

## Q1.3 Banal

Something **banal** is common, mundane, trivial, or lacking originality. The word often carries a sense of how depressing it is to be confronted with such commonness. It comes from the Old French word *ban*, which described something that was common to the entire community.

**These memories . . . lay on the far side of a great divide in time, as significant as B.C. and A.D. Before prison, before the war, before the sight of a corpse became a banality.**

—Ian McEwan, British writer, in *Atonement*