## Linda Berrey State Contest Director

Turning Students into Word Wizards: Strategies That Lead to Success in UIL Spelling and Vocabulary

- Man is separated from all other animals by the ability to communicate across Space and Time.
- This ability is made possible by Written Language.
- Communication in Writing is made possible by Man's agreement on the symbols he uses.

# • The Agreed sequence of those written symbols is called

Spelling.

#### The Importance of Correct Spelling

When our spelling is perfect, it's invisible. But when it's flawed, it prompts strong negative associations. --Marilyn vos Savant

Take care that you never spell a word wrong. Always, before you write a word, consider how it is spelled, and, if you do not remember, turn to a dictionary. It produces great praise to a lady to spell well. --Thomas Jefferson in a letter to his daughter Martha

Spelling counts. Spelling is not merely a tedious exercise in a fourth-grade classroom. Spelling is one of the outward and visible marks of a disciplined mind. --James J. Kilpatrick Journalist and grammarian

#### Why so much vocabulary??...

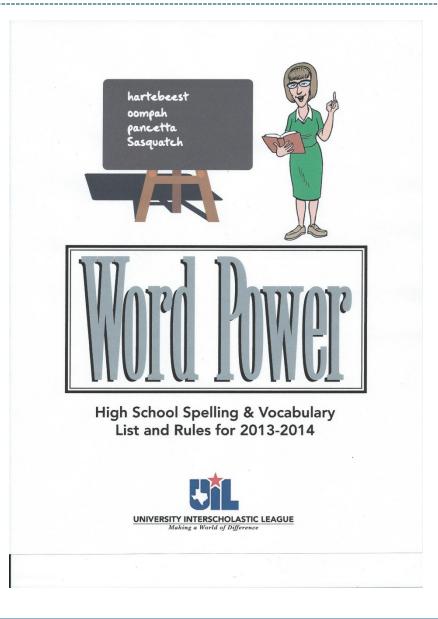
Vocabulary is the best single indicator of intellectual ability and an accurate predictor of success in school.

--W.B. Elley, education professor emeritus and literacy researcher

Knowing how to spell words correctly is important, but it is equally or perhaps more important to know what words mean and how to use them accurately. As Mark Twain once remarked, "The difference between an almost right word and a right word is really a large matter—it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning".

To put it simply, spelling and vocabulary are important! Correctly spelled words, coupled with precise and compelling diction, are two of the most important aspects of effective communication.

This is the **Official Word** list for this **Contest.** It also contains the rules and procedures for the contest as well as a sample test. The UIL **Constitution is** the source for all the rules.



UIL Spelling and Vocabulary Contest

#### PART I. PROOFREADING AND VOCABULARY PART II. SPELLING FROM DICTATION PART III. TIE-BREAKER

# Part I Proofreading

#### **Part I Proofreading**

Worth **15 points** - requires that contestants given sets of five-word lists recognize the word which is misspelled in each list and write it spelled correctly.

- <u>**Most</u>** of the words from this section of the test are from Word Power.</u>
- **Up to twenty percent (20%)** of the words on this part of the test <u>may</u> be from other sources.
- Questions 1-15 of Part I are comprised of 15 Proofreading sets. Each question is worth one point each.

# Part I Vocabulary

**15 points** - multiple choice test of word origins and meaning.

- The **350 words** designated for this part of the test are **marked** in the Word Power list with a DOT.
- The Vocabulary section has **NO** misspelled words, but contestants are still responsible for the correct spelling of these words.

Questions 16-30 are comprised of vocabulary entries and are worth one point each.

# Part II. Spelling from Dictation

**70 points** - 70 words, pronounced at a rate of 4 words per minute - one every fifteen seconds. A definition will be given for every word.

#### Part III. Tie-breaker

**20 words**, pronounced at 4 words per minute with definitions given for all words.

With the exception of the State Meet, this part is scored **ONLY** in case of ties and then only those involved in the tie are scored.

#### Sources of Words

At least **80%** of the test words for questions 1-15 of Part I and Parts II and III come from the Word Power list. Up to **20%** come from...

- Common Usage,
- Words from school course materials, such as textbook glossaries,
- News and Current Events Words and Proper names
- Vocabulary Builders roots and affixes which appear in the list as other parts of speech,
- and other words of interest.

#### How to prepare for those dreaded outside words...

- Study roots and affixes.
- Read widely and to PAY ATTENTION to words that are new to you.
- Go to the Internet and find lists of SAT or college vocabulary. For instance, quizlet.com has a list called "College Board Top 100 SAT/ACT Vocabulary Words." Majortests.com also has helpful word lists. A great list of 5,000 (yes, 5,000!) words can be found at freevocabulary.com
- Take vocabulary tests on Facebook

#### **The Official Dictionary**

### The official dictionary of this contest is *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Third, Fourth, or Fifth edition.

This contest is based **only** on the definitions, pronunciations, and usages in **this dictionary**.**All** the contest words are in **this dictionary**.

