

WORD KNOWLEDGE REVIEW

The ability to understand other people and to be understood by other people is an important communication skill, both in speaking and in writing. This ability can be measured in a written test by including a section on synonyms—words having the same, or nearly the same, meaning as other words in the language.

Synonym questions are used to test for ability to understand the meaning of words. They are also good indicators of reasoning ability and ability to learn.

The Word Knowledge subtest determines breadth of word knowledge through synonyms. The words used in the synonym questions are those used in everyday language by high school graduates or those who have high school equivalency diplomas. The test questions are four-choice items and appear in either of the two following formats:

Format 1. Complete the definition of a key word.

Sample:

1. Notorious most nearly means
 - 1-A annoying.
 - 1-B condemned.
 - 1-C unpleasant.
 - 1-D well known.

Notorious means *well known*, which is the same as choice D. Choices A and C are unrelated in meaning since a notorious person may or may not be annoying or unpleasant. Although choice B may be just slightly related in meaning, as *notorious* also implies being widely and unfavorably known, it does not necessarily imply being condemned. Choice D is the only correct answer of the options given.

Sample:

2. To assent means most nearly to
 - 2-A acquire.
 - 2-B climb.
 - 2-C consent.
 - 2-D participate.

To *assent* means to *express acceptance or concurrence*. Choice C is almost the same in meaning. Choices A, B, and D are unrelated in meaning. Choice B is similar in meaning to the word “ascend” but not to “assent.”

Choice C is the correct answer.

Format 2. Choose the word that means the same as the key word in a sentence.

Sample:

Choose the lettered word that means most nearly the same as the underlined word as it is used in the sentence.

3. The rear of the truck should be washed.
- 3-A Back
 - 3-B Front
 - 3-C Hood
 - 3-D Roof

Replace *rear* with each of the choices. The correct choice is the word that does not change the meaning of the sentence. In the previous question, the choice that is closest in meaning to the underlined word is *back*. Therefore, choice A is the correct answer.

An excellent method of increasing your vocabulary is by developing and maintaining your own word list. Write down every word you see or hear whose meaning you are not certain of. Look up its meaning in a dictionary and record it next to the word. Then follow up by using the word in a sentence.

A guide to word formation follows. This key to word recognition consists of commonly used prefixes and suffixes, as well as Latin and Greek word stems that have been absorbed into the English language. Use this guide as a reference to increase your knowledge of word meanings, an essential component of verbal ability.

Information about the Word Knowledge test and sample questions with accompanying answer explanations follow the Word Formation section and word parts list. Be sure to study these sections then try the practice questions.

Word Formation—A Key to Word Recognition

Many English words, especially the longer and more difficult ones, are built up out of basic parts or roots. One of the most efficient ways of increasing your vocabulary is to learn some of these parts. Once you know some basic building blocks, you will find it easier to remember words you've learned and to puzzle out unfamiliar ones.

The following chart lists more than 150 common word parts. Each part is defined, and an example is given of a word in which it appears. Study the chart a small section at a time. When you've learned one of the building blocks, remember to look for it in your reading. See if you can think of other words in which the word part appears. Use the dictionary to check your guesses.

