11 Plus Synonym and Antonym Pair Sheets

Companion sheets for the Smart Cub Learning guide Synonyms and Antonyms in 11 Plus Verbal Reasoning (smartcublearning.com). Grouped by the confusion that costs the mark, not alphabetically.

How to use these sheets

1. Fold on the dashed line to hide the right column.
2. Explain a word in your own words, then unfold and check.
3. Cover the words and try to recall a word from a meaning.
4. Revisit words you found difficult in another short session.
5. Try the words in sentences. Follow your local test instructions for timed practice.

Group 1: related meanings and differences

Related words can differ in strength or context. They are not always interchangeable; try a sentence for each.

FIRST WORD	RELATED WORD	WHAT SEPARATES THEM
worried	terrified	unease versus overwhelming fear
annoyed	furious	mild irritation versus rage
pleased	delighted	quiet satisfaction versus strong joy
cool	freezing	slightly cold versus extreme cold
tired	exhausted	needing rest versus completely spent
damp	saturated	slightly wet versus soaked through
large	immense	bigger than usual versus vast
surprised	astonished	mild shock versus disbelief
dislike	loathe	preference against versus hatred
quiet	silent	low sound versus no sound at all
hungry	ravenous	wanting food versus desperate for it
quick	instantaneous	fast versus with no delay at all

Group 2: everyday and formal words

These words can share a meaning in suitable sentences. Check the context and grammar before substituting one for another.

EVERYDAY	FORMAL PARTNER	SHARED MEANING
begin	commence	to start
ask	enquire	to request information
buy	purchase	to obtain in exchange for money
show	demonstrate	to make something clear or visible
help	assist	to give support

need	require	to have to have
enough	sufficient	as much as is needed
keep	retain	to hold on to
leave out	omit	to miss something out
put off	postpone	to move to a later time
get worse	deteriorate	to decline in quality
make bigger	expand	to increase in size

Group 3: word class traps

For a same-meaning substitution, check the meaning, word class and grammatical form in the sentence. A shared word class alone does not make two words synonyms.

QUESTION WORD	POSSIBLE PARTNER	THE TEMPTING WRONG FORM
advise (verb)	recommend	advice, guidance (nouns, wrong class)
practise (verb)	rehearse	practice (noun spelling)
separated	divided	divide, dividing (wrong tense)
anxiously	nervously	anxious, nerves (not adverbs)
strength (noun)	power	strong, powerful (adjectives)
hopeful	optimistic	hope, optimism (nouns)
freedom	liberty	free, liberate (wrong class)
rapidly	swiftly	rapid, speed (wrong class)
rushing	hurrying	rush, rushed (different form)
reduce (verb)	decrease	reduction, less (wrong class)

Group 4: homographs (one spelling, more than one meaning)

Read the question word's options first: they tell you which meaning is in play. Cover the right column and give both meanings from memory.

WORD	MEANING A	MEANING B
fair	just, even-handed	light in colour; a funfair
content	satisfied	what something holds inside
row	a line of things	an argument; to paddle a boat
bark	a dog's call	the outer layer of a tree
grave	a burial place	extremely serious
current	happening now	a flow of water or electricity
tender	gentle, soft	sore to the touch; to offer formally
sound	a noise	healthy, reliable, in good condition
right	correct	an entitlement; opposite of left
store	a shop	to keep something for later
light	brightness	not heavy
refuse	to say no	rubbish, waste

Group 5: opposites in context

Try an opposite, then check it in an example sentence. Other valid answers may exist; explain the meaning you chose.

WORD	OPPOSITE	WATCH OUT FOR

generous	stingy	"unkind" is close but not opposite
expand	contract	"shrink" also fits; pick the closest
temporary	permanent	"long" is not an opposite
ancient	modern	"new" fits some contexts
scarce	plentiful	"some" is not opposite
reveal	conceal	"hide" fits; check register
praise	criticise	"ignore" is unrelated
arrogant	humble	"quiet" is not opposite
advance	retreat	"stop" is not opposite
strengthen	weaken	match the verb form
accept	reject	"dislike" is a feeling, not a refusal
victory	defeat	"loss" fits; both are nouns