**Medieval Vocabulary List #1**

**Ample - more than enough in size or scope or capacity**

The Twin Cities area provides students ample opportunity to gain real-world experience and to enjoy a wide range of cultural offerings.US News (Sep 25, 2015)

Like amplify (crank up the volume), ample is from the Latin word amplus, meaning "large or spacious" and has the word plus in it, like plus-sized models. Ample can be enough or even too much of something. It's great when there's ample parking or water for the hike, but there are things that some people don't want more of, like extra pounds. It's a cheeky insult to tell someone he or she has ample thighs, but we'd all be happy if we had ample time and money.

**Banter - light teasing repartee (look up repartee if you don’t know the definition)**

An older man approaches, and she greets him by name and with a warm hug and a few words of banter. New York Times (Aug 19, 2015)

Good friends usually banter back and forth easily, like they're trying to keep a step ahead of each other in witty responses. This type of banter is their special language of friendship.

Banter is both a noun and a verb about talking. It comes from unknown origins, but even as a word, it seems to be playful and teasing. You can engage in banter with friends, siblings, parents, and even good-natured strangers. Banter usually ends with everyone feeling better for the talk and verbal play.

**Brandish - exhibit aggressively**

In each robbery, McDaniel says the suspect entered the business, brandished a handgun, demanded money then fled after obtaining an undisclosed amount of cash. Washington Times (Sep 29, 2015)

Brandish often implies that a person is wielding a physical weapon. In fact, brandish comes from the archaic French word brandir, meaning “sword.” However, it’s also possible to brandish objects that aren’t weapons. If you win a bowling tournament, for example, you might be inclined to brandish your shiny new trophy in front of the other competitors.

**Burnish - polish and make shiny**

The story, which was published in 1917, burnished Kipling’s reputation as a demented and reactionary old man. The New Yorker (Sep 25, 2015)

A caution about usage: burnish in the physical sense is usually reserved for inanimate objects — a woman will not be happy to hear that her appearance is "burnished to perfection." But your car will thank you. Also, one of the most common non-physical things to be burnished? A reputation. People are forever burnishing them — and its opposite, besmirching them (i.e., making them dirty).

**Covenant - a signed written agreement between two or more parties**

Yet the right to privacy in this country is tantamount to a sacred covenant.US News (Aug 11, 2015)

A covenant is an agreement between two people, or companies, or even countries. It is formal, solemn, sometimes even sacred.

There are some places where you'll hear covenant get used. It's a little old fashioned and formal, but marriage is often referred to as a covenant.

**Dais - a platform raised above the surrounding level**

At major conservative dinners in recent years, she often has sat on the dais or helped manage the gala behind the scenes. Washington Times (Jul 27, 2015)

A speaker stands on a dais, or a platform, when giving a presentation. In ME times, important people (like the king and his special friends) would eat at a table set on a platform so that they were a little above everyone else.

**Demeanor - the way a person behaves toward other people**

When I watched him on the sideline, and I watched him go out to kick, his demeanor was easy-going, low-key, and I think that’s positive. Washington Times (Sep 28, 2015)

Demeanor in English today has evolved from Middle English and Old French to refer to the way one manages or presents oneself, and this definition applies to conduct as well as facial expressions. The way you present yourself often affects how others make judgments about you and therefore, you might want your demeanor to reflect the situation you're in. So, if you're at a birthday party, your demeanor should be happy and smiling!

**Disdain - lack of respect accompanied by a feeling of intense dislike**

Many on social media added their thoughts using the trash can emoji to express their disdain.Los Angeles Times (Sep 29, 2015)

Can also mean to look down on something. To disdain something, then, is to treat it with contempt: "Management at [the company] displayed a certain disdain for safety and appeared to regard safety-conscious workers as wimps in the organization." As a verb, disdain carries an air of self-righteousness not associated with similar words like despise, abhor, detest, loathe and scorn. So if you disdain something, you might reject it with a haughty scoff, "Ha!"

**Draught - a serving of drink (usually alcoholic) drawn from a keg**

They gave me a draught of Polyjuice Potion containing one of my mother’s hairs*. Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire*

If you're chilly, you might close a window that's letting in a draught. Draught is the British spelling of the word draft.

The noun draught is pronounced exactly like draft, and it also shares most of the same meanings. A cold burst of wind, a swig or a serving of a drink, the act of pulling a heavy load, and the depth of a ship below the surface of the water: each of these can be called a draught.

**Enmity - a state of deep-seated ill-will**

In this compacted world, close friendships, intense rivalries, clashing ambitions, and personal enmities all flourish. The New Yorker (Sep 14, 2015)

Enmity means intense hostility. If you're a football fanatic, you feel enmity for your opposing team.

Enmity comes from the same Latin root as enemy, and means the state of being an enemy. If you have always hated someone, you have a history of enmity with that person. Enmity is stronger than antagonism or animosity, which imply competitive feeling but don't go all the way to enemy status.

**Evince - give expression to**

The fly-fishing comparison still holds, and his images, though no longer surprising, still evince intelligence, concentration, delicacy and attention. The Guardian (Jul 9, 2015)

The verb evince means to show or express clearly; to make plain. Evidence can evince the innocence of the accused, and tears can evince the grief of the mourning.

Evince is a rather formal word that reveals the presence of something hidden — usually a feeling. So, if you are happy, your smile might evince your happiness. And if you are angry, the skull and crossbones on your tee shirt might evince your anger. Evincing is about expressing.