<u>WORD PART</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
ab, abs	from, away	<i>abrade</i> —to wear off <i>absent</i> —away, not present
act, ag	do, act, drive	<i>action</i> —a doing <i>agent</i> —one who acts for another
alter, altr	other, change	<i>alternate</i> —to switch back and forth
am, ami	love, friend	<i>amorous</i> —loving
anim	mind, life, spirit	<i>animated</i> —spirited
annu, enni	year	<i>annual</i> —yearly
ante	before	<i>antedate</i> —to occur earlier
anthrop	man	<i>anthropology</i> —study of mankind
anti	against	<i>antiwar</i> —against war
arbit	judge	<i>arbiter</i> —a judge
arch	first, chief	<i>archetype</i> —first model
aud, audit, aur	hear	<i>auditorium</i> —place where performances are heard
auto	self	<i>automobile</i> —self-moving vehicle
bell	war	<i>belligerent</i> —warlike
bene, ben	good, well	<i>benefactor</i> —one who does good deeds
bi	two	<i>bilateral</i> —two-sided
bibli	book	<i>bibliophile</i> —book lover
bio	life	<i>biology</i> —study of life
brev	short	<i>abbreviate</i> —to shorten
cad, cas	fall	<i>casualty</i> —one who has fallen
cede, ceed, cess	go, yield	<i>exceed</i> —go beyond <i>recession</i> —a going backward
cent	hundred	<i>century</i> —hundred years
chrom	color	<i>monochrome</i> —having one color
chron	time	<i>chronology</i> —time order
cide, cis	cut, kill	<i>suicide</i> —a self-killing <i>incision</i> —a cutting into

<u>WORD PART</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
circum	around	<i>circumnavigate</i> —to sail around
clam, claim	shout	<i>proclaim</i> —to declare loudly
clin	slope, lean	<i>decline</i> —to slope downward
cogn	know	<i>recognize</i> —to know
com, co, col, con	with, together	<i>concentrate</i> —to bring closer together <i>cooperate</i> —to work with
contra, contro, counter	against	<i>contradict</i> —to speak against <i>counterclockwise</i> —against the clock's direction
corp	body	<i>incorporate</i> —to bring into a body
cosm	order, world	<i>cosmos</i> —universe
cre, cresc	grow	<i>increase</i> —to grow
cred	trust, believe	<i>incredible</i> —unbelievable
culp	blame	<i>culprit</i> —one who is to blame
cur, curr, curs	run, course	<i>current</i> —presently running
de	away from, down, opposite	<i>detract</i> —to draw away from
dec	ten	<i>decade</i> —ten years
dem	people	<i>democracy</i> —rule by the people
dic, dict	say, speak	<i>dictation</i> —a speaking <i>predict</i> —to say in advance
dis, di	not, away from	<i>dislike</i> —to not like <i>digress</i> —to turn away from the subject
doc, doct	teach, prove	<i>indoctrinate</i> —to teach
domin	rule	<i>domineer</i> —to rule over
du	two	<i>duo</i> —a couple
duc, duct	lead	<i>induct</i> —to lead in
dur	hard, lasting	<i>durable</i> —able to last
equ	equal	<i>equivalent</i> —of equal value
ev	time, age	<i>longevity</i> —age, length of life

<u>WORD PART</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
ex, e, ef	from, out	<i>expatriate</i> —one who lives outside his native country <i>emit</i> —to send out
extra	outside, beyond	<i>extraterrestrial</i> —from beyond the earth
fac, fact, fect, fic	do, make	<i>factory</i> —place where things are made <i>fictitious</i> —made up or imaginary
fer	bear, carry	<i>transfer</i> —to carry across
fid	belief, faith	<i>fidelity</i> —faithfulness
fin	end, limit	<i>finite</i> —limited
flect, flex	bend	<i>reflect</i> —to bend back
flu, fluct, flux	flow	<i>fluid</i> —flowing substance <i>influx</i> —a flowing in
fore	in front of, previous	<i>forecast</i> —to tell ahead of time <i>foreleg</i> —front leg
form	shape	<i>formation</i> —shaping
fort	strong	<i>fortify</i> —to strengthen
frag, fract	break	<i>fragile</i> —easily broken
fug	flee	<i>fugitive</i> —one who flees
gen	birth, kind, race	<i>engender</i> —to give birth to
geo	earth	<i>geology</i> —study of the earth
grad, gress	step, go	<i>progress</i> —to go forward
graph	writing	<i>autograph</i> —to write one's own name
her, hes	stick, cling	<i>adhere</i> —to cling <i>cohesive</i> —sticking together
homo	same, like	<i>homophonic</i> —sounding the same
hyper	too much, over	<i>hyperactive</i> —overly active
in, il, ig, im, ir	not	<i>incorrect</i> —not correct <i>ignorant</i> —not knowing <i>illogical</i> —not logical <i>irresponsible</i> —not responsible

<u>WORD PART</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
in, il, im, ir	on, into, in	<i>impose</i> —to place on <i>invade</i> —to go into
inter	between, among	<i>interplanetary</i> —between planets
intra, intro	within, inside	<i>intrastate</i> —within a state
ject	throw	<i>reject</i> —to throw back
junct	join	<i>juncture</i> —place where things join
leg	law	<i>legal</i> —lawful
leg, lig, lect	choose, gather, read	<i>legible</i> —readable <i>eligible</i> —able to be chosen <i>select</i> —to choose
lev	light, rise	<i>alleviate</i> —to make lighter
liber	free	<i>liberation</i> —a freeing
loc	place	<i>location</i> —place
log	speech, study	<i>dialogue</i> —speech for two characters <i>psychology</i> —study of the mind
luc, lum	light	<i>translucent</i> —allowing some light to pass through <i>luminous</i> —shining
magn	large, great	<i>magnify</i> —to make larger
mal, male	bad, wrong, poor	<i>maladjusted</i> —poorly adjusted <i>malevolent</i> —ill-wishing
mar	sea	<i>marine</i> —sea-dwelling
ment	mind	<i>demented</i> —out of one's mind
meter, metr, mens	measure	<i>chronometer</i> —time-measuring device <i>commensurate</i> —of equal measure
micr	small	<i>microwave</i> —small wave
min	little	<i>minimum</i> —least
mis	badly, wrongly	<i>misunderstand</i> —to understand wrongly
mit, miss	send	<i>remit</i> —to send back <i>mission</i> —a sending

<u>WORD PART</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
mono	single, one	<i>monorail</i> —train that runs on a single track
morph	shape	<i>anthropomorphic</i> —man-shaped
mov, mob, mot	move	<i>removal</i> —a moving away <i>mobile</i> —able to move
multi	many	<i>multiply</i> —to become many
mut	change	<i>mutation</i> —change
nasc, nat	born	<i>innate</i> —inborn <i>native</i> —belonging by or from birth
neg	deny	<i>negative</i> —no, not
neo	new	<i>neophyte</i> —beginner
nom	name	<i>nominate</i> —to name for office
non	not	<i>nonentity</i> —a nobody
nov	new	<i>novice</i> —newcomer, beginner <i>innovation</i> —something new
omni	all	<i>omnipresent</i> —present in all places
oper	work	<i>operate</i> —to work <i>cooperation</i> —a working together
path, pat, pass	feel, suffer	<i>patient</i> —suffering <i>compassion</i> —a feeling with
ped, pod	foot	<i>pedestrian</i> —one who goes on foot
pel, puls	drive, push	<i>impel</i> —to push
phil	love	<i>philosophy</i> —love of wisdom
phob	fear	<i>phobia</i> —irrational fear
phon	sound	<i>symphony</i> —a sounding together
phot	light	<i>photosynthesis</i> —synthesis of chemical compounds in plants with the aid of light
poly	many	<i>polygon</i> —many-sided figure
port	carry	<i>import</i> —to carry into a country
pot	power	<i>potency</i> —power

<u>WORD PART</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
post	after	<i>postmortem</i> —after death
pre	before, earlier than	<i>prejudice</i> —judgment in advance
press	press	<i>impression</i> —a pressing into
prim	first	<i>primal</i> —first, original
pro	in favor of, in front of, forward	<i>proceed</i> —to go forward <i>prowar</i> —in favor of war
psych	mind	<i>psychiatry</i> —cure of the mind
quer, quir, quis, ques	ask, seek	<i>query</i> —to ask <i>inquisitive</i> —asking many questions <i>quest</i> —a search
re	back, again	<i>rethink</i> —to think again <i>reimburse</i> —to pay back
rid, ris	laugh	<i>deride</i> —to make fun of <i>ridiculous</i> —laughable
rupt	break	<i>erupt</i> —to break out
sci, scio	know	<i>science</i> —knowledge <i>conscious</i> —having knowledge
scrib, script	write	<i>describe</i> —to write about <i>inscription</i> —a writing on
semi	half	<i>semiconscious</i> —half conscious
sent, sens	feel, think	<i>sensation</i> —feeling <i>sentimental</i> —marked by feeling
sequ, secut	follow	<i>sequential</i> —following in order
sol	alone	<i>desolate</i> —lonely
solv, solu, solut	loosen	<i>dissolve</i> —to loosen the bonds of <i>solvent</i> —loosening agent
son	sound	<i>sonorous</i> —sounding
spect	look	<i>inspect</i> —to look into <i>spectacle</i> —something to be looked at

<u>WORD PART</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
spir	breathe	<i>respiration</i> —breathing
stab, stat	stand	<i>establish</i> —to make stand, found
string, strict	bind	<i>restrict</i> —to bind, limit
stru, struct	build	<i>construct</i> —to build
super	over, greater	<i>superfluous</i> —overflowing beyond what is needed
tang, ting, tact, tig	touch	<i>tactile</i> —of the sense of touch <i>contiguous</i> —touching
tele	far	<i>telescope</i> —machine for seeing far
ten, tain, tent	hold	<i>tenacity</i> —holding power <i>contain</i> —to hold together
term	end	<i>terminal</i> —last, ending
terr	earth	<i>terrain</i> —surface of the earth
test	witness	<i>attest</i> —to witness
therm	heat	<i>thermos</i> —container that retains heat
tort, tors	twist	<i>contort</i> —to twist out of shape
tract	pull, draw	<i>attract</i> —to pull toward
trans	across	<i>transport</i> —to carry across a distance
un	not	<i>uninformed</i> —not informed
uni	one	<i>unify</i> —to make one
vac	empty	<i>evacuate</i> —to make empty
ven, vent	come	<i>convene</i> —to come together
ver	true	<i>verity</i> —truth
verb	word	<i>verbose</i> —wordy
vid, vis	see	<i>video</i> —means of seeing <i>vision</i> —sight
viv, vit	life	<i>vivid</i> —lively
voc, vok	call	<i>provocative</i> —calling for a response <i>revoke</i> —to call back
vol	wish, will	<i>involuntary</i> —not willed

Sample Questions

1. Small most nearly means
 - 1-A cheap.
 - 1-B round.
 - 1-C sturdy.
 - 1-D little.

2. Impair most nearly means
 - 2-A direct.
 - 2-B weaken.
 - 2-C improve.
 - 2-D stimulate.

3. Cease most nearly means
 - 3-A stop.
 - 3-B start.
 - 3-C change.
 - 3-D continue.

4. The wind is variable today.
 - 4-A Mild
 - 4-B Steady
 - 4-C Shifting
 - 4-D Chilling

5. The student discovered an error.
 - 5-A Found
 - 5-B Entered
 - 5-C Searched
 - 5-D Enlarged

6. Do not obstruct the entrance to the building.
 - 6-A Block
 - 6-B Enter
 - 6-C Leave
 - 6-D Cross

Answers and Explanations

- 1-D** *Little* most closely means the same as *small*. The other choices clearly are not related in any way to the word *small*.
- 2-B** Of all the choices, *weaken* most closely means the same as *impair*. *Impair* means to *decrease in strength, amount, or quality*.
- 3-A** *Stop* most nearly means *cease*. *Start* and *continue* are opposites of *cease*, while *change* is not related to the word *cease*.
- 4-C** The word “shifting” could replace “variable” in this sentence. *Variable* means *changing* or *subject to change*.
- 5-A** The word “discovered” can be replaced by “found” in this sentence. *Discovered* means *to have uncovered* or *found*.
- 6-A** *Obstruct* can be replaced by the word “block.” *Obstruct* means to *impede* or *interfere*.