

LESSON 12

MORE HOMONYMS

Okay, we've got another story for you. This one happened just last week. Now, Mike had been jocking this girl, Fran, forever. She works at the local record store, and every day after school Mike would walk in and ask her about such-and-such cool record, in the hopes that it would spark a conversation. (*Not that he actually has good taste in music-he just keeps stealing my music magazines to pick up girls!-Alex*) Anyhow, one day it finally pays off, and Fran agrees to go out with Mike. He leaves his number and she promises to call later in the week to make plans.

When Fran finally calls, Mike isn't at home. Wayne picks up the phone, and Fran asks, "Mike?" See, Fran has no idea Mike is an identical twin. Luckily, Mike had told Wayne all about her. Wayne decides to play along for a while, so he chats her up for a few minutes. Wayne pretends he's Mike the whole time, and arranges to go see the latest Coen brothers' movie with her on Friday. When he hangs up, he realizes that this is a prime opportunity to pull a supreme prank. When Mike gets home, Wayne begs and pleads for him to play along. At first Mike doesn't want to, since he'd just worked his butt off trying to get Fran to go out with him in the first place. But finally, the wiseass in him wins out, and he agrees.

Friday night rolls around, and Mike goes to pick Fran up. Wayne, meanwhile, is already waiting at the theater, wearing the exact outfit Mike is (we keep a few sets of those around, just in case). Mike drops Fran off at the door, saying that he'll park the car and *come* back. Thirty seconds later, Wayne walks up to Fran and asks if she wants to go in. She does a double take, and then makes some crack about how fast that was. Wayne just shrugs and they go in and take their seats. Halfway through the previews, Wayne says he's going to get some popcorn. Mike, of course, is waiting outside the door with a huge bucket of popcorn and some Junior Mints, for good measure. Fran is definitely a little weirded out at this point, and it doesn't get any better when Mike gets up to go to the bathroom, only to return fifteen seconds later with his fly unzipped and toilet paper stuck to his shoe (a particularly brilliant touch, we thought.) Finally, the movie ends and Wayne goes off to get the car. Actually, though, he runs behind the theater just as Mike drives up in the car. For a second, we think Fran wasn't going to get in the car-she looks so, totally, completely freaked at this point. But she does, and she calms down a bit as Mike sweet-talks her.

That is, she calms down until Wayne comes flying out of the bushes and throws himself on the windshield of the car.

Fran screams bloody murder, and we burst into laughter like a bunch of idiots-we were practically holding our sides in. Fran, though, didn't find it so funny. She totally let one fly at Mike, and he had a black eye for a week after. (Note to selves: Never pull pranks on girls with black belts.)

Mike's waiting for the eye to heal before asking her on a second date.

MORE HOMONYMS

I told my brothers that they couldn't use my special, expensive **stationery** to write out their grocery list, and that if I found it had moved from its **stationary** position on my desk there would be hell to pay.

stationery (n): writing materials

stationary (adj): fixed, unmoving

My father believes in the **principle** of working for what you get. In fact, I would say that's probably his **principal** belief – he puts it above all others.

principle (n): rule, standard

principal (adj): chief, foremost (also, of course, as a noun it means the guy at your school who makes all the rules)

I needed to find my copy of *Hamlet* before I could write my essay, because I wanted to **cite** the professor who had written the introduction. However, it seemed my brothers had moved my book to some other **site**.

cite (v): to quote someone as an authority

site (n): place, location

My brothers often **flout** my father's rules, and then **flaunt** it at school – they like having reputations for being bad-asses.

flout (v): to openly disobey

flaunt (v): to show off

When my brothers told me that **incredible** story about meeting Britney Spears at our local mall, I have to admit I was pretty **incredulous**.

incredible (adj): something so surprising or unusual it almost can't be believed

incredulous (adj): unable to believe something

My brothers often use their sweet, **ingenuous** appearance to fool people – you'd never think such nice-looking boys would actually be such devious, **ingenious** troublemakers.

ingenuous (adj): innocent, inexperienced

ingenious (adj): extremely clever

My brothers **loathe** doing chores. They are especially **loath** to clean the bathroom, even though they're the only ones who mess it up.

loathe (v): to hate, despise

loath (adj): to be unwilling to do something

I mean, it's certainly not my fault there's always an **odorous** haze around the bathroom. It's an **odious** task, but they have to take responsibility.

