and mystified art lovers for centuries.

**splice V.** /fasten together; unite.

Before you splice two strips of tape together, be sure to line them up evenly.

**spontaneity N.** /lack of premeditation; naturalness; freedom from constraint.

When Anne and Amy met, Amy impulsively hugged her new colleague, but Anne drew back, unprepared for such spontaneity. The cast over-rehearsed the play so much that the eventual performance lacked any *spontaneity*.  
spontaneous, **ADJ.**

**sporadic ADJ.** /occurring irregularly.

Although you can still hear sporadic outbursts of laughter and singing outside, the big Halloween parade has passed; the party's over till next year.

**sportive ADJ.** /playful.

Such a sportive attitude is surprising in a person as serious as you usually are.

**spry ADJ.** /vigorously active; nimble.

She was eighty years old, yet still spry and alert.

**spurious ADJ.** /false; counterfeit; forged; illogical.

The antique dealer hero of Jonathan Gash's mystery novels gives the reader tips on how to tell spurious antiques from the real thing. Natasha's claim to be the lost heir of the Romanoffs was spurious: the only thing Russian about her was the vodka she drank!

**spurn V.** /reject; scorn.

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The heroine *spurned* the villain's advances.

**squabble N.** /minor quarrel; bickering.

Children invariably get involved in petty *squabbles*; wise parents know when to interfere and when to let the children work things out on their own.

**squalor N.** /filth; degradation; dirty, neglected state.

Rusted, broken-down cars in its yard, trash piled up on the porch, tar paper peeling from the roof, the shack was the picture of *squalor*. squalid, **ADJ.**

**squander V.** /waste.

If you *squander* your allowance on candy and comic books, you won't have any money left to buy the new box of crayons you want.

**squat ADJ.** /stocky; short and thick.

Tolkien's hobbits are somewhat *squat*, sturdy little creatures, fond of good ale, good music, and good mushrooms.

**staccato ADJ.** /played in an abrupt manner; marked by abrupt sharp sound. His *staccato* speech reminded one of the sound of a machine gun.

**stagnant ADJ.** /motionless; stale; dull.

Mosquitoes commonly breed in ponds of *stagnant* water. Mike's career was *stagnant*; it wasn't going anywhere, and neither was he! stagnate, **V.**

**staid ADJ.** /sober; sedate.

Her conduct during the funeral ceremony was *staid* and solemn.

**stalemate N.** /deadlock.

Negotiations between the union and the employers have reached a stalemate; neither side is willing to budge from previously stated positions.

**stalwart ADJ.** /strong, brawny; steadfast.

His consistent support of the party has proved that he is a stalwart and loyal member. also **N.**

**stamina N.** /strength; staying power.

I doubt that she has the stamina to run the full distance of the marathon race.

**stanch V.** /check flow of blood.

It is imperative that we *stanch* the gushing wound before we attend to the other injuries.

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**stanza N. /division of a poem.**

Do you know the last stanza of "The Star-Spangled Banner"?

**static ADJ./unchanging; lacking development.**

Why watch chess on TV? I like watching a game with action, not something static where nothing seems to be going on.

**statute N. /law enacted by the legislature.**

The statute of limitations sets the limits on how long you have to take legal action in specific cases.

**steadfast ADJ. /loyal; unswerving.**

Penelope was steadfast in her affections, faithfully waiting for Ulysses to return from his wanderings.

**stealth N. /slyness; sneakiness; secretiveness.**

Fearing detection by the sentries on duty, the scout inched his way toward the enemy camp with great stealth.

**steep V. /soak; saturate.**

Be sure to steep the fabric in the dye bath for the full time prescribed.

**stellar ADJ. /pertaining to the stars.**

He was the stellar attraction of the entire performance.

**stem V. /check the flow.**

The paramedic used a tourniquet to stem the bleeding from the slashed artery.

**stem from V. /arise from.**

Milton's problems in school *stemmed from* his poor study habits.

**stereotype N. /fixed and unvarying representation; standardized mental picture, often reflecting prejudice.**

Critics object to the character of Jim in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* because he seems to reflect the *stereotype* of the happy, ignorant slave.

**stifle V. /suppress; extinguish; inhibit.**

Halfway through the boring lecture, Laura gave up trying to *stifle* her yawns.

**stigma N. //token of disgrace; brand.**

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I do not attach any stigma to the fact that you were accused of this crime; the fact that you were acquitted clears you completely.

