

## Changing Words, Changing Times Answer Key

1. A euphemism is a polite or gentle way of saying something unpleasant or sensitive. People use them to show respect or avoid offending others.
2. "Insane asylum" → "mental institution" → "mental health facility."
3. Because society wanted to use language that showed respect and focused on the person, not the condition.
4. Because people's beliefs and feelings about death shift over time, and language evolves to match changing attitudes.
5. Answers will vary (e.g., "passed away" instead of "died").

- **Teaching Tips:**

- Begin by asking students to brainstorm words from history that have changed due to social awareness.
- Discuss how euphemisms can reveal attitudes toward groups or topics (e.g., mental health, disability, death).
- Emphasize how word choice can shape perception and influence social progress.

- **Differentiation Strategies:**

- For **Grades 8-9**: provide short examples and ask students to match older and newer terms.
- For **Grades 10-12**: assign small research tasks—students trace the history of one euphemism (e.g., "custodian" replacing "janitor").

- **Extension Ideas:**

- Have students create a "**Timeline of Politeness**" showing how certain words have evolved.
- Assign a brief essay: *How do euphemisms show society's values at different times in history?*
- Explore global examples: how do euphemisms differ across cultures and languages?