

ECV01 — Synonyms & Antonyms

Chapter ECV01 · CDS Grammar Level

CDS Level

✦ **How CDS Structures Options:** Every CDS synonym/antonym question has 4 options — 2 clearly from the wrong domain (easy eliminations), 1 plausible trap (same area, wrong degree or type), and 1 correct answer. This chapter covers 10 years (2015–2025) of confirmed CDS vocabulary, grouped by theme. PYQs have all four options with full trap analysis.

💡 **Two-Step CDS Strategy:** Step 1 — Eliminate the 2 clearly wrong options (different domain). Step 2 — Between the remaining two, check *degree* (mild vs extreme), *tone* (positive vs negative), and *exact meaning* (not just category). The trap option fails on one of these three tests.

PART A — SYNONYMS: NEAREST MEANING

A1 Courage, Boldness & Determination

▶ BRAVERY & PERSISTENCE CLUSTER

INTREPID

adj.

Fearless; resolutely courageous in danger

SYN: dauntless, fearless, valiant, undaunted, bold

💡 *Trap: 'reckless' — intrepid is controlled bravery; reckless has no care*

DAUNTLESS

adj.

Showing fearlessness; not intimidated by difficulty

SYN: fearless, intrepid, resolute, indomitable, brave

💡 *daunt = frighten; dauntless = cannot be frightened*

AUDACIOUS

adj.

Showing willingness to take bold risks; daring

SYN: daring, bold, brazen, adventurous, venturesome

💡 *Trap: 'insolent' = rude/disrespectful; audacious*

TENACIOUS

adj.

Holding firm; persistent; not yielding to opposition

SYN: resolute, steadfast, persistent, dogged, unyielding

💡 *tenere (hold). Trap: 'obstinate' = same action but*

= boldly courageous

negative/unreasonable

RELENTLESS

adj.

Oppressively constant; never yielding in severity

SYN: unrelenting, incessant, persistent, unremitting, inexorable

💡 *Trap: 'remorseless' = without regret; relentless = without stopping*

IMPETUOUS

adj.

Acting quickly without thought; impulsive and hasty

SYN: impulsive, rash, hasty, precipitate, headlong

💡 *impetus (force) — rushing forward before thinking. Ant: deliberate, cautious*

A2

Positive Character & Social Grace

► VIRTUE, INTEGRITY & WARMTH

MAGNANIMOUS

adj.

Generous and noble in spirit; forgiving of rivals

SYN: generous, noble, benevolent, charitable, high-minded

💡 *magn (great) + anim (spirit). Ant: petty, pusillanimous*

BENEVOLENT

adj.

Well-meaning and kindly; wishing good to others

SYN: charitable, philanthropic, altruistic, humane, munificent

💡 *bene (good) + vol (wish). Exact opposite: malevolent*

AFFABLE

adj.

Friendly, good-natured, and easy to talk to

SYN: amiable, genial, cordial, congenial, approachable

💡 *affari (speak to). Easy to approach and begin conversation with*

AMIALE

adj.

Having a pleasant, friendly disposition; likeable

SYN: affable, genial, cordial, amicable, good-natured

💡 *amor (love). Trap: 'amicable' applies to agreements, not persons*

CANDID

adj.

Truthful and straightforward; frank and direct

SYN: frank, forthright, sincere, blunt, outspoken

💡 *Trap: 'critical' — candid = honest, not necessarily critical of others*

PRUDENT

adj.

Acting with care and foresight; showing good judgement

SYN: judicious, circumspect, sagacious, discreet, sensible

💡 *Trap: 'cowardly' — prudent is cautious, absolutely NOT cowardly*

DILIGENT

adj.

Careful and hardworking; steady and thorough in effort

SYN: assiduous, industrious, meticulous, sedulous, painstaking

💡 *Trap: 'determined' — diligent = steady effort; determined = refusing to give up*

SCRUPULOUS

adj.

Thorough; attentive to right conduct; guided by principles

SYN: meticulous, conscientious, principled, punctilious, precise

💡 *scruples = moral principles. Trap: 'suspicious' — no connection at all*

VERACIOUS*adj.*

Habitually truthful;
accurate and honest in
representation

**SYN: truthful, honest,
accurate, reliable,
sincere**

💡 *ver (truth). Trap: 'voracious' = extremely hungry — completely different word*

GREGARIOUS*adj.*

Fond of company;
sociable; liking to be with
others

**SYN: sociable, outgoing,
convivial, friendly,
extrovert**

💡 *grex (flock). Ant: reclusive, hermitic, unsociable*

DECOROUS*adj.*

In keeping with good
taste and propriety;
dignified

**SYN: proper, seemly,
dignified, appropriate,
well-mannered**

💡 *Trap: 'decorative' = ornamental — completely different meaning*

DEFERENCE*noun*

Respectful submission or
yielding to another's
judgement

**SYN: respect,
submission, homage,
reverence, compliance**

💡 *Trap: 'indifference' — sounds similar; means the opposite*

ADROIT*adj.*

Clever or skilful in using
the hands or mind;
dexterous

**SYN: dexterous, deft,
nimble, skilful, expert**

💡 *à + droit (to the right) — French. Ant: clumsy, inept, maladroït*

A3

Negative Character & Conduct

▶ NEGATIVE TRAITS — CDS FAVOURITE TARGET**OBSTINATE***adj.*

Stubbornly refusing to
change; pig-headed;
unreasonably firm

**SYN: obdurate,
recalcitrant, intransigent,
headstrong, dogged**

💡 *Trap: 'tenacious' — obstinate (unreasonable) vs tenacious (admirable persistence)*

OBDURATE*adj.*

Stubbornly refusing to
change opinion; hardened
against reason

**SYN: obstinate, inflexible,
intransigent, unyielding,
hardened**

💡 *ob + durare (harden) — hardened against reason or emotion*

RECALCITRANT*adj.*

Having an obstinately uncooperative attitude toward authority

SYN: unruly, defiant, refractory, wayward, intractable

💡 *re + calcitrare (kick back) — kicking back against authority*

INSOLENT*adj.*

Showing rude and arrogant disrespect; impertinent

SYN: impudent, impertinent, brazen, contemptuous, disrespectful

💡 *Trap: 'hostile' = aggressive intent; insolent = disrespectfully rude in manner*

IMPUDENT*adj.*

Not showing due respect; shamelessly rude; forward

SYN: insolent, impertinent, brazen, cheeky, forward

💡 *im + pudere (ashamed) = without shame. Trap: 'imprudent' = unwise (different)*

CALLOUS*adj.*

Showing insensitive disregard for others; cold-hearted

SYN: heartless, unfeeling, hard-hearted, ruthless, indifferent

💡 *callus (hardened skin). Trap: 'calculating' = scheming, not insensitive to pain*

