

What is Semantic Precision?

Worksheet

Semantic precision is the skill of selecting the exact word that best conveys your intended meaning — avoiding vagueness and capturing the nuance of what you want to communicate.

Questions

1. Which sentence has the highest semantic precision?

- A) He made a lot of money.
- B) He earned \$500,000 in venture funding.
- C) He got some money.
- D) He made good money.

2. Semantic precision is about...

- A) Using fancy or complex words
- B) Writing longer sentences
- C) Choosing the exact word that fits your meaning
- D) Avoiding synonyms

3. Which pair shows the most semantic difference?

- A) 'Happy' and 'joyful'
- B) 'Angry' and 'furious'
- C) 'Tired' and 'exhausted'
- D) 'Walk' and 'wander'

4. To improve semantic precision, you should...

- A) Use the first word that comes to mind
- B) Avoid thinking about synonyms
- C) Consult a thesaurus and understand synonym nuances
- D) Use the most uncommon word possible

5. Revise this for semantic precision: 'The weather was bad.'

6. Which is more semantically precise: 'She felt bad' or 'She felt ashamed'?

7. Choose the most semantically precise synonym for 'look': 'He ___ at the painting.' (glance, stare, glimpse)

8. Define: What is semantic precision?

9. Define: Why is semantic precision important in writing?

10. Define: Example: 'said' vs. 'whispered'

Answer Key

1. B) He earned \$500,000 in venture funding. — Option B specifies exactly how much money and its source, eliminating ambiguity. The others are vague.
2. C) Choosing the exact word that fits your meaning — Semantic precision is clarity and exactness, not complexity. The right simple word beats a fancy vague one.
3. D) 'Walk' and 'wander' — 'Walk' is purposeful; 'wander' is aimless — completely different intentions and meanings.
4. C) Consult a thesaurus and understand synonym nuances — Understanding synonym nuances and choosing carefully is the path to semantic precision.
5. Vague: 'bad' doesn't specify the problem More precise: 'The weather was freezing and humid' or 'The weather was scorching and dry' Best: Specific word choice that captures the exact weather condition and its effect.
6. 'She felt bad' = generic, could mean sick, sad, guilty, etc. 'She felt ashamed' = precise — specifically indicates embarrassment or guilt Conclusion: 'ashamed' has higher semantic precision.
7. 'glance' = quick, casual look 'stare' = long, intense look 'glimpse' = brief, partial view Context matters: if he's studying it, 'stare' is most precise; if passing by, 'glimpse' fits better.
8. The ability to choose exact, specific words that convey your intended meaning without ambiguity.
9. It prevents misunderstanding, creates stronger impact, and makes your message more memorable and persuasive.
10. 'Said' is neutral; 'whispered' is precise — it conveys secrecy, intimacy, or discretion.

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