




# AWESOME STORIES

## VISUAL VOCABULARY BUILDER

### WATER FOR ELEPHANTS

contortionist / depression / horrific / insufficient / pachyderm  
paraffin / perilous / plastered / predatory / vicious



Contortionist\* - performer who can twist his/her body in unusual ways

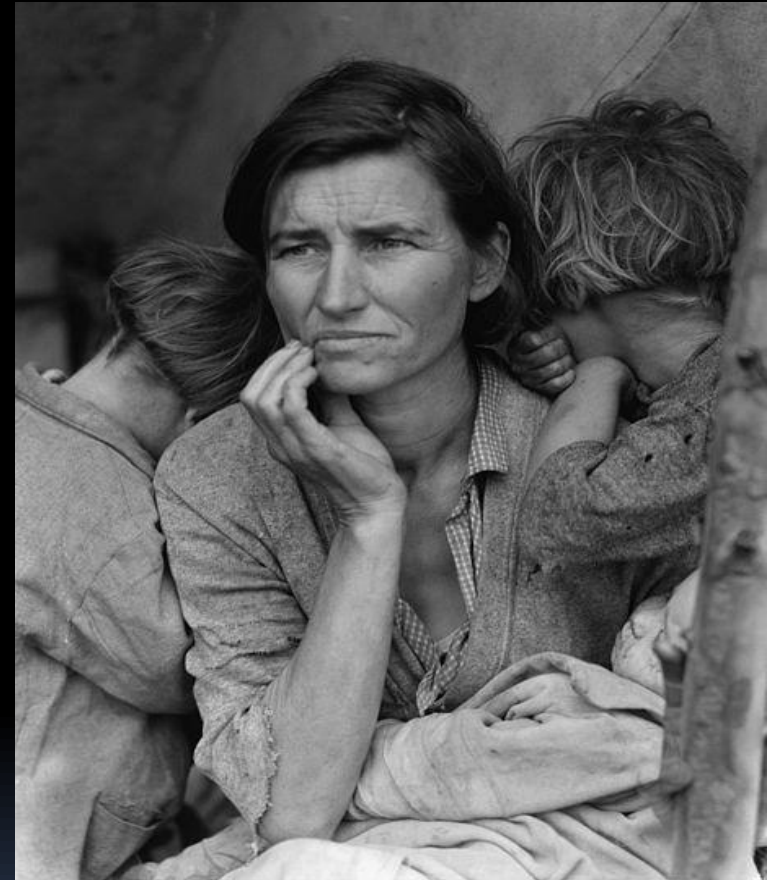
- Contortionist – noun  
A contortionist, from the 1880s, posed for this picture.
- Contortional – adjective  
The contortional position of his body suggests that this man was a circus performer.
- Contort – verb  
Circus performers are often able to contort their bodies in interesting ways.



\*Contortionist – See Chapter 2 (The Circus During the 1930s)

# Depression\* - time of low economic activity with many people out of work

- Depression – noun  
During a time of great depression in America, Dorothea Lange took pictures of suffering people.
- Depressed – adjective  
When the economy is depressed, people lose their jobs and are unable to live as they once did.
- Depress – verb  
A down-trending economy tends to depress the job market.



\* Depression – See Chapter 1 (Story Preface – *Water for Elephants*)

- Note: Photo by Dorothea Lange, for the Farm Security Administration, taken during the “Great Depression.”

# Horrific\* - causing horror or shock

- Horrific – adjective  
After a bridge over the Mississippi River collapsed, during the summer of 2007, people gave horrific accounts of the tragedy.
- Horribly – adverb  
The bridge collapsed during rush hour, horribly causing death and property damage as cars unexpectedly plunged into the Mississippi River.



\*Horrific – See Chapter 4 (Rosie the Circus Elephant)

- Note – This photo depicts the collapse of Bridge 9340, located along Interstate 35W, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

# Insufficient\* - not enough

- Insufficient – adjective  
Rashida, a young African girl from Niger, developed a skin disorder caused by insufficient nutrition.
- Insufficiency – noun  
Rashida, like other young children in her country, suffered from nutritional insufficiency.
- Insufficiently - adverb  
Nutritious food is insufficiently available for many young children throughout the world.