PERFIDIOUS*adj.*

Guilty of betrayal; treacherous; deceitful

SYN: treacherous, traitorous, faithless, duplicitous, disloyal

💡 *per + fid (faith) = against faith. Trap: 'malicious' = intending harm; perfidious = breaking trust*

VINDICTIVE*adj.*

Having a strong desire to harm those who have wronged one

SYN: vengeful, spiteful, retaliatory, malicious, unforgiving

💡 *vindicta (revenge). Trap: 'bitter' = feeling; vindictive implies seeking revenge*

INVETERATE*adj.*

Long-established habit; deeply ingrained; deeply habitual

SYN: habitual, chronic, confirmed, ingrained, deep-seated

💡 *vetus (old) — deeply rooted over a long time*

SUPERCILIOUS*adj.*

Behaving as if one is superior to others; haughty

SYN: haughty, arrogant, condescending, disdainful, contemptuous

💡 *supercilium (raised eyebrow) — literally looking down with raised brows*

OSTENTATIOUS*adj.*

Pretentious showy display designed to impress others

SYN: flamboyant, showy, pretentious, garish, flashy

💡 *Trap: 'pompous' = self-important in speech; ostentatious = excessive display in action*

POMPOUS*adj.*

Affectedly grand or self-important in manner; puffed-up

SYN: grandiose, pretentious, arrogant, self-important, bombastic

💡 *pompa (procession) — putting on a grand show of importance*

PETULANT*adj.*

Childishly sulky or bad-tempered; easily irritated

SYN: sulky, irritable, peevish, querulous, fretful

💡 *Trap: 'impatient' — petulant has a childish*

QUERULOUS*adj.*

Complaining in a petulant or whining manner

SYN: complaining, whining, petulant, grumbling, discontented

💡 *queri (complain). Trap: 'curious' — sounds similar;*

sulking quality; impatient = restless

entirely different meaning

SANCTIMONIOUS

adj.

Making a show of moral superiority; self-righteously pious

SYN: self-righteous, hypocritical, pious, priggish, unctuous

💡 *sanctus (holy) — pretending holiness in order to judge others*

PARSIMONIOUS

adj.

Excessively unwilling to spend money; miserly

SYN: miserly, niggardly, stingy, avaricious, tightfisted

💡 *parcere (spare). Trap: 'thrifty' = positive economical; parsimonious = negatively tight-fisted*

TRUCULENT

adj.

Eager to argue or fight; aggressively defiant

SYN: belligerent, aggressive, combative, pugnacious, ferocious

💡 *trux (savage). Trap: 'talkative' — no connection whatsoever*

PUGNACIOUS

adj.

Eager to quarrel or fight; combative by nature

SYN: belligerent, truculent, combative, aggressive, contentious

💡 *pugnus (fist). A pugnacious person is always looking for a fight*

BELLIGERENT

adj.

Hostile; aggressive; inclined toward conflict

SYN: hostile, aggressive, warlike, antagonistic, combative

💡 *bellum (war). Trap: 'brave' — belligerent implies aggression, not noble bravery*

GUILE

noun

Sly or cunning intelligence used to deceive; craftiness

SYN: cunning, deceit, craftiness, duplicity, artfulness

💡 *Trap: 'guilt' — sounds similar but means clever deception, not remorse*

GULLIBLE

adj.

Easily persuaded to believe things; naive; credulous

SYN: credulous, naive, unsuspecting, trusting, ingenuous

💡 *Trap: 'gloomy' — entirely different domain; gullible = easily fooled*

BIGOT

noun

One intolerant of others' opinions; a narrow-minded fanatic

SYN: zealot, fanatic, dogmatist, chauvinist, sectarian

💡 *Trap: 'hypocrite' — hypocrite feigns virtue; bigot is intolerant of others*

DIFFIDENT

adj.

Modest or shy due to lack of self-confidence; not assertive

SYN: modest, timid, bashful, retiring, self-effacing

💡 *dis + fidere (trust) = not trusting oneself. Ant: assertive, confident*

INEPT

adj.

Having or showing no skill; incompetent; clumsy

SYN: incompetent, clumsy, unskilled, bungling, maladroit

💡 *in + aptus (fit) = not fit/suited. Ant: adroit, dexterous, competent*

ECCENTRIC*adj.*

Unconventional and slightly strange in behaviour; odd

SYN: unconventional, quirky, odd, outlandish, peculiar

💡 *ek + kentron (off-centre).*

Trap: 'excellent' — no connection whatsoever

A4**Intelligence, Perception & Knowledge**▶ **MIND & INTELLECT CLUSTER****ASTUTE***adj.*

Accurately assessing situations and people; mentally sharp

SYN: shrewd, sagacious, perspicacious, discerning, canny

💡 *Trap: 'arrogant' — astute =*

clever assessment, not conceit

SAGACIOUS*adj.*

Having keen mental discernment and good judgement; wise

SYN: wise, astute, judicious, perspicacious, prudent

💡 *sagax (keen-scented) — perceiving things sharply, like an animal tracking prey*

PERSPICACIOUS*adj.*

Having a ready insight; mentally sharp; seeing through complexity

SYN: perceptive, acute, discerning, astute, insightful

💡 *perspicere (see through)*

— seeing through complexity to the core truth

ERUDITE*adj.*

Having or showing great knowledge and learning; scholarly

SYN: learned, scholarly, knowledgeable, literate, well-read

💡 *Trap: 'intelligent' — erudite = wide knowledge from study, not just natural intelligence*

ABSTRUSE*adj.*

Difficult to understand; obscure; requiring deep knowledge

SYN: obscure, recondite, arcane, esoteric, cryptic

💡 *Trap: 'abstract' = not concrete; abstruse = hard to understand (different quality)*

LUCID*adj.*

Expressed clearly; easy to understand; mentally clear

SYN: clear, coherent, transparent, intelligible, pellucid

💡 *lux (light) — shedding light. Ant: obscure, opaque, cryptic*

CRYPTIC*adj.*

Having a hidden or mysterious meaning; puzzling

SYN: enigmatic, mysterious, obscure, puzzling, ambiguous

💡 *kryptos (hidden). Ant: transparent, explicit, lucid*

ENIGMATIC*adj.*

Difficult to interpret or understand; mysterious; inscrutable

SYN: mysterious, cryptic, puzzling, inscrutable, unfathomable

💡 *ainigma (riddle). Trap: 'eccentric' = odd behaviour; enigmatic = hard to read*

EQUIVOCAL
adj.

Open to more than one interpretation; deliberately ambiguous
SYN: **ambiguous, vague, unclear, evasive, misleading**
💡 *equi + vox (equal voices) = two voices pointing differently. Ant: unequivocal*

CREDULOUS
adj.

