



Test Ninjas

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

GRE VOCABULARY

GRE Vocabulary: Change, Time & Movement

76 focused words in Change, Time & Movement

76

UNIQUE WORDS

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CATEGORIES

GRE

EXAM FOCUS



About this study guide

This vocabulary guide was prepared and published by Test Ninjas as an independent study resource. It is designed to help students build the precise word knowledge needed for demanding academic reading and reasoning.

How to use this guide

Study in short, repeated sessions. Read each definition, say the word aloud, and use the example to understand how the word functions in context. Return to unfamiliar words until you can explain them without looking at the definition.

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001 ameliorate *verb***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

To make something bad or unsatisfactory better; to improve

Urban planners proposed a network of green spaces to **ameliorate** the effects of extreme heat in the city center.

MEMORY CUE: Ameliorate a harsh condition by turning its pain dial toward better.

002 ameliorated *verb (past participle)***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Made something bad or unsatisfactory better; improved

The new irrigation system **ameliorated** the chronic water shortages that had plagued the farming community for decades.

MEMORY CUE: A bad condition ameliorated when careful repairs made it better.

003 anachronistic *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Belonging to a period other than the one being portrayed; outdated

The novel's characters use smartphones in a story supposedly set in the 1950s, an **anachronistic** error the editor missed.

MEMORY CUE: A smartphone in an ancient castle is anachronistic because it belongs to another time.

004 antedated *verb***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Preceded in time; came before in chronological order

The cave paintings **antedated** the arrival of agriculture in the region by several thousand years.

MEMORY CUE: The prefix ante means before, so an event antedated another.

005 awry *adverb/adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Away from the expected course; amiss

The carefully planned experiment went **awry** when a power outage corrupted the data at a critical stage.

MEMORY CUE: A wheel tilted awry sends the entire cart off course.

006 burgeon *verb***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

To begin to grow or increase rapidly; to flourish

The tech industry continued to **burgeon** throughout the decade, creating millions of new jobs.

MEMORY CUE: A single bud burgeons into rapidly spreading branches and blossoms.

007 culminate *verb***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

To reach a climax or point of highest development

Years of research **culminated** in a paper that transformed the field of molecular biology.

MEMORY CUE: A climb culminates at the highest peak and final climax.

008 debacle *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

A sudden and ignominious failure; a fiasco

The product launch was a **debacle**, with software glitches rendering the device unusable.

MEMORY CUE: A debacle is a plan collapsing spectacularly into humiliating failure.

009 decline *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To diminish in quality, strength, or condition; to become worse

Fish populations in the river began to **decline** sharply after the upstream factory expanded its operations.

MEMORY CUE: A declining line slopes downward as quality, strength, or condition worsens.

010 degrade *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Break down; deteriorate in quality or structure over time

Ultraviolet radiation causes plastics to **degrade**, releasing microparticles that contaminate soil and water.

MEMORY CUE: Sunlight can degrade material, breaking its quality down over time.

011 deteriorate *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To become progressively worse in quality, condition, or value

Without proper conservation, the medieval frescoes will continue to **deteriorate** from exposure to moisture and light.

MEMORY CUE: A once-solid wall crumbling over time shows it deteriorating.

012 dislocation *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Disturbance from a proper or original position; disruption

The rapid **dislocation** of traditional communities during industrialization created social upheaval that lasted generations.

MEMORY CUE: A dislocation knocks something away from its proper position or order.

013 dispersal *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

The action or process of distributing or spreading things over a wide area

Wind-driven **dispersal** of seeds allows certain plant species to colonize areas far from the parent organism.

MEMORY CUE: Dispersal scatters seeds outward across a wide area.

014 displacement *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

The moving of something from its place or position; the replacing of one thing by another

The **displacement** of indigenous languages by colonial tongues remains one of the most lasting effects of imperialism.

MEMORY CUE: Displacement pushes one object from its place and puts another there.

015 displacing *verb (present participle)*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Taking the place of; pushing aside

Automation is **displacing** workers in sectors that once provided stable middle-class employment.

MEMORY CUE: A new technology displacing an old one pushes it aside.

016 dissolution *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

The breaking up or disintegration of something; the closing down of an assembly

The **dissolution** of the Soviet Union in 1991 redrew the political map of an entire continent.

MEMORY CUE: Dissolution dissolves an organized whole until its parts break apart.

017 distend *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To swell or expand from internal pressure

The balloon will **distend** as the gas inside it heats and expands under direct sunlight.

MEMORY CUE: Internal pressure distends a balloon, swelling it outward.

018 dormant *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Temporarily inactive; in a state of rest or suspension

The volcano had been **dormant** for centuries before showing signs of renewed activity.

