Context Clues: Using All Types

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

> **context clue:** words or phrases near an unfamiliar word that help readers figure out the word's meaning
>
> **definition clue:** directly tells the meaning of the word
>
> **restatement clue:** restates the meaning of the word in easier language
>
> **comparison clue:** suggests the meaning of a word by telling what it is like
>
> **contrast clue:** suggests the meaning of a word by telling what it is unlike
>
> **cause-and-effect clue:** describes a cause or effect related to a word
>
> **example clue:** suggests a word's meaning with one or more examples

HERE'S HOW

Step 1: Identify the word. Ask yourself: Which word is unfamiliar?

Step 2: Use context. You can often tell a word's meaning from context. Look for related words, phrases, or sentences surrounding an unfamiliar word.

Step 3: Look for context clues. Clues of different types are often signaled by particular words and punctuation marks. Study the chart below.

Type of Clue	Signal Words	Punctuation	Example
Definition	*this means, that is, or, also known as, also called, defined as,*	, -	***Anthropology,*** or the study of human cultures, is Fred's favorite subject.
Restatement	*is, are, meaning, in other words,*	, - ( ) :	Ann ***sauntered*** along— as if she had all the time in the world.
Comparison	*like, as, similar to, not unlike, resembling, reminiscent, similarly*		Like a stone falling down a well, the temperature ***plummeted***.
Contrast	*unlike, but, in contrast to, different from, instead, on the other hand, except for*		Ed thought he would be tired after supper, but instead he felt surprisingly ***vivacious***.

Vocabulary 16

Type of Clue	Signal Words	Punctuation	Example
Cause-and-effect	*since, because, so, as a result, due to, thus*	**, :**	<u>Since</u> Sue is ***eloquent,*** <u>she is in demand</u> to give toasts.
Example	*such as, especially, like, for instance for example, including*	**- :**	The class rep used <u>such</u> ***rhetoric*** <u>as repetition and appeals to pride</u>.

Step 4: Define the unfamiliar word. Write the word and its definition in a special vocabulary notebook. Try using the word in a sentence.

Vocabulary 16