#### In Case of Error in the Word Power List

• If the Word Power list has an error in spelling, the correction is announced in the Official Notices of the *Leaguer*, the UIL's newspaper, which is now found online at the UIL website.

# Using Language Skills to Build Strength in Spelling

## Phonics, Pronunciation, and Spelling

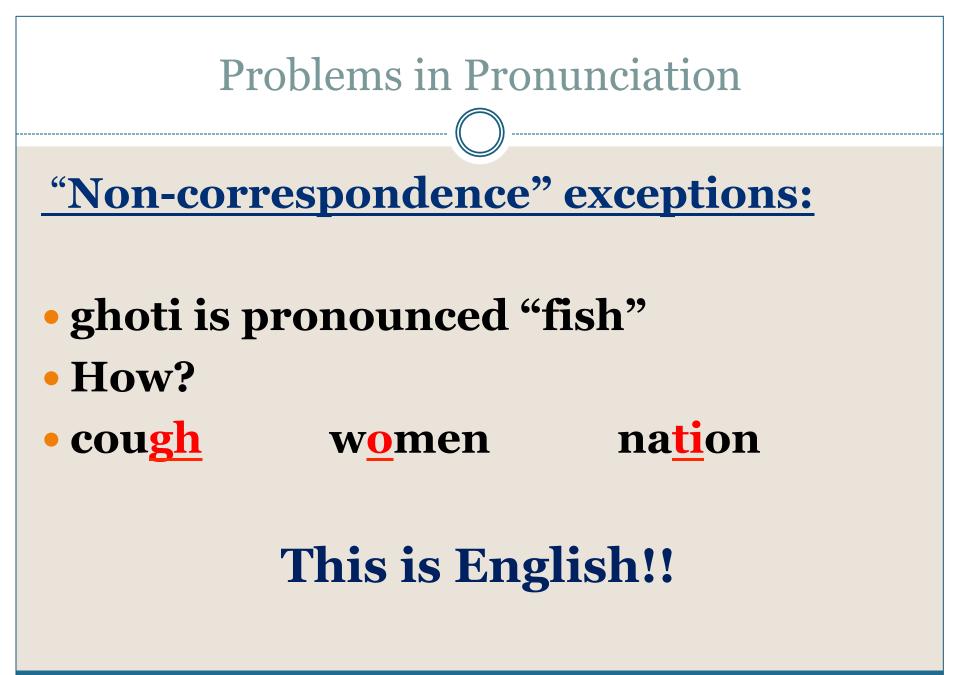
# How to spell a really long word? Sound it out!

#### **SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS**

#### SUPER CALI FRAGIL ISTIC EXPIALI DO CIOUS

## **Problems in Pronunciation**

# PRONOUNCE ghoti



#### Watching out for the schwa = $\partial$

acolyte (ăk´ə-līt') 0 adenoma (ăd´ən-o´mə) e, a babushka (bə-boosh'kə) a, a cacophonous (kə-käf'ə-nəs) a,o, and ou distensible (dĭ-stĭn´sə-bəl) i, blend indecipherable (ĭn´dĭ-sī´fər-ə-bəl) e, a, blend pachydermatous (păk´ĭ-dûr´mə-təs) a, ou (These words are not from this year's list)

#### **Problems in Pronunciation**

## **Consonant Blends**

**Consonant pairs** *(bl-,br-, ch, etc.)* have blended sounds that are different from that of the letters when pronounced separately.

- Diphthongs (Vowel pairs) such as -ae, -ai, -au, -ea, etc.) are the same issue.
- Separating these pairs into their component sounds, exaggerating each sound, facilitates spelling.

#### One solution

**Sound Color = exaggerated "Pure" letter-sound Consonant/vowel blends can be more** troublesome; they may sound the same but look different: **Precious > preshus Contentious > contenshus** o precious > presheeus o contentious > contenteeus

### **Speak the Spelling!**

#### **Troublesome Spelling Items**

### Compound words

- Words with non-alphabetical marks
- Words with alternate spellings
- Capitalized words
- Words with optional capitalization
- Words where definition determines capitalization

### Examples from this year's Word Power list

#### Two-word test items

- Kodiak bear
- in extenso
- feme sole
- data processor
- writer's block
- viva voce

### <u>Non-alphabetic</u> <u>elements</u>

- béchamel sauce
- double-entendre
- entrepôt
- All Fools' Day
- fourragère

#### Examples from this year's Word Power List

#### <u>Alternate Spellings</u>

 ascendancy or ascendency

 clerestory or clearstory

 crape myrtle or crepe myrtle  yogurt, or yoghurt or yoghourt

 Magna Carta or Magna Charta

 lacrimator or lachrymator

### Capitalization

#### <u>Capitalization</u> <u>Required</u>

- Deccan
- Gestaltist
- Louis Seize
- Wounded Knee
- Novocain (trademark)

