Determining the Meanings of Unknown Words & Phrases

Beryl Irene Bailey, Ed.D., CCC/SLP
Determining the Meanings of Unknown Words & Phrases

Support teachers in:

- Conceptualizing the importance of teaching vocabulary strategies
- Implementing vocabulary standards outlined in the CT Core Standards
- Implement the generative approach to vocabulary instruction
- Learning the types of contextual clues
- Providing explicit instruction in how words and language function within different types of subjects and contexts
What the Research Says?

- A strong vocabulary is essential for literacy success.
- Important words must be taught explicitly on a repeated basis.
- Words should be presented to students using a variety of multimodal instructional strategies that will engage higher-level thinking.
- **Students must learn that words contain clues to their meanings.**

(2006 Block & Mangieri, p.15 The Vocabulary Enriched Classroom)
What the Research Says?

“In a national study of teachers, vocabulary or some facet of it was identified by 83% as being the area of literacy about which their knowledge was the most limited.” (Block & Mangieri, at the 2010 International Reading Association annual conference)
“We can help students develop the ability to problem-solve using new words and their contexts. This type of instruction involves modeling the thinking processes we use when trying to figure out word meanings and can also help students understand how contexts work.”

(p. 21, 2010 Blachowicz and Fisher: Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms)
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Materials check:

- FACADES Word Meaning Poster
- Shoe Bag for Portable Word Wall
- Affixes/Roots on labels/Colored construction paper
- Academic Vocabulary for CLOSE Reading
- Frankenstorm article
- one pack of Metatextual Markers
Determining the Meaning of Unknown Words & Phrases

How is vocabulary like blood?
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How is vocabulary like blood?

“Vocabulary is the blood that courses through the bodies of complex text. Just like blood is essential to the life of the human body, vocabulary is essential to the life of complex text.”

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How is vocabulary like blood?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are different blood types</td>
<td>There are 3 tiers (types) of vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A drop of blood can tell you a lot about a person</td>
<td>A single word can have multiple meanings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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How are words like puzzles?

dia

logue
How are words like puzzles?
When word parts are joined together, they make a word, just like puzzle pieces make a picture.
How is a strategic reader like a detective?
Word Meaning Strategies

Just like a detective looks for clues to solve a puzzle or mystery, a strategic reader looks for clues to the meanings of unknown or multiple-meaning words.
Unpack the Grade 6 ELA Content Language Standard
It’s all About the Verbs and the Nouns box

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Skills Necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1:</strong> Choose a Standard 6 L. 4</td>
<td><strong>Step 2:</strong> Identify the verbs</td>
<td><strong>Step 3:</strong> Identify the nouns</td>
<td><strong>Step 4:</strong> Identify the skills needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determine or clarify</strong></td>
<td>• Determine</td>
<td>• Meaning of unknown words</td>
<td>• Knowledge of word meaning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the meaning of unknown or multiple</td>
<td>• Clarify</td>
<td>• Meaning of unknown words</td>
<td>• How and when to use contextual clues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meaning words and phrases based on grade 6</td>
<td>• Determine</td>
<td>• Multiple meaning words &amp; phrases</td>
<td>• Knowledge of when to use word meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading and content, choosing</td>
<td>• Clarify</td>
<td>• Multiple meaning words &amp; phrases</td>
<td>strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flexibly from a range of strategies.</td>
<td>• Choose</td>
<td>• Range of strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beryl Irene Bailey, Ed.D., CCC/SLP 11-11-20
Word Meaning Strategies

- Context Clues
- Multiple-Meaning Words
- Word parts-Roots/Affixes
- Figurative Language
Metacognition

“Conscious knowledge of what one is expected to do, and strategies for doing it—knowing about knowledge.”

(Carol Westby in Handbook of Language and Literacy Development and Disorders, p.398, 2006)
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Metacognition-Thinking about Thinking

• **Conditional Knowledge**- When do I need to use context clues?
• **Declarative or Factual Knowledge**- What kinds of clues do I need? *(FACADES)*
• **Procedural Knowledge**- How do I look for these clues?
• *(READ Strategy)*

Blachowicz and Fisher, 2010 and Carol Westby in Handbook of Language and Literacy Development and Disorders, 2006
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Academic Vocabulary for CLOSE Reading

- Pinky Finger-**struc, struct.** (structure), word, sentence, text, & story structure
- Fourth Finger-**notare** (annotation)
- Middle Finger-**fer** (infer)
- Index Finger- **scribe, script, graph, gram**, (paragraph, bar graph, pictograph, diagram)
- Thumb-**hend** (comprehend)
Vocabulary tools allow a teacher and students to:

