Name _____ Date _____

Shades of Meaning

FOCUS Synonyms are words with the same or nearly the same meaning. Words with differing **shades of meaning** are similar to synonyms. The words mean nearly the same thing, but there are slight differences in their meanings.
Example: *small* → *tiny* → *miniscule*
At first glance, these words all have similar meanings. They all mean "little." However, as you read the words from left to right, you will notice that each of the words expresses a greater degree of "smallness." For example, *tiny* suggests a smaller size than *small*, and *miniscule* suggests an even smaller size than *tiny*.

PRACTICE **Read each set of words. Rank the words according to their shades of meaning. The word that expresses the weakest or least degree of meaning should come first. The second word should be the medium degree of meaning. The strongest, or most powerful, word should come third. Write the words in their correct order on the line.**

1. overjoyed, content, happy

_____

2. hot, scorching, warm

_____

3. clever, brilliant, intelligent

_____

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APPLY **Read each pair of words. Think about the relationship between the first word and the second word. Then look at the words listed below. Write the word that has the strongest or most powerful shade of meaning on the line.**

4. cool → cold → _____

uncomfortable freezing weather

5. sad → depressed → _____

terrifying heartbroken exhausted

6. nibble → eat → _____

gobble chew picky

7. look → stare → _____

avoid different glare

8. unusual → strange → _____

bizarre normal reaction

9. slim → thin → _____

allow skinny selfish

10. upset → angry → _____

problem uninterested furious

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