MEMORY CUE: A dormant seed rests underground: alive but temporarily inactive and not growing.

019 eclipse *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To surpass in importance or achievement; to obscure or overshadow

The younger scientist's groundbreaking discoveries threatened to **eclipse** the contributions of her more famous mentor.

MEMORY CUE: A brilliant newcomer can eclipse a veteran by overshadowing their achievement.

020 eclipsed *verb (past tense)*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Surpassed or outshone; made to seem less important

The scandal **eclipsed** the administration's genuine policy achievements, dominating headlines for months.

MEMORY CUE: The moon eclipsed the sun, obscuring and outshining its disk.

021 emulated *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Matched or surpassed by imitation; strived to equal

Younger painters **emulated** her bold use of color, though none quite captured the emotional intensity of her originals.

MEMORY CUE: A student emulated the master, striving to equal the admired model.

022 enduring *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Lasting over a long period; durable

The philosopher's **enduring** influence can be traced in debates that continue to shape political theory three centuries later.

MEMORY CUE: An enduring bridge remains solid through years of storms.

023 enervate *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To cause someone to feel drained of energy or vitality; to weaken

The oppressive heat **enervated** the workers, slowing production to a crawl.

MEMORY CUE: An enervating heat drains energy until strength feels unplugged.

024 engender *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To cause or give rise to a feeling, situation, or condition

The policy change **engendered** widespread resentment among the affected communities.

MEMORY CUE: A seed engenders a new plant by giving rise to it.

025 ephemeral *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Lasting for a very short time; transient; fleeting

Social media posts are **ephemeral** by nature, yet their consequences can be lasting and far-reaching.

MEMORY CUE: An ephemeral soap bubble shines briefly and vanishes.

026 extant *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Still in existence; surviving

Only three **extant** copies of the original manuscript are known to exist.

MEMORY CUE: An extant manuscript still exists rather than having vanished or been destroyed.

027 fiascoes *noun (plural)*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Complete failures, especially in a ludicrous or humiliating way

A series of diplomatic **fiascoes** damaged the nation's reputation and strained relationships with longtime allies.

MEMORY CUE: Fiascoes are plans that tumble into complete and embarrassing failures.

028 fleeting *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Lasting for a very short time; passing quickly

The comet's appearance was **fleeting**, visible to the naked eye for only three nights before fading from view.

MEMORY CUE: A fleeting shadow crosses the wall and disappears almost immediately.

029 forestalled *verb (past tense)*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Prevented or obstructed in advance; anticipated and acted against

Quick diplomatic intervention **forestalled** a military confrontation that both sides would later agree they wanted to avoid.

MEMORY CUE: A barrier erected early forestalled the problem before it could occur.

030 fostered *verb (past tense)*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Encouraged or promoted the development of something

The mentorship program **fostered** a sense of belonging among first-generation college students who might otherwise have felt isolated.

MEMORY CUE: A greenhouse fostered young plants by encouraging their development.

031 hibernation *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

A state of inactivity or dormancy (used metaphorically here for a practice that had gone dormant)

The art form had entered a kind of **hibernation** in the early twentieth century before a dramatic revival in the 1960s.

MEMORY CUE: A bear's winter battery drops to minimum during hibernation.

032 **imminent** *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

About to happen; impending

With floodwaters rising by the hour, the danger to downstream communities was **imminent**.

MEMORY CUE: An imminent event stands one second away on a countdown clock.

033 **immovable** *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Unable to be moved; fixed and rigid

The negotiator found her counterpart **immovable** on the key issue, forcing the talks to stall.

MEMORY CUE: An immovable boulder stays fixed despite every effort to shift it.

034 **immutable** *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Unchanging over time; unable to be altered

The laws of thermodynamics are considered **immutable**, governing everything from engine design to the fate of the universe.

MEMORY CUE: An immutable rule is carved into stone that cannot be changed.

035 **incessant** *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Continuing without pause or interruption; ceaseless

The **incessant** noise from the construction site made it impossible for residents to sleep or concentrate.

MEMORY CUE: An incessant alarm sounds continuously without pause.

036 **inchoate** *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Just begun and so not fully formed or developed; rudimentary

The **inchoate** movement lacked clear leadership but showed signs of growing momentum.

MEMORY CUE: An inchoate plan has begun forming but remains shapeless and incomplete.

037 **inexorable** *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Impossible to stop or prevent; impossible to persuade by request or entreaty

The **inexorable** march of technological change has transformed every aspect of modern life.

MEMORY CUE: An inexorable glacier advances without being stopped or persuaded.

038 **infusion** *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

The introduction of a new element or quality; an injection (as of capital)

The **infusion** of venture capital allowed the startup to hire top engineers and accelerate product development.

