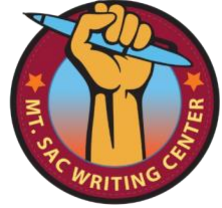


# The Writing Center

## DLA: Thesaurus Skills



This DLA is a writable PDF form. You can enter your answers directly into this document.

**YOU MUST DOWNLOAD AND SAVE THIS FILE TO YOUR COMPUTER.**

**Do not complete this form in a web browser. You will not be able to save your work.**

### Student Name:

#### Important Note

To get completion credit for this DLA, make sure you complete all the required activities. If you'd like help while working on a specific DLA, you can meet with a specialist at the Writing Center. Keep in mind that you might need to schedule a second appointment to review your work, check your understanding, and get your completion credit. You can only review **ONE** DLA per appointment. (Check the last section of this DLA for information on making your appointment and receiving completion credit for your work).

#### Learning Outcome

Through computer and other independent work, this activity will familiarize you with skills needed for the effective use of thesauruses, which will increase your vocabulary and help you choose correct words for different contexts.

#### Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

### Thesaurus Basics

*Pronounced:* [THə'sôrəs]

#### *What is a thesaurus and how is it different from a dictionary?*

- A thesaurus, like a dictionary, uses alphabetical order to list words. Although most thesauruses provide a brief definition of each word, they are different from dictionaries in that they are focused on synonyms (words that have the same meaning) and antonyms (words that have the opposite meaning).
- If you would like to avoid repeating words, or you would like to replace some of your words with more precise or more academic words, you can look up your word in a thesaurus and find a list of synonyms.
- If you want to find an antonym for a word you have used, you can look up your word in a thesaurus and find a list of antonyms.
- Thesauruses can help you expand your vocabulary since you are able to learn a variety of synonyms and antonyms for different contexts.
- **Important note:** You should always keep in mind that synonyms are usually not used in the same contexts, and their connotations\* may vary greatly. See the next section. →

[Thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com) at <http://www.thesaurus.com> is a good online thesaurus.

[Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online](http://www.ldoceonline.com) at <http://www.ldoceonline.com> is a good online dictionary for English learners.

Here is a picture of an entry on Thesaurus.com:

The screenshot shows the Thesaurus.com website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with 'synonyms' selected and 'intelligence' entered. Below the search bar, the word 'intelligence' is displayed in a large font, followed by a star icon and a link to 'see definition of intelligence'. To the right, there is a 'show' dropdown menu set to 'all' and two checkboxes for 'Common' and 'Informal'. Below this, the word 'intelligence' is defined as a noun: 'ability to perceive, understand'. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Synonyms for intelligence' and 'Antonyms for intelligence'. The synonyms are listed in five columns, each with a small orange box containing the word. The antonyms are listed in three columns, each with a small gray box containing the word.

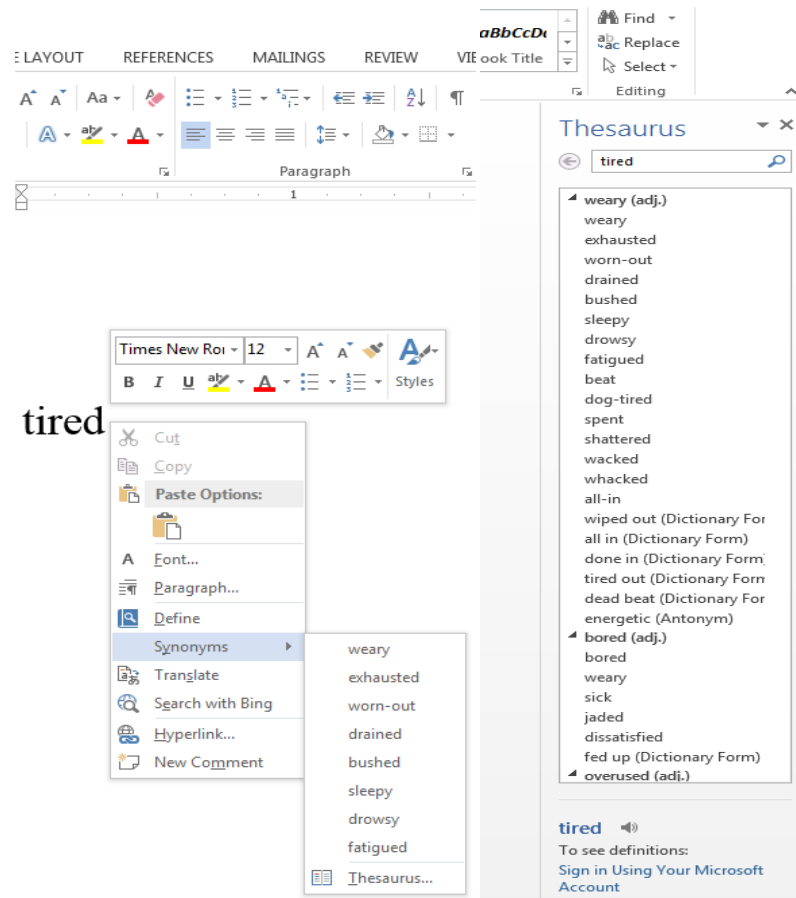
**Synonyms for intelligence**

acumen	sense	brainpower	IQ	reason
agility	skill	brains	luminosity	sagacity
brilliance	subtlety	brightness	mentality	smarts
intellect	understanding	capacity	mind	trenchancy
judgment	wit	cleverness	penetration	gray matter
perception	acuity	comprehension	perspicacity	the right stuff
quickness	alertness	coruscation	precocity	what it takes
savvy	aptitude	discernment	quotient	

**Antonyms for intelligence**

ignorance	stupidity	physicality
inability	disinclination	ineptness

Microsoft Word© also has a feature that helps you find synonyms and sometimes even antonyms. To find this feature, simply type a word, right click, select “Synonyms,” and then you can see a list of similar words. To see more options, click on the “Thesaurus” field. A box with synonyms will appear to the right of your screen.