\*Insufficient – See Chapter 5 (Great Circus Disasters)

- Note: Rashida Mahmadou, a 19-month-old girl from the country of Niger, died from malnutrition-caused problems which also impacted her skin. Photo online from "Doctors without Borders in Niger."

# Pachyderm\* - large, thick-skinned mammal – such as an elephant

- Pachyderm – noun  
An elephant is a pachyderm.
- Pachydermal – adjective  
Pachydermal mammals – such as an elephant, hippopotamus and rhinoceros – are large and have thick skin.



## \*Pachyderm – See Chapter 4 (Rosie the Circus Elephant)

- Note: Photo of male and female elephants, in South Africa's Addo Elephant Park, by Charles J. Sharp. Photo License: [CC By 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

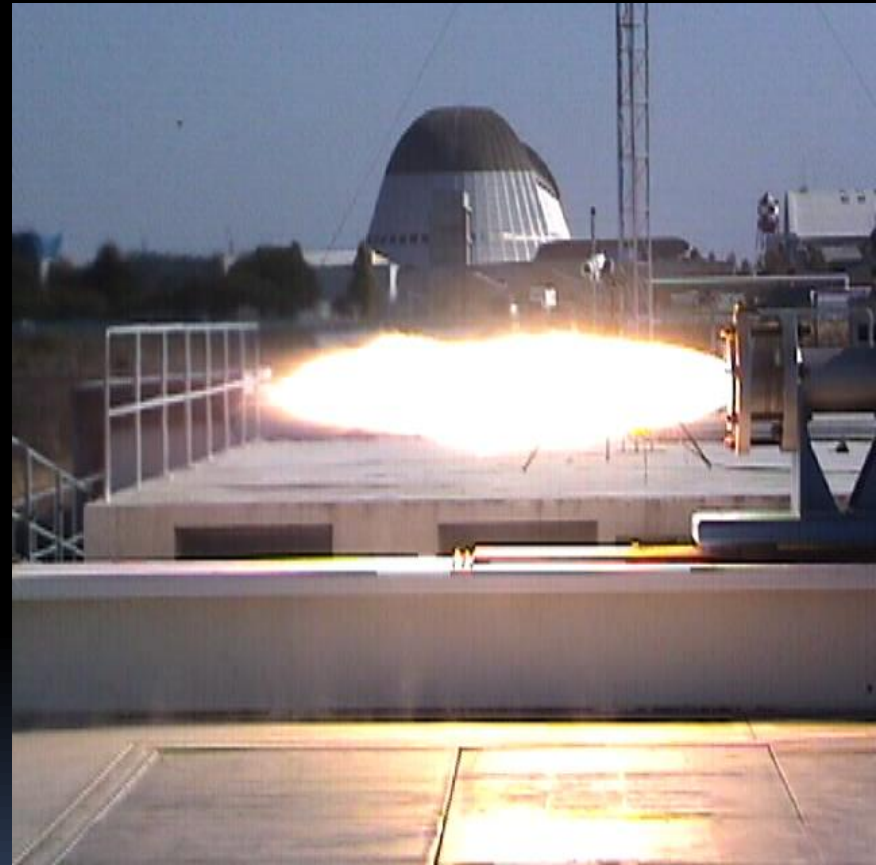
# Paraffin\* - flammable hydrocarbon mixture used for sealing (among other things)

- Paraffin – noun

NASA has tested paraffin as a potential fuel for rocket launches.

- Paraffined – verb

Workers paraffined the top of a circus tent to make it waterproof. Unfortunately, that action also made the tent flammable.



\*Paraffin – See Chapter 5 (Great Circus Disasters)

Note: Photo taken by remote camera at [Hybrid Rocket Test Facility](#), NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, CA.

