

## Figurative

Here is an attempt at figurative connection:

### Chameleon

Sense 0

Definition: a small slow-moving Old World lizard with a prehensile tail, long extensible tongue, protruding eyes that rotate independently, and a highly developed ability to change color.

Sense 1

Figurative: Sense 0

Definition: a person who changes their opinions or behavior according to the situation

Example count: 1

Example 0: voters have misgivings about his performance as a political chameleon

### Problems

The target does not specify what its figurative properties are – are they protruding eyes, rotatable eye sockets, a tongue longer than its body, or the ability to change colour? (or the ability to change a seemingly fixed attribute – other animals have this ability – cuttlefish, but they are not celebrated the way a chameleon is – Old World probably tells us why). Does “to change colour” sell the chameleon short – it can change the colour of any part of its body?

A barnacle is frequently used figuratively – its ability to cling tenaciously to something, or its ability to impede progress by ruining the streamlining of a ship’s hull, or both together.

An elephant – it is the largest land animal, so personifying the largest of its type, as a whale personifies the largest animal, or a dinosaur a large scary monster, or something that died out because it couldn’t adapt, but then birds. A figurative use is based on the popular understanding, using detailed analysis would be unwise.

### Whale

Definition: a very large marine mammal with a streamlined hairless body, a horizontal tail fin, and a blowhole on top of the head for breathing.

The definition doesn’t match the cachet – the blue whale is the largest animal that ever lived, so use of whale figuratively has a lot to live up to. As the machine only has adjectives to guide it, perhaps “very large” should be “very large to extremely large”.

### Elephant

Definition: a heavy plant-eating mammal with a prehensile trunk, long curved ivory tusks, and large ears, native to Africa and southern Asia. It is the largest living land animal.

The definition gives a hint of its importance, but memory is another aspect – “An elephant never forgets”.

### Barnacle

Sense 0

Definition: a marine crustacean with an external shell, which attaches itself permanently to a variety of surfaces. Barnacles feed by filtering particles from the water using their modified feathery legs.

Sub Sense 0

Definition: used figuratively to describe a tenacious person or thing

The sub sense frightens away searching – a marine crustacean is not a person. No mention is made of its ability to impede progress, by slowing a ship. We could change it to

### **Barnacle**

Sense 0

Definition: a marine crustacean ...

Figurative Sub Sense 0

Definition: a tenacious person or thing

Figurative Sub Sense 1

Definition: a thing which impedes progress

If we fail on the Sense, we still search figurative sub senses – a bit messy. The alternative is to have other senses, which point to the main sense – we need to know they are described as barnacles, but are only figuratively so.

### **Barnacle**

Sense 0

Definition: a marine crustacean ...

Sense 1

Figurative Sense 0

Definition: a tenacious person or thing

Sense 2

Figurative Sense 0

Definition: a person or thing which impedes progress

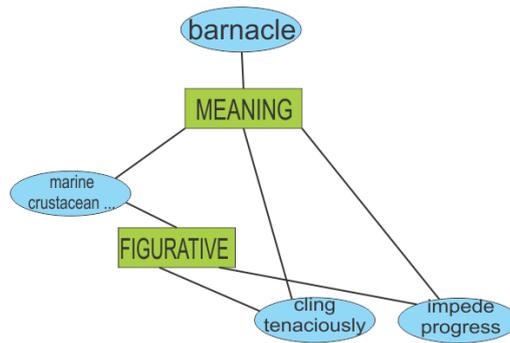
The definition of barnacle doesn't hint at the effect on a ship of its hull being covered with barnacles. Should we attempt to cover the most common figurative uses in the target definition – something like

Definition: a marine crustacean with an external shell, which attaches itself permanently to a variety of surfaces. Barnacles feed by filtering particles from the water using their modified feathery legs. *Barnacles on a ship's hull increase drag.*

We need to avoid a real barnacle picking up a figurative use of barnacle. We could make the definition

Definition: a tenacious person or thing (not a barnacle)

It would be preferable to use the figurative connection to avoid a figurative use. That is



For an elephant, we could say

Definition: a heavy plant-eating mammal with a prehensile trunk, long curved ivory tusks, and large ears, native to Africa and southern Asia. It is the largest living land animal. **An elephant is reputed to have a prodigious memory.**

Are we going to end up with a lot of old wives tales, because they are enshrined in the language?

## Orion Design Note