



Test Ninjas

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

GRE VOCABULARY

GRE Vocabulary: Society, Power & Culture

159 focused words in Society, Power & Culture

159

UNIQUE WORDS

1

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.

Copyright and permitted use

© 2026 Test Ninjas. All rights reserved. A lawful purchaser may print this document for personal study or for students in one class directly taught by that purchaser. Redistribution, resale, public posting, dataset extraction, and use for training or evaluating automated systems are prohibited without written permission.

Independent publication. SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, and LSAT are trademarks of their respective owners. Their owners are not affiliated with, and do not endorse, Test Ninjas.

001 abdicate *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To renounce or relinquish a throne, right, power, or responsibility

The king chose to **abdicate** the throne rather than face a revolution.

MEMORY CUE: Picture a king stepping down and handing away his crown: abdicate.

002 acceding *verb (present participle)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Agreeing to a demand, request, or treaty; giving consent

After months of resistance, the board ended up **acceding** to the shareholders' demand for greater transparency.

MEMORY CUE: Picture someone acceding with a nod and saying, "I agree."

003 activism *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change

Her **activism** on behalf of migrant workers earned her both admiration and fierce political opposition.

MEMORY CUE: Activism means becoming active, organized, and vocal for social change.

004 adaptations *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Modified versions of something adjusted for a new purpose

Film **adaptations** of classic novels rarely satisfy readers who cherish the original prose.

MEMORY CUE: Adaptations are altered versions fitted to survive a new setting.

005 advocate *verb/noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To publicly recommend or support; a person who pleads for a cause

She continued to **advocate** for criminal justice reform throughout her career.

MEMORY CUE: An advocate raises a public SUPPORT sign for a person or cause.

006 aesthetic *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty

The building's **aesthetic** appeal was undeniable, drawing tourists from around the world.

MEMORY CUE: An aesthetic eye judges the beauty and artistic form of what it sees.

007 aesthetics *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

A set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty

The **aesthetics** of Japanese garden design emphasize simplicity, asymmetry, and the beauty of natural materials.

MEMORY CUE: Aesthetics asks what makes an object or style feel beautiful.

008 agrarian *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Relating to cultivated land or the cultivation of land; agricultural

The country's **agrarian** economy left it vulnerable to droughts that devastated crop yields.

MEMORY CUE: An agrarian society centers its life on agricultural fields and farms.

009 alienated *adjective/verb***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Estranged; made to feel isolated or withdrawn from

The artist's uncompromising vision **alienated** mainstream audiences but earned devoted followers among critics.

MEMORY CUE: An alienated person feels like an outsider on a distant planet.

010 ancillary *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Providing supplementary or additional help and support; subsidiary

The research paper's **ancillary** findings about diet and sleep proved more influential than its main thesis.

MEMORY CUE: An ancillary tool stands beside and supports the primary operation.

011 apostle *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

A vigorous and pioneering advocate of a particular cause or idea

She became an **apostle** of sustainable architecture, lecturing worldwide on carbon-neutral building design.

MEMORY CUE: An apostle carries a cause outward as its devoted pioneering advocate.

012 archaic *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Very old or old-fashioned; belonging to an earlier period

The **archaic** language of the legal code made it nearly incomprehensible to modern readers.

MEMORY CUE: An archaic custom belongs in an archive of very old practices.

013 aria *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

A self-contained piece for one voice, usually in an opera

The soprano's **aria** in the second act brought the audience to tears with its haunting simplicity.

MEMORY CUE: Picture one opera singer holding the stage alone during an aria.

014 authorial *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Relating to or characteristic of an author

The novel's shifting perspectives make it difficult to determine the **authorial** stance on the central moral dilemma.

MEMORY CUE: An authorial choice bears the distinctive fingerprints of the author.

015 authoritarian *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Favoring or enforcing strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom

The **authoritarian** regime suppressed dissent through censorship, surveillance, and the imprisonment of political opponents.

MEMORY CUE: An authoritarian ruler demands strict obedience from a high command chair.

016 authorization *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Official permission or approval to do something

Construction could not begin without **authorization** from both the city planning board and the environmental agency.

MEMORY CUE: Authorization is the official green light granting permission to proceed.

017 availed *verb***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Made use of; took advantage of

She **availed** herself of the university's extensive archives to reconstruct the lost history of the community.

MEMORY CUE: She availed herself of the tool by actually putting it to use.

018 banished *verb***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Sent away from a place as an official punishment; expelled

The dissident was **banished** from the country and spent twenty years in exile before the regime fell.

MEMORY CUE: A banished person is sent beyond the border as punishment.

019 bowed to *verb phrase*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Yielded or submitted to

The company **bowed to** public pressure and withdrew the controversial advertisement within hours of its release.

MEMORY CUE: Someone who bowed to pressure lowered resistance and finally yielded.