#### <u>Capitalization</u> <u>Optional</u>

- alastor, Alastor
- philistinism, Philistinism

#### <u>Capitalization</u> <u>depends on the</u> <u>definition given</u>

- euonymus =any of various shrubs
- Euonymus = the genus
- mecca=center of activity
- Mecca =city in Saudi Arabia

## Root Words, Language History, and Spelling

- Words can be put together from source words and root words to form words that never existed before: Tele = distance
- -metrics = measurement
- -phony = sound
- -graphy = writing
- -vision = viewing

# New Needs = New words from old parts

Television Telephone Telemetry Telegraph

#### **Root Words and Affixes**

- a- : without
- angio- : pain
- arterio- : artery
- arthro- : joints
- cardio-: heart
- cranio- : skull
- dys -: unhealthy
- -ectomy : cutting out
- eu- : healthy

- -graphy: recording, writing
- hemo- : blood
- -itis: inflammation
- laryngo- :throat
- lipo-: fat
- litho-: stone
- meter : measure
- myelo- : muscle

#### **Root Words and Affixes**

- neuro- : nerve
- -ology: study
- oto- : ear
- -otomy : cutting into
- patho- : illness
- -pathy : disease
- peri- : around
- -pnea : breathing
- rhino- : nose

- thoraco- : chest
- thrombo- : clot
- trauma- : damage or injury
- ...and there are many more that you can find as they are used in the *WordPower list.*
- Google <u>**Root Words**</u> for much more on this topic.

#### **Root Words and Affixes**

- Oto- = ear
- -rhino- = nose
- -laryng- = throat
- -ologist = One who studies

Ear, Nose and Throat doctor = Otorhinolaryngologist

### **Root Words and Affixes**

As you study the Word Power list, especially for Vocabulary Words, make lists of the Root Words, prefixes, and suffixes you identify.
That way you **learn the pieces once** and have them every time you need them, such as when you take the SAT.

# **Basic Spelling Rules**

• Words Ending in a Silent *e* 

Before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel to a word ending in a silent *e*, drop the *e* (with some exceptions).

- amaze + ing = amazing
- nerve + ous = nervous

**Exceptions:** Words ending in a soft "g" sound, such as *change* + *able* = *changeable*; *courage* + *ous* = *courageous* 

### Words Ending in a Consonant

In words of more than one syllable, double the final consonant when the word ends with one consonant preceded by one vowel AND when the word is accented on the last syllable.

be GIN + ing = beginning
per MIT + ing = permitting
re FER + ing = referring

Note that in the new words formed with suffixes, the stress remains on the SAME syllable.

In the following examples the accent does NOT remain on the same syllable; thus, the final consonant is **NOT** doubled.

RE fer + ence = reference

CON fer +ence = conference

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PRE fer + ence = preference
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# Prefixes and Suffixes in Spelling

- When adding a prefix to a word, do not change the spelling of the base word. When a prefix creates a double letter, keep both letters.
- ir + regular = irregular
- il + logical = illogical
- mis + spell = misspell
- When adding the suffix *–ness* to a word ending in *n*, keep both *n*'s.
- sudden + ness = suddenness
- thin + ness = thinness

• Remember this rule learned in elementary school: *i* before *e* except after *c* or sounded long *a*.

*i* before *e*: thief, relieve, grieve, niece, field except after *c*: conceit, perceive, ceiling, receipt sounded long *a*: skein, vein, feint

Exceptions: either, weird, seize, leisure

# Rule for using -ible or -able

- If the root is **not** a complete word, add –ible. For example, visible, horrible, terrible, possible, edible.
- If the root **is** a complete word, add –able. For example, fashionable, laughable, suitable, comfortable.
- If the root is a complete word ending in -e, drop the final -e and add -able. For example, advisable, desirable, valuable, debatable.
- Once again, however, exceptions exist: contemptible, digestible, flexible, responsible, irritable, inevitable.

# When to use -sede, -ceed, or -cede

Only one English word ends in **–sede**: supersede (often seen on UIL tests!) Only three words end in **–ceed**: exceed, proceed, and succeed.

All other verbs ending in the "seed" sound are spelled with –**cede**, as in concede, precede, recede, and secede.

### Organize for Learning

All of these features of words in the WordPower list can be used to organize the words to help you learn them.

Put words with similar features together in Word Families.

# Word Families

- Words with common or similar characteristics
- Word forms
- Words with non-alphabetic elements
- Alternate spellings
- Capitalization (Required, Optional, for Definition)
- Root words and Affixes
- Contexts

### **Contexts and Word Families**

- Trademarks
- Medical terms
  - Legal terms
  - Food terms
- Political terms
- Musical terms
- Words from the same language
- Words with non-alphabetic elements

# **Non-Alphabetic Written Symbols**

- Words which have come in to English from other languages may have non-alphabetic features which designate pronunciation, such as
- the tilde ~
- the circumflex ^ and caron
- the cedilla,
- the dieresis " or umlaut
- and the acute ' and grave ` accents

These are Pronunciation features and must be used correctly in spelling the word correctly.

