



Funny

The meanings of the word *funny* can be loosely separated into two groups: humorous and non-humorous. This simple distinction is often referred to as “*funny* ha-ha or *funny* peculiar.” Students may be more familiar with the word *funny* in reference to things that are humorous or silly than the non-humorous meanings, such as curious or odd.

Students may encounter both definition categories in the texts they read. A fictional young hero may look for a villain in an abandoned house and something might feel funny about the house. In this context, the meaning of *funny* is not humorous; rather, *funny* means that something feels unusual or odd. This feeling may help the hero find and defeat the villain. In a different story, the class clown may say a funny joke in front of her classmates at school. This use of the word *funny* refers to the humorous use of the word.

Follow-Up

- Have you ever felt that something was not quite right even if you didn’t know why you felt that way? Describe the situation and how you felt.
- How has a funny character in a story you have read acted around other people?

The Spanish Connection

The etymology of the word *funny* begins with the word *fun*. *Funny* is the word *fun* with the suffix of -y. *Fun* originates from the word *fon*, meaning to be foolish or make a fool of. The word *fon* has not been used since the 15th century. The suffix -y descends from Old English and generally means “having the qualities of.” Interestingly, it was not until the early 1800’s in the American South that the word *funny* evolved from its comical, foolish origin to also mean strange or odd.

Neither *fun* nor *funny* have a Spanish cognate, but some relevant synonyms do. For example, the cognate of comical is *cómico*.

Word Changes

In the 1870’s, comic strips in the newspapers in Canada and the United States began to be called *funnies*. During the 1920-1950’s it was common to say “see you in the funny papers,” as an ironic farewell or goodbye.





Funny

Funny as in different from the normal (adj)

- peculiar
- odd
- strange
- curious
- unusual
- quirky
- perplexing
- unwell

Funny as in causing laughter or amusement (adj)

- humorous
- comical
- amusing
- silly

A funny remark (noun)

- joke
- witticism
- crack
- quip
- pun
- jest

Funny as is involving deception (adj)

- deceptive
- deceitful
- suspicious
- dubious
- underhanded

Funny

COMMON PHRASES

- Funny paper
- Funny stuff
- Funny bone
- Funny looking
- Make fun of

IDIOMS

- Funny as a barrel of monkeys
- Funny as a crutch
- Funny business
- See you in the funny papers

SPANISH CONNECTIONS

- comical / cómico
- curious / curioso
- peculiar / peculiar





Funny

Funny as in different from the normal (adj)

Funny as in causing laughter or amusement (adj)

A funny remark (noun)

Funny as is involving deception (adj)

Funny

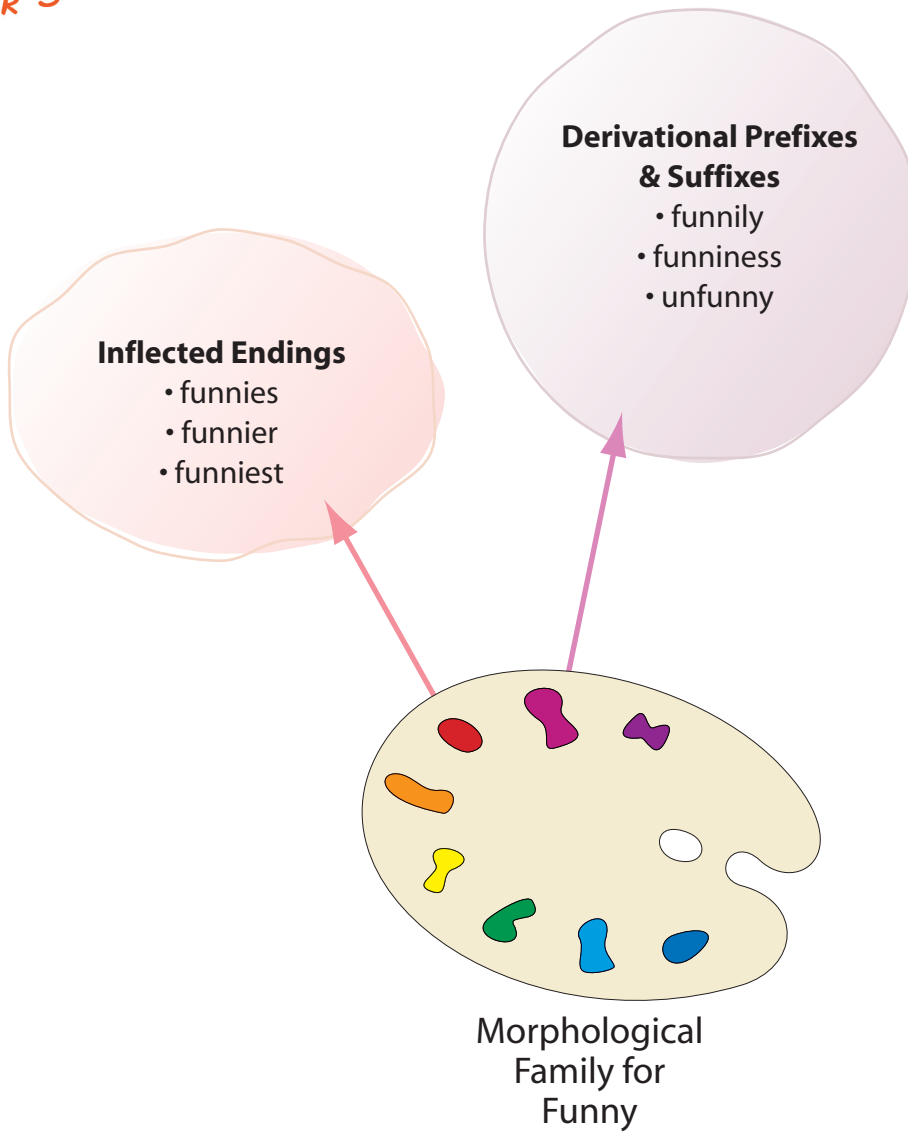
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