



# Reading Comprehension

## Paraphrases and Meanings

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## **Paraphrases and Meanings**

These worksheets enhance students' comprehension of subtle meanings, consequently improving their ability to paraphrase. Two separate worksheets provide students with pairs and groups of paraphrases, requiring them to identify and discuss subtle differences in meaning between and among the paraphrases. Students must rely on their ability to really break down and comprehend the meanings within sentences conveyed by verb tense, synonyms, adverbs, conceptual relationships such as causality or contrast, and more. Answer keys are included.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Shades of Meaning

**Directions:** Discuss the subtle differences in meaning between the paraphrases.

- 1) I want to always live in a warm, sunny place.  
I don't ever want to live in a cold and rainy place.
- 2) I went ice-skating last week.  
I'd been going ice-skating last week.
- 3) I remembered that I was supposed to pick up my dry cleaning yesterday.  
I didn't pick up my dry cleaning yesterday.  
I picked up my dry cleaning yesterday.
- 4) My hair is getting too long.  
I need to get a haircut.  
I wish I had short hair.
- 5) Susan said she'd let me know if she can come to the party.  
Susan couldn't say yet whether or not she can come to the party.
- 6) I hope it's not raining tomorrow because we're planning a picnic.  
If it rains tomorrow our picnic will be ruined.
- 7) Today I will go to the store.  
Today I hope to get to the store.  
I'm planning on going to the store.
- 8) There are very few things I like about my job but I do like working with sharp knives.  
The only thing I like about my job is that I get to work with sharp knives.  
One of the good things about my job is that I get to work with sharp knives.
- 9) I hate Thanksgiving.  
I really despise Thanksgiving.  
Thanksgiving is probably my least favorite holiday.
- 10) I can't believe he said that.  
Can you believe he said that?
- 11) The next time you're at the store pick up some chocolate for me, okay?  
Will you get me some chocolate from the store?
- 12) That pasta was the best I've ever had!  
That pasta is the best in the world!

## Shades of Meaning—Answer Key

**Directions:** Discuss the subtle differences in meaning between the paraphrases.

- 1) I want to always live in a warm, sunny place.  
I don't ever want to live in a cold and rainy place.  
(The second speaker could be okay with living in a cold and sunny place or a warm and rainy place, whereas the first speaker would not.)
- 2) I went ice-skating last week.  
I'd been going ice-skating last week.  
(The second statement sounds like the speaker went ice-skating more than once.)
- 3) I remembered that I was supposed to pick up my dry cleaning yesterday.  
I didn't pick up my dry cleaning yesterday.  
I picked up my dry cleaning yesterday.  
(The first speaker may or may not have actually picked up the dry cleaning; for example, she may have remembered but then something prevented her from actually getting it. The second and third speakers' statements are opposites.)
- 4) My hair is getting too long.  
I need to get a haircut.  
I wish I had short hair.  
(The third speaker could be bald, while the second speaker might need a haircut for a reason other than having hair that is too long; for example, maybe she just wants to go from a blunt cut to a layered one.)
- 5) Susan said she'd let me know if she can come to the party.  
Susan couldn't say yet whether or not she can come to the party.  
(In the second statement it's implied that Susan will RSVP, but not definite as in the first sentence.)
- 6) I hope it's not raining tomorrow because we're planning a picnic.  
If it rains tomorrow our picnic will be ruined.  
(In the first statement the picnic will not necessarily be ruined.)