Ways to Study and Prepare

### How to begin?

- Understand the team aspect of this contest and encourage and support your teammates!
- Expect to devote a good deal of time to preparing for this contest. It takes work to produce winners!
- Have fun! If you are bored or uninterested in this contest, you will likely not be successful! A love for words is a must!
- Be on the lookout for words you haven't seen before. Write them down and share with your team!
- Purchase resource materials...more about this later!
- Plan to compete in invitational meets.

# **Create Study Materials**

- Word Cards and Practice sets
  - o Look up each word;
  - On a 3 x 5 card:
    - •Write the definition;
    - •Write the derivation (root or origin)

• Write the pronunciation given and the pronunciation that reflects the "sound color" of the vowels in unaccented syllables.

### **Establish a Context**

Write sentences with the words that are clues to their meaning. That way, you remember the entire idea, the sound of the context sentence, and the clue to the meaning. This can help with vocabulary and proofreading questions.

Instead of skipping the words you do not know when you come to them, write them down or highlight them and look them up. (That works for reading for your classwork, too)

#### Establish a Context

- When you have written the word, its definition, derivation, and pronunciation on the card, <u>write a</u> <u>sentence that uses the word in its appropriate</u> <u>context.</u>
- Pronounce the word and listen to the way it sounds. Repeat it several times if it is a hard word.
- Say the word. Spell the word. Say the word.
- Say the word. Write the word. Say the word.

## Ways to Study and Prepare

#### Word Cards

#### Practice Sets

- Word Families
- o Word Contexts
- o Word Structure
- Words with Capitals
- o Words with Non-Alphabetic Symbols
- **Study Buddies**
- Practice Rate: 1 word every 15 seconds
- Study Games Scrabble, et cetera

## Ways to Study and Prepare

- Source-of-Error Check: "How did I make that mistake?"
- Look up new words in your reading
- Mix-and-Match Roots and Affixes a New Game?
- Audiotape
  - o Purchased or Teacher-made
- Self-made Pronounced list– Cell phone file?
- To hear words pronounced, try www.mydictionary.com

- Lydia: You are such a tatterdemalion! Go rusticate!
- Kendall: I hope you get the screaming meemies, you varlet!
- Lydia: You wisenheimer! You think you're a whizbang wonk but vox populi says you're really just a boondoggling Walter Mitty!
- Kendall: You are gauche and lack erudition! Go fall off a cuesta and catch kyphosis!
- Lydia: Your floruit is over! I hope you become an old feme covert making feijoada and falafel!

# **Cautions for Practice**

- Speakers may omit sounds or add sounds in such words as different, leverage, surprise, temperament, recognize, history.
- Speakers may transpose (switch) letters in pronouncing such words as irrelevant, hundred, realtor.
- Make sure you are hearing the word as it is to be written.
- Use Competition Rate of pronunciation

– four words a minute = 15 seconds per word

# **Practice writing legibly**

If graders can't tell what a letter is, they isolate it from the rest of the word by placing their thumbs or cards on either side of it.

If a letter is unrecognizable, it is incorrect. Two of the three graders must agree that the letter is correct or it is a missed word.

Use standard handwriting or print.

Make a **clear distinction** between upper- and lower-case letters – DO NOT USE ALL CAPITALS!

#### Winners Double-check Results

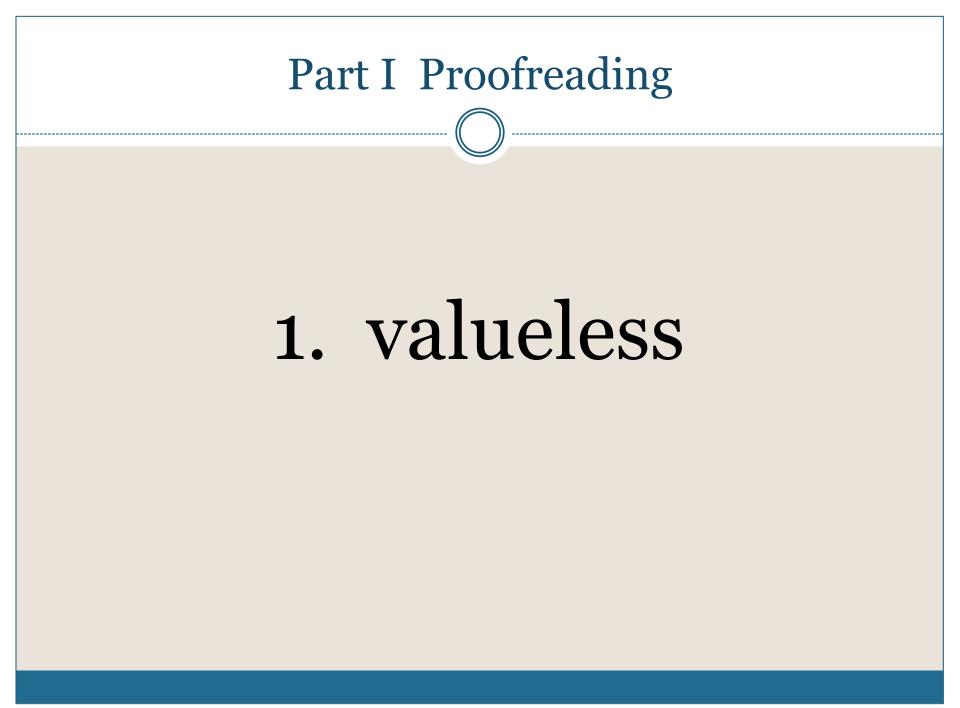
At contests, always use the fifteen minute
 Verification Period between the scoring of the papers and the announcement of Final Results to check the computation of your score.

