Strength and Defense

WORD LIST

blockade robust coup stable indestructibility staunch

martial vulnerability

omnipotent 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 (koo) 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 (ĭn´dĭ-strŭk´tə-bəl´ĭ-tē) noun from Latin in-, "not" + destruere, "to destroy"

The quality of being impossible to destroy

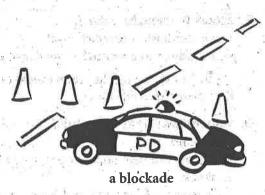
• Many superheroes are known for their indestructibility.

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

- **4. martial** (mär shəl) 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-nĭp´ə-tənt) 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**.



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

- **6. robust** (rō-bust') 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 (stônch) 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 (vŭl nər-ə-bĭl i-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 (with-stand') 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.

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.

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.