Vocabulary: Context Clues

Resource at a Glance

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Vocabulary: Context Clues

Learning Target: analyze context clues in order to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

ENTRY POINT: Analyzing Context Clues

15–20 mins.

Note: Words in bold are said aloud by the teacher.

⬡ TEACH: Analyzing Context Clues

- **While you're reading, whenever you encounter words that you don't know, you can usually figure out the meaning without using the dictionary.**
- **To do this, you can use** *context clues***. Context clues are words in the sentence that hint at the meaning of the word you don't know.**
- **What is** *context* **anyway? Context is the setting, circumstance, or surrounding information that helps make sense of what is happening. For example, perhaps you're telling someone that you had a nightmare where your house caught fire, and someone else only heard part of your story. They might think your house actually burned down!**
- **There are five types of context clues:** *inference, definition, example, antonym,* **and** *synonym***. You can remember this by using the acronym** *IDEAS***.**

Modify

Provide visuals for each type of context clue or have students create their own illustrations.

⬡ GUIDE: Model Using Context Clues

Note: For each of the context clue types, instruct students to copy the definition, underline the context clue in the given example, and copy the signal words onto their handout.

- Distribute Five Types of Context Clues (S-1).
- Display Five Types of Context Clues (T-1). Cover everything below the first context clue, Inference. **Find the box labeled** *Inference***. An inference context clue is when the author gives you a** *clue* **about what the word might mean, and** *you* **have to make an educated guess, or inference, to figure out the meaning.**
  - Read the example sentence. **Remember that to making an inference means using what is written and what you know to draw a conclusion about something.**
  - Point out the underlined context clue. **In this case, we know that he nods his head. What does nodding usually mean?**
    - Suggested response: **It means yes or agreed. So that means we can infer that** *confirmation* **is related to agreeing or saying yes about something.**
  - **There aren't really signals for inference context clues, but that's okay. You just need to think about what the rest of the sentence says and make an educated guess.**

Modify

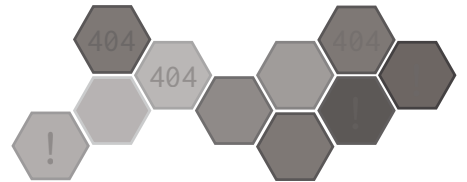Turn the five types of context clues into a foldable, flip book, or other simple design.

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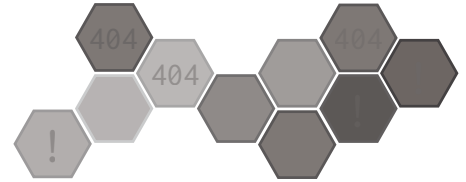
Vocabulary: Context Clues

⬡ GUIDE: Model Using Context Clues (cont.)

- Uncover the next context clue, Definition. **Find the box labeled *Definition*. A definition context clue is when the *meaning* of the word is given explicitly in the sentence.**
  - Read the example sentence. Point out the underlined context clue. **Without using a dictionary, we can tell that a *portfolio* is a collection of work.**
  - **You will also notice that this definition is set off by commas. That is a big hint for this type of context clue. There can also be signal words like *is, are, means,* and *refers to*.**
- Uncover the next context clue, Example. **Find the box labeled *Example*. An example context clue is when an *example* of the word is given in the sentence.**
  - Read the example sentence. **The unfamiliar word is *adversary*.**
  - Point out the underlined context clue. **The example we're given is *the Joker*. We know that the Joker is the bad guy who fights against Batman. That tells us that an adversary is the bad guy, or someone who is against you.**
  - **Signal words for this type of context clue are *like, such as, for example, for instance,* and *including*.**
- Uncover the next context clue, Antonym. **Find the box labeled *Antonym*. An antonym context clue is when a word with the *opposite* meaning as the unfamiliar word is used in the sentence.**
  - Read the example sentence. **Our word in this example is *expose*.**
  - Point out the underlined context clue. **The sentence says that *even though* they wanted to *expose* the secret, they kept it *hidden*. So we know that whatever expose means, it's the opposite of hidden. The opposite of hidden is shown or easy to see, right? So expose must mean to show or reveal.**
  - **Some signal words for this type of context clue are *but, however, whereas, though, unlike, as opposed to, in contrast to, instead of,* and *on the other hand*.**
- Uncover the next context clue, Synonym. **Find the box labeled *Synonym*. A synonym context clue is when a word with the *same* meaning as the unfamiliar word is used in the sentence.**
  - Read the example sentence. Point out the underlined context clue. **In this sentence, *miniature* is followed by *small* which is a word that means the same thing. Because we know what *small* means, we know what *miniature* means.**
  - **Some signal words are *also, as, identical, like, likewise, resembling, similarly,* and *too*.**

