

Antonyms and Synonyms

What do you need to know?

Antonyms

Words that are opposite in meaning are called **antonyms**.

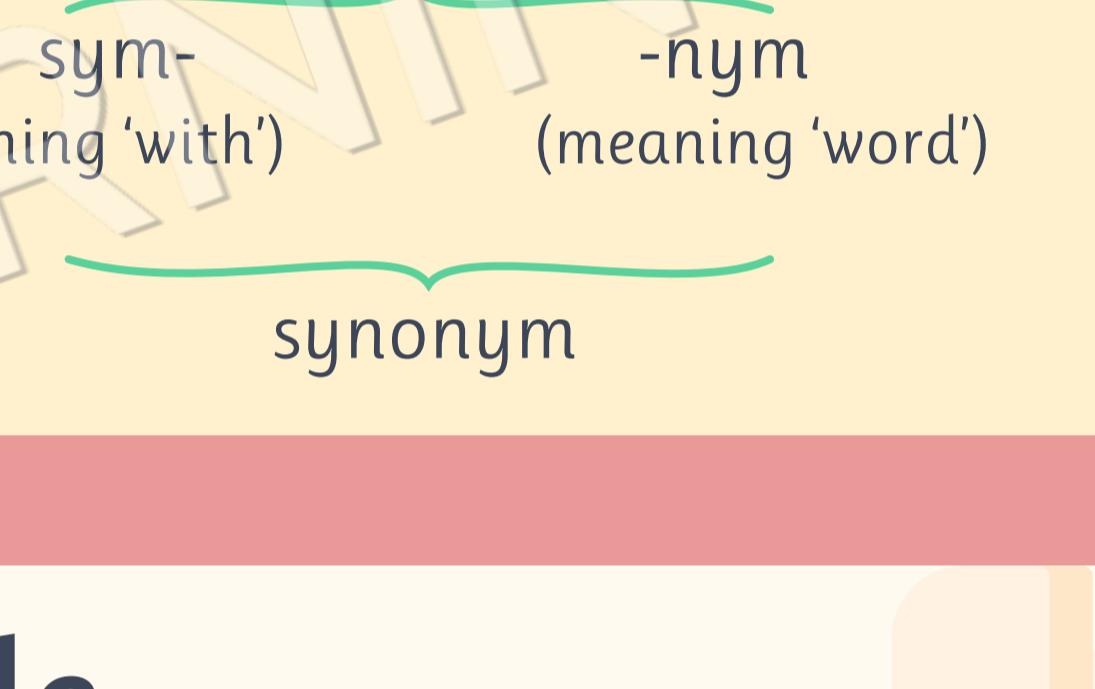
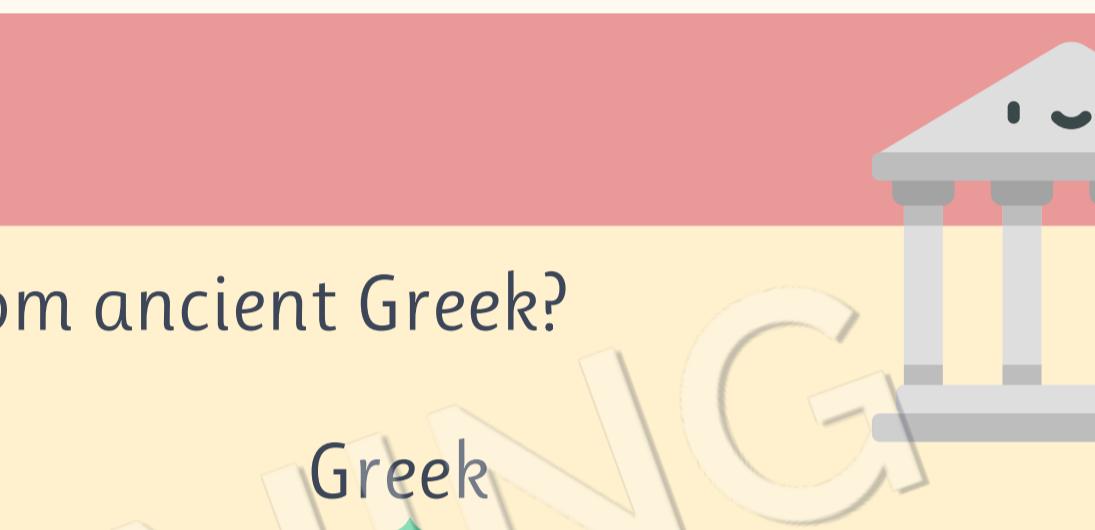
