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CONTENTS

I. FOREWORD	4
II. FEATURES OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY	5
III. CHANGES IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY.....	17
IV. HOMONYMY	33
V. SYNONYMY	38
VI. ANTONYMY.....	43
VII. MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH WORDS. WORD BUILDING.....	49
VIII. FREE AND FIXED WORD COMBINATIONS.....	57
REFERENCES	65

I. FOREWORD

LEXICAL SEMANTICS is the branch of linguistics which is concerned with the systematic study of word meanings and relations between them. The purpose of the support is to systematize, develop and deepen the knowledge of the students on *LEXICAL SEMANTICS* and familiarize them with the description of the meanings of words, and how to account for the variability of meaning from context to context. These are necessarily connected, since an adequate description of meaning must be able to support our account of variation and our ability to interpret it. The didactic support provides students with a balanced and up-to-date material which ensures obtaining a high linguistic competence. The support is intended for the *second and third-year students* and consists of seven themes; moreover we have offered a list of books for reference that will give them a thorough understanding of the course.

If you want to master the English language and become skillful specialists, we recommend you to expand your horizon by persevering in Lexical Semantics. We wish you a happy and fruitful learning experience!

II. II. FEATURES OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY



VOCABULARY refers to the words that make up a language. Each language and dialect has its own vocabulary. *Vocabulary* is an important focus of literacy teaching and refers to the knowledge of words, including their structure (morphology), use (grammar), meanings (semantics), and links to other words (word/semantic relationships).

- ✓ English words are mainly *polysemantic*, they have more than one possible meaning. The meaning of most English words is a complex structure of meanings.
- ✓ English has a lot of **borrowed words** (80%) which were mainly adopted from different Indo-European languages (most borrowed words came from Latin and French).
- ✓ English is characterized by well-developed **synonymy** with many sources for synonyms.
- ✓ English is characterized by well-developed **homonymy** (e.g. *bare/bear, hair/hare* etc.).
- ✓ Most words in English are mono- and disyllabic.
- ✓ English has a unique phenomenon: **phrasal verbs**, which consist of a verb and a preposition or adverb that modifies or changes the meaning; e.g. ‘give up’ is a phrasal verb that means ‘stop doing’ something, which is very different from ‘give’.
- ✓ Many words have rather **general meaning** specified by context.



✓ English has a special type of word-formation — **conversion** (zero affixation or functional shift).

✓ **SPELLING** is important if you want to use the word in your writing.

English spelling is notoriously difficult, with many words spelt differently

from how they sound. This is obvious when examining homonyms (words which sound the same but are spelt differently). For example, the words *tort* and *taught*, which have very different meanings, are both pronounced exactly the same way, namely /tɔt/, while the words *tuff* and *tough* are both pronounced /tʌf/. The spelling of the first word in each case more closely resembles how it is pronounced, though in fact those two words are far less common than the other two spellings. Almost every phoneme (unit of sound) has more than one way to spell it. Some spelling mistakes are common even among native speakers, such as confusion between *their* and *there*.



✓ Knowing how a word is pronounced is especially important if you want to use it in your speaking, or understand it when listening.

Pronunciation, like spelling, can be a difficult area, with some words which are spelled similarly

being pronounced in different ways. For instance, **through, drought, cough, tough, though** and **thought**, which all contain the combination **-ough-**, are pronounced differently/: /θru:/, /draut/, /kɔ:f/, /tʌf/, /ðʊʊ/ and /θɔt/ respectively.

The main difference here is the vowel sounds. Indeed English has a particularly large number of vowel sounds when compared to other languages, and these

tend to be the area which learners struggle with the most, with consonants being relatively straightforward. The vowels of English differ considerably between dialects, which is another source of difficulty.

✓ An additional component to understanding how a word is pronounced is the position of the *stress* in words with more than one syllable. This can sometimes change across different word forms, a phenomenon known as

stress on first syllable		stress on second syllable	
sʌbdʒekt	subject (n.)	səb'dʒekt	subject (v.)
ˈrɛkɔ:d	record (n.)	ɪ'rɛkɔ:d	record (v.)
ˈkɒntræst	contrast (n.)	kən'træst	contrast (v.)
ˈdaɪdʒest	digest (n.)	dɪ'dʒest	digest (v.)
ˈkɒntrækt	contract (n.)	kən'trækt	contract (v.)
pɜ:mɪt	permit (n.)	pə'mɪt	permit (v.)
ˈɒbdʒekt	object (n.)	əb'dʒekt	object (v.)
ˈkɒntent	content (n.)	kən'tent	content (adj.)
ˈkɒndʌkt	conduct (n.)	kən'dʌkt	conduct (v.)

shifting stress, making pronunciation even more difficult. For example, e-CON-o-my and e-con-O-mics.



✓ It is important to know the part of speech of any word you study. This means whether the word is a *noun*, *verb*, *adjective* or *adverb*. Modern grammars normally recognise four major word classes (**verb, noun, adjective, adverb**) and five other word classes (determiners,

preposition, pronoun, conjunction, interjection), making nine word classes (or parts of speech) in total. Without this information, it will be difficult to use the word accurately in speaking or writing. It is useful, when studying new vocabulary, to study the word family, which will entail studying all parts of speech associated with a new word at the same time. This will enable you to use the word more flexibly in your writing or speaking. A word family is a group of words which are 'related' by a common base word. Other members of the word family are formed by adding prefixes or suffixes to the base word or part of it. In this case, the base form *creat-* is changed to a noun by adding *-or* (for the person) or *-ivity* or *-ion* (for the thing), and so on. Learning common prefixes and suffixes and studying words in word families will help you to build vocabulary more quickly. It can also help in guessing the meaning of unknown words. For example, knowing that *creativity* is a noun, meaning 'being creative', might help you understand the meanings of *objectivity* ('being objective')

CREATE
CREATOR,
CREATIVITY
CREATION,
CREATIVE,
CREATIVELY
RECREATE

FREQUENCY Some words are more frequent than others. Words which are extremely low frequency (i.e. uncommon words) are not worth learning unless they

are important in your particular field of study. Words which are high frequency, however, need to be studied as you will probably encounter them on a regular basis, in reading or listening. It can be difficult to know how frequent a word is. Some dictionaries will indicate the frequency of a word. Word lists can also help out here, for example the General Service List (GSL), which is a list of the most common words in English.

REGISTER refers to the language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. Academic English uses a particular register, employing more formal language than in other contexts such as story writing or chatting to friends. Although the term *register* is similar to *formality* in the case of academic English, it is not synonymous. Some very formal words and language, such as might be used in writing a contract (e.g. *hereinafter* and *heretofore*), would be considered *too* formal for academic English. In addition, the register can vary across academic English genres, with some less formal words or phrases used in academic presentations or lectures, such as *like* (to give examples), *OK* (to signal a transition), and *but* and *so* (to contrast or conclude), which are less common and even considered wrong in academic writing. In order to improve academic vocabulary use, it is important to be aware of how formal a word is, and whether it is suitable for use in academic writing or speaking.

It is not enough to study single words in isolation. If you want to expand your vocabulary and be able to use the words productively, in your speaking or writing, you need to understand how they are used. This includes studying prepositions which are associated with particular words (such as *prepare for*, *beneficial for*, *skilled in*, *associated with*), or verb forms which might follow the word (such as *prepare to do*, *unwilling to do*, *consider doing*).

A **collocation** is two or more words which frequently appear together (the prefix *co-* means *together*, while the suffix *-location* means *place*). Unlike with grammar, it is not possible to define rules for how collocation works. Some combinations just sound right to native English speakers, while others sound wrong. Modern computers and corpus linguistics (the study of language in real texts) has made it possible to

extract common collocations. There are several types of collocation possible in English. These are shown below:

- **adjective+noun** (by far the most common type, e.g. *academic achievement, active participant, cultural diversity, high frequency*)
- **verb+noun** (the second most common type, e.g. *accept responsibility, develop (a) theory, raise (a) question, use statistics*)
- **noun+noun** (e.g. *background knowledge, business sector, climate change, survey data*)
- **adverb+adjective** (e.g. *acutely aware, almost identical, broadly similar, virtually impossible*)
- **adverb+past participle** (e.g. *closely connected (to/with), commonly referred (to as), directly related (to), poorly understood*)
- **adverb+verb** (e.g. *briefly describe, clearly understand, closely resemble, strongly agree*)
- **verb+adverb** (e.g. *apply equally, communicate effectively, think differently, vary significantly*)
- **verb+adjective** (e.g. *become aware, make available, prove useful, seem unlikely*)

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY

We can distinguish two groups of words in the language:

- **Stylistically neutral (unmarked) words** can be used in any type of texts, by everyone and everywhere. They make a **core** of vocabulary.
- **Stylistically marked words** are chosen for specific situations depending on their stylistic characteristics (i.e. its *functional style*).
- **Functional style** (or **register**) is a system of expressive means peculiar to a specific situation of communication. Functional style as a subsystem of language has own peculiar features in what concerns vocabulary means, syntactical constructions, and even phonetics.

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own peculiar features in what concerns vocabulary means, syntactical constructions, and even phonetics.

- *Prior to the discovery of America, potatoes were not consumed in Europe. (highly formal style)*
- *Before America was discovered, potatoes were not eaten in Europe. (formal to neutral style)*
- *Before they discovered America, Europeans didn't eat potatoes. (neutral to informal style)*

There are two primary types of **style**—**informal** and **formal** which require using of specific groups of stylistically marked words.

Formal English is used in official, literary, academic, etc. context.

Formal functional style uses a variety of literary (bookish) words which include several specific subgroups.

➤ **Literary (bookish)** words are 'refined' words are found mainly in fiction and poetry; most of them are polysyllabic and have Latin, French or Greek origin.

e.g. *omnilegent, intelligencer, solitude, sentiment, fascination, fastidiousness, facetiousness, delusion, meditation, felicity, elusive, cordial, illusionary. exordium, articulateness, coinage.*

Using bureaucratic phrasing can make readers feel inadequate and indirectly exclude them from the conversation.

