

SOPHOMORE VOCABULARY WORDS*

LESSON 1: OUR EVOLVING LANGUAGE

1. **Acronym** (noun) A word formed from the first letter of each word in a series
Acronymic (adjective)
 - PAC is an **acronym** for political action committee
 - NAFTA is the **acronymic** title for the North American Free Trade Agreement
2. **Affix** (noun) A prefix or suffix
(verb) To attach a part to the beginning or end of a word;
(verb) To attach something
 - The word reappearance has two **affixes**, re- and -ance
 - We often **affix** -ed to a verb to form its past tense.
 - To help prevent birds from crashing into the windows, **affix** noticeable stickers to the glass
3. **Coinage** (noun) The invention of new words or an invented word or phrase
(noun) The making of metal coins; metal currency
 - The spread of computer technology has resulted in the **coinage** of words such as blog and cyberculture. . . . Another recent **coinage** is the verb to google, as in "I googled the author of the article to find out his background and credentials."
 - More zinc than copper is now used in the **coinage** of U.S. pennies.
4. **Colloquial** (adjective) Typical of informal language usage; conversational
Colloquialism (noun)
 - "Hi" and "what's up?" are **colloquial** expressions for "hello" and "how are you?"
 - A "close call" is a **colloquialism** for a "narrow escape."
5. **Diminutive** (noun) A suffix that indicates small size, youth, familiarity, affection or contempt;
A nickname indicating affection or familiarity.
(adjective) Extremely small; tiny
 - 1) Two common **diminutives** are -ette and -let. 2) Did you know that Peggy is a **diminutive** of Margaret?
 - The **diminutive** dollhouse furniture enchanted the youngsters.
6. **Metonymy** (noun) A figure of speech that substitutes a word with a different but closely associated word.
Metonymic (adjective)
 - The sentence "Washington's official response was negative" includes a **metonymy**; the word Washington is substituted for the U.S. government.
 - The **metonymic** expression "the hand that rocks the cradle" refers to a mother.
7. **Oxymoron** (noun) An expression that contains contradictory terms
Oxymoronic (adjective)
 - A common **oxymoron** is "jumbo shrimp."
 - Two examples of **oxymoronic** expressions are "good grief" and "fresh frozen."
8. **Palindrome** (noun) A word or expression that is spelled the same backward and forward.
 - The words rotor and civic are **palindromes**.
9. **Portmanteau word** (noun) A word formed by combining sounds and meanings of two different words.
 - Chunnel, a **portmanteau word** formed from channel and tunnel, is the name for the tunnel that runs underneath the English Channel.
10. **Spoonerism** (noun) An often comical switching of the first sounds of two or more words.
 - "Lack of pies" is a **spoonerism** for "pack of lies."

* Vocabulary words, definitions, and examples taken from Richek, Margaret Ann. Vocabulary for Achievement. Fourth Course. Wilmington: Great Source Education Group, 2005.