Name _____ Date _____

Word ladders

Synonyms, opposites and choosing a stronger word.

1 Learn



Synonyms mean the same, or nearly the same (big, large). **Antonyms** are opposites (big, small). Some synonyms are **stronger** than others: we call these **shades of meaning**.

freezing	cold	cool	warm	hot	boiling

The further you go from the middle, the **stronger** the word. Warm, hot and boiling are synonyms, but boiling is the strongest.

Choose a stronger word: The dog was big.

1. List synonyms for big: **huge**, **gigantic**.
2. Put them in order, weakest to strongest: big → huge → gigantic.
3. Pick the one that fits what you want to say: **The dog was gigantic.** Now the reader can really picture it!

Flip's tip: a synonym must be on the **same team**. Before you choose, ask: "Does it mean the same thing, or the opposite?"

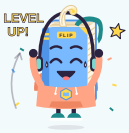
Warm up: write **S** for synonyms or **A** for antonyms.

happy, glad ☐ tiny, huge ☐ quick, fast ☐ noisy, quiet ☐

Grown-ups: people sometimes disagree about the exact order of words (is huge stronger than enormous?). That's fine: talking about it is the point. The ones on this sheet have a clear order.

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2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Floor word ladder

You need: 12 scraps of paper and a pencil.

1. Pick a starting word: **cold**, **happy**, **wet** or **tired**. Write it on a scrap.
2. Take turns thinking of synonyms, weaker or stronger. Write each on its own scrap.
3. Lay the scraps in a line on the floor, from weakest to strongest. Talk about any you disagree on!
4. Walk along your ladder saying each word, getting louder as the words get stronger. Write your ladder below.

Go	weakest	→	→	strongest
1				
2				
3				

Grown-ups: ideas: chilly, cold, freezing · pleased, happy, delighted, overjoyed · damp, wet, soaking · sleepy, tired, exhausted.

3 Practise

A. Write each set of words in order, from **weakest** to **strongest**.

1 hot · warm · boiling _____ → _____ → _____

2 soaking · damp · wet _____ → _____ → _____

3 shout · whisper · talk _____ → _____ → _____

4 freezing · cool · cold _____ → _____ → _____

5 gobble · nibble · eat _____ → _____ → _____

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B. Draw lines to match the **synonyms**.

begin	close
shut	fast
angry	start
quick	cross

C. Write an **antonym** for each word.

1 tall _____
2 empty _____
3 early _____
4 ancient _____

D. Swap each dull word for a stronger synonym. Write the new sentence.

1 It was a nice day at the beach.

_____

2 The monster was big and scary.

_____

3 Ava was tired after the race.

_____

Challenge

Leo says **the opposite of hot is warm**. Is he right? Use the word ladder on page 1 to explain.

_____

_____

I can... Tick when you can.

- [ ] find a synonym and an antonym for a word
- [ ] put words in order from weakest to strongest
- [ ] choose a stronger word to make my writing better