

PTE Preparation Series

Vocabulary Mastery

Essential Words for PTE Academic Success



Designed for PTE Students

Comprehensive vocabulary practice with contextual
examples and usage patterns



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1. Dabble (verb)

- Definition: To take a slight and not very serious interest in a subject or activity.
- Synonyms: tinker, trifle, toy with
- Antonyms: specialize, focus, commit
- Example: He first dabbled in politics in his early twenties before committing to a full-time career.

2. Daunting (adjective)

- Definition: Seeming difficult to deal with in anticipation; intimidating.
- Synonyms: intimidating, forbidding, discouraging
- Antonyms: encouraging, reassuring, inviting
- Example: The task of memorizing five hundred vocabulary words seemed daunting at first.

3. Dearth (noun)

- Definition: A scarcity or lack of something.
- Synonyms: scarcity, lack, shortage, paucity
- Antonyms: abundance, surplus, plenty
- Example: There is a dearth of reliable information on the long-term effects of the new policy.

4. Debacle (noun)

- Definition: A sudden and ignominious failure; a complete disaster.
- Synonyms: fiasco, catastrophe, disaster, mess
- Antonyms: success, triumph, achievement
- Example: The economic policy turned into a complete debacle, leading to widespread protests.

5. Debilitate (verb)

- Definition: To make someone very weak and infirm.
- Synonyms: weaken, enfeeble, enervate
- Antonyms: strengthen, fortify, invigorate
- Example: The prolonged illness debilitated the patient, leaving him unable to walk for weeks.

6. Decipher (verb)

- Definition: To succeed in understanding, interpreting, or identifying something.
- Synonyms: decode, interpret, unravel
- Antonyms: encode, scramble, confuse
- Example: Scientists are still trying to decipher the ancient script found in the ruins.

7. Decisive (adjective)

- Definition: Having or showing the ability to make decisions quickly and effectively.
- Synonyms: resolute, firm, determined
- Antonyms: indecisive, hesitant, vacillating



- Example: The manager's decisive action prevented the project from failing.

8. Deduce (verb)

- Definition: To arrive at a fact or a conclusion by reasoning; to draw as a logical conclusion.
- Synonyms: conclude, infer, reason
- Antonyms: guess, assume, surmise
- Example: From the available evidence, we can deduce that the company is planning a major expansion.

9. Defer (verb)

- Definition: To put off an action or event to a later time; postpone.
- Synonyms: postpone, delay, adjourn
- Antonyms: advance, expedite, hasten
- Example: The university decided to defer the start of the semester due to unforeseen circumstances.

10. Deficient (adjective)

- Definition: Not having enough of a specified quality or ingredient.
- Synonyms: lacking, inadequate, insufficient
- Antonyms: sufficient, abundant, adequate
- Example: The report was deficient in its analysis of the financial data.

11. Definitive (adjective)

- Definition: Of a conclusion or agreement; done or reached decisively and with authority.
- Synonyms: conclusive, final, ultimate
- Antonyms: inconclusive, tentative, provisional
- Example: The study provided definitive proof that the new drug was effective.

12. Deft (adjective)

- Definition: Neatly skillful and quick in one's movements.
- Synonyms: skillful, adept, adroit, dexterous
- Antonyms: clumsy, awkward, inept
- Example: With a deft movement, the surgeon completed the intricate procedure.

13. Degrade (verb)

- Definition: To treat or regard someone with contempt or disrespect; to break down or deteriorate.
- Synonyms: debase, demean, deteriorate
- Antonyms: improve, enhance, upgrade
- Example: Pollution can degrade the quality of soil and water over time.

14. Delegate (verb)

- Definition: To entrust a task or responsibility to another person, typically one who is less senior.



- Synonyms: assign, entrust, commission
- Antonyms: retain, keep, hoard
- Example: A good manager knows how to delegate tasks effectively to their team.

15. Deleterious (adjective)

- Definition: Causing harm or damage.
- Synonyms: harmful, damaging, detrimental
- Antonyms: beneficial, harmless, advantageous
- Example: The deleterious effects of smoking on public health are well-documented.

16. Deliberate (adjective)

- Definition: Done consciously and intentionally.
- Synonyms: intentional, calculated, conscious
- Antonyms: accidental, unintentional, inadvertent
- Example: The committee made a deliberate decision to invest in renewable energy.

17. Delineate (verb)

- Definition: To describe or portray something precisely.
- Synonyms: describe, outline, define
- Antonyms: confuse, obscure, distort
- Example: The research paper clearly delineates the scope and limitations of the study.

18. Delude (verb)

- Definition: To impose a misleading belief upon someone; deceive or fool.
- Synonyms: deceive, mislead, trick
- Antonyms: enlighten, inform, disabuse
- Example: He deluded himself into thinking he could pass the exam without studying.

19. Deluge (noun)

- Definition: A great quantity of something arriving at the same time; a severe flood.
- Synonyms: barrage, flood, torrent
- Antonyms: drizzle, trickle, dearth
- Example: The office received a deluge of complaints after the system failure.

20. Demagogue (noun)

- Definition: A political leader who seeks support by appealing to popular desires and prejudices rather than by using rational argument.
- Synonyms: rabble-rouser, agitator, firebrand
- Antonyms: statesman, unifier, peacemaker
- Example: The politician was accused of being a demagogue for his inflammatory speeches.



21. Demeanor (noun)

- Definition: Outward behavior or bearing.
- Synonyms: manner, bearing, conduct, comportment
- Antonyms: character, personality, nature
- Example: His calm and confident demeanor was reassuring during the crisis.

22. Demolish (verb)

- Definition: To pull or knock down a building; to comprehensively refute an argument.
- Synonyms: destroy, raze, dismantle
- Antonyms: build, construct, create
- Example: The old factory was demolished to make way for a new shopping center.

23. Demonstrate (verb)

- Definition: To clearly show the existence or truth of something by giving proof or evidence.
- Synonyms: prove, show, illustrate
- Antonyms: disprove, refute, hide
- Example: The experiment was designed to demonstrate the effects of gravity.

24. Demure (adjective)

- Definition: Reserved, modest, and shy.
- Synonyms: modest, shy, reserved, coy
- Antonyms: bold, brazen, outgoing
- Example: She gave a demure smile and quietly left the room.

25. Denigrate (verb)

- Definition: To criticize unfairly; disparage.
- Synonyms: disparage, belittle, decry
- Antonyms: praise, laud, commend
- Example: It is unwise to denigrate your colleagues' contributions if you want to maintain a positive work environment.

26. Denote (verb)

- Definition: To be a sign of; indicate.
- Synonyms: indicate, signify, represent
- Antonyms: connote, imply, suggest
- Example: In this graph, a red line is used to denote a fall in profits.

27. Denounce (verb)

- Definition: To publicly declare to be wrong or evil.
- Synonyms: condemn, censure, criticize



- **Antonyms:** praise, commend, approve
- Example: The government was quick to denounce the terrorist attack.

28. Depict (verb)

- Definition: To represent by a drawing, painting, or other art form; portray in words.
- **Synonyms:** portray, represent, illustrate, describe
- **Antonyms:** misrepresent, distort, falsify
- Example: The novel accurately depicts the life of a migrant worker in the 1930s.

29. Deplete (verb)

- Definition: To use up the supply or resources of.
- **Synonyms:** exhaust, use up, consume
- **Antonyms:** replenish, increase, augment
- Example: Overfishing can severely deplete fish populations in the ocean.

30. Deplore (verb)

- Definition: To feel or express strong disapproval of something.
- **Synonyms:** abhor, condemn, lament
- **Antonyms:** approve, praise, applaud
- Example: We deplore all acts of violence and discrimination.

31. Deploy (verb)

- Definition: To move troops or equipment into position for military action; to bring into effective action.
- **Synonyms:** position, station, utilize
- **Antonyms:** withdraw, recall, conceal
- Example: The company plans to deploy the new software across all its departments next month.

32. Depreciate (verb)

- Definition: To diminish in value over a period of time.
- **Synonyms:** devalue, decrease, lessen
- **Antonyms:** appreciate, increase, enhance
- Example: A new car will depreciate in value as soon as it is driven off the lot.

33. Deprive (verb)

- Definition: To deny a person or place the possession or use of something.
- **Synonyms:** dispossess, strip, divest
- **Antonyms:** provide, supply, endow
- Example: Lack of investment will deprive the region of much-needed infrastructure.

34. Derelict (adjective)



- Definition: In a very poor condition as a result of disuse and neglect.
- Synonyms: abandoned, dilapidated, neglected
- Antonyms: maintained, cared-for, restored
- Example: The city has a plan to renovate the derelict warehouses by the river.

35. Deride (verb)

- Definition: To express contempt for; to ridicule.
- Synonyms: mock, ridicule, scorn
- Antonyms: respect, praise, admire
- Example: The scientist's unconventional theories were initially derided by his peers.

36. Derive (verb)

- Definition: To obtain something from a specified source.
- Synonyms: obtain, get, extract
- Antonyms: originate, create, invent
- Example: Many modern medicines are derived from plants and natural herbs.

37. Desiccated (adjective)

- Definition: Having had all moisture removed; dried out.
- Synonyms: dried, dehydrated, parched
- Antonyms: moist, damp, hydrated
- Example: The desiccated landscape had not seen rain for over a year.

38. Desolate (adjective)

- Definition: A place deserted of people and in a state of bleak and dismal emptiness.
- Synonyms: bleak, barren, stark
- Antonyms: populous, vibrant, fertile
- Example: After the factory closed, the town became a desolate and empty place.

39. Despondent (adjective)

- Definition: In low spirits from loss of hope or courage.
- Synonyms: dejected, disheartened, discouraged
- Antonyms: hopeful, cheerful, optimistic
- Example: He grew increasingly despondent after failing the exam for the third time.

40. Destitute (adjective)

- Definition: Without the basic necessities of life.
- Synonyms: penniless, impoverished, needy
- Antonyms: wealthy, affluent, rich
- Example: The long war left thousands of families destitute.



41. Desultory (adjective)

- Definition: Lacking a plan, purpose, or enthusiasm.
- Synonyms: random, haphazard, aimless
- Antonyms: systematic, methodical, focused
- Example: He made a few desultory attempts at conversation but seemed distracted.

42. Deter (verb)

- Definition: To discourage someone from doing something by instilling doubt or fear of the consequences.
- Synonyms: discourage, dissuade, prevent
- Antonyms: encourage, persuade, incite
- Example: The high cost of tuition might deter some students from applying to the university.

43. Deteriorate (verb)

- Definition: To become progressively worse.
- Synonyms: worsen, decline, degenerate
- Antonyms: improve, enhance, recover
- Example: The political situation in the country continued to deteriorate.

44. Detrimental (adjective)

- Definition: Tending to cause harm.
- Synonyms: harmful, damaging, injurious
- Antonyms: beneficial, advantageous, favorable
- Example: A lack of sleep can be detrimental to your health and academic performance.

45. Deviate (verb)

- Definition: To depart from an established course or accepted standard.
- Synonyms: diverge, stray, digress
- Antonyms: conform, adhere, follow
- Example: The pilot had to deviate from the original flight path due to a storm.

46. Devise (verb)

- Definition: To plan or invent a complex procedure, system, or mechanism by careful thought.
- Synonyms: conceive, formulate, invent
- Antonyms: copy, imitate, duplicate
- Example: The engineers devised a new method for recycling plastic waste.

47. Devoid (adjective)

- Definition: Entirely lacking or free from.
- Synonyms: lacking, without, empty of



- **Antonyms:** full of, filled with, replete with
- Example: His speech was devoid of any emotion or enthusiasm.

48. Dexterous (adjective)

- Definition: Showing or having skill, especially with the hands.
- **Synonyms:** deft, adroit, agile
- **Antonyms:** clumsy, inept, awkward
- Example: The dexterous craftsman quickly assembled the intricate model.

