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Vocabulary in Context

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CHAPTER 1 Vocabulary in Context

This lecture will cover vocabulary skills that you will use both in your **reading** and while you write **Vocabulary Journal Entries**.

You will use context clues to help yourself determine meanings of unknown words while you read.

And you will also construct sentences for course text vocabulary words that have context clues in them, in order to demonstrate your comprehension of the words.

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Slideshow 4

Vocabulary in Context

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CHAPTER 1 Vocabulary in Context

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You will use context clues to help yourself determine meanings of unknown words while you read.

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If you were asked to define the word *ubiquitous*, you might have some difficulty. On the other hand, if you saw this word in a sentence, chances are you could come up with a fairly accurate definition.

Look at the sentence below and see if the **context** helps you figure out the meaning of the word *ubiquitous*.

Smartphones have become *ubiquitous*; you can see them—and hear them—everywhere.

Ubiquitous means

- A. unaffordable. B. complicated. C. widespread.

The **context** tells you the meaning of *ubiquitous*.

Smartphones have become ubiquitous you can see them—and hear them—everywhere.

Ubiquitous means

- A. unaffordable. B. complicated. C. widespread.

The word *everywhere* suggests that *ubiquitous* means “widespread.”

Using context clues to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words will help you in several ways.

- 1 It will **save you time** when reading. You will not have to stop to look up words in the dictionary.
- 2 After you figure out the meaning of a particular word more than once through its context, it may become a part of your **working vocabulary**. You will therefore add to your vocabulary simply by reading thoughtfully.
- 3 It will **give you a good sense of how a word is actually used**, including any shades of meaning it might have.

Types of Context Clues

There are four common types of **context clues**.

- 1 Examples
- 2 Synonyms
- 3 Antonyms
- 4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

1 Examples

Examples may suggest the meaning of an unknown word.

Types of Context Clues / 1 Examples

See if the **example** in this cartoon helps you figure out the meaning of the word *adverse*.



The word *adverse* means

- A. known.
- B. pleasant.
- C. harmful.

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Types of Context Clues / 1 Examples

The **example** of an adverse side effect—it will drain the patient’s bank account—helps you understand that *adverse* means “harmful.”



The word *adverse* means

- A. known.
- B. pleasant.
- ✓ C. harmful.

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In the sentence below, the examples are **boldfaced**. Use the examples to help you figure out the meaning of the *italicized* word.

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many *tribulations*, such as **scarce food**, **extreme weather**, and **loneliness**.

Tribulations means

- A. criminals. B. hard decisions. C. great difficulties.

The examples of what the pioneers faced may have helped you realize that *tribulations* means “great difficulties.”

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many *tribulations*, such as **scarce food**, **extreme weather**, and **loneliness**.

Tribulations means

- A. criminals. B. hard decisions. C. great difficulties.

CHAPTER 1 Vocabulary in Context

Types of Context Clues / 1 Examples

Examples are often introduced with **signal words and phrases** like *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, and *such as*.

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many tribulations, **such as** scarce food, extreme weather, and loneliness.

Signal phrase

Examples

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CHAPTER 1 Vocabulary in Context

Types of Context Clues / 1 Examples

Hint: When you use context clues to figure out the meaning of a word, actually insert into the sentence the word you think is the answer. For example, substitute *criminals* or *hard decisions* or *great difficulties* in this sentence in place of *tribulations* to see which one fits.

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many tribulations, such as scarce food, extreme weather, and loneliness.

Tribulations means

A. criminals. **B.** hard decisions. **C.** great difficulties.

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Hint: When you use context clues to figure out the meaning of a word, actually insert into the sentence the word you think is the answer. For example, substitute *criminals* or *hard decisions* or *great difficulties* in this sentence in place of *tribulations* to see which one fits.

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many tribulations, such as scarce food, extreme weather, and loneliness.

As they moved westward, early pioneers faced many **great difficulties**, such as scarce food, extreme weather, and loneliness.

In the item below, the examples are **boldfaced**. Use the examples to help you figure out the meaning of the *italicized* word.

Each of my coworkers has a strange *idiosyncrasy*. For instance, our receptionist **wears only pink**. The mail clerk **always speaks in a whisper**. And my office mate **lives on peanuts and apples**.

