



SUPER SYNONYMS!

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Helping struggling learners with dyslexia and other learning differences understand the meanings of words they encounter can be a daunting task. Application of words poses an even meaner feat, when even students without learning differences struggle in using productive vocabulary (applying vocabulary in speech or writing).

One effective way to boost language skills is by learning about synonyms. Synonyms or words that have similar meanings, offer several benefits for students who grapple with applying vocabulary. They can be a game-changer by helping learners expand their vocabulary, especially when learners understand that a word can have multiple synonyms. This also allows learners to gain a nuanced understanding of the English language, and allows them to express themselves more precisely and creatively. As dyslexic learners often face challenges in comprehending written texts, knowledge of synonyms can also provide learners context clues when they encounter unfamiliar words, thus helping them to infer its meaning and contributing to an improved reading experience.

Apart from one's receptive vocabulary, synonyms can help empower learners to apply more appropriate words which resonate with their intended message in their speech and writing. The ability to write and speak in a more precise, engaging and impactful way can help learners be more coherent, ultimately improving their confidence as well. Here are three strategies that can help us harness the power of using synonyms to enhance receptive and productive vocabulary!

1. Speedy substitution

furious, livid, outraged, irate

Father was **angry** when he found out that I
had skipped school.

challenging, puzzling, mind-boggling

This mathematics question is so **hard!**



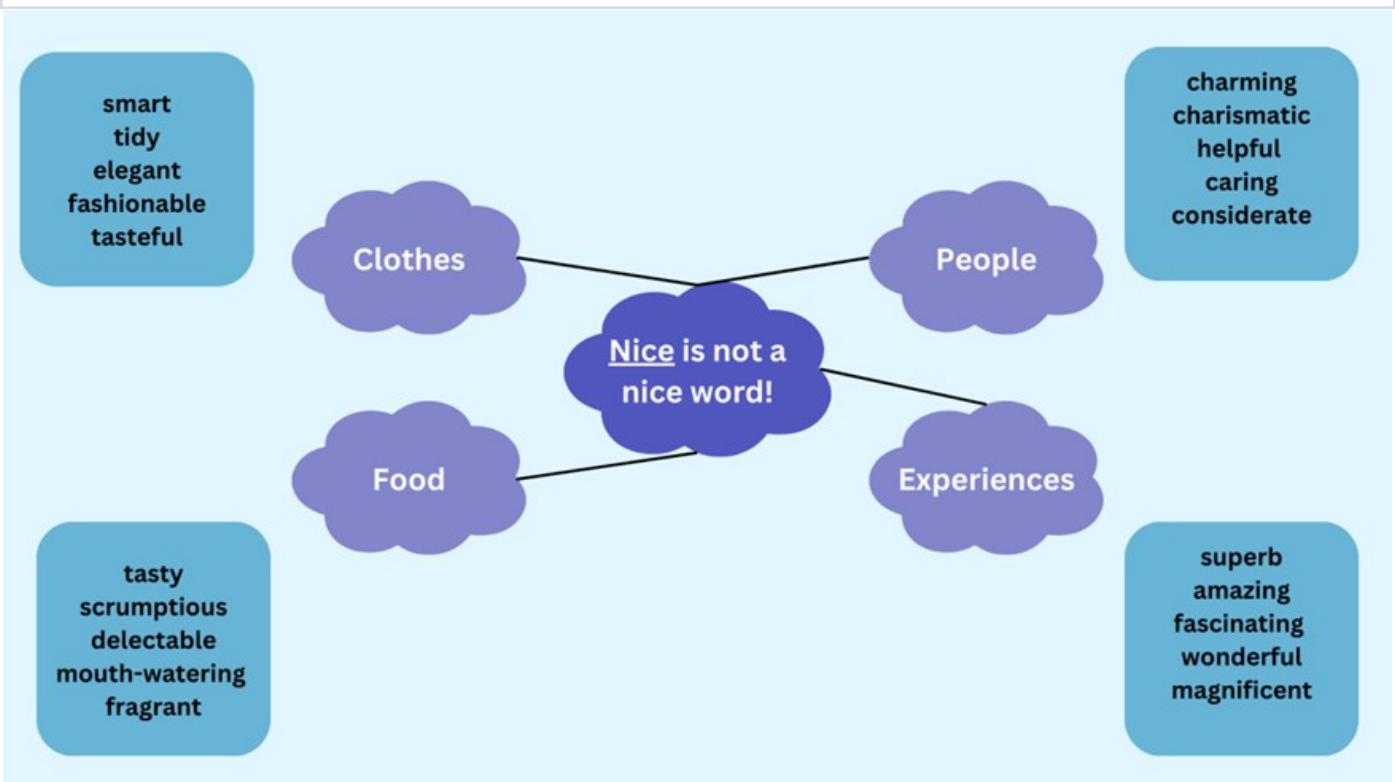
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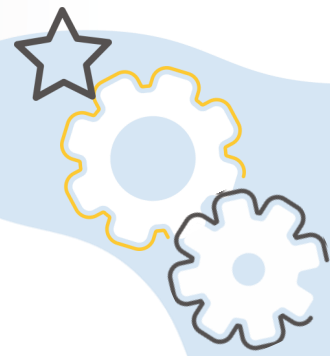
2. Mind Maps

