

PTOLEMY'S GATE

VOCABULARY

The following is a selection of vocabulary words listed in order of appearance in PTOLEMY'S GATE (written by Jonathan Stroud, published in 2005). Review this list before reading the novel to assess the level of difficulty of the novel or simply to learn more words.

in mitigation	in order to make it less serious.
feisty	aggressive.
snag (→ snaggy)	obstacle.
pebbledash wall	wall made up of cement and pebbles.
becomingly	fittingly.
to caper	to jump or leap.
manila file with elastic	brown paper file with rubber band.
to waylay	to ambush.
banter	sarcastic teasing comments.
skirl	wailing sound made by bagpipes.
to dunk	to dip (bread) into a liquid.
humdrum	dull and ordinary.
scruffy	dirty.
garrulous	talkative.
tetchy	bad-tempered.
to titter	to give a little laugh.
to procure	to obtain.
to douse	to throw water on something
snooty	superior.
guff	informal words which mean nothing.
fib	a lie.
runt	small person or animal.

reprieve	pardon given to a prisoner.
strapping	big and strong (young men and girls)
to souse	to soak in water.
cantankerous	bad-tempered (continually).
shorn	cut-off.
motels of dust	heaps of dust.
wry	showing dislike by twisting the mouth.
dowdy	badly dressed.
midden	heap of dung.
to lob	to throw slowly in a high curve.
welter	a confused mass.
portentous	important, warning that something will happen.
disparaging	critical, telling that something is bad.
to sashay	to walk confidently.
scurf	dandruff.
to shirk	to try not to do something/work (→ a shirker)
wallop	to hit hard, a hard blow (→ wallop: huge).
fug	stuffy and hot atmosphere (of coffee or cigarettes for example).
to straggle	to walk in an untidy way.
to broach	to open.
to bay	to bark. the baying crowd.
quaint	picturesque.
conceit	high opinion of oneself.
dormer	window with a small gable roof jutting out from a sloping roof.
paunch	fat stomach.
fripperies	useless ornaments.
parlous	bad, dangerous state. his finances became parlous.
revelers	persons who are celebrating.
placatory	which calms, makes less angry.
baleful	hateful.
untoward	unlucky or inconvenient. an untoward incident.

to totter	to wobble, to walk unsteadily.
rudder	flat plate at the stern of a boat/tail of a plane used for steering
minnow	small freshwater fish.
astute	clever, wise.
to holler	informal to shout.
huffy	informal bad-tempered
mercurial	whose temper changes frequently.
limerick	amusing five-line poem.
plangent	loud and resounding. plangent bells.
to brook	to allow/accept. to brook no argument.
miser	person who hoards money and refuses to spend it.
hoard	mass of money, food, etc. which has been collected.
slough	marshy place.
to trip along	to go along with light footsteps.
beetling	high and threatening. a beetling cliff.
woad	wild plant used to make a blue dye.
trotter	pig's foot cooked for food.
flighty	silly and empty-headed.
to slosh	to splash.
ruched	gathered in folds.
dour	gloomy, silent.
livery	special clothing of a group of servants.
decrepit	falling to pieces.
to rout	to defeat completely.
heifer	young cow.
snippy	sarcastic.
rivulet	little stream.
addled	rotten (of an egg) or confused.
to caw	to make a croaking sound like a crow.
woebegone	very sad (of a look).
to contrive	to manage.

stringent	strict and severe.
stultifying	making someone stupid.
cochineal	red coloring used in cooking.
slatternly	dirty (of a woman).
mellifluous	soothing and pleasant (of a sound)
to cavort	to behave in an excited, merry way. a cavorting throng.
weal (or wheal)	raised mark left on the skin by a blow from a whip or stick.
cuss	to curse or curse at.
scab	dry rough crust formed over a wound when it is healing.
lissom	lithe and supple (of a belly dancer for example).
recumbent	formal lying down
wan	pale, looking ill.
flange	rim or edge which sticks out on a pipe or wheel.
to bank	to roll to one side.
to beset	to attack from all sides. to trouble persistently.
to stymie	to block (a plan).