OFFICIALESE: *officialese, bureaucratese or governmentese* is language that sounds official It is the "language of officialdom. Officialese is characterized by a preference for wordy, long sentences; a preference for complex words, code words or buzzwords over simple, traditional ones; a preference for vagueness over directness and a preference for passive over. The history of *officialese* can be traced

to the history of officialdom, as far back as the eldest human civilizations and their surviving official writings. *Officialese* is meant to impress the listener (or reader) and

increase the authority (more than the social status) of the user, making them appear more professional.

e.g. “*You are authorized to acquire the work in question by purchase through the ordinary trade channels.*” (= *We advise you to buy the book in the shop*)

Mission	
✗ Example	“Unfortunately, the Director General cannot attend the conference because he will be on mission .”
☠ Why not?	“Holy people and superheroes go on missions. The rest of us just travel” (H/T @GreggSvingen)
✓ Alternatives	Business trip, travel

- **TERMS.** A term is a word or an expression that has an exact meaning or is limited to a specific subject or field, such as a particular branch of science, technology, trade or art
(phonetics: *bilingual, interdental, labialization, palatalization, glottal stop*).

TRANSLATION TIPS. *When translating terms, it is necessary to remember that many terms are polysemantic. They may have several meanings in different fields of science, and even in one and the same field. In this case it is important to thoroughly study the context: e.g. stage (in radio engineering) – фазă/каскад, фаза, стадия; (in rocket engineering) – ступень ракеты; stage (general meaning) – етапă/этан.*

- **Archaic and poetical words** are outdated, obsolete words found mainly in historical novels and poetry. An archaic word or sense is one that still has some current use but whose use has dwindled to a few specialized contexts, outside which it connotes old-fashioned language.

e.g. ‘*Thou*’ and ‘*thy*’, ‘*aye*’ (‘yes’) and ‘*nay*’ (‘no’), *afore* (‘before’), *agone* (ago), *afeard* (frightened)etc.

INFORMAL ENGLISH is typically used in everyday, personal conversations. It is characterized by inclusion of colloquial words and some other stylistically marked groups of words.

- Colloquial words are characteristic of ordinary or familiar conversation or writing; they are informal, ‘relaxed’ words. Dictionaries often display colloquial words and phrases with the abbreviation ‘colloq.’ Typical colloquial words or expression are:
- Phrasal combinations consisting of a general verb (usually ‘have’) + a verbal noun, such as *to have a drink*, *to have a bite*;
- Phrasal verbs (*to put up*, *to get on*);
- Intensifiers, such as *fantastic*, *terrific*;
- Substitution words with a broad meaning (*stuff*, *thing...*);
- Shortened words (abbreviations) (*bike*, *fridge...*).

north and south - mouth

boat race -- face

oily rag -- fag = cigarette

jam jar -- car

mince pies -- eyes

pen and ink -- stink

porkies -- lies

tea leaf-thief

jugs-ears

bird-prison

SLANG is language of a highly colloquial style, considered as below the level of standard educated speech. Some linguists do not differentiate colloquial and slang words, while others underline that slang words are either new words or current words used in some special sense, and are mainly used by a specific social group, for example teenagers, prisoners, soldiers etc.

“The world of slang is inhabited by odd creatures indeed: not by men but by guys, blighters and rotters with nuts for heads, mugs for faces, flippers for hands.”

- **Vulgar words.** Vulgar words are rude, obscene words.
- **Dialect words.** English is actually an unusual language. Already a blend of early Frisian and Saxon, it absorbed Danish and Norman French, and later added many Latin and Greek technical terms. In the US, Canada, Hawaii,

Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and elsewhere, it absorbed terms for indigenous plants, animals, foodstuffs, clothing, housing, and other items from native and immigrant languages. Plus, the various dialects, from *Cockney* to *Jamaican*. Dialect words are used in certain geographic locations. They are different from Standard English. Authors generally use dialect in their works of literature to create a better sense of place and to help **characterization**. Some writers create a way of writing a particular dialect that is at first difficult for readers not of that place to understand. Others use dialect in more subtle ways that connote a time and place without having to state it directly.

AYE-YES
KIRK – CHURCH
HAME –HOME
BIG –BUILD
GAN –GO
HOWDY -HELLO

e.g Bairn = child “...*never used to hurry see the bairns then...*”

Professionalisms as the term itself signifies, are the words used in a definite trade, profession or calling by people connected by common interests both at work and at home. They commonly designate some working process or implement of labour. Professionalisms are correlated to terms. Terms, as has already been indicated, are coined to nominate new concepts that appear in the process of, and as a result of, technical progress and the development of science.

Professional words name a new already-existing concepts, tools or instruments, and have the typical properties of a special code. The main feature of a professionalism is its technicality. Professionalisms are special words in the non-literary layer of the English vocabulary. They form so called “professional slang”; or “technical

Professionalisms should not be mixed up with jargonisms. Like slang words, professionalisms do not aim at secrecy. They fulfil a socially useful function in communication, facilitating a quick and adequate grasp of the message.

jargon” Professionalisms generally remain in circulation within a definite community, as they are linked to a common occupation and common social interests. The semantic structure of the term is usually transparent and is therefore easily understood. The semantic structure of a professionalism is often dimmed by the image on which the meaning of the professionalism is based, particularly when the features of the object in question reflect the process of the work, metaphorically or metonymically. Like terms, professionalisms do not allow any polysemy, they are monosemantic.

e.g ‘*gas passer*’—anesthesiologist

tin-fish – submarine

piper - a specialist who decorates pastry with the use of a cream-pipe

outer - knockout blow



REWRITE THIS LETTER IN MORE SUITABLE FORMAL ENGLISH.

DEAR Mr. BLACK,

We're really sorry to say that we can't lend you the sum of six hundred quid that you need, but it may be possible to give you a loan for some of the money. If you are still interested, do you fancy getting in touch with our main office to fix up an appointment with the assistant manager. He will be happy to talk to you about it.

Yours sincerely!



USING THE DICTIONARY EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING BOOKISH WORDS.

*OMNILEGENT,
INTELLIGENCER,
ELUSIVE,
CORDIAL,
ILLUSIONARY,
EXORDIUM
ARTICULATENESS,
COINAGE*

Read and analyze the following extract from “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee. Find examples of Colloquialism.

“It’s not necessary to tell all you know. It’s not ladylike-in the second place, folks don’t like to have somebody around knowin’ more than they do. It aggravates ‘em. You’re not gonna change any of them by talkin’ right, they’ve got to want to learn themselves, and when they don’t want to learn there’s nothing you can do but



FIND STYLISTICALLY MARKED WORDS IN THE SENTENCES BELOW. WHICH WORDS IN SENTENCES 1-4 ARE MOST LIKELY BOOKISH/FORMAL WORDS?

- 1. 80% of voters are dissatisfied with the way their country is being governed.*
- 2. Please indicate your marital status by ticking appropriate box in the form.*
- 3. Passengers were stranded without food and beverages for hours.*
- 4. I am the ideal candidate for this job because I have substantial experience in this field.*

REWRITE THESE SENTENCES IN MORE INFORMAL ENGLISH

- 1. When are you going to collect your bicycle?*
- 2. Most of these children are very clever.*
- 3. I think it'll commence quite soon.*
- 4. Would you like to go out for a meal?*
- 5. My flat is five minutes from where I work, thus it is very convenient.*
- 6. What's the matter?*
- 7. The man in the market wanted twenty pounds for this ring.*
- 8. Where did you purchase that book?*

III. III. CHANGES IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY

Vocabulary system is not a rigid one. It is quite adaptive and closely connected with the life of the people speaking this language. There are two types of changes that take place in the vocabulary system:



is

Quantitative changes imply that generally the total number of words is constantly increasing. Though quite a lot of words become obsolete and eventually drop out of the language, much more of new words appear every day.

Qualitative changes imply that old words develop and acquire new meanings.

e.g. *meat*: OE *mete* – any food; now – only animal flesh

The meanings of very few words remain unchanged through ages. When a word acquires new meanings, they become polysemantic. Sometimes a polysemantic word may split into two or more words; as a result **homonyms** can come about. A **neologism** is a new word or a phraseological unit or a meaning of an existing word which is: felt by speakers as new, and not included in most dictionaries yet. Neologisms may appear in all spheres of life, but it's true that much more neologisms appear in certain spheres of modern life. Some of these spheres are:

New science and technology: *faxable, tummytuck*.

Lifestyle, new sports, music and fashions: *snowsurfing, beach-music, vougeing*.

Political and social life: *eco-friendly, fattism*.

Ways of forming neologisms:

Word-building (affixation): e.g. *ageism*

Word-building (blending): *politiclone*

Change of meaning: e.g. *dark-green*

New words borrowed from other languages: e.g. *karaoke*

New set phrases: e.g. *bedroom community*

An **archaism** is an outdated word or expression. There are two types of archaisms:

1. **Historisms** are words denoting notions which do not exist now but they don't pass out of use altogether.

e.g. *bodkin, vassal, yeoman*

2. **Archaisms proper** are the words which come out as a result of synonymic competition.

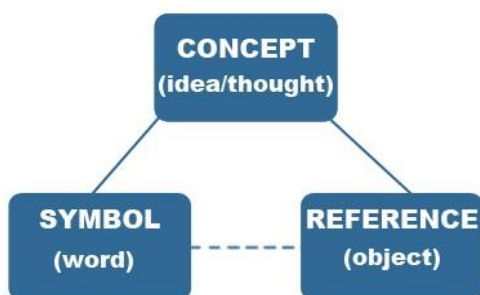
e.g. *swoon (feel seasick), hap (chance)*

Lexical semantics is a subfield of linguistic semantics. It is the study of how and what the words of a language denote. The units of analysis in lexical semantics are lexical units which include not only words but also sub-words or sub-units.(affixes, compound words,and phrases). It covers theories of the classification and decomposition of lexical items, the differences and similarities in lexical semantic structure between different language, and the relationship of lexical meaning to sentence meaning and syntax.

Meaning is one of the most controversial terms in the theory of language.

