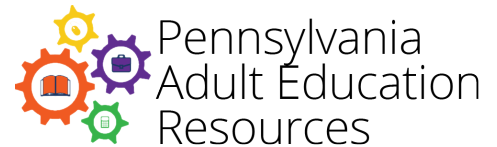


## PARENT EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Workshop Topic:

# Be a Word Detective (Use Context Clues)

CREATED BY



**CCRS Language Anchor 4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

### NELP Predictors of Later Success

- **Reading readiness:** usually a combination of alphabet knowledge, concepts of print, vocabulary, and phonological awareness
- **Oral language:** the ability to produce or comprehend spoken language, including vocabulary and grammar

**Objective:** At the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Recognize several kinds of context clues
- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words
- Explain why using context clues helps extend children's vocabulary and aids in comprehension



### Materials:

- Copies of Mystery Teaser parent handout
- Copies of Types of Context Clues parent handout
- Copies of Amur Tigers: Big Cats in Crisis parent handout
- Books or other resources (magazine or newspaper articles, menus, pictures) parents can share with children

### Welcome/Ice Breaker:

Greet parents as they come in. Build rapport and break the ice.

Ask parents what kinds of activities they did with their children that week. Were they able to incorporate any of the material they learned at their previous session in their activities with their child?

Give each parent a slip of paper and have him write one general fact about himself. You do the same. Have parents give you their slip of paper. Read a few of the facts out loud and have the group guess who wrote that fact.

### Topic Review:

Tell parents that in this workshop they are going to learn how to uncover the meaning of unknown words when they are reading and how they can share this knowledge with their children. This strategy will help increase children's vocabulary and aid them in understanding what they are reading. It is a strategy that can be used with anyone.

## Opening Activity:

Tell parents they are going to be detectives and are being asked to solve a mystery. Give each parent a copy of the Mystery Teaser handout and ask parents to work in small groups to figure out the mystery. Ask each group if they were able to solve the mystery and, if so, what clues they used.

Tell parents that when they are reading, there often are clues given for the meaning of unknown words. These are called context clues and they are hints that an author gives to help define a difficult or unusual word. The clue may appear within the same sentence as the word to which it refers or in an earlier or later sentence. Using context clues is a strategy parents can share with their children. This strategy can increase a child's vocabulary and help her understand what she reads.

## Central Ideas and Practice (Content and Strategies):

1. Discuss with parents some questioning strategies they can use when their children are reading and come to a word they do not know.
  - Did you reread the sentence (as well as sentences before and after the unknown word) to look for clues to tell you what the word means?
  - Are there clues to let you know what the word is the same as?
  - Are there clues to let you know what the word is not or is the opposite of?
  - Is the word actually defined in the sentence?
  - Is there an example given in the sentence?
2. Share with parents the handout showing five basic categories of context clues. Review the handout with parents. Discuss the examples given in the handout for each type of context clue.

## Content or Strategies

- *Infant/Toddler Content or Strategies*  
You can help infants and toddlers begin to understand context clues by asking them questions, such as “What does the cow say?” while pointing to a picture of a cow or “What does the dog say?” when you see a dog in the park or walking with its owner.
- *Preschool Content or Strategies*  
When you are out eating with your child, look at the pictures on the menu together. Ask your child to name some food that you can buy at the restaurant based on the pictures.
- *Elementary Content or Strategies*  
Library books with science, geography, or social studies themes often introduce new vocabulary that might be defined or explained by context clues. Websites such as Wonderopolis (<http://wonderopolis.org/>) also have science and social studies articles that introduce new vocabulary words in context.
- *Middle School Content or Strategies*  
Online news, such as Scholastic News (<http://magazines.scholastic.com/>) or PBS Learning Media (<https://ket.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/daily-news-story/#.WRxBoevyuUk>) can be a great source for readings that might include unknown words and context clues. Plus they can provide great background knowledge.

## Application:

Have parents work in small groups to read and identify types of context clues in the Amur Tiger handout. Have each group identify a context clue they found in the passage.

## Connection to Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time®:

Parents will share the Amur Tiger handout with their child during PACT Time. Parents and children can read the article together and take it home to reread it and look for more context clues. Remind parents to look for other ways they can use context clues with their children. Books also can be used to find context clues.

- *Infant/Toddler Connections*

Parents can introduce children to context clues by pointing out pictures and using words that children know. When in the grocery store they might look for ads, end cap displays, or general merchandise that might have pictures children recognize. Connect the picture to its merchandise, e.g., dog to dog food or cow to milk. Use books, such as *The Wheels on the Bus* or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to help children use examples as context clues.

- *Preschool Connections*

Give children clues by pointing out pictures and using words that they know. Use examples as clues. Show your child a flower and talk about its petals. Show your child the three wheels on her tricycle and the two wheels on your bicycle. Use a book, such as *Goodnight Moon*, *The Wonderful Things You Will Be*, or *Give a Mouse a Cookie*, to help preschoolers use examples as context clues.

- *Elementary Connections*

Look for clues that can help your child find the meaning of words he doesn't know. Look at a flyer that came in the mail and search for context clues. Go to the library and look for books like *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Stellaluna*, and *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*.

- *Middle School Connections*

Read a newspaper or magazine article with your child and when he reaches a word he does not understand, use the questioning strategies from the beginning of the lesson to help find context clues leading to the meaning of the word. Look for books, such as *Stone Fox* or *Helen Keller* when you visit the library and read them together using context clues where needed.

