

A. STRATEGIES FOR UNDERSTANDING WORDS IN CONTEXT

1. Reread the sentence that contains the unknown word. Be on the lookout for signal words or punctuation.
2. Reread the sentences before and after the sentence that contains the unknown word.
3. Based on the clues, try to figure out the meaning of the word.
4. Insert your meaning in the original sentence to see whether it makes sense.

CONTEXT CLUES			
Types of Context Clues	What To Look For	Signal Words	Examples of Signal Sentences
Definition	A definition in the sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is, are, is called, means, or • Signal punctuation: Set off by commas 	Brick made of sun-dried clay is called adobe . The Native Americans used adobe , or bricks made of sun-dried clay, to build their homes.
Synonym	A word with a meaning that is similar to the meaning of the unknown word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • also, as, like, same, similarly, too 	The Zuni built their homes with brick made of sun-dried clay. The Hopi also used adobe to build their homes.
Antonym/contrast	A word or phrase that means the opposite of the unknown word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • but, however, in contrast, on the other hand, although, unlike 	The Hopi lived in single-family houses, but the Iroquois lived in longhouses.
Example	Several examples in a list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such as, for example, for instance, like, including 	The Pueblo people grew many crops such as corn, beans, and squash.
General	General or inexact clues		After 1700, the Pueblos got sheep from the Spanish, and wool replaced cotton as the most important textile .
WORD STRUCTURE			
Affixation	Prefixes & Suffixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-, re-, in- • -ist, -ion, -ive, -ly 	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.

<https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Context-Clues-508.pdf>

EXERCISE

Choose the correct meaning of the underlined word and identify the type of context clue used: example, contrast (antonym), synonym or definition.

1. Our baseball team's pitcher has a few eccentric habits, such as throwing exactly thirteen warm-up pitches and never wearing socks.

- A) normal
- B) strange
- C) messy

clue: _____

2. After the heavy rains, the stream became murky; in fact, the water was so cloudy you couldn't see the bottom.

- A) cloudy
- B) bottomless
- C) clear

clue: _____

2. The debris on the stadium floor included numerous paper cups, ticket stubs, and cigarette butts.

- A) products
- B) papers
- C) trash

clue: _____

3. The coach takes every opportunity to censure his players, yet he ignores every opportunity to praise them.

- A) approve of
- B) criticize
- C) choose

clue: _____

4. The newlyweds agreed to be very frugal in their shopping because they wanted to save enough money to buy a house.

- A) economical
- B) wasteful
- C) interested

clue: _____

5. Although Alex usually looks unkempt, he had a very neat appearance at his job interview.

- A) orderly
- B) handsome
- C) messy

clue: _____

Which type of context clue is provided for the underlined word in the sentences below?

6. I'm looking for a unique gift for my boyfriend; he appreciates unusual things.

- A) Example
- B) synonym
- C) antonym / contrast

7. Expecting that his license would be renewed, the pilot was surprised when it was revoked instead.

- A) example
- B) synonym
- C) antonym