Meaning is one of the most important features in a word. Generally speaking, meaning is a component of the word through which a concept is communicated. The complex relations between a symbol (word), concept (thought) and a referent (thing) are traditionally represented by the following triangle:

Fig. 1 The referential approach to the description of meaning.



Here, the “symbol” is the word; thought or reference is concept. The dotted line suggests that there is no immediate relation between word and referent: it is established only through the concept. The meaning of a word can be also described as **a sum of usages** of the word.

“The tendency to think of the meaning of a word, e.g. apple, boy, dog or sun, as apart from an actual communication event is fundamentally a mistake, for once we have isolated a word-form its living context, we no longer possess the insight necessary to appreciate fully its real function.” (Eugene A. Nida)

THE STRUCTURE OF MEANING, TYPES OF MEANING

The inner form of the word (its meaning) is a structure which is called the semantic structure of the word. There are two big components of meaning:

- **LEXICAL** (individual, unique, correlated with the referent and unchanged in different forms of a word)
- **GRAMMATICAL** (abstract, common to big classes of words)

*e.g. There are two **tables** in the room.*

Lexical meaning of 'tables' = 'an article of furniture';

grammatical meaning of 'tables' = noun, plural, indefinite.

The borderline between lexical and grammatical is not clear. Sometimes the lexical meaning is changed with the change of grammatical.

e.g. custom (= a practice followed by people of a particular group or region) – Customs (=duties or taxes imposed on imported and, less commonly, exported goods)

The lexical meaning is further analyzed into two components. The first component expresses the conceptual content of the word correlated with the referent (**denotative meaning**). Denotation is the dictionary (explicit or literal) meaning of a word.



The second component characterizes not so much the referent, as the speaker himself, his attitude, situation etc. (**connotative meaning**). Connotations may vary according to the experience of individuals.

Connotation refers to a meaning that is implied by a word apart from the thing which it describes explicitly. Words carry **cultural** and **emotional** associations or meanings, in addition to their literal meanings or denotations.

Words may have **positive** or **negative** connotations that depend upon the social, cultural, and personal experiences of individuals. For example, the words *childish*, *childlike* and *youthful* have the same *denotative*, but different *connotative*, meanings.



Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, the "dictionary definition." For example, if you look up the word snake in a dictionary, you will discover that one of its denotative meanings is "any of numerous scaly, legless, sometimes venomous reptiles having a long, tapering, cylindrical body and found in most tropical and temperate regions."

- Connotation, on the other hand, refers to the associations that are connected to a certain word or the emotional suggestions related to that word. The connotative meanings of a word exist together with the denotative meanings.

The connotations for the word *snake* could include *evil* or *danger*.

DENOTATION is when you mean what you say, literally. **CONNOTATION** is created when you mean something else, something that might be initially hidden. The



JACK WORE A **BLUE** SHIRT YESTERDAY

connotative meaning of a word is based on implication, or shared emotional association with a word. *Greasy* is a completely innocent word: Some things, like car engines, need to be greasy. But



HE WAS **BLUE** AFTER HIS PET DIED.

greasy contains negative associations for most people, whether they are talking about food or about people. Often there are many words that denote approximately the same thing, but their connotations are very different. Innocent and genuine both

denote an absence of corruption, but the connotations of the two words are different: innocent is often associated with a lack of experience, whereas genuine is not. Connotations are important in poetry because poets use them to further develop or complicate a poem's meaning.

In grammar, a word's denotation is whatever the word directly refers to, roughly equivalent to its lexical definition. Thus, the word "atheist" denotes a person who disbelieves in or denies the existence of gods. A word's connotation refers to any subtle nuances that might or might not be intended by its use. For example, one possible connotation for the word "atheist" might be someone who is immoral and wicked, depending upon who is doing the speaking or listening. Separating grammatical denotation from connotation is important because while one might assume that a word's denotation is fully intended, whether a word's connotations are intended is much more difficult to determine. Connotations are often emotional in nature, and thus if they are intended, it may be for the purpose of swaying a person's emotional reactions rather than the logical evaluation of an argument.

If there are misunderstandings about how a person is using a word in a particular debate, a primary source of that misunderstanding might lie in the word's connotations: people might be seeing something not intended or the speaker may be intending something people don't see. In constructing your own arguments, it's a good idea not merely to look at what your words denote, but also what they connote. The relationship between words and meanings is extremely complicated, and belongs to the field of semantics. For now, though, what you need to know is that words do not have single, simple meanings. Traditionally, grammarians have referred to the meanings of words in two parts: denotation a literal meaning of the word connotation an association (emotional or otherwise) which the word evokes For example, both "woman" and "chick" have the denotation "adult female" in North American society, but "chick" has somewhat negative connotations, while "woman" is neutral. **Connotations** are also an important means of conveying personal attitude and point of view:

e.g. "I am firm. You are obstinate. He is a pig-headed fool."

The boundary between **denotative** and **connotative** components of meaning is vague. Some words have no connotative meaning. A few may have no denotative meaning.

Each denotative meaning of a word is a set of semantic components (**semes**), the smallest elements of meaning that correspond to the features of the notion of the word expressed.



Explain the denotative meaning of the word “dog”?

What is the negative connotation of the word “dog”?

*I LOVE MY PET **DOG**. YOU ARE SUCH A **DOG**.*



Which word in each pair below has the more favorable connotation to you? Explain.

PUSHY-AGGRESSIVE

POLITICIAN-STATESMAN

CHEF-COOK

SLENDER-SKINNY

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of a home?
Of a house?
2. Why do you think that real-estate advertisers use the word home more frequently than house?
3. What is the connotation of these words?



ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

1. *What is the general meaning of each of the three sentences about Annette? Do the words surprised, amazed, and astonished have approximately the same denotation? 2. What additional meanings are suggested by astonish? Would one be more likely to be surprised or astonished at seeing a ghost?*

Ann was surprised.

Ann was amazed.

Ann was astonished.



Read each list of words below. Each word has a different connotation, but has the same general denotation. Decide what the general denotation is for each group. Write your answer on the line provided. Then, number the words in each group from most positive connotation to most negative connotation.

THIN

BONY.....

SLIM.....

ANOREXIC

SLENDER.....

_____ (GENERAL
DENOTATION)

UPRISING.....

RIOT.....

DEMONSTRATION.....

*UNLAWFUL
GATHERING....*

PROTEST.....

DISTURBANCE

_____ (GENERAL
DENOTATION)

POLYSEMY is the existence of several meanings in a single word. It's a universal characteristic of all natural languages. English is particularly rich in polysemous words. A **polysemous (polysemantic) word** is a unity of meanings (lexico-semantic variants) correlated with each other and having one or several features in common.

e.g. fail (v)

to be unsuccessful

to make somebody unsuccessful

not to be enough

to become weak

to become bankrupt

The relations between meanings of a polysemous word may imply:

➤ natural existing relations between objects (**implicational relations**)

e.g. surprise :1. an unexpected event; 2. the feeling that you have when something unexpected happens.

➤ those not based on naturally existing relations but on some common features (classification relations)

e.g. coat 1. a type of clothes; 2. Covering

Polysemy exists only in language; in speech a polysemantic word is used in one of its meanings. When two or more meanings are clear from the contexts we deal with the **pun (a play of words)**.

One day a very worried-looking man knocked at Mrs Brown's door.

"I'm terribly sorry", he said. "I've run over your cat. I'd like to replace it".

"All right", said Mrs Brown doubtfully. "But can you catch mice?"

Meanings of polysemous words

✓ **Stylistic**: meanings *stylistically neutral and stylistically marked*.

E.g. high adj.

a. *Indicating excitement or euphoria: high spirits (this meaning is stylistically neutral)*

b. *(Slang) Intoxicated by or as if by alcohol or a drug, such as cocaine or marijuana. (this meaning is stylistically marked)*

✓ **Diachronic**: archaic (obsolete) meanings and present meanings.

✓ **Synchronic**: meanings direct and figurative; concrete and abstract, primary and secondary, narrow and broad, general and particular etc.

The causes of the meaning changes may be:

✓ **non-linguistic** (extra-linguistic, due to changes in life, culture etc.)

➤ **linguistic** (due to reasons within the language).

The development of a new meaning is usually logically (involves the relations between the scope and content of the notions expressed by different meanings, primary and secondary) and psychologically-based (involves different types of associative links between notions).

Psychologically based are the processes of **transference of meaning**:

Transference based on Resemblance (Similarity) = **Linguistic metaphor** (hidden comparison).

- A **concretive metaphor** employs a concrete term to refer to an abstract thing: e.g. *the burden of responsibility*
- **Antropomorphic metaphor** ascribes human characteristics to nonhuman things: *a leg of the table, the heart of the matter*
- **Zoomorphic (animalistic)** metaphors are animal metaphors that present human personality: *a swine (a dishonest, brutal person), a goose (a silly person), a dove (a gentle, innocent person), a hawk (a person who favors military force or action in order to carry out foreign policy), a cat (a woman who is regarded as spiteful), a hen (a fussy or nosy old woman).*

Another particular type of metaphor is **antonomasia**: the use of a proper name to designate a member of a class such as: a Solomon - a wise ruler, or the use of an epithet or title in place of a proper name such as: **the Bard** for Shakespeare. In rhetoric, *antonomasia* is a kind of metonymy in which an epithet or phrase takes the place of a proper name, such as "the little corporal" for Napoleon I;

PERSONS

"Il Duce" for Benito Mussolini

"La Divina" for Maria Callas

"Man of Steel" for Joseph Stalin

PLACES

"The Big Apple" for New York City

"The Big Easy" for New Orleans

"City of Dreams" for Mumbai

A frequent instance of *antonomasia* in the Late Middle Ages and early Renaissance was the use of the term "the Philosopher" to refer to Aristotle.

Transference based of contiguity results in **Linguistic Metonymy**. Metonymy is the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated. Linguistic metonymy may be based on associations:

- between container and content: *cash* (from Old French 'casse,' money box)
- b/n things and their place of origin: *china, champaign*
- b/n the part and the whole: *town* (from Old English *tūn*, enclosed place, village)
- b/n organs and their function: *a good ear for music*
- b/n material and things made of it: *glass, copper, china*
- b/n a symbol and the thing symbolized: *Pentagon*.
- b/n cause and consequence: *fear* (the Old English word used to denote "calamity, disaster, unexpected attack")

DEFINITION

Semantic change refers to a change in the meaning of a word over time.

