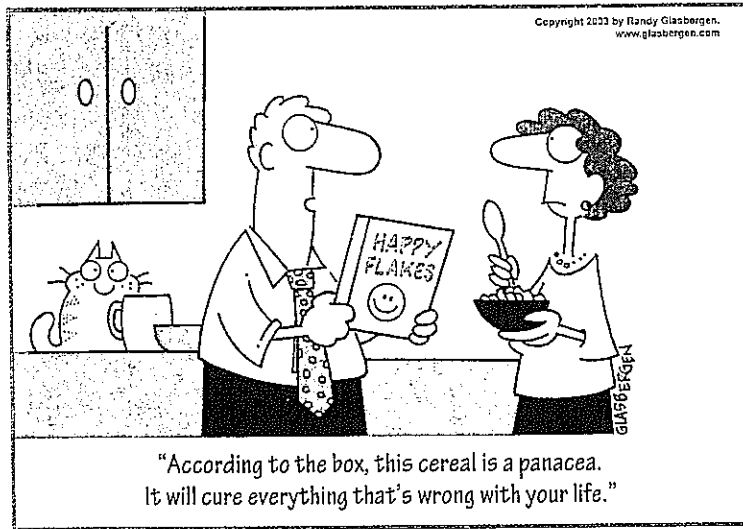


2 Synonyms

A context clue is often available in the form of a **synonym**: one or more words that mean the same or almost the same as the unknown word. In the sentence on page 17, “Cell phones have become *ubiquitous*; you can see them—and hear them—everywhere,” the synonym “everywhere” tells you the meaning of *ubiquitous*. A synonym may appear anywhere in a sentence as a restatement of the meaning of the unknown word.

Look at the cartoon below.



Notice that the synonym that helps you understand the word *panacea* is “cure everything.”



Check Your Understanding

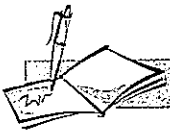
Each of the following items includes a word or phrase that means the same as the italicized word. Underline the synonym for each italicized word.

1. In the sentence “I actually love the sport of bowling,” not only is the word “actually” unnecessary, but the words “the sport of” are also *superfluous* (sŏŏ-pŭr’flŏŏ-əs): All the sentence has to say is “I love bowling.”
2. That five-year-old girl must have *innate* (ĩ-nāt’) musical talent; playing piano so well at her age requires an inborn gift.
3. Gaining a *mentor* (mĕn’tŏr’) is helpful when you are beginning a new job. A wise and trusted adviser can greatly assist your career.

Explanation

In each sentence, the synonym given should have helped you understand the meaning of the word in italics:

- *Superfluous* means “unnecessary.”
- *Innate* means “inborn.”
- *Mentor* means “wise and trusted adviser.”



PRactice 21 Synonyms

Each item below includes a word that is a synonym of the italicized word. Write the synonym of the italicized word in the space provided. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

- _____ 1. I swore not to reveal Anita's secret, but then I did *divulge* (dī-vūlj') it to my brother.
Hint: What must the speaker have done to Anita's secret?
- _____ 2. The rescue team had *explicit* (īk-splīs'īt) directions to the site of the helicopter crash in the mountains. Without such clear directions, they might never have found the place.
- _____ 3. My boss has an *abrasive* (ə-brā'sīv) personality. It's so irritating that he has trouble keeping friends.
- _____ 4. When I saw the doctor's *somber* (sōm'bər) expression, I feared that serious news awaited me.
- _____ 5. "This is a *poignant* (poin'yənt) book, as it is filled with touching stories of the author's days in a small Southern town," wrote the reviewer.
- _____ 6. Some consider terrorism the most *heinous* (hā'nəs) crime; others consider treason, torture, or crimes against children the worst evils.
- _____ 7. *Charlatans* (shār'lə-tənz) often get rich when medical science is not yet able to treat a disease effectively. Patients desperate for a cure will try anything, and so they fall into the hands of quacks.

