

Need another word that means the same as “subtle”? Find 40 synonyms and 30 related words for “subtle” in this overview.

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**The synonyms of “Subtle” are: elusive, insidious, pernicious, fine, nice, overnice, minute, precise, narrow, tenuous, understated, low-key, muted, subdued, astute, keen, quick, acute, sharp, razor-sharp, canny, shrewd, aware, perceptive, discerning, sensitive, discriminating, penetrating, sagacious, wise, clever, intelligent, skilful, artful, ingenious, adroit, cunning, crafty, wily, devious**

## Subtle as an Adjective

### Definitions of "Subtle" as an adjective

According to the [Oxford Dictionary of English](#), “subtle” as an adjective can have the following definitions:

- *Difficult to detect or grasp by the mind or analyze.*
- *Crafty; cunning.*
- *Able to make fine distinctions.*
- *(of a mixture or effect) delicately complex and understated.*
- *Capable of making fine distinctions.*
- *Working or spreading in a hidden and usually injurious way.*
- *Arranged in an ingenious and elaborate way.*
- *(especially of a change or distinction) so delicate or precise as to be difficult to analyze or describe.*
- *Making use of clever and indirect methods to achieve something.*



## Synonyms of "Subtle" as an adjective (40 Words)

- acute** Denoting or designed for patients with an acute form of a disease.  
*An **acute** or critical lack of research funds.*
- adroit** Clever or skilful.  
*An **adroit** technician.*
- artful** Clever or skilful, especially in a crafty or cunning way.  
*An **artful** photograph of a striking woman.*
- astute** Marked by practical hardheaded intelligence.  
*An **astute** businessman.*
- aware** Having or showing knowledge or understanding or realization or perception.  
*Was **aware** of his opponent s hostility.*

<b>canny</b>	Having or showing shrewdness and good judgement, especially in money or business matters. <i><b>Canny</b> investors will switch banks if they think they are getting a raw deal.</i>
<b>clever</b>	Showing skill and originality; ingenious. <i>How <b>clever</b> of him to think of this.</i>
<b>crafty</b>	Involving the making of decorative objects and other things by hand. <i>A <b>crafty</b> crook faked an injury to escape from prison.</i>
<u><b>cunning</b></u>	Marked by skill in deception. <i>A <b>cunning</b> baby.</i>
<u><b>devious</b></u>	Indirect in departing from the accepted or proper way; misleading. <i>A <b>devious</b> character.</i>
<b>discerning</b>	Unobtrusively perceptive and sympathetic. <i>A <b>discerning</b> reader.</i>
<u><b>discriminating</b></u>	Having or demonstrating ability to recognize or draw fine distinctions. <i>The <b>discriminating</b> eye of the connoisseur.</i>
<u><b>elusive</b></u>	Difficult to remember. <i>Success will become ever more <b>elusive</b>.</i>
<b>fine</b>	Characterized by elegance or refinement or accomplishment. <i>Anything you want is <b>fine</b> by me Linda.</i>
<b>ingenious</b>	(of a machine or idea) cleverly and originally devised and well suited to its purpose. <i>An <b>ingenious</b> solution to the problem.</i>
<u><b>insidious</b></u>	Beguiling but harmful. <i>Sexual harassment is a serious and <b>insidious</b> problem.</i>
<b>intelligent</b>	(of a computer terminal) incorporating a microprocessor and having its own processing capability. <i>An <b>intelligent</b> guess.</i>
<b>keen</b>	Having or showing great perception or insight. <i>Ear splitting explosive bursts <b>keen</b> and sharp.</i>
<b>low-key</b>	Restrained in style or quality.
<b>minute</b>	Infinitely or immeasurably small. <i>Two <b>minute</b> whiplike threads of protoplasm.</i>
<b>muted</b>	(of colour or lighting) not bright; subdued. <i><b>Muted</b> trumpets.</i>

<b>narrow</b>	Denoting a vowel pronounced with the root of the tongue drawn back so as to narrow the pharynx. <i>The <b>narrow</b> sense of a word.</i>
<b>nice</b>	(especially of a difference) slight or subtle. <i>A <b>nice</b> gesture.</i>
<b>overnice</b>	Excessively fastidious and easily disgusted. <i>Mildred was <b>overnice</b> in regard to their father.</i>
<b>penetrating</b>	(of a sound) clearly heard through or above other sounds. <i>The students asked some <b>penetrating</b> questions.</i>
<b>perceptive</b>	Of or relating to perception. <i>A <b>perceptive</b> observation.</i>
<b><u>pernicious</u></b>	Having a harmful effect, especially in a gradual or subtle way. <i>The <b>pernicious</b> influences of the mass media.</i>
<b><u>precise</u></b>	Used to emphasize that one is referring to an exact and particular thing. <i>The director was <b>precise</b> with his camera positions.</i>
<b>quick</b>	Moving quickly and lightly. <i>A <b>quick</b> inspection.</i>
<b>razor-sharp</b>	As sharp as a razor.
<b>sagacious</b>	Having or showing keen mental discernment and good judgement; wise or shrewd. <i>Observant and thoughtful he was given to asking <b>sagacious</b> questions.</i>
<b><u>sensitive</u></b>	Being susceptible to the attitudes, feelings, or circumstances of others. <i>A mimosa's leaves are <b>sensitive</b> to touch.</i>
<b><u>sharp</u></b>	Having or emitting a high pitched and sharp tone or tones. <i>Her <b>sharp</b> disappointment was tinged with embarrassment.</i>
<b>shrewd</b>	Used of persons. <i>She was <b>shrewd</b> enough to guess the motive behind his gesture.</i>
<b>skilful</b>	Having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude. <i>A <b>skilful</b> midfielder.</i>
<b>subdued</b>	Lacking in light; not bright or harsh. <i>I felt strangely <b>subdued</b> as I drove home.</i>
<b><u>tenuous</u></b>	Very weak or slight. <i>A <b>tenuous</b> fluid.</i>
<b><u>understated</u></b>	Presented or expressed in a subtle and effective way. <i><b>Understated</b> elegance.</i>
<b>wily</b>	Marked by skill in deception. <i>A <b>wily</b> old attorney.</i>



