

# Words denoting Success vs Failure

## Avocabo Word List 16

ABORTIVE, ACE, AVAIL, BOTCH, CIRCUMVENT, DÉBÂCLE, FIASCO, FLASH IN THE PAN, FORFEIT, FOUNDER, INCOMPETENCE, INEFFECTUAL, NONSTARTER, OUTFLANK, PREVAIL, ROUT, SUCCUMB, SURMOUNT, SURPASS, SWEEP, TRIUMPH, VANQUISH



### Exercise 16-1: Fill-in-the-blanks

Complete each sentence with the most appropriate word (or variation of the word) from those in the word list. Write your choice in the space provided. Each list word is used once. (22 marks)

- Faulty wiring, a kitchen fire or even a carelessly discarded cigarette were all possible causes of the blaze at La Goajira discotheque, which erupted near the club's entrance about 11:50 p.m. Saturday, said Fire Chief Rodolfo Briceno. Nearly all the dead had \_\_\_\_\_ to smoke.
- Keaton rocks as Wiener, a globe-trotting go-getter who relentlessly drove his team, taunted his rivals, and finessed authorities into giving him the cheese — notably, the transmitting gear that \_\_\_\_\_ Iraq's censors and enabled CNN to broadcast audio reports of the battle to the outside world. CNN was the only network that could.
- And finally, at the municipal level, Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman, under fire at an inquiry into a \_\_\_\_\_ computer leasing deal, admitted that city hall had more or less lost control of its finances.
- Austrian \_\_\_\_\_ Stephan Eberharter, seeking his fourth consecutive victory, went wide in a turn early in his run and couldn't recover, finishing in a tie for 15th at 1:20.09. The demanding course claimed six skiers among the first 30, including Austria's Fritz Strobl who crashed through two safety fences.
- Some residents in Davis Inlet, anxious to abandon the squalid island community known for its widespread social problems, said the historic relocation was turning into a \_\_\_\_\_. Last week, the project manager urged the federal government to postpone the move because only 30 homes were expected to be finished and inspected by the Dec. 14 deadline.
- Canadians should not adopt a tone of smug moral superiority in dealing with Americans, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham says. \_\_\_\_\_ attitudes are different in Canada on issues such as gun control and health care, and even on moral questions like birth control, but this is no reason to lecture Americans, Mr. Graham said in an interview yesterday.
- Twain, 37, is the most popular female singer in the history of recorded music. Her 1997 CD, *The Woman in Me*, sold more than 19 million copies in the United States alone. *Up!* could equal or \_\_\_\_\_ that total since Time magazine reports it sold almost 900,000 copies there upon its release Nov. 19.
- The world's top female hockey player was a key member of the Canadian women's team that won the Olympic gold medal. She kept women's hockey in the headlines after the \_\_\_\_\_ as she sought a spot on a men's team in the Italian pro league.
- The National Federation of State High School Associations mandated a 215-pound weight class this winter. Schools with large turnouts, such as Old Mill, could benefit from the 14th weight class, but teams that have struggled in the past to fill their lineups might end up with another weight class to \_\_\_\_\_ at some meets.
- In the weeks after last year's terrorist attacks, the commission was criticized by some Arab-American groups for what they said was an \_\_\_\_\_ response to widespread reports of workplace discrimination against Arab Americans. Agency officials said they would enforce anti-bias laws and vigorously pursue any allegations that could be substantiated.
- I told him that I had been very anxious to have the Eastern armies \_\_\_\_\_ their old enemy who had so long resisted all their repeated and gallant attempts to subdue them or drive them from their capital.

12. Consider the latest report cards on the operations of the governments of Canada and Ontario, carried out by Sheila Fraser and Erik Peters, respectively. Both audits were made public Tuesday. Both are lengthy and detailed, running into the hundreds of pages. Both catalogue a stunning degree of waste, \_\_\_\_\_ and complacency — rules broken, standards ignored.

13. The captain, finding that their design had proved \_\_\_\_\_, went directly to the place of rendezvous, and told his followers that they had lost their labour and must return to the cave.

*The Story of 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*

14. Her name was the *Nonesuch*, a very ancient ship and very happily named. By all accounts this should be her last voyage; people shook their heads upon the quays, and I had several warnings offered me by strangers in the street to the effect that she was rotten as a cheese, too deeply laden, and must infallibly \_\_\_\_\_ if we met a gale.

*Stevenson, Robert Louis (1850–1894). The Master of Ballantrae*

15. Apparently he was in an evil temper with Montgomery. He took not the slightest notice of either of us. We dined with him in a sulky silence, after a few \_\_\_\_\_ efforts on my part to talk.

*H.G. Wells (1866–1946). The Island of Doctor Moreau.*

16. For he truly engages in battle who endeavors to \_\_\_\_\_ all the difficulties and errors which prevent him from reaching the knowledge of truth, and he is overcome in fight who admits a false opinion touching a matter of any generality and importance, and he requires thereafter much more skill to recover his former position than to make great advances when once in possession of thoroughly ascertained principles.

