

## **abscond**

pronunciation: /ab-SKOND (verb)

### **1.**

To depart secretly; to steal away and hide oneself -- used especially of persons who withdraw to avoid arrest or prosecution.

### **Use:**

The criminal is not concerned with influencing or affecting public opinion: he simply wants to **abscond** with his money.

Pearl, now an orphan (her father having **absconded** shortly after her conception), has been taken to live with her great-aunt Margaret in the north of England.

### **Origin:**

*Abscond* comes from Latin *abscondere*, "to conceal,"  
from *ab-*, *abs-*, "away"

## Supernumerary

\soo-puhr-NOO-muh-rair-ee; -NYOO-\ (adjective)

1. Exceeding the stated, standard, or prescribed number.
2. Exceeding what is necessary or desired; superfluous.

(noun)

1. A supernumerary person or thing.
2. An actor without a speaking part, as a walk-on or an extra in a crowd scene.

### Use:

I made ten films in my career but always as a **supernumerary**, I never had a speaking role.

Important as its role has been in the history of civilization, the bookshelf seldom even gets mentioned in the program; it is treated as a **supernumerary**, taken for granted, and ignored.

The Swiss chef and many others serve principally as **supernumeraries** in the film.

### Origin:

*Supernumerary* is from Latin *supernumerarius*, from *super*, "over" + *numerus*, "number."

# Listless

\LIST-lis\ (adjective)

1. Having no desire or inclination; indifferent; heedless; spiritless.

LISTLESSLY, adverb / LISTLESSNESS, noun

## Use:

If you appear downcast or depressed, or are unresponsive to the interviewer's questions or **listless** in your approach, you will rule yourself out of consideration for that job.

He hasn't suddenly become inarticulate, **listless** and unfit to govern, as some commentators are suggesting.

Later his frustration deepened, and in the middle of a **listless** poetry reading he fell asleep.

## Origin:

*Listless* is from Middle English *listles*, from *liste*, desire + less.

# Superfluous

soo-PER-floo-us

adjective

1. More than is wanted or is sufficient; rendered unnecessary by superabundance; unnecessary; useless; excessive.

SUPERFLUOUSLY (adverb)  
SUPERFLUOUSNESS (noun)

## Use:

And it's hard to realize economies of scale without shedding **superfluous** jobs.

Power Grubs make a dead skunk smell like a rose by comparison. The 'Not for human consumption' warning is **superfluous**.

To argue with an angry man would make the outcome **superfluous**.

## Origin:

*Superfluous* comes ultimately from the Latin *superfluus*, from *superfluo*, *superfluere*, to overflow, from *super-*, over, above + *fluo*, *fluere*, to flow.

# Adamant

ˈAD-uh-muhnt\ (adjective)

1. Not capable of being swayed by pleas, appeals, or reason; not susceptible to persuasion; unyielding.

## Use:

The Captain was convinced the boat had run aground, the navigator was **adamant** that it was snared in nets.

The sales assistant was **adamant** that I had given her a €20.00 note, I knew I had given her €50.00.

## Origin:

*Adamant* derives from Greek *adamas*, *adamant-*, "unconquerable; the hardest metal; diamond."

# Winsome

WIN-suhm\ (adjective)

1. Cheerful; merry; gay; light-hearted.
2. Causing joy or pleasure; agreeable; pleasant.

## Use:

And, oh, it was a sweet smile, they said, none sweeter, so **winsome** and large it transformed her melancholy face.

The first time I met Diana, she was a **winsome** little girl full of energy and mischief.

Every town has them, the youngsters who light up the headlines in the provincial papers, who smash under-age scoring records and throw you a **winsome** smile just to top it all.

## Origin:

*Winsome* is from Old English *wynsum*, from *wynn*, "joy" + *-sum* (equivalent to Modern English *-some*), "characterized by."

## Potable

\POH-tuh-buhl\ (adjective)

1. Fit to drink; suitable for drinking; drinkable.
2. A potable liquid; a beverage, especially an alcoholic beverage. (noun)

### Use:

If you drink from the spring, which is shaded by a fig tree, you will supposedly feel younger and more loving. Unfortunately, you may also feel sick: the government warns that the water is not **potable**.

The park has no showers or **potable** drinking water--we picked up bottled water in Kaunakakai.

He indicates the places for peculiar edibles, and exquisite **potables**. (noun)

Also from California, some other off-the-beaten-path **potables**: the 1994 Gallo-Sonoma "Barrelli Creek" Valdiguie and the 1995 Pellegrini Carignane.

### Origin:

*Potable* comes from Late Latin *potabilis*, from Latin *potare*, "to drink."

# Skulk

☒\SKUHLK\ (verb)

1. To hide, or get out of the way, in a sneaking manner; to lurk.
2. To move about in a stealthy way.
3. To avoid responsibilities and duties.

## Use:

When not rummaging under bushes, Mr. Sculley can often be seen **skulking** in the woods or prowling along the shore.

He was forced to creep and **skulk** into every place for fear of being taken and hanged.

He **skulked** back from the shop with his purchase, hugging the walls, looking at no one, all the more panicky because he knew no other way home.

## Origin:

*Skulk* is from Middle English *skulken*, ultimately of Scandinavian origin

## Repast

rih-PAST          noun

1. Something taken as food; a meal

### Use:

This **repast** could scarcely have been digested before a "tea" of fresh bread, butter, cheese, cold meat, and cake was served at half past six.

On June 1, 1563, in Basel, Thomas sat down to a meal, probably the evening repast.

When staying with friends in American in 1949, the philosopher demanded a repast of bread and cheese at all meals.

### Origin:

*Repast* comes from Old French *repaistre*, "to feed," from Latin *re-* + *pascere*, "to feed"

It is related to *pasture*, "the grass grown for the feeding of grazing animals, or the land used for grazing"

## **Hobson's Choice**

\HOB-suhnz-CHOIS\

(noun)

1. A choice without an alternative; the thing offered or nothing.

### **Use:**

Fagan's defense revolves around his insistence that he faced a **Hobson's choice** and had to act.

They're faced with a **Hobson's choice**: Make the plunge or face a terrifying alternative.

### **Origin:**

The origin of the term *Hobson's choice* is said to be in the name of one Thomas Hobson (ca. 1544-1631), at Cambridge, England, who kept a livery stable and required every customer to take either the horse nearest the stable door or none at all.