

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lexical Nuance: Your Guide to 10th Grade Diction and Syntax Quiz

Sophomores dissect subtle shifts in tone and meaning by manipulating sophisticated word relationships and semantic traps found in academic and literary texts.

1. In a political critique, an author replaces the word 'steadfast' with 'obdurate' to describe a leader's policy. How does this synonym change the connotation of the sentence?

- A. It shifts the tone from admiring loyalty to criticizing stubbornness.
- B. It suggests the leader is becoming more flexible over time.
- C. It implies the leader's actions are now based on religious rites.
- D. It simplifies the sentence for a more general audience.

2. The legal counsel argued that the witness's testimony was _____; however, the prosecution presented evidence that was its exact antonym: _____.

- A. spurious / specious
- B. veracious / mendacious
- C. perfunctory / haphazard
- D. audacious / intrepid

3. In the sentence 'The discrete investigator was praised for his discreet handling of the sensitive documents,' the homophones are used correctly to convey that he was both 'separate/distinct' and 'cautious'.

- A. True
- B. False

4. Which set of words represents a gradation of synonyms from least to most intense in terms of emotional volatility?

- A. Irate, Annoyed, Enraged
- B. Enraged, Irate, Annoyed
- C. Annoyed, Irate, Enraged
- D. Irate, Enraged, Annoyed

5. Select the homophone pair that correctly completes this philosophical observation: 'The _____ who sought total isolation found that even in the desert, he could not escape the _____ of his own mind.'

- A. ascetic / ascent
- B. cenobite / sin
- C. hermit / heard
- D. aesthete / assent

6. 'Ephemeral' and 'Perpetual' are considered binary antonyms frequently used in 19th-century Transcendentalist literature to contrast human life with nature.

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- A. True
- B. False

7. In Hamlet's soliloquies, Shakespeare often uses words that sound alike but have different meanings to create double entendres. This literary device relies primarily on which of the following?

- A. Synonymy
- B. Antonymy
- C. Homophony
- D. Alliteration

8. While the protagonist's motives were initially _____, by the end of the novel they were revealed to be quite _____, proving that appearances are often deceptive.

- A. altruistic / benevolent
- B. nefarious / villainous
- C. opaque / crystalline
- D. magnanimous / selfish

9. Choose the most precise synonym to replace the underlined word for a formal scientific report: 'The results of the study were *surprising* to the researchers.'

- A. Stunning
- B. Anomalous
- C. Wild
- D. Unanticipated

10. The words 'complement' (to complete something) and 'compliment' (to praise someone) are antonyms because one involves giving while the other involves taking away.

- A. True
- B. False