49. Diaphanous (adjective)

- Definition: Light, delicate, and translucent (especially of fabric).
- **Synonyms:** sheer, gossamer, transparent
- **Antonyms:** opaque, thick, heavy
- Example: The bride wore a beautiful dress with diaphanous sleeves.

50. Diatribe (noun)

- Definition: A forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone or something.
- **Synonyms:** tirade, harangue, denunciation
- **Antonyms:** praise, encomium, eulogy
- Example: The politician launched into a long diatribe against the media's coverage of his campaign.

51. Dichotomy (noun)

- Definition: A division or contrast between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different.
- **Synonyms:** contrast, division, split
- **Antonyms:** union, agreement, harmony
- Example: There is often a dichotomy between what people say and what they actually do.

52. Didactic (adjective)

- Definition: Intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an ulterior motive.
- **Synonyms:** instructive, educational, moralistic
- **Antonyms:** unenlightening, uninformative, frivolous
- Example: The film was overly didactic, with a clear and heavy-handed moral message.

53. Diffident (adjective)

- Definition: Modest or shy because of a lack of self-confidence.
- **Synonyms:** shy, bashful, unconfident
- **Antonyms:** confident, bold, assertive
- Example: She was diffident about expressing her opinions in a large group.

54. Diffuse (verb)



- Definition: To spread over a wide area or among a large number of people.
- Synonyms: spread, disseminate, scatter
- Antonyms: concentrate, focus, gather
- Example: The aim is to diffuse new technology and knowledge throughout the industry.

55. Digress (verb)

- Definition: To leave the main subject temporarily in speech or writing.
- Synonyms: deviate, stray, wander
- Antonyms: focus, concentrate, stick to the point
- Example: The lecturer would often digress from his topic to tell an amusing anecdote.

56. Dilapidated (adjective)

- Definition: In a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect.
- Synonyms: run-down, derelict, ramshackle
- Antonyms: pristine, restored, well-kept
- Example: The council is planning to restore the old, dilapidated theatre.

57. Dilatory (adjective)

- Definition: Slow to act; intended to cause delay.
- Synonyms: slow, tardy, procrastinating
- Antonyms: prompt, punctual, expeditious
- Example: The government was accused of using dilatory tactics to avoid passing the new legislation.

58. Dilemma (noun)

- Definition: A situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, especially equally undesirable ones.
- Synonyms: quandary, predicament, plight
- Antonyms: solution, advantage, boon
- Example: The student faced the dilemma of choosing between a prestigious internship and a well-paying summer job.

59. Dilettante (noun)

- Definition: A person who cultivates an area of interest, such as the arts, without real commitment or knowledge.
- Synonyms: amateur, dabbler, dabbler
- Antonyms: professional, expert, connoisseur
- Example: He was a wealthy dilettante who dabbled in painting but never produced any serious work.

60. Diligent (adjective)

- Definition: Having or showing care and conscientiousness in one's work or duties.
- Synonyms: industrious, hardworking, assiduous



- **Antonyms:** lazy, negligent, careless
- Example: She is a diligent student who always completes her assignments on time.

61. Diminish (verb)

- Definition: To make or become less.
- **Synonyms:** decrease, reduce, lessen
- **Antonyms:** increase, augment, enhance
- Example: The new regulations are expected to diminish the company's profits.

62. Diminutive (adjective)

- Definition: Extremely or unusually small.
- **Synonyms:** tiny, small, minuscule
- **Antonyms:** large, enormous, gigantic
- Example: The village was a diminutive collection of houses nestled in the valley.

63. Dire (adjective)

- Definition: Extremely serious or urgent.
- **Synonyms:** terrible, dreadful, urgent
- **Antonyms:** minor, trivial, unimportant
- Example: The refugees were in dire need of food, water, and medical supplies.

64. Disabuse (verb)

- Definition: To persuade someone that an idea or belief is mistaken.
- **Synonyms:** correct, enlighten, set straight
- **Antonyms:** deceive, mislead, delude
- Example: Let me disabuse you of the notion that this will be an easy task.

