

# General Context Clues

Teaching

You can often tell the meaning of an unfamiliar word by looking closely at words and phrases in the same sentence or nearby sentences. Read the following passage:

Listeners were shocked by the speaker's **diatribe**. They hadn't expected such harsh words against the mayor.

You can infer from the context words and phrases "Listeners were shocked", and "harsh words against the mayor" that *diatribe* means a strongly worded, even abusive, criticism.

## A. Using General Context Clues in Action

Read the following sentences and underline any word or phrase that signals a context clue for each italicized word. Then write the meaning for each italicized word.

1. The odor *pervaded* the building. After awhile no resident on any floor could escape it.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The dog crept slowly closer, doing it so *surreptitiously* that the cat got quite a surprise.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

3. I'd like to *collaborate* with you on the science project. I think we each would have something to contribute.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

4. I always thought he was my friend. I realized I was wrong when he started making those *derogatory* comments about me.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

5. My father respects hard work. I know he will *commend* me for painting the entire garage.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

6. The *impudent* child ran into the room. The first thing he did was stick out his tongue at the teacher.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

7. The week-old fruit really wasn't *palatable*. I had to spit it out.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

8. The *ransom* note came in the mail. It demanded three million for the return of the jewels.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Your offer of money was very *liberal*. I must say it was much more than I expected.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

10. The new neighbors must be pretty *affluent*. They own three expensive cars and a boat.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

# General Context Clues

*More Practice*

*pervaded*    *surreptitiously*    *collaborate*    *commend*    *impudent*  
*palatable*    *ransom*    *liberal*    *derogatory*    *affluent*

## B. Vocabulary Words in Action

Review the meanings of the words in the list above. Then insert in each sentence the word that correctly fits the meaning.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ demand told the detectives where to drop the money.
- The meal was barely \_\_\_\_\_. By that time, though, I was so hungry that I ate it anyway.
- You spoke really rudely to her. Don't you think you were being a little \_\_\_\_\_?
- We may not be as \_\_\_\_\_ as some. On the other hand, we've always made do.
- Sasha and I want to give a surprise party and \_\_\_\_\_ on the arrangements.
- Dad poured a \_\_\_\_\_ amount of barbecue sauce on the steaks. I guess he knows how much we like the stuff!
- A sense of menace \_\_\_\_\_ the house. We could feel it everywhere we went.
- I don't mean this in any \_\_\_\_\_ way, but I think you should be a little more careful about what you say.
- I want to \_\_\_\_\_ you on your report about whales in class. It was the best you've done all year.
- The spy inched \_\_\_\_\_ along the prison wall. He was afraid he'd be seen in the floodlights.

## C. Vocabulary Challenge

Look at the following words and their meanings. Then for each word write a sentence that uses the word and includes a context clue to its meaning.

- stealthy** acting in a quiet, cautious way

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- elude** escape from

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- deleterious** having a harmful effect; injurious

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- apparition** a ghostly figure; a specter

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- gregarious** seeking and enjoying the company of others

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