- 7) Today I will go to the store.  
Today I hope to get to the store.  
I'm planning on going to the store.  
(The first statement is the most definite, and the third statement does not specify which day.)
- 8) There are very few things I like about my job but I do like working with sharp knives.  
The only thing I like about my job is that I get to work with sharp knives.  
One of the good things about my job is that I get to work with sharp knives.  
(The first speaker likes few things, the second speaker likes only one thing, and the third speaker might like many things.)
- 9) I hate Thanksgiving.  
I really despise Thanksgiving.  
Thanksgiving is probably my least favorite holiday.  
(The second speaker has stronger negative feelings than the first, and the third speaker might actually like Thanksgiving, just not as much as the other holidays.)
- 10) I can't believe he said that.  
Can you believe he said that?  
(A statement vs. a question: the second speaker doesn't definitively say whether he believes or not.)
- 11) The next time you're at the store pick up some chocolate for me, okay?  
Will you get me some chocolate from the store?  
(The second speaker makes a stronger request and sounds like he wants it soon.)
- 12) That pasta was the best I've ever had!  
That pasta is the best in the world!  
(In the first statement there could be better pasta somewhere in the world.)





Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Shades of Meaning—2

**Directions:** Discuss the subtle differences in meaning between the paraphrases.

- 1) Yesterday there was an event at the supermarket.  
Yesterday there was an incident at the supermarket.
- 2) The doctor dismissed my symptoms as nerves.  
The doctor said my symptoms were from nerves.
- 3) Sophie quietly yawned.  
Sophie silently yawned.  
Sophie self-consciously yawned.
- 4) Bill reluctantly hung up the phone.  
Bill regrettably hung up the phone.
- 5) The little girl clutched the grocery list.  
The little girl held the grocery list.
- 6) Justin sped down the mountain slope.  
Justin skied down the mountain slope.
- 7) Andrea felt content.  
Andrea felt happy.  
Andrea was amused.  
Andrea felt enthusiastic.  
Andrea was enthusiastic.
- 8) The old guy staggered down the road.  
The old guy walked down the road.
- 9) The robbers chose the house on the corner.  
The robbers targeted the house on the corner.
- 10) Kathy slipped on the ice.  
Kathy skidded on the ice.
- 11) When she was three, Susan had a huge temper tantrum at the park.  
When she was three, Susan had a huge meltdown at the park.
- 12) I misplaced the money for the flea market.  
I lost the money for the flea market.  
I lost the clothes for the flea market.  
I lost the clothes from the flea market.



## Shades of Meaning—2—Answer Key

**Directions:** Discuss the subtle differences in meaning between the paraphrases.

- 1) Yesterday there was an event at the supermarket.  
Yesterday there was an incident at the supermarket. (implies negativity)
- 2) The doctor dismissed my symptoms as nerves. (implies a dismissive attitude)  
The doctor said my symptoms were from nerves.
- 3) Sophie quietly yawned. (could be some sound)  
Sophie silently yawned.  
Sophie self-consciously yawned. (means she felt self-conscious)
- 4) Bill reluctantly hung up the phone.  
Bill regrettably hung up the phone. (implies regret, not reluctance)
- 5) The little girl clutched the grocery list. (implies she was holding on tightly)  
The little girl held the grocery list.
- 6) Justin sped down the mountain slope. (implies speed)  
Justin skied down the mountain slope.
- 7) Andrea felt content. (a milder feeling than happiness)  
Andrea felt happy.  
Andrea was amused. (adds a feeling of slight humor)  
Andrea felt enthusiastic.  
Andrea was enthusiastic. (could imply enthusiastic behavior, more than just feeling)
- 8) The old guy staggered down the road. (implies difficulty walking)  
The old guy walked down the road.
- 9) The robbers chose the house on the corner.  
The robbers targeted the house on the corner. (could imply that the house was already burglarized more so than the 1st statement)
- 10) Kathy slipped on the ice.  
Kathy skidded on the ice. (“slipped” implies actually falling more so than “skidded”)
- 11) When she was three, Susan had a huge temper tantrum at the park. (implies anger)  
When she was three, Susan had a huge meltdown at the park.  
(emotional but not necessarily angry)
- 12) I misplaced the money for the flea market. (speaker may or may not know where it is)  
I lost the money for the flea market. (sounds more like the speaker doesn’t know)  
I lost the clothes for the flea market. (clothes to sell)  
I lost the clothes from the flea market. (clothes that were bought)