**Feint - any distracting or deceptive maneuver**

Lined up to the outside was their hulking new receiver, Brandon Marshall, who feinted right and then broke inside, beating his defender. New York Times (Aug 9, 2015)

Did you ever tell your parents you were going off to school, grabbed your book bag, and headed out the door... only to spend the rest of the day hanging out with your friends? Well, that was a feint, a super sneaky move designed to fool someone.

Although military and political tactics are big on feints, their most common use is probably in sports — particularly boxing, where opponents are continually trying to fake each other out.

**Firmament - the sphere on which celestial bodies appear to be projected**

The show, once a behemoth in American entertainment and a cultural touchstone, no longer occupies the same position in the television firmament. Time (May 11, 2015)

The word firmament comes from the Latin firmus, or "firm," and this description of the sky as something solid reflects ancient ideas of the way the universe was constructed. The first stargazers imagined the sky as a sphere, and it wasn't until the late 1500s that the idea of an infinite universe was seriously considered. Today the word firmament is mostly literary, used to poetically describe the visual curve of the sky.

**Foster - providing nurture though not related by blood or legal ties**

It’s a structure that fosters a more collaborative and open environment, where students help in making the rules, she said. Washington Times (Sep 26, 2015)

To foster is to nurture something for a little while. She fosters creativity by providing crayons to every student.

You may have seen photos of a cat taking care of a baby rabbit, or a pig nursing a litter of puppies: those are little foster families. Foster can be a verb (to foster someone or something) or an adjective used to describe a foster family, child, or parent. The word is from the Old English fostrian meaning "to supply with food, nourish, support."

**Haughty - having or showing arrogant superiority**

Think of Verbier, perched high on a terrace in the Swiss Alps, exclusive and haughty.New York Times (Jun 17, 2015)

Someone who is haughty is arrogant and full of pride. When you're haughty, you have a big attitude and act like you're better than other people.

A haughty person acts superior and looks down on others. Haughty people are disdainful, overbearing, prideful, swaggering, and obnoxious. Acting amazed that others haven't heard of a hot new band is haughty. Speaking in a cocky or superior way is haughty.

**Interlude - an intervening period or episode**

The modern Greek tragedy isn’t over—after an interlude, there will be more acts. Wall Street Journal (Jul 16, 2015)

Any block of time that comes as a break or a respite from an activity can be called an interlude, so you could talk about a quiet interlude after a noisy birthday party, or an interlude of peace after years of war. Interlude is often used to describe the pauses between acts of a play or during an intermission. In fact, the original meaning came from the Latin interludium, which means "between a play".

**Intrepid - invulnerable to fear or intimidation**

Brilliant and intrepid also apply to the subjects of David McCullough’s latest biography, “The Wright Brothers,” another work of blue-chip history from this exalted source.New York Times (May 21, 2015)

Intrepid is just a fancy word for describing a person or action that is bold and brave. Super heroes are intrepid in their struggle for truth, justice and the American way.

**Lofty - having or displaying great dignity or nobility**

This lofty figure of reason and righteousness was cast as an exemplary political leader – one who could deftly combine real learning with commendably virtuous governance.US News (Sep 14, 2015)

additional definition: of high moral or intelligent value. Dating from the 15th century, lofty originally meant "exalted," or spiritually high, but soon came to mean physically high as well. A towering mountain can be called "lofty." So can someone who walks around with her nose in the air and speaks in a fake English accent. Even if she's only five-foot-two.

**Malevolent - wishing or appearing to wish evil to others**

If sugar isn’t evil, then it’s at least nefarious, malevolent, and wicked; or heinous and corrupt; or perfidious and wrong.Slate (Aug 10, 2015)

Malevolent comes from the Latin word malevolens, which means "ill-disposed, spiteful"; its opposite is benevolent, which means "wishing good things for others." A malevolent person might display satisfaction at someone else's problems. But it's not only individuals who can be malevolent. If you think that television violence influences viewers to violence, you see television as a malevolent force.

**Petition - request formally and in writing**

He has had to petition the Ministry of Justice to find a lawyer he can trust. BBC (Sep 24, 2015)

Petition comes from the Anglo-Norman word peticiun, meaning "demand, request," and when you petition someone, you ask them to consider your request. If you write up a statement, say against the town's approval of a new carnival district, and collect signatures from 100 neighbors to turn in to the city government, that's a petition. If you pray to the carnival gods to reign down ruin on the carnival, that's also a petition — and no signatures needed.

**Scintillating - brilliantly clever**

Although commendable, heartwarming and convivial, community theater projects don't always result in the most scintillating entertainment. Los Angeles Times (Jun 24, 2015)

To be scintillating is to be sharp. Things that are scintillating are exciting: they grab your attention with sparkles, flashes of light, or sheer brilliance. Most often, we talk about scintillating conversations and speakers. If you say someone is scintillating, then they are clever — people want to listen to them. This is a word often used sarcastically. If someone is boring, you might say "Well, that was scintillating," while rolling your eyes.

**Virtuous - morally excellent**

Plus, you get to enjoy a giant bowl of healthy food and feel virtuous for saving money.US News (Aug 13, 2015)

When you use virtuous to describe an action, like, "Your decision to cancel your vacation plans when your mom got sick was virtuous," it’s almost as though you’re referring to an ideal of goodness. In past centuries, virtuous was synonymous with virginal. In many 18th century English novels, for example, a woman didn't even have to be all that nice to be called virtuous; it just mattered that she was sexually innocent.