65. Discern (verb)

- Definition: To perceive or recognize something; to distinguish something with difficulty by sight or with the other senses.
- **Synonyms:** perceive, detect, distinguish
- **Antonyms:** overlook, miss, ignore
- Example: It was difficult to discern any pattern in the chaotic data.

66. Discomfit (verb)

- Definition: To make someone feel uneasy or embarrassed.
- **Synonyms:** embarrass, abash, unsettle
- **Antonyms:** reassure, comfort, soothe
- Example: The journalist's persistent questioning seemed to discomfit the politician.

67. Disconcerting (adjective)



- Definition: Causing one to feel unsettled.
- Synonyms: **unsettling, un-nerving, disturbing**
- Antonyms: **reassuring, calming, comforting**
- Example: There was a disconcerting silence after he finished his controversial speech.

68. Disconsolate (adjective)

- Definition: Without consolation or comfort; unhappy.
- Synonyms: **dejected, sad, unhappy**
- Antonyms: **happy, cheerful, joyful**
- Example: The team was disconsolate after losing the championship game.

69. Discord (noun)

- Definition: Disagreement between people.
- Synonyms: **conflict, disagreement, strife**
- Antonyms: **harmony, accord, agreement**
- Example: A note of discord has crept into the previously harmonious relationship between the two countries.

70. Discourse (noun)

- Definition: Written or spoken communication or debate.
- Synonyms: **discussion, conversation, debate**
- Antonyms: **silence, quiet, reticence**
- Example: The lecture was a fascinating discourse on the history of modern art.

71. Discrepancy (noun)

- Definition: A lack of compatibility or similarity between two or more facts.
- Synonyms: **difference, inconsistency, disparity**
- Antonyms: **similarity, consistency, correspondence**
- Example: There was a significant discrepancy between the two witness statements.

72. Discrete (adjective)

- Definition: Individually separate and distinct.
- Synonyms: **separate, distinct, individual**
- Antonyms: **connected, combined, joined**
- Example: The research process was broken down into several discrete stages.

73. Disdain (noun)

- Definition: The feeling that someone or something is unworthy of one's consideration or respect; contempt.
- Synonyms: **contempt, scorn, derision**
- Antonyms: **respect, admiration, esteem**



- Example: He regarded the new regulations with disdain, believing they were unnecessary.

74. Disparage (verb)

- Definition: To regard or represent as being of little worth.
- Synonyms: belittle, denigrate, deprecate
- Antonyms: praise, compliment, flatter
- Example: It is not professional to disparage your competitors in a public forum.

75. Disparate (adjective)

- Definition: Essentially different in kind; not allowing comparison.
- Synonyms: different, dissimilar, contrasting
- Antonyms: similar, homogeneous, alike
- Example: The study brought together a group of people from disparate cultural backgrounds.

76. Dispassionate (adjective)

- Definition: Not influenced by strong emotion, and so able to be rational and impartial.
- Synonyms: unemotional, impartial, objective
- Antonyms: passionate, biased, emotional
- Example: A judge must remain dispassionate when hearing a case.

77. Dispel (verb)

- Definition: To make a doubt, feeling, or belief disappear.
- Synonyms: banish, eliminate, drive away
- Antonyms: gather, foster, engender
- Example: The CEO's announcement helped to dispel rumors about the company's financial health.

78. Disseminate (verb)

- Definition: To spread something, especially information, widely.
- Synonyms: spread, circulate, distribute
- Antonyms: suppress, conceal, hoard
- Example: The agency's role is to disseminate information about public health issues.

79. Dissent (noun)

- Definition: The expression or holding of opinions at variance with those previously, commonly, or officially held.
- Synonyms: disagreement, dispute, opposition
- Antonyms: agreement, assent, accord
- Example: There was considerable dissent among the committee members regarding the new policy.

80. Dissipate (verb)

- Definition: To disappear or cause to disappear; to squander or fritter away.



- Synonyms: disperse, vanish, squander
- Antonyms: accumulate, gather, collect
- Example: His anger began to dissipate as he thought about the situation more calmly.

