

TUTORIAL

Most words have multiple meanings, or definitions. Sometimes those meanings are similar, but most of the time, the multiple meanings of a word are very different from each other.

Some words have different meanings for the different functions, or parts of speech: verb, noun, adverb, or adjective. Some words refer to several different nouns, verbs, etc, which is why it is important to be careful when looking up vocabulary words in the dictionary.

I've gathered a short list of words that most students are familiar with as examples of common words with multiple meanings. I labeled each meaning with the part of speech the word functions as.

Base

Noun:

1. particular place of work or action (This is our base of operations)
2. lowest point, edge of something (People began to gather at the base of the structure long before anyone decided to climb it)
3. root or stem of a word (the base form of the word broken is break)
4. the objects that designate the path a batter must run after hitting the ball (first, second, and third base)

Verb:

1. foundation (My decision is based on the fact that it's raining outside!)
2. center of an action

Pitch

Noun:

1. of a tone or note (She has a hard time singing at such a high pitch!)
2. steepness of a roof
3. level of intensity (fever pitch)
4. delivery of a ball (That was a lousy pitch.)
5. the spiel, or mini-speech used when trying to persuade someone to do something (Don't give me that old sales pitch again!)

Verb:

1. to throw or fling something—literally or figuratively, roughly or casually (to pitch a ball, tent, fit)
2. fall heavily (She pitched forward down the hill!)

Plot

Noun:

1. secret plan (The terrorist plot was thwarted.)

2. main events (as devised and organized by the author) of a play or piece of writing (
3. small piece of land set aside for something (That plot of land over there is a community garden.)
4. a graph

Verb:

1. to make secret plans (I caught them plotting against the superintendent!)
2. to devise sequencing of events (We began to plot out a timeline for the events.)
3. to mark on chart (I plotted the data on this graph.)

Present

Adjective:

1. in attendance (At the present moment, I don't have the resources.)
2. existing or occurring now (present tense)

Noun:

1. the present (here and now, this moment)
2. a gift (Herman likes to open his birthday presents after the guests leave.)

Verb:

1. to give (to present something to someone: She presented the first place winner with a trophy.)
2. to show (I presented my badge to the doorman, but he was not impressed.)
3. to give a presentation (Gabby presented her findings to the board of trustees.)

Tense

Noun:

1. distinction in verb form to express time and duration (verb tense)

Adjective:

1. stretched tight, rigid, (muscles)
2. unable to relax, showing nervous tension (Why do you look so tense?)
3. marked by strain or suspense

Verb:

1. to make rigid or tight
2. to tighten

Value

Noun:

1. worth or denomination of something (like a coin)
2. worth compared to price (Don't throw out that teddy bear! It has sentimental value.)

3. principles/beliefs/standards (family values, personal values)
4. a magnitude/quantity/number (for example, a math question might ask “what is the value of X?”)

Adjective:

1. considered to be important (He is a valued customer!)

Verb:

1. to cherish or respect (I value our time together. I value your opinion.)
2. to estimate/assign monetary value (Her estate is valued at...)