Multiple-Meaning Words 1

Words with multiple meanings can be confusing to a reader. One type of multiple-meaning word is a word that is spelled and pronounced the same, but has more than one definition.

Examples: down (toward the floor) press (to push against)
down (fine, soft feathers) press (a printing machine)

Another type of multiple-meaning word is a word that is spelled the same but pronounced differently for different definitions.

Examples: wind /wind/ (air in motion) wound /wOUND/ (an injury)
wind /wÎ¬nd/ (to wrap around) wound /wound/ (past tense of wind)

Read the underlined word in each sentence below. Circle the letter of the sentence in which the word has the same meaning as in the original sentence.

1. The one-hundred piece puzzle was of a picture of a castle.
   A. Be careful not to puzzle her with your question.
   B. I bought an easy puzzle with large pieces for my four-year-old cousin.

2. I received a grade of a B on the essay.
   A. I will study my science notes to get a higher grade next time.
   B. The truck climbed up the steep grade.

3. Josh played in a summer baseball league.
   A. There are four towns who play little league on Thompson Field.
   B. The ship was found one league away from the shore.

4. Please close the door. There is quite a draft!
   A. I handed my rough draft of the speech to my peer editor.
   B. The old barn had a draft coming through the wooden walls.

5. If you get there early, please reserve a seat for Damien.
   A. The nature reserve was set on 100 acres of forest.
   B. Our favorite restaurant will reserve us a table on short notice.

CHALLENGE Use a dictionary to find two different definitions for suit, root, and pass. Choose one word. Construct three sentences for that word in the same manner as the above activity. See if another student can identify which answer choice uses the same word meaning.
Multiple-Meaning Words 2

Read the sentences below. Look at the underlined word.

Be careful not to drop the glass.
There is only one drop of water left in the jug.

In the first sentence, drop is a verb—an action that could happen. In the second sentence, drop is a noun—meaning “a small amount.”

Strategies for Decoding Multiple-Meaning Words

1. **Use context clues.** Ask: *What is the word’s part of speech? Do other words in the sentence or nearby sentences give clues about its meaning?*
2. **Use a dictionary.** Look at the different definitions and ask: *Does this definition make sense as it is used in the text?* Keep looking until one definition fits. Pay attention to the pronunciation—you might have heard the word before, but pronounced differently.

Choose the word whose meanings best fit both sentences.

• Our math teacher taught us how to find a square __________.
  a. shape    b. root    c. triangle    d. flower

• The plant’s __________ is deep under the ground.
  a. shape    b. root    c. triangle    d. flower

• I did not know Harry was from another country until I heard his __________.
  a. voice    b. friend    c. accent    d. wall

• She decided to give her all-blue kitchen a new yellow __________.
  a. voice    b. friend    c. accent    d. wall

• The weather announcer said we would have an afternoon __________.
  a. shower    b. meeting    c. game    d. flow

• When Aunt Tilly visits, she usually likes to __________ me with special gifts.
  a. shower    b. meeting    c. game    d. flow

• My right __________ is more green than my left one.
  a. circle    b. finger    c. eye    d. flower

• I stuck the green thread through the __________ of the needle.
  a. circle    b. finger    c. eye    d. flower
Choose a word below that you know and write two definitions for it on the lines provided. Use a dictionary to check your definitions. Then write two sentences for the word, one for each of the two definitions you chose.

**RAY**

Definition 1: ________________________________________________________

Definition 2: ________________________________________________________

Sentence 1: ________________________________________________________

Sentence 2: ________________________________________________________

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**ROLL** can mean:

a) to move by turning over and over
b) to be moved by wheels
c) something rounded or cylindrical, as in a unit of film
d) to enclose or wrap in a covering
e) to cast, as in dice
f) a list of people in a class or group
g) a small cake of baked dough
h) a rapid series of short sounds

Match the following people with the definition of roll they most likely would use.

_____ Baker     _____ Drummer

_____ Mathematician   _____ Photographer

_____ Dog Trainer    _____ Truck Driver

_____ Attendance Officer   _____ Rug Salesperson

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**CHALLENGE** Look up run in a dictionary. Find at least four meanings. Think of an occupation that relates to each meaning. Have a peer decide which occupation goes best with which definition.