⬡ MONITOR: Identify Character Traits

- Cut and distribute Context Clues Exercise (S-2). There are two copies of the exercise per printed page, so each student will need only half the page.
- **Now you are going to practice using context clues. Read each sentence carefully. Underline the context clue you find in the sentence for the bolded word. Then use the context clue to determine the meaning of the bolded word. Write the meaning of the bolded word and which type of context clue is being used in the space below.**
- Walk around and help as needed.

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T-1: Five Types of Context Clues Notes

I Inference

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
When the author gives a clue about what the word might mean and you have to make an educated guess about the meaning	He nodded his head in **confirmation**.	N/A

D Definition

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
when the meaning of the word is stated clearly in the sentence	The **portfolio**, or collection of work, is due next Friday for the contest.	punctuation (like commas), is, are, means, and refers to

E Example

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
when an example of the word is given in the sentence	Like the Joker, my **adversary** was unpredictable.	like, such as, for example, for instance, and including

A Antonym

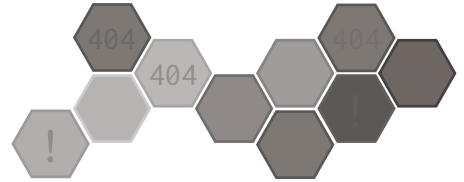| Definition:	Example:	Signals:
when a word with the opposite meaning as the unfamiliar word is used in the sentence	Even though I wanted to **expose** his evil secret, I kept it hidden.	but, however, whereas, though, unlike, as opposed to, and instead of

S Synonym

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
when a word with the same meaning as the unfamiliar word is used in the sentence	The **miniature** is so small that I have to use a magnifying glass to see the details.	also, as, identical, like, likewise, resembling, similarly, and too

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T-2: Context Clues Exercise Key

Read each sentence. Underline the context clue(s) given for the bolded word. Write your inferred meaning and the clue type used in the blanks below each sentence.

1. Once Kaya decides to **confide** in you, you know she <u>trusts</u> you.

   Meaning: to tell a secret to someone trusted   Clue Type: synonym

2. If you **exclude** them, they will feel <u>left out</u>.

   Meaning: to prevent someone or something from being included   Clue Type: synonym

3. Even though the video game was **vivid**, I knew it was <u>not reality</u>.

   Meaning: a lifelike level of detail   Clue Type: antonym

4. The architect will **envision** how he wants the <u>new building to look</u>.

   Meaning: to picture something in one's mind   Clue Type: inference

5. My love for you is **infinite**, like the <u>number of stars in the sky</u>.

   Meaning: limitless or going on forever   Clue Type: example

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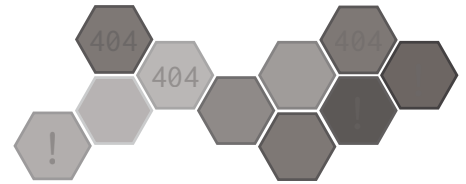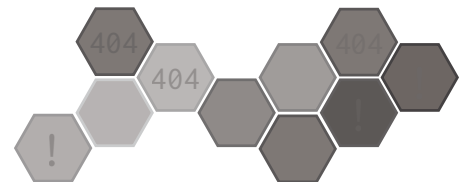## S-1: Five Types of Context Clues Notes

Name: _____ Date: _____

I Inference

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
	He nodded his head in **confirmation**.	

D Definition

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
	The **portfolio**, or collection of work, is due next Friday for the contest.	

E Example

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
	Like the Joker, my **adversary** was unpredictable.	

A Antonym

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
	Even though I wanted to **expose** his evil secret, I kept it hidden.	

S Synonym

Definition:	Example:	Signals:
	The **miniature** is so small that I have to use a magnifying glass to see the details.	

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S-2: Context Clues Exercise

Name:_____ Date:_____

Read each sentence. Underline the context clue(s) given for the bolded word. Write your inferred meaning and the clue type used in the blanks below each sentence.

