

Lesson Plan

Synonym Sort

Book: *Helicopters*

Series: Let's Fly

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice distinguishing shades of meaning among synonyms.

Supplies

- *Helicopters* book
- Whiteboard
- 3 copies of the Scholastic Children's Dictionary
- Timer

Before the Activity

Read *Helicopters* out loud to students, pausing on the last two pages (pp. 26–27).

Activity

Pages 26 and 27 of the *Helicopters* book describe the instruments that help helicopters fly and avoid crashes. Write the word *avoid* on the whiteboard at the front of the class. Then open the Scholastic Children's Dictionary to page 771, the first page of the thesaurus feature. Explain that a thesaurus is a tool that lists synonyms, or words with similar meanings. Explain that although the meanings are similar, they are not identical. For example, choose a student to look up the word *avoid* in the thesaurus and read the list of synonyms out loud: *dodge*, *evade*, *duck*, and *sidestep*. Each of these words refers to getting away from something. But each word has a slightly different meaning. *Dodge* is more related to moving quickly, while *evade* is more related to being clever. Writers use thesauruses to find words with the exact meaning they want to use.

To help students practice identifying these slight differences in meaning, divide the class into three teams. Give each team a copy of the Scholastic Children's Dictionary. Explain that you will read a sentence out loud. Then you will read a list of three synonyms. Students have 30 seconds to determine which synonym is the best match for how the word is used in the particular sentence. If needed, students can use the dictionary to look up definitions of unfamiliar words. When the timer is up, call on a student from each team to give that team's answer. Then reveal the correct answer. Each team that chose this answer gets one tally mark on the whiteboard.

Use the following list of questions (correct answers appear in bold):

1. What is the closest synonym for **invented** in the following sentence? The first helicopter was **invented** in Germany.

- A. **created**
- B. imaginary
- C. concocted

2. What is the closest synonym for **looked** in the following sentence? It **looked** similar to an airplane.

- A. stared
- B. **appeared**
- C. examined

3. What is the closest synonym for **new** in the following sentence? A **new** kind of helicopter flew in 1939.

- A. **different**
- B. green
- C. firsthand

4. What is the closest synonym for **design** in the following sentence? Today's helicopters are based on this **design**.

- A. **model**
- B. picture
- C. decoration

5. What is the closest synonym for **appeared** in the following sentence? The turbine engine **appeared** in the 1950s.

- A. surfaced
- B. acted
- C. **developed**

6. What is the closest synonym for **faster** in the following sentence? This engine made helicopters **faster**.

- A. **speedier**
- B. sooner
- C. shorter

7. What is the closest synonym for **longer** in the following sentence? They could carry more weight for **longer** distances.

- A. taller
- B. slower
- C. **farther**

8. What is the closest synonym for **during** in the following sentence? Many helicopters flew **during** the Vietnam War.

- A. between
- B. past
- C. **throughout**

9. What is the closest synonym for **carried** in the following sentence? Helicopters **carried** soldiers, supplies, and weapons.

- A. included
- B. **transported**
- C. stored

10. What is the closest synonym for **changed** in the following sentence? Helicopters have not **changed** much since then.

- A. **varied**
- B. traveled
- C. disagreed

11. What is the closest synonym for **common** in the following sentence? But they have become more **common**.

- A. rough
- B. rapid
- C. **popular**

12. What is the closest synonym for **power** in the following sentence? Helicopters get **power** from turbine engines.

- A. **energy**
- B. muscle
- C. ideas

13. What is the closest synonym for **hot** in the following sentence? An engine burns fuel to make a rush of **hot** air.

- A. scorching
- B. fierce
- C. angry

14. What is the closest synonym for **spins** in the following sentence? The air **spins** a turbine.

- A. replaces
- B. shuffles
- C. rotates

15. What is the closest synonym for **produces** in the following sentence? The turning turbine **produces** power.

- A. generates
- B. builds
- C. loses

16. What is the closest synonym for **sends** in the following sentence? The transmission **sends** this power to the rotors.

- A. mails
- B. moves
- C. throws

17. What is the closest synonym for **very** in the following sentence? Rotor blades spin **very** fast.

- A. moderately
- B. extremely
- C. exactly

18. What is the closest synonym for **force** in the following sentence? They create an upward **force** known as lift.

- A. weight
- B. light
- C. pressure

19. What is the closest synonym for **rise** in the following sentence? This upward force causes the helicopter to **rise** into the air.

- A. grow
- B. awake
- C. climb

20. What is the closest synonym for **main** in the following sentence? Most helicopters have a **main** rotor and a tail rotor.

- A. primary
- B. central
- C. focused

21. What is the closest synonym for **shake** in the following sentence? The engine and rotors make the helicopter **shake**.

- A. wobble
- B. blend
- C. upset

22. What is the closest synonym for **some** in the following sentence? So, **some** helicopters have a stabilizer bar.

- A. several
- B. every
- C. roughly

23. What is the closest synonym for **above** in the following sentence? A stabilizer bar goes across and **above** the main rotor blade.

- A. beyond
- B. over
- C. better

24. What is the closest synonym for **reduces** in the following sentence? The bar **reduces** the shaking.

- A. trims
- B. shrinks
- C. lessens

25. What is the closest synonym for **steady** in the following sentence? Less shaking keeps the helicopter **steady**.

- A. unending
- B. stable**
- C. cool

26. What is the closest synonym for **called** in the following sentence? A helicopter's body is **called** the fuselage.

- A. named**
- B. gathered
- C. shouted

27. What is the closest synonym for **front** in the following sentence? The cockpit is at the **front**.

- A. head**
- B. border
- C. opposite

28. What is the closest synonym for **back** in the following sentence? The tail boom attaches to the **back**.

- A. former
- B. rear**
- C. support

29. What is the closest synonym for **long** in the following sentence? This part looks like a **long** tube.

- A. lingering
- B. wanting
- C. lengthy**

30. What is the closest synonym for **connects** in the following sentence? It **connects** the tail rotors to the fuselage.

- A. attaches**
- B. pledges
- C. promises

Evaluation

The team with the most tally marks at the end of the activity wins.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' language standards, grade 4 (L 4.4, 4.5).