

Happiness and Unhappiness

WORD LIST

bliss compassion dismay ecstatic endear
exasperate forlorn somber sullen wretched

Happiness and unhappiness are at opposite ends of the emotional scale. As you study these words, think about where they fall on such a scale. Are they closer to one end or the other, or do they fit between the two extremes?

- 1. bliss** (blis) *noun* from Old English *blithe*, “joyful”
Extreme joy, leading to contentment

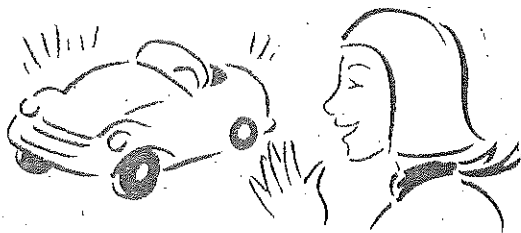
 - After months of dormitory food, Jenny’s first home-cooked meal was sheer **bliss**.

blissful *adjective* My wedding was a **blissful** experience.
- 2. compassion** (kəm-pāsh’ən) *noun* from Latin *com-*, “with” + *path*, “suffer”
The feeling of sharing the suffering of another

 - Community members felt great **compassion** for the fire victims.

compassionate *adjective* Nurses are often **compassionate** caregivers.
- 3. dismay** (dīs-mā’) from Old French *esmaier*, “to frighten”

 - verb* To discourage; to upset
 - Amanda was **dismayed** when she failed the algebra exam.
 - noun* A sudden loss of courage or confidence, due to danger
 - The animal trainer felt great **dismay** when the tiger that he had trained attacked him.



ecstatic

- 4. ecstatic** (ĕk-stăt’ĭk) *adjective* from Greek *ekstasis*, “to astonish”
Overwhelmingly joyful; intensely delighted

 - The contestant was **ecstatic** when she won a new car.

ecstasy *noun* I was in **ecstasy** at the thought of our upcoming trip to the Bahamas.
- 5. endear** (ĕn-dîr’) *verb*
To inspire friendly, affectionate feelings; to cause to be liked

 - Alice **endeared** herself to her in-laws by remembering their wedding anniversary.

endearment *noun* *Sweetheart* is a common term of **endearment**.

Compassion means “to actually share a feeling of suffering.” In contrast, *sympathy* means “to feel sorry for someone.”

6. **exasperate** (ĭg-zās'pə-rāt') *verb* from Latin *ex-*, "very" + *aspere*, "to make rough"

To annoy greatly; to aggravate or irritate; to anger

- We were **exasperated** when the neighbor's dog barked all night.

exasperation *noun* When the referee called a foul, the coach threw up his hands in **exasperation**.

7. **forlorn** (fər-lôrn') *adjective* from Old English *forleosan*, "to abandon"

Lonely; abandoned; sad

- The **forlorn** child had to spend the holiday alone at her boarding school.

8. **somber** (sôm'bər) *adjective* from Latin *sub-*, "under" + *umbra*, "shadow"

Dark; gloomy

- A funeral is a **somber** occasion.

somberness *noun* A **somberness** overcame the festivities when news of the mayor's illness was announced.

9. **sullen** (sül'ən) *adjective*

Bad-tempered in a quiet, gloomy way; sulky

- At the party, the **sullen** boy sat alone in a corner, frowning.

10. **wretched** (rĕch'id) *adjective*

Miserable; dreadful

- The employees went on strike to protest **wretched** working conditions.

Don't confuse *somber* with *sober*, which means "serious."

Wretched can also be used to describe people: No one wants to work for a boss with a *wretched* personality.

WORD ENRICHMENT

Shadowy words

The word *somber* comes from the Latin meanings of *sub-*, "under," and *umbra*, "shadow." When things are dark, or we are feeling gloomy, it is as though we are "under a shadow."

The Latin word *umbra*, meaning either "shadow" or "shade," is used in a variety of words. You probably know the common word *umbrella*. Originally, it was meant to shield people from the sun. Now, most of us use it for protection against the rain.

To *adumbrate* something is to give a sketchy outline or drawing of it, which may look somewhat like a shadow of the subject. The word *umber* is also derived from the Latin word for "shadow." *Umbra* is brown earth containing ferric oxide and manganese oxide. It is used to make a variety of brown colors that we also call *umber*. The color *umber* is similar to that of a shadow.

You may know that the Romance languages, including Spanish, French, and Portuguese, are all descended from Latin. (They are called "Romance" languages because Latin used to be spoken in Rome.) It is not surprising, then, to find that many words in these languages also have Latin roots. For example, the Spanish word *sombrero*, a hat with a large brim, is taken from *umbra*. A *sombrero* casts a shadow that protects one's face from the sun.