

How literal ...?

In the contexts below, the task is to decide either how literal a given word within a phrase is, or else how literal the whole phrase is.

Enter a number between 0 and 5.

- * 0 means: Not to be understood literally at all.
- * 5 means: To be understood very literally.
- * Use values in between to grade your decision.

Note: In the examples below, scores don't imply a right answer. The task is subjective and there is not a single correct answer. Instead we are asking for your opinion.

Example 1:

We have three or four months to raise the last million of the appeal . After that , I have been asked by National Neurological Hospital , where I was treated with **brain surgery** , to get involved

How literal is the use of **Surgery** in the phrase **Brain Surgery**?

- YOUR ANSWER: might be 5
- reason: Here “brain surgery” is referred to the real surgical procedure so surgery is used literally

Example 2:

The police voiced some concerns over the location of the **zebra crossing** and state they prefer a pelican as traffic have to stop at red lights

How literal is the use of **Zebra** in the phrase **Zebra Crossing**?

- YOUR ANSWER: might be 1
- reason: “zebra crossing” is not “a crossing for zebra”. Yet it got its name because of stripes of “zebra”. There is therefore some meaning from zebra in the phrase

Example 3:

Many students enter this branch of nursing as a broad base to their nursing career. As **student nurses** they will see medical , surgical , accident and emergency , critical care , care of older people

How literal is the phrase **Student Nurse**?

- YOUR ANSWER: might be 5
- reason: “student nurse” can be literally understood from “student” and “nurse” in the sense a “nurse who is a student”

Example 4:

It seems he can not pursue the case any further ; it 's a **dead end** .

How literal is the phrase [Dead End](#)?

- YOUR ANSWER: might be 3
- reason: “dead” literally means “no life” and “end” means “a final point”. The meaning of “dead end” here is getting literal meaning from “end” and not much literal meaning from “dead”. So I would score this midway between literal and non-literal.