

# Classic Words

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What words do students really need to know if they are to read comfortably in the classics of English and American literature? My ten-year study of 35,000 examples from 130 different works indicates that the following words appear with high frequency. They are the top 100 words in my *Classic Words* database, in descending order of frequency, and they appear even in so-called children's classics, such as *Tom Sawyer*, *Peter Pan*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and *The Call of the Wild*.

countenance  
profound  
manifest  
serene  
sublime  
prodigious  
singular  
clamor  
visage  
abate  
allude  
grotesque  
undulate  
acute  
vivid  
venerate  
exquisite  
melancholy  
incredulous  
traverse

repose  
lurid  
languid  
superfluous  
sagacity  
vulgar  
placid  
tremulous  
odious  
pallor  
abyss  
stolid  
condescend  
wistful  
prostrate  
remonstrate  
palpable  
vex  
amiable  
perplex  
portent  
peremptory  
somber  
importune  
audible  
expostulate  
subtle  
tangible  
vivacious  
despond  
doleful  
pervade  
pensive  
apprehension  
procure  
abject  
austere  
magnanimous  
oppress  
oblique  
sallow  
ignominy

eccentric  
resolute  
articulate  
furtive  
fain  
genial  
mien  
affect  
billow  
confound  
wan  
indolent  
maxim  
reproach  
morose  
latter  
conjure  
retort  
antipathy  
alacrity  
animated  
vestige  
verdure  
adjacent  
rebuke  
zenith  
inexorable  
livid  
din  
dilate  
fortnight  
abash  
profane  
imperious  
conjecture  
swarthy  
impute  
appellation

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