

Enthusiasm and Indifference

WORD LIST

allure	avid	devotion	effusive	exhilaration
fanatic	indifferent	jubilant	reticent	zealous

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm,” wrote American author Ralph Waldo Emerson. Enthusiasm motivates us to pursue our interests and to strive for success. The words in this lesson describe different degrees of this emotion, or lack of it. You may be *exhilarated* by a success or be an *avid* sports fan. Or, lacking enthusiasm, you may feel *indifferent* to an outcome or be *reticent* to participate in something. You will find the words on this list useful in both school and everyday life.

- 1. allure** (ə-lōōr´) from Latin *ad-*, “to” + German *loirre*, “bait”

a. *noun* A strong fascination or attraction; the power to attract

 - Unable to resist the **allure** of the teddy bear, the six-year-old grabbed it from the display case.

b. *verb* To attract with something desirable; entice

 - Although Jeremy knew he should study for his test, his new video game **allured** him.
- 2. avid** (āv´īd) *adjective* from Latin *avere*, “to desire”

Eager; very enthusiastic

 - An **avid** reader, Dad finished a novel every week.
- 3. devotion** (dī-vō´shən) *noun* from Latin *devovere*, “to vow”

Complete dedication to a cause or person

 - Out of **devotion** to his religion, the monk took a vow of silence to help him concentrate on prayer.

devote *verb* The doctor left his hospital job and **devoted** himself to caring for sick people in countries without good health care.
- 4. effusive** (ī-fyōō´siv) *adjective* from Latin *ex-*, “out” + *fundere*, “to flow”

Unrestrained or excessive in emotional expression; gushing

 - After her **effusive** praise of the child’s performance, we weren’t surprised to learn he was her nephew.

effusiveness *noun* We were embarrassed by Gabbie’s **effusiveness** when she squealed, “I’m so, so, so happy to see you!”
- 5. exhilaration** (īg-zīl´ə-rā´shən) *noun* from Greek *hilaros*, “cheerful”

Excited happiness

 - Imagine the **exhilaration** he felt when his essay won first prize!

exhilarate *verb* Jamal was **exhilarated** when he received a big bonus.



avid reader

Effusive can refer to embarrassing enthusiasm.

6. **fanatic** (fə-năt'ĭk) *noun*

A person excessively and unreasonably devoted to a cause or belief

- The **fanatic** stood on the street corner and screamed his views to anyone who would listen.

fanaticism *noun* In her **fanaticism**, she believed every silly thing the leader said.

fanatical *adjective* Beware of **fanatical** devotion to a cause.

7. **indifferent** (ĭn-dĭf'ər-ənt, -dĭf'rənt) *adjective*

a. Not interested in or concerned about something; not caring

- I am **indifferent** about which team wins the game.

b. Not good or bad; mediocre

- Caryn was an **indifferent** art student, but a great musician.

indifference *noun* Although he faked **indifference**, we knew he was disappointed by his grade on the test.

8. **jubilant** (jōō'bə-lənt) *adjective* from Latin *iubilare*, "to raise a shout of joy"

Filled with joy

- Ching was **jubilant** when his favorite uncle showed up at the party.

jubilation *noun* The room was filled with **jubilation** when Sonja's family discovered she had won a full scholarship to college.

9. **reticent** (rĕt'ĭ-sənt) *adjective* from Latin *reticere*, "to be silent"

a. Unwilling; reluctant

- Ashanti was **reticent** about going on the overnight school trip.

b. Private about one's affairs; tending to say little

- Joanna is **reticent** when it comes to talking about her family.

reticence *noun* Understandably, the general showed **reticence** when asked to discuss troop positions.

10. **zealous** (zĕl'əs) *adjective*

Highly motivated by dedication to a cause, an ideal, or a goal

- The **zealous** campaign volunteer worked for hours after everyone else had gone home.

zeal *noun* In her **zeal** to be a perfect mother, Geralynn sometimes forgot about her own well-being.

The term *fanatic* has a very negative meaning.

The *Zealots* were ancient Hebrews who revolted against Roman invaders. Today, a *zealot* is someone fanatically committed to a cause.

WORD ENRICHMENT

Fans and fanatics

Today, the word *fanatic* refers to blind devotion or intense beliefs. It seems fitting that the word comes from *fanum*, the Latin word for "temple." In the 1800s, *fanatic* was shortened to *fan* (as in *sports fan*). Today, *fanatic* has a negative meaning, whereas *fan* has a more positive one.