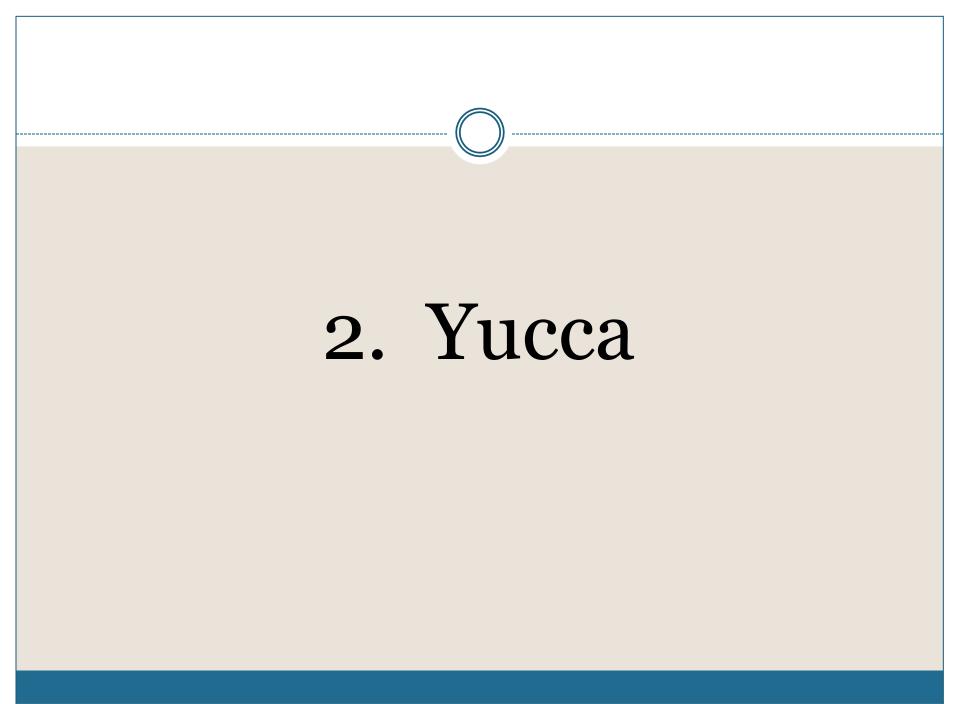
#### **Winners Prepare**

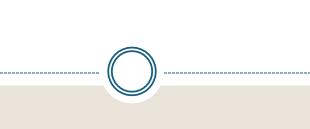
# Practice, Practice, Practice If you prepare, you will be a winner!

