

SECTION

4

VARIED MEANINGS OF WORDS



READING

Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Hello! You are warmly welcome to this section of the Intervention English Language lesson. In the previous section, you learned about the real-life connections between words and their usage. In this section, we will look at how we can use our knowledge of words and their different meanings to enrich our language skills. This section will help you identify new meaning for familiar words and apply them correctly in speech and writing. You will be equipped with the skills to use the appropriate vocabulary to describe situations in your daily activities. Make sure you follow the lesson carefully and do all the learning activities that are provided in the course of the lesson.

By the end of the lesson, you as the student will be able to;

Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them correctly.

Key Ideas

Familiar words refer to words that are easy to recognise or frequently used. Context refers to the immediate surrounding or environment in which a word or a sentence is used. Syntax is the grammatical role of the word in the sentence.

IDENTIFYING VARIED MEANINGS OF FAMILIAR WORDS

Familiar words are words that are easy to recognise since they are frequently used. They may be common words to us but their meaning in terms of usage may differ. For instance, let us examine the pair of sentences below.

1. *Manu was given local medication prepared from the tree **bark**.*
2. *The dog's **bark** woke her up.*

In the first sentence, the word ‘bark’ refers to the cover or the protective outer sheath of a tree which is mostly used for local medication. However, in the second sentence, the word ‘bark’ relates to the noise made by a dog. Also, the word ‘bank’ may have different meanings based on how it is used. It may refer to a financial institution or a space around or on the edge of a river. For example:

1. Ama and Kassim took a stroll on the river bank. (‘bank’ here means a space around or the edge of a river)
2. The bank refused to pay the customer. (the meaning of the word ‘bank’ here is a financial institution)

From the illustrations or examples given, it is clear that the same word may relate to different meanings according to how they are used. This is to say that words are better understood when they are used in sentences or context.

Activity 4.1

Answer the questions below

- a) Use your dictionary to look up for at least two different meanings of the words below:
 - i. Transport _____

 - ii. Pen _____

 - iii. Match _____

- b) Use each of the words to form two sentences to show two different meanings:
 - i. Transport _____

 - ii. Pen _____

 - iii. Match _____

Well done! You can observe that, some of the meanings of the words from the dictionary are familiar while other meanings may be unfamiliar to you. This means

that, until a word is used, we cannot just assign or give it a particular meaning. Let us take a look at examples with the word ‘fire’.

1. Fire

a) *familiar meaning- flame*

- i. The *fire* burnt down the house.
- ii. The *fire* has destroyed the entire village.

b) *Unfamiliar meaning/ new meaning- to shoot*

- i. The military will **fire** into the air.
- ii. Armed robbers always **fire** their victims.

c) *Unfamiliar/new meaning- to sack*

- i. Your boss will **fire** you for not doing your work.
- ii. They won’t **fire** you for coming late.

This is to help you understand that, the same word may have two or more meanings in relation to its use. Therefore, you have to look at a particular word in a sentence carefully before determining its meaning.

Activity 4.2

From the list of words lettered A to C, choose the word or group of words that mean the same and can replace the underlined word in the sentence.

1. Appiah has been fired for not meeting the timeline.
A) burnt B) sacked C) shot
2. The class secretary reviewed the minutes of the last meeting.
A) reports B) time C) recordings
3. The President has been under fire recently.
A) criticism B) shot C) disrespected
4. It is our goal as students to excel in our studies.
A) aim B) belief C) reason
5. Kumah is the head of the family.
A) strongest B) toughest C) leader

6. The team has few minutes to win the match.
 A) time B) chance C) power

Congratulations! In determining the meaning of words, we need to consider the context, syntax, word structure, collocation, synonyms, antonyms, dictionary definition, field or subject-specific knowledge, tone and register. These terms are explained in detail in the glossary for you. You are encouraged to read the explanations. We will now apply them in determining the meaning or usage of a particular word.

To begin with, let us use the following words to complete the passage below.

seat belt ticket alight driver passenger safety
 bus stance bus terminal

seat belt, ticket, alight, driver, passenger, safety, bus stance, bus terminal.

At the -1-, every -2- was required to get a -3- before going onboard. The bus -4- asked everyone to fasten the -5-. This was to ensure the -6- of all passengers on the bus. The station master advised the passengers to always -7- at the -8- for convenient purposes.

To fill in the gaps in the passage, we need to first and foremost consider the environment, the grammatical role, predictable words, field or subject-specific and related words of the numbered gaps. Now, let us rewrite the passage by filling in the numbered gaps.

At the *bus terminal*, every *passenger* was required to get a *ticket* before going onboard. The bus *driver* asked everyone to fasten the *seat belt*. This was to ensure the *safety* of all passengers on the bus. The station master advised the passengers to always *alight* at the *bus stance* for convenient purposes.

Keep it up! We are now going to look at how synonyms and antonyms help determine the meaning of words.

Synonym: A Word Nearest in Meaning to Another One

A **synonym** is a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in a given language. That is, words that can replace one another depending on how they are used.

For example, the words close, shut, slam and latch are all synonyms of one another. This means that each of the words can replace one another based on how they are used. Read the following sentences to understand synonyms.

1. They always **shut** the door in the morning.
2. They always **close** the door in the morning.
3. They always **slam** the door in the morning.
4. They always **latch** the door in the morning.

This is to show that, the alternative or other words that can replace the word 'shut' in the first sentence include **close**, **slam** and **latch**. Therefore, the words **close**, **slam** and **latch** are synonymous or nearest in meaning to the word **shut**.

Also, let us consider the word 'begin'. Which of the list of words in the table can best replace the word 'begin' in the sentence?

