

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.*

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

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

abstract	Give an abstract of. <i>Abstract concepts such as love or beauty.</i>
allusion	The practice of making allusions. <i>A classical allusion.</i>
artful	Not straightforward or candid; giving a false appearance of frankness. <i>Her artful wiles.</i>
circumlocution	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 circumlocution.</i>
complexity	A factor involved in a complicated process or situation. <i>He enjoyed the complexity of modern computers.</i>
covert	A flock of coots. <i>A woman covert.</i>

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

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