Mind maps are an effective visual aid which can help aid both vocabulary acquisition, and vocabulary production. Firstly, learners can use mind maps to collate synonyms of common words they come across, creating an ongoing collection of vocabulary learnt.

This helps to create a visual representation of the word's synonyms, thus harnessing the brain's natural associative and visual thinking abilities, making the process of learning and retaining new words more effective and engaging. In the classroom, educators can help learners brainstorm for more effective words they can use in their writing and speaking tasks. For instance, the mind map shown below allows learners to brainstorm for other more effective words which can substitute the word 'nice'.

Although some of these words may not be direct synonyms, mind maps can help challenge students to generate more effective and powerful vocabulary that they can apply in their tasks.





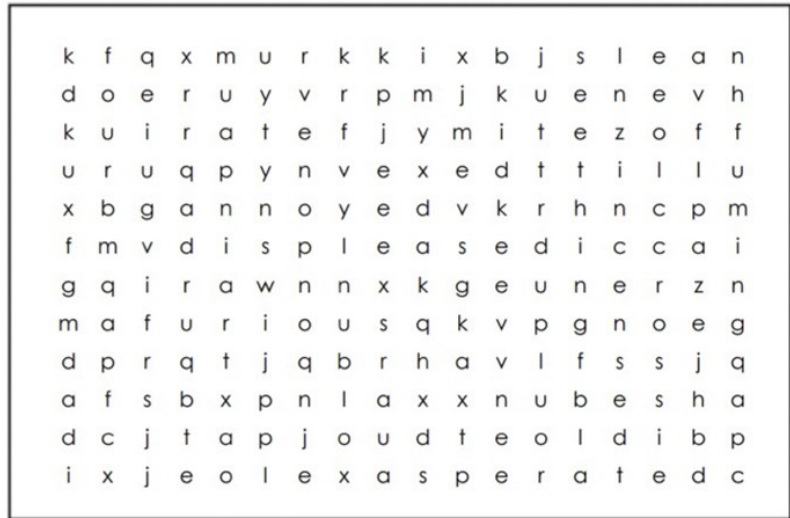
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3. Game-based learning

With the help of technology, educators can help to make synonym learning more engaging! Through the use of online generators and some creativity, free online teachers can help students encounter and use synonyms in a light-hearted context. For instance, the example below introduces students to ten synonyms of the word 'angry' through a word search, created by an online free word search generator (E.g Super Teacher Worksheets). Other possible games include Scrabble, crossword puzzles, and even online quizzes to gamify and enhance the process of learning synonyms!

Learning about synonyms is a powerful tool for struggling learners. By using a few simple strategies, learners can be equipped with a broader understanding of more vocabulary, and slowly but surely, improve both their receptive and productive vocabulary!

Synonyms of ANGRY



Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

annoyed
cross
displeased
exasperated

fuming
furious
incensed
irate

seething
vexed



Word search, created with Super Teacher Resources generator