

Title:

How To Find The Meaning Of Words As You Read

Word Count:

2538

Summary:

Vocabulary Building and Reading Comprehension

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Although it takes practice, it is the easiest and most efficient way to identify words. Often,

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Article Body:

Vocabulary Building and Reading Comprehension

The meaning of unknown words which you come across in your reading sometimes can be known by t

Although it takes practice, it is the easiest and most efficient way to identify words. Often,

Consider the word "bar". Bar is a common word. But without surrounding words, you don't know i

Readers often have trouble because they identify the literal but incorrect meaning of a word w

A. Using The Part of Speech of the unknown word as a help in reading.

One consideration in using the context is to determine the unknown word's part of speech. The

In the following sentences, identify the part of speech of the italicized words by writing N i

Example: She liked to wear red and always wore jewelry made of carnelian. Ans. N

1. The dirty old man gave the young woman a salacious look.

2. The president prayed for the sagacity to make the right decision in the face of many altern

3. The man looked at the rusty old gadget and wondered how its mechanism worked.

4. The dying man designated his son to receive his property.

5. The brindled dog barked loudly.

6. The father caressed his crying child with great tenderness.

7. "Don't patronize us; we are not children!" said the angry indigenous leaders to the politic

8. John was a good emanuensis, always taking dictation correctly and typing up all of his empl

9. The boy was disappointed by the paltry amount he received as an inheritance when his grandf

10. The young boy ran clumsily down the hill with his arms and legs flapping all over.

B. USING OTHER CLUES GOTTEN FROM THE TEXT ITSELF

Knowing the part of speech of the unknown word is not the only way to figure out its meaning.

You use them to compare words or to identify unknown words that mean the same or the opposite. There are five other clues that will help you: 1. Punctuation clues, 2. Definition clues, 3. Contrast clues, 4. Comparison clues, 5. Framework clues. Of these types, the most important are the Contrast clues and the Comparison Clues. The other three are less important. The five text based clues are useful but the most powerful tool is the Framework based clue.

1. Punctuation Clues

Punctuation clues are given when the unknown word is set off by commas, parentheses, brackets, or dashes.

Example of Punctuation Clue: Nicotine, a colorless and oily drug in tobacco, stains the teeth.

Punctuation Exercise: Underline the punctuation clue that tells you the meaning of the italicized word.

1. The soldiers advanced down the small deep-sided gulch (a narrow valley) into an ambush.
2. The philosopher Descartes helped to establish dualism (the separation of mind and body).
3. Metamemory -knowledge about one's memory processes-is helpful in helping us store and recall information.
4. Adjunct aids-techniques used to assist students' comprehension of reading materials-have been developed by reading specialists.
5. The deluge, a flood of rain, threatened to drown the little town.

2. Definition Clues

Definition clues join the unknown word with the word(s) that rename it or tell its meaning. They use verbs such as is, was, are, means, i.e. (that is), involves, is called, that is, and is known as.

Examples of these verbs are: is, was, are, means, i.e. (that is), involves, is called, that is, and is known as.

For example: The mansion's piazza resembled a large uncovered patio. Explanation: The word resembled is a definition clue.

Definition Exercise: Use definition text-based clues to find the meaning of the italicized word.

1. The art, science, or profession of teaching is called pedagogy.
2. Divergent thinking is generating many different ideas in order to solve a problem.
3. Conservative behavior involves cautious or conventional actions.
4. The seasonal wind of the Indian Ocean and southern Asia is a monsoon.
5. Criterion means a standard or rule by which a judgment is formed.
6. A souk is an open-air marketplace in North Africa.

3. Contrast Clues

With contrast clues, you use the opposite of known information to determine the unknown word.

Example of Contrast Clue:

My sister is extremely neat in appearance while she is slovenly in her housekeeping.

Explanation: The word "while" indicates that slovenly means the opposite of neat. Thus, slovenly means untidy or messy.