020 brandish *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To wave or flourish something as a threat or display

The dictator would **brandish** military threats whenever neighboring countries criticized his human rights record.

MEMORY CUE: To brandish a sword, wave it visibly as threat or display.

021 bridling *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Restraining or controlling; checking the freedom of

The author chafed at the publisher's edits, **bridling** at what she saw as unnecessary interference with her prose.

MEMORY CUE: Bridling a horse uses restraints to check and control its freedom.

022 bureaucracy *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A system of government or administration marked by excessive red tape and rigid procedures

The grant application required navigating a labyrinth of **bureaucracy** that discouraged all but the most determined researchers.

MEMORY CUE: Bureaucracy resembles a maze built from forms, desks, and rigid procedures.

023 centralization *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The concentration of control or authority in a single entity or center

The **centralization** of power in the capital weakened local governance and bred resentment in the provinces.

MEMORY CUE: Centralization pulls scattered control inward to one commanding center.

024 chevron *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A V-shaped or zigzag pattern used as decoration or insignia

The mosaic floor featured a repeating **chevron** pattern that archaeologists traced to second-century Roman workshops.

MEMORY CUE: A chevron looks like a pointed V stitched onto a uniform.

025 choir *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The part of a church between the nave and the altar, typically enclosed, where the choir sings

The **choir** of the medieval cathedral was reserved for clergy, separated from the nave where the congregation gathered.

MEMORY CUE: In church architecture, the choir encloses singers near the altar.

026 clerical *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to the clergy or religious officials

The **clerical** hierarchy resisted the reforms, viewing them as a threat to the church's traditional authority.

MEMORY CUE: Clerical robes identify matters connected with clergy and religious officials.

027 collage *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A composition made by combining diverse elements

The filmmaker's work is a **collage** of documentary footage, animation, and staged reenactments.

MEMORY CUE: A collage joins diverse scraps into one unified composition.

028 collegial *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to the shared responsibility and cooperation among colleagues

The department fostered a **collegial** atmosphere in which junior faculty felt comfortable sharing ideas with senior professors.

MEMORY CUE: A collegial team shares responsibility with cooperative respect among colleagues.

029 colonized *verb (past tense)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Established a settlement in and exercised control over a foreign territory

European powers **colonized** vast territories in Africa during the nineteenth century, redrawing borders with little regard for existing cultures.

MEMORY CUE: A colonized territory receives foreign settlers and falls under their control.

030 commerce *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Trade; the exchange of goods and services between groups

The ancient port city thrived on **commerce**, trading silk and spices with merchants from three continents.

MEMORY CUE: Commerce moves goods and services between buyers, sellers, and regions.

031 communal *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Shared by all members of a community; for common use

The **communal** gardens provided fresh produce and, more importantly, a gathering place for the neighborhood.

MEMORY CUE: A communal table belongs to and serves the whole community.

032 compliance *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The act of obeying rules, requests, or commands

The factory was shut down for failure to maintain **compliance** with federal emissions standards.

MEMORY CUE: Compliance means every action receives a check beside the governing rule or requirement.

033 conspicuous *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Standing out so as to be clearly visible; attracting notice

The artist's **conspicuous** absence from the gallery opening fueled speculation about a rift with the curator.

MEMORY CUE: A conspicuous red umbrella stands out in a gray crowd.

034 contextualization *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The act of placing something in an appropriate context for proper understanding

The museum's **contextualization** of colonial artifacts alongside indigenous accounts offered a more balanced historical narrative.

MEMORY CUE: Contextualization places an isolated fact inside the surrounding picture it needs.

035 conventionality *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The quality of being based on or in accordance with what is generally done or believed; conformity

The novelist's early work was marked by a **conventionality** that gave no hint of the radical experimentation to come.

MEMORY CUE: Conventionality follows the familiar lane marked "what is normally done."

036 cosmopolitan *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Familiar with and at ease in many different countries and cultures

The **cosmopolitan** city attracted artists, entrepreneurs, and scholars from every continent.

MEMORY CUE: A cosmopolitan traveler feels comfortably at home among many world cultures.

037 cubism *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

An early 20th-century art movement that fragmented objects into geometric forms and depicted them from multiple viewpoints simultaneously

Cubism shattered the conventions of perspective that had dominated Western painting since the Renaissance.

MEMORY CUE: Cubism breaks a subject into geometric facets seen from several viewpoints.

038 decorum *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Behavior in keeping with good taste and propriety; etiquette

The judge demanded **decorum** in her courtroom, silencing the unruly spectators.

MEMORY CUE: Decorum follows the unwritten rulebook of tasteful, proper behavior.

039 deference *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Humble submission and respect; yielding to the judgment of another

Out of **deference** to the senior professor, the young researcher withheld her criticism.

MEMORY CUE: Deference steps back respectfully and yields to another person's judgment.

