

authoritarian

meaning

favoring or exercising total control; non-democratic

example

The people had no control over their destiny; they were forced to obey the dictates of the authoritarian regime.

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blighted

meaning

suffering from a disease; destroyed

example

The extent of the blighted areas could be seen only when viewed from the air.

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careen

meaning

lurch; sway from side to side

example

The taxicab careened wildly as it rounded the corner.

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coercion

meaning

use of force

example

They forced him to obey, but only by great coercion.

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comeuppance

meaning

rebuke; deserts

example

After his earlier rudeness, we were delighted to see him get his comeuppance.

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conducive

meaning

helpful; contributive

example

Rest and proper diet are conducive to good health.

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cordon

meaning

extended line of men or fortifications to prevent access or egress

example

The police cordon was so tight that the criminals could not leave the area.

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corporeal

meaning

bodily; material

example

He was not a churchgoer; he was interested only in corporeal matters.

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dermatologist

meaning

one who studies the skin and its diseases

example

I advise you to consult a dermatologist about your acne.

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distend

meaning

expand; swell out

example

I can tell when he is under stress by the way the veins distend on his forehead.

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dogmatic

meaning

positive; arbitrary

example

Do not be so dogmatic about that statement; it can be easily refuted.

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equity

meaning

fairness; justice

example

Our courts guarantee equity to all.

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evanescent

meaning

fleeting; vanishing

example

For a brief moment, the entire skyline was bathed in an orange-red hue in the evanescent rays of the sunset.

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extrovert

meaning

person interested mostly in external objects and actions

example

A good salesperson is usually an extrovert, who likes to mingle with people.

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feign

meaning

trick; shift; sham blow

example

The boxer was fooled by his opponent's feint and dropped his guard.

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finesse

meaning

delicate skill

example

The finesse and adroitness of the surgeon impressed the observers in the operating room.

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granulate

meaning

form into grains

example

Sugar that has been granulated dissolves more readily than lump sugar.

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grovel

meaning

crawl or creep on ground; remain prostrate

example

Even though we have been defeated, we do not have to grovel before our conquerors.

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hue

meaning

color; aspect

example

The aviary contained birds of every possible hue.

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improvident

meaning

thriftless

example

He was constantly being warned to mend his improvident ways and begin to "save for a rainy day."

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inerrancy

meaning

infallibility

example

Jane refused to believe in the pope's inerrancy, reasoning: "All human beings are capable of error. The pope is a human being. Therefore, he pope is capable of error."

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labyrinth

meaning

maze

example

Tom and Becky were lost in the labyrinth of secret caves.

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legend

meaning

explanatory list of symbols on a map

example

The legend at the bottom of the map made it clear which symbols stood for rest areas along the highway and which stood for public camp sites.

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lustrous

meaning

shining

example

Her large and lustrous eyes gave a touch of beauty to an otherwise drab face.

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monarchy

meaning

government under a single hereditary ruler with varying degrees of power

example

England today remains a monarchy.

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noisome

meaning

foul smelling; unwholesome

example

I never could stand the noisome atmosphere surrounding the slaughter houses.

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noxious

meaning

harmful

example

We must trace the source of these noxious gases before they asphyxiate us.

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omnipotent

meaning

all-powerful

example

The monarch regarded himself as omnipotent and responsible to no one for his acts.

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parochial

meaning

narrow in outlook; provincial; related to parishes

example

Although Jane Austen writes novels set in small rural communities, her concerns are universal, not parochial.

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perennial

meaning

something long-lasting

example

These plants are hardy perennials and will bloom for many years.

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potpourri

meaning

heterogeneous mixture; medley

example

He offered a potpourri of folk songs from many lands.

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punctilious

meaning

laying stress on niceties of conduct or form; precise

example

We must be punctilious in our planning of this affair, for any error may be regarded as a personal affront.

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skeptic

meaning

doubter; person who suspends judgment until he has examined the evidence supporting a point of view.

example

In this matter, I am a skeptic; I want proof.

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solicit

meaning

request earnestly; seek

example

Knowing she needed to have a solid majority for the budget to pass, the mayor telephoned all the members of the city council to solicit their votes.

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succulent

meaning

juicy; full of richness

example

To some people, Florida citrus fruits are more succulent than those from California.

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titillate

meaning

tickle

example

I am here not to titillate my audience but to enlighten it.

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trivia

meaning

trifles; unimportant matters

example

Too many magazines ignore newsworthy subjects and feature trivia.

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tyranny

meaning

oppression; cruel government

example

Frederick Douglass fought against the tyranny of slavery throughout his entire life.

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unobtrusive

meaning

inconspicuous; not blatant

example

The secret service agents in charge of protecting the President tried to be as unobtrusive as possible.

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valor

meaning

bravery

example

He received the Medal of Honor for his valor in battle.

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acid

meaning

sharp; bitterly pungent

example

The acid odor of burnt gunpowder filled the room after the pistol had been fired.

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alliteration

meaning

repetition of beginning sound in poetry

example

The furrow followed free is an example of alliteration.

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altruistic

meaning

unselfishly generous; concerned for others

example

In providing tutorial assistance and college scholarships to hundreds of economically disadvantaged youths, Eugene Lang performed a truly altruistic deed.

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ameliorate

meaning

improve

example

Many social workers have attempted to ameliorate the conditions of people living in the slums.

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archetype

meaning

prototype; primitive pattern

example

The Brooklyn Bridge was the archetype of the many spans that now connect Manhattan with Long Island and New Jersey.

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