strive: (v.)
to try very hard

I strive to make learning fun. Write a joke on your assignments, and I’ll use the best ones throughout class.
immense: (adj.)
very large; huge

They now sell drinks so immense
that the cup comes with wheels.
**abode**: (n.)
a home

Welcome to our **abode**. The last owners took such good care of it that we didn’t have to redo anything when we moved in.
ponder: (v.)
to think about deeply;
to study

I should use my long walk home from school to ponder all the good things in my life, but usually I just try to think of shortcuts.
wallop: (v.)
to hit hard

It stops being scary when you wallop your chest so hard that you fall over backwards.
culprit: (n.)
a guilty person

The good thing about being an only child is getting my parents’ undivided attention. The bad thing is being the only possible culprit when something goes wrong.
blunder: (n.)
a silly or careless mistake

If it happens to be Halloween, then I did this on purpose. If not, then yes, it’s a blunder.
eerie: (adj.) weird or strange; scary

Halloween itself is not nearly as eerie as visiting the dentist after Halloween.
**heed**: (v.)
to obey or listen to

I’m happy to **heed** that sign. Even if they didn’t have it, the weird smell coming from inside is warning enough.
utter: (v.)
to speak or say

The last time my mom asked me to utter the magic word, I tried “abracadabra” and “hocus pocus.” After all, nothing really magical has ever happened when I said “please.”
attire: (n.)
clothing

I’ve seen **attire** with special pockets for cell phones and MP3 players, but I didn’t know they also make clothing that can hold TVs.
superb: (adj.)
excellent; very fine

Our new castle is superb. I just wish we had gotten a larger bowl, too.
sliver: (n.)
a small, thin piece

I can understand that you didn’t feel that sliver of spinach between your teeth, but how did you miss the slice of watermelon stuck in your hair?
baffle: (v.)
to confuse or puzzle

I am the Sphinx. I have a riddle that will baffle you. And though it's less famous, I also have a card trick that will amaze you.
**taunt**: (v.)
to make fun of; mock

If I **taunt** your father about his clothes, it doesn’t mean you can do the same to your brother. Your father has had a lot longer to learn better.
murmur: (v.)
to whisper or talk quietly

Sometimes you *murmur* jokes in your sleep, and they’re funnier than the ones you tell when you’re awake.
hasty: (adj.)
done quickly or with little thought; fast

I wasn’t hasty when I was making the brownies, but then I had to leave the house so quickly that I forgot to put them in a container first.
**shriek:** *(v.)*
to yell; scream; screech

I’m glad we have a poor sense of hearing. Most people **shriek** when they see me.
jovial: *(adj.)*
joyful; merry; cheerful

When Mom and Dad send me to *my* room, I’m *jovial*. If they really wanted to punish me, they should send me to *their* boring room.
**lug: (v.)**
to pull or haul (usually something heavy)

If I help you **lug** that up the stairs, you’ll have to lug me home afterward.
hurl: (v.)
to throw with great force

Every time I hurl a Frisbee onto the roof, I use another one to try to knock it off. After I lose these last two, I’ll have to move on to tennis balls.
irate: (adj.)
angry

I understand you’re irate that I lost my cell phone, but this might calm you down. It’s a list of all the things I haven’t lost.
**dingy:** *(adj.)*
dirty; soiled; shabby

At one point, I let my room get so **dingy** that I had to be careful not to track dirt out of it.
tranquil: (adj.)
calm; peaceful

What? It wasn’t exactly tranquil here before I found this.
**pact:** (n.)
an agreement

Let's make a new **pact** that we will each use one new vocabulary word every time we hang out. That'll be much easier than our current pact to take turns cooking lunch.
drowsy: (adj.)
sleepy

I’m drowsy enough for a nap, but if I walk up to my room, I’ll wake up again.
flawless: (adj.)
perfect

Well, I don’t care that your birthday cake isn’t flawless. It’s not like my stomach has eyes.
prank: (n.)
a trick or practical joke

Every April Fool’s Day I set up a prank for my sister somewhere in the house. She doesn’t always find them...so be careful!
throng: (n.)
a large crowd of people

It figures that only four spectators saw my first hit of the season. Whenever I strike out, a throng of people are at the game.
**plead:** (v.)
to beg

OK, I’ll **plead** for scraps. But if it’s for your entertainment, it’s only fair that you pay me for it.
thorough: (adj.)
complete; careful

I’m glad you gave your room a thorough cleaning. But now the hallway needs one!
jostle: (v.)
to bump or push

Don’t jostle me! If I drop this, it’ll be ruined.
timid: (adj.)
easily frightened; shy

When I first met your dad, I thought he was timid because he didn’t open his mouth. I found out later he was just afraid he had bad breath.
**WORD OF THE WEEK**

**amble: (v.)**
to walk slowly and easily

Is that thing ever going to give the signal to *amble*?
bedlam: (n.)
a great deal of noise and confusion

It’s going to be bedlam in here when we tell them that we forgot the straws.
jaunt: (n.)
a short trip or outing

It doesn’t matter whether you’re going on a jaunt to the corner store or a journey overseas. If you forget your keys, you’re still locked out when you get back.
scrumptious: (adj.)
delicious

Worms are so scrumptious that even the dirt I swallow with them tastes good.
flaunt: (v.)
to show off

I don’t flaunt my cartwheeling ability in public. But I have made this video of it for you to watch and admire in the privacy of your own homes.
slumber: (v.)
to sleep

It would be more fun to slumber under the stars if the mosquitoes were slumbering, too.
feign: (v.)
to pretend; to fake

You don’t have to feign being sick. First of all, it’s Saturday. Second, it’s summer vacation. And third, I can always tell when you’re faking anyway.