

# Strength and Defense

## WORD LIST

blockade	coup	indestructibility	martial	omnipotent
robust	stable	staunch	vulnerability	withstand

In addition to requiring food, clothing, and shelter, people need to feel secure. For this reason, many societies establish and maintain armed forces that protect and defend their country. The words in this lesson, which describe aspects of strength and defense, will help you better understand how individuals and groups try to assure their own safety.

### 1. blockade (blŏ-kād')

**a. noun** The closing off of an area to prevent people and supplies from leaving or entering

- The troops set up a **blockade** to prevent enemy ships from entering the harbor.

**b. verb** To set up a barrier that prevents exit or entrance

- The police tried to **blockade** the area surrounding the car accident.

### 2. coup (kŏŏ) *noun* from Latin *colpus*, "blow"

**a.** A brilliantly executed action that brings success

- The new mayor scored a **coup** by coming from behind to win the election.

**b.** A sudden takeover that overthrows the existing power

- The generals established their rule in a **coup**.

### 3. indestructibility (ĩn'dĩ-strŭk'tŏ-bŏl'ĩ-tē) *noun* from Latin *in-*, "not" + *destruere*, "to destroy"

The quality of being impossible to destroy

- Many superheroes are known for their **indestructibility**.

**indestructible** *adjective* The massive stone pillars of the ancient building seemed **indestructible**.

### 4. martial (mār'shŏl) *adjective* from Latin *Mars*, Roman god of war

Warlike; relating to war or the military

- The army band was well known for its performances of **martial** music.

### 5. omnipotent (ŏm-nĩp'ŏ-tŏnt) *adjective* from Latin *omni-*, "all" + *posse*, "to be able"

Having unlimited power, authority, or force

- Ancient Romans considered their emperors to be **omnipotent**.

**omnipotence** *noun* Most young children do not question their parents' **omnipotence**.



a blockade

*Coup* comes from the French *coup d'etat*, "blow to a state."

**6. robust** (rō-büst') *adjective* from Latin *robustus*, "of oak"  
Healthy, strong, and vigorous; sturdily built  
• People who climb the mountains of Tibet must be **robust**.  
**robustness** *noun* To maintain his **robustness**, Grandpa followed a strict, year-round fitness routine.

**7. stable** (stā'bəl) *adjective* from Latin *staulum*, "standing place"  
Not easily changed; relatively permanent  
• Although it decreased for many years, the African elephant population is now **stable**.

**stability** *noun* After moving every year or two for much of her life, Nicole longed for the **stability** of living in one place.

**8. staunch** (stōnch) *adjective*  
Firm; steadfast in support; loyal  
• The judge was a **staunch** defender of equal rights.

**staunchness** *noun* The **staunchness** of the army's defense prevented the enemy from advancing.

**9. vulnerability** (vül'när-ə-bil'ĩ-tē) *noun* from Latin *vulnerare*, "to wound"  
The quality of being open to injury, disease, attack or criticism; weakness  
• The events of September 11 revealed the United States' **vulnerability** to terrorism.

**vulnerable** *adjective* The **vulnerable** teenager cried when she was not picked for the team.

**10. withstand** (wĩth-stānd') *verb* from Old English *with*, "against" + *standan*, "to stand"  
To successfully resist or oppose something; to survive without damage  
• The sand castle could not **withstand** the powerful ocean waves.

Stable, staunch, and the stand in withstand all contain the root *sta*, "to stand."

Don't confuse *vulnerable* with *venerable*, which means "worthy of respect due to age or dignity."

The past tense of *withstand* is *withstood*.

## WORD ENRICHMENT

### Warlike words

Believe it or not, many of our words come from Mars—not the planet, but the Roman god of war, for whom the red planet is named. As you read earlier, *martial* is an adjective that can describe many things related to war or the military. For example, *martial law* is rule imposed by military authorities. The phrase *martial arts* refers to any of several Asian arts of combat or self-defense, including kung fu, karate, and tae kwon do. In ancient Rome, weapons were cleaned during the month of March, which the Romans had named for this violent, feared god.