## Wrap up/Closure:

Review with parents how looking for context clues can help expand a child's vocabulary and comprehension. Ask them how they will use context strategies with their child when reading books or other forms of text, e.g., advertisements, newspapers, magazines, or even billboards. Tell them that at the next meeting, you will review how they used context clues with their children during the week.

## Teacher Materials

### Mystery Teaser: Sherlock Holmes

One snowy night, Sherlock Holmes was in his house sitting by a fire. All of a sudden a snowball came crashing through his window, breaking it.

Holmes got up and looked out the window just in time to see three neighborhood kids who were brothers run around a corner. Their names were John Crimson, Mark Crimson and Paul Crimson.

The next day Holmes got a note on his door that read “? Crimson. He broke your window.”

Which of the three Crimson brothers should Sherlock Holmes question about the incident?

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Answer to Mystery Teaser: Sherlock Holmes

Answer  
Mark Crimson

“?” = question MARK, so the note on the door reads “Question Mark Crimson. He broke your window.

## Amur Tigers: Big Cats in Crisis

Amur tigers, also known as Siberian tigers, are interesting animals. They are the biggest cats in the world. A full-grown Amur tiger can weigh over 600 pounds. Unlike lions that live in groups, tigers are solitary animals, meaning they live alone. Tigers also have very good eyesight and hearing. Its eyesight is six times better than a human's.

Amur tigers live in the forests located in the Russian Far East and northeastern China. They have a thick yellow fur coat with black stripes. Their stripes are like human fingerprints. Every tiger has a different and unique stripe pattern. Tigers use their striped coat to camouflage or hide themselves from the animals they hunt. Their thick fur and a thick layer of fat keep them warm during the long, cold winters in the forest. The fur and fat layer are adaptations, or changes, that help them survive in the wild.

Powerful and quiet hunters, Amur tigers usually hunt at night. Animals that are active at night are called nocturnal animals. Sometimes these tigers travel hundreds of miles looking for prey to eat. They hunt deer and wild boar that live in the forest. They also hunt smaller types of bears. A hungry Amur tiger can eat more than 50 pounds in one night.

Today, Amur tigers are an endangered species. Endangered species are animals that are in danger of disappearing forever. Snow leopards, chimpanzees, and blue whales are also endangered species. Amur tigers almost disappeared forever at the beginning of the 20th century. They were hunted until only 40 tigers remained in the wild. Countries like Russia then began to protect these big cats. They made it illegal to hunt them, and they tried to protect their forest habitat. After these changes, the number of Amur tigers living in the wild increased. Scientists believe there are about 540 Amur tigers living in the wild today.

These big cats are still in crisis. People continue to illegally hunt Amur tigers. Illegal hunting is called poaching. Amur tigers are also still in danger because the forests they live in are being destroyed. Illegal logging and new roads destroy their forest homes. It makes it hard for the tigers to find prey to eat. It also makes it difficult for the tigers to roam for long distances. Many organizations and people are trying save these tigers in the wild. Organizations that work to save animals and the environment are called conservation organizations. They are trying to stop poaching. They are also trying to protect the tiger's forest.

Retrieved from Reading Vine (<https://www.readingvine.com/passages/amur-tigers-big-cats-in-crises>)  
Passage designated for 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders.

The following suggested answers will be included on the instructor's page, not on the parents' page.

Synonym: What is another name for Amur tigers?

Definition: What clue helps you know what "solitary" means?

Synonym: What does "camouflage" mean?

Synonym: What kind of clue helps you understand the meaning of "adaptations?"

Definition: What does "nocturnal" mean?

Example: "Prey" means what?

Inference: What does "endangered species" mean?

Definition: What is the meaning of "poaching?"

# Parent Handout

## Mystery Teaser: Sherlock Holmes



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# Parent Handout

## Types of Context Clues



There are several different types of context clues. Here are five common ones.

### 1. Definition/Description Clues

The author provides a direct definition of an unknown word in the sentence. Sometimes a word's or phrase's meaning is explained immediately after its use. It is defined. Clues to definition include "that is," commas, dashes, and parentheses.

Example: Some water *fowl*, such as ducks, are often hunted for sport.

### 2. Synonym/Restatement Clues

Synonyms are words or phrases with the same meaning. The author uses a word having the same or nearly the same meaning as another word or other words in a sentence. Sometimes a hard word or phrase is said in a simple way.

Example: The train passing always seems *infinite* or endless when I am in a hurry.

### 3. Antonym/Contrast Clues

Antonyms are words with opposite meanings. An opposite meaning context clue contrasts the meaning of an unfamiliar word with the meaning of a familiar term. Words like "although," "but," "however," "instead of," and "unlike" may signal contrast clues.

Example: Thomas was very *anxious* about the driver's test, but I was not worried about it.

### 4. Example Clues

Sometimes when a reader finds a new word, an example may be found nearby to help explain its meaning. Words like "including" and "for example" can lead to example clues.

Example: There are certain products that include GMOs. For example, much of the soy, cotton, corn and sugar beets in the United States have been genetically modified.

One kind of phobia is a fear of heights. There are other kinds, such as a fear of insects and a fear of small spaces.

### 5. Inference Clues

A word's definition is not explained in the text. It can be inferred (guessed) from the description of a situation. The author provides nonspecific clues that can be given before or after the sentence.

Example: John's pugnaciousness surprised everyone, especially when he punched his own locker and then turned and pushed Simon down.



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