

Grade/Age of Learner: 40-55

Subject: Antonyms and contronyms

Time allotted: One hour

Activity (10 minutes):

Hook: Sometimes, the clearest means on vision/understanding is through opposites. We see it in fashion with the sharp contrast of houndstooth patterns and in charcoal sketches by our favorite artists. Contrasts are also important in language. Today, we are going to learn about antonyms and contronyms, what they are, their differences and similarities and how knowledge of them enhances our understanding.

Pre-assessment: Have you ever heard of contronyms or antonyms?

Building Instructions-Content Delivery (35 minutes):

Inquiry prompt: Give an example of both an antonym and a contronym

Teacher-directed instructions:

1) Antonym (from the Greek words anti(opposite) and nym(word)). The opposite of another word. Examples: hot/cold, happy/sad wide/narrow. Antonyms are often used when making comparisons.

2) Contronym (from the Latin contra and the Greek work nym): A word that has two, nearly opposite meanings. These types of words present challenges for English learners and native English speakers alike. Because there is no difference in spelling or inflection, the meaning of the words is frequently understood based on context. Examples: dust (which can mean to clean/wipe away particles and apply light particles- i.e. applying/dusting powder sugar to a freshly baked cake) and cleave (which means to cut in some contexts but means to cling to/adhere in others).

Like many instances of unclear words/meanings in English, the reason for these apparent contradictions is that many contronyms were the result of English borrowing/evolving from difference language traditions.

Student modeling: Ask students of examples of antonyms and contronyms

Applying Instruction (10 minutes)

Student practice: Ask three students to use the antonyms and contronyms just identified in sentences.

Student self-assessment: Ask student to summarize briefly and define antonym and contronym.

Concluding instructions (five minutes) : Ask students if this has helped their understanding and how they plan to apply the principles in reading, speech and writing

