

SEMANTIC MAP NO. 3: The Animacy Boundary

Notes

Transitive Verbs

EXECUTE

SANCTION

Sanction is considered a Janus word, or auto-antonym, e.g. *dust, trim, cleave*.

**THINGS
& ACTIONS**

1 Carry Out, Accomplish,
Fulfill, Complete,
Perform, Do,
Initiate, Start

1 Authorize, Approve,
Ratify, Allow

The OED notes the first use of punish is from 1956; this sense of "impose penalty on" is also carried by the plural noun "part of the law which spells out the penalty for breaking it".

Animacy Boundary

**PEOPLE
& PLACES**

2 KILL

2 Punish, Restrict,
Penalize, Disallow

Usage prefers collective nouns, i.e. nations, organizations, unions.

Word Form Family

execution, **n.** (sense 1 & 2)
unexecuted, **adj.** (sense 1)
unexecutable, **adj.** (sense 1)
executive, **n, adj.** (sense 1)
intr. **verb** (sense 1) (*sports, etc*)
e.g. "you didn't execute well."

sanction, **n.**(sense 1 (2 *Law*))
sanctions, **n.** (sense 2 *Pol, Eco, Mil*) specifically action against animate object.
sanctionable, **adj.** (sense 1)
unsanctioned, **adj.** (sense 1)

While "executing people" is a shortened phrase of "to execute to death" with usage from the 15th century, "sanctioning people" is still considered incorrect in legal circles even though it is wide spread in U.S. politics and journalism.

Thus, while sanction (v) generally and historically refers to making the law and (n) as the law, in legal circles it began to refer to the part of the law that referred to enforcement or punishment. This use has been expanded in modern times, but must refer to an animate object to avoid ambiguity. The plural noun now evoking economic and military coercive action against a target.

Compare:

e.g. "The U.S. sanctioned **Iran**."

"The U.S. sanctioned **the use of force** in Syria."

Etymology

Execute means "follow out"; the root *sequi* is highly generative, i.e., second, sequence, sue, persecute, etc.

Sanction means "act of decreeing" from verb "to make sacred" or "to invest with authority". It shares the same root as *saint* and *sacred*.



Janus word "auto antonym

<https://news.tfonline.com/post/169421017127/janus-words-sanction-and-leave>