Too willing to believe things without evidence; gullible
SYN: **gullible, naive, unsuspecting, trusting, ingenuous**
💡 *cred (believe). Ant: incredulous (refusing to believe), sceptical*

CIRCUMSPECT
adj.

Wary; cautious in all directions before acting
SYN: **cautious, wary, prudent, discreet, guarded**
💡 *circum (around) + spect (look) = looking all around before acting*

PRAGMATIC
adj.

Dealing with things practically rather than theoretically
SYN: **practical, realistic, sensible, rational, down-to-earth**
💡 *Ant: idealistic, quixotic. Trap: 'pessimistic' – practical ≠ negative*

PLAUSIBLE
adj.

Seeming reasonable or probable; appearing worthy of belief
SYN: **credible, believable, reasonable, convincing, probable**
💡 *plaudere (to applaud). Ant: implausible, incredible, unconvincing*

FALLACIOUS
adj.

Based on a mistaken belief; logically unsound
SYN: **erroneous, misleading, spurious, unsound, deceptive**
💡 *fallere (deceive). Ant: valid, sound, truthful*

SPURIOUS
adj.

Not genuine; false; based on false reasoning
SYN: **counterfeit, fake, fraudulent, specious, bogus**
💡 *Ant: genuine, authentic, valid. Trap: CDS places 'genuine' as option in synonym Q*

COGENT
adj.

Clear, logical, and convincing; powerfully persuasive
SYN: **compelling, convincing, forceful, persuasive, sound**
💡 *cogere (drive together) – all evidence drives to one clear conclusion. Ant: flimsy*

SUBTLE
adj.

So delicate as to be difficult to analyse; not obvious
SYN: **nuanced, delicate, refined, understated, elusive**
💡 *subtilis (finely woven). Trap: 'clever' – subtle = barely perceptible, not necessarily smart*

A5

Speech, Language & Expression

► COMMUNICATION CLUSTER

LOQUACIOUS*adj.*

Tending to talk a great deal; excessively talkative

SYN: garrulous, verbose, voluble, chatty, talkative💡 *loqui (to speak). Ant: taciturn, reticent, laconic***GARRULOUS***adj.*

Excessively talkative, especially on trivial matters

SYN: loquacious, verbose, voluble, chatty, babbling💡 *garrire (chatter). More negative than loquacious — implies meaningless chatter***VERBOSE***adj.*

Using more words than are needed; wordy

SYN: wordy, long-winded, prolix, diffuse, loquacious💡 *verbum (word). Ant: succinct, terse, laconic, concise***LACONIC***adj.*

Using very few words; brief and concise in speech

SYN: terse, succinct, brief, pithy, concise💡 *Lakon — Sparta. Spartans were famous for brief, blunt speech***SUCCINCT***adj.*

Briefly and clearly expressed; to the point

SYN: concise, terse, laconic, brief, pithy💡 *sub + cinctus (belted tight) — tightly wrapped with no loose ends***TACITURN***adj.*

Reserved; saying little; not communicative by temperament

SYN: reticent, reserved, uncommunicative, tight-lipped, quiet💡 *tacere (be silent). Not shy — quiet by nature. Ant: loquacious, garrulous***RETICENT***adj.*

Reluctant to reveal thoughts; not freely communicating

SYN: taciturn, reserved, restrained, discreet, guarded💡 *Trap: 'reluctant' = unwilling to act; reticent = unwilling to SPEAK***ELOQUENT***adj.*

Fluent or persuasive in speaking or writing

SYN: articulate, fluent, expressive, silver-tongued, persuasive💡 *e + loqui (speak out). Ant: inarticulate, incoherent***CAUSTIC***adj.*

Corrosively critical; sarcastic in a biting, burning way

SYN: sarcastic, biting, acerbic, mordant, scathing💡 *kaustos (burnt) — burning words. Trap: 'careful' — no connection***SARDONIC***adj.*

Grimly mocking or cynical; disdainfully humorous

SYN: cynical, mocking, scornful, derisive, ironic💡 *Sardonios (bitter Sardinian herb). Ant: sincere, earnest, genuine***PEDANTIC***adj.*

Excessively concerned with minor details or rules

SYN: finicky, dogmatic, scholastic, hair-splitting, fastidious💡 *Trap: 'educated' — pedantic is negative; implies annoying over-precision***REDUNDANT***adj.*

Exceeding what is necessary; no longer needed; superfluous

SYN: superfluous, unnecessary, surplus, excessive, tautological💡 *re + undare (overflow). Ant: essential, necessary, indispensable***BREVITY***noun*

Concise and exact use of words in expression;

RHETORIC*noun*

Persuasive language; art of effective speech;

shortness

SYN: conciseness, terseness, succinctness, pithiness, laconism

💡 *brevis (short). Ant: verbosity, prolixity. 'Brevity is the soul of wit'*

sometimes empty language

SYN: oratory, eloquence, bombast, grandiloquence, elocution

💡 *In CDS negative context: inflated or insincere language*

A6

Emotion, Mood & State of Mind

▶ EMOTION & PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES

EBULLIENT

adj.

Cheerful and full of energy; overflowing with enthusiasm

SYN: exuberant, vivacious, buoyant, effervescent, enthusiastic

💡 *ebullire (boil out) – bubbling over with energy*

VIVACIOUS

adj.

Lively, animated, and spirited in temperament

SYN: lively, animated, buoyant, spirited, ebullient

💡 *vivax (lively). Ant: listless, dull, torpid, despondent*

SANGUINE

adj.

Optimistic, especially in a difficult situation

SYN: optimistic, hopeful, confident, positive, buoyant

💡 *Trap: 'pale' is a different meaning; CDS context = optimistic. Ant: pessimistic*

EXUBERANT

adj.

Filled with lively energy and excitement; effusively enthusiastic

SYN: ebullient, vivacious, enthusiastic, effusive, animated

💡 *exuberare (overflow abundantly). Trap: 'extravagant' – about spending, not energy*

DESPONDENT

adj.

In low spirits; lacking hope; dejected and discouraged

SYN: dejected, disheartened, downcast, forlorn, dispirited

💡 *de + spondere (promise) = giving up on all hope. Ant: sanguine, ebullient*

APATHY

noun

Lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern; complete indifference

SYN: indifference, lethargy, listlessness, torpor, passivity

💡 *a (without) + pathos (feeling). Trap: 'sadness' – apathy has NO feeling; sadness is a feeling*

CONSTERNATION

noun

Anxiety or dismay triggered by something unexpected

SYN: dismay, alarm, perturbation, disquiet, agitation

💡 *Trap: 'anger' – consternation = shocked dismay, not anger*

ACRIMONY

noun

Bitterness or ill feeling, especially in speech or manner

SYN: bitterness, rancour, animosity, asperity, hostility

💡 *acer (sharp/bitter). Trap: 'accuracy' – sounds similar; completely different*

ANIMOSITY
noun

Strong hostility or ill will;
active dislike
SYN: hostility,
antagonism, enmity,
rancour, malice
💡 *animus (spirit). Trap:*
'sadness' — animosity is
active hostile feeling, not
sorrow

EUPHORIA
noun

Intense excitement and
happiness; a state of
elation
SYN: elation, ecstasy,
exhilaration, rapture,
bliss
💡 *eu (good) + phora*
(carrying). Ant: dysphoria,
melancholy

LUGUBRIOUS
adj.

