



WRITING CENTER

Library and Academic Resource Center (LARC 229)
www.lavc.edu/tutor | 818-947-2810

Figure 1 The Writing Center and Academic Resource Center logo

Synonyms and Antonyms



Figure 2 Man looking into a mirror

Can you say the same thing with many different words in English? Sure! With synonyms and antonyms, one can expand his or her vocabulary, improve the wording of a sentence, and avoid repetition.

A **synonym** is a word that shares a **similar** meaning to another. *Use a synonym when you want to use another word instead of the one you are thinking of.

An **antonym** is a word that means the **opposite** of another. *Use an antonym when you want to use a word that means the opposite of the one you are thinking of.

Synonyms

Let's say you are writing a research paper for a biology class and you want to explain that bacteria are gross. Since this word may be too informal for a biology paper, you could use a synonym for the word, "gross"

. In the chart below is a list of synonyms:

Word	Synonym
gross	repulsive
interesting	captivating
beneficial	advantageous

Antonyms



Figure 3 A potato looking into a fun house mirror

Now, imagine you are reading an article for the same paper that discusses how bacteria are good for you. If your thesis were “Bacteria are ‘bad’ for You” you would want to use a word that means the opposite of “bad.” Therefore, an antonym would be the best option.

In the chart below is a list of antonyms:

Word	Antonym
gross	clean, pleasing, appealing
interesting	boring, dull, tedious
beneficial	harmful, disadvantageous, detrimental

Note that the words on the right mean the opposite. Remember that “antonym” means “opposite definition.”

Example:

One word that is often used is *beneficial*, which means *good for you*. Can you think of an opposite meaning or an antonym for this word?

How about *detrimental*? (*Detrimental* means *harmful*; since it is the opposite of *beneficial*, it will work!

If you cannot think of any synonyms or antonyms on your own, you can use online resources like Thesaurus.com. (Thesaurus.com is also attached to Dictionary.com.)

Type in the word you want to use in the search box, and a synonym will come up. For antonyms, you can use antonymsfor.com.

Exercise: Determine the synonym and antonym for the words below. Try to think of the answers on your own, but if you need help, use the Internet.

Important

Similar meaning of: (synonym)

Opposite meaning of: (antonym)

Luck

Antonym:

Synonym:

Prove

Antonym:

Synonym:

Answer key for exercise:

*These are just a few answers remember that with Antonyms and Synonyms, there are more possibilities!

Important	Luck	Prove
Synonym: significant	Synonym: fortune	Synonym: demonstrate
Antonym: trivial	Antonym: misfortune	Antonym: disprove

This handout uses information from the following sources:

Harper, Douglas. "Online Etymology Dictionary." *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Dan McCormack Sponsored Words, 2001. Web. 22 May 2013.

IA Users Club, Inc. "Antonyms Dictionary - AntonymsFor.com." *Antonyms Dictionary - AntonymsFor.com*. IA Users Club, Inc, 2011. Web. 22 May 2013.

See other helpful handouts at the Writing Center!

If you need any help, do not hesitate to come to the Writing Center for one-on-one help with these handouts!