

Submitted by: GENERATION CURES

TITLE: SYNONYMS

SUBJECT: English Language Arts

GRADE: 3rd & 4th

RECOMMENDED TIME: 45 minutes

GENERATION CURES CONTENT: Zebrafish Webisode 2-Instruments of Change

LEARNING GOALS:

Students will learn about synonyms and antonyms. After this lesson, they should be able to broaden their vocabulary by looking for synonyms to common words and expressions. They may use memorization and/or reference materials such as a dictionary or thesaurus.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Computer / Internet / Projector
- Pen / Pencil / Paper
- Zebrafish Webisode 2 “Instruments of Change” (www.kids.generationcures.org)
- Dictionary: define
 - Endangered species- anyone or anything whose continued existence is threatened by extinction.
 - Global warming- an increase in the earth’s atmospheric and oceanic temperatures, usually associated with an increase in greenhouse gases that are formed from pollutants like car exhaust.
 - Healthcare- Vita discusses raising money for the specific issue of healthcare. Healthcare is the effort to care for individuals by trained medical and health professionals. More broadly it refers to the effort to pay for that care through insurance providers and other revenue sources.

BACKGROUND:

In Webisode #2 of Zebrafish, the teens get together for their second band meeting. Vita doesn’t have much hope – none of the other band members play an instrument. Disaster seems certain until computer whiz Jay has a brilliant idea. The kids can create a virtual band. As other kids reveal their talents, it seems like Zebrafish might come to life after all – if the kids work as a team. Vita can play music and sing, Walt can use his artistic skills to draw the band, and Tanya can think of a way to use the video to raise public awareness about a cause. As for Plinko, well, his talents aren’t quite clear yet!

LESSON STEPS:

- **Watch with a Purpose:** Ask students to count how many times students in Zebrafish use the terms “cool” and “awesome” and other similar expressions.
- Have students turn to one another in pairs and count how many conversations occur within the second webisode, counting whether or not the characters use the same vocabulary.
- **Words about Words:** Teach students the meaning of ‘antonym’ and ‘synonym.’ Instruct them that a thesaurus, whether printed or online, helps us to find antonyms and synonyms of words, which can help broaden our vocabulary.
 - Antonym- a word that means the opposite of another word. ‘Good’ is an antonym of ‘bad.’
 - Synonym- a word that means the same as another word. ‘nice,’ ‘great,’ and ‘excellent’ could all be synonyms of ‘good.’
- Direct students to think of words that they use often in conversations at home. Feel free to include common slang.
- **Words on words:** Draw a chart on the board to fill in with student’s input on words, finding at least one synonym and antonym for each word they think they use too often or is their favorite word. Try to include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions.

Example:

Favorite word	Antonym	Synonym
Awesome	Boring, dull	Cool, interesting
Good	Bad, awful	Great, okay
Walking	Standing, sitting	On foot
Friend	Enemy, opponent, stranger	Pal, companion, buddy
Up	Down	Above
In	Out	Within

- Ask students to present to the class, standing by their chair, a sentence using one of their lesser-used words.
- **Real-World Application:** Ask students how they could have used different words when they’ve communicated in face-to-face conversations, emails, letters, Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter. Could they have saved space on Twitter by using a different word?
- Emphasize to students the importance of accurate communication, politeness, and awareness of common miscommunications
- Challenge students to choose five alternative words or phrases to those they most often employ and use the new words or phrases for the remainder of the week.

EXTENSIONS:

- Ask students to take their list of major words and phrases and expand their chart.