

Antonyms

Many times, you may come across a word you don't know. You can often figure out its meaning by thinking of a synonym or antonym for it. An antonym is a word which is contrary or opposite in meaning to another word.

E.g. He collapsed after another arduous day of work in the mine.
Can you think of a word to describe work that probably would NOT make someone collapse? How about easy, simple, or effortless? They all mean the opposite of *hard* or *difficult*, which is what *arduous* means!

Also, *or*, and *like* often signal that a synonym is in a sentence. *But* or *unlike* often signal an antonym.

E.g. Maria thought she'd be calm once the test was over, *but* now she was angst-ridden about the results.

The word *but* in the example signals an antonym. Maria thought she'd be calm, but she's the opposite. So *angst-ridden* must mean "anxious" or "worried."

Choosing antonyms

- Use a dictionary, thesaurus, etc.
- If you don't know what a word means you can try two things:
 - Try to get at its roots. Dismantle the word and look at its parts.
 - Focus on whether it has a positive or negative connotation.
 - Then pick a word with the opposite connotation.
- Eliminate answers you know are wrong.

To know more, visit the Writing Centre. 😊