Idiosyncrasy means

- A.** hidden thought. **B.** unusual goal. **C.** unusual personal trait.

The examples of the coworkers' habits may have helped you realize that *idiosyncrasy* means "unusual personal trait."

Each of my coworkers has a strange *idiosyncrasy*.
 For instance, our receptionist wears only pink. The
 mail clerk always speaks in a whisper. And my
 office mate lives on peanuts and apples.

Idiosyncrasy means

- A. hidden thought. B. unusual goal C. **unusual personal trait.**

Notice the **signal phrase** that introduces the examples.

Each of my coworkers has a strange *idiosyncrasy*.
For instance, our receptionist wears only pink. The
 mail clerk always speaks in a whisper. And my
 office mate lives on peanuts and apples.

Remember, this lecture is imparting both reading and writing skills. When reading, you can look for signal phrases and examples to help you define an unknown word. When you are writing your Vocabulary Journal Entries, you can use signal phrases to introduce your own examples.

Types of Context Clues

Exercise

Let's create a sentence for the Course Text 1 Vocabulary word **deluge** that contains an **example** context clue that demonstrates its meaning.

- Circle the vocabulary word, and underline the context clue.

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Types of Context Clues

Review: Parts of Speech

When encountering a word that you do not know, or writing sentences in which you use new words, it is very important that you know the word's **part of speech**.

A word's **part of speech** tells you how it grammatically functions in a sentence.

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Types of Context Clues

Review: Parts of Speech

- A **noun** is a person, place, thing, or idea.
Example: **Aaliyah** is inside of the **building**.
- A **verb** is an action word that a noun performs.
Example: Tony **earns** enough money to **take care** of his family.
- An **adjective** *modifies* a **noun**—it adds descriptive detail to a noun.
Example: The **sweet** kitten fell asleep in my lap.
- An **adverb** *modifies* a **verb** or an **adjective**—adding descriptive detail to either of those two things.
Example (modifying a **verb**): Henry **gracefully** swung the bat.
Example (modifying an **adjective**): This soda is **delightfully** flavorful.

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Types of Context Clues

Review: Parts of Speech

- When you encounter a word that you don't know, analyze the sentence in order to determine the word's **part of speech**. This will help you to also use context clues to determine the word's meaning.
- When you are writing your Vocabulary Journal Entries, make sure that you understand every word's part of speech, so that you can successfully use it in a sentence.

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Types of Context Clues

2 Synonyms

Context clues are often available in the form of a **synonym**: a word that means the same or almost the same as the unknown word.

In a strict sense, a **synonym** must be the same **part of speech** as the vocabulary word whose meaning you are looking for. When you are **writing** your Vocabulary Journal Entries, if you are inserting a synonym clue, your synonym must be the same part of speech as the vocabulary word. While **reading**, synonyms will usually be the same part of speech. But occasionally, there will be synonym-like clues that are not the same part of speech as an unknown word.

A synonym may appear anywhere in a passage to provide the same meaning as the unknown word.

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Types of Context Clues / 2 Synonyms

Look again at this sentence you saw earlier.

Smartphones have become *ubiquitous*; you can see them—and hear them—everywhere.

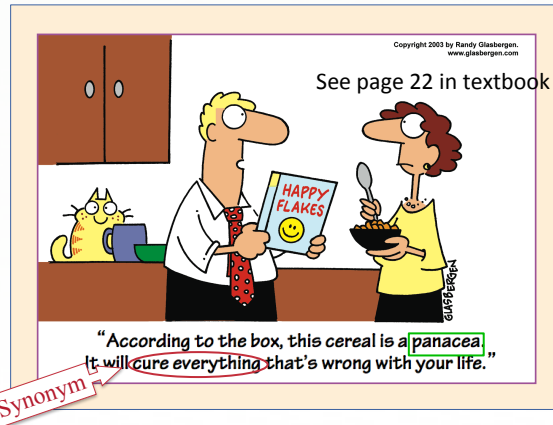
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Smartphones have become *ubiquitous*; you can see them—and hear them—*everywhere*.

In this sentence, the **synonym** *everywhere* helped you figure out the meaning of the word *ubiquitous*.

In the cartoon below, what two words help you understand the meaning of the word *panacea*?





The **synonym** that helps you understand the meaning of *panacea* is *cure everything*.

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In the sentence below, what words tell you the meaning of the word *mentor*?