1. Once Kaya decides to **confide** in you, you know she trusts you.

   Meaning: _____ Clue Type: _____

2. If you **exclude** them, they will feel left out.

   Meaning: _____ Clue Type: _____

3. Even though the video game was **vivid**, I knew it was not reality.

   Meaning: _____ Clue Type: _____

4. The architect will **envision** how he wants the new building to look.

   Meaning: _____ Clue Type: _____

5. My love for you is **infinite**, like the number of stars in the sky.

   Meaning: _____ Clue Type: _____

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Vocabulary: Context Clues

NEXLEVEL: Extending the Lesson

🎯 Gamify

- Create a game! Give each student or small groups of students a dry erase board. Then display each sentence/word from Analyzing Context Clues. Have students work together to write the correct definition and type of context clue on their dry erase boards. Give points to teams that finish quickest or that answer correctly.

- Create a Kahoot (getkahoot.com) using the words and sentences from Analyzing Context Clues or create your own examples. Students will use their phones or other electronic devices to compete to answer questions about word meanings or the type of context clue used.
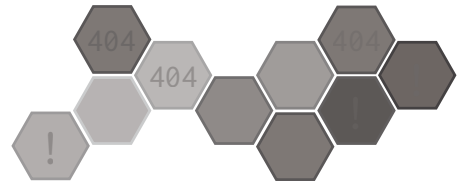
🔍 Research/Present

- Give each student a mystery word. Have them conduct an internet search to find sentences for each word. Then students will identify the context clues used in the sentences. The goal is for students to have the class guess the meaning of the word based on the context clues they provided. Students could present this orally, by creating a visual like a poster or slideshow, or any other creative way.

🧩 Cooperate

- Create stations in your classroom. At each station, students should focus on one type of context clue. Use sentences from what's currently being read in class or news articles to make the learning authentic!

- Optional: Use the Student-Led Discussion Rubric to review how to participate in a constructive and efficient discussion. Have students evaluate their own performance using the rubric.

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Student-Led Discussion Rubric

All good discussions require students to be active listeners, articulate their arguments, and productively exchange with their peers.

	5 points **Highly Effective**	3 points **Effective**	1 point **Developing**	0 points **Weak**
Active Listening	❑ **Consistently** summarizes what others say ❑ Often asks clarifying questions that build on others' ideas ❑ Always responds appropriately by making thoughtful comments	❑ **Sometimes** summarizes what others say ❑ Sometimes asks clarifying questions that may or may not build on others' ideas ❑ Usually appropriately by making comments	❑ **Rarely** summarizes what others say ❑ Rarely asks clarifying questions ❑ Rarely responds appropriately	❑ Fails to meet criteria
Communication	❑ **Consistently** uses clear communication ❑ Expertly gives and/or follows oral instructions that include multiple steps to perform a task, answer a question, or solve a problem (when applicable)	❑ **Sometimes** uses clear communication ❑ Adequately gives and/or follows oral instructions that include multiple steps to perform a task, answer a question, or solve a problem (when applicable)	❑ **Rarely** uses clear communication ❑ Rarely gives and/or follows oral instructions that include multiple steps to perform a task, answer a question, or solve a problem (when applicable)	❑ Fails to meet criteria
Participation	❑ **Consistently** asks for and considers suggestions from other group members ❑ Consistently takes notes during the discussion ❑ Thoughtfully identifies points of agreement and/or disagreement among group members	❑ **Sometimes** asks for and considers suggestions from other group members ❑ Sometimes takes notes during the discussion ❑ Identifies points of agreement and/or disagreement among group member	❑ **Rarely** asks for and considers suggestions from other group members ❑ Rarely takes notes during the discussion ❑ Sometimes identifies points of agreement and/or disagreement among group members	❑ Fails to meet criteria
Engagement	❑ **Consistently** engages in meaningful discourse ❑ Consistently provides constructive feedback to group members ❑ Consistently accepts and incorporates constructive feedback from group members	❑ **Sometimes** engages in meaningful discourse ❑ Sometimes provides constructive feedback to group members ❑ Sometimes accepts and incorporates constructive feedback from group members	❑ **Rarely** engages in meaningful discourse ❑ Rarely provides constructive feedback to group members ❑ Rarely accepts and incorporates constructive feedback from group members	❑ Fails to meet criteria

Total Score:

% Grade (Total Score × 5):

Comments:

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