

Linguistic Precision and Etymology

English Language · Practice Test · 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