PEJORATION is the process by which a word develops a negative meaning or negative connotations over time. These words did not always have negative connotations but, as society progresses and our use of language changes, the meaning of words can change and develop. Pejoration is therefore a type of semantic change.

Pejoration is sometimes called 'deterioration' or 'degeneration'. All terms can be used synonymously however the term "pejoration" is most commonly used. The term derives from the Latin word "**peior**" meaning 'worse' whilst the suffix '-ation' refers to a process or result. The term 'pejoration' therefore refers

*SILLY
ATTITUDE
AWFUL
CUNNING
VILLAIN*

to the process by which a word becomes pejorative. A word that is 'pejorative' is a word that expresses disapproval, discontent, criticism, or other negative connotations. Pejorative language may be used as a slur or to insult someone.

It is important to remember that different terms are perceived as pejorative by different groups of people. For example, people in certain social or ethnic groups may perceive a term as pejorative that others don't (and vice versa). This can develop over time as societal values change. Some examples of everyday pejorated words include silly, attitude, awful, cunning/crafty. Silly - in the Early Middle English period (11th-13th century), the word "seely" (or "sely") was used to describe someone as happy, fortunate, or blessed. As time went on, the definition shifted to mean someone innocent, holy, and pure. Then again to mean someone naive. Eventually, the word became associated with its present-day connotations of foolishness and idiocy. The word "*awful*" used to have positive connotations, similar to the words "awe-inspiring" and "awesome". It was understood in the literal sense i.e. "worthy of awe". However, things that are *worthy of awe* aren't always positive. Over time, the word 'awful' developed negative connotations of something that is bad. Nowadays, "awful" has particularly bad connotations and is used to describe something that is dreadful or appalling. This is a great example of pejoration as the meaning of the word has greatly changed from having positive connotations to very negative connotations.

The process of pejoration reflects how social values and perceptions of language have changed over the years. The English language is constantly changing and adapting to suit the societies that use it. This means that pejoration is an important process in linguistics as it allows people to fully make use of a language and use it to express what they mean.

Dictionaries are constantly being revised and, as the meaning of a word changes, the meaning in the dictionary will also change. Who knows which words are next in the process of pejoration. For example, imagine if being called 'nice' or 'lovely' is an insult in a few hundred years time! Only time will tell.

AMELIORATION is
the process by which a
word develops a **positive**

The opposite of pejoration is a process called
“**amelioration**”, which is
another type of semantic
change. An example of this is

QUEEN
LEAN
TERRIFIC

the word “*terrific*” which originally described something that caused terror or fear. Over time, the meaning of the word weakened, changing to mean 'severe' e.g. 'I have a terrific headache!' (I have a severe headache!). In the late 19th century, “terrific” developed the positive meaning, similar to the word 'excellent', that we know today. (e.g. *queen* (OE a common woman); *lean* (very thin especially from hunger; now – athletic, slim and good looking.

Irony is the humorous or mildly sarcastic use of words to imply the opposite of what they normally mean. The word came into English as a figure of speech in the 16th century as similar to the French *ironie*. It derives from the Latin *ironia*. Sarcasm does not necessarily involve irony and irony has often no touch of sarcasm. Irony must not be confused with sarcasm, which is direct: sarcasm means precisely what it says, but in a sharp, caustic, manner.

e.g. Nice of you!

A pretty mess you have made of it!

A nice mess!

HYPERBOLE (overstatement). *Hyperbole* is a simple and straightforward technique that can be used to great effect by writers and speakers. Learning to use hyperbole well can help elevate your prose and engage your readers effectively. Hyperbole is a rhetorical and literary technique where an author or speaker intentionally uses exaggeration and overstatement for emphasis and effect. The word hyperbole is derived from the greek word “*huperbole*” meaning “to throw above.”

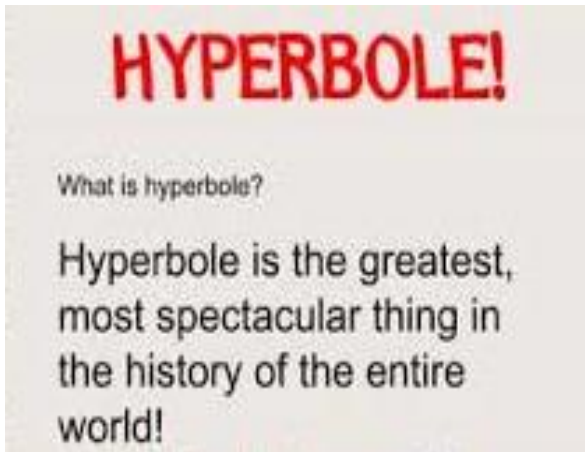
I’m so excited, I could die!

**I’ve told you a million
times, pick up your dirty
socks.**

**She knocked it out of the
park with that speech.**

When used in rhetoric, it’s also called “auxesis” which comes from the greek word

for “growth.” *Hyperbole* is a common literary device, but use of hyperbole also pops up in everyday storytelling and common figures of speech. Hyperbole can be used to great effect when employed judiciously—there is a difference between using a hyperbolic figure of speech and misleading your reader. Hyperbole is effective when



the audience understands that you are employing hyperbole. When using hyperbole, the intended effect is not to deceive the reader, it's to emphasize the magnitude of something through exaggerated comparison. In the 5th century B.C. there was a rabble-rousing Athenian, a politician named Hyperbolus, who often made exaggerated

promises and claims that whipped people into a frenzy. But even though it sounds appropriate, “Hyperbolus” name did not play a role in the development of the modern English word *hyperbole*. That noun does come to us from Greek (by way of Latin), but from the Greek verb *hyperballein*, meaning "to exceed," not from the name of the Athenian demagogue. *Hyperballein* itself was formed from *hyper-*, meaning "beyond," and *ballein*, "to throw."

A way of speaking or writing that makes someone or something sound bigger, better more, etc. than they are:

- Thousand thanks.
- I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse.
 - My feet are killing me.
 - That plane ride took forever.
- This is the best book ever written.
- I love you to the moon and back.
- I've told you this 20,000 times.
- That runner's faster than the speed of lightning.
- My parents are going to kill me when they find out.
 - He has the memory of an elephant.

- He's high as a kite.

EUPHEMISM is a substitute for rough or taboo words. Euphemistic language can be found throughout both in literature and in everyday language.

juicy (=drunken)

Euphemism is also often employed in an attempt to make polite reference to physical or psychological disability

e.g. lame → crippled → handicapped → disabled → physically challenged
→ differently abled

TECHNIQUES FOR CREATING EUPHEMISM

- ✓ Using abbreviations e.g. B.O. (body odor), W.C. (toilet) etc.
- ✓ Using foreign words to replace an impolite expression e.g. *faux (fake), or faux pas (foolish error)*
- ✓ Using abstractions or words with general meaning e.g. *before I go (before I die)*.
- ✓ Deliberately mispronouncing an offensive word to reduce its severity e.g. *darn (a common substitute for "damn")*



FIND OUT WHO THESE ANTONOMASIA BELONG TO.

"Old Blue Eyes" for

"The Donald" for

"The Fab Four" for

"The Führer" for

The Iron Chancellor" for

"The Iron Lady" for

"The King of Pop" for

"The King" for

"The City of Kings" for

"The City of Light" for ...

"The City of Palaces" for

"The Eternal City" or "Urbe" for

"The Smoke" for

Fill IN THE APPROPRIATE WORD

He's not a ...; he's "creative with the truth."

People don't go to ... it's a "correctional facility."

He's not ...; he's "economically disadvantaged."

She didn't ... with him; she "needed some space."

You're not ...; you're being "let go."

He's not ...; he's "between jobs."

She didn't ...; she "chose to resign."

You're not unable to find ...; you're just "considering your options."

CONTEXTUALIZE THESE SENTENCES CONTAINING HYPERBOLE.

Thousand thanks.

I am so hungry, I could eat a horse.

My feet are killing me.

That plane ride took forever.

This is the best book ever written.

I love you to the moon and back.

I have told you this 20,000 times.

That runner is faster than the speed of lightning.

My parents are going to kill me when they find out.

He has the memory of an elephant.

He is high as a kite.



IV. IV. HOMONYMY

In linguistics, *homonyms* are words which are *homographs* (words that share the same spelling, regardless of pronunciation), or *homophones* (equivocal words, that share the same pronunciation, regardless of spelling), or both. Using this definition, the words **row** (propel with oars), **row** (a linear arrangement) and **row** (an argument) are homonyms because they are *homographs* (though only the first two are homophones): so are the words **see** (vision) and **sea** (body of water), because they are *homophones* (though not homographs).

A more restrictive and technical definition requires that homonyms be simultaneously *homographs* and *homophones* – that is to say they have identical spelling and pronunciation, but with different meanings. Examples are the pair **stalk** (part of a plant) and **stalk** (follow/harass a person) and the pair **left** (past tense of leave) and **left** (opposite of right).

A distinction is sometimes made between *true homonyms*, which are unrelated in origin, such as **skate** (glide on ice) and **skate** (the fish), and polysemous homonyms, or polysemes, which have a shared origin, such as **mouth** (of a river) and **mouth** (of an animal).

In English homonymy is very widely spread.

- **bow** – a long stick with horse hair that is used to play certain string instruments such as the violin
- **bow** – to bend forward at the waist in respect (e.g. "bow down")
- **bow** – the front of the ship (e.g. "bow and stern")
- **bow** – a kind of tied ribbon (e.g. bow on a present, a bowtie)
- **bow** – to bend outward at the sides (e.g. a "bow-legged" cowboy)
- **Bow** – a district in London
- **bow** – a weapon to shoot projectiles with (e.g. a bow and arrow)

The relationship between a set of homonyms is called homonymy, and the associated adjective is homonymous, homonymic, or in latin, *equivocal*.

e.g. This porter is very fond of porter.

