Multiple-Meaning Words

Words sometimes have more than one meaning so, when reading or writing, the sentence, the story line, and the pictures give us a context – a place where the word logically fits.

Sometimes the word is a noun, sometimes a verb or, at times, an adjective or adverb. When it’s used as an adjective or adverb, suffixes are added.

Here are some easy words with more than one meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>leaves</th>
<th>noun, parts of a plant (The leaves are green in spring.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swamp</td>
<td>verb, to go away, to depart (She leaves in a rush every day.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bluff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>band</td>
<td>noun, a group of people united for a purpose (The marching band played my favorite song.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glasses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catalog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bluff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bolt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
address **noun**, a direction or house number which shows where a place is (My address is 416 Main St.)

**verb** – to talk to a group or large crowd (The president of the company has to address the stockholders.)

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glasses **noun**, an object you can wear in front of your eyes to see better (My glasses broke so I can’t see well now.)

**noun**, containers (made from ground-up sand) that hold liquid (We need six glasses of juice for our guests.)

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place **noun**, a location that exists (I always sit in the same place at the dinner table.)

**verb**, to put something somewhere (Where did you place my CDs?)

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swamp **noun**, a geographical area full of murky water and vegetation (Florida has a famous swamp called the Everglades.)

**verb**, to overwhelm or flood (I am swamped with so much work.)
Now, here are difficult ones. Remember to use your knowledge of prefixes and suffixes.

**associate**  
noun, someone you work with  
(My associate gave me a great idea at the meeting.)  
verb, to join with others in a group or club  
(My mother won’t let me associate with smokers.)

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**catalog**  
noun, a book or pamphlet that lists and describes things  
(I look forward to receiving my CD catalogs, even though I don’t buy many CDs.)  
verb, to put things in proper order and classification  
(I catalog my stamp collection according to countries.)

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**divide**  
noun, a huge canyon or separation in the land formation  
(The Grand Canyon is one of the largest geological divides on our planet.)  
verb, to separate into two or more parts  
(Do we have enough pieces of candy to divide among the whole class?)

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**bluff**  
noun, a craggy hill in a land formation  
(The billy goat stood on the bluff overlooking the ocean.)  
verb, to outsmart someone  
(His bet to win with a poor hand was a bluff that didn’t work.)
**Bolt**

**noun**, a type of screw (Be careful not to lose the nut that goes with that **bolt**.)

**noun**, an electrical flash, like a bolt of lightening (The idea struck me like a lightening **bolt**.)

**noun**, a piece of metal that slides across a door or box to lock it (When you close the door, slide the **bolt** into place.)

**verb**, to close something securely (**Bolt** the door for security before you go to bed, please.)

**verb**, to run away like a shot (The frightened animal **bolted** across the field to safety.)

**STEPS FOR STUDENTS**

**Step 1 – Write the Word**

Have students create vocabulary cards with different meanings for the word on left and right sides.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wave</td>
<td>wave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la onda</td>
<td>saludar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Step 2 – Add a Visual**

Students draw a picture under each word showing the meaning of the word.

**Step 3 – Write a Definition**

Under each of the words, have the students write a short definition in their own words.

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- **noun**
  - wave
  - la onda
  - a big curl of water

- **verb**
  - wave
  - saludar
  - a hand movement to say hello or goodbye
Step 4 – Create a Sentence

At the bottom of the card, students write a sentence that matches their drawing.

noun
wave
la onda

verb
wave
saludar

a big curl of water
Hawaii has the best surfing waves.

a hand movement to say hello or goodbye
The kids on the beach wave hello to friends.
Creative Use of the Cards

Using a set of single-meaning word cards and a set of multiple-meaning word cards, students read the vocabulary card and decide if it belongs to the single or multiple group of cards. They then place it under the label “Single Meaning” or Multiple Meaning.” (Write the answer on the reverse side of each card so students can check their work.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>single-meaning words</th>
<th>multiple-meaning words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>animal</td>
<td>address</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>