

12/14/25

Elegant English

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 **S**.

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.

1. Solvent (SAWL•vent)
A: A piece of evidence that is critical to the solving of a crime.
B: A fabric that allows a small amount of sunlight through the fibers.
C: A liquid that is capable of dissolving other substances.
2. Spurn (SPERN)
A: A device worn on an equestrian's boot with short, dull spikes that gently urge the horse to move faster.
B: To reject with contempt.
C: The term for a single twist of spaghetti around a fork.
3. Sacrosanct (SACK•row•sanked)
A: A legal document that has been certified by two separate authorities.
B: Treated as holy; protected from violation or criticism.
C: A surgical procedure on the lower back.
4. Stultify (STULL•tiff•eye)
A: To make ineffective; to cause someone to appear foolish.
B: To temporarily disable a software feature during system maintenance.
C: To brush a membrane onto a valuable painting to protect it in storage.
5. Superfluous (su•PER•flu•iss)
A: Critically important.
B: Unnecessary.
C: A molecule that binds only to water or other liquids.
6. Somnolent (SAWM•no•lent)
A: Sleepy; drowsy.
B: An enzyme found in turkey, chicken, and duck that induces sleepiness.
C: A pleasing sound such as classical music, ocean waves, or a crackling fireplace.
7. Sagacious (sa•GAY•shiss)
A: Bitter and sarcastic.
B: Extremely talkative.
C: Wise and insightful.

8. SCION (SIGH•on)
A: A ceremonial staff used by medieval knights during coronation rituals.
B: An established branch on a tree used to measure sap flow.
C: A descendent or heir.
9. Simian (SIM•ee•in)
A: A robot designed to imitate human gestures.
B: A nocturnal rodent recently discovered in South America.
C: Relating to or resembling an ape or monkey.
10. Specious (SPEE•shuss)
A: An animal that is successfully cross-bred with an unrelated species.
B: Description for an argument or reasoning that sounds plausible but is false.
C: A traditional almond Christmas cookie from Denmark.
11. Stoic (STO•ick)
A: Angry.
B: Unaffected by passion or feeling.
C: A person who buys much more than he needs; a hoarder.
12. Subliminal (sub•LIM•in•el)
A: Below the level of consciousness.
B: Under the skin, physically or metaphorically.
C: To place under the tongue, such as a medication or thermometer.
13. Surreptitious (suh•rup•TISH•iss)
A: Repetitive and monotonous.
B: The annoying habit of finishing someone else's sentences.
C: Cautious and secret.
14. Sycophant (SICK•ah•phant)
A: A person who laughs incessantly.
B: A person who tries to please someone to gain an advantage; a "yes" man.
C: A specialist in Zydeco music.

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ANSWERS

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|---|---|
| 1. Solvent | C. A liquid that is capable of dissolving other substances. |
| 2. Spurn | B. To reject with contempt. |
| 3. Sacrosanct | B. Treated as holy; protected from violation or criticism. |
| 4. Stultify | A. To make ineffective; to cause someone to appear foolish. |
| 5. Superfluous | B. Unnecessary. |
| 6. Somnolent | A. Sleepy; drowsy. |
| 7. Sagacious | C. Wise and insightful. |
| 8. Scion | C. A descendent or heir. |
| 9. Simian | C. Relating to or resembling an ape or monkey. |
| 10. Specious plausible but is false. | B. Description for an argument or reasoning that sounds |
| 11. Stoic | B. Unaffected by passion or feeling. |
| 12. Subliminal | A. Below the level of consciousness. |
| 13. Surreptitious | C. Cautious and secret. |
| 14. Sycophant | B. A person who tries to please someone to gain an advantage; a “yes” man. |