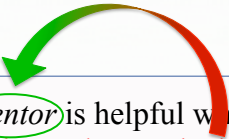
Gaining a *mentor* is helpful when you are beginning a new job. A wise and trusted adviser can greatly assist your career.

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CHAPTER 1 Vocabulary in Context

Types of Context Clues / 2 Synonyms

Gaining a mentor is helpful when you are beginning a new job. A wise and trusted adviser can greatly assist your career.



The words *wise and trusted adviser* tell you the meaning of *mentor*.

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CHAPTER 1 Vocabulary in Context

Types of Context Clues / 2 Synonyms

Gaining a mentor is helpful when you are beginning a new job. A wise and trusted adviser can greatly assist your career.

The words *wise and trusted adviser* are a **synonym** for *mentor*.

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Exercise

Let's create a sentence for the Course Text 1 Vocabulary word **dichotomy** that contains a **synonym** context clue that demonstrates its meaning.

- Circle the vocabulary word, and underline the context clue.

3 Antonyms

An **antonym**—a word that means the opposite of another word—is also a useful context clue.

In a strict sense, an **antonym** must be the same **part of speech** as the vocabulary word whose meaning you are looking for. When you are **writing** your Vocabulary Journal Entries, if you are inserting an antonym clue, your antonym must be the same part of speech as the vocabulary word. While **reading**, synonyms will usually be the same part of speech. But occasionally, there will be antonym-like clues that are not the same part of speech as an unknown word.

Antonyms are sometimes signaled by words and phrases such as *however*, *but*, *yet*, *on the other hand*, and *in contrast*.

Those who advocate capital punishment often argue that it prevents crime, but those who oppose it say it has no such effect.

In the sentence above, the word *oppose* is an antonym that helps us realize that the word *advocate* means “support.”

Those who **advocate** capital punishment often argue that it prevents crime, but those who **oppose** it say it has no such effect.

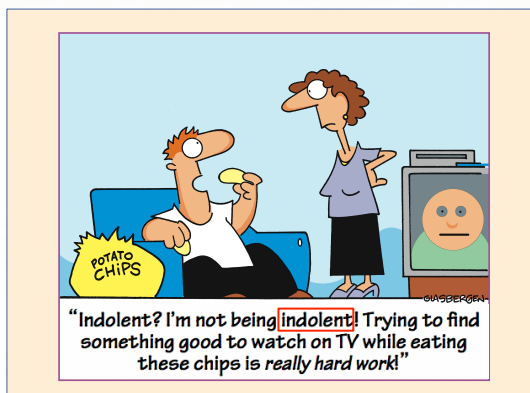
advocate = support

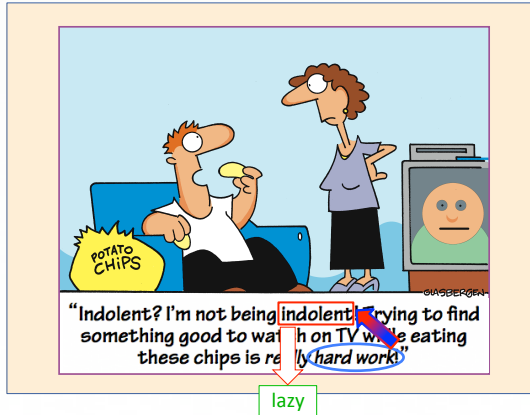
In the sentence above, the word *oppose* is an antonym that helps us realize that the word *advocate* means “support.”

Those who **advocate** capital punishment often argue that it prevents crime, **but** those who **oppose** it say it has no such effect.

Note the word that signals the antonym.

In the cartoon below, what two words help you figure out what the word *indolent* means?





The **antonym** *hard work* helps you figure out that *indolent* must mean "lazy."

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In the sentence below, pick out the word that means the *opposite* of the italicized word.

The teacher would have achieved better results if she had been as quick to *commend* students for their successes as she was to criticize them for their failures.

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The opposite of *commend* is *criticize*.

The teacher would have achieved better results if she had been as quick to *commend* students for their successes as she was to *criticize* them for their failures.

If the opposite of *commend* is *criticize*, what is the meaning of *commend*?

The teacher would have achieved better results if she had been as quick to *commend* students for their successes as she was to *criticize* them for their failures.

