



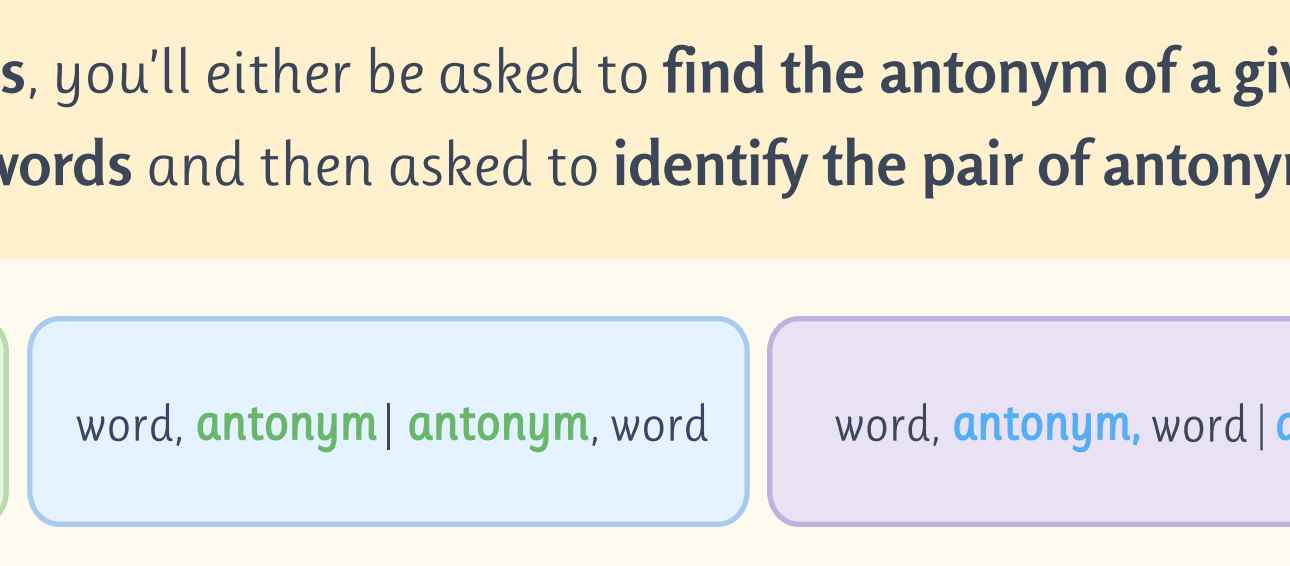
Antonyms

What do you need to know?

An **antonym** is a word that means the exact **opposite** of another word. Antonyms will always be the **same word class** as each other. The word class means the type of word they are (such as verbs or adjectives).

Antonyms come up in a lot of **'words and word play'** verbal reasoning questions, so you need to be confident in identifying them!

For example, the words **'wet'** and **'dry'** are antonyms because they mean the exact opposite of one another. They are also in the **same word class** - they are both **adjectives**.



In **antonym questions**, you'll either be asked to **find the antonym of a given word** or be given **two groups of words** and then asked to **identify the pair of antonyms**:

What is the antonym of **word**?

