

Bright Horizons Academy

Grade 5: Language Arts

Using Context Clues to Determine Word Meanings

Objective:

Students will use context clues from surrounding words and sentences to *understand* the meaning of unfamiliar words without needing a dictionary.

Core Content:

Context clues are hints in a sentence or paragraph that help you figure out what a *new word* means.

Pay attention to other words in the sentence or paragraph. These clues can be *synonyms, examples, or explanations*.

By looking closely at the words around an unfamiliar word, you can guess its meaning without using a dictionary.

Examples:

1. Sentence: “The garden was full of vibrant flowers, like bright red roses and sunny yellow daisies.”

- Clues: The examples of flowers suggest the word “vibrant” means full of color and energy.

2. Sentence: “He felt remorse, or deep regret, after breaking the vase.”
 - Clues: The phrase “or deep regret” directly explains the word “remorse.”
3. Sentence: “After the long hike, she was famished, so she ate a huge meal.”
 - Clues: The sentence shows that “famished” means very hungry because she ate a huge meal.

Practice Questions:

Try these questions to practice using context clues to figure out word meanings -

1. “The movie was so hilarious that we couldn’t stop laughing.” What does “hilarious” likely mean?
2. “We had an abundance of apples this year, more than we could possibly eat.” What does “abundance” suggest?
3. “The lake was tranquil, quiet and peaceful in the early morning.” What does “tranquil” mean?
4. “He trudged through the snow, taking slow, heavy steps.” What does “trudged” suggest about how he walked?
5. “They were ecstatic, or extremely happy, about their new puppy.” What does “ecstatic” mean?

Answers to Practice Questions:

1. “Hilarious” likely means very funny.
 - Clue: The sentence mentions “we couldn’t stop laughing.”

2. “Abundance” suggests a large amount or plenty.
 - Clue: The phrase “more than we could possibly eat” gives a hint.
3. “Tranquil” means calm and peaceful.
 - Clue: The words “quiet and peaceful” define “tranquil.”
4. “Trudged” suggests he walked slowly and with effort.
 - Clue: The phrase “slow, heavy steps” explains how he walked.
5. “Ecstatic” means extremely happy.
 - Clue: The phrase “or extremely happy” defines the word directly.