odorous (adj): awful smelling

odious (adj): hateful

My brothers could clean the bathroom **alternately**; one week Mike could do it, then Wayne the next. **Alternatively**, they could do it together each week.

alternately (*adv*): one after the other, in turn

alternatively (*adv*): on the other hand

When he left for a business trip last month, my **perspicacious** father knew that he needed to leave very clear, **perspicuous** instructions for my brothers if he wanted the dog and plants to be alive when he got back.

perspicacious (*adj*): wise, insightful

perspicuous (*adj*): easily understood

Our principal, Mr. Limbergh, has a **plenitude** of **platitudes** that he likes whipping out for all occasions. His favorite is "Haste makes waste," which he yells at people who run in the halls.

plenitude (*n*): abundance, plenty

platitude (*n*): a trite, overused saying

At Mississippi Fried Chicken, some employees get year-end bonuses. However, the **prerequisite** for getting that **perk** is working at MFC for two full years – a task I'm not sure I'm up for.

prerequisite (*n*): a condition that must be met before beginning something

perk (*n*): a perk or privilege given in addition to one's salary

Mike kept putting off his English essay, so as a **stimulus** my dad said he would buy Mike a case of Coke, his favorite **stimulant**, if he managed to write the first page that night.

stimulus (*n*): something that encourages something to begin or develop

stimulant (*n*): a substance that causes excitement (caffeine, some narcotics, etc.)

My brothers wished they lived in an **amoral** universe, where their **immoral** behavior wouldn't be a problem.

amoral (*adj*): unconcerned with morals

immoral (*adj*): acts against accepted morals

The difference here is that the first word describes something lacking any kind of moral system, good or bad. The second describes a specifically negative moral system.

Whenever I'm fighting with my brothers, Dad tries to be a **disinterested** judge and come up with the fairest solution. He always takes time to listen to us, even if he's totally **uninterested** in what we're talking about.

disinterested (*adj*): without bias; impartial

uninterested (*adj*): lacking interest in something

My brothers usually do a pretty **unexceptional** job on their homework. They always land right in the middle of a class. My dad wants them to get straight A's, but my brothers think their performance is **unexceptionable**.

unexceptional (*adj*): not special

unexceptionable (*adj*): good enough, with no apparent reason for complaint

Right now, my brothers' stupid acts are pretty **venial**. However, Dad

worries about them going to college, which is a hotbed of much more **venal** behavior.

venial (*adj*): minor, easily excused

venal (*adj*): corruptible

Don't confuse either of these words with **venereal** (*adj*): spread through sexual contact. Hmm, major social embarrassment is possible with that mix-up!

If my brothers had the power to become **invisible**, they'd be **invincible** – they'd never get caught.

invisible (*adj*): unable to be seen

invincible (*adj*): impossible to defeat or destroy

When I was eleven I blamed my brothers for **dissolving** my science fair project, a jar of dirt that I'd been keeping the fridge. They were **absolved** when my dad confessed he'd mistakenly washed the jar out.

dissolve (*v*): to breakdown in water, to fade away and disappear

absolve (*v*): to clear someone of guilt

When my brothers think a waitress is cute, they usually leave her a **gratuitously** large **gratuity**.

gratuitous (*adj*): unnecessary

gratuity (*n*): extra money given for a service; a tip

At the last school dance, I watched my brother oscillate between these two freshman girls before finally deciding to osculate one of them. It was totally disgusting.

oscillate (*v*): to swing between two points

osculate (*v*): to kiss

Walter is so sure of himself, he's convinced that his admission to that eminent Ivy league college is imminent.

eminent (*adj*): important, distinguished, respected

imminent (*adj*): about to happen any minute

My brothers are totally **edacious**, and when they're eating they lose any concern for manners that they ever had. I'm always shocked by their **audacious** behavior in restaurants. They don't care who's watching as they shovel it in.

edacious (*adj*): voracious, loving to eat

audacious (*adj*): bold, unconcerned with authority

When they were little, my brothers were **inveterate** torturers of small **invertebrates**.

Inveterate (*adj*): unable to be changed (generally applied to a bad habit)

invertebrate (*n*): an animal without a spine (like a worm)

My father thought that getting my brothers a tutor might **affect** their grades, but so far it doesn't seem to have had any **effect**.

affect (*v*): to change, to influence

effect (*n*): result, outcome