

Vocab Set #1

**hoax** (noun) a trick, a deception

**nonconformity/nonconformist** (noun) not going along with the crowd; being different than the group

**saguaro** (noun) giant cactus

**balk** (verb) to hesitate or fail to follow through

**paleontologist** (noun) one who studies fossils

**orate** (verb) to speak in public, to give a speech (other forms: **orator**, **oration**)

Vocab Set #2:

**amorphous** (adj.) shapeless (like a blob or an amoeba)

**inquisition** (noun) angry questioning (preceded by a noun marker: “an” or “the”)

**spiel** (noun) prepared performance or speech (like a sales pitch)

**impromptu** (adj) unplanned, on the spur of the moment

**raucous** (adj) loud, rambunctious

**ferocity** (noun) quality of being ferocious, aggressiveness

Vocab Set #3

**mica** (noun) a sparkly rock in the desert

**ocotillo** (noun) a desert plant with red flowers

**serene** (adj.) peaceful; **serenity** (noun) peacefulness

**derelict** (adj.) not taken care of, run-down

**rapture** (noun) perfect bliss

**facetious** (adj.) jokingly, non-serious

Vocab Set #4

**disparage** (verb) to belittle, insult, or make fun of

**festooned** (always followed by *with*) (adj.) decorated

**moa** (noun) giant prehistoric bird, now extinct

**jostling** (adj./verb) maneuvering through a crowd, bumping into lots of other people

**gander** (noun) a long, thoughtful look (*take a gander...*)

**preamble** (noun) introduction, something that goes before a speech or a document