

9/7/25

# Elegant English

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Estimated play time: Approximately 15 minutes  
 Number of players: Unlimited  
 Supplies needed: Scoring board/pad; noisemakers  
 Suitable for visually impaired players.

## Overview:

The words in this game are not obscure, but they are not commonly used in everyday conversation. For example, most of us would say, “The star of that movie had black hair and very pale, white skin.” But perhaps a more elegant word choice would be to say that the movie star had *alabaster* skin.

In this game, we provide a list of “elegant” words. You should first try to come up with the correct definitions on your own. If you can’t, we have provided three definitions from which you must choose the correct one.

We will be posting this game format regularly until we complete the alphabet. This week, we are looking at elegant words that begin with the letter D.

## Instructions:

1. This game can be played by individuals or in teams.
2. Read the first word and ask for its definition. Discussion is permitted among teammates. Prior to the start of the game, a method to signal when a team is ready to answer must be determined. Ringing bells and New Year’s blowers are just two inexpensive noisemakers. Raised hands work, but the host must be vigilant to watch for whose hand went up first. The host always has the final say in any disputes.
3. After a player/team is recognized as the first to signal, they may give an answer. If the first answer is incorrect, the other teams may “buzz” in and answer.
4. If no one comes up with the correct definition, read the three possible answers.
5. As before, the first player/team to signal may give an answer. If the answer is incorrect, the others may “buzz” in.
6. Score 10 points for each correct answer. Play until all questions have been asked and answered.

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**INSTRUCTIONS:** In this game, we provide a list of words that are not obscure, but not very commonly used. You should first try to come up with the correct definitions on your own. If you can't, we have provided three definitions from which you must choose the correct one.

## QUESTIONS

1. Demure: (da•MURE)  
A: Devilish.  
B: To solve a mystery.  
C: Quiet and shy.
2. Denouement: (DAY•new•mon)  
A: A period of temporary peace in a battle or war.  
B: The final, most exciting, part of a narrative or story.  
C: A shocking image included in an otherwise non-controversial painting.
3. Diaphanous: (die•AFF•in•is)  
A: To speak in low tones from the diaphragm.  
B: Description of a cloth so delicate that you can see through it.  
C: Sticky, like a spider's web.
4. Diaspora: (die•ASS•pour•ah)  
A: A critical part of the human respiratory system.  
B: An 18<sup>th</sup>-century woman's undergarment that cinched in the waist and accentuated the bust line.  
C: The scattering of people from their original country to other places.
5. Dulcimer: (DULL•sim•er)  
A: A percussion instrument consisting of two hollow orbs filled with stones that are shaken to produce sound.  
B: An artificial sweetener.  
C: A stringed instrument that is played by hitting the strings with a pair of hammers.
6. Dilatory: (DILL•ah•tory)  
A: A section within a spa where unwanted hairs are plucked out by hand.  
B: Nickname for a dashboard or cockpit with many dials and instruments.  
C: Slow; given to delay or procrastination.

7. Descry: (des•CRY)  
A: To catch sight of something.  
B: To define a word incorrectly.  
C: To vandalize a landmark or monument.
8. Dodecahedron: (do•dec•ah•HEE•dron)  
A: A twelve-sided shape.  
B: An herbivorous dinosaur that had only twelve teeth.  
C: A year that includes a leap day.
9. Diatribe: (DIE•ah•tribe)  
A: Payment made to an informant.  
B: An angry speech or verbal attack.  
C: To translate a word or phrase into two languages.
10. Diplopia: (dip•LOW•pee•ah)  
A: A woven basket with two attached containers.  
B: A 19<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript in which every other page contains a drawn image.  
C: Double vision.
11. Didactic: (die•DACK•tic)  
A: Educational or instructive in an excessively detailed manner.  
B: Information of extreme interest to a police investigation.  
C: Repetitive military exercises.
12. Déclassé: (day•class•EH)  
A: A shirt or blouse that is covered in sequins and beads.  
B: Below one's social status.  
C: Learning that occurs outside a classroom in informal environments.
13. Distaff: (DIS•staff)  
A: Of or pertaining to women.  
B: Restaurant workers who bus tables and wash dishes.  
C: Relatives who live very far away.
14. Dactylogram: (dac•TILL•oh•gram)  
A: A fingerprint.  
B: A double-pawed cat.  
C: A handwritten invitation.

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## ANSWERS

1. C: Quiet and shy.
2. B: The final, most exciting, part of a narrative or story.
3. B: Description of a cloth so delicate that you can see through it.
4. C: The scattering of people from their original country to other places.
5. C: A stringed instrument that is played by hitting the strings with a pair of hammers.
6. C: Slow; given to delay or procrastination.
7. A: To catch sight of something.
8. A: A twelve-sided shape.
9. B: An angry speech or verbal attack.
10. C: Double vision.
11. A: Educational or instructive in an excessively detailed manner.
12. B: Below one's social status.
13. A: Of or pertaining to women.
14. A: A fingerprint.