Looking or sounding sad
and dismal; mournfully
exaggerated
SYN: mournful, doleful,
melancholic, woeful,
sombre
💡 *lugere (mourn). Implies*
theatrical, excessive sadness

FERVENT
adj.

Displaying passionate
intensity; intensely
enthusiastic
SYN: ardent, passionate,
zealous, vehement,
intense
💡 *fervere (to boil). Trap:*
'angry' — fervent =
passionate enthusiasm, not
rage

TORPID
adj.

Mentally and physically
inactive; sluggish;
lethargic
SYN: lethargic, sluggish,
inert, listless, languid
💡 *torpere (be numb). Ant:*
energetic, vivacious,
animated

VOLATILE
adj.

Liable to change rapidly
and unpredictably;
emotionally unstable
SYN: unstable, erratic,
capricious, mercurial,
tempestuous
💡 *volare (to fly) — flying off*
in all directions. Ant: stable,
steady, constant

PLACID
adj.

Not easily upset or
excited; calm and
peaceful
SYN: calm, serene,
tranquil, composed,
equable
💡 *placere (please). Ant:*
turbulent, volatile, agitated

STOIC
adj.

Enduring pain or difficulty
without showing emotion;
impassive
SYN: impassive,
unemotional, self-
disciplined, austere,
resigned
💡 *Stoicism — Greek*
philosophy of endurance.
Trap: 'cowardly' — stoic
requires discipline

SEDATE
adj.

Calm, dignified, and
unhurried; tranquil in
manner
SYN: calm, composed,
tranquil, staid, collected
💡 *sedare (settle/calm). Ant:*
agitated, restless, excitable

QUIXOTIC
adj.

Exceedingly idealistic;
impractically romantic;
chasing impossible goals
SYN: idealistic,
impractical, romantic,
visionary, chivalrous
💡 *Don Quixote — tilted at*
windmills. Ant: pragmatic,
realistic

A7

Moral Qualities, Actions & Ethical Behaviour

MITIGATE

verb

Make less severe; reduce the seriousness of

SYN: alleviate, assuage, allay, mollify, palliate

💡 *Ant: aggravate, exacerbate. Trap: 'mediate' = negotiate; different meaning*

AMELIORATE

verb

Make something bad better; improve a situation

SYN: improve, better, enhance, rectify, upgrade

💡 *melior (better). Trap: 'alleviate' = reduce pain; ameliorate = improve conditions*

ALLAY

verb

Diminish or put at rest fear, suspicion, or worry

SYN: calm, soothe, ease, pacify, alleviate

💡 *Trap: 'refuse' — allay = reduce/calm, not reject. Ant: intensify, aggravate*

ASSUAGE

verb

Make pain or distress less intense; satisfy an appetite

SYN: relieve, ease, alleviate, appease, mollify

💡 *suavis (sweet) — sweet relief. Trap: 'aggravate' = exact opposite*

APPEASE

verb

Pacify by acceding to demands; satisfy or relieve

SYN: pacify, placate, mollify, conciliate, satisfy

💡 *Trap: 'anger' — appease = calm anger, not express it. Ant: provoke, antagonise*

COERCE

verb

Compel using force or threats; pressurize into action

SYN: compel, force, intimidate, pressurize, browbeat

💡 *co + arcere (enclose) = boxing someone in with no choice*

REPUDIATE

verb

Refuse to accept; disown; deny the truth of

SYN: disavow, renounce, reject, disclaim, abjure

💡 *Trap: 'refute' = disprove by argument; repudiate = simply reject/deny*

CONDONE

verb

Accept or allow behaviour considered wrong; overlook offence

SYN: overlook, excuse, pardon, forgive, disregard

💡 *Trap: 'condemn' = EXACT OPPOSITE. Condone = let pass; condemn = censure strongly*

SUBJUGATE

verb

Bring under domination or control; conquer and subdue

SYN: dominate, conquer, subdue, suppress, overpower

💡 *sub (under) + jugum (yoke) = bring under the yoke*

ALACRITY

noun

Brisk and cheerful readiness; prompt willingness

SYN: eagerness, promptness, willingness, zeal, enthusiasm

💡 *alacer (lively). Trap: 'alertness' = watchfulness; alacrity = eager promptness*

HAMPER

verb

Hinder or impede the movement or progress of

SYN: impede, hinder, obstruct, thwart, encumber

💡 *Trap: 'damage' — hamper = slow down/obstruct; does NOT mean destroy*

STYMIE

verb

Prevent or hinder the progress of; thwart completely

SYN: thwart, obstruct, hamper, foil, frustrate

💡 *Golf term — ball blocked. CDS: stymied plans = blocked, frustrated efforts*

NEFARIOUS

adj.

Wicked; criminal;

flagrantly evil

SYN: wicked, villainous, heinous, iniquitous, vile

💡 *ne (not) + fas (divine law).*
 Trap: 'notorious' = famous for wrongdoing; nefarious = actively evil

FLAGRANT

adj.

Conspicuously offensive;

obviously scandalous; blatant

SYN: blatant, glaring, brazen, obvious, outrageous

💡 *flagrare (to blaze) — a blazing, undeniable violation*

EGREGIOUS

adj.

Outstandingly bad; shockingly wrong; conspicuously offensive

SYN: outrageous, flagrant, glaring, scandalous, monstrous

💡 *e + grex (flock) = standing out from the flock for the wrong reasons*

HEINOUS

adj.

Utterly odious or wicked; deeply criminal

SYN: atrocious, monstrous, abominable, odious, wicked

💡 *haineus (hateful). Trap: 'dangerous' = different quality entirely*

OMINOUS

adj.

