

Ambiguity

Statements that are **ambiguous** have more than one meaning. Often, these make us laugh.

- Explain why these examples are funny.
- On a separate sheet, write out a version of each which is not ambiguous.



Ambiguous statement	Why it is funny	What the writer really means
The goalkeeper dived for the ball. He decided to head it. It came off first time.		
If your child does not like milk, try heating it slowly in boiling water.		
Pills should be kept in a cabinet. If you have children, make sure they are locked away.		
Headaches? Get your eyes tested. We can help get rid of them.		
She found a van full of sheep which had broken down.		



- Write four **ambiguous** statements.
- Ask a partner to explain the two possible meanings of each statement.

Teachers' note This activity links with sentence activity work, as many examples of ambiguity will be the result of misplaced pronouns. The children could make an explanatory book of these, drawing cartoons to illustrate the comic meanings when they occur.

Developing Literacy
Text Activities Book G
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Activity Sheet 5 - Level C (Extension)

	Word	Match	Write	✓	✗
1.	insecure	completely wet through			
2.	microbe	calamity, terrible happening			
3.	typical	not safe			
4.	silo	to take in turns			
5.	concentrate	relating to the earliest history			
6.	reluctant	not clear, obscure			
7.	saturated	a tool or device			
8.	nitrogen	storehouse for grain			
9.	variation	a tiny organism, germ			
10.	appliance	to put all your thoughts to something			
11.	authentic	the shape of a new moon			
12.	tattoo	a change, something different			
13.	disaster	a person not in the armed forces			
14.	fragrant	a gas of the atmosphere			
15.	indistinct	normal, characteristic			
16.	primitive	an ink drawing on the skin			
17.	territory	genuine, real, true			
18.	crescent	sweet-smelling			
19.	alternate	not keen, unwilling			
20.	civilian	an area of land			

Now try these

(a) Add letter patterns from the box to complete each list word.

rant rim cent robe tern too

tat_____

con_____rate

p_____itive

al_____ate

frag_____

mic_____