

burgeon

pronunciation: BUR-juhn (verb)

1. To grow or develop quickly; flourish
2. To begin to grow or blossom.

Use:

They fought aggressively to bring their **burgeoning** industry under their control.

Avoid plants that will **burgeon** beyond bounds. The wide range of plants available includes many smaller species and cultivars that have been bred to stay compact.

Mrs Sprock often brought seeds and young plants for her garden, which was beginning to **burgeon** with colour.

Origin:

Burgeon is from Middle English
burgeonen from Old French *borjoner*, from *burjon*, a bud.

encumbrance

\en-KUHM-brun(t)s\ (noun)

1. A burden, impediment, or hindrance.
2. A lien, mortgage, or other financial claim against a property.

Use:

As Prince of Wales, George V had himself taken his wife on several foreign or imperial tours, without the **encumbrance** of their young children.

Liberated from the **encumbrances** of Washington, the editor and his creation were free to embark on the happiest period of their history.

But she knew that each family needed a son to inherit the property and **encumbrances** and to carry on the name for at least one more generation.

Origin:

Encumbrance is from Old French *encombrance*, from *encombrer*, "to block up," from *en-*, "in" + *combre*, "dam, weir, hence hindrance."

Salubrious

\suh-LOO-bree-us\ (adjective)

1. Favourable to health; promoting health; healthful.

Use:

A physician warned him his health was precarious, so Montague returned to the United States, shelved his legal ambitions and searched for a **salubrious** climate where he might try farming.

For years, her mother has maintained that the sea air has a **salubrious** effect on both her spirits and her vocal cords.

Uptown, however, the tanners' less **salubrious** quarter is notorious for its stench.

Origin:

Salubrious is from Latin *salubris*, "healthful," from *salus*, "health."

Triskaidekaphobia

tris-ky-dek-uh-FOH-bee-uh noun

1. Fear or a phobia concerning the number 13.

Use:

Thirteen people who have pledged to eliminate **triskaidekaphobia**, the fear of the number 13, today tried to reassure American sufferers by renting a 13 ft plot of land in Brooklyn for 13 cents a month.

Past disasters linked to the number 13 hardly help **triskaidekaphobics** overcome their affliction.

The most famous is the Apollo 13 mission, launched on April 11, 1970 from Pad 39 (three times 13) at 13:13 local time, and struck by an explosion on April 13.

Origin:

Triskaidekaphobia is from Greek *treiskaideka*, *triskaideka*, thirteen (*treis*, three + *kai*, and + *deka*, ten) + *phobos*, fear.

Some famous triskaidekaphobes:

- Napoleon, Herbert Hoover, Mark Twain
- Richard Wagner, Franklin Roosevelt

Peccadillo

\peck-uh-DIL-oh\ (noun)

1. A slight offence; a petty fault.

Use:

No **peccadillo** is too trivial: we learn that the King once blew his top because his laundry came back starched.

And besides "what do they say? 'Don't judge lest you be judged.' Everybody has their **peccadilloes**."

Child of a dominant mother, victim of a guilt-ridden conscience, [St. Augustine] wrote bewilderingly about infantile **peccadilloes** like stealing apples.

Origin:

Peccadillo comes from Spanish *pecadillo*, "little sin," diminutive of *pecado*, "sin," from Latin *peccatum*, from *peccare*, "to make a mistake, to err, to sin." It is related to *impeccable*, "without flaw or fault."

Ostracize

\OS-truh-syz\

(verb)

1. To banish or expel from a community or group; to cast out from social, political, or private favour.
2. Greek Antiquity - To exile by ostracism; to banish by a popular vote, as at Athens.

Use:

As for scientists who might be tempted to pursue the theory, he says, they worry that their colleagues might **ostracize** them for stepping out of line and that their funding could suffer.

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani called Monday on the members of the United Nations to unite in a global effort to eradicate terrorism and to **ostracize** countries that refuse to join.

Origin:

Ostracize is from Greek *ostrakizein*, "to banish by voting with potsherds," from *ostrakon*, "a piece of earthenware, a potsherd." *Ostracism* was practiced at Athens to get rid of a citizen whose power was considered too great for the liberty of the state. Each voter wrote on a potsherd the name of a person he wished banished. The man named on the most *ostraka* was exiled, normally for a period of ten years.

Nefarious

\nuh-FAIR-ee-uhs\ (adjective)

1. Wicked in the extreme; iniquitous.

Use:

Despite involvement in protection, narcotics, strong-arm debt collecting, strikebreaking, and blackmail, among other **nefarious** activities, all of them professed to be a cut above mobsters in other lands.

The liar, however, can become a truly subversive and scandalous figure, whose **nefarious** influence may extend far more widely than her own individual actions.

Origin:

Nefarious is from Latin *nefarius*, from *nefas*, "that which is contrary to divine command; a crime, transgression, sin," from *ne-*, "not" + *fas*, "divine command or law."

Supercilious

\soo-puhr-SIL-ee-uhs\ (adjective)

1. Disdainfully arrogant; haughty.

Use:

The girl has a **supercilious** expression, and seems to be looking down her nose at the camera.

Russian emissaries used to be received at European courts with a **supercilious** courtesy, patronized by European elites.

The two Princes arrived like avenging angels at the Guardian Hay Festival to put snobs and **supercilious** critics in their place.

Will I be interviewed by a **supercilious** manager who will make fun of my accent?

Origin:

Supercilious is from Latin *superciliosus*, from *supercilium*, "an eyebrow, arrogance," from *super*, "over" + *cilium*, "an eyelid."

Precocious

\pri-KOH-shus\ (adjective)

1. Characterized by or characteristic of exceptionally early development or maturity (especially in mental aptitude); as, "a precocious child"; "a precocious achievement."
2. (Botany) Flowering or fruiting early.

Use:

He showed a **precocious** talent in the creation of shadow puppets.

He quickly acquired a grandiose and **precocious** vocabulary.

After demonstrating a **precocious** aptitude for music, he was sent at a young age to the Leo Miller Studio for instruction in piano.

Origin:

Precocious is from Latin *praecox*, *praecocis*, ripe before the time, premature, cooked beforehand, from *praecoquo*, *praecoquere*, to cook in advance, from *prae-*, before + *coquo*, *coquere*, to cook, to ripen.

Pugnacious

\puhg-NAY-shuhs adjective

Inclined to fight; combative; quarrelsome

Use:

Roberto's **pugnacious** grandmother lived across the meadow and would yell threats and curses helplessly from her balcony

The idea that he was truculent or **pugnacious**, that he went about with a chip on his shoulder was a mistake

Origin:

Pugnacious comes from Latin *pugnare*, "to fight"

From *pugnus*, "fist"