Homophones and homographs

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each lexical-relations concept with its meaning.

1 homophony	____	a system and conventions of written representation
2 homography	____	b one form having several related meanings
3 homonymy	____	c words sharing pronunciation but differing in meaning
4 polysemy	____	d assignment of prominence within a word
5 heteronymy	____	e same written form with different pronunciations and meanings
6 lexical ambiguity	____	f uncertainty caused by more than one possible lexical interpretation
7 semantic relatedness	____	g words sharing spelling but differing in meaning
8 sense disambiguation	____	h degree to which meanings are conceptually connected
9 lexical stress	____	i selection of the intended meaning from context
10 orthography	____	j formally identical words with unrelated meanings

2 Complete the analytical collocations.

ambiguity | **contextual** | **homographic** | **lexical** | **orthographic** | **semantic** | **sense** | **stress**

1 resolve lexical _____

2 use _____ evidence

3 a _____ contrast

4 _____ representation

5 _____ disambiguation

6 a change in lexical _____

7 _____ relatedness

8 a _____ reading

3 Choose the concept that best captures the distinction.

1 Bank as finance and river edge, treated as unrelated: *homonymy / polysemy*.

2 Mouth of a person and mouth of a river, related by extension: *polysemy / homophony*.

3 Knight and night: *homophony / homography*.

4 Lead /li■d/ and lead /led/: *heteronymy / homophony*.

5 Identifying the intended bank from context: *sense disambiguation / orthography*.

6 Noun import versus verb import: *lexical stress / spelling reform*.

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4 Complete the lexical analysis with terms from the box.

heteronymy | homography | homonymy | homophony | lexical ambiguity | lexical stress | orthography | polysemy | semantic relatedness | sense disambiguation

Words such as *night* and *knight* illustrate **1** _____, whereas forms sharing spelling illustrate **2** _____. When identical forms have unrelated meanings, analysts speak of **3** _____; related senses instead suggest **4** _____. A written form with distinct pronunciations exemplifies **5** _____. Competing interpretations create **6** _____, resolved through **7** _____. Judgments may depend on **8** _____. Pronunciation contrasts can involve **9** _____, while spelling conventions belong to **10** _____.

5 Read the text and answer the questions concisely.

Where meanings divide

The boundary between homonymy and polysemy is not always objective. Dictionaries may split one historical word into separate entries or group its related senses under one headword. Etymology provides evidence, but speakers may perceive connections that history does not support, or fail to perceive older links. Corpus patterns, collocations and grammatical behaviour also inform analysis. Lexicographers therefore combine historical, semantic and usage evidence rather than applying a single mechanical test.

1 Is the homonymy-polysemy boundary always objective? _____

2 What two choices can dictionaries make? _____

3 What historical evidence is mentioned? _____

4 Can speaker perception differ from history? _____

5 Name three kinds of usage evidence. _____

6 Why is no single mechanical test sufficient? _____

6 Paraphrase using the expression in capitals.

1 Context selected the intended meaning. **DISAMBIGUATED** _

2 The two senses were conceptually connected. **RELATEDNESS** _

3 The identical spelling concealed different sounds. **HETERONYMY** _

4 Several interpretations remained possible. **AMBIGUOUS** _

OVER TO YOU

Write a **160-190 word** critical analysis of an ambiguous word or sentence. Discuss homonymy or polysemy, contextual evidence and dictionary treatment.

[ ] Use at least ten target terms or collocations. [ ] Separate form, sound and sense. [ ] Qualify borderline judgments.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Lexical-relations concepts

1 **c** 2 **g** 3 **j** 4 **b** 5 **e** 6 **f** 7 **h** 8 **i** 9 **d** 10 **a**

2 Analytical collocations

1 **ambiguity** 2 **contextual** 3 **lexical** 4 **orthographic** 5 **sense** 6 **stress** 7 **semantic** 8 **homographic**

3 Conceptual distinctions

1 **homonymy** 2 **polysemy** 3 **homophony** 4 **heteronymy**
5 **sense disambiguation** 6 **lexical stress**

4 Lexical analysis

1 **homophony** 2 **homography** 3 **homonymy** 4 **polysemy** 5 **heteronymy**
6 **lexical ambiguity** 7 **sense disambiguation** 8 **semantic relatedness** 9 **lexical stress** 10 **orthography**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 No. 2 Split entries or group senses. 3 Etymology. 4 Yes.
5 Corpus patterns, collocations and grammar. 6 Several kinds of evidence must be combined.

6 Paraphrasing - possible answers

1 Context **disambiguated** the word. 2 The senses showed semantic **relatedness**. 3 This was **heteronymy**. 4 The expression remained lexically **ambiguous**.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check theoretical accuracy, evidence and appropriate qualification.