



Happy

Happy is a very common word, but it does have some subtleties in the ways it is used. Happy is primarily used as an adjective to describe an enjoyable or contented feeling. Students feel happy when they earn a good grade on an assignment. A child feels happy if she receives a gift that she wanted for her birthday. A dog is very happy when his family comes home at the end of the day.

In some uses, however, *happy* conveys a meaning closer to satisfaction or acceptance rather than joy. To say, “The performers were happy with the audience turnout,” suggests that the attendance was sufficient but a higher turnout would have been even better. “I am happy with this batch of cookies” most likely means the cookies are acceptable in appearance or taste, but are not quite as good as the baker had hoped.

Happy sometimes means “willing,” as in “I would be happy to cut the grass for my brother this weekend.” You might not mind helping your brother, but mowing the lawn probably is not a blissful activity for you. Yet another subtle use for *happy* is “fortunate” or “convenient.” A happy accident is an event that was unexpected but turned out to be beneficial. Happy appears as part of many greetings as well, such as “Happy Birthday!” and “Happy New Year!”

Happy shows up in many colorful phrases and expressions, and it has many synonyms, making it an excellent word to explore on a word line.

Follow-Ups

- What is the difference between being happy and being ecstatic?
- When might we use the word *happy* when we actually mean appropriate or suitable?

The Spanish Connection

The word *happy* comes from an Early Middle-English word, *hap*. It is believed that *hap* is an adaptation of an Old Norse word, *happ*, which means chance, or good luck. The Spanish word for happy is *feliz*. Although *feliz* is not a cognate of *happy*, *feliz* is related to other words in English such as *felicity* or *felicitous*.

Word Changes

When *-happy* is added to the end of a word, as in money-happy or clothes-happy, the idea is one of excessiveness or spontaneity. A money-happy person is one who cares too much about money. A clothes-happy friend may impulsively buy more clothes than he can use because he is fascinated by new fashions.



Happy



Happy as in an overexcited feeling

- ecstatic
- overjoyed
- delighted
- thrilled
- elated
- jubilant

Happy as in fortunate

- fortuitous
- auspicious
- fortunate
- lucky

Happy as in something that is a good fit

- apt
- appropriate
- acceptable
- suitable

Happy as in a joyful feeling

- content
- euphoric
- felicitous
 - glad
 - joyful
 - joyous
- pleased
- blithe
 - gay
- delighted
- cheery
- merry

Happy as in a peaceful feeling

- halcyon
- blissful
- serene



Happy

COMMON PHRASES

- Happy Birthday
- Happy New Year
- Happy ending
- Happy to help
- Couldn't be happier
- In high spirits
- Happy event

IDIOMS

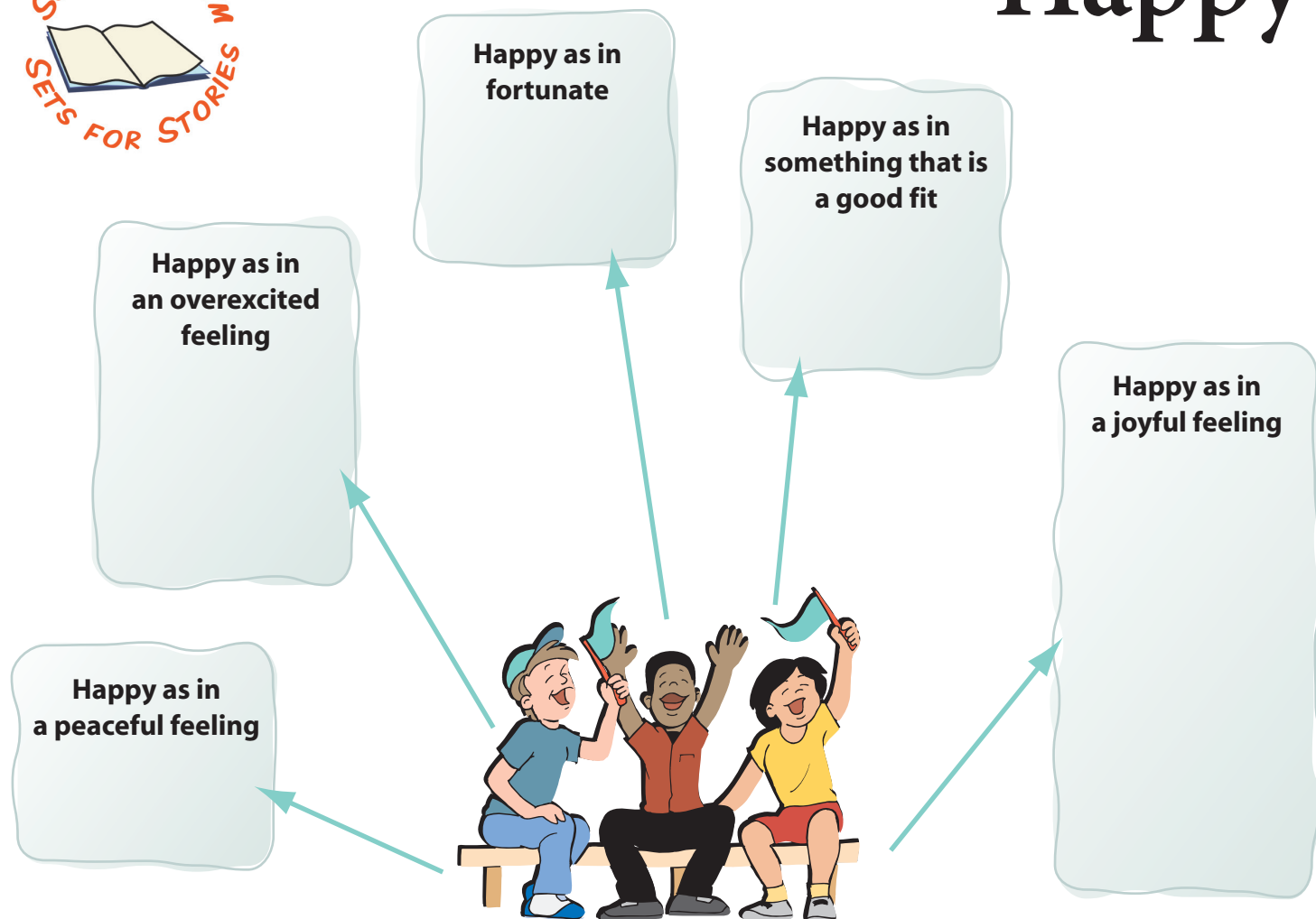
- Happy camper
- A happy medium
- Happy go lucky
- Happy as a clam
- On cloud nine
- Seventh heaven
- Over the moon
- Happy family