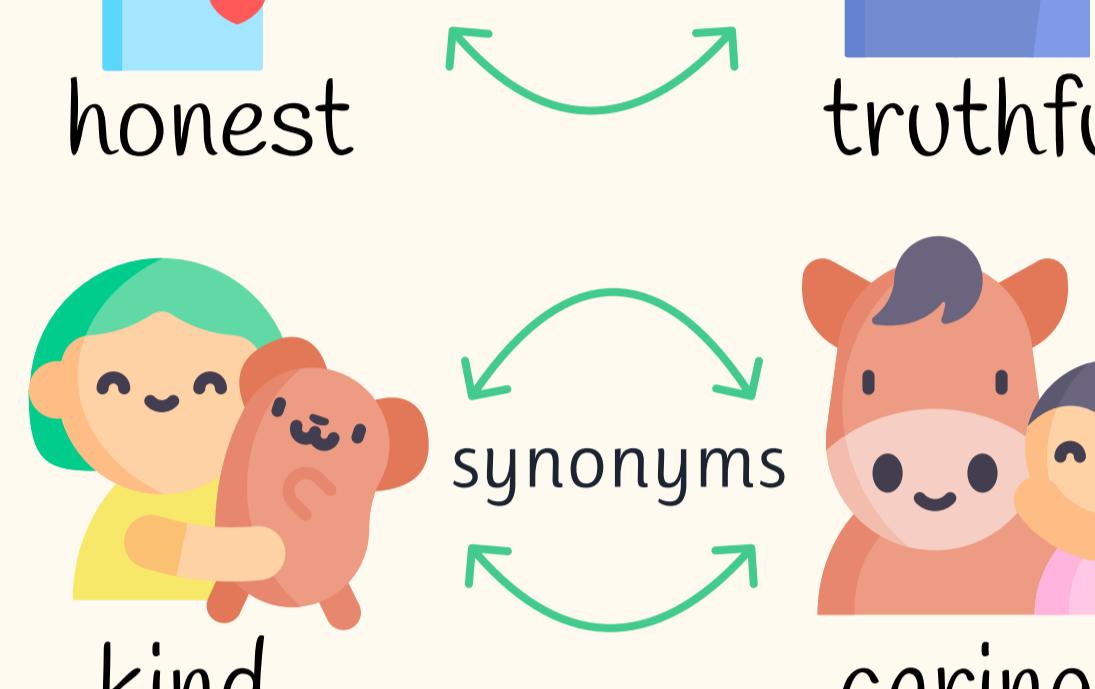
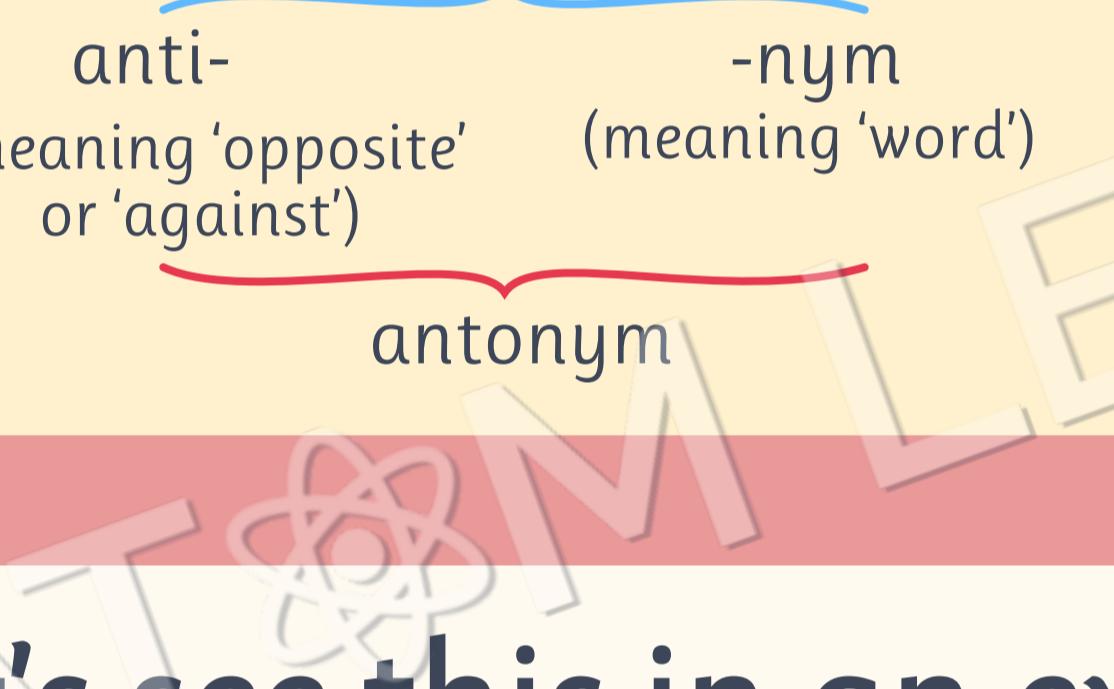
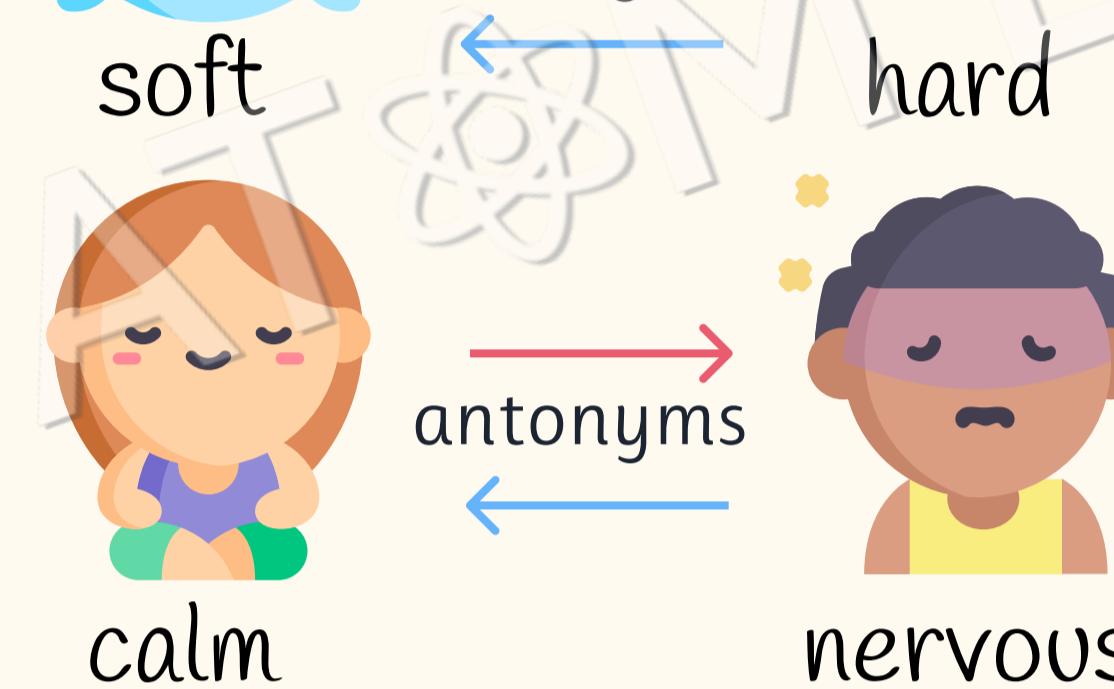
They are often formed using prefixes and suffixes, e.g. 'possible' and 'impossible', 'careful' and 'careless'.

