

Forbidden City by William Bell, p. 1-65 25 words

January 13, 2015 By [Jason B.](#)

This list is meant to accompany a novel study unit on William Bell's *Forbidden City*. Words are selected for middle school students.

1. **camcorder**

a portable television camera and videocassette recorder

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

The video **camcorder** industry has imploded as the rise of the smartphone pitched it into junk drawers across the country.

— [Washington Post](#)

2. **organism**

a living thing that has (or can develop) the ability to act or function independently

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

Cyanobacteria—some of the oldest **organisms** on the planet—can occur wherever there is moisture.

— [Scientific American \(Dec 11, 2014\)](#)

3. **pacifist**

opposed to war

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

They were **pacifists** who refused to kill for their country but who were willing to sacrifice themselves to help others.

— [Washington Times \(Nov 24, 2014\)](#)

4. **atheist**

someone who denies the existence of god

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

You're a little religious while your husband is an **atheist**.

— [Time \(Dec 15, 2014\)](#)

5. **cynical**

believing the worst of human nature and motives; having a sneering disbelief in e.g. selflessness of others

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

In fact, a truly **cynical** mind might wonder if the whole rebellion wasn't staged by Boehner partisans just to show how horrific the alternative was.

— [New York Times \(Jan 7, 2015\)](#)

6. informer

one who reveals confidential information in return for money

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

Israeli intelligence services rely heavily on **informers** in both Gaza and the West Bank.
— [The Guardian \(Aug 22, 2014\)](#)

7. paranoid

suffering from paranoia

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

Call me **paranoid**, but I believe China poses the greatest threat to our future than any other country.
— [Wall Street Journal \(Dec 23, 2014\)](#)

8. fallout

any adverse and unwanted secondary effect

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

The political **fallout** doomed his bid for a fifth council term.
— [Washington Post \(Dec 28, 2014\)](#)

9. reconnaissance

the act of reconnoitring (especially to gain information about an enemy or potential enemy)

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

In 1990, AeroVironment designed an unmanned stealth blimp for **reconnaissance** missions as it also developed lightweight and maneuverable drones for aerial surveillance.
— [Los Angeles Times \(Dec 28, 2014\)](#)

10. bigwig

the most important person in a group or undertaking

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

She's a European Parliament lawmaker and the daughter of a **bigwig** in the powerful Social Democratic Party.
— [US News \(Nov 13, 2014\)](#)

11. lenient

tolerant or lenient

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

Paul recently introduced a measure that would have made gun-control laws in the city among the most **lenient** in the country.
— [Washington Post](#)

12. dais

a platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

As he stepped off the **dais**, a reporter asked if he was sticking around to watch the remaining

games.

— [New York Times \(Jul 2, 2014\)](#)

13. **quaver** ✓

give off unsteady sounds, alternating in amplitude or frequency

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*Her voice **quavered** and she broke into tears as she rose and told Judge Laura Taylor Swain she was also a victim of Mr. Madoff's.*

— [New York Times \(Dec 9, 2014\)](#)

14. **esteem** ✓

regard highly; think much of

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*But some low rounds are held in more **esteem** than others, and Jordan Spieth's Sunday 63 to win the Australian Open is one of them.*

— [Golf Digest \(Oct 16, 2013\)](#)

15. **redouble** ✓

double again

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*The Obama administration, meanwhile, is **redoubling** its efforts to get the word out about these repayment plans.*

— [Chicago Tribune \(Jan 2, 2015\)](#)

16. **literal** ✓

limited to the explicit meaning of a word or text

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*I think many white people are surprised by the fact that actual, **literal** segregation still exists in America.*

— [Salon \(Oct 20, 2014\)](#)

17. **revered** ✓

profoundly honored

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*No disrespect to Streep, but so **revered** is the actress at this point, I think she might have been nominated with or without a role.*

— [Los Angeles Times \(Dec 10, 2014\)](#)

18. **deteriorate** ✓

become worse or disintegrate

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*"Road conditions are going to be **deteriorating** very rapidly. If you don't have to be out and about, it's a good time to stay indoors."*

— [Washington Times \(Jan 5, 2015\)](#)

19. conjecture



a hypothesis that has been formed by speculating or conjecturing (usually with little hard evidence)

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*Rumours and **conjecture** surrounded Skorzeny's regular visits to Ireland over the coming years.*
— [BBC \(Dec 29, 2014\)](#)

20. claustrophobic



suffering from claustrophobia; abnormally afraid of closed-in places

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*The 'new' Penn Station is indeed a **claustrophobic** underground shopping mall.*
— [New York Times \(Jan 3, 2015\)](#)

21. tool around

ride in a car with no particular goal and just for the pleasure of it

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*Ages ranged from families with young children to elderly people **tooling around** on motorized scooters.*
— [Salon \(May 31, 2014\)](#)

22. contingent



a gathering of persons representative of some larger group

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*Despite the scoreline, a small **contingent** of Palestinian fans in the 15,497-strong crowd waved flags and beat drums throughout the match.*
— [BBC \(Jan 12, 2015\)](#)

23. throng



a large gathering of people

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*The celebration draws **throng**s of thousands of spectators every New Year's Eve.*
— [Seattle Times \(Dec 31, 2014\)](#)

24. lame



pathetically lacking in force or effectiveness

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*He is fully aware, as most players, that it's an unforgiving business, but he doesn't insult our intelligence as fans by making **lame** excuses.*
— [New York Times \(Jan 11, 2015\)](#)

25. autonomous



existing as an independent entity

EXAMPLE SENTENCE:

*Russia annexed Crimea, a former **autonomous** region of Ukraine, on March 17, 2014.*
— [Forbes \(Jan 5, 2015\)](#)