### Choosing the Right Synonym

When you find synonyms in a thesaurus, the next step is to look at the definitions of each word so that you can understand the slight differences between each one. You can also look for examples of how the word is used in sentences in similar contexts to the one you are using it in. See how others have used it in sentences they wrote so that you understand whether the word generally carries either a negative, neutral, or positive connotation and whether or not it has the exact meaning you want to express. If you find that the word has the right definition but not the correct connotation you want, then search for a new synonym in your thesaurus and follow the above process again to find out if your new word has the correct meaning and connotation.

(\*For more information on connotations of words, please refer to our “Connotation and Denotation” DLA.)

For example, which word would be the best synonym for *middle* in the following sentence?

→ Do not eat the *middle* of an apple.

**middle**<sup>2</sup> /ˈmɪdl/ *noun* ▼ **middle**

the part of something that is farthest from all the edges of an area or object. You use **middle** especially about the part that is halfway between two sides:

Ex. Gary swam toward the *middle* of the lake.

Ex. She placed the flowers *in the middle* of the table. → You can also use **middle** to talk about the part of something that is halfway between the beginning and the end: *I fell asleep in the middle of the movie.*

▼ **center**

**center** means the same as **middle**. You use **center** especially about the part that is exactly in the middle:

Ex. Draw a line through the *center* of the circle.

Ex. She placed the flowers *in the center* of the table.

▼ **heart**

the middle of an area, town, or city:

Ex. The hotel is located *in the heart of* Manhattan.

▼ **core** AWL

the central part of the Earth, an object, such as a fruit:

Ex. The Earth has a solid inner core which is 2,500 kilometers in diameter.

For the previous sentence, a better synonym for *middle* would be the word *core* because this word is related to the central part of a fruit. Make sure you look at the difference in meaning before choosing a synonym.

## Activities

**Check off each box once you have completed the activity.**

**1. Thesaurus Skills Review**

What are the benefits of using a thesaurus?

What is similar and what is different between a thesaurus and a dictionary?

Similar:

Different:

**2. Online Quiz**

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/thesaurusskillsdlaquiz> and take the DLA quiz. You must score at least 75% on the quiz before meeting with a specialist. After you complete the task, please take a screenshot of the page that has your score and show it to your specialist. Do not exit the quiz until you take the screenshot.

### □ 3. Thesaurus Word-Level Practice

Go to [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com) for [Thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com) find and write down 3 synonyms and 1 antonym for the word *flexible*.

Synonyms: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Antonym 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Using Microsoft Word®, find and write down 3 synonyms for the word *party*.

Synonyms: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Choose 4a or 4b Below

#### □ 4a. Review Your Own Writing

Collect some of your written work. Find 3 words that you would like to replace with more precise words. Then, use one of the Writing Center's thesauruses or the following links to choose the appropriate replacement and write your sentences below.

[Thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com) at <http://www.thesaurus.com/>

[Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online](http://www.ldoceonline.com/) at <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

#### 1. Original Sentence

##### 1a. New Sentence

#### 2. Original Sentence

##### 2a. New Sentence

#### 3. Original Sentence

##### 3a. New Sentence

If you do not have sentences from your own writing to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (4b).

#### 4b. Thesaurus Sentence-Level Practice

Using a thesaurus, find the best synonym for the **bolded** word in each sentence.

1. At summer camp, Laura felt **sad**, for she had been away from her family and friends for two weeks.

Best synonym:

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Explain your choice:

---

2. I have a major **problem**; I can't decide whether I should keep my terrible job and have money or quit and be unemployed with no money.

Best synonym:

---

Explain your choice:

---

3. Grace has this silly **idea** that chewing gum will help her hair grow longer!

Best synonym:

---

Explain your choice:

---

4. Jim was so **shocked** when he heard the news that he stayed silent for a whole minute.

Best synonym:

---

Explain your choice:

---

5. Kim **jumped** across the big puddle of water so that she wouldn't get her new shoes dirty.

Best synonym:

---

Explain your choice:

---

6. We **immediately** knew that something was wrong when we saw the look on her face.

Best synonym:

---

Explain your choice:

---

7. Michael quickly **ran** out the door and down the street to catch the ice cream truck.

Best synonym:

---

Explain your choice:

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## □ 5. Review the DLA/Receive Completion Credit

1. Go to [EAB Navigate](#) and make an appointment (online or in-person).
2. Attend your session and be prepared to explain your understanding of the information you've learned in the DLA. Consider the main concept you learned and how you might use this in your future assignments/classes.
3. If your professor asks you to provide proof, you can review the "appointment summary report" through EAB Navigate (app or desktop). You will find all Writing Center appointments under "appointment summary reports" (app or desktop). Look for the summary report for your DLA appointment. This is where your writing specialist will indicate the title of your DLA and state whether it is "completed" or "not completed." If it is marked as "not completed," book a follow up appointment to complete.

Note: Appointment summary reports are also sent weekly to your instructor on record. If there is an issue, please contact us at [writingcenter@mtsac.edu](mailto:writingcenter@mtsac.edu) or (909) 274-5325.

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center's website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

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