

SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

Vocabulary – Synonyms & Antonyms

When we are writing in English sometimes we cannot express what we want to convey due to our lack of vocabulary or the words we choose. It is necessary to select better and more effective words and being familiar with antonyms and synonyms can be helpful to improve our writing. Repeating the same words tends to get monotonous and may affect your score in International Exams. Using synonyms makes your speech or writing richer and more "colorful."

Using antonyms helps to emphasize your point, show contrast, or explain exactly what you mean. Antonyms too add "colors" to your speech or writing.

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have the same, or almost the same, meaning as another word. You can say an “easy task” or a “simple task” because easy and simple are synonyms.

The English language is full of pairs of words that have subtle distinctions between them. All writers, professionals and beginners alike, face the challenge of choosing the most appropriate synonym to best convey their ideas. When you pay particular attention to synonyms in your writing, it comes across to your reader. The sentences become much more clear and rich in meaning.

Exercise 1

Write a sentence using the following words showing their differences:

1. outside, exterior

2. poor, destitute

3. rude, impolite

4. talk, conversation

5. hug, embrace

6. home, residence

7. leave, abandon

8. mad, insane

9. quiet, peaceful

10. riot, revolt

For a report or research paper, you may need to gather background information that is important to the paper but not worthy of direct quotation. Indeed, in technical writing direct quotation is rarely used. Using synonyms appropriately helps us to avoid plagiarism.

Let's see an example that illustrates the use of synonyms to enrich your writing skills.

Original

Like drought, **excess** rainfall and flooding **can also contribute to epidemics** of **waterborne** infectious diseases, in this case due to poor sanitation resulting from runoff from **overwhelmed sewage lines** or the **contamination of water by livestock**.

(Source: Shuman, E., M.D. (2010, March 25). *Global climate change and infectious diseases*. *New England Journal of Medicine*; 362, 12, 1061-1063. Retrieved from nejm.org at MIT Libraries.)

An **overabundance of** rainfall can also **be a factor in spreading** infectious diseases **carried by** water, usually as a result of **overflowing sewers** and **pollution from farm animals** (Shuman, 2010).

**Taken from <https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/academic-writing/avoiding-plagiarism-paraphrasing>*

Antonyms

Antonyms are words that have the opposite meaning of a given word. The study of antonyms will not only help you choose the most appropriate word as you write; it will also sharpen your overall sense of language. One great strategy to increase your vocabulary is to learn groups of words including the antonyms. You can learn justice, law, right and injustice, corruption and dishonesty.

Exercise 1

Select the best antonym for the following words:

1. joy
a. loneliness b. sadness c. happiness
2. friend
a. refuse b. enemy c. brother
3. let
a. prevent b. allow c. keep
4. part
a. whole b. all c. bit
5. attack
a. fight b. retreat c. help
6. problem
a. solution b. question c. lawful
7. powerful
a. weak b. single c. strong
8. kind
a. slave b. honest c. cruel
9. advance
a. go back b. retreat c. go forward
10. permit
a. refuse b. agree c. attend

Exercise 2

Correct the following sentences by replacing the underlined words with an antonym. Write the antonym on your own sheet of paper.

The pilot who landed the plane was a coward because no one was injured.

Even though the botany lecture was two hours long, Gerard found it incredibly dull.

My mother says it is impolite to say thank you like you really mean it.

Although I have learned a lot of information through textbooks, it is life experience that has given me ignorance.

When our instructor said the final paper was compulsory, it was music to my ears!

My only virtues are coffee, video games, and really loud music.

Elvin was so bold when he walked in the classroom that he sat in the back row and did not participate.

Maria thinks elephants who live in freedom have a sad look in their eyes.

The teacher filled her students' minds with gloomy thoughts about their futures.

The guest attended to every one of our needs.