

CONTEXT CLUES

Each word you read or write, in order to make sense, depends on the other words in the sentence. These other words are called the *context* of a word. By looking closely at these surrounding words, you can pick up hints or clues which will help you figure out the meaning of a difficult or new word. In order to show that you understand the meaning of the vocabulary word, you are required to use context clues when writing vocabulary sentences. Some of the most common types of context clues are listed below with examples.

Types of Context Clues

1. Synonyms:

Jerome is fond of using *trite*, worn-out expressions in his writing. His favorite is “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.”

2. Antonyms:

Bruce had always been quite heavy, but he looked *gaunt* when he returned from the hospital.

3. Comparisons and Contrasts:

Riding a mountain bike in a *remote* area is my idea of a great day. I wonder why some people like to ride motorcycles on busy six-lane highways.

4. Definition or Description:

Peggy is a *transcriptionist*, a person who makes a written copy of a recorded message.

5. Appear in a Series:

The *dulcimer*, fiddle, and banjo are all popular among the Appalachian Mountain people.

6. Tone and Setting:

The streets filled instantly with *bellicose* protesters, who pushed and shoved their way through the frantic bystanders. The scene was no longer peaceful and calm as the marchers had promised it would be.

7. Cause and Effect:

Since nobody came to the first voluntary work session, attendance for the second one is *mandatory* for all the members.

8. Association:

Carol is one of the most talented students ever to have attended Walker High. She has won many awards in art, music, and theater. She also writes poetry and short stories for the school paper and creates video games on her computer. She is on the basketball team and runs road races in the summer. Carol’s talents are *innumerable*.