040 demagogue *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A political leader who seeks support by appealing to prejudices rather than rational argument

Historians often cite the rise of the **demagogue** as a warning about the fragility of democracy.

MEMORY CUE: A demagogue uses emotional fire and prejudice, not reason, to pull a crowd.

041 dictate *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To determine or control; to prescribe authoritatively

Economic realities, rather than ideological preferences, often **dictate** the policies a government can pursue.

MEMORY CUE: A dictator's commanding voice dictates what others must write or do.

042 dirge *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A lament for the dead, especially one forming part of a funeral rite; a mournful song

The haunting **dirge** echoed through the cathedral during the memorial service.

MEMORY CUE: A dirge is slow, mournful music accompanying grief for the dead.

043 dispense with *verb phrase*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To manage without; to get rid of

The new manufacturing process allowed the company to **dispense with** several costly intermediate steps.

MEMORY CUE: To dispense with an item, remove it and manage without it.

044 disqualify *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To make ineligible or unfit; to declare not meeting requirements

A single procedural error was enough to **disqualify** the laboratory's results from inclusion in the meta-analysis.

MEMORY CUE: A broken requirement can disqualify a candidate from eligibility.

045 disregard *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Lack of attention to or concern for something

The company's blatant **disregard** for environmental regulations resulted in a record-setting fine from federal authorities.

MEMORY CUE: Disregard turns its eyes away and pays no attention or concern.

046 disseminate *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To spread or scatter widely, especially information or knowledge

The internet has made it possible to **disseminate** research findings to a global audience within hours of publication.

MEMORY CUE: Disseminate information like seeds scattered widely across many fields.

047 doctrinaire *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Seeking to impose a doctrine without regard to practical considerations; rigidly ideological

His **doctrinaire** approach to economics ignored the messy realities of the global marketplace.

MEMORY CUE: A doctrinaire leader forces doctrine onto reality despite practical consequences.

048 documentarian *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A person who makes documentary films or photographs documenting real life

The **documentarian** spent five years embedded in the community before filming a single frame of footage.

MEMORY CUE: A documentarian documents real lives through factual film or photography.

049 ecumenical *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Representing a number of different groups or viewpoints; universal or broad in scope (originally: promoting unity among Christian churches)

The conference adopted an **ecumenical** approach, inviting scholars from every major school of thought to present their findings.

MEMORY CUE: An ecumenical table seats many groups and viewpoints within one broad circle.

050 egalitarian *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to or believing in the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities

The commune was founded on **egalitarian** principles, with every member sharing equally in both labor and decision-making.

MEMORY CUE: An egalitarian scale places every person at the same level of rights.

051 electorate *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

All the people in a country or area who are entitled to vote in an election

The **electorate** was deeply polarized, with no single issue capable of uniting voters across party lines.

MEMORY CUE: The electorate is the entire body of people entitled to vote.

052 elimination *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The complete removal or getting rid of something

The **elimination** of lead from gasoline is one of the twentieth century's most significant public health achievements.

MEMORY CUE: Elimination crosses an item completely off until none remains.

053 embedded *adjective/verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Fixed firmly and deeply in a surrounding mass

Cultural assumptions are **embedded** in language in ways that native speakers rarely notice.

MEMORY CUE: An embedded stone sits fixed deeply within the surrounding concrete.

054 eminence *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Fame or recognized superiority within a particular sphere; high rank or distinction

The historian achieved such **eminence** in the field that her interpretations shaped an entire generation of scholarship.

MEMORY CUE: Eminence places recognized excellence high above others in its field.

055 endemic *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Native to or restricted to a certain place; regularly found among particular people or in a certain area

Corruption was **endemic** in the regime, permeating every level of government.

MEMORY CUE: An endemic species is at home only in its restricted native region.

056 entails *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Involves (something) as a necessary or inevitable part or consequence

Rebuilding the city's infrastructure **entails** not just financial investment but also years of careful urban planning.

MEMORY CUE: A responsibility entails every necessary consequence bundled inside it.

057 entrenched *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Firmly established and difficult to change

Entrenched interests in the energy sector have repeatedly blocked legislation aimed at reducing carbon emissions.

MEMORY CUE: An entrenched habit has dug defenses so deep that change is difficult.

058 epitome *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A person or thing that is a perfect example of a particular quality or type

The museum is considered the **epitome** of modern architectural design.

MEMORY CUE: The epitome wears a sash reading "perfect example of this quality."

059 equitable *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Fair and impartial; just

The mediator proposed an **equitable** division of resources that gave each community access to clean water.

MEMORY CUE: An equitable decision divides benefits with fair and impartial judgment.

060 espoused *verb (past tense)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Adopted or supported (a cause, belief, or way of life)

The reformer **espoused** the cause of universal suffrage at a time when the idea was considered dangerously radical.