Commend means

- A. blame. B. praise. C. grade.

Types of Context Clues

Exercise

Let's create a sentence for the Course Text 1 Vocabulary word **flippant** that contains an **antonym** context clue that demonstrates its meaning.

- Circle the vocabulary word, and underline the context clue.

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Types of Context Clues / 3 Antonyms

The teacher would have achieved better results if she had been as quick to *commend* students for their successes as she was to *criticize* them for their failures.

Commend means

A. blame.



B. praise.

C. grade.

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Reminder: Synonyms and Antonyms

Although not all of the previous examples strictly follow this guideline, grammatically, a **synonyms** and **antonyms** are the same **part of speech** as the unknown word.

**Example synonyms and antonyms
that follow the part of speech rule**

word: **fire** (*noun*)
synonym: conflagration (*noun*)
antonym: water (*noun*)

word: **to descend** (*verb*)
synonym: to come down (*verb*)
antonym: to ascend (*verb*)

**Example synonyms and antonyms
that follow the part of speech rule**

word: **grouchy** (*adjective*)
synonym: ill-tempered (*adjective*)
antonym: cheerful (*adjective*)

word: **loudly** (*adverb*)
synonym: noisily (*adverb*)
antonym: softly (*adverb*)

4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

Often, the context of a new word contains no examples, synonyms, or antonyms.

In such cases, you must do a bit more detective work; you'll need to look at any clues provided in the information surrounding the word.

Asking yourself questions about the passage may help you make a fairly accurate guess about the meaning of the unfamiliar word.

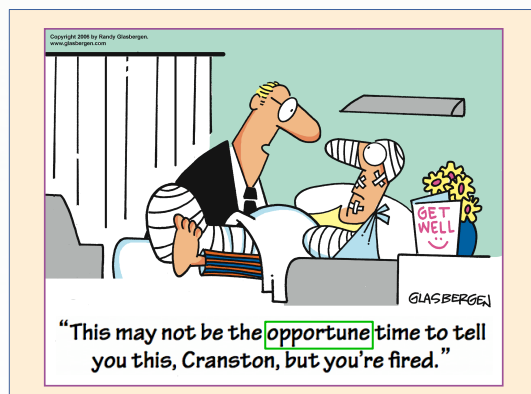
Types of Context Clues / 4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage



Can you figure out the meaning of the word *opportune* in this cartoon?

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Types of Context Clues / 4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage



To figure out the meaning of *opportune*, try asking this question: Is this a good time for the boss to tell an injured worker that he's been fired?

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Since the boss realizes that "this may not be the opportune time," his words to Cranston strongly suggest that *opportune* means "suitable."

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Use the question below the sentence to help you figure out the meaning of the word *diverged*.

Sonya and Liz thought they'd stay good friends forever. But after graduation, their lives *diverged*: Sonya got married, and Liz moved away.

(What relationship did their lives have after graduation?)

Diverged means

- A. came together. B. improved. C. went in different directions.

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The sentence provides enough evidence for you to guess that *diverged* means “went in different directions.” If Sonia got married and Liz moved away, their lives went in different directions.

Sonya and Liz thought they’d stay good friends forever. But after graduation, their lives *diverged*: Sonya got married, and Liz moved away.

(What relationship did their lives have after graduation?)

Diverged means

- A. came together. B. improved. C. went in different directions.

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(What relationship did their lives have after graduation?)

Diverged means

- A. came together. B. improved. ✓ C. went in different directions.

Sonya and Liz thought they'd stay good friends forever. But after graduation, their lives diverged. Sonya got married, and Liz moved away.

C. went in different directions.

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Exercise

Let's create a sentence for the Course Text 1 Vocabulary word **empathy** that contains a **general sense** context clue that demonstrates its meaning.

- Circle the vocabulary word, and underline the context clue.

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Chapter Review

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- To save time when reading, you should try to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words. You can do so by looking at their *context*—the words surrounding them.
- There are four kinds of context clues: **examples** (marked by words like *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, and *such as*); **synonyms** (words that mean the same as unknown words); **antonyms** (words that mean the opposite of unknown words); and **general sense of the sentence** (clues in the sentence or surrounding sentences about what the unknown words might mean).
- You can also insert context clues into your own original sentences in order to practice using new words, and to demonstrate that you know their meanings.