#### **PRACTICE TEST**

# Let's apply lessons learned...



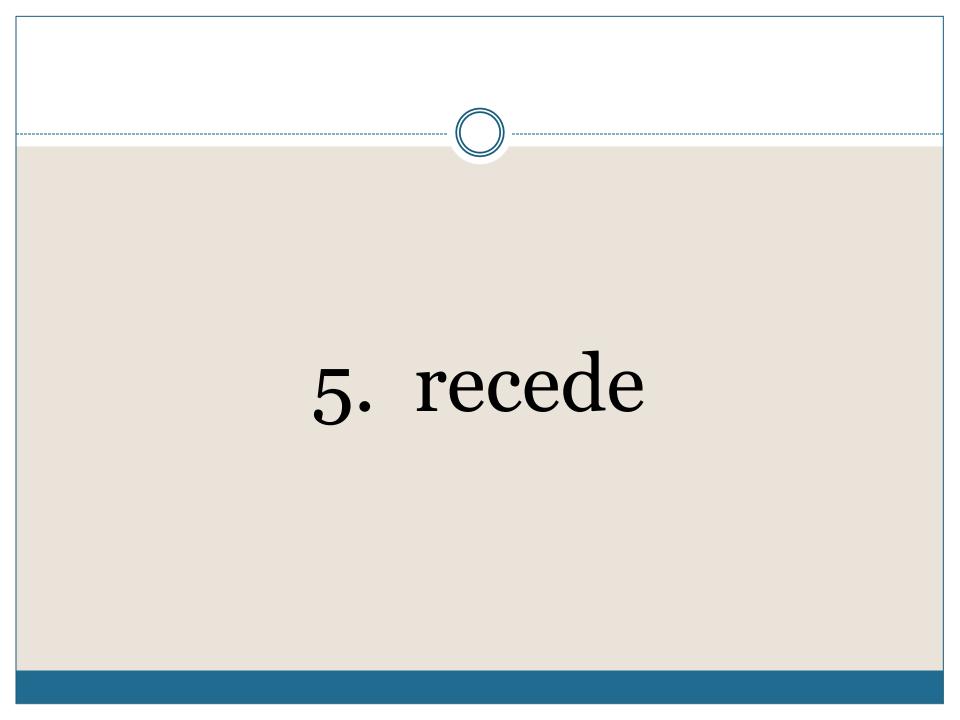




# 3. Novocain

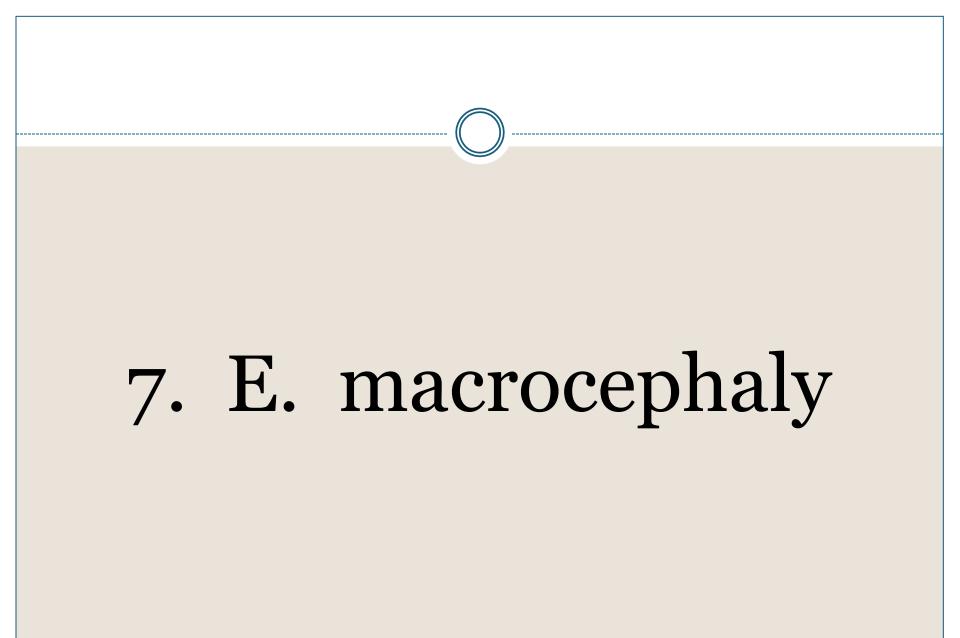


# 4. posttraumatic





# 6. D. bellicose





# 8. A. pentadactyl



# 9. C. subterranean



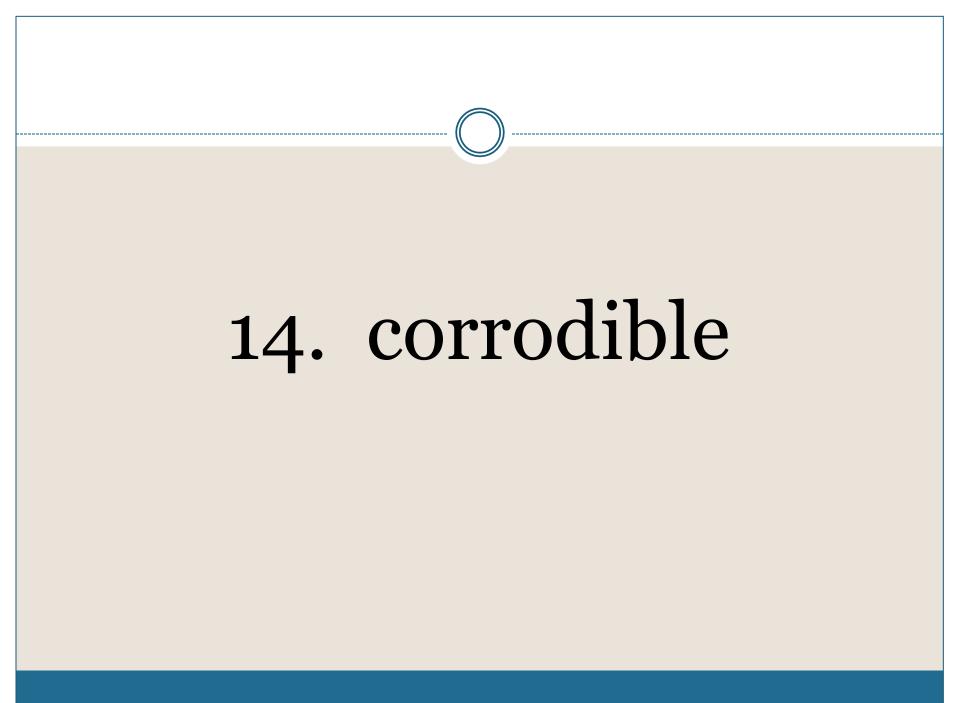
# 10. D. stupefaction

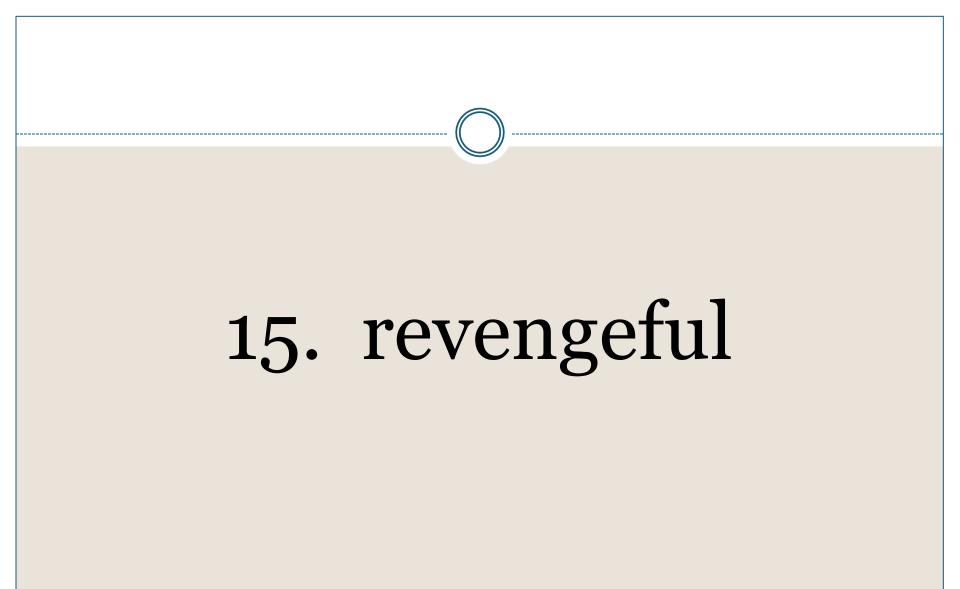


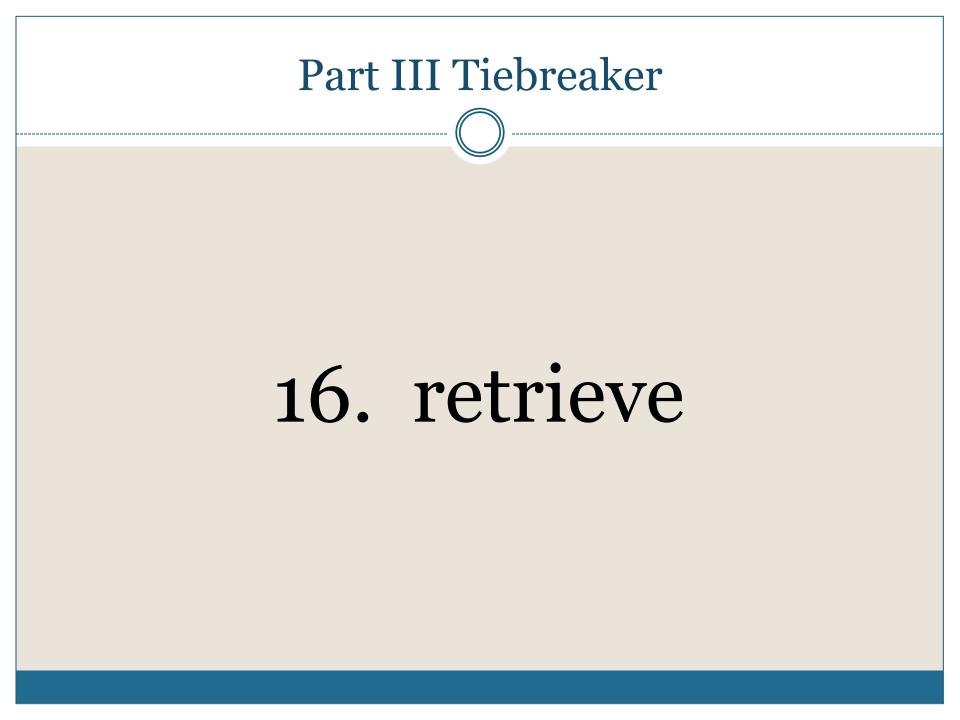
#### 11. deceitful



## 13. underreact

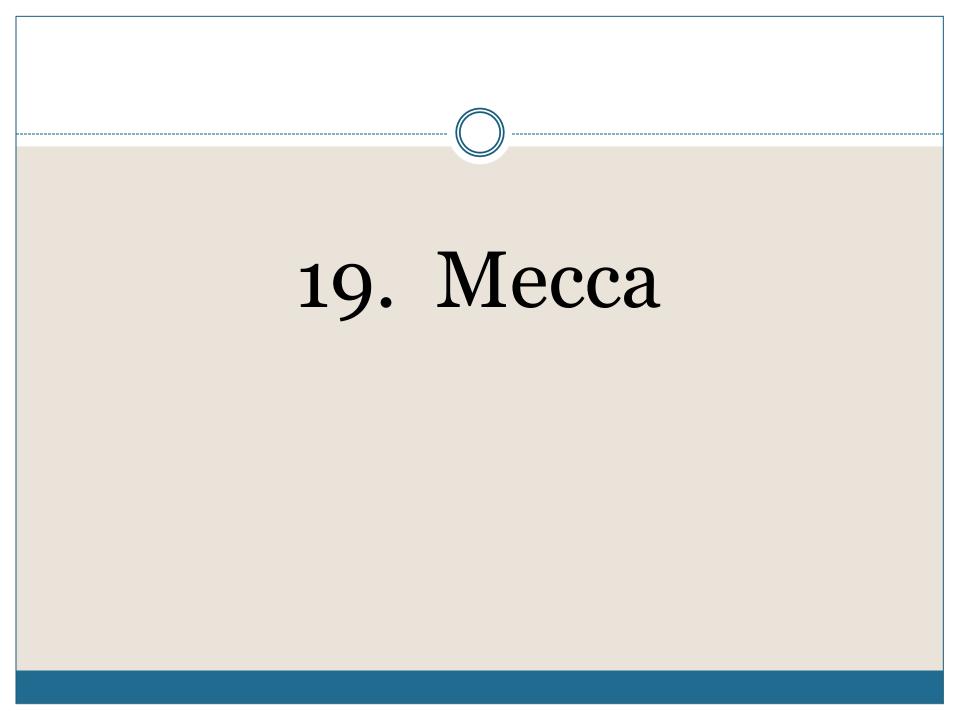