• Lay a reading foundation
• Scaffold learning
• Construct meaning
• Build knowledge
• Dig deeper
A façade is a disguise. If we look at the first three letters in the word, façade, they remind us of the word face. Sometimes people hide who they are by disguising their face or feelings. They are said to have put on a façade. Well, that’s what authors do with some words when they write. They disguise the meanings of words within the context of what they have written. The prefix con- means “with” and the Latin Root, tex- means “to weave.” Most definitions of words are woven within the text.
FACADES Word Meaning Strategy

FACADES is a brain friendly acronym that classifies and describes the many ways that authors define words. This strategy also helps the reader to problem solve using new words and their context. Each letter of the word FACADES represents or stands for a type of context clue or definition. The use of the acronym helps the reader to remember each type of contextual clue. This is a prerequisite in using context clues to determine the meanings of unknown words.
READ Word Meaning Strategy

Steps for using Context Clues to Determine the Meanings of Unknown Words

Re-read the sentences before & after the unknown word.

- Examine or look at the pictures
- Examine the context clues (Key & signal words)
- Examine word parts (prefixes, suffixes, root words) that can help you to figure out (infer) the meaning of the unknown word.

Analyze or think about the context clues and connect what you know about them to what the author has written and think about a possible meaning for the unknown word.

Determine or decide if you have figured out the correct meaning by substituting (putting) your meaning in the sentence. Determine what type of context the word was in (synonym, compare, or description ...definition) (See FACADES)
• **F is for Formal definition.** A formal definition is a description or explanation of a word or thing by its attributes, properties or relations that distinguish it from all other things. The **signal words** are *is, means, is called, was, were, and are.* Formal definitions are usually found in non-fiction and expository/informational text.
• **Example**: abolitionists—“In the years before the Civil War, abolitionists were a group of people who tried to bring slavery to an end. Men and women traveled throughout the states speaking against the evils of slavery.”

• **Example**: ...abolitionists were a group of people who tried to bring slavery to an end.

• **Formal definition by description**. Signal word, were, ...abolitionists were a group of people who tried to bring slavery to an end.

• **Formal definition defined by explanation**. Men and women traveled throughout the states speaking against the evils of slavery.
A is for Antonym definition. An antonym definition is a word of opposite meaning. The signal words are instead, although, but, yet, however, rather, despite, either and/or or. Antonym definitions are usually found in realistic fiction, autobiographies, biographies, folktales and/or fantasy genres.
• **Example**: obliterate: “Instead of politely asking for modest reforms in seating patterns and more courteous behavior from the drivers, why not try to **obliterate** the segregation laws in court? If judges agreed, the city would have to give up. Once the buses were integrated, there would be no more need for a bus boycott.”

• **Antonym definition** defined by a word of opposite meaning. Signal word, **instead**. **Obliterate** segregation laws **instead of** asking for modest reforms in seating patterns and courteous behavior from drivers. **Obliterate** means to get rid of.
Families who enter our country the right way and play by the rules watch others **flout** the rules. Business owners who offer their workers good wages and benefits see the competition exploit undocumented immigrants by paying them far less. All of us take offense to anyone who reaps the rewards of living in America without taking on the responsibilities of living in America.

The word **flout** in this context most nearly means ____.

a) bend  
b) break  
c) forget  
d) obey
Families who enter our country the right way and play by the rules watch others **flout** the rules. Business owners who offer their workers good wages and benefits see the competition exploit undocumented immigrants by paying them far less. All of us take offense to anyone who reaps the rewards of living in America without taking on the responsibilities of living in America.

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Identify the context clue that helps the reader to determine the meaning of the word **flout**.

a) Antonym definition  
b) Apposition definition  
c) Compare definition  
d) Description definition
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Identify the context clue that helps the reader to determine the meaning of the word flout.

a) Antonym definition
b) Apposition definition
c) Compare definition
d) Description definition
Arturo had what he called the book hunting disease. No one volume told the whole story and no library specialized in the subject. So he haunted rare bookstores, poring over fragile pamphlets with torn covers and leather books with paper mites between pages.

The word **haunted** in this context most nearly means ___.

a) cursed
b) disturbed
c) frequented
d) visited
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The word haunted in this context most nearly means ___.

a) cursed  
b) disturbed  
c) frequented  
d) visited
C is for Compare definition. A compare definition represents something as similar. The reader examines the context for likenesses and differences. This definition often uses similes and/or metaphors. The signal words are like, as, than, or is. Compare definitions are usually found in biographies, memoirs, realistic fiction, poetry, folktales and/or fantasy genres.
• **Example**: battleground: “Known as the most segregated city in the south, Birmingham seemed the perfect *battleground* for the war on segregation.

