

Words with the Prefixes *sym-* and *syn-*

In “Lichens: The ‘Tough Guy’ Plants,” Vince Brach uses a word that may be new to you, *symbiosis*. The parts of the word provide clues to its meaning. *Sym-* means “together” or “with,” while *-biosis* means “way of living.” Therefore, *symbiosis* means “different species of plants or animals that live together,” as alga and fungus live together in lichens. *Syn-* is another form of the same prefix.

Read the definitions below. Then use context clues in each of the following sentences to select the correct definition of the boldfaced word.

- A close association between two or more organisms of different species
- B sharing or understanding the feelings of another
- C having an exact match of form and arrangement of parts on opposite sides
- D something that stands for something else
- E a meeting for discussion of a topic
- F a set of symptoms or conditions that together indicate the presence of an illness

Write the letter of the correct definition on the line provided.

1. The flag is a **symbol** of our country. _____
2. People filed into the hall twenty minutes before the **symposium** on the environment was about to begin. _____
3. Maria was **sympathetic** when her friend lost because she knew how her friend felt. _____
4. The artist carefully carved the same design on both sides of the picture frame, so the piece would be **symmetrical**. _____
5. The **symbiosis** between ants and aphids provides shelter for the aphids and food for the ants. _____
6. Pain, tingling, and weakness in the hands are a common **syndrome** among people who work long hours at computer keyboards. _____

Challenge

Look up these words in a dictionary: *asymmetrical*, *synapse*, *photosynthesis*, and *synchronize*. Create a diagram that explains the meaning of each word.