



## Word List

Study the definitions of the words. Then do the exercises that follow.

**aquatic** *adj.* 1. Growing or living in or on water.  
Water lilies are **aquatic** plants.  
2. Done in or upon water.  
Water skiing is an **aquatic** sport.

**assert** *v.* To say firmly; to declare.  
Charles **asserted** that the money entrusted to him was in a safe place.  
**assertion** *n.* A firm statement or declaration.  
No one challenged her **assertion** that Tuckerman's Ravine was too dangerous to ski.  
**assertive** *adj.* Self-assured; bold and confident.  
Because of his **assertive** manner, he was able to obtain an interview for the job.

**avert** *v.* 1. To turn away.  
I **averted** my eyes from the scary scenes in the movie.  
2. To keep from happening.  
The driver **averted** an accident by hitting the brake.

**bleak** *adj.* 1. Without much hope.  
The company's future looked **bleak** when the new product failed to sell.  
2. Cold and dreary; exposed to cold winds and bad weather.  
Penguins seem to flourish in Antarctica's **bleak** climate.

**blithe** *adj.* 1. Cheerful; carefree.  
The children's **blithe** mood is captured beautifully in the Renoir painting.  
2. Not showing proper care; heedless.  
The driver showed a **blithe** indifference for the safety of others on the highway.  
**blithely** *adv.* In a carefree manner.  
I was reminded of her highly positive attitude when she walked **blithely** out the door.

**docile** *adj.* Well behaved; easy to handle.  
Because it was my first attempt at riding, I was given the most **docile** horse in the stable.

**dwindle** *v.* To keep on becoming less; to grow smaller in number or amount.  
dwin' dəl My hopes of winning the arm wrestling match **dwindled** when I saw the size of my opponent's muscles.

**lethal** *adj.* Causing, or capable of causing, death.  
lē' thəl A rattlesnake's bite can be **lethal**.

**monitor** *v.* To watch closely and frequently; to observe and make note.  
mān' i tər Some cities **monitor** the amount of pollution in the air.  
*n.* A video screen used to display information.  
The sales clerk checked the **monitor** to see if the book was still in stock.

**mutilate** *v.* To hurt or damage by cutting into, cutting off, or cutting out.  
myōōt' l āt Steel traps are cruel because they **mutilate** the animals caught in them.

**nimble** *adj.* 1. Able to move quickly and easily.  
nim' bəl Karen's **nimble** fingers plucked the harp strings with amazing speed.  
2. Showing quickness of thinking; clever.  
It takes a **nimble** mind to solve such a difficult problem.

**plight** *n.* A difficult or dangerous condition or situation.  
plīt The **plight** of homeless people was the principal subject of tonight's evening news.

**ponderous** *adj.* Heavy and slow moving.  
pān' dər əs The elephant made its way with **ponderous** steps through the clearing.

**verge** *n.* An edge, border, or brink.  
vɜrj After being on the **verge** of extinction, the bald eagle made a remarkable comeback in the 1980s.  
*v.* To come close to the edge or border of.  
The story is not merely silly; it **verges** on the ridiculous.

**vigilant** *adj.* Watchful; ready for danger.  
vij' ə lənt Health authorities remain **vigilant** for any signs of the epidemic's return.