*René Descartes (1596–1650). Discourse on Method. The Harvard Classics.*

17. Audrey Lacroix of Montreal raced to her second gold of the U.S. Open swimming championships, winning the women's 200-metre butterfly Saturday. John Stamhuis of Victoria posted his first international victory, leading a Canadian medal \_\_\_\_\_ of the men's 200-metre breaststroke.

18. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a horse that fails to run in a race for which it has been entered. It can also refer to an idea, proposal, or candidate with no chance of being accepted or successful.

19. *Forrester Solutions* has come up with a plan that will allow firms to finally \_\_\_\_\_ hackers, viruses and email worms. Company President David Forrester says the solution's been at hand since the Internet was founded. His ***In the Dark*** software toolkit will sever all connections with the Internet--permanently!

20. The decisive 6-1 \_\_\_\_\_ of SJK's boastful senior boys' soccer team gave the school's team of aging but highly skilled teachers the bragging rights for the next twelve months.

21. All of the paranoid talk of the Y2K virus that would see the digital world come grinding to a halt turned out to be just hype, as the threat proved to be a mere \_\_\_\_\_.

22. She says she apologized to the unhappy neighbor and offered to discuss the matter further, but to no \_\_\_\_\_. He continued to press charges.

**Exercise 16-2: Success or Failure?**

Sort the list words in columns, indicating whether the word denotes success or failure. (22 marks)

**SUCCESS**

**FAILURE**

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**Exercise 16-3: Synonyms**

From the three choices, circle the one that is *closest in meaning* to the list word (in boldface) in the context shown. (22 marks)

1. after an **abortive** coup by supporters of Bochenek  
(a) unsuccessful (b) violent (c) exuberant
2. 5 cars **ace** high-speed crash tests  
(a) virtuoso (b) flunk (c) pass easily
3. **avail** themselves of surgical sterilization  
(a) help (b) avoid (c) yashmak
4. The noise caused him to **botch** the shot  
(a) ball up (b) blooper (c) blow (d) blunder (e) bobble (f) bollix up (g) bungle (h) fluff (i) foul up (j) fumble (k) louse up (l) mess up (m) mishit (n) mishandle (o) muff (p) screw up (q) spoil
5. housing developers **circumvent** local zoning bylaws  
(a) pants (b) skirt (c) tie
6. Budget **debacle** leaves sports in state of limbo  
(a) fiasco (b) debate (c) the wrong answer
7. Cowboys trying to forget Giants **fiasco**  
(a) victory (b) cheerleaders (c) collapse
8. mutter darkly about the **flash in the pan** nature of the pop poppet's career  
(a) spark (b) unlikely (c) briefly successful
9. were the winners by **forfeit**  
(a) a penalty for a fault or mistake that involves losing or giving up something (b) overwhelming victory (c) close margin
10. computer plan could **founder** due to incompatibility  
(a) succeed (b) flourish (c) fall through
11. people get promoted until they reach their level of **incompetence**  
(a) inability (b) expertise (c) satisfaction
12. death is an affront to medical science, making it look foolish and **ineffectual**  
(a) futile (b) silly (c) wet and sticky
13. The city also talked to an investment group out of Chicago, but its proposal was a **nonstarter**  
(a) failure (b) impossibility (c) achiever
14. DeCoster denied Northwest was trying to **outflank** small-business aviation companies  
(a) spade (b) trump (c) club
15. Montreal Canadiens **prevail** in last minute  
(a) surrender (b) triumph (c) endure
16. Mavericks **Rout** Pacers, 118-97  
(a) defeat disastrously (b) count backwards (c) expel
17. Local crops **succumb** to excessive heat,  
(a) are fatally overwhelmed (b) thrive (c) aestivate
18. If it can **surmount** these challenges, China will emerge as a biotech behemoth  
(a) overcome (b) understand (c) oversimplify
19. Number of job leavers **surpass** job finders  
(a) divide (b) diminish (c) exceed
20. If the West Indies completed a **clean sweep**, they  
(a) failed to win (b) were victorious and undefeated (c) wore their uniforms well, but were trounced
21. Football will be coming home if the Euro 2008 bid is **triumphant**  
(a) victorious (b) reasonable (c) undisputed
22. **Vanquish** is  
(a) a word meaning defeat (b) a very cool \$234,260 Aston Martin car featured in the latest James Bond flick (c) all of the above



**Exercise 16-4 Making Connections:**

In a few sentences, describe the relationship between each pair of words. Use a good dictionary to clarify unclear words. (10 marks)

- 1. ineffectual                      defang
- 2. arduous                            surmount
- 3. circumvent                        coronary bypass surgery
- 4. incompetence                    foolproof
- 5. vain                                avail

**Exercise 16-5 Parts of Speech:**

Indicate the part(s) of speech of the list word, **as displayed**. Some words can assume multiple parts of speech! (14 marks)

	verb	noun	adject.	adverb
ACE				
DEBACLE				
FORFEIT				
INEFFECTUAL				
ROUT				
SURPASS				
SWEEP				
TRIUMPHANTLY				

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”

*Theodore Roosevelt*

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”

*Albert Schweitzer*

