

Find meaning from context

A free five-page practice pack

Includes a worked example, ten questions, a short reading and writing task, and a separate answer key. No account needed.

1. Read the whole sentence

Read the words before and after the unfamiliar word. Look at the next sentence, too.

2. Find a useful clue

Look for a definition, a contrast, an example, or a detail that explains what happens.

3. Replace and check

Try the meaning in place of the word. Does the whole sentence still make sense?

Try one together: fragile

The first design was fragile: one light tap made the thin frame snap.

The frame breaks after a light tap, so fragile means easily broken. Replace fragile with easily broken and check that the whole sentence still makes sense.

When the clue is not enough

Read more of the passage or use a dictionary, then check which meaning fits. Context does not always give enough information by itself.

For parents and teachers

Ask "Which words helped you decide?" Discuss mistakes, and revisit unfamiliar words in another reading. Print on US Letter, or choose Fit for A4. The answer key is the last page.

This is an original practice sample, not an official school list or placement test.

Context clues practice

Name: _____ Date: _____

Circle the best answer. Underline a clue or explain why your choice fits. Keep the answer key aside until you finish.

1. The box was transparent; we could see the colored beads through its sides. What does transparent mean?

- A. easy to see through
- B. heavy to lift
- C. filled to the top

Clue / reason: _____

2. Unlike her talkative partner, Nia was reserved and said very little during the meeting. What does reserved mean here?

- A. angry about a delay
- B. quiet and not quick to share thoughts
- C. ready to lead every activity

Clue / reason: _____

3. The path was obstructed by a fallen tree, so the hikers could not get through. What does obstructed mean?

- A. carefully marked
- B. recently repaired
- C. blocked

Clue / reason: _____

4. Kai made a miniature boat, a version small enough to rest in his palm. What does miniature mean?

- A. made of paper
- B. very small
- C. able to float

Clue / reason: _____

5. The smell was unpleasant at first, but it began to dissipate as fresh air entered and the odor faded. What does dissipate mean?

- A. spread out and fade away
- B. grow stronger
- C. turn into a liquid

Clue / reason: _____

Context clues practice

Name: _____ Date: _____

Circle the best answer. Underline a clue or explain why your choice fits. Keep the answer key aside until you finish.

6. During the drought, water was scarce. The family had only a small amount left for the garden. What does scarce mean?

- A. unsafe to touch
- B. easy to replace
- C. in short supply

Clue / reason: _____

7. We packed provisions for the walk: water, sandwiches, fruit, and a small first-aid kit. What does provisions mean here?

- A. directions to follow
- B. supplies for the trip
- C. people in the group

Clue / reason: _____

8. Milo was skeptical of the unbelievable story; he doubted it and asked for proof. What does skeptical mean?

- A. fully convinced
- B. too tired to listen
- C. not easily convinced

Clue / reason: _____

9. The temporary sign would stay up for just two days before the permanent sign arrived. What does temporary mean?

- A. lasting for a limited time
- B. difficult to read
- C. made by a professional

Clue / reason: _____

10. The worker reinforced the shelf by adding two supports so it could hold more books. What does reinforced mean?

- A. moved to a new place
- B. made stronger
- C. made shorter

Clue / reason: _____

A garden after the rain

Name: _____ Date: _____

At first, the garden path was impassable: deep puddles covered it from fence to fence, leaving nowhere dry to step. The class waited until the water drained. Later, the soil was still moist, but the path was firm enough to use. The students inspected the young plants carefully, looking for bent stems and torn leaves before they began working.

Explain your thinking

What does impassable mean here? Which words support your answer?

Write with the words

Write two sentences about a journey or a project. Use one word from this worksheet, then add a definition, contrast, example, or result that helps a reader infer its meaning.

Answer key & explanations

Discuss the reason behind each answer. This practice set does not measure overall reading ability.

1. **A. easy to see through** - "We could see ... through its sides" gives a definition clue. Transparent means easy to see through.
2. **B. quiet and not quick to share thoughts** - "Unlike" signals a contrast. Talkative is contrasted with saying very little.
3. **C. blocked** - The tree stops the hikers from passing. That result is a clue that obstructed means blocked.
4. **B. very small** - "Small enough to rest in his palm" explains the size. The sentence does not tell us the material or whether it floats.
5. **A. spread out and fade away** - The fresh air and fading odor show that the smell becomes less concentrated and disappears.
6. **C. in short supply** - Having only a small amount left shows that water is in short supply.
7. **B. supplies for the trip** - The items after the colon are examples of supplies.
8. **C. not easily convinced** - "Doubted it" and "asked for proof" suggest that Milo is not easily convinced.
9. **A. lasting for a limited time** - "Just two days" and the contrast with permanent show a limited duration.
10. **B. made stronger** - Adding supports and holding more weight indicate that the shelf was made stronger.

Reading: a sample response

It means not possible to travel through at that time. Puddles cover the path from fence to fence, and there is nowhere dry to step. Those details explain why the class waits.

Writing: responses vary. Check that each word fits its meaning and that the explanation gives useful details.

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