81. Dissonance (noun)

- Definition: A lack of harmony among musical notes; a tension or clash resulting from the combination of two disharmonious elements.
- Synonyms: discord, incongruity, disagreement
- Antonyms: harmony, consonance, agreement
- Example: Cognitive dissonance occurs when a person holds two conflicting beliefs.

82. Diverge (verb)

- Definition: To separate from another route, especially a main one, and go in a different direction.
- Synonyms: separate, deviate, differ
- Antonyms: converge, unite, agree
- Example: The two scientists' opinions began to diverge as they analyzed the data.

83. Diverse (adjective)

- Definition: Showing a great deal of variety; very different.
- Synonyms: varied, miscellaneous, assorted
- Antonyms: similar, uniform, homogeneous
- Example: The city is known for its culturally diverse population.

84. Divulge (verb)

- Definition: To make known private or sensitive information.
- Synonyms: disclose, reveal, impart
- Antonyms: conceal, hide, withhold
- Example: The company refused to divulge the details of its new product before the official launch.

85. Docile (adjective)

- Definition: Ready to accept control or instruction; submissive.
- Synonyms: compliant, obedient, submissive
- Antonyms: rebellious, disobedient, defiant
- Example: The once rebellious students became docile after the new principal's reforms.

86. Doctrinaire (adjective)

- Definition: Seeking to impose a doctrine in all circumstances without regard to practical considerations.
- Synonyms: dogmatic, rigid, inflexible
- Antonyms: pragmatic, flexible, open-minded
- Example: His doctrinaire approach to economic policy was criticized for being inflexible.



87. Dogmatic (adjective)

- Definition: Inclined to lay down principles as incontrovertibly true.
- Synonyms: opinionated, assertive, authoritarian
- Antonyms: open-minded, flexible, unbiased
- Example: He has a dogmatic belief in the superiority of his own methods.

88. Domestic (adjective)

- Definition: Relating to the running of a home or to family relations; existing or occurring inside a particular country.
- Synonyms: household, national, internal
- Antonyms: foreign, international, external
- Example: The airline offers both domestic and international flights.

89. Dormant (adjective)

- Definition: Having normal physical functions suspended or slowed down for a period of time; in or as if in a deep sleep.
- Synonyms: inactive, latent, asleep
- Antonyms: active, awake, erupting
- Example: The volcano has been dormant for over two hundred years.

90. Droll (adjective)

- Definition: Curious or unusual in a way that provokes dry amusement.
- Synonyms: amusing, humorous, witty
- Antonyms: dull, boring, serious
- Example: He entertained us with his droll stories about his travels.

91. Dubious (adjective)

- Definition: Hesitating or doubting; not to be relied upon; suspect.
- Synonyms: doubtful, uncertain, suspicious
- Antonyms: certain, reliable, trustworthy
- Example: He made the dubious claim that he could predict the stock market.

92. Duplicity (noun)

- Definition: Deceitfulness; double-dealing.
- Synonyms: deceit, deception, dishonesty
- Antonyms: honesty, sincerity, candor
- Example: He was accused of duplicity for promising to support both candidates.

93. Durable (adjective)

- Definition: Able to withstand wear, pressure, or damage; hard-wearing.
- Synonyms: long-lasting, sturdy, resilient



- **Antonyms:** fragile, weak, perishable
- Example: The most durable materials were used to construct the bridge.

94. Dwindle (verb)

- Definition: To diminish gradually in size, amount, or strength.
- **Synonyms:** decrease, diminish, decline
- **Antonyms:** increase, grow, flourish
- Example: The town's population began to dwindle after the main factory closed down.

95. Dynamic (adjective)

- Definition: Characterized by constant change, activity, or progress.
- **Synonyms:** energetic, vigorous, active
- **Antonyms:** static, stable, lethargic
- Example: The business world is a dynamic environment that requires constant adaptation.

96. Dysfunctional (adjective)

- Definition: Not operating normally or properly; deviating from the norms of social behavior.
- **Synonyms:** malfunctioning, impaired, broken
- **Antonyms:** functional, working, effective
- Example: The old, dysfunctional system needed a complete overhaul.