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Using context clues to determine word meaning worksheets

RD.COM Knowledge Grammar & SpellingThanks to cultural changes, incorrect translations, and a host of other reasons, word meanings often shift over time. Here, ten words that have done a 180. Olena Yakobchuk/ShutterstockCurrent meaning: Someone who mocks or harms those who are weakerOriginal meaning: A good fellow or a darling. Linguists believe it evolved from the Dutch word "boel," meaning "lover." LStockStudio/ShutterstockCurrent meaning: A conference or meeting to discuss a particular subjectOriginal meaning: A drinking party. The word comes from the Greek word "symposion," which the ancient Greeks used to describe their lively, boozy banquets. Here are 10 words that mean very different thing in England and America. Monkey Business Images/ShutterstockCurrent meaning: A matter of no importanceOriginal meaning: A hypothetical idea created specifically to be talked about. Here are 10 common words that everyone gets wrong.. wowsty/ShutterstockCurrent meaning: IndignationOriginal meaning: GratitudeOriginally Published: March 04, 2019 The root of a word: Also referred to as the base of a word and the stem of a word, is the main part of a word without any syllables before the root of the word, which is a prefix, or after the root of the word, which is a suffix. Prefixes: The part of a word that is connected to and before the stem or root of a word Suffixes: The part of a word that is connected to and after the stem of the word. Some suffixes, like "s", "es", "d" and "ed" which make words plural or of the past tense, are quite simple but others are more complex. Vocabulary can be acquired and somewhat mastered knowing about the meanings of word stems, word prefixes and word suffixes. As mentioned previously, the stem of a word, which is also referred to as the base of a word and the root of a word, is the main part of a word without any syllables before the stem of the word, which is a prefix, or after the stem of the word, which is a suffix. For example, examine the word "reinstatement". The root of the word is "instate"; the prefix for the word reinstatement is "re" and the suffix for the word "reinstatement" is "ment". The meaning of the root of the word is to place or put into a position ; the meaning of the prefix is to redo or do again ; and the meaning of the suffix is the result of some action or occurrence. Based on these definitions, you should now be able to discover and determine the meaning of the word "reinstatement" as the placing something again in a position or place. As you can see in the word above, word roots or stems are typically entire words. For example, here is a list of word stems or roots with an added prefix and/or suffix: Word stem with a prefix: Reengage Word stem with a suffix: Engagement Word stem with a prefix: Entangle: Word stem with a suffix: Entanglement Word stem with a prefix: Hypersweet Word stem with a suffix: Sweetener Word stem with a suffix: Sweeter Word stem with a suffix: Sweetest Word stem with a suffix: Mysterious Word stem with a prefix: Rediscover Word stem with a suffix: Rediscovery Word stem with a suffix: Ceremonial Word stem with a prefix: Unfestive Word stem with a suffix: Festival Word stem with a prefix: Dissection Word stem with a suffix: Sectional Word stem with a prefix: Hypothermal Word stem with a suffix: Hypothermia Word stem with a prefix: Apolitical Word stem with a suffix: Politicism Word stem with a prefix : Disestablish Word stem with a suffix: Disestablishment Word stem with a prefix : Recall Word stem with a suffix: Caller Word stem with a prefix : Enlarge Word stem with a suffix: Larger Word stem with a suffix: Largest Word stem with a prefix : Disestablish Word stem with a prefix : Disestablishment Word Prefixes As previously stated, vocabulary can be acquired and somewhat mastered knowing about the meanings of prefixes and suffixes which are attached to the beginning of a word stem and after a word stem, respectively. Some of the most commonly used prefixes, examples of words with these prefixes and the meaning of these words are listed below. Mono: One or singular Example: Monopoly which means under the control and possession of one individual or one group A and an: Not or without Example: Apathetic meaning without emotion and anemic meaning without blood or a component of blood Anti: Against or before Example: Antiseptic meaning an agent that fights against germs Auto: Self Example: Autobiographical meaning a story about self or one self Co, com and con: With and together Example: Concurrent meaning together and at the same time, conjoined meaning joined together and communicate meaning to convey a message with others Uni: One Example: Unicycle meaning a one wheeled cycle and unicellular meaning one celled Bi: Two Example: Bifocals meaning two lenses for eye glasses and bicycle meaning a two wheeled cycle Tri: Three Example: Triples meaning three infants born at the same time by the same mother and tricycle meaning a three wheeled cycle Quad: Four Example: Quadruplets meaning four infants born at the same time by the same mother and quadrilateral meaning a four sided figure Circum: Around Example: Circumcision meaning the surgery that a new born baby boy gets around the tip of the penis and circumference