Giving the impression something bad is about to happen

SYN: threatening, foreboding, menacing, sinister, inauspicious

💡 *omen (sign). Ant: auspicious, promising, propitious*

REMORSE

noun

Deep regret or guilt for a wrong committed

SYN: contrition, repentance, compunction, penitence, regret

💡 *re + mordere (bite again) = guilt biting again and again*

AVARICE

noun

Extreme greed for wealth or material gain

SYN: greed, cupidity, covetousness, rapacity, acquisitiveness

💡 *avere (crave). Trap: 'jealousy' — avarice specifically = wealth-greed*

HARBINGER

noun

A person or thing that announces or signals what is coming

SYN: forerunner, precursor, herald, omen, portent

💡 *Old German hariberga (advance shelter). Trap: 'messenger' — harbinger = leading/first*

WANE

verb

Decrease in vigour, power, or size; diminish

SYN: diminish, decline, decrease, dwindle, ebb

💡 *Ant: wax (grow). Moon waxes then wanes. Trap: 'fade' = lose colour; wane = lose power/size*

ABHOR

verb

Regard with disgust and hatred; detest completely

SYN: detest, loathe, despise, execrate, abominate

💡 *ab + horrere (shudder away from). Ant: adore, cherish, revere*

REVERE

verb

Feel deep respect and admiration for; venerate

SYN: venerate, worship, adore, esteem, idolise

💡 *revereri (stand in awe of). Ant: despise, abhor. Trap: 'fear' — reverence includes awe but not fear*

DISSEMBLE

verb

Conceal one's true motives; pretend or disguise

SYN: feign, dissimulate, pretend, disguise, mask

💡 *Trap: 'disassemble' = take apart. Dissemble = hiding your true nature*

FURTIVE

adj.

Attempting to avoid notice; secretive;

CLANDESTINE

adj.

Kept secret or done secretly, especially for

surreptitious
SYN: stealthy, surreptitious, clandestine, secretive, sneaky
💡 *furtum (theft) — like a thief hoping not to be noticed. Ant: overt, open, transparent*

illicit reasons
SYN: covert, secret, furtive, underground, surreptitious
💡 *clam (secretly). Ant: overt, open, public*

A8 Frequently Tested — Other Key Words

▶ HIGH-FREQUENCY CDS WORDS — MIXED

ABATE

verb

Become less intense or widespread; subside
SYN: subside, lessen, diminish, decrease, dwindle
💡 *Ant: augment, intensify, increase. Storm abated = storm lessened*

AUGMENT

verb

Make something greater by adding to it; increase
SYN: increase, enlarge, amplify, expand, supplement
💡 *augere (increase). Ant: diminish, reduce, abate*

ARDUOUS

adj.

Involving or requiring strenuous effort; difficult
SYN: strenuous, laborious, taxing, gruelling, demanding
💡 *arduus (steep). Trap: 'dangerous' — arduous = demanding, not necessarily dangerous*

CURSORY

adj.

Hasty and therefore not thorough; rapid and superficial
SYN: hasty, superficial, perfunctory, brief, hurried
💡 *currere (to run). Cursory glance = running quickly over without care*

FASTIDIOUS

adj.

Very attentive to detail; difficult to please; high standards
SYN: meticulous, particular, finicky, exacting, discriminating
💡 *fastidium (loathing of imperfection). Ant: slovenly, careless, negligent*

PAUCITY

noun

The presence of something in only small or insufficient quantities
SYN: scarcity, insufficiency, dearth, shortage, deficiency
💡 *paucus (few). Ant: abundance, surplus, plethora*

UBIQUITOUS

adj.

Present or found everywhere; seeming to appear everywhere at once
SYN: omnipresent, pervasive, universal, prevalent, everywhere
💡 *ubique (everywhere). Ant: rare, scarce, uncommon*

PALPABLE

adj.

Able to be touched or felt; clear and obvious
SYN: tangible, perceptible, noticeable, evident, manifest
💡 *palpare (stroke/touch). A palpable tension = tension you can almost feel physically*

PRECARIOUS

adj.

Not securely held; dependent on chance;

MUNDANE

adj.

Lacking interest or excitement; dull; ordinary

dangerously unstable
SYN: uncertain, unstable, risky, insecure, perilous
💡 *precarious* (obtained by prayer). Ant: stable, secure, safe

SYN: ordinary, commonplace, banal, prosaic, humdrum
💡 *mundus* (world). Trap: 'mysterious' = opposite tone entirely. Ant: extraordinary

BANAL
adj.

Lacking originality; so common as to be obvious and boring
SYN: trite, hackneyed, cliché, mundane, insipid
💡 *ban* (public/communal) = so common it belongs to everyone. Ant: original, fresh

HACKNEYED
adj.

Lacking freshness; overused to the point of meaninglessness
SYN: clichéd, trite, banal, stereotyped, worn-out
💡 *Hackney* horses hired out so often they became exhausted. Ant: original, fresh

PROLIFIC
adj.

Producing many works or results; fertile and productive
SYN: productive, fertile, fruitful, abundant, copious
💡 *proles* (offspring) + *ficus* (making). Ant: barren, unproductive, sterile

EMINENT
adj.

Famous and respected in a field; distinguished; outstanding
SYN: distinguished, prominent, renowned, illustrious, notable
💡 *eminere* (to stand out). Trap: 'imminent' = about to happen soon (different word!)

STRINGENT
adj.

Strict; precise and exacting; demanding compliance
SYN: strict, rigorous, severe, exacting, harsh
💡 *stringere* (tighten). Ant: lenient, lax, flexible

DEBILITATE
verb

Make someone very weak and infirm; weaken or enfeeble
SYN: weaken, enfeeble, enervate, incapacitate, sap
💡 *de* + *bilis* (weak). Ant: invigorate, strengthen, fortify

ENERVATE
verb

Drain of energy or vitality; weaken physically or mentally
SYN: weaken, debilitate, sap, exhaust, devitalise
💡 *e* + *nervus* (sinew) = removing all nerve/strength. Ant: energise, invigorate

OBLIVIOUS
adj.

Not aware of or concerned about what is happening
SYN: unaware, heedless, ignorant, unmindful, inattentive
💡 *oblivio* (forgetting). Trap: 'forgetful' = forgetting past; *oblivious* = unaware in the moment

WARY
adj.

Feeling cautious about possible dangers or problems
SYN: cautious, guarded, vigilant, circumspect, alert
💡 Trap: 'worried' = distressed; *wary* = actively watchful

TURBULENT
adj.

Characterised by conflict, disorder, or confusion
SYN: stormy, tempestuous, chaotic, riotous, volatile
💡 *turba* (crowd/confusion). Ant: calm, placid, serene

UNTENABLE
adj.

Not able to be defended or maintained; indefensible

VACUOUS
adj.

Having or showing a lack of thought or intelligence; empty

SYN: indefensible, unsustainable, groundless, baseless, flawed
💡 *un + tenere (hold) = cannot be held. An untenable position = one that cannot be defended*

SYN: empty, inane, mindless, unintelligent, hollow
💡 *vacuus (empty). Ant: profound, thoughtful, intelligent*

CDS PYQ

Synonyms — Full Option Set with Trap Analysis

Q1. (CDS 2025-I) Choose the word nearest in meaning to INTREPID:

- (a) Cunning
- (b) Reckless
- (c) Fearless
- (d) Cautious

Answer: (c) Fearless

Elimination: (a) Cunning = clever deception — wrong domain entirely. (d) Cautious = opposite direction. (b) Reckless = close trap: shows disregard for danger, but intrepid implies controlled, principled courage. **Fearless** = not afraid = direct synonym of intrepid.

