

Context Clue Lab: Clue Detective Casebook

6 complete activities from Context Clue Lab, each with a worked answer.

Read

Read the passage closely.

Find

Underline the words that prove it.

Explain

Tell how the clues fit together.

HOW TO USE

1. Read the situation and the evidence first.
2. Show your thinking in the work boxes, not only an answer.
3. Explain how you know your answer makes sense.
4. Try the new problem at the bottom of the page.

6 activities • 3 answer pages • From the 24-activity collection

10 US Letter pages • Print at 100% / Actual Size

Original Bobotemp educational printable • Fictional names, places and prices

Name _____ Date _____

Signal Word Spotter: trellis

LEVEL 1



Read the short passage. Find the signal word that tells you a definition is coming. Use the definition to choose the meaning.

Courtyard Club Notes: 'Before the evening event, Dante and Rosa set up a trellis. A trellis is a wooden frame that climbing plants grow on. By the end of the week, green vines had wrapped around its slats.' What does trellis mean?

- (A) a wooden frame that climbing plants grow on
- (B) a wooden bench for sitting
- (C) a metal hook for hanging lanterns
- (D) a stone path through a garden

EVIDENCE TO USE

- Target word: trellis
- Definition signals: is, means, refers to, is called
- Tip: the definition usually comes right after the signal word.

1. Write the signal word from the second sentence.

2. Copy the exact words that define trellis.

3. Write your letter choice and test the meaning in the first sentence.

TRY IT • 'A gazebo is a small roofed building with open sides where people can sit outdoors.' What is the signal word, and what does gazebo mean?

Name _____ Date _____

Appositive Hunt: pennant

LEVEL 1



Find the punctuation that sets off a meaning next to the target word. Use it to choose the meaning, then rewrite the sentence with a different signal.

Read: 'Before the evening event, Hana hung a pennant, a long pointed flag, above the courtyard gate. It fluttered in the breeze while her classmates arranged chairs.' What does pennant mean?

- (A) a round paper lamp
- (B) a long pointed flag
- (C) a wide square banner
- (D) a thin rope for tying things

EVIDENCE TO USE

- Target word: pennant
- Punctuation signals: commas, dashes, parentheses
- An appositive is a phrase next to a noun that renames it.
- Tip: look for a pair of commas right after the target word.

1. Box the two commas that set off the meaning.

2. Copy the exact words between the commas.

3. Rewrite the sentence using dashes or parentheses instead.

TRY IT • Find the meaning, then rewrite with parentheses: 'The class used a stencil—a sheet with shapes cut out of it—to paint stars on the sign.'

Name _____ Date _____

Read On! The Lantern Garden: luminous

LEVEL 2



The sentence with the target word has no clue. Keep reading to find the clue, then count how far away it is.

From 'The Lantern Garden': 'Jun's job was to make the stone path luminous for the evening event. When he finished placing small lanterns along both edges, every stepping stone glowed, and visitors could see the path from the gate without a flashlight.' What does luminous mean?

- (A) decorated with flowers
- (B) smooth and flat
- (C) bright and glowing
- (D) wide enough for two people

EVIDENCE TO USE

- Target word: luminous
- The target sentence has no signal word.
- Clue type: cross-sentence
- Distance = how many sentences after the target sentence the clue appears (same sentence = 0, next sentence = 1)

1. Copy the exact clue that shows what luminous means.

2. Write how many sentences away the clue is.

3. Rewrite the first sentence using your meaning.

TRY IT • Find the clue and the meaning: 'The garden was parched by Friday. The soil had cracked, and the leaves curled up, waiting for water.'

Name _____ Date _____

Whole-Sentence Restatement: reluctant

LEVEL 2



Sometimes a whole sentence restates the target word. Find the restatement signal and one more detail that supports the meaning.

From a class newsletter: 'When the courtyard project ended, the volunteers were reluctant to leave. In other words, they did not really want to go yet. Several of them lingered by the lanterns, taking slow steps toward the gate and looking back.' What does reluctant mean?

- (A) unwilling or hesitant to do something
- (B) excited and eager
- (C) in a big hurry
- (D) confused about directions

EVIDENCE TO USE

- Target word: reluctant
- Restatement signals: in other words, that is, or
- A restatement can be a whole sentence.
- A later detail can confirm the meaning.

1. Circle the restatement signal.**2. Copy the restatement exactly.****3. Copy one more detail that supports the meaning.**

TRY IT • What does conceal mean? 'Amir tried to conceal the surprise poster. That is, he hid it behind the bookshelf so no one would see it.'

Name _____ Date _____

When Word Parts Mislead: invaluable

LEVEL 3



Word parts can trick you. Make a first guess from the word parts, then use the context to confirm or revise it. Watch for a distractor sentence.

Read: 'The map club's old brass compass was invaluable to them. A visitor once offered to buy it, but the members said they would not trade it for any amount of money. They keep it in a padded case and pass it to a new leader each year. A plastic compass sits in the supply bin; anyone may borrow that one.' What does invaluable mean?