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have the **same** meaning. If you can replace one word with another in a sentence without the meaning of the sentence changing, the words are **synonyms**.

An easy way to remember this is that **synonyms** begin with an 's', reminding you that these words mean the '**same**'.

Here are some more examples of **antonyms** and **synonyms**:



Did you know...?

The words **antonym** and **synonym** both come from ancient Greek?

antonym

Greek	anti-	(meaning 'opposite' or 'against')	-nym	(meaning 'word')
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synonym

Greek	sym-	(meaning 'with')	-nym	(meaning 'word')
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Let's see this in an example...

What **prefix** can be added to all of these words to form their **antonyms**?

—available —familiar —necessary

im- un- mis- dis- non-

All of these prefixes are negatively charged and can be used to create antonyms, but we need to find out which one works with all three of the words above.

The best way to work this out is to try adding each of the prefixes in turn to the words, starting with 'im-'. This gives us 'imavailable', 'unfamiliar' and 'unnecessary'. None of these are words!

Next we have 'un-'. Adding this to our words gives us 'unavailable', 'unfamiliar' and 'unnecessary'. This time we have formed real words!

Therefore, the prefix we can add to all of the words to form their antonyms is 'un-'! 'Un-' means 'not'.

Example 2



During the past year, Emma had become very attached to her grandmother.

What **synonym** could be used to replace the word 'attached' without **changing the meaning** of the **sentence**?

If we think of the meaning of the word 'attached', we might think of attaching one thing to another. This would lead us to synonyms such as, 'glued', 'stuck' or 'fastened'.

However, Emma is not 'fastened' to her grandmother!

We need to consider the context of the sentence. Emma is 'attached' because she feels affection for her, or is emotionally close to her grandmother.

Therefore, we need a word that means the same thing as this. The best synonyms would be 'close' or 'devoted'!



Tips

★ To help remember the difference between the two terms, just think of **antonyms** - **against** and **synonyms** - **same**!

★ When thinking of **synonyms**, be aware of **nuance**.

★ **Nuances** are the very slight differences in meaning between **synonyms**, e.g. 'The pan is **hot**, but the sun is **blistering**!'