Q2. (CDS 2025-II) Choose the word nearest in meaning to VERBOSE:

- (a) Aggressive
- (b) Silent
- (c) Wordy
- (d) Energetic

Answer: (c) Wordy

Elimination: (a) Aggressive = hostile behaviour — wrong domain. (d) Energetic = physical energy — wrong domain. (b) Silent = trap: verbose is about using too many words, not whether you speak at all. **Wordy** = using many more words than necessary = direct synonym.

Q3. (CDS 2024-II) Choose the word nearest in meaning to CALLOUS:

- (a) Careful
- (b) Courageous
- (c) Calculating

(d) Unfeeling

Answer: (d) Unfeeling

Elimination: (a) Careful = same first letter, different domain. (b) Courageous = different quality entirely. (c) Calculating = cold-minded trap: means scheming/planning; callous means insensitive to others' pain. **Unfeeling** = without feeling for others = direct synonym.

Q4. (CDS 2024-I) Choose the word nearest in meaning to ALACRITY:

- (a) Laziness
- (b) Alertness
- (c) Caution
- (d) Eagerness

Answer: (d) Eagerness

Elimination: (a) Laziness = opposite. (c) Caution = different quality. (b) Alertness = trap: watchful readiness vs alacrity's cheerful, prompt willingness. **Eagerness** = brisk, enthusiastic readiness = direct synonym. Alacrity includes both speed AND enthusiasm.

Q5. (CDS 2023-II) Choose the word nearest in meaning to ACRIMONY:

- (a) Accuracy
- (b) Kindness
- (c) Extremity
- (d) Bitterness

Answer: (d) Bitterness

Elimination: (a) Accuracy — sounds like "acrimony" if read carelessly — pure misdirection. (b) Kindness = opposite. (c) Extremity = intensity of situation — wrong domain. **Bitterness** = sharp ill-feeling in speech/manner = direct synonym. Root: acer (sharp/bitter).

Q6. (CDS 2023-I) Choose the word nearest in meaning to CIRCUMSPECT:

- (a) Confident
- (b) Surrounded
- (c) Cautious
- (d) Detailed

Answer: (c) Cautious

Elimination: (a) Confident = opposite of cautious. (b) Surrounded — trap based on “circum” (around): being surrounded ≠ circumspect. (d) Detailed = meticulous — different quality. Circumspect = looking around before acting = **cautious**.

Q7. (CDS 2022-II) Choose the word nearest in meaning to SPURIOUS:

- (a) Enthusiastic
- (b) Genuine
- (c) Counterfeit
- (d) Spontaneous

Answer: (c) Counterfeit

Elimination: (a) Enthusiastic — wrong domain entirely. (d) Spontaneous — sounds similar in feel but means impulsive, not fake. (b) Genuine — TRAP: this is the antonym of spurious, not the synonym. CDS places the antonym as a trap option. **Counterfeit** = not genuine, fake = direct synonym of spurious.

Q8. (CDS 2022-I) Choose the word nearest in meaning to COGENT:

- (a) Vague
- (b) Convincing
- (c) Complicated
- (d) Agreeable

Answer: (b) Convincing

Elimination: (a) Vague = opposite of cogent. (c) Complicated = complex — wrong quality; cogent is about clarity. (d) Agreeable = pleasant — different domain. Cogent = clear, logical, powerfully persuasive = **convincing**. Root: cogere (drive together).

PART B — ANTONYMS: OPPOSITE IN MEANING

CDS Antonym Trap Principle: The most common trap in CDS antonym questions is placing the *synonym* as one of the options. Students who confuse “opposite” with “similar” fall for it. Always re-read: is the question asking for NEAREST meaning or OPPOSITE meaning?

B1 Core Antonym Pairs – All Confirmed in CDS PYQs

Courage / Character Antonyms MOST FREQUENT

INTREPID / DAUNTLESS (fearless)	↔	TIMID / COWARDLY / PUSILLANIMOUS
AUDACIOUS (bold)	↔	CAUTIOUS / TIMID / CRAVEN
TENACIOUS (persistent)	↔	IRRESOLUTE / VACILLATING / WAVERING
RELENTLESS (unyielding)	↔	LENIENT / MERCIFUL / YIELDING
IMPETUOUS (rash/hasty)	↔	DELIBERATE / CAUTIOUS / MEASURED
MAGNANIMOUS (generous/noble)	↔	PETTY / MEAN-SPIRITED / VINDICTIVE
BENEVOLENT (kind)	↔	MALEVOLENT / MALICIOUS / SPITEFUL
CANDID (frank)	↔	EVASIVE / DECEPTIVE / GUARDED
DILIGENT (hardworking)	↔	INDOLENT / SLOTHFUL / LAZY
SCRUPULOUS (principled)	↔	UNSCRUPULOUS / UNPRINCIPLED / CORRUPT
GREGARIOUS (sociable)	↔	RECLUSIVE / HERMITIC / UNSOCIABLE
AFFABLE / AMIABLE (friendly)	↔	HOSTILE / UNFRIENDLY / ALOOF
ADROIT / DEXTEROUS (skilful)	↔	CLUMSY / INEPT / MALADROIT
DIFFIDENT (shy/modest)	↔	ASSERTIVE / CONFIDENT / BOLD
OBSTINATE / OB DURATE (stubborn)	↔	COMPLIANT / AMENABLE / FLEXIBLE
CALLOUS (heartless)	↔	COMPASSIONATE / EMPATHETIC / SENSITIVE
OSTENTATIOUS (showy)	↔	MODEST / UNASSUMING / UNDERSTATED
PARSIMONIOUS (miserly)	↔	GENEROUS / LAVISH / MUNIFICENT
INSOLENT (rude/arrogant)	↔	RESPECTFUL / DEFERENTIAL / HUMBLE

Intelligence / Knowledge Antonyms

ERUDITE (learned)	↔	IGNORANT / ILLITERATE / UNLETTERED
ASTUTE / SHREWD (clever)	↔	NAIVE / GULLIBLE / CREDULOUS
CREDULOUS (too believing)	↔	SCEPTICAL / INCREDULOUS / CYNICAL
LUCID (clear)	↔	OBSCURER / CRYPTIC / ABSTRUSE