# Perilous\* - full of risk or danger

- Perilous – adjective

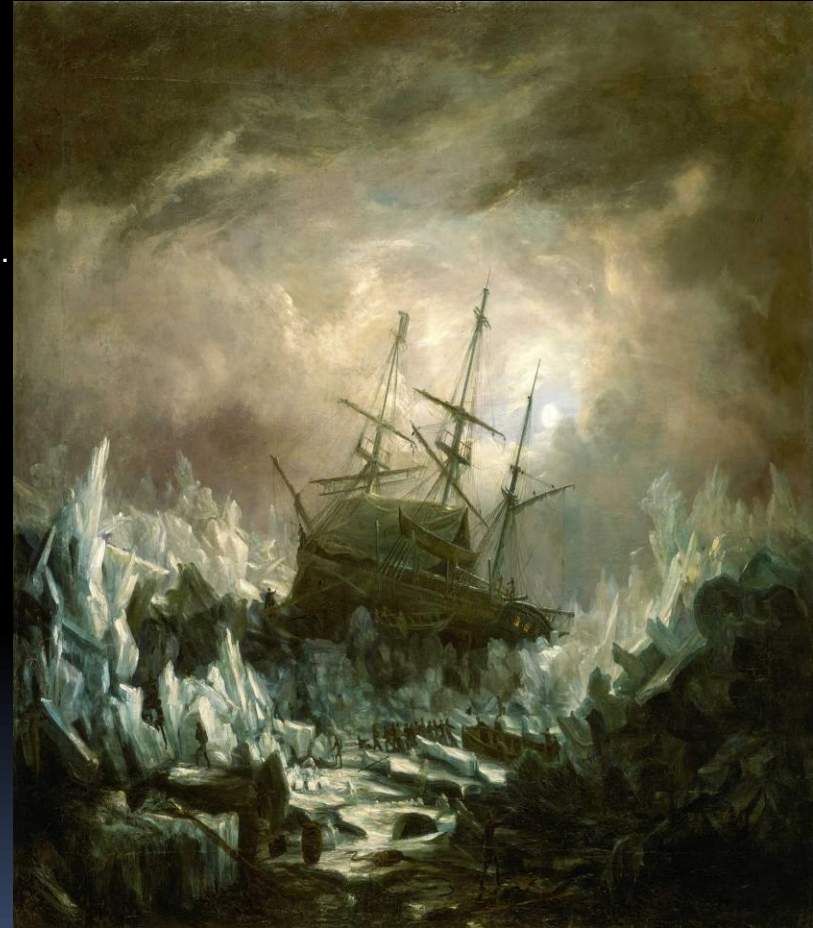
Sailors aboard the HMS *Terror* were on a perilous journey as they were caught in pack ice near Baffin Island.

- Perilously – adverb

Captain George Back came perilously close to losing his ship, the *Terror*, during its 118 days drifting on an ice floe.

- Perilousness – noun

No one underestimated the perilousness of a journey to the ice-filled Arctic region.



\*Perilous – See Chapter 2 (The Circus in the 1930s)

Note: Admiral William Smyth created this painting of the HMS *Terror*. The original painting is at the National Maritime Museum in London, England.

# Plastered\* - coating walls with materials

- Plastered – verb

Artists plastered the walls of *Kunsthau Tacheles* (“Art House Tacheles”), in Berlin, with colorful graffiti.

- Plastering – verb

Artists, plastering the walls of *Kunsthau Tacheles* with colorful graffiti, have attracted worldwide attention.

- Plasterer – noun

An art plasterer used many different colors to create graffiti at the *Kunsthau Tacheles* in Berlin.



## \*Plastered – See Chapter 2 (The Circus During the 1930s)

- NOTE: Photo of *Kunsthau Tacheles* by Garagolo. Photo License: [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/)

# Predatory\* - Living by preying on others

- Predatory – adjective  
Predatory lions attack a herd of buffalo in the country of Botswana.
- Predation – noun  
In the wild, lions are know for their predation.
- Predators – noun  
Lions are predators of buffalo in Botswana’s Okavango Delta.



\*Predatory – See Chapter 2 (The Circus During the 1930s)

Note: Image of lions attacking buffalo in Botswana’s Okavango Delta, by Beverly Joubert. Copyright, Beverly Joubert, all rights reserved. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

# Vicious\* - dangerously aggressive

- Vicious – adjective  
Samo, a trained attack-dog owned by the U.S. Air Force, can be vicious when given the proper commands.
- Viciously – adverb  
Given the proper command, Samo viciously attacks a decoy's arm wrap.



\*Vicious – See Chapter 4 (Rosie the Circus Elephant)

Note – US Air Force close-up photo of trained attack-dog Samo, leaping toward a decoy's arm wrap, by Robbin Cresswell. Photo online, courtesy US Air Force.