Synonyms and antonyms for kids: 60 pairs by grade, and how to practise

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Sixty synonym and antonym pairs for kids, sorted by grade from 1st to 5th, with the difference explained in one line and free practice pages.

Synonyms are words that mean the same or nearly the same, and antonyms are words that mean the opposite. Big and large are synonyms, and hot and cold are antonyms. Below are 30 synonym pairs and 30 antonym pairs sorted by grade from 1st to 5th, 60 in all. Peabody's synonyms and antonyms page has a definition, examples and three questions with answers, free through the end of 2026, with no sign-up and no ads.

The pairs start with words a 6-year-old uses and end with words a 5th grader meets in books.

30 synonym pairs by grade

- Grade: 1st · Word: big · Synonym: large
- Grade: 1st · Word: little · Synonym: small
- Grade: 1st · Word: happy · Synonym: glad
- Grade: 1st · Word: fast · Synonym: quick
- Grade: 1st · Word: start · Synonym: begin
- Grade: 1st · Word: pretty · Synonym: lovely
- Grade: 2nd · Word: tired · Synonym: sleepy
- Grade: 2nd · Word: shout · Synonym: yell
- Grade: 2nd · Word: jump · Synonym: hop
- Grade: 2nd · Word: kid · Synonym: child
- Grade: 2nd · Word: hard · Synonym: difficult
- Grade: 2nd · Word: easy · Synonym: simple
- Grade: 3rd · Word: angry · Synonym: mad
- Grade: 3rd · Word: scared · Synonym: afraid
- Grade: 3rd · Word: tidy · Synonym: neat
- Grade: 3rd · Word: buy · Synonym: purchase
- Grade: 3rd · Word: enormous · Synonym: huge
- Grade: 3rd · Word: tiny · Synonym: little
- Grade: 4th · Word: brave · Synonym: courageous
- Grade: 4th · Word: clever · Synonym: smart
- Grade: 4th · Word: ancient · Synonym: old
- Grade: 4th · Word: delicious · Synonym: tasty
- Grade: 4th · Word: cold · Synonym: chilly

- Grade: 4th · Word: rapid · Synonym: speedy
- Grade: 5th · Word: generous · Synonym: giving
- Grade: 5th · Word: reluctant · Synonym: unwilling
- Grade: 5th · Word: enormous · Synonym: gigantic
- Grade: 5th · Word: gloomy · Synonym: dim
- Grade: 5th · Word: fragile · Synonym: delicate
- Grade: 5th · Word: observe · Synonym: watch

30 antonym pairs by grade

- Grade: 1st · Word: hot · Antonym: cold
- Grade: 1st · Word: up · Antonym: down
- Grade: 1st · Word: big · Antonym: small
- Grade: 1st · Word: day · Antonym: night
- Grade: 1st · Word: happy · Antonym: sad
- Grade: 1st · Word: open · Antonym: closed
- Grade: 2nd · Word: fast · Antonym: slow
- Grade: 2nd · Word: hard · Antonym: soft
- Grade: 2nd · Word: wet · Antonym: dry
- Grade: 2nd · Word: full · Antonym: empty
- Grade: 2nd · Word: near · Antonym: far
- Grade: 2nd · Word: old · Antonym: new
- Grade: 3rd · Word: brave · Antonym: afraid
- Grade: 3rd · Word: strong · Antonym: weak
- Grade: 3rd · Word: early · Antonym: late
- Grade: 3rd · Word: loud · Antonym: quiet
- Grade: 3rd · Word: tidy · Antonym: messy
- Grade: 3rd · Word: smooth · Antonym: rough
- Grade: 4th · Word: generous · Antonym: selfish
- Grade: 4th · Word: careful · Antonym: careless
- Grade: 4th · Word: expand · Antonym: shrink
- Grade: 4th · Word: shallow · Antonym: deep
- Grade: 4th · Word: public · Antonym: private
- Grade: 4th · Word: victory · Antonym: defeat
- Grade: 5th · Word: ancient · Antonym: modern
- Grade: 5th · Word: permanent · Antonym: temporary
- Grade: 5th · Word: accept · Antonym: refuse
- Grade: 5th · Word: include · Antonym: exclude
- Grade: 5th · Word: ascend · Antonym: descend
- Grade: 5th · Word: scarce · Antonym: plentiful

That is 30 synonym pairs and 30 antonym pairs, which makes the 60 in the title.

Nearly the same is not the same

Few synonyms are exact copies. Each one paints a slightly different picture, and choosing the right one is a big part of good writing. Take four words for moving on foot.

- Word: walk · What it adds: to move on foot, with nothing added
- Word: stroll · What it adds: a slow, relaxed walk
- Word: march · What it adds: walking in steps, like a band or a soldier
- Word: stomp · What it adds: walking hard, with loud feet and often an angry mood

A good question for a child is "Which one fits this sentence?" and not "Which one is right?" The answer is often "more than one, with a different feeling".

How to remember which is which

Synonym and same both start with s. Antonym starts like anti, which means against, so an antonym is against the meaning. A child who learns that pair of clues rarely mixes them up again.

Practice

1. Match on the floor. Write eight pairs on sixteen cards, mix them and match them. Use synonyms one day and antonyms the next.
2. Swap a word. Take a sentence, replace one word with a synonym, and ask whether the meaning holds. "The big dog ran" and "The large dog ran" work. "The big dog ran" and "The huge dog ran" mean a bit more.
3. Do three ready questions. The synonyms and antonyms page has three questions with the answers one tap away.
4. Find an opposite in a story. Pick a describing word from a story in the library and find its antonym. Then see if the story could use it.

Peabody does not have a synonyms game. What it has is a page for the skill, flashcards linked from the page, and the grammar hub for the other skills.

Questions grown-ups ask

What is an antonym?

An antonym is a word that means the opposite of another word, such as hot and cold, or up and down.

What is the difference between a synonym and an antonym?

A synonym means the same or nearly the same, and an antonym means the opposite. Big and large are synonyms. Big and small are antonyms.

What grade are synonyms and antonyms taught?

Children learn opposites from kindergarten and play with same-meaning words in 1st and 2nd grade. The standard that names synonyms and antonyms is in 4th grade (L.4.5c).

Does every word have an antonym?

No. Words such as table, run and green have no real opposite. Antonyms fit best on describing words, such as hot, fast and brave.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/synonyms-and-antonyms-for-kids