

## CONTEXT CLUES

The first line of attack on a new word is to try to figure out the meaning from the context in which it appears. The context of a word refers to the way the word is used in the sentence or paragraph. There are several different types of context clues:

### 1. DEFINITION

Example: The explorers landed in an alien environment, a place both foreign and strange to their beloved homeland.

The definition is set off by a comma following the phrase in which the word appears. Alien means strange or foreign.

### 2. ELABORATING DETAILS

Example: The natives were hostile when the settlers approached their village. They lined up across the road and drew their weapons. The settlers were afraid to go further.

As described in the sentences after the word, hostile must mean unfriendly.

### 3. EXAMPLES

Example: The bird's appetite is voracious. In one day he ate enough worms to equal three times his body weight.

The example illustrates that the bird ate an extraordinary amount, therefore voracious means extremely hungry or greedy.

### 4. COMPARISON

Example: The smell of the flower was as compelling as a magnet's pull on a paper clip.

Since a magnet will pull a paper clip to it, the comparison suggests that the smell of the flower had an attraction. Compelling means attracting.

### 5. CONTRAST

Example: In America, she is an eminent scientist even though she is virtually unknown in England.

"Even though" are signal words indicating that an opposite is coming. Thus eminent means the opposite of unknown. It means well known or famous.

## CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE

### RESTATEMENT WITH PUNCTUATION

Directions: Write the meaning of the underlined word using the sentences below. Remember to notice the definition set off by commas, dashes, or parentheses.

1. Biologists use an elaborate taxonomy (classification system) to categorize animals and plants.

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2. Scientists attempt to be objective - report what is factual and real.

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3. Syntax (grammar) refers to the rules used to put words together to create phrases and sentences.

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4. One branch of linguistic inquiry is semantics - the science of meaning in language.

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5. The psychological significance of a tic, such as eye blinking, is covert, or concealed, to the person who has the tic.

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6. On the other hand, the interpretations to be placed on symptoms of personality disorders are overt (not hidden) to psychiatrists.

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7. When people receive credit cards, it is explicit, or clearly stated, in the contracts they sign that they will pay for any merchandise or services they receive from using the cards.

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## CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE (con't)

### SYNONYMS

Directions: In each sentence find a synonym for the underlined word.

1. The Sears Building in Chicago is now the world's tallest edifice.

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2. He surreptitiously packed his clothing and secretly slipped away; his absence was not noticed for nearly two days.

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3. She was admired for her impeccable manners as well as her faultless taste in clothing.

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4. It is one thing to have influence in high places, but quite another to have prestige in places of power as well as with common people.

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5. The offspring of one insect can number in the thousands, but most insects' progeny do not survive long.

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6. It is important for a speaker to establish good rapport with the audience, because the speaker and the audience will enjoy the experience more if a warm relationship has been developed.

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7. The general practitioner advised them that their elderly mother should be taken to a doctor who specializes in geriatrics.

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## CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE (con't)

### CONTRAST CLUES

Directions: Write the meaning of the underlined word on the line below. Remember to notice the signal words which show that the word you do not know is the opposite in meaning to another word in the sentence.

1. Phil started the long-distance race full of strength, but after about eight miles he was enervated by the hot sun and had to drop out.

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2. Both of them stood trial, but one was found guilty and sent to prison while the other was acquitted.

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3. It was the woman's grim responsibility to decide if her husband's body should be cremated or interred.

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4. Alex was making so little money selling encyclopedias from door to door that he decided to search for more lucrative employment.

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5. It is easier to present a speech for which one is completely prepared than to give a speech extemporaneously.

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6. The brothers' reactions to having stolen the car were quite different - one was contrite while the other was not sorry in the least.

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## CONTEXT CLUES PRACTICE (Con't)

### GENERAL SENSE

Directions: Write the meaning of the underlined word below. Remember to notice the idea of the whole sentence to see what the unknown word must mean in order to make sense in the sentence.

1. Ben's automobile caught fire upon impact, but fortunately he was able to extricate himself from it before it exploded.

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2. Maybe I'm foolish, but I was so incensed that Fred didn't invite me to his party that I haven't spoken to him in a month.

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3. We drove out of our way to traverse the river by ferry rather than by bridge.

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4. The treasurer was put under close observation, as it was suspected she had plans to abscond with the company's funds.

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5. She so coveted youth and beauty that she went to Switzerland and had her face lifted.

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6. One overhead expense of all large offices is the cost of pencils, paper, and pens that are pilfered by employees for their personal use.

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7. Even though our football players had lost six games in a row, we admired them because their losses did not deter them from playing their very best.

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8. It is the job of parents to attempt to inculcate the values of society in their children so that they will understand what kind of behavior will be expected of them in life.

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