TYPES OF HOMONYMS

Homographs have identical spelling, different pronunciation.

• *e.g. lead - lead, bow – bow, tear – tear;*

Homophones have identical pronunciation but different spelling.

• *bare-bear, sea – see; son-Sun; eye –I; knight – night.*

Homonyms proper have both identical spelling and pronunciation

Case- case;

Classification of homonyms based on the difference in meaning

✓ Lexical homonyms have different lexical meaning but the same grammatical meaning.

plot (noun, a small piece of land) – plot (noun, a secret plan to achieve some purpose)

✓ Grammatical homonyms have same lexical meaning but different grammatical meaning.

set-set-set (infinitive, past tense, past participle)

✓ Lexico-grammatical homonyms have different lexical and grammatical meanings

seal(n) – seal (v)

✓ Split of polysemy. When one basic meaning of a polysemantic word is lost, a word splits into several ones with unrelated meanings.

e.g. board

- *a long wide flat relatively thin piece of sawn timber*
- *a smaller flat piece of rigid material for a specific purpose: ironing board*

(Archaic. a table, esp. one used for eating at, and esp. when laden with food)

a person's food or meals, provided regularly for money

a group of people who officially administer a company, trust

✓ Historical phonetic changes (e.g. vowel shift)

e.g. night (OE niht) – knight (cniht) – these words used to have different spelling and pronunciation.

- ✓ Historical process of leveling of endings resulted in the loss of many grammatical inflections.

e.g. love (n) OE lufu – love (v) OE lufian

- ✓ Process of conversion, when a new word is formed by changing the category of part of speech of an existing word with each morphemic shape remaining unchanged.

e.g. top (n) – to top (v)

PARONYMS are false homonyms; words, containing the same root or stem.

Paronyms are words that are pronounced or written in a similar way but which have different lexical meanings. *Paronyms* contrast with homonyms, which are words with different meaning having the same pronunciation or spelling.

e.g. humane – human

conscious – conscience

A word which is similar in form of derivation but different in meaning is known as a Paronym. In other words, paronyms may refer to words that are linked by a similarity of a form.

COMPARE:

Ancient = old in time.

Eg: I am very interested in ancient Telugu Literature.

Antiquated = old in fashion.

Eg: The Aryans are antiquated people.

The difference between **CONFUSED** words and **PARONYMS** is as follows: *Confused words* differ from each other in spelling and pronunciation. But *Paronyms* differ not only from spelling but also come from same root word.



Choose the right word.

1. A ___ is an animal.

2. a. bare

- 3.b. bear
4. When it ____, it pours.
5.a. rains
6.b. reigns
7.c. reins
8. It is dishonest to ____.
9.a. steal
10. b. steel
11. A ____ is a type of tree.
12. a. beach
13. b. beech
14. The team ____ the playoffs.
15. a. won
16. b. one
17. She vanished into thin ____.
18. a. air
19. b. heir
20. The window ____ was cracked.
21. a. pain
22. b. pane
23. That's him! He is the ____.
24. a. won
25. b. one
26. A carrot is a ____ vegetable.
27. a. root
28. b. route
29. To ____ means to plant seeds.
30. a. sew
31. b. so
32. c. sow
33. Iron is used to produce ____.
34. a. steal
35. b. steel
36. I am very honored to ____ you.
37. a. meat
38. b. meet
39. A ____ is a type of shellfish.
40. a. muscle
41. b. mussel
42. One tasty fish is called ____.
43. a. place
44. b. plaice



FILL IN THE RIGHT WORD:

Artist/artiste

Ravi Varma is a great ...

Nagarjuna is a popular film ...

2. imaginative/imaginary

Modern man is living in ... world.

John Keats was a great ... poet.

3. sensible/sensitive

Wordsworth was a ... poet.

Ann is always of her mother's love and affection.

4. Sociable/social

Ann is a ... woman.

We must work hard to combat ... evils.

5. Popular/populous

He is a ... singer.

China is a ... country.

6. Barbarism/barbarity

We still find in many parts of India.

Some tribal people are notorious for their

7. Economic /economical

No political party has tried to improve the ... conditions of our country.

I appreciate the ... ways of my friend.

V. V. SYNONYMY



English, with its long history of absorbing terminology from a wealth of other tongues, is a language particularly rich in **SYNONYMS** —words so close in meaning that in many contexts they are interchangeable, like the nouns *tongue* and *language* in the first part of this sentence. Just about every popular dictionary defines *synonym* as a term having “the same or nearly the same” meaning as another, but there is an important difference between “*the same*” and “nearly the same.”

Noun synonyms sometimes mean exactly the same thing. A *Dalmatian* is a *coach dog* —same dog. A *bureau* is a *chest of drawers*. And if you ask for a *soda* on the east coast of the U.S., you’ll get the same drink that asking for a *pop* will get you farther west. The object referred to remains constant. But *forest* and *wood*, though often *interchangeable*, have different shades of meaning: a *forest* tends to be larger and denser than a *wood*. And when we move from nouns to other parts of speech, we almost always find subtle but important differences among synonyms: although the meanings overlap, they differ in emphasis and connotation. A sunset might be described equally well as *beautiful* or *resplendent*, but a *beautiful* baby would not usually be described as *resplendent*, which implies an especially dazzling appearance. The verbs *make* and *construct* mean roughly the same thing, but one is more likely to *make* a cake but *construct* a building, which is a more complex undertaking.

SYNONYMS are the words of the same category of parts of speech conveying the same concept but differing either in shades of meaning or in stylistic characteristics.

calm	strange	false	angry	select
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
peaceful	peculiar	untrue	mad	choose
large	eat	happen	sad	get
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
big	consume	occur	unhappy	receive
scared	pretty	middle	total	help
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
afraid	beautiful	centre	entire	assist

e.g. to surprise – to astonish – to amaze – to astound (different connotation of intensity)

The usual test for **synonymy** is **substitution**: if one expression can be replaced by another in a sentence without change to the meaning of the sentence, then the two expressions are said to be synonyms.

Absolute synonyms are substitutable in all possible contexts in all possible (semantic, grammatical, sociolinguistic) ways.

Synonymy is a relation between individual senses of words, so that a single word typically has different sets of synonyms for each of its senses. For example, coat has different synonyms for its senses ‘outer garment’ (e.g., jacket) and ‘covering layer’ (e.g., layer).

Thus, synonyms may be **full** and **partial**:

e.g. convince — to make (someone) agree, understand, or realize the truth

persuade – 1) — to make (someone) agree, understand; 2) to induce, urge, or prevail upon successfully

These polysemantic words are partial synonyms as they coincide only in some of their meanings.

Synonyms form *synonymic series*, where one word is a *synonymic dominant* (it has the most broad meaning, extensive combinability and no connotations)

e.g. leave— depart- quit- retire- clear out

To look- to stare – to gaze

Other synonym terms distinguish types of semantic overlap between words:

1. **identity of sense** (perfect, or exact, synonymy: myopia/near-sightedness) versus overlap (near-synonymy: advice/suggestion)

2. **similar but non-identical referents** (the state of being close but not identical in meaning, e.g. fog/mist,); and differences in **level of specificity** (hyponymy: shoe/footwear).

One sense is a **hyponym** of another sense if the first sense is more specific, denoting a subclass of the other. In linguistics and lexicography, a *hyponym* is used to designate a particular member of a broader class. For instance, *daisy* and *rose* are

hyponyms of the *flower*. Also called a *subtype* or a *subordinate term*. The adjective is *hyponymic*.

Hyponymy is not restricted to nouns. The verb *to see*, for example, has several hyponyms—a *glimpse*, *stare*, *gaze*, *ogle*, and so on. Edward Finnegan points out that although “hyponymy is found in all languages, the concepts that have words in hyponymic relationships vary from one language to the next.

e.g. Car is a hyponym of vehicle;
blouse is a hyponym of clothes;
dog is a hyponym of animal,
mango is a hyponym of fruit,
carrot is a hyponym of vegetable.

Conversely, we say that vehicle is a hypernym of car, and animal is a hypernym of dog. It is unfortunate that the two words (hypernym and hyponym) are very similar and hence easily confused.

Replacing a word with an equivalent one, perhaps even a more specific one, *can improve how you are communicating your ideas*. The use of synonyms also helps to make your writing more vivid and to create a more intriguing image in the mind of the reader.

The use of synonyms also helps to make your writing more vivid and to create a more intriguing image in the mind of the reader. What images do you see in your mind when you read the following sentences; “the water in the pond was dark”, “the water in the pond was murky”. Does the second sentence create a more interesting image for you? The word “murky” gives a more exciting and vivid description of the appearance of the pond water.



tiny petite insufficient
unimportant trifling
trivial **SMALL** meagre
insignificant pocket-sized
slight young immature

Fill in the appropriate synonym of the word SMALL.

1. The bank's staff were already angered by the.... pay rise.
2. I did not like his sense of humour.
3. They were forced to supplement their earnings.
4. Huge fines were imposed for offences.
5. She was dark and, as all his wives had been.
6. I don't know why he gets so upset about something so
7. It's such a ... issue, and we are wasting so much time.

Work with your dictionary and explain why the following synonyms are partial. Give the meanings in which they coincide.

- a) TONGUE – LANGUAGE
- b) DEAR – EXPENSIVE
- c) RIPE – MATURE

Prove that the following synonyms have different combinability.

