

SECTION

4

VARIED MEANINGS OF WORDS



STRAND: READING

Sub-Strand: 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. In essence, this section will help you to 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.

Learning Indicator (s):

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 surroundings 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 meaning based on how it is used. It may refer to a financial institution or a space around or the edge of a river. For example:

1. Ama and Kassim took a stroll at 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

- 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 meaning:

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'.

Fire

1. *familiar meaning- flame*
 - i. The *fire* burnt down the house.
 - ii. The *fire* has destroyed the entire village.
2. *Unfamiliar meaning/ new meaning- to shoot*
 - i. The military will **fire** into the air.
 - ii. Armed robbers always **fire** their victims.
3. *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 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 means 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 a 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		

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 their *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.

Activity 4.3

Rewrite the passage below by filling-in the numbered gaps with the appropriate words:

eighteen, process, voters, office, citizens, registering, electoral, presiding, right, December.

The -1- commission of Ghana has started -2- Ghanaian -3- for the 2024 elections in -4- 7. The -5- of the commissioner has recruited -6- officers who would supervise the -7-. It is expected that, all persons who are -8- years and above will register to fulfil their -9- to vote as -10- of the Republic of Ghana.

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. They are 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 4.4

Use three other words which 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 4.5

- a) Fill in the gap of the second sentence with the word that is nearly opposite in meaning to the underlined words in the first sentence.
- i. My English teacher comes **in** every morning to teach.
 My English teacher comes _____ every morning to teach.

ii. The bird is at the **top** of the tree.

The bird is at the _____ of the tree.

b) Write sentences with the pairs of words provided.

1. young/old: _____

2. sit/stand: _____

3. masculine/feminine: _____

4. essay/difficult: _____

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 same words is to use them to create short stories. Creating stories with words make them come alive. Now, let's create 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 worst. 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 will 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 on the different meaning 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:

Select the appropriate word from the list below to complete the passage.

Include	treaty	education	implement	passed
talents	environment	achieving	discrimination	develop

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human right **-1-** that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights.

The General Assembly of the United Nations **-2-** the convention in 1989; it has since been ratified by most member states. When a country ratifies the convention, it agrees to do everything it can to **-3-** it.

The convention gives children and young people over 40 rights. These **-4-** the right to:

- Special protection measures and assistance
- Access to services such as **-5-** and health care
- **-6-** their personalities, abilities and **-7-** to the fullest potential
- Grow up in an **-8-** of happiness, love and understanding

- Be informed about and participate in **-9-** their rights in an accessible and active manner

All of the rights in the convention apply to all children and young people without **-10-**.

Question 3:

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

1. Sometimes lack of information can be as **fatal** as misinformation.
A) viral
B) serious
C) deadly
D) vital
2. The officials suggested we should have a **permanent** solution to the problem
A) possible
B) detailed
C) direct
D) lasting
3. The class teacher could not **bear** the noise
A) tolerate
B) understand
C) take in
D) make out
4. Due to anger the pupil spoke to the teacher in an **impolite** way.
A) foolish
B) loud
C) brave
D) rude

5. The auditor's job was to go over the accounts carefully
- A) present
 - B) calculate
 - C) settle
 - D) 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 instruction, or you will commit a mistake 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. The soil is very fertile for the growing of vegetables.
- A) poor
 - B) shallow
 - C) porous
 - D) hard
4. Formerly, we walked a very long distance to attend school
- A) sometimes
 - B) now
 - C) recently
 - D) usually

5. It is wise to preserve work of art for the future
- A) produce
 - B) destroy
 - C) condemn
 - D) abolish

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:
 - a. [Synonym | Overview, Definition & Importance - Video | Study.com](#)
 - b. [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 **not make exercise**. Collocation can consist of any kinds of words 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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