

Refining Word Meaning *Bert was a really good singer, and he knew some really good songs. Whenever we were really hurting for entertainment at one of our parties and we wanted to make sure that it would be really good, we asked Bert to sing a song, one that everyone would really like.*

The adverbs *very* and *really* are overworked and should be avoided whenever possible. Many words include the idea of very or really in their meanings. For example *very hungry* could mean *starving* or *famished* (one of which is more hungry than the other, by the way). Here is a list of *very/really* words for which you could find and write a more vivid adjective (or two).

On the back of this page I've listed a plethora of possibilities—a mini thesaurus if you will, in case your mind is *really* empty (i.e. *vacuous*) Make these dead adjectives come alive.

Very/really...

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. brave | 30. tired |
| 2. small | 31. far |
| 3. large | 32. old |
| 4. dry | 33. bright |
| 5. hot | 34. busy |
| 6. wet | 35. hungry |
| 7. cold | 36. clever |
| 8. friendly | 37. dangerous |
| 9. loyal | 38. hasty |
| 10. cruel | 39. young |
| 11. ugly | 40. angry |
| 12. sorry | 41. clear |
| 13. glad | 42. unusual |
| 14. thin | 43. honest |
| 15. funny | 44. strong |
| 16. careful | 45. weak |
| 17. tall | 46. fast |
| 18. lazy | 47. late |
| 19. poor | 48. deep |
| 20. rich | 49. clean |
| 21. smart | 50. happy |
| 22. rough | 51. smooth |
| 23. dirty | 52. loud |
| 24. soft | 53. close |
| 25. nice | 54. complicated |
| 26. hard | 55. high |
| 27. mean | 56. shallow |
| 28. low | |
| 29. slow | |

In English, it is difficult to think of exact synonyms, because frequently, two synonyms mean something slightly different. For example, *tiny* means something different than *small*, but they both indicate a size that is below average. Nevertheless, we need synonyms to give variety to our speech and writing. We have been focusing on adjectives above; let's now see if you can think of common synonyms for these nouns: 1. **Car** 2. **Sweat** 3. **Eyeglasses** 4. **Flower** 5. **Enemy** and for some others that come to your mind...**friend**, **letter**, **light**... Is the connotation and the image slightly different depending on the word selected? Mark Twain was right. Remember what he said about lightening bugs and lightening?

loquacious
garrulous
verbose
taciturn
reticent
laconic
diligent
agile
indolent
sluggish
inert
obese
plump
lithe
slender
arrogant
imperious
domineering
docile
submissive
abstemious
frugal
temperate
gluttonous
wanton
intemperate
heedless
alert
attentive
rational
sagacious
shrewd
obtuse
apprehensive
audacious
intrepid
dilettante
amiable
churlish
morose
lugubrious
sullen
ardent
apathetic
stolid
phlegmatic

clumsy
boorish
gauche
dexterous
adroit

barbaric
brutal
uncouth
civilized
humane
urbane
exquisite
elegant
grotesque
hideous
repulsive
altruistic
bountiful
avaricious
parsimonious
candid
truthful
cunning
subtle
naïve
determined
resolute
fickle
vacillating
devoted
incorruptible
capricious
vigorous
frail
emaciated
immense
gigantic
bulky
diminutive
microscopic
petty
destitute
valiant
jubilant
famished

gaunt
affluent
ancient
complex
adjacent
furious
exhausted
saturated
belated
cautious
rash
unique
freezing
distant
scrupulous
immense
intimate
remote
lucid
torrid
brilliant
ravenous
monstrous
immaculate
precarious
ingenious
infantile
remorseful
towering
filthy
industrious
profound
hilarious
parched
frail
atrocious
frigid
devoted
depressed
antique
superficial
abrasive
ancient
courageous
gigantic