

What is a Euphemism?

Worksheet

A euphemism is a tactful, indirect word or phrase substituted for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive — for example, 'pass away' instead of 'die' or 'restroom' instead of 'toilet'.

Questions

1. Which is a euphemism for 'lie'?
A) mistruth
B) falsehood
C) untruth
D) fib
2. Euphemisms are used mainly to...
A) deceive people
B) show off vocabulary
C) maintain politeness and respect
D) sound intelligent
3. What does 'between jobs' euphemistically mean?
A) working part-time
B) unemployed
C) on vacation
D) changing careers
4. Which is NOT a euphemism?
A) 'let go' for fired
B) 'senior citizen' for elderly
C) 'terminate' for kill
D) all are euphemisms
5. Rewrite 'He died yesterday' using a euphemism.
6. Identify the euphemism in 'The company let go 200 employees.'
7. Create a euphemism for 'The restaurant's food was terrible.'
8. Define: What is a euphemism?
9. Define: Example of euphemism for death?
10. Define: Why use euphemisms?

Answer Key

1. A) mistruth — 'Mistruth' sounds less harsh than 'lie'; 'fib' is actually a diminutive, not a euphemism.
2. C) maintain politeness and respect — Euphemisms serve tact, dignity, and respectful communication.
3. B) unemployed — It's a tactful way to say someone is currently unemployed.
4. D) all are euphemisms — All three are euphemisms; there is no 'not' option.
5. Original: He died yesterday. Euphemism: He passed away yesterday. Reasoning: 'Passed away' is gentler, more respectful in formal contexts.
6. Euphemism: let go What it replaces: fired, dismissed, laid off Reason: Sounds less harsh than direct termination language.
7. Direct: The food was terrible. Euphemism: The food was not quite to our taste. Reasoning: Softens criticism, maintains politeness.
8. A mild, indirect word or phrase substituted for one considered harsh or offensive.
9. 'Passed away', 'lost someone', 'went to heaven' instead of 'died'.
10. To show respect, maintain politeness, and avoid offending or upsetting people.

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