



Test Ninjas

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

GRE VOCABULARY

GRE Vocabulary: Truth, Deception & Appearance

72 focused words in Truth, Deception & Appearance

72

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 aberrant *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Departing from what is normal or expected; deviating from the standard

The scientist noted the **aberrant** data point and investigated whether it was caused by equipment malfunction.

MEMORY CUE: An aberrant arrow strays outside the normal target rings.

002 adulterate *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To make something poorer in quality by adding another substance

Unscrupulous merchants would **adulterate** expensive spices with cheaper fillers.

MEMORY CUE: To adulterate pure juice, secretly dilute it with an inferior liquid.

003 affectation *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Behavior, speech, or writing that is artificial and designed to impress

His British accent was merely an **affectation**, adopted after a single semester abroad.

MEMORY CUE: An affectation is an affected pose worn merely to impress.

004 allegations *noun (plural)*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Claims or assertions, typically without proof, that someone has done something wrong

The **allegations** of financial impropriety forced the university president to resign before any formal investigation began.

MEMORY CUE: Allegations point accusing fingers before proof has established the claims.

005 apocryphal *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Of doubtful authenticity, although widely circulated as being true

The story about the cherry tree is almost certainly **apocryphal**, yet it persists in popular culture.

MEMORY CUE: An apocryphal tale circulates widely while its truth remains doubtful.

006 ascribed *verb (past participle)*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Attributed to or regarded as belonging to

Historians have long **ascribed** the empire's decline to military overextension, though economic factors also played a role.

MEMORY CUE: A signature ascribed the anonymous painting to a particular artist.

007 beguiling *verb (present participle)*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Charming or enchanting, often in a deceptive way

The **beguiling** simplicity of the theory concealed deep mathematical complexities that took decades to unravel.

MEMORY CUE: A beguiling smile charms you while quietly hiding deceptive intentions.

008 bogus *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Fake; not genuine; fraudulent

The academic journal retracted the paper after discovering that its data was entirely **bogus**.

MEMORY CUE: A bogus bill looks official but is completely fake.

009 candor *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The quality of being open and honest in expression; frankness

Voters appreciated the candidate's **candor**, even when his views were controversial.

MEMORY CUE: Candor removes the curtain and speaks with open, direct honesty.

010 chicanery *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The use of trickery to achieve a political, financial, or legal purpose

The investigation revealed years of financial **chicanery** at the highest levels of the corporation.

MEMORY CUE: Chicanery uses marked cards and hidden tricks to achieve its purpose.

011 cloak *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To cover or conceal; to hide or disguise

Diplomatic language can **cloak** aggressive intentions behind a veneer of cooperation and goodwill.

MEMORY CUE: To cloak an intention, wrap and conceal it from view.

012 cloaked *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Covered or concealed; disguised

The proposal was **cloaked** in the rhetoric of fiscal responsibility, but its true aim was to cut social services.

MEMORY CUE: A cloaked motive remains covered beneath a respectable-looking disguise.

013 conceal *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To keep from sight or discovery; to hide

The dense canopy of the rainforest can **conceal** entire species from researchers working at ground level.

MEMORY CUE: Pull a curtain over an object to conceal it from view and keep it secret.

014 counterpoint *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

A thing that forms a pleasing or notable contrast to something else; a complementary or opposing element

The novel uses the daughter's optimism as a **counterpoint** to the father's deep-rooted cynicism.

MEMORY CUE: A dark tower creates counterpoint against the pale, open landscape.

015 credulous *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Having or showing too great a readiness to believe things; gullible

The **credulous** investors failed to question the fund manager's unrealistic promises of returns.

MEMORY CUE: A credulous audience gives flimsy claims too much easy credit.

016 culpable *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Deserving blame; at fault

The investigation found the supervisor equally **culpable** for the safety violations.

MEMORY CUE: A culpable person carries blame because they are at fault.

017 deceptive *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Giving an appearance or impression different from the truth; misleading

The **deceptive** calm of the river masked a treacherous undertow that had caught many swimmers off guard.

MEMORY CUE: A deceptive mask shows a pleasant face while hiding a different truth underneath.

018 derivative *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Imitative of the work of another; not original; lacking originality

Critics dismissed the album as **derivative**, noting its heavy borrowing from earlier jazz recordings.

MEMORY CUE: A derivative result follows an origin arrow from an earlier source.

019 disguise *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To conceal the true nature of something

Satire can **disguise** serious political commentary as humor, reaching audiences that might otherwise tune out.