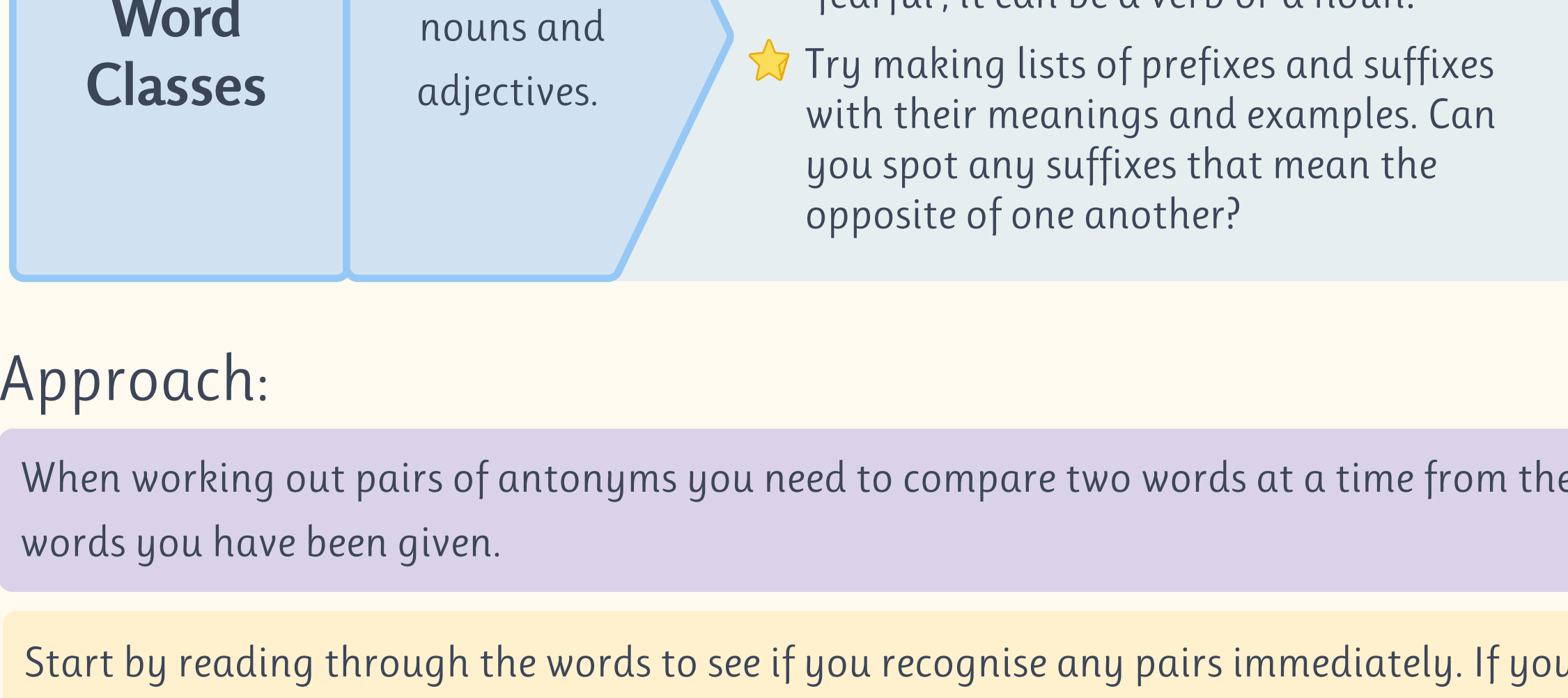
word, **antonym** | **antonym**, word

word, **antonym**, word | **antonym**, word, word

If you are given two groups of words, your job is to work out which word from one group means the **exact opposite** of a word from the other group. We've got lots of tips to help you out!

Key Skills:

There are some key skills that you will need to be able to recognise antonyms:



Approach:

When working out pairs of antonyms you need to compare two words at a time from the words you have been given.

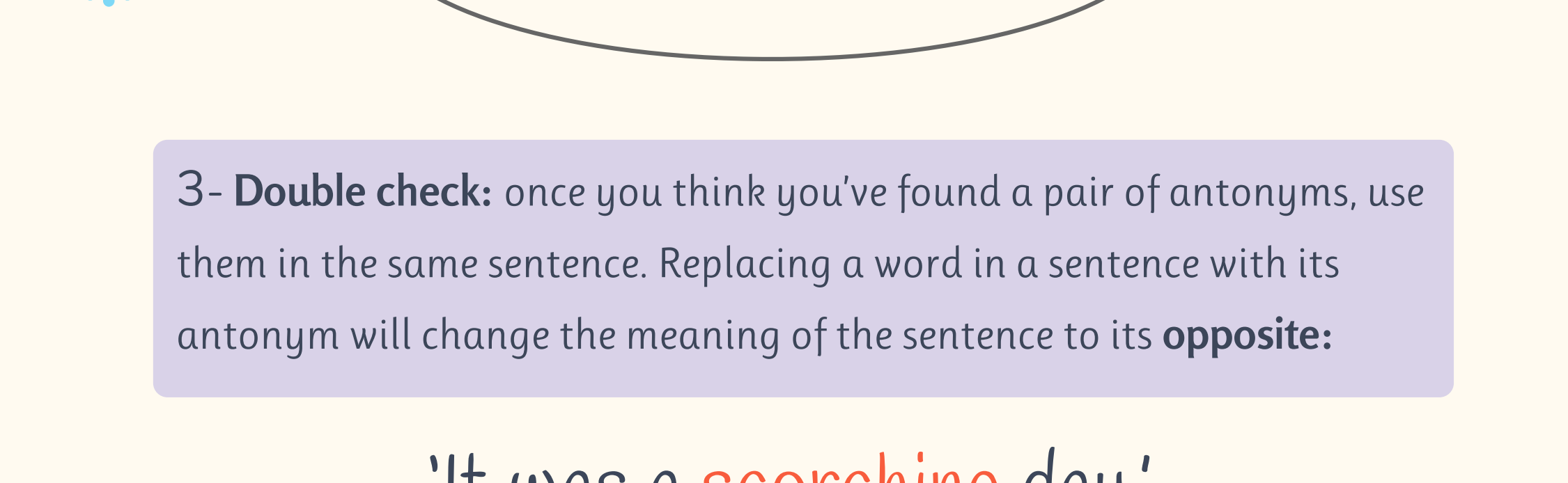
Start by reading through the words to see if you recognise any pairs immediately. If you don't, then begin with either the single word you have been given or the first word of the left-hand group. To find its antonym you need to **compare** its meaning to the words in the second group by following three simple steps: **identify**, **define** and **double check**!