• A compare definition represents something as similar. The author uses a metaphor and implies a similarity between Birmingham, known as the most segregated city in the south and a *battleground*. Birmingham is engaged in a war on segregation and the inference is that it is a battleground.
Arturo had what he called the book hunting disease. No one volume told the whole story and no library specialized in the subject. So he haunted rare bookstores, poring over fragile pamphlets with torn covers and leather books with paper mites between pages. The word poring in this context most nearly means ____.

a) examining
b) glancing
c) skimming
d) staring
Arturo had what he called the book hunting disease. *No one volume told the whole story and no library specialized in the subject.* So he haunted rare book-stores, *poring* over fragile pamphlets with torn covers and leather books with paper mites between pages.

The word *poring* in this context most nearly means ____.

a) examining  
b) glancing  
c) skimming  
d) staring
A is for Apposition definition. An apposition definition usually has a meaning put in parentheses or is set off by commas or a dash. The signal words are, or, that is, is, are, called. Apposition definitions are usually found in fiction and non-fiction text.
• **Example:** Constitution: “This time they were using the Constitution, the rule book for their country, to achieve justice. Apposition definition, meaning set off by a comma.

• Apposition definition, meaning set off by a comma. The *constitution* is the rule book.
Arturo eventually traced the roots of rebellion to early America. He read the radical pamphlet that David Walker, a free black merchant published in 1829: An appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World calling for slaves to rise up, a fiery tract that was banned in its day.

The context clue that helps the reader to infer the meaning of the word **tract** is ______________.

a) Antonym definition  
b) Apposition definition  
c) Compare definition  
d) Example definition
Arturo eventually traced the roots of rebellion to early America. He read the radical pamphlet that David Walker, a free black merchant published in 1829: An appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World calling for slaves to rise up, a fiery tract that was banned in its day.

The context clue that helps the reader to infer the meaning of the word tract is ______________.

a) Antonym definition
b) Apposition definition
c) Compare definition
d) Example definition
D is for Description definition. A description definition is defined in terms of appearance and attributes. The signal words are usually adjectives. Description definitions are usually found in autobiographies, biographies, realistic and historical fiction, poetry and non-fiction.
Example: tactic: Although [Mahatma Ghandi] he wasn’t the first to practice principles of nonviolence and civil disobedience, he gained fame for successfully spreading the tactic among large numbers of people.

Description definition is defined in terms of attributes. Signal words are adjectives. Principles of nonviolence; civil disobedience
E is for Example definition. An example definition is defined in terms of function. The signal words are verbs. Example definitions are usually found in autobiographies, biographies, realistic and historical fiction, poetry and non-fiction.
Example: tactic: [Ghandi]...he gained fame for successfully spreading the tactic among large numbers of people. “....Indians, he said, must refuse to cooperate with the corrupt government.” He urged Indians to boycott British products, ignore British customs and refuse to pay taxes.

Example definition is defined in terms of function. Signal words are verbs; refuse, boycott and ignore. Tactic must mean a strategy used.
S is for Synonym definitions. Synonym definitions have one or two words with similar meanings. Synonym definitions are usually found in content area subjects social studies, English Language Arts, narrative and expository texts.
Example—commandeered: Then, on a moonlit May night, nine black slaves *stole* the Confederate commander’s gunship as it lay tied a wharf in front of Confederate headquarters in Charleston Harbor and delivered it to the American navy...The daring slaves had *commandeered* her from under the noses of twenty-one Confederate troops guarding her from just a few feet away.

- Synonym definitions have words with similar meanings. *commandeered* and *stole* have similar meanings.
FACADES Word Meaning Strategy

**S is for Structural Analysis definitions.** Structural Analysis definitions are defined in terms of an arrangement or relationship of word elements, root word, prefixes and/or suffixes. Structural Analysis definitions are usually found in content area subjects, science, math, social studies, narrative and expository texts.
Example: dismantle: [14th Amendment] This amendment was used in several important cases during the Civil Rights Era to dismantle legal segregation, including Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

• Structural Analysis definitions are defined in terms of prefix and/or root words. The prefix dis- means away from and the root -man means hand. I infer that the word dismantle means to take apart by hand.
I wanted to find out, said Arturo Schomburg, what my own racial group had contributed. He could not get his hands on enough books. His curiosity about Africa-**insatiable**.

The type of contextual clue that helps the reader to infer the meaning of **insatiable** is ________________.

a) Antonym definition  
b) Apposition definition  
c) Synonym definition  
d) Structural Analysis definition
I wanted to find out, said Arturo Schomburg, what my own racial group had contributed. He could not get his hands on enough books. His curiosity about Africa-insatiable.

The type of contextual clue that helps the reader to infer the meaning of insatiable is ______________.

a) Antonym definition
b) Apposition definition
c) Synonym definition
d) Structural Analysis definition
Portable Word Wall