MEMORY CUE: She espoused the cause, adopting and publicly supporting its beliefs.

061 estrangement *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The state of being alienated or separated in feeling

The **estrangement** between the two former allies lasted nearly a decade before a mutual friend brokered reconciliation.

MEMORY CUE: Estrangement stretches emotional distance between people who were once close.

062 ethnomusicology *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The study of music from the cultural and social aspects of the people who create it

Her work in **ethnomusicology** documented musical traditions that were at risk of disappearing within a single generation.

MEMORY CUE: Ethnomusicology listens to music inside the culture and society creating it.

063 ethos *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The characteristic spirit, attitudes, or guiding beliefs of a community, era, or movement

The company's **ethos** of innovation encourages employees to experiment freely, even at the risk of occasional failure.

MEMORY CUE: Ethos is the shared spirit and guiding character of a community.

064 expedience *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The quality of being convenient and practical, though possibly improper or immoral; political advantage or self-serving convenience

The decision was driven by political **expedience** rather than any genuine concern for the welfare of constituents.

MEMORY CUE: Expedience chooses the convenient shortcut even when principle objects.

065 expedient *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Convenient and practical, though possibly improper or immoral; serving one's immediate interest

The quick fix was **expedient** in the short term but created structural problems that took years to resolve.

MEMORY CUE: An expedient solution works conveniently now but may compromise what is right.

066 exploitable *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Able to be taken advantage of or used for one's benefit

The software vulnerability was potentially **exploitable** by attackers, prompting an emergency patch from the developer.

MEMORY CUE: An exploitable weakness offers an opening someone can use for advantage.

067 expropriated *verb (past tense)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Taken away (property) from the owner, typically by the state or an authority

The government **expropriated** farmland along the river to build a dam, compensating owners at below-market rates.

MEMORY CUE: The state expropriated the land, taking it from its private owner.

068 facilitate *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To make an action or process easy or easier; to help bring about

The mediator's role was to **facilitate** productive dialogue between the opposing parties.

MEMORY CUE: Facilitate a process by removing the barrier and opening an easier path.

069 fledgling *adjective/noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

New and inexperienced; a person or organization that is immature or inexperienced

The **fledgling** startup secured its first round of funding after only three months.

MEMORY CUE: A fledgling organization has only just grown wings and lacks experience.

070 flyers *noun (plural)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Short for flying buttresses; the arched supports on the exterior of a Gothic building

The **flyers** of Notre-Dame transfer the weight of the vault across open space to massive outer piers.

MEMORY CUE: Gothic flyers are flying buttresses arching outward to support a wall.

071 flying buttresses *noun phrase*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Arched exterior supports that transfer the thrust of a roof or vault to an outer pier, characteristic of Gothic architecture

The **flying buttresses** of Chartres Cathedral allowed architects to replace solid walls with vast stained-glass windows.

MEMORY CUE: Flying buttresses leap from outer piers to brace a cathedral's vault.

072 folio *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A sheet of paper folded once to make two leaves; a large-format page

The rare **folio** edition of Shakespeare's plays sold at auction for a record-breaking sum.

MEMORY CUE: A folio folds one large sheet into two broad leaves.

073 folkloric *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community

The composer drew on **folkloric** melodies from her native region, weaving them into a symphonic framework.

MEMORY CUE: Folkloric stories carry a community's traditional beliefs and customs.

074 forbidding *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Appearing unfriendly or threatening; discouraging approach

The mountain's **forbidding** north face, sheer and ice-covered, had never been successfully climbed.

MEMORY CUE: A forbidding gate seems to warn visitors not to approach.

075 formulating *verb (present participle)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Creating or devising methodically; expressing in a systematic way

The committee spent months **formulating** a policy that could satisfy both environmentalists and the mining industry.

MEMORY CUE: Formulating a theory means assembling its parts into a systematic expression.

076 genre *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A category of artistic composition characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter

The novel defies easy classification, blending elements of science fiction, historical drama, and philosophical essay into a new **genre**.

MEMORY CUE: A genre shelf groups works sharing a recognizable form, style, or subject.

077 iconoclast *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A person who attacks cherished beliefs or institutions

The **iconoclast** challenged every assumption the discipline had held for generations.

MEMORY CUE: An iconoclast challenges the sacred icons of established opinion.

078 iconographic *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to the interpretation of visual images, symbols, and their cultural meanings

The **iconographic** analysis revealed that the painting's symbols were drawn from both Christian and pagan traditions.

MEMORY CUE: Iconographic analysis decodes the cultural meanings carried by visual symbols.

079 ideology *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

A system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory

The regime's official **ideology** demanded loyalty to the state above all personal and family obligations.

MEMORY CUE: Ideology organizes political or economic beliefs into one guiding system.

