

## **Course N-06.**

### **(The meaning of words 02)**

## **6. What Are Synonyms, Antonyms and Homonyms?**

Learning a word's meaning is just one part of understanding that word. Once you know a word's antonyms, synonyms and homonyms, you can add a lot of variety to speech and writing. But what are synonyms and antonyms, and what do they have to do with homonyms? Learn more about each type of word and how they can help increase your vocabulary.

### **6.1. What Are Synonyms?**

Words with similar meanings in similar contexts. They are used to add variety to writing and speech and allow you to avoid repetition. The words amazing, astounding and marvelous are all synonyms. Their meanings are similar and can be interchanged with one another.

Synonyms must be the same part of speech. For example, beautiful and princess have the same connotation of beauty, but they are not synonyms because beautiful is an adjective and princess is a noun.

Synonyms are never used in exactly the same way in a language. There is always some situation where one of the words is preferred over its synonym.

#### **Examples of synonym pairs include:**

- Large - Big
- Cough - Hack
- Couch - Sofa
- Quick - Fast

- skill and ability
- lead and guide
- guest and visitor
- love and adore

Synonyms make it possible for writers to create a certain mood with their subtle differences. For example, the verb "walk" sets a different pace than "saunter," and "drink" implies a different style than "guzzle." The differences are implied by the word selected, and when a writer is trying to paint a picture in a reader's mind, those differences can make or break a writer's prose.

### **Activity: Synonyms**

Can you think of any situations where an English speaker would say large but not big? Or one where a native speaker would say big but not large? How do the following examples compare?

*This is my big brother.*

*This is my large brother.*

Do the two sentences have the same meanings? Do the synonyms big and large have exactly the same meanings?

## 6.2. What Are Antonyms?

Words with opposite meanings are called antonyms. Like synonyms, antonym pairs must be the same part of speech. Antonyms show a contrast between two ideas.

**Examples of antonym word pairs are:**

- \* full and empty
- \* fail and succeed
- \* happy and sad
- \* tiny and enormous
- \* wonderful and terrible
- \* alive - dead
- \* asleep - awake
- \* aren't - not pregnant

Some common prefixes indicate that a word is an antonym to its root word. For example, the prefixes un- (unhappy, unwise), dis- (disinterested, dislike) and im- (improper, impolite) form a new word that is the opposite of its root word.

## 6.3. What Are Homonyms?

Homonyms are words that have the same spelling and pronunciation but different meanings. Because these words sound and look the same but mean something different, they can be a source of entertainment, confusion or even inspiration. Many puns are inspired by homonym mix-ups!

**Some common homonyms include:**

- **Bat** - an implement used to hit a ball (such as a baseball bat) or a nocturnal flying mammal (such as a fruit **bat**)
- **Bear** - a hibernating animal (such as a grizzly **bear**) or to carry something (such as **bearing** children)
- **Fire** - a flaming blaze (such as a forest **fire**) or to terminate someone from a job (such as **firing** an employee)
- **Trip** - to stumble or fall (such as **tripping** on a curb) or a vacation (such as a summer **trip**)
- **Watch** - a wearable timepiece (such as a wristwatch) or to look at something (such as **watching** television)

**Homonyms** are often confused with homophones, which have the same pronunciation but are spelled differently, and homographs, which are pronounced differently but are spelled the same. It's helpful to know any homonyms to a word that you're learning in order to avoid word mix-ups in the future.

## 6.4. Questions and Answers (QUIZ)

1. Homonyms are words that have identical or very similar meanings. TRUE or FALSE

### Explanation

Homonyms are words that have the same spelling or pronunciation but different meanings. They are often confused because they look or sound alike, but their meanings are distinct.

2. Synonyms are words with half meanings TRUE or FALSE

### Explanation

Synonyms are words or phrases that have similar meanings, providing variety and richness to language. They allow for precise expression by offering alternative terms with comparable definitions. Synonyms enhance communication, enabling writers and speakers to convey ideas effectively while avoiding repetition and adding nuance to their language.

3. The word "night" is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the word "day."

- A. Homonym
- B. Synonym
- C. Antonym

### Explanation

The word "night" is the antonym of the word "day" because they are opposite in meaning. "Night" refers to the period of darkness when the sun is below the horizon, while "day" refers to the period of light when the sun