

Linguistic Precision and Etymology

English Language · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. Which of these linguistic terms describes a word that is spelled the same forwards and backwards?

A) Palindrome

- B) Anonym
- C) Tautogram
- D) Isogram

2. What is the etymological root of the word 'sycophant'?

A) Greek for 'fig-shower'

- B) Latin for 'to flatter'
- C) Persian for 'servant'
- D) Old Norse for 'deceiver'

3. In formal grammar, what is the technical term for a word that functions as both a noun and a verb but changes its stress pattern (e.g., 'record')?

A) Heteronym

- B) Initialism
- C) Contronym
- D) Apostrophe

4. Which 18th-century English writer is most famously associated with the first comprehensive 'A Dictionary of the English Language' published in 1755?

A) Samuel Johnson

- B) Noah Webster
- C) James Murray
- D) Jonathan Swift

5. What is the meaning of the grammatical term 'pleonasm'?

A) The use of more words than are necessary to convey meaning

- B) The omission of necessary words
- C) The study of word origins
- D) A phrase that has lost its literal meaning

6. Which linguistic term refers to the process where a word's meaning becomes more positive over time?

A) Amelioration

- B) Pejoration
- C) Broadening
- D) Narrowing

7. What is the singular form of the word 'phenomena'?

A) Phenomenon

B) Phenomenum

C) Phenomenus

D) Phenomeni

8. The word 'cliché' is derived from which technological process?

A) Stereotype printing

B) Medieval calligraphy

C) Roman shorthand

D) Telegraphy

9. Which of the following is an example of an 'ergative verb' in English?

A) The window broke

B) He slept soundly

C) She ran fast

D) They walked home

10. What is the definition of a 'portmanteau' in linguistics?

A) A word blending the sounds and meanings of two others

B) A word that functions as an adjective

C) A regional variation of a language

D) A word derived from a proper noun

11. What is the 'infinitive' form of the verb 'went'?

A) To go

B) To went

C) To gone

D) To going

12. Which term describes the study of the history and evolution of words?

A) Etymology

B) Syntax

C) Morphology

D) Semantics

13. Which of these words is a 'contronym' (a word that can mean its own opposite)?

A) Cleave

B) Bright

C) Heavy

D) Fast

14. In English grammar, which pronoun case is required after the preposition 'between' when referring to two people?

A) Objective case

B) Nominative case

C) Possessive case

D) Reflexive case

15. What does the term 'orthography' specifically refer to?

A) The conventional spelling system of a language

B) The study of sentence structure

C) The history of punctuation

D) The phonetic representation of sounds