THE SPANISH CONNECTION

- fortuitous / fortuito(a)
- euphoric / eufórico(a)
- felicitous / feliz
- serene / sereno
- jubilant / de júbilo



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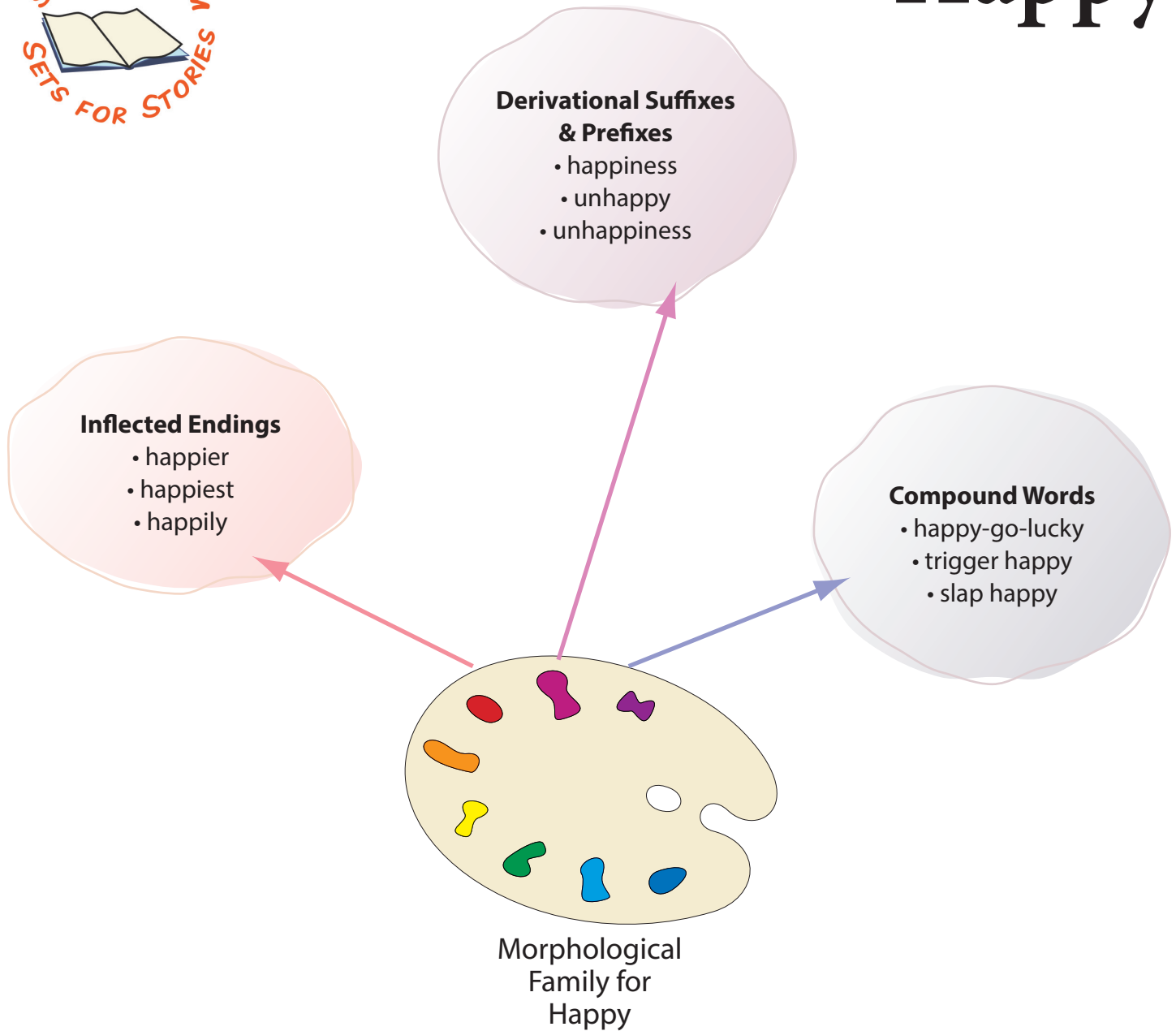
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