

C.S.I.

Clues in Sentences Investigation



C

ES!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY MS. WALSH

Guessing The Meaning Of An Unfamiliar Word...

Sometimes when we are reading, we don't know what a word means! What do we do?

Just like a detective, we have to use clues! There are words or phrases around unfamiliar words that can help us understand the meaning of a word.

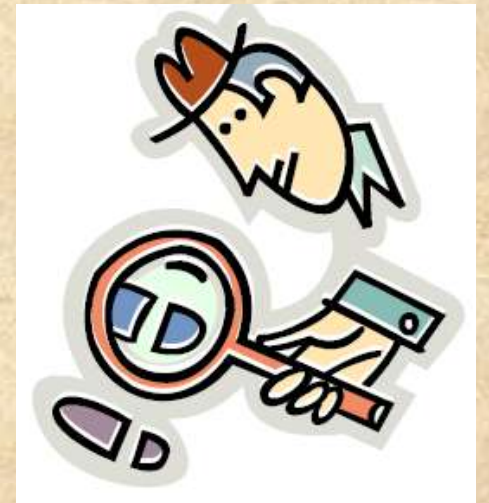
These words or phrases are called context clues.

Learning how to use these clues can help us understand the meaning of the word, help us to understand the reading, improve our vocabulary and save us from using Google or the dictionary!

WE USE CONTEXT CLUES ALL THE TIME!

We Make Guesses Based on the
Information We Know!

Let's Try It...



A Hop, Skip and a Jump...

Who Am I?

I'll tell you about
the career that I chose;
it definitely keeps me
on my toes.

I've been practicing since
a very young age.
Now I travel around
and perform on the stage.

I'm graceful and pretty,
but I'm also real strong.
My body is thin
and my legs are quite long.

I often wear pink
and love satin and lace.
Watch me twirl, flit and flutter
all over the place.

A Ballerina!



Hot Shot!

Who Am I?

**A lot of kids think
that they want to be me.
Danger 's my best friend
and my enemy.**

**When I'm summoned to duty
I'm often alarmed.
Still, I help lots of people
stay safe and unharmed.**

**I wear a cool hat
and a raincoat and boots.
Which I'd much rather wear
than some stuffy old suits.**

**My truck makes loud noises
when I drive down the street.
It's a lot of fun but I
still take lots of heat.**

A Fireman!



A Pipe Dream

Who Am I ?

**If it has to do with water,
then it has to do with me.
I will fix your sink or toilet
for a rather hefty fee.**

**I carry a big toolbox
and my name is on my chest.
(That's so that I can advertise
that my skills are the best!)**

**So if there's hair stuck in your drain,
or your toilet's overflowing,
Or if your pipes are frozen
or your basement walls are bowing,**

**I am the one to call
and though this sounds a bit insane,
I know I've done a good job
when it all goes down the drain.**

A Plumber!



Getting There

Who Am I ?

**My career is really taking off
but there's more to it than that.
For I can take you far away
in 30 minutes flat.**

**You can sit beside the window
and look at the *ants* below.
From here, the earth looks all the same,
no matter where you go.**

**My future is up in the air.
My hopes remain sky high.
Most people are beneath me,
cuz I'm quite a lofty guy.**

**Of course, sometimes I have to keep
my feet firm on the ground.
Like when I'm home,
or when somebody's luggage can't be
found.**

A Pilot !





Context Clues



Context Clues are words that say, “Stop - don’t touch that dictionary! The definition of the word you don’t know is right here in the text!”

Context Clues - Information a reader can get from the reading that helps show what a word or group of words means.

Like in a mystery, you have to use the clues to find the answer!