which is the measurement around a circle Contra: Against Example: Contraindicated meaning against indications and not appropriate De: Undo Example: Decrease meaning to lower and undo Hyper: More than normal Example: Hyperglycemia meaning more than normal blood sugar and hyperactive meaning more active than normal Inter: Between Example: Intersection meaning the spot between two streets or other things Inter: Between Example: Interaction meaning an action, such as a conversation, between two people of things In: Into and not Example: Internal meaning inner and inactive meaning not active Peri: Around Example: Perimeter meaning the length around a geometric figure like a square, triangle or rectangle and perioral meaning around the mouth Ex: Out of Example: External meaning outside and exit meaning a way to leave an area Homo: The same Example: Homogeneous meaning a group of people or things that are the same in terms of gender, age, or shape for example Hetero: Different Example: Heterogeneous meaning a group of people or things that are different in terms of a characteristic such as gender, age, or shape for example Micro: Small Example: Microscopic meaning very small and microscope meaning a scientific instrument that is used to see verify small things Macro: Large Example: Macroeconomics meaning the study of economics on a large scale, such as global economics Pre: Before Example: Prenuptial meaning before marriage Sub: Under Example: Subway meaning a means of transportation that is underground and substandard meaning not up to and less than the standard Word Suffixes As stated previously, suffixes are connected to and after the stem of the word. Some suffixes, like "s", "es", "d" and "ed" which make words plural or of the past tense, are quite simple but others are more complex. Unlike prefixes, many suffixes do not have a specific meaning; instead many suffixes change a part of speech to another part of speech. For example, the suffix "ish" often changes a noun into an adjective and the suffix "ly" often changes an adjective into an adverb. The word child is a noun but when "ish" is added to the end of the word child, it becomes childish which is an adjective that means like a child; and when "ly" is added to the end of an adjective like generous, the word is now an adverb as generously. Like prefixes and word stems or roots, knowing the meaning of suffixes can improve one's vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary mastery. Below is a list of suffixes, their meanings and examples of each: Er: More than Example: Sweeter meaning more sweet than something else. This suffix is used with comparative adjectives which compare two things. Est: Most Example: Sweetest meaning the most sweet of more than two things. This suffix is used with superlative adjectives that compare more than two things. Ing: Continuing or continuous Example: Running meaning that the person or thing is continuing to run. Ish: Like or similar to Example: Childish meaning like a child and foolish meaning like a fool Less: Without Example: Childless meaning without children Ful: With or full of Example: Beautiful meaning full of beauty Ible and Able: Can or able to Example: Enjoyable meaning that something can be enjoyed. These suffixes often changed a word that is a verb into an adjective. Ness: With Example: Kindness meaning with being kin. This suffix usually changes adjectives like kind into a noun like kindness. Ment: State of Example: Sentiment meaning in the state of feeling. This suffix typically changes a verb into a noun. Al: Like Example: Capable meaning able to do something in the correct manner or with competency Pulling it All Together to Decipher the Meaning of Difficult Words In this final section of your English and Language TEAS examination review, we have listed some sentences with difficult vocabulary words. Read each of the sentences and try to determine the meanings of these difficult vocabulary words. If you have difficulty with these sentences, look the words up in a dictionary. You may also prepare yourself for these types of TEAS examination questions by flipping through a dictionary, looking for difficult words and then trying to determine its meaning while you cover and hide the definition with your finger . As the detectives investigated the mass murder and arson case, it was determined that one of the chief suspects had an alibi about their whereabouts the night of these crimes that was corroborated by several people and the suspect's time card at his place of employment. What does the word corroborated mean? One of the chief witnesses for the suspect's defense told confusing and illogical stories; therefore, the jurors felt that the witness was capricious and not predictable. What does the word capricious mean? Nancy, who has known Karen for over 20 years, recently learned that Karen was the antithesis of selflessness which was quite a surprise to Nancy. What does the word antithesis mean? An example of synergism is that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. What does the word synergism mean? Throughout the ages, there have been many people who have been shunned and even persecuted for thinking differently and coming forward with a new paradigm. For example, Pythagoras, a Greek philosopher, was rejected when he said that the earth was round and