



LESSON: Cultivating Mischief! Synonyms and Antonyms

Grades: 1-3

Subject Areas: Language Arts

Estimated Time: 60 minutes

I. Summary: WordGirl's extensive vocabulary helps her to get out of sticky situations and solve difficult problems. She knows that it's not enough to know only one word to describe a thing; she often has a variety of synonyms and antonyms at her disposal. This lesson focuses on the collection of new words for a richer, stronger vocabulary. Students will be introduced to synonyms and antonyms through the use of a class "Synonym Tree" and "Antonym Tree."

II. Objectives:

- Students will experience and appreciate the richness of words
- Students will become familiar with the terms "synonym" and "antonym"
- Students will be encouraged to actively participate in word identification
- Students will practice using new words in context
- Students will work together to identify synonyms and antonyms

III. Materials:

- Bulletin board reserved for a Synonym Tree and an Antonym Tree
- Green construction paper, cut out in the shape of leaves
- Brown construction paper, cut out in the shape of 2 large trees with branches
- A container to put the "leaves" in
- Tacks, to attach the leaves to the tree branches

IV. Procedure:

1. In advance, cut out 16 green leaves. In marker, write down the following words (and associated clues for the more difficult words) on each leaf:

(Synonyms)

naughty (clue: Tobey's behavior is bad.)

unruly (clue: He was impossible to control.)

willful (clue: She's determined to have her own way.)

rascal (clue: A synonym for "naughty")

sly (clue: Granny May is sly because she's clever and tricky.)

troublesome (clue: The Butcher causes a lot of problems!)

teasing (clue: I enjoyed teasing my sister by making fun of her.)

rowdy (clue: That's sure a loud group of kids!)



(Antonyms)

good (clue: An antonym for "bad")

well-behaved (clue: Violet is a well-behaved art student.)

aiding (clue: Eugene is aiding Granny May in robbing people.)

helpful (clue: Captain Huggy Face is always helpful to WordGirl.)

dutiful (clue: He feels he should.)

obedient (clue: She follows the rules!)

trustworthy (clue: (You can depend on WordGirl!))

harmless (clue: They would never hurt you.)

2. Write the words "synonym" and "antonym" on the board in big letters. Review the meanings of these two terms. For easy reference, explain that synonyms are similar and antonyms are opposite. Discuss how synonyms and antonyms contribute to a strong vocabulary. Ask students for examples of synonyms and antonyms for the word "big." Write their answers under the appropriate term.

3. On the blackboard, now write the word "mischievous." Ask students to discuss what it means. Ask for examples of when the students have been "mischievous."

4. Explain to students that the class is going to play a game using synonyms and antonyms for the word "mischievous." The class will be divided into two teams. One member from each team will pull a "word leaf" out of the bowl and have to decide, with the help of his team, whether it belongs on the Synonym Tree or the Antonym Tree, and will have to use it correctly in a new sentence that the team creates together. If the team is correct on both counts - placement AND meaning - they get to keep their leaf on the tree. If a team cannot figure out the meaning of a word, you may give them a few more contextual clues. If the team still doesn't understand the word or know how to use it in a sentence, the other team gets to try. If neither team understands and knows how to use a word, put that "word leaf" to the side, until the end of the game.

5. There will be eight rounds for each team. Each time, there should be a new student who picks out a word leaf from the bowl and, after consulting with his teammates, uses it orally in a sentence. Whoever has more leaves on the trees at the end of the game wins!

6. If necessary, review any words that may have either been misunderstood or incorrectly used. Explain their meanings. Invite students to orally use these words in sentences.

V. Assessment: Students should be able to define in conversational language what a synonym and an antonym are. Students should actively participate in the Synonym/Antonym word identification game, and demonstrate cooperation. Students should become aware of new words and know how to use them in the correct context.



VI. Extensions in Learning:

- Print up a master class list of synonyms and antonyms on the word trees. Ask students to use at least ten of them in a written description of one of the WordGirl characters. Share this with the class.
- Encourage students to continue collecting synonym and antonym leaves for the two trees. Use different root words, such as: "frustrating," "ultimate," "flabbergasted," or "distracted." These words were also presented on WordGirl.
- Invite students to write a dialogue with a partner, including as many synonyms and antonyms, as possible. Perform these for the class.

Related National Standards (These are established by McREL at URL: <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.)

- Language Arts
- Working with others