Some Types of Context Clues

Context Clues	Examples
helping words or punctuation (or, and, called, like)	Mary was furious, or angry, at her brother.
opposite or same meaning	Mary's cat looks tame when sleeping, but wild when awake.
your own experience	When Mary's dog died, she was filled with grief. (You know that if your dog died you would feel sad.)
sentences before or after	The people were nomads. They went from place to place looking for food.
definition provided	Mary got a scholarship for winning the contest. A scholarship is a grant or prize to pay for school.
examples given	Mary used the utensil to eat her lunch.

Some Types of Context Clues

<u>Synonym</u>	<p>A synonym, or word with the same meaning, is used in the sentence.</p> <p>My opponent's argument is fallacious, misleading – plain wrong.</p>
<u>Antonym</u>	<p>A word or group of words that has the opposite meaning reveals the meaning of an unknown term.</p> <p>Although some men are loquacious, others hardly talk at all.</p>
<u>Explanation</u>	<p>The unknown word is explained within the sentence or in a sentence immediately preceding.</p> <p>The patient is so somnolent that she requires medication to help her stay awake for more than a short time.</p>
<u>Example</u>	<p>Specific examples are used to define the term.</p> <p>Celestial bodies, such as the sun, moon, and stars, are governed by predictable laws.</p>

CONTEXT CLUES

LET'S LOOK AT SOME MORE TYPES OF CONTEXT CLUES:

Definition

Restatement or Synonym

Contrast or Antonym

Comparison

Example

List or Series

Cause and Effect

Description or Inference



DEFINITION

The unknown word is explained by using a more familiar word or phrase

EXAMPLES:

**** Entomology is the study of insects.**

• Archaeology is the scientific study of prehistoric cultures by excavation of their remains.**



Definition / Description Clues:

Examples:

His emaciation, that is, his skeleton-like appearance, was frightening to see.

The dudeen – a short-stemmed clay pipe – is found in Irish folk tales.



RESTATEMENT OR SYNONYM

The meaning is usually right after the unfamiliar word and often separated from the rest of the sentence with commas, dashes, or parentheses; *sometimes*, or *that is*, or *in other words* is used.

EXAMPLES:

* Meat eaters, **that is** *carnivores*, are at the top of the food chain.

* The *goslings*—those fuzzy baby geese—waddled after their mother.

* She enjoyed *biology* (the study of living things).

Restatement / Synonym Clues:

Examples:

Flooded with spotlights – the focus of all attention – the new Miss America began her year-long reign. She was the cynosure of all eyes for the rest of the evening.

The mountain pass was a tortuous road, winding and twisting like a snake around the trees of the mountainside.



COMPARISON

The unfamiliar word is shown to be the same as or like another word; *too, like, as, similar to, or in the same way* may be used to signal the comparison.



EXAMPLE:

***My brother is *enthralled* by birds *similar to* the way that I am *fascinated* by insects.**

CONTRAST OR ANTONYM

The unfamiliar word is shown to be different from or unlike another word, and is often an opposite; *but, however, although, otherwise, unless, instead, on the contrary, on the other hand, while, never, no, or not* may be used to signal contrast.

EXAMPLE:

*Mike's parrot was *loquacious*, **but** Maria's said **very little**.



Contrast / Antonym Clues:

Examples:

When the light brightens, the pupils of the eyes contract; however, when it grows darker, they dilate.

The children were as different as day and night. He was a lively conversationalist, but she was reserved and taciturn.





EXAMPLE



The unfamiliar word is cleared up by giving an example; *for instance*, *such as*, and *for example* may be used as signals.

EXAMPLE:

***The archeologist found different *amulets*, *such as* a *rabbit's foot* and *bags of herbs*, near the ancient altar.**

Example Clues...



Examples:

Piscatorial creatures, such as flounder, salmon, and trout, live in the coldest parts of the ocean.

Celestial bodies, including the sun, moon, and stars, have fascinated man through the centuries.

In the course of man's evolution, certain organs have atrophied. The appendix, for example, has wasted away from disuse.

LIST OR SERIES

The unfamiliar word is included in a series of related words that give an idea of the word's meaning.



