

More Exercises on Semantic Change

complete the pages and bring to section

Transfer of Meaning in Metaphor, Synecdoche, Metonymy, and Synesthesia

NAME OF CHANGE	EXAMPLE	STANDS IN FOR	DIRECTION OF CHANGE
Metaphor	the <i>foot</i> of a mountain	The lowest part of the mountain, analogous to the lowest extremity of an animal.	A name, idea or phrase is transferred to something different from but analogous to that to which it is literally applicable: "Life is a journey"
Synecdoche	all <i>hands</i> on <i>deck</i>	sailors ship	A part is used for the whole
Metonymy	<i>crown</i>	king	A property of or something associated with a thing (but is not a part of it) that is used to denote the thing itself. The association is by contiguity rather than by similarity (vs. metaphor).
Synaesthesia	I sing the <i>blues</i>	melancholy music	Meaning is transferred from one sensory faculty to another

[Look up each word below in the OED](#), and, by referring to the table above, fill in the kind of change it has undergone over the years.

_____ *harsh*: now "discordant in sound," from "rough to the touch"

_____ *dish*: now "the food served in a dish"

_____ *crane*: now "a machine for lifting heavy objects," from "a bird with a long neck and bill"

_____ *board*: now "daily meals," ("room and board") from "table"

_____ *plastic*: now "credit card"

_____ *heavy*: now "abstract, difficult to understand"

_____ *bar*: now "the legal profession," from "barrier in the Inns of Court which separated students from senior members"

_____ *cork*: now "stopper," from "bark of an oak tree"

_____ *high*: now "shrill, sharply pitched," from "extending upwards in space"

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- _____ *fret*: now “worry, be distressed,” from “eat, gnaw”
- _____ *the press*: now “the news media”, from “printing press”
- _____ *the White House*: now “the President of the United States and his administration”
- _____ *the deep*: now “the ocean”
- _____ *clear*: now “intelligible”

Also: Find “Blind mouths!” in John Milton’s *Lycidas* and examine it in context. (You can google it.) How does it combine more than one of the figurative uses above?

Other Kinds of Semantic Change: Subjective and Objective Meanings

NAME OF CHANGE	EXAMPLE		OLD DEFINITION	DIRECTION OF CHANGE
Subjective	<i>fear</i> : “terror”	once	“danger”	Transfer to describe the person who experiences fear
Objective	<i>pitiful</i> : “deserving of pity”	once	“full of pity”	Transfer to describe the object that causes pity

Identify the kind of change in each of these words: *S* or *O*

- ___ *angry*: now “wrathful, raging,” once “troublesome, causing sorrow”
- ___ *anxious*: now “feeling anxiety about something,” once “causing anxiety in someone”
- ___ *hateful*: now “filled with hate,” once “inspiring hate”
- ___ *joyous*: now “causing joy, delightful,” once “experiencing joy”
- ___ *knowledgeable*: now “possessing knowledge,” once “capable of being known”
- ___ *excitement*: now “the state of being excited,” once “something that causes activity or feeling”

Extra Credit:

Provide one example of *back-formation* and one example of a *calque*