080 idiosyncrasies *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Peculiar or individual characteristics, mannerisms, or habits

The composer's **idiosyncrasies**—his insistence on conducting barefoot, for example—became the stuff of legend.

MEMORY CUE: Idiosyncrasies are personal quirks stamped like unique fingerprints on behavior.

081 idiosyncratic *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Peculiar to an individual; distinctively personal and unconventional

Her **idiosyncratic** writing style, full of sentence fragments and invented punctuation, divided critics sharply.

MEMORY CUE: An idiosyncratic habit belongs distinctively to one unusual individual.

082 ignoble *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Not honorable in character or purpose; morally base

The historian argued that the war was fought for **ignoble** reasons disguised as righteous ones.

MEMORY CUE: An ignoble act drops the honor medal into disgrace.

083 illiberal *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Opposed to liberal principles; restrictive; not generous

The new legislation drew condemnation from civil liberties groups who described it as **illiberal** and authoritarian.

MEMORY CUE: An illiberal policy restricts freedom and refuses broad-minded generosity.

084 illiberality *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Lack of generosity; narrowness; unwillingness to give or share

The patron's **illiberality** was legendary; despite vast wealth, he refused to fund even modest public improvements.

MEMORY CUE: Illiberality closes both the mind and hand in narrow ungenerosity.

085 immured *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Enclosed or confined against one's will; walled in

The political prisoners were **immured** in a fortress so remote that escape was virtually unthinkable.

MEMORY CUE: An immured prisoner is enclosed as though walls were built around them.

086 improvisation *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The act of creating or performing spontaneously without preparation

Jazz thrives on **improvisation**, with musicians building spontaneous melodies over established harmonic structures.

MEMORY CUE: Improvisation creates in the moment without a prepared plan.

087 improvisational *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Created and performed spontaneously or without preparation

The troupe's **improvisational** comedy drew its humor from audience suggestions, making every show unique.

MEMORY CUE: An improvisational performance invents each step spontaneously as it unfolds.

088 indemnified *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Compensated for harm or loss; secured against legal liability

The insurance policy **indemnified** the homeowner against losses from fire, flood, and earthquake.

MEMORY CUE: An indemnified owner receives protection or compensation against harm and liability.

089 indigenous *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native

Indigenous farming techniques, refined over thousands of years, have recently attracted the attention of sustainable agriculture researchers.

MEMORY CUE: An indigenous species originates naturally in the place it inhabits.

090 indiscernible *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Impossible to see or clearly distinguish; imperceptible

The difference in quality between the two recordings was **indiscernible** to all but the most trained audiophiles.

MEMORY CUE: An indiscernible line is too faint to distinguish clearly.

091 indistinguishable *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Not able to be identified as different or distinct

The forger's copies were virtually **indistinguishable** from the originals, fooling experts for nearly a decade.

MEMORY CUE: Identical twins may look indistinguishable, with no visible difference.

092 inscription *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A written or carved text; here, the artist's written claim

The **inscription** on the ancient stele recorded a peace treaty between two rival city-states.

MEMORY CUE: An inscription presses written words permanently into stone or another surface.

093 invested in *verb phrase*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Deeply committed to or involved with

The community was deeply **invested in** the outcome of the zoning decision, which would determine the neighborhood's character for decades.

MEMORY CUE: Being invested in an outcome means commitment has placed personal stakes there.

094 irreverent *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Showing a lack of respect for things normally treated with reverence

The comedian's **irreverent** take on political conventions delighted younger audiences but scandalized traditionalists.

MEMORY CUE: An irreverent joke refuses the respect normally given to sacred subjects.

095 itinerant *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Traveling from place to place; wandering

Itinerant musicians brought news and entertainment to remote villages.

MEMORY CUE: An itinerant worker carries home from place to place.

096 jettison *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To throw or drop (something) from an aircraft or ship; to abandon or discard

The airline decided to **jettison** its unprofitable routes to focus on the most heavily traveled corridors.

MEMORY CUE: A struggling aircraft jettisons cargo by throwing it away.

097 justifies *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Shows or proves to be right or reasonable

The evidence presented so far barely **justifies** the sweeping conclusions the authors draw in their final chapter.

MEMORY CUE: Evidence justifies a decision by showing it is reasonable and right.

098 kinship *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A close connection or relationship, especially biological relatedness

The anthropologist studied the **kinship** systems of Pacific Island societies to understand how social bonds shaped governance.

MEMORY CUE: Kinship ties people with the close connecting thread of relationship.

099 lax *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Not sufficiently strict or careful; negligent

The agency's **lax** oversight of the industry allowed unsafe products to reach consumers for years before a recall was issued.

MEMORY CUE: A lax safety rope hangs too loose because standards are not strict enough.

100 legislative *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to the branch of government that makes laws

The **legislative** battle over healthcare reform consumed the better part of two congressional sessions.

MEMORY CUE: The legislative branch is the government's law-making workshop.