MEMORY CUE: A disguise is a mask that changes appearance to conceal identity.

020 disingenuous *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Not candid or sincere; giving a false appearance of simple frankness

The company's claim to have discovered the contamination voluntarily struck regulators as **disingenuous**, given the pending lawsuit.

MEMORY CUE: A disingenuous smile hides insincerity and pretended ignorance behind a mask.

021 disinterested *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Not influenced by considerations of personal advantage; impartial and unbiased

The dispute required a **disinterested** mediator who had no stake in the outcome.

MEMORY CUE: A disinterested judge has no personal stake and remains impartial.

022 disinterestedness *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Impartiality; lack of self-interest or bias (NOT the same as "uninterestedness")

The judge's **disinterestedness** in the case was questioned when reporters discovered her financial ties to one of the parties.

MEMORY CUE: Disinterestedness balances the scales without adding personal interest or bias.

023 dissemble *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To conceal one's true motives, feelings, or beliefs; to pretend

The diplomat's ability to **dissemble** made it impossible to determine his true position.

MEMORY CUE: To dissemble, assemble a false appearance that conceals true motives.

024 distortion *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The act of twisting or altering something from its true meaning or proportions

The memoir's critics accused it of deliberate **distortion**, claiming key events were presented out of context.

MEMORY CUE: A funhouse mirror creates distortion by twisting true proportions.

025 **distractors** *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Incorrect answer choices designed to mislead

On the GRE, **distractors** are designed to resemble the correct answer closely enough to test genuine understanding.

MEMORY CUE: Distractors wave tempting wrong answers beside the correct one.

026 **dubious** *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Hesitating or doubting; not to be relied upon; of questionable value

The startup's claims of revolutionary technology struck investors as **dubious** once they examined the patents more closely.

MEMORY CUE: A dubious claim wobbles beneath a question mark and cannot earn confidence.

027 **enigmatic** *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Difficult to interpret or understand; mysterious

The Mona Lisa's **enigmatic** smile has inspired countless interpretations, none of which has achieved scholarly consensus.

MEMORY CUE: An enigmatic figure stands behind a question-mark mask that resists interpretation.

028 **exculpate** *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To show or declare that someone is not guilty of wrongdoing

New DNA evidence was used to **exculpate** the defendant after fifteen years of imprisonment.

MEMORY CUE: Evidence that exculpates lifts the mark of guilt from the accused.

029 **exonerate** *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To absolve someone from blame for a fault or wrongdoing

The inquiry completely **exonerated** the officer of any misconduct.

MEMORY CUE: To exonerate someone, erase blame after proving they were not responsible.

030 **fabricated** *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Invented or concocted in order to deceive; manufactured artificially

The journalist was fired after editors discovered that key quotes in the article had been **fabricated**.

MEMORY CUE: A fabricated story is manufactured from invention rather than truth.

031 fanciful *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Imaginative and unrealistic; existing only in fantasy; over-elaborate

The architect's **fanciful** design featured towers shaped like seashells and bridges that mimicked ocean waves.

MEMORY CUE: A fanciful castle floats beautifully in imagination but not reality.

032 fantastical *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Imaginative or fanciful; remote from reality; bizarre

The novel's **fantastical** elements—talking animals, floating cities—serve as allegories for real political struggles.

MEMORY CUE: A fantastical creature belongs to fantasy, far from ordinary reality.

033 forthright *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Direct and outspoken; straightforward and honest

Her **forthright** assessment of the problem, though uncomfortable, was exactly what the team needed.

MEMORY CUE: A forthright answer travels in a straight line from honest thought to speech.

034 fortuitous *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Happening by accident or chance rather than design; fortunate

The discovery of the manuscript in a secondhand bookshop was entirely **fortuitous**—no one had been looking for it.

MEMORY CUE: A fortuitous find arrives by lucky chance beneath a four-leaf clover.

035 furtive *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Attempting to avoid notice or attention, typically because of guilt; secretive

The **furtive** glances between the two executives suggested they were concealing something.

MEMORY CUE: A furtive figure glances around while sneaking beneath cover.

036 guile *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Sly or cunning intelligence; craftiness

The negotiator used **guile** rather than force to achieve favorable terms.

MEMORY CUE: Guile hides a clever trap beneath a sly, innocent-looking smile.

037 hermetic *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Complete and airtight; insulated or protected from outside influences

The community maintained a **hermetic** existence, cut off from modern society.