EXPLICIT (clearly stated)	↔	IMPLICIT / VAGUE / AMBIGUOUS
EQUIVOCAL (ambiguous)	↔	UNEQUIVOCAL / EXPLICIT / CLEAR
COGENT (convincing)	↔	FLIMSY / WEAK / UNCONVINCING
SPURIOUS / FALLACIOUS (false)	↔	GENUINE / VALID / AUTHENTIC
PLAUSIBLE (believable)	↔	IMPLAUSIBLE / INCREDIBLE / UNCONVINCING
PRAGMATIC (practical)	↔	IDEALISTIC / IMPRACTICAL / QUIXOTIC
SUBTLE (delicate/not obvious)	↔	OBVIOUS / BLATANT / CONSPICUOUS

Speech / Expression Antonyms

LOQUACIOUS / GARRULOUS (talkative)	↔	TACITURN / RETICENT / LACONIC
VERBOSE (wordy)	↔	SUCCINCT / CONCISE / LACONIC
ELOQUENT (expressive)	↔	INARTICULATE / INCOHERENT / TONGUE-TIED
BREVITY (conciseness)	↔	VERBOSITY / PROLIXITY / LONG-WINDEDNESS
REDUNDANT (unnecessary)	↔	ESSENTIAL / NECESSARY / INDISPENSABLE
CAUSTIC / SARDONIC (biting)	↔	GENTLE / SINCERE / GOOD-NATURED

Emotion / Mood Antonyms

EBULLIENT / VIVACIOUS (lively)	↔	DESPONDENT / DEJECTED / TORPID
SANGUINE (optimistic)	↔	PESSIMISTIC / DESPONDENT / GLOOMY
APATHY (indifference)	↔	ENTHUSIASM / ZEAL / PASSION
FERVENT (passionate)	↔	INDIFFERENT / APATHETIC / LUKEWARM
EUPHORIA (intense happiness)	↔	DYSPHORIA / MELANCHOLY / DESPAIR
PLACID / SEDATE (calm)	↔	TURBULENT / VOLATILE / AGITATED
TORPID (sluggish)	↔	ENERGETIC / VIVACIOUS / ANIMATED
VOLATILE (unstable)	↔	STABLE / CONSTANT / EQUABLE
STOIC (emotionally controlled)	↔	EMOTIONAL / EXPRESSIVE / EXCITABLE

Moral / Action Antonyms

MITIGATE (lessen)	↔	AGGRAVATE / EXACERBATE / INTENSIFY
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AMELIORATE (improve)	↔	WORSEN / DETERIORATE / EXACERBATE
ALLAY / ASSUAGE / APPEASE (reduce/calm)	↔	PROVOKE / INTENSIFY / AGGRAVATE
CONDONE (overlook)	↔	CONDEMN / CENSURE / PENALISE
REVERE (respect deeply)	↔	DESPISE / ABHOR / DISDAIN
NEFARIOUS / HEINOUS (wicked)	↔	VIRTUOUS / RIGHTEOUS / ADMIRABLE
ABHOR (hate)	↔	REVERE / ADORE / CHERISH
AUSTERE (severe/plain)	↔	LAVISH / INDULGENT / EXTRAVAGANT
OMINOUS (threatening)	↔	AUSPICIOUS / PROMISING / PROPITIOUS
FURTIVE / CLANDESTINE (secret)	↔	OVERT / OPEN / TRANSPARENT
UBIQUITOUS (everywhere)	↔	RARE / SCARCE / UNCOMMON
PROLIFIC (productive)	↔	BARREN / UNPRODUCTIVE / STERILE
WANE (decrease)	↔	WAX / GROW / INCREASE
ABATE (subside)	↔	AUGMENT / INTENSIFY / ESCALATE
TURBULENT (chaotic)	↔	CALM / PLACID / SERENE
MUNDANE / BANAL (ordinary)	↔	EXTRAORDINARY / EXCEPTIONAL / NOVEL
STRINGENT (strict)	↔	LENIENT / LAX / PERMISSIVE
PRECARIOUS (unstable)	↔	STABLE / SECURE / SAFE
EMINENT (distinguished)	↔	OBSCURE / UNKNOWN / INSIGNIFICANT
ARDUOUS (strenuous)	↔	EASY / EFFORTLESS / FACILE
FASTIDIOUS (particular)	↔	CARELESS / SLOVENLY / NEGLIGENT
HACKNEYED / BANAL (overused)	↔	ORIGINAL / FRESH / INNOVATIVE
EGREGIOUS (outrageously bad)	↔	ADMIRABLE / PRAISEWORTHY / EXEMPLARY
DIFFIDENT (shy)	↔	ASSERTIVE / CONFIDENT / BOLD
ACRIMONY (bitterness)	↔	GOODWILL / AMITY / CORDIALITY
TENACIOUS (persistent)	↔	IRRESOLUTE / VACILLATING / SPINELESS

⚠ These are the antonym pairs where CDS places a “trap” option:

The trap is a word that *looks like an antonym* but changes the degree, register, or type — not the actual opposite. Reading options carefully against the *exact* meaning of the question word is the only defence.

Word	Correct Antonym	Trap Option (wrong)	Why trap is wrong
VERBOSE (wordy)	succinct, laconic	<i>silent</i>	Silent = not speaking; verbose = too many words when speaking — different dimension
SANGUINE (optimistic)	pessimistic, despondent	<i>pale</i>	Pale is a different meaning of sanguine (blood-red); CDS tests the psychological meaning
PRAGMATIC (practical)	idealistic, impractical	<i>negative</i>	Negative ≠ opposite of practical; idealistic (head in clouds) = true opposite
CANDID (honest, frank)	evasive, deceptive	<i>critical</i>	Critical = judgemental; candid = frank/honest — opposite is evasive, not flattering
TENACIOUS (persistent, positive)	irresolute, vacillating	<i>obstinate</i>	Obstinate = also persistent but negatively so — not the antonym
FERVENT (passionate)	indifferent, apathetic	<i>quiet</i>	Quiet = low volume; fervent is about passion intensity, not volume
ALLAY (reduce, calm)	aggravate, intensify	<i>refuse</i>	Refuse = decline; allay means to reduce (fear, pain) — opposite is to increase it
PARSIMONIOUS (miserly)	munificent, lavish	<i>poor</i>	Poor = having no money; parsimonious = having money but refusing to spend it
NOTORIOUS (famous for bad)	reputable, esteemed	<i>unknown</i>	Notorious has a qualitative dimension (bad fame); absence of fame is not the antonym

Word	Correct Antonym	Trap Option (wrong)	Why trap is wrong
MITIGATE (lessen severity)	aggravate, exacerbate	<i>alleviate</i>	Alleviate is the SYNONYM of mitigate, not the antonym! CDS places synonyms as traps in antonym Qs

CDS PYQ

Antonyms — Full Option Set with Trap Analysis

Q9. (CDS 2025-I) Choose the word opposite in meaning to LOQUACIOUS:

- (a) Amusing
- (b) Loud
- (c) Rude
- (d) Reticent

Answer: (d) Reticent

Elimination: (a) Amusing = entertaining — different quality. (b) Loud — trap: loquacious is about quantity of words, not volume; you can be loquacious in a whisper. (c) Rude = different dimension. Loquacious = excessively talkative. Exact opposite = **reticent** (reluctant to speak, reserved).