- A) SICK – ILL
- B) LIVING/LIVE – ALIVE
- C) ALL-EVERY

CHOOSE A SUITABLE SYNONYM:

CRUCIAL	A. achieve	B. confusing	C. essential	D. defend
CHALLENGING	A. real	B. difficult	C. essential	D. beneficial
DISTINCT	A. connect	B. beneficial	C. vast	D. different
AMATEUR	A. believe	B. beginner	C. accurate	D. delicate
INTENSE	A. difficult	B. different	C. strong	D. adequate
IMMENSE	A. vast	B. connect	C. beneficial	D. essential
ABUNDANT	A. believe	B. numerous	C. connect	D. beneficial
GENUINE	A. real	B. aggressive	C. numerous	D. connect
ACCOMPLISH	A. achieve	B. accurate	C. aggressive	D. essential
ATTACH	A. connect	B. confuse	C. defend	D. numerous
SHIELD	A. defend	B. vast	C. different	D. beneficial
SUFFICIENT	A. accurate	B. achieve	C. adequate	D. different
FRAGILE	A. delicate	B. connect	C. strong	D. difficult
ASSERTIVE	A. adequate	B. aggressive	C. real	D. essential

MATCH THE SYNONYMS:

1. POLITE
2. TEMPER
3. CHORUS
4. RUDE
5. SELECTION
6. FOOLISH
7. TOXIC
8. MEETING
9. CHILDISH
10. DOMESTICATE

ASSEMBLY
CHOICE
CULTIVATE
IMPOLITE
INFANTILE
MOOD
POISONOUS
REFRAIN
SILLY
WELL MANNERED

VI. VI. ANTONYMY



SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

The English language (and, we may presume, many other languages) has both *antonyms* and *synonyms*. There are many more words with *synonyms* than there are words with *antonyms*, since many things exist which do not have an opposite (the word *sandwich*, for instance, may be said to have synonyms in the words *hoagie*, *grinder*, *submarine* and many other words, but there is no opposite of *sandwich*). *Antonym* is also a much more recent addition to English than *synonym* is; it first appeared in the 1860s, whereas *synonym* has been used for more than 500 years. Additionally, both nouns have adjectival forms: *synonymous* and *antonymous*. *Synonymous*, which is often used loosely ("She has become synonymous with good taste"), is the more common of the two. If you are looking for ways to improve upon your writing skills start by learning some new synonyms. The correct use of synonyms can transform your writing from boring to exciting or from repetitive to imaginative.

*First Known Use of
antonym 1857*

The word "*antonymy*" was coined by C. J. Smith as an opposite of "synonymy". Since 1867, lots of efforts have been taken to define "*antonymy*", but the problem is that the definition of *antonymy* tends to illustration rather than description. For example, if we would like to tell others what *antonymy* is, to give some examples like *old/young*, *tall/short*, *open/close*, *bad/good*, etc. will be more effective than to give a definition. However, finding a definition which could account for every example of *antonymy* is difficult, even problematic. Lyons (1977) defines "antonym" as the words which are opposite in meaning and "antonymy" as the oppositeness between words. For example, "buy" and "sell" is a pair of antonyms and the relation between these two words is termed as antonymy. Leech (1981) puts forward the definition of antonym and antonymy in Semantics that the opposite meaning relation between the

words is antonymy and word of opposite meaning is antonym. And a famous Chinese linguist Hu Zhuanglin (2001, p.164) simply says “antonymy is the name for oppositeness relation”. Traditional definitions of antonymy only concentrate on the oppositeness of meaning. Some traditional definitions are as follows: word of opposite meaning; (Leech, 1981) word of opposite sense; (Pyles & Algeo, 1970) words that are opposite. (Watson, 1976) These definitions are only rough ideas and over ambiguous. First, they don’t explain the ways of *oppositeness* very concretely. The antonym pairs like *hot/cold*, *dead/alive* and *lend/borrow* differ from each other in the way of oppositeness. The pair *hot/cold* belongs to the gradable antonyms; the pair *dead/alive* belongs to the complementary antonyms; and the pair *lend/borrow* belongs to the relational antonyms. Second, these definitions focus more on the discrepancy of the antonyms but they ignore the similarity of the grammar and usage of each of the antonym pairs. Just look at another three pairs, *heat/cold*, *single/married*, and *beauty/ugly*. Although either of them is opposite in meaning, they could not be regarded as antonyms in that they are not the same in grammatical units. Furthermore, people use the antonyms most of the time just for the effect of contrast. For instance, the juxtaposition of spring and winter can constantly be found in the English literature, as is presented in Ode to the West Wind, “If winter comes, can spring be far behind?”

A word that has the exact opposite meaning of another word is its *antonym*. Life is full of *antonyms*, from the "stop" and "go" of a traffic signal to side-by-side restroom doors labeled "men" and "women."

Most antonyms are pretty obvious, like "good" and "bad," or "black" and "white." Some words can be transformed into their *antonyms* simply by adding the prefixes "un," "in," or "non," as when "likable" is changed into its antonym, "unlikable."

The word *antonym* itself takes the Greek word *anti*, meaning "opposite," and adds it to *-onym*, which comes from the Greek *onoma*, or "name." So *antonym* literally means "opposite-name."

ANTONYMY can be found across all parts of speech:

Adjective: tall - short, wet - dry, hot - cold

Nouns: hero - villain, freedom - slavery

Verbs: ask - answer, discourage - encourage

Adverbs: here - there, loudly - softly

Propositions: on - under, above - below.

TYPES OF ANTONYMS

The main types of antonyms in the English language are:

➤ **Auto-antonym:** An auto-antonym is a word that has two meanings, including one with an opposite meaning. It has several different names, including “contronym” and “Janus word.” Examples of auto-antonyms include “bound,” “dust,” “consult,” and “fast.” Auto-antonym: “Dust,” when used as a verb, is an example of an auto-antonym. One definition means “to lightly cover with fine particles,” while the other means “to clean away light debris.” Here are two sentences that illustrate this difference: “He dusted the cookie with a fine layer of powdered sugar,” and “She dusted the fireplace mantle.” An **auto-antonym** is a word that can have opposite meanings in different contexts or under separate definitions:

Enjoin (to prohibit, issue injunction; to order, command)

Fast (moving quickly; fixed firmly in place)

sanction (punishment, prohibition; permission)

Stay (remain in a specific place, postpone; guide direction, movement).

Complementary antonyms: Also known as direct antonyms or contradictory antonyms, complementary antonyms are related words that are absolute opposites. They exist independently from one another and do not need the other term to exist. Examples of complementary antonyms include:

e.g. “night and day”;

“inhale and exhale.”

Complementary antonyms: “The boy crossed the street” and “The girl walked to the curb” are examples of sentences with complementary antonyms. The

DEAD: ALIVE

MALE- FEMALE

ON: OFF

TRUE --FALSE

subjects of both sentences are independent: The boy doesn't exist as a condition of the girl.

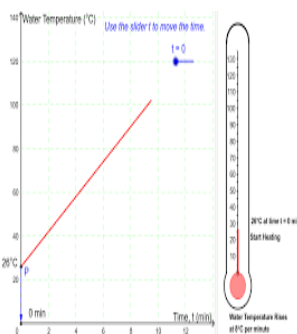
Complimentary Antonyms: These are the sets of word pairs that have no degree of meaning. There is only availability of two opposite in a possible manner.

Complementary antonyms explain an either-or relationship between the opposite word pairs.

Remember when you have to answer true or false questions on tests? This is an example of a complementary antonym. There are only two options, either true or false. There is no half-true or half-false. Because of this, each complementary antonym can exist independently of the other, and is usually its absolute opposite. Other examples are dead - alive, exterior - interior, and yes - no.

Converse antonyms: Converse antonyms, or relational antonyms, are closely related words that can't exist without each other. For example, “near” and “far” are converse antonyms because an object can't be near without measuring it with something far away.

Converse antonyms: “*The pan was warm*” and “*The pan was cool to the touch*” show how converse antonyms are relational opposites. The pan can't be cool unless it's first hot and then warm. Relational / converse antonyms show a dependent relationship between opposite words. A word from the pair can't exist without the other. For example, open - close. A shop owner must first open the shop before they can close it. Other examples include: **husband – wife;** **front – back;** **doctor - patient.**



Imagine you're looking at a room thermometer. If the indicator is at the bottom of the thermometer, it tells you that the room is cold. If it is at the top, the room is hot. However, the thermometer can also indicate warm temperature when the indicator is in the middle.

Hot and cold are *gradable* antonyms. *Gradable* antonyms define words that are at the opposite ends of a spectrum with some

gradation between the two extremes. In our temperature example we have hot - cold, with warm between hot and cold. Other examples include *empty - full* (gradations: half empty or half full), *high - low* (gradation: medium), and *young - old* (gradation: teenager). Gradable antonyms show variations or grades between words with similar meanings. While “pleased,” “gratified,” “overjoyed,” and “content” all have a relational connection to “happy,” each has a different definition.



Graded antonyms are variations of a word with different meanings. An example is, “The results varied from pleasant and upbeat to joyous and remarkable.” These terms mean “good” but differ in scale: “pleasant” is not the same as “remarkable,” though both are positive words.

ANTONYMY can also be found in *idioms*:

*E.g. Although they are twins, their personalities are **night and day**.*

Things don't always go as you want.

*You have to learn to take the **bad** with the **good**.*

Antonymy Used in Proverbs. Proverb is a form of language with the presentation of each figure of speech, which is a fixed short verse naturally coming from the usual use of some composition of the language. Proverb is simple; meanwhile, it entertains a thought deeply. When antonyms are used in proverbs, the rhetorical effect of phonological harmony, formal beauty and conciseness are achieved. Several examples are given as follows. “More haste, less speed.” “Easy come, easy go.” “Art is long, life is short.” “An idle youth, a needy age.” “Small sorrows speak; great sorrows are silent.” Very famous people are more skilful of using antonymy in proverbs. George Herbert has “Love makes all hard hearts gentle”. And George Eliot has “It is surely better to pardon too much than to condemn too much”



1. *Fill IN THE MISSING ANTONYM.*

Barack Obama's 2008 victory speech.

It's the answer spoken by ... and old, rich and ..., Democrat and ..., black, ..., Latino, ..., Native American, gay, ..., ... and not disabled - Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of red states and blue states; we are, and always will be, the United States of America.

2. *Write your own speech using as many as possible antonyms.*



FINISH THE SENTENCES.

1. *The opposite of arrive home is ...*
2. *The opposite of send an email is ...*
3. *The opposite of buy a car is ...*
4. *The opposite of find your mobile phone is...*
5. *The opposite of open the window is*
6. *The opposite of start the meeting is ...*
7. *The opposite of sit down is ...*
8. *The opposite of go to bed is ...*
9. *The opposite of turn on the TV is ...*
10. *The opposite of read a message is...*

**VII. VII. MORPHOLOGICAL
CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH
WORDS. WORD BUILDING**



Morpheme is a speech element having a **meaning** or grammatical function that cannot be subdivided into further such elements.

