The vocabulary of English contains anywhere from three-quarters of a million to one million words — by far the largest in the history of humankind. Despite this impressive accomplishment, many words in English have to do double duty and convey more than one meaning. As a result, one word can function as the opposite of two very different words.

To see this process at work, try the following quiz. Fill in each blank with a word that is opposite in meaning to the word in the left-hand column and the different word in the right-hand column. Then check your responses against those that appear in Answers and Solutions. Example: light is the opposite of heavy and of dark.

1. loud hard
2. young new
3. wrong left
4. tall long
5. smooth gentle
6. even normal
7. sharp interesting
8. costly enslaved
9. bring give
10. rich excellent
11. win find
12. soft easy
13. past absent
14. foul dark
15. stop come
16. sharp bumpy
17. spend peril
18. good healthy
19. thick fat
20. major adult
21. common well done
22. coarse sick
23. loose slow
24. stale polite
25. unbiased complete
26. front forth
27. sane happy
28. rise spring