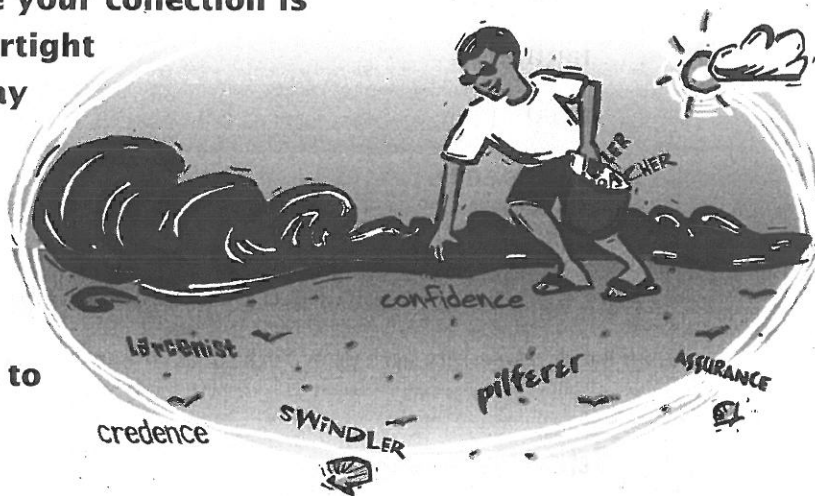


Lesson 13

name: date:

Shades of Meaning

Are you a collector? Maybe you have a collection of rocks, sports cards, key chains, or seashells kept in an old box. Maybe your collection is more formal, involving airtight containers or glass display cases. As a writer, you need to be a serious collector of words. A word collection lets you select the words with the perfect shade of meaning to convey your idea.



Sharing an Example: Hope Was Here

In the following passage from Joan Bauer's book, *Hope Was Here*, Hope, a self-described word person, is using her thesaurus to help her work out her feelings. Read the passage carefully.

I took out my Roget's thesaurus, which lists words that have the same meaning. If you're a word person like me, you can't live without one. Say you're trying to get an idea across, like *Gleason Beal is a thief*. You can look up the word "thief" in the thesaurus and come up with a slew of better slams to help you work out your intense feelings.

Gleason Beal is a . . .

- . . . robber.
- . . . stealer.
- . . . purloiner (I like that one).
- . . . larcenist.
- . . . pilferer.
- . . . poacher.
- . . . swindler.

I flipped to the H section.

Hope is . . .

- . . . belief.
- . . . credence.
- . . . faith.
- . . . trust.
- . . . confidence.
- . . . assurance.

I lay on the bed, holding the thesaurus, trying to live up to my name.

Joan Bauer, *Hope Was Here* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2000), pp. 60–61.

Reflect

Synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning. The choices you make as a writer will affect how your readers respond to your ideas.

When looking up synonyms, you need to know what part of speech you're looking for. In the example above, the words *thief* and *hope* are nouns. Suppose you wanted a list of synonyms for *hope* as a verb, as in this sentence: *I hope for good things in my life*. Use your thesaurus to find three synonyms for the word *hope* as a verb.

Synonyms for hope (as a verb)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Practice: Lists of Choices

Read this sentence from the book *Lord of the Nutcracker Men*, by Iain Lawrence. Working with a partner and with a thesaurus, identify the part of speech for each word in colored print. Then, make a list of two or three synonyms for each word. Remember, each synonym pair should be the same part of speech.

She fled down her trail of ragged footprints, past buildings that were shedding snow from their steep roofs, then round the bend at the edge of the village.

Iain Lawrence, *Lord of the Nutcracker Men* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2001), pp. 100–101.

Word	Part of Speech	Synonyms
1. fled		_____ , _____ , _____
2. ragged		_____ , _____ , _____
3. shedding		_____ , _____ , _____
4. village		_____ , _____ , _____

Shading the Picture

Review your lists of synonyms for each word. With your partner, circle the word on each list that you both think is closest in meaning to the word the author uses. Put your circled words in the blanks.

She _____ (*fled*) down her trail of _____ (*ragged*) footprints, past buildings that were _____ (*shedding*) snow from their steep roofs, then round the bend at the edge of the _____ (*village*).

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Read the sentence aloud the way the author wrote it, and then read it with your synonym substitutions. What has happened to the author's original? Write your thoughts here.

A Shade Too Dark

Look over your list of synonyms again. Underline the word on each list that you think is least like the meaning of the word the author used. Put your underlined words in the blanks.

She _____ (*fled*) down her trail of _____ (*ragged*) footprints, past buildings that were _____ (*shedding*) snow from their steep roofs, then round the bend at the edge of the _____ (*village*).

Read the sentence aloud the way the author wrote it, and then read it with your synonym substitutions. What has happened to the author's original? Write your thoughts here.



A Writer's Question

As Hope suggests, a thesaurus is a must-have if you're going to be a "word person." Nevertheless, a teacher was once heard to say, "A thesaurus can be dangerous in the wrong hands." What do you suppose the teacher meant by this? Write your thoughts here.