1- Identify: begin by identifying the word class of the words you are comparing. We know that antonyms are **always in the same word class** so check to see if they are all verbs, adjectives or conjunctions.

Word class	Definition
★ Noun	A noun identifies a place or a thing, like love and hate .
★ Verb	A verb describes an action or state, like rise and fall .
★ Adjective	An adjective is a word that describes a noun, like a strong or weak table.
★ Adverb	An adverb describes the manner in which, the time when, or the place where an action (verb) takes place. Like the antonyms joyfully and sorrowfully .
★ Preposition	A preposition gives more information about the relationship between a noun and the other words in the sentence. Like the antonyms before and after .

2- Define: can you define the words you are comparing? Do they mean something positive or negative? Then, can you work out how positive or negative they are? We call this 'word strength'. Antonyms will always be **opposite** in meaning with the **same word strength**.

For example, **'hot'** and **'cold'** have opposite meanings with the same word strength. So do the antonym pair **'scorching'** and **'freezing'**. They are adjectives that describe temperature as 'extremely hot', and 'extremely cold', so they are matched in word strength.



3- Double check: once you think you've found a pair of antonyms, use them in the same sentence. Replacing a word in a sentence with its antonym will change the meaning of the sentence to its **opposite**:

'It was a **scorching** day.'

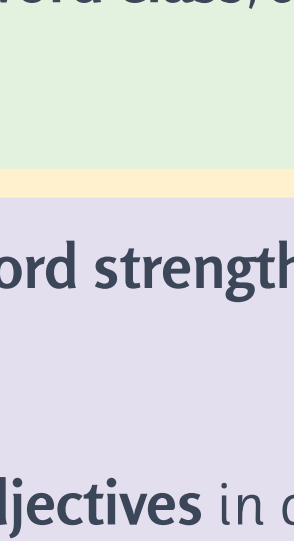
'It was a **freezing** day.'

These sentences mean opposite things!

If the two words you have compared **aren't** antonyms, then move onto the next word in the group and repeat the steps.

Let's see this in action!

This picture is of a delicious ice cream. Which word in the list below is the antonym of 'delicious'?



tasty

sour

sprinkles

disgusting

Let's start by identifying the **word class** and meaning of **'delicious'**.

- It's an **adjective**: it is used to describe the noun 'ice cream' and it ends in the common adjective suffix '-ous'.

- It describes something as **very** yummy which means it is a **strong** positive word!

Antonyms are always of the same word class, so the antonym of 'delicious' will also be an **adjective**.

Antonyms always have the same word strength, so the antonym of 'delicious' must be a **strong negative** word.

So, let's compare 'delicious' to the **adjectives** in our answer options. They are 'tasty', 'sour' and 'disgusting'. 'Sour' describes something that tastes acidic, like a lemon! Of these adjectives only **'disgusting'** describes something as not very yummy!

Let's **double check** this by using them in the same sentence.

Hannah's ice cream was **delicious**!

Hannah's ice cream was **disgusting**!

Both sentences make sense, but they mean opposite things!

How to work out a word's meaning

Sometimes, we might not know the meaning of all the words in a question. We can often look at **prefixes** and **suffixes** to work out **word classes**, as well as whether the word is **positive** or **negative**.

★ Prefixes like **'un-', 'in-'** or **'im-'** mean 'not' and are usually added to **adjectives**. For example, **'unkind'** means 'not kind'.

★ The suffixes **'-ous'** and **'-ful'** are both added to **adjectives** and mean 'full of'. For example, **'joyful'** describes something as 'full of joy'!