MEMORY CUE: A hermetic seal shuts outside air and influence completely away.

038 idealized *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Regarded or represented as perfect or better than in reality; simplified beyond practical use

The poet's **idealized** vision of rural life bore little resemblance to the harsh realities faced by actual farmers.

MEMORY CUE: An idealized portrait polishes away flaws until reality looks perfect.

039 imitative *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Copying or following a model; lacking originality

Early critics dismissed jazz as merely **imitative** of European musical forms, a judgment that history has thoroughly overturned.

MEMORY CUE: An imitative work copies its model instead of originating its own form.

040 impartiality *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Equal treatment of all sides; lack of bias or prejudice

The tribunal's **impartiality** was called into question when one of the judges was found to have a financial interest in the outcome.

MEMORY CUE: Impartiality keeps the judge's scales level for every side.

041 improbable *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Not likely to be true or to happen; unexpected

The novel's plot hinges on an **improbable** coincidence that stretches the reader's willingness to suspend disbelief.

MEMORY CUE: An improbable event sits far outside the circle of likely outcomes.

042 ingenuous *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Innocent and unsuspecting; candid and frank

The **ingenuous** young diplomat was unprepared for the duplicity she encountered at the summit.

MEMORY CUE: An ingenuous person speaks with innocent, unsuspecting candor.

043 inscrutable *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Impossible to understand or interpret; mysterious

The judge's **inscrutable** expression gave no indication of how she would rule.

MEMORY CUE: An inscrutable face is sealed so tightly that meaning cannot escape.

044 insincerity *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The quality of not being genuine or honest in expressing feelings

Voters detected an undercurrent of **insincerity** in the candidate's sudden pivot to populist rhetoric.

MEMORY CUE: Insincerity smiles outwardly while genuine feeling is absent underneath.

045 manifest *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Clear or obvious to the eye or mind

The flaws in the original design became **manifest** only after the building had been occupied for several years.

MEMORY CUE: What was hidden becomes manifest when it steps into a bright, revealing spotlight.

046 mendacious *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Not telling the truth; lying; dishonest

The investigation exposed the CEO's **mendacious** claims about the company's financial health.

MEMORY CUE: A mendacious speaker sends lies through a long-nosed mask.

047 mendacity *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Untruthfulness; the tendency to lie

The witness's **mendacity** was exposed when surveillance footage contradicted her sworn testimony point by point.

MEMORY CUE: Mendacity mends together falsehoods into a practiced habit of lying.

048 misrepresentation *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

A false or misleading account of something

The lawsuit alleged that the advertisement constituted a deliberate **misrepresentation** of the product's effectiveness.

MEMORY CUE: Misrepresentation bends an account away from the truth into something misleading.

049 nonpartisan *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Not biased toward any particular political party or viewpoint

The research institute maintains a **nonpartisan** stance, publishing findings regardless of which political party they favor.

MEMORY CUE: A nonpartisan referee wears no political team's colors.

050 notoriety *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The state of being famous or well known, typically for some unfavorable quality or deed

The forger achieved a perverse **notoriety** when his fakes were found hanging in several major museums.

MEMORY CUE: Notoriety is fame stained by an unfavorable deed or quality.

051 notoriously *adverb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

In a way that is famous or well known, typically for something bad

The mountain pass is **notoriously** dangerous in winter, claiming several lives in avalanches each year.

MEMORY CUE: A notoriously unreliable clock is widely known for a bad reason.

052 obfuscate *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To render obscure, unclear, or unintelligible; to deliberately make confusing

The dense jargon served to **obfuscate** rather than clarify the company's financial position.

MEMORY CUE: Obfuscate a clear sign by surrounding it with thick confusing fog.

053 obfuscating *verb (present participle)*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Rendering obscure, unclear, or unintelligible; making confusing

The company's dense legal language succeeded in **obfuscating** the true terms of the contract from ordinary consumers.

MEMORY CUE: Obfuscating language pours fog over an idea that could be clear.

054 obscure *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To make unclear, indistinct, or difficult to understand; to conceal

Jargon can **obscure** meaning rather than clarify it, especially when used to impress rather than inform.

MEMORY CUE: Fog obscures an object until it is hard to see, understand, or recognize.

055 obscurities *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The quality of being difficult to understand; things that are unclear or hard to perceive

The poem's deliberate **obscurities** have generated a cottage industry of scholarly interpretation spanning decades.

