



Test Ninjas

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

SAT VOCABULARY

SAT Vocabulary: Success & Failure

31 focused words in Success & Failure

31

UNIQUE WORDS

1

CATEGORIES

SAT

EXAM FOCUS



About this study guide

This vocabulary guide was prepared and published by Test Ninjas as an independent study resource. It is designed to help students build the precise word knowledge needed for demanding academic reading and reasoning.

How to use this guide

Study in short, repeated sessions. Read each definition, say the word aloud, and use the example to understand how the word functions in context. Return to unfamiliar words until you can explain them without looking at the definition.

Copyright and permitted use

© 2026 Test Ninjas. All rights reserved. A lawful purchaser may print this document for personal study or for students in one class directly taught by that purchaser. Redistribution, resale, public posting, dataset extraction, and use for training or evaluating automated systems are prohibited without written permission.

Independent publication. SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, and LSAT are trademarks of their respective owners. Their owners are not affiliated with, and do not endorse, Test Ninjas.

001 **accomplishment** *noun*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

something that has been achieved successfully

Graduating from medical school was her greatest **accomplishment**, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: At the finish line, a completed goal becomes an accomplishment: something successfully achieved.

002 **catastrophic** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

causing sudden great damage or suffering

The earthquake had **catastrophic** effects on the coastal region, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

MEMORY CUE: A catastrophe shatters the whole scene at once; catastrophic damage is sudden and enormous.

003 **completed** *verb*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

finished; brought to an end

She **completed** the marathon in under four hours, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A final check mark and a FINISHED stamp show that the task has been completed.

004 **disastrous** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

causing great damage or harm; extremely unfortunate

The **disastrous** hurricane left thousands of people homeless, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

MEMORY CUE: A collapsed bridge beneath a storm warning represents disastrous harm and misfortune.

005 **finishing** *noun/verb*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

completing or bringing to an end; the final treatment of a surface

She is **finishing** her thesis before the graduation deadline, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: Finishing crosses the final task off or applies the last smooth coat to a surface.

006 **fruitless** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

failing to achieve the desired result; unproductive

After hours of **fruitless** searching, we gave up looking for the lost ring, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

MEMORY CUE: A fruitless tree consumes work but produces no fruit or desired result.

007 **fulfills** *verb*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

carries out or brings to completion; satisfies requirements

The new policy **fulfills** the promise made during the campaign, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A final piece fulfills the plan by completing it and satisfying every requirement.

008 **obtain** *verb*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

to get or acquire something through effort

She worked hard to **obtain** her medical license, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

MEMORY CUE: Obtain the key by reaching the end of an effortful path and taking possession.

009 **obtained** *verb*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

acquired or gained through effort

The researcher **obtained** permission to access the archives, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

MEMORY CUE: The prize in hand was obtained after effort successfully gained it.

010 **overcome** *verb*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

to succeed in dealing with a problem or difficulty

She managed to **overcome** her fear of public speaking, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: Climb over the wall and raise a success flag to show the difficulty was overcome.

011 **resolved** *verb/adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

settled or found a solution to a problem; firmly determined to do something

The dispute was finally **resolved** through mediation, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A tied-off solution knot shows the problem is resolved; a firm anchor shows determination.

012 **successful** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

accomplishing a desired aim or result; having achieved fame or prosperity

The campaign was **successful** in raising awareness about the issue, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A successful effort crosses the intended finish line and raises the result trophy.

013 succumb *verb***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

to fail to resist pressure, temptation, or some negative force

After hours of negotiation, he finally **succumbed** to their demands, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: A barrier that finally collapses under pressure has succumbed.

014 surpassed *verb***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

exceeded; was greater than

The results **surpassed** all our expectations, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: One bar rose above the previous record; it surpassed it.

015 surrendered *verb***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

gave up possession of something; stopped fighting or resisting

The army **surrendered** after the long siege, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: A dropped shield and raised white flag show that resistance and possession were surrendered.

016 futile *adjective***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

incapable of producing any useful result

Their **futile** attempts to escape failed, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A futile machine spins endlessly but produces nothing useful.

017 triumphant *adjective***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

having won a battle or contest

The **triumphant** team celebrated wildly, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A triumphant winner raises the trophy after the contest.

018 abortive *adjective***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

failing to produce the intended result

The **abortive** attempt was abandoned, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: An abortive launch falls before reaching the intended result.

019 **fruitful** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

producing good results

The **fruitful** collaboration yielded results, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: A fruitful effort produces baskets of good results.

020 **auspicious** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

conducive to success; favorable

The sunny weather was an **auspicious** sign, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: An auspicious beginning opens beneath favorable signs pointing toward success.

021 **ominous** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

giving the impression that something bad will happen

The **ominous** clouds gathered overhead, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: Ominous black clouds suggest that something bad is approaching.

022 **victorious** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

having won a victory

The **victorious** army returned home, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A victorious competitor stands above the finish line holding the victory trophy.

023 **vanquished** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

thoroughly defeated

The **vanquished** opponent withdrew, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A vanquished opponent lies beneath the winner's flag, thoroughly defeated.

024 **accomplished** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

highly trained or skilled

She was an **accomplished** pianist, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: An accomplished musician displays years of training through polished skill.

025 **flourishing** *adjective*

SUCCESS & FAILURE

developing rapidly and successfully

The **flourishing** business expanded globally, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: A flourishing tree rapidly grows healthy branches, blossoms, and fruit.

026 floundering *adjective***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

struggling or making mistakes

The **floundering** company needed help, allowing the final result to show whether the effort achieved its intended purpose.

MEMORY CUE: A floundering swimmer struggles, splashes, and repeatedly makes mistakes.

027 thriving *adjective***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

prospering; flourishing

The **thriving** community attracted newcomers, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: A thriving garden grows vigorously and prospers.

028 languishing *adjective***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

failing to make progress; weak

The **languishing** project was revived, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

MEMORY CUE: A languishing plant droops while its progress meter remains at zero.

029 conquer *verb***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

to overcome and take control of

She **conquered** her fears, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

MEMORY CUE: Conquer a fortress by overcoming its walls and taking control.

030 capitulate *verb***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

to cease to resist; to surrender

The rebels finally **capitulated**, revealing which choices contributed most directly to the eventual result.

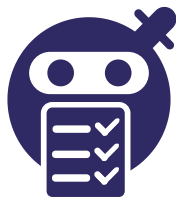
MEMORY CUE: Capitulate by dropping the shield and raising a surrender flag.

031 ascend *verb***SUCCESS & FAILURE**

to go up or climb

She **ascended** to the position of CEO, giving the team a concrete basis for judging the outcome of its work.

MEMORY CUE: Ascend by climbing the staircase toward a higher point.



SAT VOCABULARY

Keep building your edge.

Vocabulary grows through repeated exposure and deliberate use.
Revisit this list, write with the words, and practice recognizing their
meaning in context.

More focused practice at test-ninjas.com