

Antonyms

Antonyms are words belonging to the same part of speech, identical in style, expressing contrary or contradictory notions.

Antonyms

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graph TD; A[Antonyms] --> B["absolute or root antonyms  
(late - early)"]; A --> C["derivational antonyms  
(to please - to displease,  
honest - dishonest,  
professional - nonprofessional)"]; B --> D[different roots]; C --> E[same roots but different affixes];
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absolute or **root antonyms**
(late - early)



different roots

derivational antonyms
(to please - to displease,
honest - dishonest,
professional - nonprofessional)



same roots but different affixes

1. Negative prefixes (**un-**; **dis-**; **non-**) form antonyms:

Un-: *untrue*

Dis-: *dislike*

Non-: *nonreactive*

2. Sometimes they are formed by means of antonymous suffixes **-ful** and **-less**

-ful: *painful*

-less: *painless*

The antonym of the adjective with the suffix **-ful** is formed by means of the prefix **un-**:

successful – unsuccessful

The antonym of the adjective with the suffix **-less** is formed with the help of the suffix **-ish**:

selfless - selfish

The same is true about antonyms with negative prefixes

e.g. **to man** is not an antonym of the word **to unman**;
to disappoint is not an antonym of the word **to appoint**.

The **difference** between derivational and root antonyms is **not only** in their **structure**, but in **semantics** as well.

Derivational antonyms	Absolute antonyms
express contradictory notions, one of them excludes the other	express contrary notions. If some notions can be arranged in a group of more than two members, the most distant members of the group will be absolute antonyms
e.g. <i>active - inactive</i>	e.g. ugly, plain, good-looking, pretty, beautiful

Leonard Lipka in the book *Outline of English Lexicology* describes different types of oppositeness, and subdivides them into three types:

- ✓ **complementarity**, e.g. *male - female, married - single*;
- ✓ **antonyms**, e.g. *good - bad*
- ✓ **converseness**, e.g. *to buy - to sell*.

Complementarity

In his classification he describes complementarity in the following way: the denial of the one implies the assertion of the other, and vice versa.

John is not married = John is single

The type of oppositeness is based on yes/no decision.
Incompatibility only concerns pairs of lexical units.

Antonyms

It's distinguished from complementarity by being **based on different logical relationships**. The assertion containing one member implies the negation of the other, but not vice versa.

John is good = John is not bad

John is not good ≠ John is bad

The negation of one term doesn't necessarily implies the assertion of the other.

An important linguistic difference from complementaries is that **antonyms** are always fully **gradable**, e.g. *hot, warm, tepid, cold*.

Converseness

1. **Converseness** is mirror-image relations or functions:

e.g. *husband – wife, pupil - teacher, precede - follow, above - below, before - after etc.*

Jonh bought the car from Bill = Bill sold the car to John

2.. Also in the *comparative* form:

Y is smaller than X = X is larger than Y.

L.Lipka also points out non-binary contrast or many-member lexical sets. Here he points out serially ordered sets, such as

- scales (*hot, warm, tepid, cold, cool*);
- colour words (*black, grey, white*);
- military ranks (*marshal, general, colonel, major, captain etc.*)
- gradable examination marks (*excellent, good, average, fair, poor*)

In such sets of words we can have outer and inner pairs of antonyms.

He also points out cycles, such as units of time:

(*spring, summer, autumn, winter*)

In this case there are no outermost members.

Not every word in language can have antonyms. This type of opposition can be met **in qualitative adjective and their derivatives**

e.g. *beautiful - ugly,*
to beautify - to uglify,
beauty – ugliness

It can be also met **in words denoting feelings and states**

e.g. *respect - scorn,*
to respect- to scorn,
respectful – scornful

to live - to die,
alive - dead,
life - death

It can be also met among **words denoting direction in space and time**

e.g. *here - there,*
now - never,
day - night,

up - down,
before - after
early - late etc.

If a word is **polysemantic**,
it can have several antonyms

e.g. the word *bright* has the
antonyms:

dim, dull, sad.

**Thank you
for your
attention!**