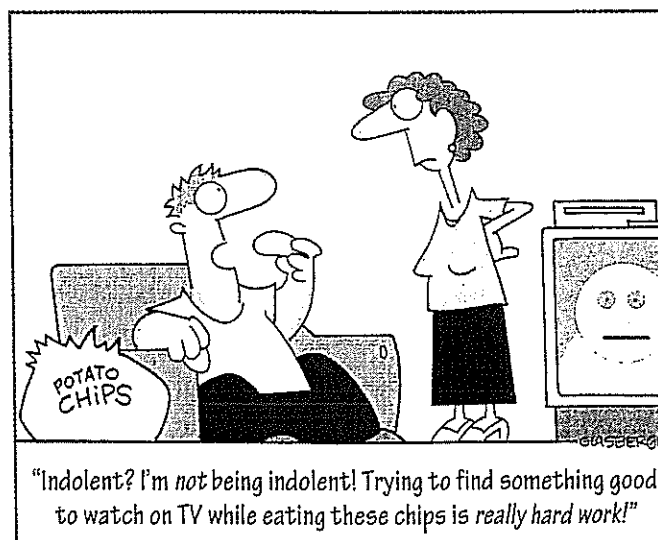
- _____ 8. Children aged three to six become more *dexterous* (děk'stər-əs) as a result of small-muscle development and increased eye-hand coordination. They are increasingly skillful, for instance, at drawing, using a spoon and cup, and dressing themselves.
- _____ 9. Many people believe that lava is the main material *extruded* (ik-strōd'əd) from a volcano. However, huge quantities of broken rock, fine ash, and dust are also cast out by volcanic explosions.
- _____ 10. Researchers have learned a *disconcerting* (dis'kən-sûrt'ing) fact: eyewitnesses often identify innocent people as being guilty. Scientists have also discovered the equally disturbing fact that there is no relationship between how confident witnesses are and how correct they are.

3 Antonyms

An **antonym**—a word or phrase that means the opposite of another word—is also a useful context clue. Antonyms are sometimes signaled by words and phrases such as *however*, *but*, *yet*, *on the other hand*, and *in contrast*.

Look again at the sentence on page 17, “Those who *advocate* capital punishment often argue that it prevents crime, but those who oppose it say it has no such effect.” Here the word *oppose* is an antonym that helps us realize that the word *advocate* means “support.”

Look also at the cartoon below.



Note that the antonym *hard work* helps you figure out that *indolent* must mean “lazy.”



Check Your Understanding

In each of the following sentences, underline the word or phrase that means the *opposite* of the italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

- _____ 1. The teacher would have achieved better results if she had been as quick to *commend* students for their successes as she was to criticize them for their failures.

Commend (kə-měnd') means

- A. blame. B. grade. C. praise.

- _____ 2. A memo that is brief and to the point is more likely to be read than one that is *verbose* and rambling.

Verbose (vər-bōs') means

- A. argumentative. B. wordy. C. short.

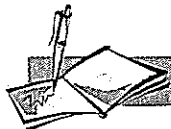
- _____ 3. Most of my friends' mothers seemed ordinary; mine, however, did such *bizarre* things as spraying green paint on the dead tree in front of our house.

Bizarre (bī-zār') means

- A. odd. B. easy. C. dangerous.

Explanation

In the first sentence, the opposite of *commend* is *criticize*; so *commend* means "praise." In the second sentence, *verbose* is the opposite of *brief*, so *verbose* means "wordy." Last, *bizarre* is the opposite of *ordinary*; *bizarre* means "odd."



PRACTICE 3: Antonyms

Each item below includes a word or phrase that is an antonym of the italicized word. Underline the antonym of each italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of the meaning of the italicized word. Note that the last five items have been taken from college textbooks.

- _____ 1. My piano teacher's criticism was always *profuse*, but her praise was scarce.

Hint: If the piano teacher's praise was scarce, what must her criticism have been?

Profuse (prə-fyōōs') means

- A. loud. B. well-founded. C. plentiful.

Name: _____

Context Clues 1.1

Directions: read each sentence and determine the meaning of the word using cross sentence clues or your prior knowledge. Then, explain what clues in the sentence helped you determine the word meaning.

1. **Dignity:** Even when the police officers put the handcuffs on my mother, she maintained her **dignity**, holding her head up high as she was marched off the protest site.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

2. **Splendid:** The rays from the rising sun shined **splendidly** through our kitchen window.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

3. **Particle:** John was so hungry that he didn't leave a single **particle** of the muffin on the plate.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

4. **Elegant:** Cassie took her time when she wrote in cursive, slowly making each word out of an **elegant** series of arcs and loops.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

5. **Injustice:** Kevin thought that it was a great **injustice** that girls could wear earrings in the school while the boys could not.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

6. **Decline:** After *Gears of Pain 6* came out, the amount of people playing *Gears of Pain 5* **declined**.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

7. **Paradise:** When Rex had a bone, a warm spot to lie, and someone petting him, he was in **paradise**.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

8. **Fascinate:** Alvin went to the museum every Saturday because he was so **fascinated** by art.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

9. **Yearn:** Even though John had a good job and a nice family, he **yearned** for more.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

10. **Seldom:** Since professional athletes have to stay in peak physical shape, most athletes **seldom** eat junk food.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

11. **Delicate:** Tracy held the flower as gently as she could, fearing that the **delicate** stem would break.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

12. **Remark:** Jennie didn't like the jacket her mother bought her until several strangers made **remarks** about how much they liked it.

Definition: _____

What clues in the sentence lead you to your definition?

Bonus: Define each of the words on a separate sheet of paper to check your answers. Attach your sheet.