EXAMPLE:

*North American *predators* include grizzly bears, pumas, wolves, and foxes.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

The meaning of an unfamiliar word is signaled by a cause-and-effect relationship between ideas in the text.



EXAMPLE:

****Due to a dearth of termites, the aardvark starved to death.***

DESCRIPTION OR INFERENCE

The meaning of an unfamiliar word can be inferred from the description of a situation or experience.



EXAMPLE:

***The monkey's *vociferous* chatter made me wish I had earplugs.**

Inference Clues...

Example:

She told her friend, “I’m through with blind dates forever. What a dull evening! I was bored every minute. The conversation was absolutely vapid.”



Cause and Effect Clues:

Example:

She wanted to impress all her dinner guests with the food she served, so she carefully studied the necessary culinary arts.



Word Structure - Etymology

Sometimes it's important to look at the word itself to find the meaning. Many words are made up of common "parts."

If you know the meaning of part of a word, you might be able to guess the meaning.

Words are often made up of prefixes, suffixes and root or base words.

By studying prefixes, suffixes and root/base words we can build our vocabulary.

The history of a word tells us a lot about what it might mean! Many words have Greek, Latin or French origins!

Word Etymology

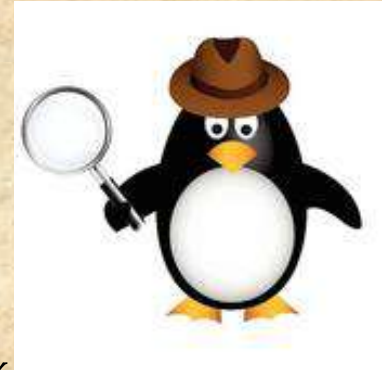
Examples:

The story is incredible.

The root cred means “to believe,” and the prefix in- means “not.” Therefore, if a story is incredible, it is unbelievable.

The somnambulist had to be locked in his bedroom at night for his own safety.

If a reader knows the meaning of ambular (walk) and somn (sleep) and sees the sentence, the reader may realize that a “somnambulist” is a sleepwalker.



CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE

Read each sentence or paragraph and find the correct answer.

1. The archeologist carefully removed the *tome* from its ancient resting place and proceeded to read the pages related to marriage in ancient Greece. What does the word *tome* probably mean?

- a. Pen b. weapon c. book d. sausage**

2. The Navajo language is an unwritten language of extreme complexity with no alphabet or symbols, and is spoken only on the lands of the Navajo Nation in the American Southwest. During World War II a Navajo code was created for the U.S. Navy. This code was *virtually* undecipherable to anyone except Navajo speaking persons. What does the word *virtually* probably mean?

- a. pleasant b. almost c. never d. always**

CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE

3. Lakes occupy less than two percent of the Earth's surface, yet they help *sustain* life. For instance, lakes give us fish to eat, irrigate crops, and generate electrical power. **What does the word *sustain* probably mean?**

a. support

b. obstruct

c. prolong

d. destroy

4. The ancient Greeks *pioneered* many of the kinds of writing we consider standard today. They wrote speeches, plays, poems, books about science and learning, long histories of the things that happened to them. **What does the word *pioneered* probably mean?**

a. complicated

b. developed

c. destroyed

d. explored

CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE

5. Fifty-five mostly *prominent*, male delegates attended the Philadelphia Convention in 1787. About seventy-five percent of the delegates had served in Congress and others were important people in their home states. These men are often referred to as the Framers of the Constitution. **What does the word *prominent* probably mean?**

- a. unimportant b. unknown c. common d. important

6. Bats that eat fruit and nectar spread seeds and help flowers grow. Without bats many important plants would not *thrive*. **What does the word *thrive* probably mean?**

- a. flourish b. die c. wither d. deteriorate

Now You Try It!

It's time for you to practice using context clues!
You'll be given some practice sheets to complete.
Work with a partner to see if you can use the clues
to solve the case!
Good luck detectives!

