“... the difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter—’tis the difference between the lightning-bug and the lightning.”

—Mark Twain, 1890 (adapted from Josh Billings, 1869)

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY
Keep a list of words related to light and lighting and refer to it often. It could be in a notebook that is with you throughout the day, or a list on your desk, or taped to your bathroom mirror. Add to the list throughout the term as you collect new words about light and lighting. The list should comprise words that are technical, poetic, mundane, and eclectic.

BACKGROUND
Lighting terms can be technical and oriented toward science and engineering, or emotive and oriented toward poetry and art. Both sets of vocabulary have their place in oral and written communication. Your ability to recall words easily to communicate the technical and emotive aspects of light and lighting will raise your credibility among other professionals and enhance the value that you can bring to a design team.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Develop the scope and depth of your vocabulary for writing and speaking about light and lighting.

READINGS AND REFERENCES
The article “How the Communicate Light” that is posted on Canvas identifies five ways of communicating light: drawing, words, mood imagery, physical modeling, and videos. This article continues to be a good resource for communication concepts—please especially review the section of the article titled “Words words words”.

Pay attention to the vocabulary selected by Jason Livingston when you read “Designing with Light”. Make a note of words that strike you as being especially useful and record them on your list. Do the same when reading other assigned readings throughout this course, such as the articles written by John Flynn.

While the language of light and lighting is ever evolving, especially with the introduction of new technologies that require new language, the basic technical language is well established. The two primary references for the technical language of light are:

- International Commission on Illumination (CIE)
- Electronic International Lighting Vocabulary (e-ILV)

Online: [http://eilv.cie.co.at/](http://eilv.cie.co.at/)
American National Standards Institute (ANSI) / Illuminating Engineering Society (IES)
ANSI/IES LS-1-20 Nomenclature and Definitions for Illuminating Engineering
Online: https://www.ies.org/standards/definitions/

Both documents are essentially dictionaries of light and lighting. I do not recommend reading them from cover-to-cover, but they are worth browsing. They are the authoritative references for the technical language of light and lighting.

DELEVERABLES
Maintain your word list throughout the term. Treat it as a living document. Add to it as you collect new words. A paper-based list is probably better than an electronic document (unless you set the list as the background on your laptop, tablet, and/or cell phone—which would be great!). Keep the list nearby and interact with it regularly. At the end of the term, scan your list and post it to Canvas. This is one case where I am not overly concerned with presentation quality, though you should at least take care with careful penmanship. A handwritten list is fine. If your sheet is creased, dogeared, or has coffee stains on it, that suggests it has been used and that is okay. That said, as your word list grows, you might find that some words can be grouped into categories. Toward the end of the quarter, it might therefore be useful to rewrite the list in a way that presents logical groupings of words—a taxonomy of lighting terminology.

APPENDIX: A NOTE ABOUT LIGHT AND LIGHTING
The Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) and International Commission on Illumination (CIE) have comparable definitions of ‘light’—defining it as radiant energy that can excite the retina and produce a visual sensation. The word ‘light’ may also be employed to mean optical radiation between about 400 and 700 nm. This second definition constrains the meaning of ‘light’ to a physical stimulus, while expanding how ‘light’ can be employed to include non-visual responses.

In contrast to light as a stimulus, lighting encompasses the science, theory, and methods to achieve desirable outcomes through the application of light in the built environment. Lighting is motivated by its outcomes, which includes supporting visual needs, psychological reinforcement, enhancing architectural form, and, more recently, encouraging physiological health especially related to alertness and circadian photobiology.

The two preceding paragraphs focus on just two words, ‘light’, and ‘lighting’. I hope even these two brief paragraphs begin to suggest the depth of subtle differences in the meanings of related words, especially when those words are given context.

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING