

Antonyms and Synonyms

Antonyms are words with opposite meanings e.g. *fast* and *slow* or *light* and *dark*

Synonyms are words with the same or nearly the same meaning as another e.g. *happy* and *joyful*, *tired* and *sleepy*

Below are two lists of common synonyms and antonyms:

Common antonyms

Big → Small

Long → Short

Empty → Full

Go → Stay

False → True

Old → Young

Up → Down

In → Out

Common synonyms

Big → Large, huge, grand

Long → Lengthy, extended

Empty → Vacant, void

Go → Leave, depart

False → Wrong, incorrect

Old → Aged, elderly

Up → Upwards, higher

In → Inside, interior

Practise in thinking about antonyms and synonyms can support students in understanding better the links between words. In turn, this helps with learning and retaining vocabulary.

Some students may need support in using a dictionary or thesaurus to support them when thinking of synonyms or antonyms for more complex vocabulary.

Antonyms & Synonyms Activity

Look at the word in the middle and then try to think of an antonym and a synonym for each one.

Synonym	Word	Antonym
<i>Freezing</i>	Cold	<i>Hot</i>
	Clean	
	Old	
	Under	
	Happy	
	Run	
	Fast	
	Big	
	Rough	
	Difficult	
	Wet	
	Closed	

Other activities to try:

- Play matching games with pairs of antonyms or synonyms.
- Use picture support to match words that mean the same thing
- See how many different synonyms you can generate for each of the words above.
- Give pairs of words for the student to identify if they are antonyms or synonyms.