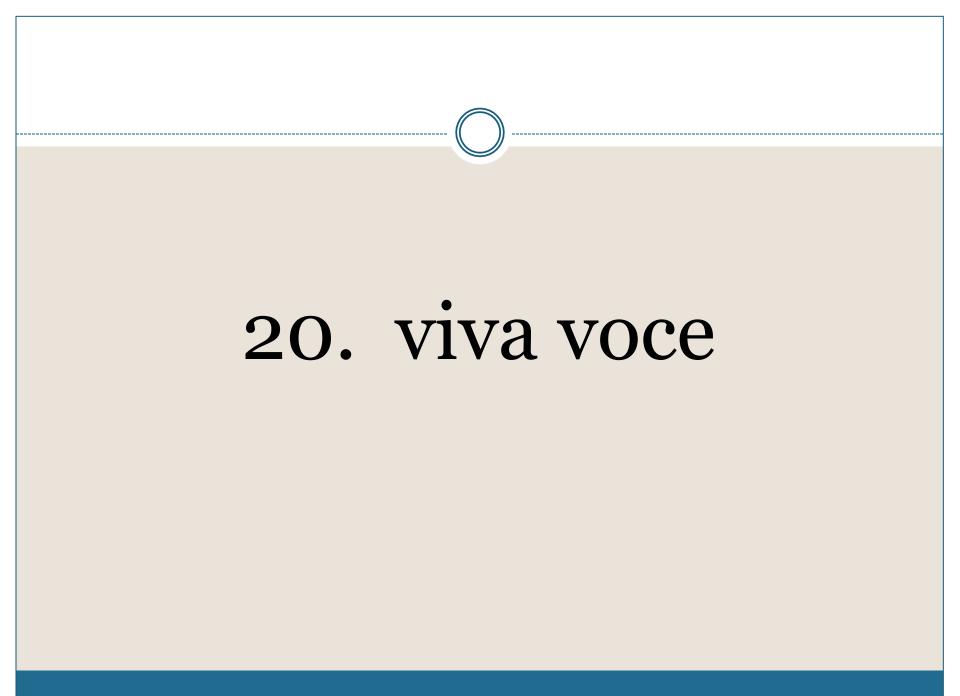




## 17. bioenvironmental

## 18. decipherable





# How to navigate the UIL website

### UIL Website: academics@uilutexas.org

Q: How do I find study materials? A: Click on "resources" tab (far upper right hand side), scroll down to "additional resources," then look for Spelling and Vocabulary resources.

Q: How do I access this year's Word Power?

A: Find the box labeled "Academic Study Materials," then click the box labeled "Order Here." The digital copy is free! Q: Does UIL offer any spelling study guides?

A: Yes! Next to the free digital Word Power icon, you will see a 2016 UIL Study Packet, which is made up of last year's District, Regional, and State tests, along with the answer keys. • Q: How do I find out about invitational meets near my school?

A: On the middle right-hand side of the website, you will see a link entitled "Invitational Meet." Click on "Listings" button.

## Good luck in becoming Word Wizards!!