

1 Meaning and style

A Asking about meaning

- A Would it be **accurate** to say that *student* and *pupil* are **synonymous**?
- B No, not exactly. A *student* is a person who studies in a school, college or university. *Pupil* has a more **restricted** use. A *pupil* is someone who only studies in a school, especially a primary school.
- A It's a bit **ambiguous** to say *she's a good student*, isn't it?
- B Yes, you can **interpret** it in different ways. *Good* can mean 'well-behaved' or 'hard-working'.
- A The meaning of *wrapping paper* is fairly obvious, isn't it?
- B Yes, it's **self-explanatory**: just paper for wrapping presents and stuff.
- A Can you give me a **precise** definition of *soul*?
- B Well, it's **virtually** the same as *spirit*: the part of you that is believed to exist after you die. But *spirit* has several other meanings too.

GLOSSARY

accurate	exact and correct; without mistakes OPP inaccurate ; accuracy <i>n</i>
synonymous	having the same, or nearly the same meaning synonym <i>n</i>
restricted	controlled or limited
ambiguous	not clear; able to be explained in different ways ambiguity <i>n</i>
interpret	explain the meaning of sth interpretation <i>n</i>
self-explanatory	easy to understand and not needing more explanation
precise	clear and accurate SYN exact ; precision <i>n</i>
virtually	almost, very nearly: virtually the same virtual <i>adj</i>

1 Mark the stress on these words. Use the to help you.

- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 accurate | 3 synonymous | 5 ambiguity | 7 interpretation |
| 2 synonym | 4 ambiguous | 6 interpret | 8 self-explanatory |

2 Is the meaning the same or different? Write S or D.

- The meaning is virtually the same. / The meaning is exactly the same.
- They are both students in my school. / They are both pupils in my school.
- The meaning is quite precise. / The meaning is quite restricted.
- The sentence is ambiguous. / The sentence can be interpreted in two ways.
- I don't know the exact meaning. / I don't know the precise meaning.
- Tom is fairly inaccurate. / Tom makes very few mistakes.
- His soul will live on. / His spirit will live on.
- What she said was fairly ambiguous. / What she said was fairly accurate.

3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the word in capitals at the end.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 If you want to make something clear, it's better to avoid | AMBIGUOUS |
| 2 She always expresses herself with | PRECISE |
| 3 <i>Hide</i> and <i>conceal</i> are very similar, but not completely | SYNONYM |
| 4 Elsie is quite fluent but she lacks | ACCURATE |
| 5 I think this sentence is open to | INTERPRET |
| 6 The instructions were; a child could understand them. | EXPLAIN |
| 7 They are opposites. | VIRTUAL |

4 Answer the questions.

- What's the exact meaning of *huge*?
- Which word is more restricted: *get* or *acquire*? Why?
- Is the meaning of *waiting room* fairly self-explanatory? Why? / Why not?
- Are *slim* and *thin* synonyms? Why? / Why not?
- Is it accurate to say that a pupil studies in a secondary school? Why? / Why not?
- I picked up my bag*. Why could this sentence be ambiguous?



B Explaining style

Example	Meaning
'Thanks for your help, Sam,' she said ironically . Sam hadn't helped at all.	ironically using words to say the opposite of what you mean, often humorously ironic adj ; irony n
The literal sense of gold is 'a valuable yellow metal used to make coins, jewellery, etc.'	literal (of words and phrases) being the basic or usual meaning literally adv
Golden is used figuratively in the sentence <i>Working in this company is a golden opportunity for him.</i>	figuratively (of words and phrases) not used in the basic or usual way, but in a way that makes a description more interesting (Golden here means 'wonderful' or 'special'.) figurative adj
She has a heart of gold is an example of a metaphor . It means 'she is a very kind person'.	metaphor a word or phrase used to describe sb/ sth else in a way that is different from its normal use metaphorical adj = figurative
The dictionary marks <i>stupid</i> as disapproving .	disapproving (often used in dictionaries) showing that sth is bad or wrong
In slang , a <i>shrink</i> is a psychiatrist or a psychologist.	slang very informal words and phrases, used by particular groups of people in spoken language
Swear words are offensive to many people and not appropriate in most everyday conversations.	offensive rude in a way that causes you to be upset or angry OPP inoffensive appropriate suitable or correct OPP inappropriate
He called Tom 'an old woman'. How insulting !	insulting rude or offensive insult n, v

SPOTLIGHT *swear*

Swearing is the use of **swear words** (= rude or offensive language). If you **swear at** somebody, you might make them angry. **Swear** can also mean to make a serious promise to do something.

- He **swore** that he would kill anyone who touched me.

5 Underline the words which usually suggest something negative.

disapproving	figurative	inappropriate	insulting	irony
literal	metaphor	offensive	slang	swearing

6 Circle the correct word(s). Sometimes both words are correct.

- 1 The **literal** / **figurative** meaning of *curtain* is a piece of cloth which covers a window.
- 2 The curtain fell on her career is **figurative** / **metaphorical**. It means 'her career ended'.
- 3 **Irony** / **Slang** is commonly used to say the opposite of what you mean.
- 4 Ana is so kind; she has a heart of **silver** / **gold**.
- 5 It may be **appropriate** / **inappropriate** to ask someone how much they earn or how old they are.
- 6 He was being **ironic** / **offensive** – he didn't mean to be rude.
- 7 I think it was **a metaphor** / **an insult** to say you were stupid.
- 8 Swearing is **offensive** / **inoffensive** to many people.

7 Complete the sentences with a suitable word.

- 1 **Naïve** often has a negative meaning and is marked '.....' in the dictionary.
- 2 **Flood** is one of those words that can be used literally or
- 3 He said my food was tasteless, which I found incredibly
- 4 **Knackered** is very informal, means 'extremely tired', and is an example of British English
- 5 The offer is a opportunity for my brother to work abroad for a year.
- 6 **Pull your socks up** is often used as a meaning 'you must work harder and do better'.
- 7 A man at me in the street because I got in his way. I was very upset.
- 8 They live just round the corner, so I see them every day.



TEST YOURSELF