

College Readiness

Due Tuesday, September 25

Learning New Words from Context

Most of the time, a word is not used by itself but with other words. These other words are its **context**. The meaning of a word is often found in its context—the other words with which it is used.

Often on the SAT and ACT tests, passages will use unique wording that you as a reader must decipher meaning through the context of the full passage.

Suppose, for example, we were asked for the meaning of *strike*. We would not be able to give a definite answer because *strike*, as presented to us, is all by itself; it has no context.

But if we were asked to define *strike* in one of the following sentences we would have not trouble telling its meaning from its *context*—the other words with which it is used.

1. *Strike* three! You're out!
2. There was no milk deliveries to HEB this week because of a *strike*.
3. He made a fist as if to *strike* me.

Looking at a full passage can often determine an unknown word's definition.

The new ruler in the country of Tranchecklia is clearly <i>xenophobic</i> ; he has ordered all foreigners to leave the capital city immediately.
--

Each passage below contains a word in italics. Read the passage carefully and find a clue to the meaning of the word in an opposite word (**antonym**) or contrasting idea.

For each passage, enter on your paper (a) the clue that led you to the meaning, and (b) your proposed meaning of the word. Follow the example for number one.

1. **“That you Joe?” he asked.**
“Who else could it be?” I *retorted*.
a. clue: *Retorted* is the opposite of “asked.”
b. meaning: *Retorted* means “answered.”

2. Some substances that cause cancer were once regarded as *noncarcinogenic*.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____

3. At this stage we cannot tell whether the new regulations will be to our advantage or *detriment*.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____

4. If his health *ameliorates*, he will stay on the job; if it becomes worse, he will have to resign.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____

5. In this firm the industrious are promoted and the *indolent* are encouraged to leave.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____

6. Parents, I suppose, were as much a problem *formerly* as they are today.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____

7. If you are going to get up before dawn tomorrow, you had better *retire* by 11:00 PM.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____

8. Evidence presented at the trials of the two public officials showed that they had *subverted* the laws they were supposed to uphold.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____
9. Many who used to waste fuel are *conserving* it, now that it has become so much more expensive.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____
10. Only one lower wing and the landing gear had been completely demolished. The rest of the machine was virtually *intact*.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____
11. Those who volunteered to help turned out to be more of an *impediment* than an aid.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____
12. The Sullivan home, which used to stand on this corner, was erected in 1929 and *razed* in 1992.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____
13. Time has proved that Seward's purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1967 was wisdom, not *folly*.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____
14. When millions face starvation, we cannot be parsimonious in doling out aid; we must be generous.
a. clue: _____
b. meaning: _____