

Edgar Allan Poe Vocabulary



Please learn the following words. Practice using them, as well as the words from ABC, in our discussions and in your essays! You will be tested on these words throughout the year. Vocabulary words never go away!

1. VEX (v.)

POE'S USE: ...for it was not the old man who **vexed** me, but his Evil Eye (Tell-Tale 75).

Definitions:

1. To make someone feel annoyed or frustrated.

Our siblings tend to vex us in this sense of the word.

Synonyms: irritate, provoke, infuriate, exasperate

Antonyms: delight, please

2. To cause distress or to cause worry ~ to make someone feel distressed or worried.

We tend to vex our parents, teachers, and other adults in this definition of the word.

Synonyms: torment, plague, haunt, worried, concerned

Antonyms: soothe, comfort

2. REPOSE (n. or v.)

POE: ...I myself...placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which **reposed** the corpse of the victim (Tell-Tale 77).

POE: "I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us" (Cask 118).

Definitions:

1. noun: A state of rest or tranquility.

With the noun form, you generally talk about a "state of repose."

Synonym: rest, relaxation, serenity, composure

Antonym: unrest, agitation

2. verb: To lie down in rest; to rest.

Synonym: rest, relax, recline

Antonym: exert, energize

In both parts of speech, repose has to do with rest.

3. DERISION (n.)

POE: Any thing was more tolerable than this **derision!** (Tell-Tale 78).

Definition: Contemptuous, disrespectful, or scornful ridicule or mockery.

If you treat someone with derision, it means you're treating them with ridicule and disrespect; you're mocking them in a mean way, not a fun way. Derision is mean-spirited, not good-natured.

Synonym: ridicule, scorn, insult, disrespect, unkindness

Antonym: flattery, praise, kindness, appreciation

Verb form: DERIDE

Adjective form: DERISIVE

4. DISSEMBLE (v.)

POE: "Villains!" I shrieked, "**dissemble** no more! I admit the deed!" (Tell-Tale 78)

Definition: To disguise or conceal one's true motives, feelings, or beliefs.

When you dissemble your feelings, emotions, or motives ~ you're hiding how you really feel or what you really think; you're hiding your real reason for doing something.

Synonym: feign, masquerade, bluff, posture, fake, hide

Antonym: acknowledge, reveal, disclose, show, express

5. IMPUNITY (n.)

POE: I must not only punish, but punish with **impunity** (Cask 116).

Definition: Exemption from punishment; freedom from negative consequences of an action.

Impunity means the same thing as immunity. If you're granted immunity, you can't be prosecuted and sent to jail for your crime. If you have impunity, you can do something and get away with it.

Synonyms: amnesty, immunity, exoneration, exemption, freedom

Antonyms: incarceration, accountability

6. IMMOLATION (n.)

POE: ...and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his **immolation** (Cask 116).

Definition: The act of killing or offering as a sacrifice, especially by burning.

In the Percy Jackson books, the kids at Camp Half-Blood immolate a portion of their meal as a sacrifice to their parents and the other gods and goddesses.

Synonyms: sacrifice, annihilation

Antonyms: ~

Verb form: IMMOLATE

7. ACCOST (v.)

POE: He **accosted** me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much (Cask 116).

Definition: To approach and address someone boldly, aggressively, or excitedly.

You're not necessarily angry or upset, but you're excited or fervent!

Synonyms: confront, hail, address

Antonyms: avoid, evade, dodge

8. ABSCOND (v.)

POE: There were no attendants at home; they had **absconded** to make merry in honor of the time (Cask 117).

Definition: To leave hurriedly and secretly, typically to avoid detection of wrongdoing.

When you are getting the heck out of there before you get caught, you're absconding.

Synonyms: take off, bolt, escape, flee

Antonyms: remain, face the consequences

9. COUNTENANCE (n.)

POE: ...and produced so wild a look upon the **countenances** of those who entered, that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts (Masque 58).

Definition: A person's face or facial expression.

Synonyms: face, features, appearance, mien

Antonyms: ~

10. DISAPPROBATION (n.)

POE: ...there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of **disapprobation** and surprise—then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust (Masque 60).

Definition: Very strong disapproval, typically on moral grounds.

This is more of a “serious” word; you’d use it in serious contexts, like disapprobation for injustice or capital punishment or animal testing. You wouldn’t use it in trivial matters, like disapprobation for watermelon gum.

Synonyms: condemnation, denunciation, disapproval

Antonyms: approval, support