The traditional **classification of morphemes** takes into consideration the relative contribution of a morpheme in the meaning of a word. Another classification defines the types of morphemes on the basis of the **degree of their self-dependence**. A bound morpheme appears only as part of a larger word. All affixes are bound morphemes. A free or unbound morpheme can stand alone. Most roots in English are free morphemes (for example, *dog, work*).



A structural type of a word depends on the quantity and character of root morphemes as well as absence or presence of word-building suffixes.

✓ **DERIVATIVE AND NON-DERIVATIVE WORDS**

Derivative words are produced by affixation, such as “*competition*,” “*competitive*.” Non-derivative or root words consist only of a root (e.g. “*compete*”).

✓ **SIMPLE AND COMPOUND WORDS**

Simple words consist of one root, such as “*board*.” Compound words consist of several roots, such as “*blackboard*.”

✓ **FULL WORDS AND CONTRACTED WORDS**

Contracted words are shortened or abbreviated words, such as “*bike, USA.*” Some contracted words are composed of two or more word forms with shortened morphs. (e.g. “*cinplex*”).

Main types of word building:

- ✓ **AFFIXATION**. Affixation is making a new word by adding an affix or several affixes to some root morpheme. An essential feature of affixes is their *combining power*. It is the possibility of a particular stem to take a particular affix depending on phono-morphological, morphological and semantic factors.

e.g. The suffix *-ance/-ence*, for instance, occurs only after ‘**b, t, d, dz, v, l, r, m, n**’: *disturbance, insistence, independence, evidence, decency, emergency*,

but not after ‘**s**’ or ‘**z**’: *condensation, organisation*.

Affixes can be classified according to the part of speech they tend to form. Thus, we can distinguish:

- Noun-forming affixes: *-er, -ness, -dom, -hood...*
- Adjective-forming affixes: *—ful, -less, -ish ...*
- Verb-forming affixes: *—en, -ise...*
- Adverb-forming affixes: *—ly, -ward...*

AFFIXES have different origin, so we can classify them into:

native affixes (-ish, -ness, -ly...)

borrowed affixes (-able, -ment...).

- ✓ **PRODUCTIVE AFFIXES** take part in deriving new words in this particular period of language development (e.g. ‘-ish, -ness, -er, -un-, re-’ are often used to make neologisms).
- ✓ **NON-PRODUCTIVE AFFIXES** may occur in words frequently, but they are no longer used in word-derivation (e.g. *-ant, -ent, -al*)

PREFIXES modify the lexical meaning of the stem, but seldom affect its basic lexico-grammatical component. Therefore, both the simple word and its prefixed derivative mostly belong to the same part of speech.

❖ The prefix ‘*mis-*’ for instance, when added to verbs, conveys the meaning ‘wrongly’, ‘badly’, ‘unfavourably’; it does not suggest any other part of speech but the verb. ‘

- e.g. *behave - misbehave, inform - misinform, lead - mislead*

The semantic effect of a prefix may be termed adverbial because it modifies the idea suggested by the stem for manner, time, place, degree and so on.

- e. g. “*mis-*” is equivalent to the adverbs “wrongly” and “badly”; “*pre-*” and “*post-*” refer to time and order.

historic : pre-historic,

pay : prepay,

view : preview.

CONVERSION is making a new word from an existing word by changing the category of a part of speech, with the morphemic shape of the original word remaining unchanged.

- ✓ e.g. *This newspaper is a nice **read**.*
- ✓ *All the years he was sick my mother had **nursed** him.*

A word made by *conversion* has a different meaning from that of the word from which it was made though the two meanings can be associated.

- ✓ e.g. *to dog (verb from noun): 1) to pursue or follow after like a dog; 2) to trouble; 3) to chase with a dog or dogs*

CONVERSION may be full and partial. By partial conversion the word acquires only some grammatical features of the new part of speech.

e.g. The noun ‘criminal’ was formed from an adjective, and it is fully converted.

COMPOSITION is making a new word by combining two or more stems.**Syntactical types of compound words:** Neutral compounds have no linking elements between roots.

e.g. *blackbird, shop-window*

lady-killer, golden-haired

TV-set, G-man

In some compounds roots are connected by a morpheme.

e.g. statesman, Anglo-Saxon

Roots can be connected by a linking element (preposition, article, conjunction)

e.g. lily-of-the valley, sister-in-law

The substantivized adjectives which indicate a class of persons (e.g. “the poor”) are partially substantivized—they are used only with the definite article, are plural in meaning and take a plural verb (e.g. *The old receive pensions*).

SEMANTIC TYPES OF COMPOUND WORDS: The meaning of a compound can be made up by the meaning of its elements (non-idiomatic compounds)

e.g. bedroom, dancing hall

The meaning of one or both components can be slightly shifted

e.f. football, lazybones, good-for-nothing

In idiomatic compounds the process of deducing the meaning of the whole from those of the constituents is impossible.

e.g. ladybird, bluestocking, man-of-war

CONTRACTION is shortening. There are several types of the contraction process. By clipping a new word is made from a syllable (rarer, two) of the original word.

e.g. hols = holidays

ad = advertisement

BLENDING is a way of forming new lexical units by putting together parts of existing words. Blends can also be called *portmanteau words* or telescope words. One defining feature of blends that is recognized in most morphological classifications is that blends combine the initial part or whole of one word with the final part or whole of another word, e.g., the blend *brunch* was formed by conjoining the initial part of the word *breakfast* and the final part of the word *lunch*. Blends are often formed in such a way that base words overlap, as in *jumbrella* where the base words *jumbo* and *umbrella* share the segment *-umb-*. In some cases, blending involves clipping of both base words, in other cases one or both base words are

incorporated into the blend, as in *floordrobe* (*floor* + *wardrobe*), *frenemy* (*friend* + *enemy*), or *predictionary* (*prediction* + *dictionary*). These examples represent only a fraction of possible configurations blends may have. The diversity of blends is a phenomenon that has been widely discussed, and one of the reasons why there is no agreement in literature as to whether blending is a productive process of regular word formation.

e.g. *brunch* = *breakfast* + *lunch*
smog = *smoke* + *fog*

An **Acronym** is a word created by combining the first letter or syllable of each word in a phrase to create a new, single word. Here are a few examples of popular acronyms:

FOMO: fear of missing out

GIF: graphics interchange format

PIN: personal identification number

Some acronyms are a bit of both: They contain first letters *and* first syllables from the words in a phrase to create a new word. Radar is an example of this; it's derived from the phrase "radio detection and ranging."

In both cases, an acronym is pronounced as a word. Acronyms are often misinterpreted as the first letter of a phrase or company/organization. But if the first letters are pronounced individually, it's called an initialism.

e.g. *UNO* – *United Nations Organization, ltd*
(*graphic acronym*) – *limited*.

MINOR TYPES OF WORD-BUILDING:

- ✓ **Onomatopoeia.** An onomatopoeia is a word that sounds just like the thing it is describing. It's also one of the trickiest words in the English language to spell! The word onomatopoeia comes from the combination of two Greek words, one meaning 'name' and the other meaning 'I' make. So, literally, onomatopoeia means the name (or sound) I make.

Latin acronyms remained in English from the time when Latin was the universal academic language in Europe i.e. (= id est = that is)

P.S; e.g: N.B; R.I.P; vs.

e.g. Dogs woof, bark, arf and growl.



Reduplication. In linguistics, reduplication is a morphological process in which the root or stem of a word (or part of it) or even the whole word is repeated exactly or with a slight change.

The classic observation on the semantics of reduplication is Edward Sapir's: "generally employed, with self-evident symbolism, to indicate such concepts as distribution, plurality, repetition, customary activity, increase of size, added intensity, continuance. Reduplication is used in inflections to convey a grammatical function, such as plurality, intensification, etc., and in lexical derivation to create new words. It is often used when a speaker adopts a tone more "expressive" or figurative than ordinary speech and is also often, but not exclusively, iconic in meaning. Reduplication is found in a wide range of languages and language groups, though its level of linguistic productivity varies. Reduplication is found in a wide variety of languages. *e.g. ping-pong, walkie-talkie; goody-goody; knock-knock*

night-night



SPLIT THE FOLLOWING WORDS INTO MORPHEMES AND DEFINE THEIR TYPE.

- 1) *SHORTEN*
- 2) *POWER*
- 3) *IMMOVABLE*
- 4) *CRITICIZED*
- 5) *SECRETARIES*

MAKE A PROPER WORD TO FILL IN THE BLANK, AFFIXES TO BE USED IN THE WORD:

-men -hood -is -less -like -able -proof -ed -ly dis-

❖ *child*

He was remembering a story heard in his ____.
She is very _____ and selfish.
Thousand of _____ couples come to this doctor with a hope.
She looked at me with big, _____ eyes.
A medicine chest should be secure and _____. (ensuring that children cannot access it)

Guess the full form of the words from which the following clipped words were formed.

*PANTS, MOVIE, LIMO,
MATH, FLU, AUTO,
BURGER, ADVARSITY,
LA. LUNCH, MEMO,
TYPO.*

I Determine what animals produce the following sounds (Onomatopoeia)

1. *ARF*
2. *PURR AND HISS*
3. *CHEEP, CROW, QUACK,*
4. *MOO*
5. *OINK AND SNORT*
6. *NEIGH*
7. *BRAY*
8. *BUZZ*

II Put down your own examples of Onomatopoeia

Match the correct words from the first two groups, and then match the compound adjective with its definition from group three.

