

Untidy Synonyms

In this activity, you'll reread Linda Ashman's quirky poem "Untidy Ursula" to understand why the language she uses is so meaningful. You'll also learn great new words and their synonyms! (Synonyms are two different words that share the same meaning.)

Directions: For each word in the word bank below, find its synonym in bold in the article, and write it in the blank on the right.

As usual, Ursula's room is **chaotic**,
 Piled with junk, **mundane** and **exotic**—
 A **wrecked** ukulele; buckets of dirt;
 An **unused** umbrella; a torn undershirt;
 An old unicycle, **encrusted** with rust;
Unearthly cobwebs; **unspeakable** dust;
Sticky utensils; **unraveling** rugs—
 An **untidy** universe perfect for bugs.

Father, upset at this **unsightly** scene,
 Says, "It's **unkempt**! I urge you to clean!"
 Ursula, **peering** from under a heap,
Utters, "I would, but I'm buried too deep."

Word Bank

looking	_____
disordered	_____
unworldly	_____
ruined	_____
messy	_____
ordinary	_____
crazy	_____
goeoy	_____
unusual	_____
untangling	_____
new	_____
says	_____
coated	_____
unmentionable	_____
abominable	_____

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Critical Thinking

On a separate piece of paper, rewrite Linda Ashman's poem substituting each bolded word with its synonym from the Word Bank. Now read your newly created poem and answer the questions below.

Make sure to support your ideas using information and details from the new poem!

- 1. When you plugged in the new synonyms into the old poem, how did the poem's structure change? (Hint: What happened to the rhyme scheme?)**

- 2. Compare and contrast your poem with Linda Ashman's version. How are they alike? How are they different?**

- 3. Do you think your version is as poetic as Linda Ashman's? Why or why not?**

- 4. If you had to choose five adjectives to describe your room, what would they be?**

Extra Credit!

Now try writing a short poem about your room using the adjectives you picked above. You can use "Untidy Ursula" for inspiration.