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What is a homograph?

Definition

A homograph is word that has the same spelling as another. Homographs differ from each other in

- meaning
- origin, and
- sometimes pronunciation.

See also: the closely related terms [homonym](#) and [homophone](#)

Examples

- **bow**, the front part of a ship
- **bow**, to bend
- **bow**, a decorative knot

Source

[Neufeldt 1991 646](#)

Context for this page:

- Concept module: [homograph](#)
- In overview module: [Glossary \(Linguistics\): H](#)
- In modular book: [Glossary of linguistic terms](#), by [Eugene E. Loos](#) (general editor), [Susan Anderson](#) (editor), [Dwight H. Day, Jr.](#) (editor), [Paul C. Jordan](#) (editor), and [J. Douglas Wingate](#) (editor)
- In bookshelf: [Linguistics](#)

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Name _____ Date _____

English Basics

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Homographs

Homographs are different words that are spelled the same. They have different meanings and origins. Homographs may or may not have the same pronunciations.

Each sentence contains two homographs. The definition or a synonym of one of the homographs follows the sentence. Underline the homograph that matches the definition or synonym. The first three have been done for you.

1. Tracey didn't feel well after falling into the well. *in good health*
2. Jim hunts, but he does not shoot does. *female deer*
3. There was a big row in the first row of the theater. *fight*
4. Let's wind up the kite string before the wind gets too wild. *moving air*
5. If the judges are fair, our rabbit will win a ribbon at the fair. *just*
6. That creaking sound makes me wonder if this building is sound. *in good condition*
7. The oil well is yours and the gold mine is mine. *belonging to me*
8. The dove dove to the ground to eat the peanut. *dived*
9. I found it hard to believe that he planned to found a new church. *establish, or start*
10. The rose bushes rose out of the fertile ground. *a kind of flower*
11. I won't shed a tear if you tear my old shirt into shreds. *rip*
12. The dog was happy when you dropped the ground beef onto the ground. *past of grind*



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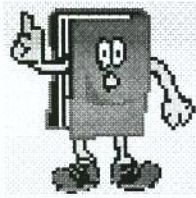
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Subject: English Topic: Vocabulary Lesson: Homographs

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Note: Some words have more than one meaning. Their meaning will change depending on the sentence. Such words are known as Homographs.

Example: We bought a pound of carrot.

measure money mash

Circle the meaning of the underlined word:

1. She looks kinder than him.

considerate start fire little kids

2. The kinder care center is closed today.

considerate start fire little kids

3. Polish men like to dance.

people of Poland make something shine people of Portuguese

4. Some men polish their shoes everyday.

people of Poland make something shine people of Portuguese

5. John ran as fast as he could to catch the bus.

don't eat quickly fall down

6. During Ramadan, people fast for ten days.

don't eat quickly fall down

7. Tom asked John to hide under his bed.

skin sink keep out of sight

8. She wore a coat made out of the tiger's hide.

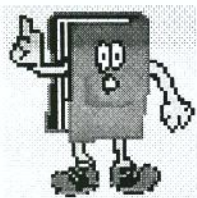
skin sink keep out of sight

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Note: Some words have more than one meaning. Their meaning will change depending on the sentence. Such words are known as Homographs.

Example: We bought a pound of carrot.

measure money mash

Circle the meaning of the underlined word:

1. Tim will bark if he sees a stranger.

rind of a tree bite noise made by a dog

2. Joe stripped its bark and used it to build the table.

rind of a tree bite noise made by a dog

3. He hid the treasure in the old chest.

box part of the body underneath

4. His chest seems congested.

box part of the body underneath

5. She carried her jewels in a case.

box lawsuit example

6. She is happy that she won the case.

box lawsuit example

7. He will lead the band.

guide teach metal

8. He will go to the lead mines.

guide teach metal

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Literal or Metaphor Activities

Work with a partner, and look at the way "track" is used in each of the following sentences. In each case decide whether the word is used literally (L) or metaphorically (M).

Activity 1

1. ____ Look at those tracks over there. Raccoon?
2. ____ Sometimes people will get off the track and lose the point of what they are saying.
3. ____ The car was going around the track at 240 miles per hour.
4. ____ You can see the track of the elementary particle as a string of bubbles.
5. ____ I lost track of time and so wasn't able to print it out before class.
6. ____ The floor is hollow and has tracks so you can plug in your computer.
7. ____ They can now track dust storms coming off the Tibetan plateau all the way to Hawaii.
8. ____ She couldn't keep track of my questions at all.

Literal or Metaphor Activities

Each of the following statements can be interpreted as making a positive (complimentary), negative (critical) or neutral (descriptive) comment about something or someone.

Work with a partner and identify which statements are Positive (+), Negative (-) or Neutral (N)?

Are there any that are difficult to categorize? Why is this?

1. ____ I wish I had kept better track of this because I think I'm underestimating the effect.
2. ____ We're using the index to keep track of where the smallest item is.
3. ____ So you're right on track with this way of developing your paper.
4. ____ Although there are complications, I feel I'm basically on track.
5. ____ The upper peninsula of Michigan is off the beaten track.
6. ____ He couldn't keep track of my questions at all. I mean, really he was all over the place.
7. ____ Nobody seems to be keeping track of which children are reading which books.
8. ____ I don't see why you have to feel you have to be on track all the time.

*This activity shows this metaphor—as well as many other metaphors and idioms—is very commonly used to express **evaluation**.*

Literal or Metaphor Activities

Teacher Key

Task One:

Items 1, 3, 4 and 6 are literal; 2, 5 and 8 are metaphorical. Number 7, as often with real-world data, is not certainly literal or metaphorical; are they actually *tracking* the dust-storms, or are they just getting some indication of their paths through satellite images?

Task Two:

Items 2 and 5 would appear to be basically descriptive. 3 & 4 are positive, while 1, 6 and 7 are negative (or critical). The last one is a bit more problematic; however, it does seem to be offering some positive reassurance.