Contrast Exercise: Determine the meaning of the italicized word by using contrast text-based clues.

1. The tumor was benign; nevertheless, the doctor decided to treat it as if it could injure the
 2. Some business disputes can be settled out of court; on the other hand; others require litigation
 3. At first the labor union leaders and the factory owners argued about pay schedules and bene
 4. Gina's leg muscles continued to atrophy because of her injury, but she exercised to build u
 5. Carlos acquiesced to Jane's demands instead of standing his ground and defending his viewpo
4. Comparison Clues

Comparison clues indicate that two or more things are alike. A comparison is possible because

Examples of Comparison Clue:

Miss Johnson is a prim, modest woman; likewise, many of her friends are very proper.

Explanation: Likewise is used to compare prim to proper. Proper means respectable. Thus, prim

1. The Greek vase was made of alabaster; similarly, the Roman lamp was also of a translucent,
2. Taking out the garbage was an onerous task; likewise, washing dishes can be a hard job.
3. Repartee, as well as other kinds of humorous conversation, kept the talk show from becoming
4. Birds are oviparous; similarly, fish and reptiles lay eggs that hatch outside of the body.
5. Both accountants and CPA's are necessary for a large company's financial office.
6. The old chair was protected by both handmade antimacassars and other coverings.

5. Example Clues

Example clues tell you an example of an unknown word follows. You derive the meaning of the un

Example of "Example" Clue: Potentates—such as kings, queens, and emperors—are very powerful an

"Example" Clue EXERCISE: Underline the words that explain the italicized words.

Canines, such as collies, pugs, and poodles, are good pets.

Edifices, such as skyscrapers and condominiums, are found in cities.

Various means of conveyance—for example, cars, subways, and ships are used worldwide.

Nickels, dimes, dollars, and other kinds of legal tender are used to purchase goods.

Many people enjoy eating mollusks, like clams and snails.

Fiduciaries, like lawyers and bankers, were chosen to manage the young heir's money.

Framework Based Clues

To find meanings from text-based clues (like contrast clues, comparison clues, definition clues)

Your knowledge of the meanings of surrounding words helps you discover the meaning of a word o

Framework Based Clue Example: The angry driver shouted vehemently during his fight with the other driver.

Sometimes it takes a bit more detective work to puzzle out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

1. A former employee, irate over having been fired, broke into the plant and deliberately wrecked the car wash.

2. John always praised his bosses; he always agreed with what they said. He said he was just a yes man.

3. The car wash we organized to raise funds was a fiasco -it rained all day.

(How successful would a car wash be on a rainy day?)

The first sentence provides enough evidence for you to guess that irate means very angry. Synonyms for irate include angry, furious, and enraged.

Try to answer the question that follows each item of the list on the other side of this page.

1. Jamal didn't want to tell Tina the entire plot of the movie, so he just gave her the gist of it.

Answer the question: ..

Meaning of the word:

2. The lizard was so lethargic that I wasn't sure if it was alive or dead. It didn't even blink.

Answer the question: ..

Meaning of the word:

3. After the accident, I was angered when the other driver told the police officer a complete lie.

Answer the question: ..

Meaning of the word:

4. The public knows very little about the covert activities of CIA spies. (What kind of activities are they?)

Answer the question: ..

Meaning of the word:

5. Whether or not there is life in outer space is an enigma. We may never know for sure until we explore it.

Answer the question: ..

Meaning of the word:

6. Suicide rates tend to fluctuate with the seasons, with much higher rates in the winter than in the summer.

Answer the question: ..

Meaning of the word:

7. Human beings are resilient creatures-they can often bounce back from negative experiences and move on.

Meaning of the word:

8. A major accomplishment of the field of sociology is dispelling the myths and prejudices that surround race and ethnicity.

Answer the question: ..

Meaning of the word:

9. When he first heard the news that he had lost the job, Peter showed a pugnacious attitude.

Answer the question:

..

Meaning of the word:

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