MEMORY CUE: An infusion pours a new element, quality, or capital into something.

039 invariable *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Never changing; constant

The scientist's **invariable** routine—arriving at the lab at dawn and leaving well after midnight—became legendary.

MEMORY CUE: An invariable pattern never varies, regardless of conditions.

043 nascent *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Just beginning to develop; not yet fully formed; emerging

The **nascent** democracy faced numerous challenges in establishing stable institutions.

MEMORY CUE: A nascent idea is newly born and only beginning to develop.

040 invigorated *verb (past tense)*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Given strength or energy to

The infusion of new talent **invigorated** the research group, leading to a burst of publications in top journals.

MEMORY CUE: Fresh air invigorated the hikers, filling them again with strength.

044 obliterating *verb (present participle)*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Destroying utterly; wiping out

The volcanic eruption buried the city in ash, **obliterating** all traces of habitation for centuries.

MEMORY CUE: Obliterating force erases the target until virtually no trace remains.

041 melding *noun/verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

The blending or merging of different elements into one

The album represents a **melding** of classical Indian ragas with contemporary electronic music.

MEMORY CUE: Melding heats separate elements until they blend into one whole.

045 obsolete *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

No longer produced or used; out of date

The rapid pace of technological change renders today's cutting-edge devices **obsolete** within a few years.

MEMORY CUE: An obsolete device gathers dust in a museum because it is no longer used.

042 momentary *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Lasting for a very short time; brief

A **momentary** lapse in concentration cost the chess grandmaster the match and the tournament title.

MEMORY CUE: A momentary light flashes for one brief instant.

046 obviating *verb (present participle)***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Removing or preventing (a need or difficulty); making unnecessary

The new software update fixed the security flaw, **obviating** the need for the temporary workaround.

MEMORY CUE: A bridge obviates the need for a boat by removing that necessity.

047 overshadowed *verb (past participle)***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

To obscure or make less important by comparison; to cast a shadow over

The composer's symphonies have long been **overshadowed** by his more popular operas, though scholars argue they deserve equal attention.

MEMORY CUE: A huge spotlight on one achievement leaves the other overshadowed and less noticeable.

048 perennial *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Lasting throughout the year or for an indefinitely long time; enduring

The question of how to balance economic growth with environmental protection is a **perennial** challenge for policymakers.

MEMORY CUE: A perennial plant returns year after year; a perennial issue likewise endures.

049 pioneering *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Involving new ideas or methods; groundbreaking; trailblazing

Her **pioneering** research on gene therapy laid the groundwork for treatments that are now saving thousands of lives.

MEMORY CUE: Pioneering work walks first into territory no established method has crossed.

050 posthumous *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Occurring after death; awarded or recognized after one's death

The writer received **posthumous** recognition when her unpublished manuscripts were discovered and celebrated as masterpieces.

MEMORY CUE: A posthumous award arrives after the recipient has died.

051 postwar *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Occurring after a war, especially after World War II

The **postwar** economic boom transformed the country from an agrarian society into an industrial powerhouse within two decades.

MEMORY CUE: Postwar rebuilding begins after the war has ended.

052 precipitate *verb/adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

To cause something to happen suddenly; done hastily without careful consideration

The assassination **precipitated** a political crisis that lasted for months.

MEMORY CUE: A pushed domino precipitates an event before it would normally occur.

053 primitive *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Relating to or characteristic of an early stage of development; unsophisticated

The **primitive** tools found at the site suggest human habitation tens of thousands of years earlier than previously thought.

MEMORY CUE: A primitive design belongs to an early, relatively unsophisticated stage.

054 protean *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Tending or able to change frequently or easily; versatile

The **protean** actor transformed convincingly from role to role across wildly different genres.

MEMORY CUE: Protean talent changes form easily and adapts to many roles.

055 providential *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Occurring at a favorable time; opportune; involving divine foresight or care

The **providential** arrival of reinforcements at the last possible moment saved the garrison from being overrun.

MEMORY CUE: Providential help arrives at exactly the favorable moment it is needed.

056 quiescent *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

In a state or period of inactivity or dormancy

The volcano had been **quiescent** for decades before the sudden eruption.

MEMORY CUE: A quiescent volcano rests quietly in a period of inactivity.

057 relinquish *verb***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

To voluntarily cease to keep or claim; to give up

The aging monarch was reluctant to **relinquish** power, even as advisors urged him to step aside for his successor.

MEMORY CUE: To relinquish a claim, open your hand and voluntarily give it up.

058 remedial *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Given or intended as a remedy or cure; intended to correct or improve

The school introduced **remedial** reading programs for students who had fallen behind during the pandemic.

