

Etymology

Languages

How word meanings drift over time, in recognisable patterns.

The standard categories of semantic change.

Change	What happens	Example
Broadening	Meaning widens	'dog' — one breed to all
Narrowing	Meaning shrinks	'meat' — any food to flesh
Amelioration	Becomes more positive	'nice' — foolish to pleasant
Pejoration	Becomes more negative	'silly' — blessed to foolish
Metaphor	Extended by analogy	'mouse' — animal to device
Semantic bleaching	Loses force	'literally', 'awesome'

Complaints about words changing meaning are as old as writing. Every word you consider correct is the product of the same process.