1. The students **begin** their journey today.

start	commence	initiate
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2. The students **start** their journey today.
3. The students **commence** their journey today.

Though the word 'initiate' is nearest in meaning to the word 'begin', the word 'initiate' cannot replace the word 'begin' in this context. However, the word 'initiate' can replace the word 'begin' in the sentences below.

4. The students **begin** their plan to succeed today.
5. **The students initiate their plan to succeed today.**
6. The students **start** their plan to succeed today.
7. The students **commence** their plan to succeed today.

Here, the word 'initiate' is one of the words that can replace the word 'begin' in sentence 4 because of the situation or environment the word 'begin' is used. Try and perform the activity that follows.

Activity 4.3

Use two other words that are nearest in meaning to the underlined words to rewrite the sentences below:

1. I am a **happy** person.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

2. The students are **intelligent**.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

Well done! Read more on synonyms or words nearest in meaning. We are now going to look at antonyms or words nearly opposite in meaning.

Antonym: A Word Nearly Opposite In Meaning To Another

An **antonym** is a word that means opposite or nearly opposite of another given word. This means that two words which are nearly opposite are different in meaning to each other. Read the following pair of sentences which are nearly opposite in meaning because of the underlined words.

1. a) Kofi turns on the light.
b) Araba turns off the light.
2. a) Abu is always home during the day.
b) Dzifa is always home during the night.
3. a) The students like their breakfast hot.
b) The teachers like their breakfast cold.
4. a) It is good to revise your notes before lessons.
b) It is bad not to revise your notes before lessons.
5. a) Prices of goods and services are high these days.
b) Prices of goods and services are low these days.

Activity 4.4

Write sentences with the pairs of words provided.

1. short/tall: _____

2. sit/stand: _____

3. male/female: _____

4. stop/move: _____

Using words to create short stories

Have you read a story recently in which you observed some words that are familiar to you were used differently? Good observation! One effective way of understanding different meanings of the same words is to use them to create short stories. Creating stories with words makes them come alive. Now, let's create a story with the words below.

mirror, umbrella, warm

*I looked closely at my face in the **mirror**. The wet hair, pale lips, and those dark eyes – the rain has done it worse. Why did I not listen to Mummy to pick an **umbrella**? I took a **warm** bath and soon, Daddy called us for lunch. He placed his palm on my forehead and smiled. “I am glad you don't have a fever,” he said. “She is my **mirror** image after all”, Mother said with a wink at me. Daddy suggested that I have to be under Grandpa's **umbrella** for some time. Mother only added that I would receive a **warm** welcome there.*

*Did you find the story fun? As you can see the words **mirror, umbrella, and warm** have been used in different contexts with different meanings. Continue to read more about the different meanings of familiar words and apply them correctly to enhance the development of your vocabulary.*

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Question 1: How many words can you find in this ‘word search’ box? Make a list of them in your exercise book. Note that the words can go vertically or horizontally.

U	T	O	B	O	R
R	E	N	I	V	S
P	S	W	C	A	N
P	U	O	E	A	A
E	O	R	B	B	K
A	H	B	Y	N	E

Question 2:

From the alternatives lettered A to D, choose one word that is *nearest in meaning* to the *underlined* word in the sentences.

- The officials suggested we should have a **permanent** solution to the problem.
 - possible
 - detailed
 - direct
 - lasting
- Due to anger the pupil spoke to the teacher in an **impolite** way.
 - foolish
 - loud
 - brave
 - rude
- The auditor’s job was to **go over** the accounts carefully.
 - present
 - calculate
 - settle
 - inspect

From the list of words lettered A to D, choose the word that is **most nearly opposite** in meaning to the underlined word and that will at the same time, **correctly fill** the gap in the sentence.

1. You should follow the specific instructions, or you will commit a mistake in general
 - A. general
 - B. detailed
 - C. reliable
 - D. familiar

2. Dorcas is rather shy in the company of many people
 - A. timid
 - B. self-confident
 - C. boastful
 - D. quiet

3. Formerly, we walked a very long distance to attend school
 - A. sometimes
 - B. now
 - C. recently
 - D. usually

Question 4: Use the following words to create a short story.

mother	father	brothers	sisters	compound	meals
market	Mr. and Mrs. Osei				

EXTENDED READING

1. Click on any of the following links for further reading:
[Synonym | Overview, Definition & Importance - Video | Study.com](#)
[What Is an Antonym? Definition and Examples | Grammarly](#)
2. MacCary, M. (2021). *Handbook for Reading*. Ebeka Book Production
3. Intervention English Teacher Manual
4. New Gateway to English for Senior High School Students Book 1 (Page 111)
5. Any other English language books approved by NaCCA

GLOSSARY

1. **Context:** The immediate situation or surroundings or environment that a particular word is used.
2. **Syntax:** The grammatical role of a word in a given sentence.
3. **Word Structure:** The way words are formed including the base or root word and affixes (prefix and suffix).
4. **Collocation:** It is a predictable combination of words. For example, we can say *heavy rain* but **not strong rain** because it is inappropriate, also, we *do exercise* and do **not make exercise**. Collocation can consist of any kind of word such as verbs, nouns, adverbs, adjectives.
5. **Synonyms:** Words which are similar or nearest in meaning.
6. **Antonyms:** Words which are nearly opposite in meaning.
7. **Dictionary Definition:** Use dictionaries to get the different meanings of a word.
8. **Field or Subject-Specific Knowledge:** Know the subject area in which a word is found and its implied meaning.
9. **Tone:** The sound or the feeling conveyed by the way a word is spoken.
10. **Register:** The group of words related to a given word or field.

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