

WORDS THAT MAKE YOU SOUND SMART

Accolade - a tangible symbol signifying approval or distinction
Acrimony - bitterness
Angst - an acute but unspecific feeling of anxiety
Anomaly - abnormality
Antidote - a remedy that stops or controls the effects of a poison
Avant-garde - ahead of the times, especially in the arts
Baroque - having elaborate symmetrical ornamentation
Bona fide - not counterfeit or copied
Bourgeois - a member of the middle class; belonging to the middle class
Boondoggle - work of little or no value done merely to look busy
Bravado - a swaggering show of courage
Brogue - a thick and heavy shoe; a strong dialectal accent
Brusque - rudely abrupt
Byzantine - highly involved or intricate
Cacophony - a loud harsh or strident noise
Camaraderie - trust among friends
Capricious - impulsive and unpredictable
Carte blanche - authority with no bounds
Catch-22 - a lose-lose situation
Caustic - sarcastic
Charisma - charm
Cloying - excessively sweet or sentimental
Déjà vu - the experience of thinking that a new situation had occurred before
Dichotomy - a division into two parts
Dilettante - showing frivolous or superficial interest
Élan - enthusiastic vigor or liveliness
Disheveled - in disarray
Ennui - boredom
Epitome - a typical example
Equanimity - steadiness of mind under stress
Equivocate - to be deliberately ambiguous or unclear in order to mislead or withhold information
Esoteric - intended for or understood by only a small group
Euphemism - an inoffensive expression that is substituted for one that is considered offensive
Fait accompli - an irreversible accomplishment
Fastidious - difficult to please
Faux pas - a social blunder
Fiasco - a complete failure
Finagle - to trick, swindle or cheat
Freudian slip - a verbal mistake that is thought to reveal an unconscious belief, thought, or emotion
Glib - artfully persuasive in speech
Gregarious - sociable
Harbinger - an omen or sign; forerunner
Hedonist - a pleasure seeker

Heresy - a belief that rejects the orthodox tenets of a religion
Idiosyncratic - peculiar to the individual
Idyllic - charming in a rustic way; suggestive of an idyll
Indelicate - lacking propriety and good taste in manners and conduct
Infinitesimal - immeasurably small
Insidious - treacherous
Junket - a trip taken by an official, often for pleasure at public expense
Kitsch - art in pretentious bad taste
Litany - any long, repetitive, or dull recital
Lurid - ghastly pale
Machiavellian - unprincipled and crafty
Malaise - physical discomfort (as mild sickness or depression)
Malingering - to evade responsibility by pretending to be ill
Mantra - a commonly repeated word or phrase
Maudlin - overemotional
Mercenary - a professional soldier hired by a foreign army; profit-oriented
Minimalist - a person who practices arts in less detailed ways
Misnomer - an incorrect or unsuitable name
Narcissist - someone in love with themselves
Nirvana - any place of complete bliss, delight, and peace
Non sequitur - something that does not logically follow
Nouveau riche - newly rich
Oblivion - total forgetfulness
Ogle - look at with amorous intentions
Ostentatious - showy
Ostracize - to exclude from a group; banish; exile
Panacea - cure-all; remedy for all diseases
Paradox - a contradiction or dilemma
Peevish - easily irritated or annoyed
Perfunctory - hasty and without attention to detail
Philistine - a person uninterested in intellectual pursuits
Precocious - appearing or developing early
Propriety - correct or appropriate behavior
Quid pro quo - this for that
Quintessential - perfect example
Red herring - any diversion intended to distract attention from the main issue
Revel - to take delight in
Rhetoric - effective writing or speaking
Scintillating - brilliantly clever
Spartan - marked by simplicity and lack of luxury
Stigma - a symbol of disgrace or infamy
Stoic - unaffected by pleasure or pain
Suave - having a sophisticated charm
Svengali - a person who exercises excessive control or influence over another person
Sycophant - a self-serving flatterer; a brownnoser
Teetotaler - one who does not drink alcohol
Tête-à-tête - a private conversation between two people
Tirade - a long, angry speech, usually very critical
Tryst - a secret meeting of lovers; rendezvous
Ubiquitous - being present everywhere at once

Unrequited - not returned in kind

Untenable - indefensible

Vicarious - done or felt for, or on behalf of, another

Vile - morally reprehensible

Waft - be driven or carried along, as by the air