Q10. (CDS 2025-II) Choose the word opposite in meaning to BENEVOLENT:

- (a) Magnificent
- (b) Malevolent
- (c) Indifferent
- (d) Relevant

Answer: (b) Malevolent

Elimination: (a) Magnificent — different root (magnus = great); sounds similar but means grand/splendid. (c) Indifferent = absence of feeling; benevolent is actively good-wishing, not just absent. (d) Relevant = completely different domain.

Malevolent = mal (bad) + vol (wish) = wishing harm = exact opposite of benevolent.

Q11. (CDS 2024-II) Choose the word opposite in meaning to MITIGATE:

- (a) Alleviate

- (b) Mediate
- (c) Aggravate
- (d) Moderate

Answer: (c) Aggravate

Elimination: (a) Alleviate — **TRAP:** this is the SYNONYM of mitigate, not the antonym! CDS deliberately places the synonym as a trap in antonym questions. (b) Mediate = negotiate — different meaning. (d) Moderate = keep within limits. **Aggravate** = make worse = exact antonym of mitigate.

Q12. (CDS 2024-I) Choose the word opposite in meaning to VERBOSE:

- (a) Articulate
- (b) Vague
- (c) Silent
- (d) Succinct

Answer: (d) Succinct

Elimination: (a) Articulate = speaking clearly — about quality of speech, not quantity. (b) Vague = unclear — different dimension. (c) Silent — trap: verbose = too many words; opposite relates to word count. Silent = not speaking at all (wrong dimension). **Succinct** = few, precise words = direct antonym of verbose.

Q13. (CDS 2023-II) Choose the word opposite in meaning to CANDID:

- (a) Honest
- (b) Critical
- (c) Evasive
- (d) Complicated

Answer: (c) Evasive

Elimination: (a) Honest — **TRAP:** honest is the synonym of candid; placing it in an antonym question is a classic CDS trick. (b) Critical = judgemental; candid is frank, not the opposite of critical. (d) Complicated = about complexity, not honesty. **Evasive** = avoiding directness = exact opposite of candid.

Q14. (CDS 2023-I) Choose the word opposite in meaning to AUSTERE:

- (a) Colourful
- (b) Lenient

(c) Lavish

(d) Emotional

Answer: (c) Lavish

Elimination: (a) Colourful = visual quality – partially overlaps but not the full antonym. (b) Lenient – trap: austere includes being strict, so lenient seems opposite; but austere also means frugal/severe in lifestyle. (d) Emotional = different dimension.

Lavish = rich, extravagant, indulgent = exact opposite of austere in lifestyle.

Q15. (CDS 2022-II) Choose the word opposite in meaning to TURBULENT:

(a) Violent

(b) Placid

(c) Rapid

(d) Silent

Answer: (b) Placid

Elimination: (a) Violent = similar in intensity, not opposite. (c) Rapid = fast – different dimension. (d) Silent = antonym of “noisy”, not of “turbulent”. Turbulent = characterised by conflict, disorder, agitation. **Placid** = calm, peaceful, undisturbed = direct antonym.

Q16. (CDS 2022-I) Choose the word opposite in meaning to SANGUINE:

(a) Pale

(b) Cowardly

(c) Despondent

(d) Cautious

Answer: (c) Despondent

Elimination: (a) Pale – trap: sanguine literally means blood-red/rosy, so “pale” might seem opposite; but CDS always tests the psychological meaning = optimistic. (b) Cowardly = different dimension. (d) Cautious = different quality. Sanguine = optimistic. **Despondent** = in low spirits, pessimistic = exact antonym.



① Bravery

Synonyms

- intrepid = dauntless = fearless = valiant
- audacious = bold (can be reckless)
- tenacious = resolute = steadfast (positive)
- obstinate = obdurate = recalcitrant (negative)

② Talking Synonyms

- loquacious = garrulous = verbose = wordy
- taciturn = reticent = reserved = tight-lipped
- laconic = succinct = terse = concise
- eloquent = articulate = fluent

③ Wisdom

Synonyms

- astute = sagacious = perspicacious = shrewd
- erudite = scholarly = learned
- lucid = clear = coherent = intelligible
- spurious = fallacious = bogus = counterfeit

④ Emotion

Synonyms

- sanguine = optimistic = hopeful = buoyant
- ebullient = vivacious = exuberant = lively
- despondent = dejected = forlorn
- apathy = indifference = torpor = listlessness

⑤ Reduce / Increase Pairs

- mitigate = alleviate = assuage = allay (all reduce)
- aggravate = exacerbate = intensify (all increase)
- abate = diminish = wane = subside
- augment = increase = amplify = expand

⑥ Key Antonym Pairs

- benevolent ↔ malevolent (same root)
- candid ↔ evasive; verbose ↔ succinct
- loquacious ↔ taciturn/reticent
- mitigate ↔ aggravate; abate ↔ augment

⑦ More Key Antonyms

- eminent ↔ obscure; austere ↔ lavish
- turbulent ↔ placid; volatile ↔ stable
- prolific ↔ barren; ubiquitous ↔ rare
- ominous ↔ auspicious; arduous ↔ effortless

⚠ CDS Antonym Traps

- 'alleviate' in antonym of MITIGATE → TRAP (synonym!)
- 'honest' in antonym of CANDID → TRAP (synonym!)
- 'silent' as antonym of VERBOSE → TRAP (wrong dimension)
- 'loud' as antonym of LOQUACIOUS → TRAP (wrong dimension)

⚠ CDS Synonym Traps

- 'reckless' for INTREPID → TRAP (wrong degree)
- 'calculating' for CALLOUS → TRAP (wrong type)
- 'alertness' for ALACRITY → TRAP (wrong type)
- 'genuine' as option in SPURIOUS Q → TRAP (antonym!)

💡 CDS 2-Step

Strategy

- Step 1: Eliminate clearly wrong domain (2 options)
- Step 2: Check DEGREE (mild vs extreme)
- Step 3: Check TONE (positive vs negative)
- Step 4: Check EXACT meaning (not just category)

💡 Negative Trait

Cluster

- nefarious = heinous = wicked = villainous
- callous = heartless = unfeeling
- ostentatious = pompous = pretentious
- parsimonious = miserly = stingy = niggardly

💡 Moral Quality

Pairs

- benevolent ↔ malevolent; revere ↔ abhor
- condone ↔ condemn; wane ↔ wax
- fervent ↔ apathetic; sanguine ↔ despondent
- furtive/ clandestine ↔ overt/transparent



Mock Tests



Subject Quiz



Telegram

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