

Antonym

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An **antonym** is a [word](#) that has the [opposite meaning](#) of another word. They also are called opposites. The opposite of antonym is [synonym](#). Hot and cold are antonyms, whereas hot and torrid are synonyms.

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- [Conronym](#) - two meanings

Here are some opposite words:	
hot	cold
left	right
up	down
near	far
small	big
alive	dead
young	old
day	night
human	animal
male	female
wet	dry



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By Richard Nordquist

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Definition

An *antonym* is a word having a [meaning](#) opposite to that of another word, such as *hot* and *cold*, *short* and *tall*. (See "Three Types of Antonyms," below.) *Antonym* is the antonym of [synonym](#). Adjective: *antonymous*. Another word for *antonym* is *counterterm*.

[Antonymy](#) is the sense relation that exists between words which are opposite in meaning. Edward Finnegan defines *antonymy* as "a binary relationship between terms with complementary meanings" (*Language: Its Structure and Use*, 2012).

It's sometimes said that antonymy occurs most often among [adjectives](#), but as Steven Jones et al. point out, it's more accurate to say that "antonym relations are more central to the adjective [classes](#) than to other classes" (*Antonyms in English*, 2012). [Nouns](#) can be antonyms (for example, *courage* and *cowardice*), as can [verbs](#) (*arrive* and *depart*), [adverbs](#) (*carefully* and *carelessly*), and even [prepositions](#) (*above* and *below*).

Antonyms – a

class of words grouped together on the basis of the semantic relations of opposition. Antonyms are words belonging to one part of speech sharing certain common semantic characteristics and in this respect they are similar to such semantic classes as synonyms, lexical sets, lexico-semantic groups. (**lexical sets** (предметные или тематические группы) - words denoting different things correlated on extralinguistic grounds: *lion, tiger, leopard, puma, cat* refer to the lexical set of "the animals of the cat family"; words describing different sides of one and the same general notion are united in a **lexico-semantic group**: group denoting "physical movement" - *to go, to turn, to run*). There exist different classifications of antonyms.

Structurally, antonyms can be divided into antonyms of the same root (1), e.g. *to do - to undo, cheerful - cheerless*, and antonyms of different roots (2), e.g. *day - night, rich - poor*.

Semantically, antonyms may be classified into contradictories, contraries and incompatibles.

1. **Contradictories** represent the type of semantic relations that exist between pairs like, for example, *dead - alive, single - married*. Contradictory antonyms are mutually opposed, they deny one another. Contradictories form a privative binary opposition, they are members of two-term sets. To use one of the words is to contradict the other and to use "not" before one of them is to make it semantically equivalent to the other: *not dead = alive; not single = married*.

2. **Contraries** are antonyms that can be arranged into a series according to the increasing difference in one of their qualities. The most distant elements of this series will be classified as contrary notions. Contraries are **gradable antonyms**, they are polar members of a gradual opposition which may have intermediate members. This may be observed in *cold - hot* and *cool - warm* which are intermediate members. Thus, we may regard as antonyms not only *cold* and *hot* but also *cold* and *warm*. Contrary antonyms may also be considered in terms of degrees of the quality involved. Thus, water may be *cold* or *very cold*, and water in one glass may be *colder* than in another glass.

3. **Incompatibles** are antonyms which are characterized by the relations of exclusion. Semantic relations of incompatibility exist among antonyms with a common component of meaning and may be described as the reverse of hyponymy. For example, to say *morning* is to say *not afternoon, not evening, not night*. The use of one member of this set implies the exclusion of the other members of the set. Incompatibles differ from contradictories as incompatibles are members of the multiple-term sets while contradictories are members of two-term sets. A relation of incompatibility may be also observed between colour terms since the choice of *red*, for example, entails the exclusion of *black, blue, yellow*, etc.