MEMORY CUE: Remedial work serves as a remedy meant to correct a weakness.

059 stagnant *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Showing no activity or advancement; not flowing or moving (wrong answer, contrasted with tested word)

The **stagnant** economy offered few opportunities for young graduates entering the workforce.

MEMORY CUE: Stagnant water sits unmoving; stagnant progress likewise goes nowhere.

060 stagnation *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

A state of little or no growth, activity, or development

After decades of rapid expansion, the industry entered a period of **stagnation** characterized by falling investment and flat revenues.

MEMORY CUE: Stagnation freezes growth and activity into a motionless pool.

061 standing *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Permanent; continuing in existence or operation over time (tested word)

The museum's **standing** collection includes works by every major Impressionist painter.

MEMORY CUE: A standing rule remains upright and continuously in operation.

062 subsequent *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Coming after something in time; following

The initial discovery and the **subsequent** investigations that followed transformed our understanding of the disease.

MEMORY CUE: A subsequent event follows afterward on the timeline.

063 superseded *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Taken the place of; supplanted something previously held or used

Newtonian mechanics was not so much disproved as **superseded** by Einstein's more comprehensive theory of relativity.

MEMORY CUE: A newer, more effective model rolls in and supersedes the old one.

064 supplant *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To supersede and replace; to take the place of

Digital photography has largely **supplanted** traditional film in both professional and amateur settings.

MEMORY CUE: A replacement plant supplants the old one by taking its place.

065 surprising *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Causing astonishment or wonder; unexpected

The most **surprising** finding of the study was that the treatment worked best in patients initially expected to respond least.

MEMORY CUE: A surprising event jumps from an unopened box before anyone expects it.

066 trajectory *noun*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

The path or direction of development; the course of an argument

The **trajectory** of the nation's economic development over the last fifty years has been nothing short of remarkable.

MEMORY CUE: Trajectory traces the path an object, career, or argument follows.

067 transient *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Lasting only for a short time; impermanent; passing through with only a brief stay

The economic boom proved **transient**, giving way to a severe downturn within two years.

MEMORY CUE: A transient visitor arrives briefly and soon follows the exit arrow.

068 transitory *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Not permanent; lasting only a short time

Fame in the art world can be **transitory**; many celebrated painters are forgotten within a generation.

MEMORY CUE: A transitory visitor stays only briefly before passing onward.

069 traumatic *adjective*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

Deeply disturbing or distressing; relating to emotional shock

The **traumatic** experience of combat left lasting psychological scars that took decades of therapy to address.

MEMORY CUE: A traumatic event strikes deeply enough to leave emotional shock.

070 tumultuous *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Making a loud, confused noise; excited, confused, or disorderly; turbulent

The nation endured a **tumultuous** decade of revolution, civil war, and foreign intervention before achieving stability.

MEMORY CUE: A tumultuous crowd churns with loud confusion and disorder.

073 unprecedented *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Never done or known before; without previous example

The scale of the humanitarian crisis was **unprecedented**, overwhelming the capacity of relief organizations.

MEMORY CUE: An unprecedented event carries a FIRST EVER stamp with no earlier example.

071 undiminished *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Not reduced, lessened, or weakened in any way

Her enthusiasm for the project remained **undiminished** after three years of setbacks and funding cuts.

MEMORY CUE: An undiminished flame burns with none of its brightness reduced.

074 unpremeditated *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Not planned or thought out in advance; spontaneous

The defense argued that the act was **unpremeditated**, committed in a moment of panic rather than deliberate intent.

MEMORY CUE: An unpremeditated act happens spontaneously without prior planning.

072 unforeseeable *adjective***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Not able to be anticipated or predicted

The pandemic was an **unforeseeable** event that upended economic assumptions held by policymakers worldwide.

MEMORY CUE: An unforeseeable event lies beyond any reasonable line of prediction.

075 upheavals *noun (plural)***CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT**

Violent or sudden changes or disruptions

The political **upheavals** of the 1960s reshaped the cultural landscape of the nation in ways still felt today.

MEMORY CUE: Upheavals violently lift and disrupt the settled order.

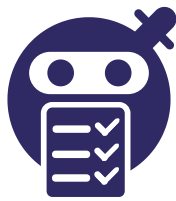
076 **wane** *verb*

CHANGE, TIME & MOVEMENT

To decrease gradually in power, size, or extent; to decline

Public interest in the scandal began to **wane** after several weeks without new revelations.

MEMORY CUE: The waning moon shrinks night by night as strength decreases.



GRE VOCABULARY

Keep building your edge.

Vocabulary grows through repeated exposure and deliberate use.
Revisit this list, write with the words, and practice recognizing their
meaning in context.

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