101 legitimize *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To make legitimate or lawful; to justify or validate

Hosting the international summit was an attempt to **legitimize** the new government in the eyes of the world.

MEMORY CUE: To legitimize a claim, give it lawful or justified standing.

102 lionized *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Treated as a celebrity; given a great deal of public attention and approval

The explorer was **lionized** upon his return, celebrated in newspapers and invited to dine with heads of state.

MEMORY CUE: A lionized artist is celebrated publicly like royalty among animals.

103 magnate *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A wealthy and influential person, especially in business or industry

The media **magnate** controlled newspapers, television stations, and streaming platforms.

MEMORY CUE: A business magnate has wealth and influence with magnetic pull.

104 malfeasance *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Wrongdoing, especially by a public official or corporate entity

The audit uncovered years of financial **malfeasance** that had siphoned millions from the public pension fund.

MEMORY CUE: Malfeasance is bad action committed by someone trusted with official responsibility.

105 manacled *verb/adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Fettered with manacles; restrained or shackled

The prisoners were **manacled** and marched through the streets as a warning to anyone who might contemplate rebellion.

MEMORY CUE: Manacled wrists are restrained by iron cuffs and chains.

106 maverick *noun/adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

An independent-minded person; unorthodox or independent in thought and action

The **maverick** scientist challenged the establishment with her unconventional theories.

MEMORY CUE: A maverick leaves the herd and follows an independent path.

107 miserliness *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Extreme reluctance to spend money; excessive stinginess

The tycoon's **miserliness** was so extreme that he reused tea bags and darned his own socks despite his vast fortune.

MEMORY CUE: Miserliness locks every coin away and hates spending even when necessary.

108 mismanagement *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The process of managing badly or incompetently

Decades of **mismanagement** left the once-profitable company on the brink of bankruptcy.

MEMORY CUE: Mismanagement puts incompetent hands on the controls and produces disorder.

109 nave *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

The central part of a church building, intended to accommodate the congregation

The cathedral's **nave**, with its soaring columns and ribbed vaulting, could accommodate over a thousand worshippers.

MEMORY CUE: The nave is the long central church space holding the congregation.

110 negligent *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Failing to take proper care in doing something; careless

The hospital was found **negligent** for failing to follow established protocols during the surgical procedure.

MEMORY CUE: A negligent caretaker walks past a warning and leaves needed care undone.

111 observance *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

The practice of following or obeying a law, custom, or duty

Strict **observance** of the ceasefire held for forty-eight hours before a border incident shattered the fragile peace.

MEMORY CUE: Observance keeps watch over a custom, law, or duty by following it.

112 orthodox *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Conforming to traditional or established beliefs; conventional

The researcher's un**orthodox** methods drew skepticism from colleagues trained in more **orthodox** experimental traditions.

MEMORY CUE: An orthodox belief walks the traditional, officially accepted path.

113 orthodoxy *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Authorized or generally accepted beliefs, doctrines, or practices

Challenging the prevailing **orthodoxy** in any scientific field requires not just evidence but considerable courage.

MEMORY CUE: Orthodoxy is the fenced field of generally accepted doctrine and practice.

114 paragon *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

A model of excellence or perfection of a kind; a peerless example

The organization was held up as a **paragon** of corporate responsibility.

MEMORY CUE: A paragon stands on the display pedestal as a peerless model.

115 parochial *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Having a limited or narrow outlook or scope; narrow-minded

The critic accused the literary establishment of **parochial** tastes, ignoring important work published outside major cities.

MEMORY CUE: A parochial outlook peers through a tiny local window at the world.

116 parsimonious *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Unwilling to spend money or use resources; frugal to the point of stinginess

The **parsimonious** explanation—that the simplest hypothesis is usually correct—is a guiding principle in scientific reasoning.

MEMORY CUE: A parsimonious hand locks one small coin inside a giant vault.

117 pastiche *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

A work of art that imitates the style of previous works; a medley or mixture

The film is an affectionate **pastiche** of 1940s detective noir, complete with shadowy cinematography and a world-weary narrator.

MEMORY CUE: A pastiche stitches borrowed styles into an imitative artistic patchwork.

118 peasantry *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The class of small farmers or farm laborers of low social rank

The revolution was fueled by a **peasantry** that had endured decades of exploitation under the feudal system.

MEMORY CUE: The peasantry consists of small farmers and low-ranking agricultural laborers.

119 periodicals *noun (plural)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Magazines or journals published at regular intervals

The library's collection of nineteenth-century **periodicals** provides a fascinating record of public opinion during the Civil War.

MEMORY CUE: Periodicals arrive periodically, published at regular repeating intervals.

120 philanthropic *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Seeking to promote the welfare of others; generous and benevolent

The billionaire's **philanthropic** efforts focused on improving access to education in rural areas.