1)
tight-
two-
narrow-
thick-
high-
pig-
far-

2)
minded
sighted
skinned
headed
fisted
faced
handed

3)
mean (with money)
bossy
good at planning
obstinate
hypocritical
insensitive
intolerant

*I. DETERMINE WHAT WORDS THE GIVEN BLENDINGS
WERE FORMED FROM.*

*FORTNIGHT , INTERNET, MOTEL, WEBINAR, EMOTICON,
BREXIT, BOTOX, FRENEMY,*

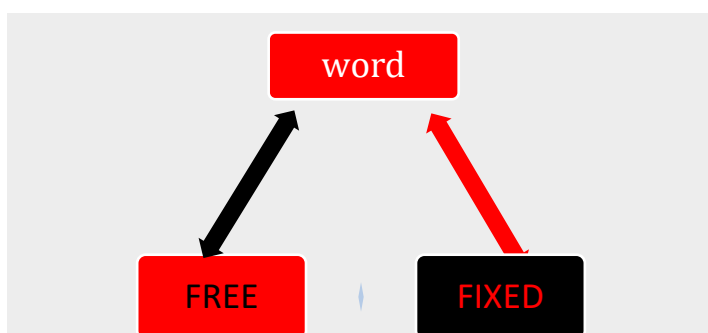
II. GIVE YOUR OWN EXAMPLES OF BLENDINGS.

VIII. VIII. FREE AND FIXED WORD COMBINATIONS



A **word combination** (phrase) is a non-predicative unit of speech which is, semantically, both global and articulated. In grammar, it is seen as a group of words that functions as a single unit in the syntax of a sentence. It is an intermediate unit between a word and a sentence. The main function of a word combination is **polinomination** (it describes an object, phenomenon or action and its attributes and properties at the same time). There are two types of word combinations (also known as *set expressions, set phrases, phrases, fixed word-groups* etc):

- ✓ **Free word combinations** in which each component may enter different combinations
- ✓ **Fixed (phraseological) combinations** consist of elements which are used only in combination with one another.



Differences between free and fixed word combinations:

1. SEMANTIC CRITERION.

The meaning in phraseological units has partially or fully shifted. The words have a transferred (metaphorical or metonymical) meaning.

- *cf: a wolf in sheep's clothing – a man in cheap clothing*

2. STRUCTURAL CRITERION.

Phraseological units are characterized by stability of components:

- ✓ It is impossible to change the components of a phraseological unit;
e.g. to have a bee in the bonnet (hat)

- ✓ It is impossible to add new components;
- ✓ It is impossible to change grammatical form of components, even if their form violates grammar rules:

e.g. at (the) first sight, from head to foot (feet), to find faults with

However the **degree of stability** varies: *a skeleton/skeletons in the cupboard, a (big) white elephant.*

Other features ensuring stability are rhythm, alliteration, contrast, repetition, simile etc.

e.g. on and on, safe and sound, as busy as a bee

- ✓ Free word combinations allow any changes.

According to **thematic (etymological) classification**, idioms are classified according to their sources of origin.

"MARINE"

- *To sink or swim*
- *In deep water*
- *In low water, on the rocks*
- *To be in the same boat with somebody*
 - *To sail under false colors*
 - *To show one's colors*
 - *To weather the storm*
 - *Three sheets in the wind*

SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION

PHRASEOLOGICAL
FUSIONS

„to skate on thin
ice“

PHRASEOLOGICAL
UNITIES

„to fall ill“

PHRASEOLOGICAL
COMBINATIONS

„as dead as
mutton“

STRUCTURAL CLASSIFICATION takes into consideration the fact that phraseologisms are, in fact, equivalents of words. Phraseological units can perform the same functions as words. So, fixed expressions are classified according to their function.

- ✓ **VERBAL** : *to run for one's life, to get the upper hand*
- ✓ **SUBSTANTIVE**: *dog's life, red tape*
- ✓ **ADJECTIVAL**: *high and mighty, safe and sound*
- ✓ **ADVERBIAL**: *high and low*
- ✓ **EQUIVALENTS OF AUXILIARY PARTS OF SPEECH**: *by way of, as long as, Good God!*
- ✓ **STEREOTYPED SENTENCES**: *take your time.*

Fixed expressions, as well as words, may be stylistically neutral and stylistically marked.

- *e.g. it's raining cats and dogs (bookish)*
- *to do smb brown (colloquial)*

Notions related to fixed expressions

• A **simile** is a figure of speech that directly compares two different things, usually by employing the words “like”, “as”, or “than”. Even though both similes and metaphors are forms of comparison, similes indirectly compare the two ideas and allow them to remain distinct in spite of their similarities, whereas metaphors compare two things directly. Similes are great for famous authors, public speakers, and folks who want to make their writing as exciting as a spontaneous show of fireworks.

e.g. as alike as two peas in a pod (identical or nearly so)

as blind as a bat (completely blind)

A **CLICHÉ** is a stereotyped expression mechanically reproduced in speech, very often overused to the point of losing its intended force or novelty. A **cliché** is an element of an artistic work, saying, or idea that has become overused to the point of losing its original meaning or effect, even to the point of being weird or irritating,

especially when at some earlier time it was considered meaningful or novel. In phraseology, the term

The term is often used in modern culture for an has taken on a more technical meaning, referring to an expression imposed by conventionalized linguistic usage. action or idea that is expected or predictable, based on a prior event. Typically pejorative, " clichés" may or may not be true. Some are stereotypes, but some are simply truisms and facts. Clichés often are employed for comedic effect, typically in fiction.

A cliché is often a vivid depiction of an abstraction that relies upon analogy or exaggeration for effect, often drawn from everyday experience. Used sparingly, it may succeed, but the use of a cliché in writing, speech, or argument is generally considered a mark of inexperience or a lack of originality.

- e.g. Even though she is 80 year old, she's still sharp as a tack.*
Her advice is to live and let live.
My father always says that it's another day, another dollar.
All that glitters isn't gold.
All for one, and one for all.
And they all lived happily ever after.
Don't cry over spilled milk.
The calm before the storm.
Laughter is the best medicine.

A PROVERB (from Latin: *proverbium*) is a simple and insightful, traditional saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense or experience. Proverbs are often metaphorical and use formulaic language. A proverbial phrase or a proverbial expression is a type of a conventional saying similar to proverbs and transmitted by oral tradition. The difference is that a proverb is a fixed expression,



Extract from a cartoon by Priestman Atkinson, from the Punch Almanack for 1885, mocking clichéd expressions in the popular literature at the time.

while a proverbial phrase permits alterations to fit the grammar of the context. Collectively, they form a genre of folklore.

Some proverbs exist in more than one language because people borrow them from languages and cultures with which they are in contact. In the West, the Bible (including, but not limited to the Book of Proverbs) and medieval Latin (aided by the work of Erasmus) have played a considerable role in distributing proverbs. Not all Biblical proverbs, however, were distributed to the same extent: one scholar has gathered evidence to show that cultures in which the Bible is the major spiritual book contain "between three hundred and five hundred proverbs that stem from the Bible, whereas another shows that, of the 106 most common and widespread proverbs across Europe, 11 are from the Bible. However, almost every culture has its own unique proverbs. Professor A. V. Koonin called proverbs *communicative phraseological units*. Lord John Russell observed poetically that a "proverb is the wit of one, and the wisdom of many. But giving the word "proverb" the sort of definition theorists need has proven to be a difficult task, and although scholars often quote Archer Taylor's argument that formulating a scientific "definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking... An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not. Hence no definition will enable us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial," many students of proverbs have attempted to itemize their essential characteristics.

More constructively, Mieder has proposed the following definition, "A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation".

Interpreting proverbs is often complex, but is best done in a context. Interpreting proverbs from other cultures is much more difficult than interpreting proverbs in one's own culture. Even within English-speaking cultures, there is difference of opinion on how to interpret the proverb "**A rolling stone gathers no moss.**" Some see it as condemning a person that keeps moving, seeing moss as a positive thing, such as

profit; others see the proverb as praising people that keep moving and developing, seeing moss as a negative thing, such as negative habits.

Proverbs in various languages are found with a wide variety of grammatical structures. In English, for example, we find the following structures (in addition to others):

- Imperative, negative – **Don't beat a dead horse.**
- Imperative, positive – **If the shoe fits, wear it!**
- Parallel phrases – **Garbage in, garbage out.**
- Rhetorical question – **Is the Pope Catholic?**
- Declarative sentence – **Birds of a feather flock together.**

Proverbs are used in conversation by adults more than children, partially because adults have learned more proverbs than children. Also, using proverbs well is a skill that is developed over years. Additionally, children have not mastered the patterns of metaphorical expression that are invoked in proverb use. Proverbs, because they are indirect, allow a speaker to disagree or give advice in a way that may be less offensive.



This ceramic, illustrating "Don't torch a stump with a hornet nest."



Which of the following word combinations in bold are fixed phrases?

- 1) Where do you think you **lost your purse**?
- 2) Don't lose you **lose your temper** when you talk to her.
- 3) Have a look at the **reverse side of the coat**.
- 4) The **reverse side of the medal** is that we'll have to do it ourselves.
- 5) **Keep the butter** in the refrigerator.
- 6) **Keep an eye** on the child.



Comment on the following proverb and make up a situation reflecting it.

YOU CATCH MORE FLIES WITH HONEY THAN WITH VINEGAR.

Fill in the missing words and justify the reasoning behind your own answers.

1. A dog is _____.
2. _____ is a penny earned.
3. A place for everything and _____.
4. _____ louder than words.
5. _____ who help themselves.
6. If you can't beat them, _____.
7. _____ over spilt milk,
8. _____ before you leap.
9. _____ is the root of all evil.
10. Never judge a _____.
11. Revenge is a dish _____.
12. The fruit does not fall _____.
13. The more things change, _____.
14. _____ as a free lunch.
15. Two wrongs _____

COMPLETE THE PROVERBS AND CHOOSE THE RIGHT ANSWER.

1. LIKE FATHER ...
2. AS YOU MAKE YOUR BED
3. YOU CANNOT MAKE AN O
4. OUT OF SIGHT ...
5. ONE SWALLOW ...
6. LISTENERS ...
7. PROMISES ...
8. BETTER SAFE ...

ARE MADE TO BE KEPT

**DOES NOT MAKE A
SUMMER**

LIKE SON

AUT OF MIND

SO YOU MUST LIE

THAN SORRY

WITHOUT BREAKING

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