

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Shatter Lexical Ambiguity: 11th Grade Semantic Analysis Quiz

Students dissect linguistic nuance by evaluating high-level diction, contextual shifts in meaning, and the subtle mechanics of rhetorical precision.

1. In a legal brief regarding property rights, which synonym for 'relinquish' carries the most specific connotation of a formal, often involuntary, surrender of a claim?

Answer: B) Cede

While all are synonyms, 'cede' specifically denotes the formal transfer of territory or legal rights, often between states or parties in a treaty or judicial context.

2. The words 'discrete' (distinct/separate) and 'discreet' (unobtrusive/judicious) are homophones that function as precise antonyms in technical scientific writing.

Answer: B) False

While they are homophones, they are not antonyms. 'Discrete' refers to individuality and separation, whereas 'discreet' refers to privacy or caution. They occupy different semantic categories.

3. The diplomat's ___ behavior was a direct contrast to her predecessor's 'insolence,' demonstrating the importance of professional decorum.

Answer: B) Deference

'Deference' acts as a contextual antonym to 'insolence,' emphasizing the respectful submission required in diplomatic relations.

4. Identify the homophones in this sentence: 'The council sought to alter the altar before the commencement of the solemn rite.'

Answer: B) Alter / Altar

'Alter' (to change) and 'altar' (a sacred table) sound identical but have different spellings and meanings, fitting the definition of homophones.

5. High-level SAT vocabulary often utilizes 'enervate' as a deceptive word. Its most accurate antonym in a physiological context is ___.

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Answer: B) Invigorate

'Enervate' means to weaken or drain energy; 'invigorate'—to give strength or energy—is its direct opposite.

6. Which set of homophones would be appropriate to complete this sentence concerning economics: 'The ____ of the company refused to compromise on his ethical ____.'

Answer: B) Principal / Principles

'Principal' refers to a person in a leading position, while 'principles' refers to fundamental truths or moral beliefs.

7. Analyze the shift in tone: A writer replaces the word 'persistent' with 'tenacious' to describe a character's journey. By using this synonym, the writer is most likely ____.

Answer: C) Implying a virtuous, firm resolve

'Tenacious' carries a stronger connotation of admirable strength and 'clinging' to a goal compared to the more neutral 'persistent.'

8. In the sentence 'The canvas was stationary as the artist reached for his stationery,' the word 'stationery' correctly refers to writing materials.

Answer: A) True

'Stationary' (with an 'a') means fixed in one place; 'stationery' (with an 'e') refers to paper and envelopes.

9. Evaluate the relationship: EPHEMERAL is to PERMANENT as TRANSITORY is to ____.

Answer: B) Perpetual

This is an analogy based on antonyms. Ephemeral and Permanent are opposites; Transitory (brief) is the opposite of Perpetual (everlasting).

10. To avoid 'pleonasm' (redundancy) in academic writing, one should avoid using 'consensus' as a synonym for '____ agreement' because the phrase is redundant.

Answer: B) General

'Consensus' by definition means general agreement; therefore, 'general consensus' is a pleonasm (redundant expression).