MEMORY CUE: A philanthropic hand gives generously to promote other people's welfare.

121 pluralistic *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Characterized by diversity of views, cultures, or groups coexisting

A **pluralistic** society requires institutions that can mediate between communities with fundamentally different values and beliefs.

MEMORY CUE: A pluralistic society makes room for many groups and viewpoints together.

122 plutocratic *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to or characterized by government by the wealthy; ruled by the rich

Critics described the tax policy as **plutocratic**, arguing that it benefited the wealthiest citizens at everyone else's expense.

MEMORY CUE: A plutocratic government lets the wealthy steer the machinery of power.

123 populous *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Having a large population; densely inhabited

The most **populous** cities in the developing world face urgent challenges in providing clean water and sanitation.

MEMORY CUE: A populous city contains a dense and numerous population.

124 preapprove *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To authorize or sanction in advance before a service is rendered

Insurance companies often require patients to **preapprove** procedures, adding bureaucratic delays to medical care.

MEMORY CUE: To preapprove a service, grant authorization before it occurs.

125 precariously *adverb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

In a way that is not securely held or in position; dangerously; uncertainly

The ancient temple sits **precariously** on a cliff edge, its foundations eroded by centuries of wind and rain.

MEMORY CUE: A climber hanging precariously is dangerously and uncertainly supported.

126 preeminent *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Surpassing all others; very distinguished in some way

She is the **preeminent** authority on early colonial American history.

MEMORY CUE: The preeminent expert stands before and above all others in distinction.

127 prescriptive *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to the imposition of rules or directions; telling people what they should do

Linguists distinguish between descriptive approaches, which document how language is used, and **prescriptive** ones, which dictate how it should be.

MEMORY CUE: Prescriptive rules prescribe what people should do rather than describe behavior.

128 pristine *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

In its original condition; unspoiled; immaculately clean

The **pristine** wilderness area remained untouched by commercial development.

MEMORY CUE: A pristine object remains sealed in its original, unspoiled condition.

129 prodigality *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Reckless extravagance or wastefulness; lavish generosity

The emperor's **prodigality**—building lavish palaces while his subjects starved—eventually provoked a popular uprising.

MEMORY CUE: Prodigality pours resources out with reckless waste or extravagant generosity.

130 profligate *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Recklessly extravagant or wasteful in the use of resources

The administration's **profligate** spending on military contracts left insufficient funds for domestic infrastructure.

MEMORY CUE: A profligate spender burns through resources with reckless extravagance.

131 prohibition *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The legal prevention of the manufacture and sale of alcohol

Prohibition, intended to reduce crime and improve public health, instead gave rise to a vast underground economy.

MEMORY CUE: Prohibition put a legal stop sign before producing and selling alcohol.

132 proprietary *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Relating to an owner; protected as intellectual/trade property

The company's **proprietary** algorithm gave it a significant competitive advantage in processing financial data.

MEMORY CUE: Proprietary information belongs to an owner and remains legally protected.

133 provincial *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Of or concerning a province; unsophisticated or narrow-minded

His **provincial** attitudes prevented him from appreciating the diversity of the cosmopolitan city.

MEMORY CUE: A provincial outlook rarely looks beyond its narrow local boundaries.

134 provocative *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Causing annoyance, anger, or strong reaction deliberately; stimulating debate

The scholar's **provocative** reinterpretation of the Civil War challenged narratives that had been accepted for generations.

MEMORY CUE: A provocative action deliberately presses a button for a strong reaction.

135 prudent *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Acting with or showing care and thought for the future; wise and careful

It would be **prudent** to save a portion of the windfall rather than spending it all immediately.

MEMORY CUE: A prudent traveler checks tomorrow's weather and consequences before leaving.

136 redress *verb/noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To remedy or set right an undesirable situation; remedy or compensation

The lawsuit sought to **redress** decades of discriminatory hiring practices.

MEMORY CUE: To redress a wrong, set the situation right through remedy or compensation.

137 relegate *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To consign or dismiss to an inferior rank or position

The once-celebrated theory has been **relegated** to a footnote in modern textbooks.

MEMORY CUE: To relegate someone, send them downward to an inferior position.

138 relentlessly *adverb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

In an unceasingly intense or harsh manner; without letting up

The prosecutor **relentlessly** cross-examined the witness, exposing inconsistency after inconsistency in his account.

MEMORY CUE: Relentlessly means the pressure never relents or lets up.

139 renounce *verb***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

To formally declare one's abandonment of a claim, right, or possession

The prince **renounced** his claim to the throne in order to marry a commoner.

MEMORY CUE: Renounce a claim by tearing up its ownership paper in a formal declaration.

140 repression *noun***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

The action or process of suppressing or restraining a thought, feeling, or desire

The government's **repression** of free speech drove intellectual life underground, where it flourished in secret salons.

