

## Writer's Craft: Nibble, Munch, Chomp!

**Learning Objective:** Analyse how synonyms enhance meaning.

Start working through the exercises, while continuing to read from chapters 34 - 40.

After reading Chapter 35 answer the comprehension questions.

**Ex. 1** Copywork this extract:



Digdown the old groundhog, popped up to munch on berries.  
Broadfoot, the giant bull moose, came by to chew on tree

shoots.  
Chapter 35, page 98



In this extract, notice how Brown uses two different words, "munch" and "chew" which give the meaning of eating. Words like these which have similar meanings are called **synonyms**.

Brown also describes other characters eating from Roz's garden:

- Tawny and Crownpoint and their fawns, happily **nibble** on the garden.
- The beavers **gnaw** on a shrub.

By using synonyms of eat, Brown makes his writing more interesting to read. It would be really boring if he just described each animal as just eating:

*The deer came by to eat from the garden. The beavers came by to eat shrub.  
Digdown came by to eat the berries. Broadfoot came by to eat the tree shoots.*  
Boring!

The different synonyms also give us an image of how each animal ate.

- "Nibble" suggests a small, delicate, and careful way of eating. This gives the deer family a sense of gentleness.
- "Gnaw" implies a more vigorous and persistent type of eating where you chew and bite with the teeth. This word choice emphasises the beavers' characteristic behaviour of using their sharp teeth to chew on wood.

## Synonyms for Shades of Meaning

**Learning Objective:** Learn a variety of synonyms for 'ate', and understand how they differ from each other.

**Ex. 2** Read the following poem and underline all of the words that give the meaning "to eat".

### **The Dog Ate The Bone**

**By Melissa Forney**

The dog ate the bone.  
Don't you think that's kind of weak?  
The verb here is "ate"  
But it needs a little tweak.  
The dog ate the bone,  
Let's try another verb.  
One that's really fun to write,  
One that's quite superb.  
The dog could devour the bone,  
Nibble, gnaw, or munch it.  
The dog could snark-up the bone,  
Gobble, bite or crunch it.  
The dog could consume the bone,  
Oh yes, that dog could do it,  
Inhale the bone, impale the bone,  
Swallow, gulp or chew it.  
So when you're writing to impress,  
Don't use a verb that fizzles.  
Think of every word you know,  
And give me one that sizzles!

## Vocabulary Focus: Synonyms for Eat

**Ex. 3** Read the following definitions of all of the words that mean "to eat" taken from the poem "The Dog Ate the Bone".

Time to role play, or get some real snacks! Have a go at eating like each of the words. What is your favourite way to eat?

1. Devour: to eat something very quickly
2. Nibble: to take small, quick bites
3. Gnaw: to chew something slowly
4. Munch: to chew noisily
5. Gobble: to eat quickly and greedily
6. Bite: to take a piece off with your teeth
8. Crunch: to chew very noisily when eating something crunchy
9. Consume: to eat or drink something
10. Inhale: to breathe in, but here it means to eat very, very quickly
11. Impale: To pierce through an object
12. Swallow: to pass food down your throat
13. Gulp: to swallow fast
14. Chew: to grind up with your teeth before swallowing

**Ex. 4** Fill in the blanks. Use different words each time.

1. How do you eat crisps? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Emma wanted to savour the last bit of her brownie, so instead of gobbling it down, she \_\_\_\_\_ at it.
3. When we \_\_\_\_\_ food, we first, \_\_\_\_\_ a piece off with our teeth, then we \_\_\_\_\_ it properly, mashing it into pulp, before we \_\_\_\_\_ it.
4. Hamsters \_\_\_\_\_ their food, but horses \_\_\_\_\_ theirs.

## Writing Activity: I was so hungry I...

**Learning Objective:** Use the various of synonyms for 'ate' to write a short paragraph.

**Ex. 5** Write a paragraph using as many synonyms for 'ate' as you can. Remember to be as descriptive as possible!

Use these words to help you with your writing. You can change the form of the word if you need to.

eat	devour	nibble	gnaw	munch
	gobble	bite	crunch	consume
inhale	impale	swallow	gulp	chew

Use this sentence to help you begin:

**I was starving when I got home.**

## Comprehension Questions

**Ex. 6** Read Chapter 35 of "The Wild Robot" then answer these questions.

1 *Early next morning, peeps and honks and splashes began echoing across the calm water.*

What does this sentence tell you about how the animals were feeling?

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2 Why did Roz struggle to make a decision of whether to help save her son?

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3 How do you think Roz felt at not being able to help protect her son from Rockmouth?

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