**wise**

Sensible or prudent.  
*Don't get **wise** with me.*



### Usage Examples of "Subtle" as an adjective

- *Subtle lighting.*
- *The German plan was simple yet subtle.*
- *A subtle poison.*
- *The subtle fiend dissembled.*
- *His whole attitude had undergone a subtle change.*
- *A subtle difference.*
- *His language expresses rich and subtle meanings.*
- *A subtle mind.*
- *He tried a more subtle approach.*



## Associations of "Subtle" (30 Words)

<a href="#">abstract</a>	Give an abstract of. <i><b>Abstract</b> concepts such as love or beauty.</i>
<a href="#">allusion</a>	The practice of making allusions. <i>A classical <b>allusion</b>.</i>
<b>artful</b>	Not straightforward or candid; giving a false appearance of frankness. <i>Her <b>artful</b> wiles.</i>
<b>circumlocution</b>	The use of many words where fewer would do, especially in a deliberate attempt to be vague or evasive. <i>His admission came after years of <b>circumlocution</b>.</i>
<b>complexity</b>	A factor involved in a complicated process or situation. <i>He enjoyed the <b>complexity</b> of modern computers.</i>
<a href="#">covert</a>	A flock of coots. <i>A woman <b>covert</b>.</i>

<b>crafty</b>	Involving the making of decorative objects and other things by hand. <i>A <b>crafty</b> crook faked an injury to escape from prison.</i>
<b><u>cunning</u></b>	Attractive or quaint. <i>A <b>cunning</b> baby.</i>
<b>difficult</b>	Hard to control. <i>A <b>difficult</b> child.</i>
<b><u>elusive</u></b>	Skillful at eluding capture- David Kline. <i>The <b>elusive</b> thought he had had moments before.</i>
<b>euphemism</b>	An inoffensive or indirect expression that is substituted for one that is considered offensive or too harsh. <i>The jargon has given us downsizing as a <b>euphemism</b> for cuts.</i>
<b>impalpable</b>	Imperceptible to the senses or the mind. <i>An <b>impalpable</b> cloud.</i>
<b>ingenious</b>	(of a person) clever, original, and inventive. <i><b>Ingenious</b> devices.</i>
<b><u>innuendo</u></b>	An indirect (and usually malicious) implication. <i>A constant torrent of <b>innuendo</b> gossip lies and half truths.</i>
<b><u>insidious</u></b>	Beguiling but harmful. <i>Sexual harassment is a serious and <b>insidious</b> problem.</i>
<b><u>intangible</u></b>	An intangible thing. <i><b>Intangible</b> assets such as good will.</i>
<b>intricacy</b>	Details, especially of an involved or perplexing subject. <i>The <b>intricacy</b> of the procedure.</i>
<b><u>manipulative</u></b>	Relating to manipulation of an object or part of the body. <i>A <b>manipulative</b> skill.</i>
<b>nuance</b>	Give nuances to. <i>The effect of the music is <b>nuanced</b> by the social situation of listeners.</i>
<b><u>obscure</u></b>	Make obscure or unclear. <i>Grey clouds <b>obscure</b> the sun.</i>
<b>reference</b>	A source of information cited in a book or article. <i>He carried an armful of <b>references</b> back to his desk.</i>
<b><u>secretive</u></b>	(of a state or activity) characterized by the concealment of intentions and information. <i>A <b>secretive</b> smile.</i>
<b><u>sly</u></b>	Showing in an insinuating way that one has some secret knowledge that may be harmful or embarrassing. <i><b>Sly</b> as a fox.</i>

<b>subtlety</b>	A subtle difference in meaning or opinion or attitude. <i>The textural <b>subtlety</b> of Degas.</i>
<b>symbolism</b>	Symbolic meaning attributed to natural objects or facts. <i>He has always believed in the importance of <b>symbolism</b> in garden art.</i>
<b>tricky</b>	Having concealed difficulty. <i>I wouldn't trust her she's <b>tricky</b>.</i>
<b>undercurrent</b>	A current below the surface of a fluid. <i>Racial <b>undercurrents</b>.</i>
<b>undertone</b>	A quiet or hushed tone of voice. <i>They were talking in <b>undertones</b>.</i>
<b>vague</b>	Not precisely limited, determined, or distinguished. <i>Many patients suffer <b>vague</b> symptoms.</i>
<b>wily</b>	Skilled at gaining an advantage, especially deceitfully. <i>A <b>wily</b> old attorney.</i>