MEMORY CUE: Obscurities sit in shadow where meaning or perception is hard to reach.

056 opaque *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Not able to be seen through; not transparent; hard to understand

The company's **opaque** financial reporting raised suspicions among regulators.

MEMORY CUE: An opaque wall blocks both light and clear understanding.

057 partiality *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Unfair bias in favor of one thing or person; incompleteness of view

The referee's apparent **partiality** toward the home team drew angry protests from visiting fans.

MEMORY CUE: Partiality tips the scales unfairly toward a favored side.

058 partisan *adjective/noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

A strong supporter of a party, cause, or person; showing strong, biased support

The report was dismissed by opponents as a **partisan** document designed to advance one party's agenda.

MEMORY CUE: A partisan wears one party's badge and supports it with bias.

059 perfidious *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Deceitful and untrustworthy; treacherous

The **perfidious** ally secretly supplied weapons to both sides of the conflict.

MEMORY CUE: A perfidious handshake hides betrayal and cannot be trusted.

060 prevaricate *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To speak or act in an evasive way; to avoid giving a direct answer

When pressed on the details of the budget, the official continued to **prevaricate**.

MEMORY CUE: To prevaricate, weave evasive words around the direct answer being avoided.

061 probity *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The quality of having strong moral principles; honesty and decency

The auditor's **probity** was beyond question, which is precisely why the board entrusted her with the sensitive investigation.

MEMORY CUE: Probity is moral uprightness supported by sturdy honesty and decency.

062 pseudonymous *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Writing or written under a false name

The **pseudonymous** author of the political satires was eventually unmasked as a prominent member of the court.

MEMORY CUE: A pseudonymous author publishes behind a substitute, false name.

063 reputable *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Held in high esteem; having a good reputation

Only data from **reputable**, peer-reviewed journals were included in the systematic review.

MEMORY CUE: A reputable name carries strong stars earned from others' trust.

064 sham *adjective/noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Bogus; something that is not what it purports to be; a fraud

The election was widely condemned as a **sham**, with opposition candidates barred from running and ballots pre-filled.

MEMORY CUE: A sham wears a convincing costume but is actually a fraud.

065 spurious *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Not being what it purports to be; false or fake; based on false reasoning

The correlation between ice cream sales and drowning deaths is **spurious**—both are driven by warm weather, not by each other.

MEMORY CUE: A spurious coin looks genuine until its fake coating peels away.

066 subjective *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Based on personal feelings, opinions, or interpretations rather than external facts

Taste in art is inherently **subjective**, which is why critics so often disagree about the same work.

MEMORY CUE: A subjective judgment is filtered through personal feeling and interpretation.

067 superficial *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Existing or occurring at or on the surface; lacking depth of character or understanding

A **superficial** reading of the text misses the irony that runs beneath the narrator's seemingly straightforward account.

MEMORY CUE: A superficial shell covers only the surface and has no depth beneath it.

068 superficiality *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The quality of lacking depth of character, understanding, or thoroughness; shallowness

The book's **superficiality** disappointed scholars who had expected a rigorous treatment of the topic.

MEMORY CUE: Superficiality skims the surface without reaching depth or thorough understanding.

069 tendentiousness *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

The quality of expressing or promoting a particular cause or point of view in a biased way

The reviewer's **tendentiousness** was apparent from the opening paragraph, which praised only authors who shared his ideological commitments.

MEMORY CUE: Tendentiousness tilts expression toward a favored cause with visible bias.

070 veracity *noun*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Conformity to facts; accuracy; habitual truthfulness

The historian devoted years to verifying the **veracity** of the sources before including them in the definitive account.

MEMORY CUE: Veracity keeps speech aligned with facts and habitual truthfulness.

071 vindicate *verb*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

To clear of accusation or blame; to show to be right or justified

The subsequent discovery **vindicated** the researcher whose hypothesis had been dismissed for years.

MEMORY CUE: Evidence erases the blame mark and vindicates the accused.

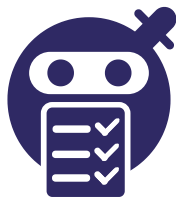
072 warranted *adjective*

TRUTH, DECEPTION & APPEARANCE

Justified or authorized; having good reason

The investigation determined that the officer's use of force was **warranted** under the circumstances.

MEMORY CUE: Warranted concern carries a valid reason authorizing it.



GRE VOCABULARY

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Revisit this list, write with the words, and practice recognizing their
meaning in context.

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