not flat. What does the word paradigm mean? Mary was far less loquacious than her gregarious friends were. What does the word loquacious mean? Although many people go to college after high school to learn about and major in theoretical subjects that they are not able to apply immediately, there are others that choose to go to a vocational school to learn pragmatic skills that they are able to use immediately in the real world. What does the word pragmatic mean? During a conversation with my friend, she stated, "Judy must be very wealthy; she lives in Beverly Hills." I told my friend that that statement was a nonsequitur. What does the word nonsequitur mean? One of the primary reasons that authors should know who their target audience of readers will be prior to beginning the piece of writing because a failure to know the target audience and their characteristics may lead to the author's use of esoteric terms and terminology that the readers are not able to understand and comprehend. For example, the words and abbreviations of NPO, a definitive diagnosis and immunoassay are usually incomprehensible to general population. What does the word esoteric mean? When Suzie's children wanted a puppy for Christmas, Suzie was ambivalent about getting one because she thought it would be nice to have the children learn about caring for a pet but she did not want to have to house break and train a puppy at this time. What does the word ambivalent mean? Many professional authors experience writer's block which makes them less prolific than they want to be. What does the word prolific mean? Angina, a disease of the heart, is characterized with intermittent chest pain. What does the word intermittent mean? Despite the fact that the Jones family donated to the new church building fund, their small donation was not nearly as magnanimous as many thought it would be. What does the word magnanimous mean? One of the cruelest characteristics of a bully is their belligerence. What does the word belligerence mean? RELATED TEAS VOCABULARY ACQUISITION CONTENT: Alene Burke RN, MSN is a nationally recognized nursing educator. She began her work career as an elementary school teacher in New York City and later attended Queensborough Community College for her associate degree in nursing. She worked as a registered nurse in the critical care area of a local community hospital and, at this time, she was committed to become a nursing educator. She got her bachelor's of science in nursing with Excelsior College, a part of the New York State University and immediately began the PhD in nursing coursework at the same university. She has authored hundreds of courses for healthcare professionals including nurses, she serves as a nurse consultant for healthcare facilities and private corporations, she is also an approved provider of continuing education for nurses and other disciplines and has also served as a member of the American Nurses Association's task force on competency and education for the nursing team members. Latest posts by Alene Burke, RN, MSN (see all) Antonyms: Words that have opposite meanings and can give the reader a context clue to determine the meaning of words and phrases Synonyms: Words that have the same meaning and can give the reader a context clue to determine the meaning of words and phrases Contronyms: Words that are spelled the same but they have different meanings; these contronyms can give the reader a context clue to determine the meaning of words and phrases Although guessing the correct answer is not a good test taking strategy, there are times when an educated guess may be the only choice that you have. One such time is when you are asked to know the meaning of a word and you are not certain of its meaning. At these times, you may feel completely baffled and without a clue. Fortunately, there are a couple of things that you can do when you feel this way. Some of the strategies that you can and should use when this occurs include: Examining a Word's Root The root of a word, also referred to as the base of a word and the stem of a word, is the main part of a word without any syllables before the root of the word, which is a prefix, or after the root of the word, which is a suffix. For example, examine the word "reinstatement". The root of the word is "state"; the prefix for the word reinstatement is "re" and the suffix for the word "reinstatement" is "ment". You will learn more about prefixes, suffixes and stems of words in the section immediately below this one. Attempting to Decipher a Word's Meaning by Examining the Word in Context Simply defined, the context of an unknown word is the words, phrases, clauses and sentences surrounding the unknown word. These words, phrases, clauses and sentences can often give you some very important clues about the word and these clues may be just enough for you to make an educated guess about the true meaning of the word. For example, examine this sentence and determine the meaning of "dubious". "Although some believe in the existence of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and the existence of extraterrestrial life, more are dubious about these things." When you examine the word "dubious" in the context of this sentence, you should be able to make some inferences and educated guesses about the meaning of the word "dubious". The meaning