★ Prefixes like **'dis-', 'un-'** and **'mis-'** also mean 'not' and are usually added to **verbs**. For example, to **'misspell'** means to 'not spell a word correctly'.

★ Suffixes like **'-ed'** and **'-es'** are added to **verbs**. For example, **'ended'** is a form of 'end'.

★ **'-ly'** is a suffix that's added to **adverbs**. **'Quickly'**, **'happily'** and **'slowly'** are all adverbs.

Remember!

Prefixes and suffixes can help you work out if a word is positive or negative! If a word has a prefix that changes that word into a positive word, you know its antonym will be negative. Always test a word that has a prefix by removing the prefix first.

Let's take a look at a different example...

You might see a question with **two groups of words**. Let's go through an example:

Choose the two words, one from each group, that have opposite meanings.

sensible, careless, daydream | careful, decision, smart

Let's start with the first word of the first group and compare it to the words in the second group. **'Sensible'** is an **adjective** that describes a person as 'responsible' or an object as 'practical'.

The **adjectives** in the second group of words are **'careful'** and **'smart'**. **'Careful'** means something very similar to responsible, and **'smart'** means clever. Both of these words seem like they're related to 'sensible', so they're not antonyms because neither of them have the **opposite** meaning.

So we move onto the next word, **'careless'**. It's also an **adjective**, so let's compare it to **'careful'** and **'smart'** again. We can see that **'careless'** and **'careful'** are very similar words: they both have the same root word 'care' but end in **different suffixes**. **'-less'** means **'without'** and **'-ful'** means **'full of'**: they are **opposites**. This makes **'careless'** and **'careful'** **antonyms**!

Let's double check that **'careless'** and **'careful'** are antonyms by using them to give a sentence opposite meanings:

He was a **careless** driver. ✓

He was a **careful** driver. ✓

Don't get caught out!

- ★ Words like **'careless'** and **'smart'** seem very **dissimilar** (different), but they're **not antonyms**. **'Careless'** means 'without care' and **'smart'** means 'clever'. Always make sure you work through all the possibilities and don't just pick an option that seems like they're opposites.
- ★ Similarly, sometimes questions will have dissimilar words or antonyms in the **same group**. Remember the question says to choose **one word from each group**, so make sure you don't identify two words from the same group!

Let's try one more!

Which two words, one from each group, have opposite meanings?

ruler, maths, shape | measure, subject, leader

Let's start with the **word class** of the words in the first group. Are they nouns, verbs, adverbs or adjectives?

At first glance lots of the words have **more than one meaning**. For example, **'shape'** can be a noun referring to the form of an object or a verb meaning 'to give something a form'. This means we could be looking for a **pair of words** that are **homonyms**.

So let's start with the first word on in the left-hand group. A **'ruler'** is a noun referring to something used to measure distances **or a person in charge**: **'ruler'** is a **homonym**.

You can **'measure'** with a **'ruler'**, and a **'ruler'** is a type of **'leader'** but these words do **not** mean the opposite of each other!

'Subject' is also a **homonym**. It can be a noun, a verb or an adjective! But we're only interested in its meanings as a noun which is a topic you study (like maths) or a person who is **under the authority of another** (like a ruler). So the nouns **'ruler'** and **'subject'** are **antonyms**!

★ They're in the same word class ✓

★ And they mean opposite things ✓

We can check this by using them in the same sentence:

She was a **ruler** of the country. ✓

She was a **subject** of the country. ✓

Both sentences make sense, but mean opposite things! **Remember**, always check if a word is a **homonym** when answering antonym questions.

Watch out!

Homonyms are words that **sound the same** and are **spelled the same** but have **different meanings**.

For example, the word **'band'** is a homonym. It can be a noun referring to a group of musicians and a noun meaning a ring of something - like an elastic band. In fact, it's also a verb, meaning to mark something! Look out for **homonyms** when you're answering questions so you don't miss meanings of words!

Tips!

★ Pairs of antonyms are always in the **same word class**!

★ Antonyms always have the **opposite meaning**! Work out if the words are positive or negative, and **how** positive and negative they are. They must have the **same word strength**.

★ Use **suffixes** and **prefixes** to help you identify word classes and meanings.

★ **Double check** your answers by using the antonyms to replace one another in the same sentence.

★ For most questions, remember that you must select **one word** from each group, not two from one (even if they're antonyms!).

★ Watch out for **homonyms**!