**stigmatize V. /brand; mark as wicked.**

I do not want to stigmatize this young offender for life by sending her to prison.

**stilted ADJ. /bombastic; inflated.**

His stilted rhetoric did not impress the college audience; they were immune to bombastic utterances.

**stint N. /supply; allotted amount; assigned portion of work.**

He performed his daily stint cheerfully and willingly. also **V.**

**stint V. /be thrifty; set limits.**

"Spare no expense," the bride's father said, refusing to stint on the wedding arrangements.

**stipend N. /pay for services.**

There is a nominal *stipend* for this position.

**stipulate V. /make express conditions; specify.**

Before agreeing to reduce American military forces in Europe, the president *stipulated* that NATO inspection teams be allowed to inspect Soviet bases.

**stodgy ADJ. /stuffy; boringly conservative.**

For a young person, Winston seems remarkably stodgy: you'd expect someone his age to show a little more life.

**Stoic ADJ. impassive; unmoved by joy or grief.**

I wasn't particularly stoic when I had my flu shot; I squealed like a stuck pig. also **N.**

**stoke V. /stir up a fire; feed plentifully.**

As a Scout Marisa learned how to light a fire, how to *stoke* it if it started to die down, and how to extinguish it completely.

**stolid ADJ. /dull; impassive.**

The earthquake shattered Stuart's usual stolid demeanor; trembling, he crouched on the no longer stable ground.

**stratagem N. /deceptive scheme.**

We saw through his clever stratagem.

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**stratify V.** /divide into classes; be arranged into strata.

As the economic gap between the rich and the poor increased, Roman society grew increasingly *stratified*.

**stratum N.** /layer of earth's surface; layer of society.

Unless we alleviate conditions in the lowest stratum of our society, we may expect grumbling and revolt.

**strew V.** /spread randomly; sprinkle; scatter.

Preceding the bride to the altar, the flower girl will *strew* rose petals along the aisle.

**striated ADJ.** /marked with parallel bands; grooved.

The glacier left many *striated* rocks. *striate*, **V.**

**stricture N.** /restriction; adverse criticism.

Huck regularly disobeyed Miss Watson's rules and strictures upon his behavior: he wouldn't wear shoes, no matter what she said.

**strident ADJ.** /loud and harsh; insistent.

Whenever Sue became angry, she tried not to raise her voice; she had no *desire* to appear *strident*.

**stringent ADJ.** /binding; rigid.

I think these regulations are too *stringent*.

**strut N.** /pompous walk; swagger.

Looking at his self-important *strut* as he swaggered about the parade ground, I could tell Colonel Blimp thought highly of himself. also **V.**

**strut N.** /supporting bar.

The engineer calculated that the *strut* supporting the rafter needed to be reinforced. (secondary meaning)

**studied ADJ.** /not spontaneous; deliberate; thoughtful.

Given Jill's previous slights Jack felt that the omission of his name from the guest list was a *studied* insult.

**stultify V.** /cause to appear or become stupid or inconsistent;  
frustrate or  
hinder.

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His long hours in the blacking factory left young Dickens numb and incurious, as if the menial labor had *stultified* his brain.

**stupefy V.** //make numb; stun; amaze.

Disapproving of drugs in general, Laura refused to take sleeping pills or any other medicine that might *stupefy* her. stupefaction, **N.**

**stupor N.** /state of apathy; daze; lack of awareness.

In his *stupor*, the addict was unaware of the *events* taking place around him.

**stymie V.** /present an obstacle; stump.

The detective was stymied by the contradictory *evidence* in the robbery investigation. also **N.**

**suavity N.** /banity; polish.

The elegant actor is particularly good in roles that require *suavity* and sophistication.

**subdued ADJ.** /less intense; quieter.

Bob liked the *subdued* lighting at the restaurant because he thought it was romantic. I just thought it was dimly lit.

**subjective ADJ.** /occurring or taking place within the subject; unreal.

Your analysis is highly *subjective*; you have permitted your emotions and your opinions to color your thinking.

**subjugate V.** /conquer; bring under control.

It is not our aim to *subjugate* our foe; we are interested only in establishing peaceful relations.

**sublime ADJ.** /exalted or noble and uplifting; utter.

Lucy was in awe of Desi's *sublime* musicianship, while he was in awe of her sublime naiveté.