



REAL ENGLISH

GET ENGLISH USEFUL FOR YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE!

DATE August 02, 2023

Volume 5

Aomori Prefecture English Education
Society

「あなたは幸せですか。」と問われたら

日本語の語彙でも時折、反対語、反意語について、「ちょっとそれで合ってるの。」「違う。」「合ってるか。」と思う時があります。幼い子ども同士が話している時、「楽しいの反対なーんだ。」「楽しくない」「違うよ。つまらないだよ。」「えーなんで」と言うような会話の展開を見ることがあります。大人の皆さんでも、まさに今、「あなたは幸せですか。」と問われたならば何と答えるでしょうか。今回はその部分を少しだけ英語で紐解いてみることにいたしましょう。

Words: Opposites, Replacements, and Slight Differences

This month, I would like to focus on vocabulary ...

in the form of *opposites*, *replacements* and vocabulary that reflects slight *differences*.

What is the **opposite** of 'happy'? If you answered 'unhappy,' that is correct. If you answered 'sad,' that is also correct. Let's try the same thing with 'sad.' If you said that the opposite of 'sad' is 'happy,' I would agree. If you said that the opposite of 'sad' is 'unsad,' I would disagree. So, what is going on?

The world of opposites is quite interesting.

There are '*truly opposite*' opposites. These come in the form of a *different word*.

Before – After / Active – Lazy / Friend – Enemy / Young – Old / Rural – Urban ... and so on.

There are '*opposites-by-prefix/suffix*' ... those that use '*dis-*,' '*im-*,' '*mis-*,' '*in-*,' '*un-*' or '*-ful/-less*'.

Approve – *Disapprove* / Possible – *Impossible* / Behave – *Misbehave* /
Accurate – *Inaccurate* / Fair – *Unfair* / Useful – *Useless*

And then there are opposites that can be shown either way.

This is where the **power** of vocabulary becomes important. After all, while the opposite of *polite* can be either *impolite* or *rude*, *impolite* is much softer than the hard-sounding word 'rude.' If someone informs you that you are the opposite of *correct*, would you rather be *incorrect* or *wrong*; being *incorrect* usually doesn't sting quite as much as being just plain wrong. Similarly, if you are not successful at being successful, would you prefer being *unsuccessful* or experiencing *failing*. If you are supposed to provide truthful information (in other words, you are supposed to tell the truth), which is worse: being accused of *misinforming* (from *to mis+inform*) or *lying* (from *to lie*)?

Interesting is an interesting word, but often use of a replacement word can make the idea ... well, more interesting. For example, an 'interesting' question is also a *meaningful question*, a *thoughtful question*, or even a *provocative question*. Interesting people are usually also *remarkable people*, *impressive people*, *fascinating people*, or, to put it politely, perhaps *odd people*. Another way of complimenting someone for doing interesting work would be to say it was *creative work*, *innovative work*, *compelling work*, or *stimulating work*.

Finally, remember that there are groups of words which seem to say the same thing ... but upon deeper consideration, have meaningful differences. Think about groups like these:

Set 1: popular, famous, common, normal, usual, well-known

Beat Takeshi is both *famous* and *popular*, but I wouldn't refer to him as *common*.
SUV cars are becoming more *popular* and *common*, but they are neither *usual* nor *famous*.
Typhoons are *common* and *normal* in the fall, but not *usual* or *popular*.

Set 2: 'looks' versus 'looks like' and 'seems' versus 'seems to be' and 'seems like'

It looks cold.	It looks like it is cold.	It seems like it is cold. (odd)
He looks tired.	He looks like he is tired.	It looks like he is tired.
		It seems (like) he is tired. (odd)
She seems happy.	It seems like she is happy.	She seems to be happy.
		She seems like she is happy. (odd)

The best way to 'figure out' all of these opposites, replacements and slight differences: read, read and then read some more. As you 'experience' more and more language, you will start to 'see' how these words are used.

Next REAL ENGLISH: SEPTEMBER !

◇◇暑い日が続いています。今週は平均 32°Cというところでしょうか。ちなみに私のデスク上の温度計は 79.5°Fになっています。エアコンが入って快適です。先般、様々な国の人々が、摂氏と華氏の両方で記録的な最高気温を示している温度計の前で記念写真をする様子がニュースで流れていました。このカップルの国では°C・°Fどっちなんだろうか、この人は？この人は？と考えていましたが、グローバル化が急速に進む中、チャット GPT のようなビッグデータをベースとした世の中ならば、もはやこれまでの概念では説明できないことばかりになるのでしょうか。知らないことは「理解したい」から「理解しなくていいや」にならないよう、勉強し続けなければならないと思う毎日です。いつになっても、学ぶ気持ちは「暑い」まま、いや「熱い」ままでいたいものです。「熱さ」に負けても、「暑さ」には負けないう皆さんもご自愛のほど。(文責 伴)

青森県英語教育学会 Real English 第5号

2023年(令和5年)8月2日発行

発行者 青森県英語教育学会 (ASELE)

代表者 丹藤永也

発行所 〒036-8560 弘前市文京町1 弘前大学教育学部英語教育講座内

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