

Lexical Digest

Daily Vocabulary Compilation

August 2, 2026

Etymology Focus

serendipity (n.)

From Persian *sarzamin-i-Serendip* (land of Serendip, an old name for Sri Lanka), coined by Horace Walpole in 1754 after the fairy tale *The Three Princes of Serendip*.

Example: The discovery of penicillin was a classic case of serendipity.

Register Contrast

commence vs. **start**

Formal/legal usage favors *commence*: The meeting shall commence at noon.

Informal speech prefers *start*: Let's start the movie.

False Friends

actual (Sp./Eng.)

Spanish *actual* = current or present-day.

English *actual* = real or factual.

Correction: Use *current* or *present* in English when translating.

Phrasal Verb Spotlight

run into

1. To collide with: The car ran into a lamppost.
2. To encounter unexpectedly: I ran into my old teacher at the café.

Word Formation

photovoltaic

photo- (light) + *voltaic* (relating to electricity, from Alessandro Volta).

Domain: Renewable energy technology.

Academic Tier

juxtapose (v.)

To place two things side by side for contrast.

Synonyms: compare, collocate.

Antonym: segregate.

Idiomatic Expression

bark up the wrong tree

To pursue a mistaken course of action; to have a false lead.

Origin: From raccoon hunting with dogs; a dog mistakes the tree where the raccoon is hiding.

Technical Term

heuristic (adj./n.)

In computing and psychology: a problem-solving approach using practical methods rather than guaranteed algorithms.

Example: Antivirus software often uses heuristic analysis to detect new threats.

Minimal Pair Pronunciation

thought /t/ vs. **thawed** /d/

Practice distinguishing vowel length and final consonant voicing.

Lexical Set (Business)

- **liquidity** ease of converting assets to cash.
- **amortization** gradual debt repayment over time.
- **stakeholder** party with interest in a project or company.

Quick Quiz

Match the word to its correct meaning:

1. Serendipity (a) Practical problem-solving method
2. Heuristic (b) Unexpected fortunate discovery
3. Juxtapose (c) Place side by side for contrast

Answers: 1(b), 2(a), 3(c)