MEMORY CUE: Repression pushes an unwanted thought or feeling down beneath awareness.

141 rescind *verb***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

To revoke, cancel, or repeal a law, order, or agreement

The university was forced to **rescind** its offer of admission after discovering the applicant's fraud.

MEMORY CUE: To rescind an order, pull it back and officially cancel it.

142 sanction *noun/verb***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Official permission or approval; a penalty for disobeying a law (note: can mean either approval or penalty)

The international community imposed economic **sanctions** on the regime to pressure it into compliance.

MEMORY CUE: An official green seal grants sanction and permission.

143 sartorial *adjective***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

Relating to tailoring, clothes, or style of dress

The actor's **sartorial** elegance, always impeccably tailored, became as famous as his performances on screen.

MEMORY CUE: Sartorial choices come from the tailor's world of clothing and dress.

144 satellite *noun (figurative use)***SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE**

An organization or entity that is dependent on or controlled by another; a subsidiary

The smaller nation functioned as a **satellite** of the superpower, following its foreign policy directives without question.

MEMORY CUE: A satellite organization circles a larger power that controls or supports it.

145 securely *adverb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

With certainty; in a way that is firmly established and beyond doubt

The archaeological record **securely** establishes that the settlement existed long before European contact.

MEMORY CUE: A conclusion established securely is fastened firmly beyond reasonable doubt.

146 shagreen *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Untanned leather with a rough granulated surface; a type of rawhide binding

The book's **shagreen** binding, rough and mottled, had survived three centuries of handling remarkably well.

MEMORY CUE: Shagreen is rough, granulated rawhide used as a textured covering.

147 sporadically *adverb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Occurring at irregular intervals; not regular or continuous

Rain fell only **sporadically** throughout the summer, leaving crops parched and farmers facing devastating losses.

MEMORY CUE: Sporadic rain falls in scattered bursts at irregular intervals.

148 stinginess *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Unwillingness to spend money or give things; extreme reluctance to part with resources

The philanthropist's private **stinginess** surprised those who knew him only through his generous public donations.

MEMORY CUE: Stinginess grips each coin too tightly to spend or share.

149 stylistically *adverb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

In a manner relating to style, especially literary or artistic style

The two novels, written a decade apart, are **stylistically** so different that they seem to be the work of different authors.

MEMORY CUE: Stylistically compares how works use artistic or literary style.

150 subjugate *verb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

To bring under domination or control, especially by conquest

The colonial power sought to **subjugate** the indigenous population through military force and cultural suppression.

MEMORY CUE: To subjugate a people, force them beneath another power's control.

151 subordinate *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Lower in rank or position; secondary in importance

The general insisted that military objectives must never be **subordinate** to political considerations during active operations.

MEMORY CUE: A subordinate position occupies a lower rung beneath a superior.

152 suffrage *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The right to vote in political elections

The long struggle for women's **suffrage** culminated in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

MEMORY CUE: Suffrage gives citizens the political right to cast a vote.

153 technocrats *noun (plural)*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Experts in technology or science who have political power or influence; technical specialists in governance

The government relied on **technocrats** rather than elected officials to design its economic reform program.

MEMORY CUE: Technocrats bring technical expertise into positions of governmental power.

154 thrift *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

The quality of using money and other resources carefully and not wastefully

The family's **thrift** during the Depression years instilled habits of saving that persisted for generations.

MEMORY CUE: Thrift stretches resources by using money carefully and avoiding waste.

155 transgression *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

An act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offense

Minor **transgressions** were punished with the same severity as serious offenses.

MEMORY CUE: A transgression steps across the boundary drawn by law or conduct.

156 ubiquitous *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Present, appearing, or found everywhere

Smartphones have become so **ubiquitous** that their absence is more noticeable than their presence.

MEMORY CUE: The same symbol appearing on every wall and street is ubiquitous.

157 unambiguously *adverb*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

In a way that leaves no doubt; clearly and definitively

The court's ruling **unambiguously** affirmed the right of citizens to peacefully assemble and petition their government.

MEMORY CUE: An unambiguous arrow points one clear way, leaving no doubt.

158 virtuosity *noun*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Great skill in music or another artistic pursuit

The pianist's **virtuosity** was breathtaking, but critics noted that technical brilliance alone does not guarantee emotional depth.

MEMORY CUE: Virtuosity turns exceptional artistic skill into a dazzling performance.

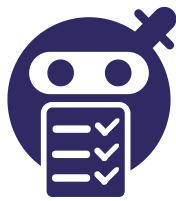
159 whimsical *adjective*

SOCIETY, POWER & CULTURE

Playfully quaint or fanciful; acting in a capricious manner

The **whimsical** illustrations delighted children and adults alike.

MEMORY CUE: A whimsical drawing follows playful fancy rather than ordinary rules.



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.

More focused practice at test-ninjas.com