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ORIGIN来源：考试大 1. Where Words About Human Beings

Come From ACHIEVE：to come to a head This seems like a simple word, but its history is extremely complicated. The word achieve

derives, if you can believe it, from the Latin phrase ad

caput venire, which literally meant "to come to a head." Sometimes

the Romans used it in the gloomy meaning "to die." Later on Old

French took over the phrase ad caput, "to a head" and built on it

the verb achever, "to finish," and this passed into English as

achieve. In Chaucer's day, and even up to the time of Queen

Elizabeth, achieve could still mean "to die" or "to kill

" Shakespeare used it in this sense in one of his plays, as " Bid them

achieve ("kill") me and then sell my bones." Along with achieve

the Old French developed the word meschever, in English

mischief, which in the beginning meant to overwhelm with

destruction, and both of these words still have in them the original

sense of the Latin caput, or "head." For when you have achieved

something, you have "brought it to a head," haven't you? But

should you get into mischief, things have been "brought to a bad

head" (Latin mis-, "bad"), and those who perpetrated the

mischief are apt to come to grief. Thus, when Merlin, the wise man of

Arthurian legend, said: "Synne draweth bothe man and woman to

myschebouse ends," he was using the word in its early and stronger

sense.百考试题 - 全国最大教育类网站(www . Examda。 com)

**ADEPT:**originally an alchemist Are you adept,that is,highly skilled at some particular thing?Then you should know the secret of the philosopher ' s stone that transformed base metals into gold.In the Middle Ages the alchemists who claimed to have this secret called themselves adeptus,a Latin word that means " attained, " from the verb adipiscor,from ad, " to, " and apiscor, " attain. " That is,the alchemists had " attained " their goal.Later,in the 17th century,adeptus became a title of honor that was applied only to alchemists of recognized reputation.But when alchemy finally fell into disrepute,the word became a general term of skill.Now you can be adept at cooking or tennis or such. But if you are inept,you have " not " (Latin in, " not " )attained your goal.You are inexpert and awkward and you are apt to say things that are unbecoming and inappropriate to the occasion.

**AMBLE:**just walking around According to the dictionary when you amble,you " move,ride,or walk at an easy and careless pace. " The derivation is from the Latin ambulo, " walk. " You can also easily detect this same term ambulo in our word ambulance or,as the French used to call this vehicle at the time of the Crimean War,hospital ambulant, " walking hospital. " The English soon left off the hospital part and just called it an ambulance.And there is the perambulator,too,that we push the baby around in,and that also takes walking to do.

**ANTICS:**originally fantastic images On the walls of the Baths of the Roman Emperor Titus some old and fantastic images were carved,representing people and animals and flowers all running together in the most grotesque

fashion possible. The Italians applied their word *antico*, "old," to these curious carvings, but because of the weird posturings of the figure *antico* came also to mean "bizarre," and so gave us our word *antic*. Thus, when a person cuts up with some antics, it means that he is going through a lot of queer capers like those weird Roman figures, or like a clown in a circus. This Italian word *antico* derives from the Latin *antiquus*, and from this latter term through the French we received our word *antique*. *Antiquus* meant "venerable" and so "excelling in worth and value," which is what we hope for when we buy antiques.

**ASSASSIN:** once a drug-fiend Some 800 years ago there was an East Indian sheik who was colorfully known as "The Old Man of the Mountains." He was the supposed head of an early version of "Murder, Inc.," and his fanatical followers made it their business to slaughter the Christian Crusaders who were on their way to the Holy Land. The murderers got themselves into the proper frenzy for their job by chewing hashish, an Eastern variety of hemp that could produce a fine state of intoxication in any teetotaling Mohammedan. Today cigarettes called "reefers" are made out of this hemp and are smoked by marijuana addicts. In the ancient days of India word *hashshashin* entered Medieval Latin as *assassinus*, and so into English as our word *assassin*, which still retains its murderous history in its meaning.

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