of this word is to be doubtful. This inference and educated guess can be arrived at by comprehending and understanding the context within which the word occurred. This sentence states that "some believe in the existence of unidentified flyer objects and the existence of extraterrestrial life" but still more are doubtful about these things. The word "although" in this sentence is also an important clue because it suggests that the opposite of "some believe" is "more are dubious" meaning more are doubtful. Here are a couple of more sentences with which you should be able to decipher and discover the meaning of some unknown words: What is the meaning of "indigenous" and "marsupials" in this sentence? Sentence: In addition to the flora and fauna in Australia, its indigenous creatures include some of the most interesting vertebrates including marsupials. The word "indigenous" means native to a particular area like Australia; and drawing on your prior knowledge of Australia, you may remember that kangaroos are native to Australia and your educated guess about the meaning of marsupial should be a classification of animals that includes kangaroos. What is the meaning of "complement" in this sentence? Sentence: It would be a good idea to complement this meal with a nice desert. The words "complement" and "compliment" are homophones that are pronounced the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. When these words are spoken orally, they sound identical and, when they are written, they appear differently because they are spelled differently. In the context of this sentence, the word "complement" means complete the meal off. If you did not know that "complement" with an "e" indicates completion, you should be able to deduce the meaning of "complement" with an "e" in the context of the sentence. What is the meaning of "compliment" in this sentence? Sentence: Everyone likes a compliment for a job well done. Again, the words "complement" and "compliment" are homophones that are pronounced the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. When these words are spoken orally, they sound identical and, when they are written, they appear differently because they are spelled differently. In the context of this sentence, the word "compliment" means a favorable comment about another. If you did not know that "compliment" with an "i" indicates a favorable comment, you should be able to deduce the meaning of "compliment" with an "i" in the context of the sentence. Discovering the Meaning of a Word by Examining the Surrounding Text for Antonyms, Synonyms, and Contronyms Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings and synonyms are words that have the same meaning. Like synonyms, antonyms can be a noun, verb, adjective or adverb. For example, here is a list of antonyms: Up and down In and out Dead and alive Male and female Inward and outward Old and young Near and far Right and left Large and small Day and night Hot and cold And, here is a list of synonyms: Old and elderly Automobile and car Infant and baby Gender and sex Proximal and near Distal and far Cold and cool Hot and warm Large and huge Small and tiny Under and beneath Less commonly referred to and referenced are contronyms. Similar to antonyms and synonyms, contronyms can give valuable clues in terms of the meaning of an unknown word. Simply defined, a contronyms are words that are spelled the same but they have different meanings. The only way to determine the meaning of a word that is a contronym is to look for its meaning in the context of the phrase or sentence. An example of a contronym is skip which can be a verb meaning a hop and skip can also be a verb meaning omit. Other contronyms include: Clip which can mean cut with a scissor and also mean fasten with a paper clip or staple Left meaning a direction that is the opposite of right and also appear differently because they are spelled differently. In the context of this sentence, the word "complement" means complete the meal off. If you did not know that "complement" with an "e" indicates completion, you should be able to deduce the meaning of "complement" with an "e" in the context of the sentence. What is the meaning of Queensborough Community College for her associate degree in nursing. She worked as a registered nurse in the critical care area of a local community hospital and, at this time, she was committed to become a nursing educator. She got her bachelor's of science in nursing with Excelsior College, a part of the New York State University and immediately upon graduation she began graduate school at Adelphi University on Long Island, New York. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Adelphi with a double masters degree in both Nursing Education and Nursing Administration and immediately began the PhD in nursing coursework at the same university. She has authored hundreds of courses for healthcare professionals including nurses, she serves as a nurse consultant for healthcare facilities and private corporations, she is also an approved provider of continuing education for nurses and other disciplines and has also served as a member of the American Nurses Association's task force on competency and education for the nursing team members. Latest posts by Alene Burke, RN, MSN (see all)

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