- (A) not valuable; worth nothing
- (B) extremely valuable; worth more than can be measured
- (C) easy to lose
- (D) broken and unusable

Word-parts
guess

Clue

Another clue

Confirm or
revise?**EVIDENCE TO USE**

- Target word: invaluable
- Word parts: in- + value + -able
- Warning: word parts can mislead.
- The last sentence is about a different object.

1. Write the meaning the word parts seem to give.

2. Copy two clues that confirm or revise that meaning.

3. Explain why the plastic compass sentence does not change the meaning.

TRY IT • Use word parts and context: 'The museum's oldest map was priceless; the city would not sell it for any amount.' Does priceless mean 'has no value' or 'too valuable to put a price on'?

Name _____ Date _____

One Word, Two Meanings: current

LEVEL 3



The word **current** appears twice with different meanings. Decide the meaning in Lena's question only. Use the part of speech and a clue to reject every other meaning.

Read: 'The class floated paper boats down the creek at the nature center. Mateo noticed that the **current** was strongest in the middle, where the boats moved fastest. Later, Lena studied the trail sign. "Is this map **current**?" she asked, pointing at a date printed 15 years ago.' What does **current** mean in Lena's question?

- (A) a flow of water moving in one direction
- (B) up to date; belonging to the present time
- (C) a flow of electricity
- (D) moving fast

TEST EACH MEANING

Choice	Naming or describing?	Fits Lena's question?
A		
B		
C		
D		

EVIDENCE TO USE

- Target word: **current** (used twice)
- Find the meaning in Lena's question only.
- Ask: Is the word naming a thing or describing one?
- One choice comes from a nearby sentence and is a trap.

1. Write the meaning of **current** in Mateo's sentence.

2. Choose the meaning in Lena's question and copy the clue that proves it.

3. Explain why 'moving fast' is a trap.

TRY IT • Give the meaning of **pitch** in each sentence: 'Kim's whistle had a high **pitch**. Later, she helped **pitch** the tent near the picnic tables.'

1. Signal Word Spotter: trellis

LEVEL 1

A: a trellis is a wooden frame that climbing plants grow on. Signal word: is. Clue: “a wooden frame that climbing plants grow on.”

WORKED REASONING • The signal word ‘is’ comes right after trellis, so a definition follows. The exact clue is ‘a wooden frame that climbing plants grow on.’ The word ‘wooden’ rules out C and D. The words ‘climbing plants grow on’ rule out B. The last sentence agrees: vines wrapped around its slats. Clue distance is 0, because the definition is in the same sentence as the word. Substitution: ‘Dante and Rosa set up a wooden frame that climbing plants grow on.’ The sentence makes sense, and the word is still a noun.

WATCH FOR • Some students pick B because a bench is also wooden and sits in a garden. Matching one detail is not enough. The whole definition, including ‘climbing plants grow on,’ must fit.

TRANSFER • The signal word is ‘is.’ A gazebo is a small roofed building with open sides where people can sit outdoors.

2. Appositive Hunt: pennant

LEVEL 1

B: a pennant is a long pointed flag. The clue “a long pointed flag” is set off by two commas. Sample rewrite: Hana hung a pennant (a long pointed flag) above the courtyard gate.

WORKED REASONING • A pair of commas sets off the words right after pennant: ‘, a long pointed flag,’. That phrase renames the noun, so it is a definition clue marked by punctuation. A restatement reading is also defensible. ‘Flag’ rules out A and D. ‘Long pointed’ rules out C, which is square. The next sentence, ‘It fluttered in the breeze,’ fits a flag. Substitution: ‘Hana hung a long pointed flag above the courtyard gate.’ The sentence makes sense, and the word is still a noun.

WATCH FOR • Students sometimes think any comma introduces a meaning. A comma clue works only when the commas surround a phrase that sits next to the noun and renames it.

TRANSFER • A stencil is a sheet with shapes cut out of it. Rewrite: The class used a stencil (a sheet with shapes cut out of it) to paint stars on the sign.

9. Read On! The Lantern Garden: luminous

LEVEL 2

C: luminous means bright and glowing. Clue: “every stepping stone glowed” (1 sentence after the target).

WORKED REASONING • The first sentence only tells Jun’s job, so I keep reading. The next sentence says ‘every stepping stone glowed’ and that visitors ‘could see the path from the gate without a flashlight.’ Both details describe light, so C fits. B and D describe the path’s shape. A adds flowers, which the passage never mentions. The clue is 1 sentence away. Substitution: ‘Jun’s job was to make the stone path bright and glowing for the evening event.’ The sentence makes sense, and the word is still an adjective.

WATCH FOR • Students may stop at the end of the target sentence and guess ‘pretty.’ When the target sentence has no clue, keep reading, because the clue may come next.

TRANSFER • Parched means very dry. Clue: ‘The soil had cracked, and the leaves curled up, waiting for water’ (1 sentence after).

10. Whole-Sentence Restatement: reluctant

LEVEL 2

A: reluctant means unwilling or hesitant to do something. Restatement clue: “In other words, they did not really want to go yet.”

WORKED REASONING • ‘In other words’ signals that the next sentence says the same idea in plainer language: ‘they did not really want to go yet.’ Not wanting to go means unwilling, so A fits. B and C are the opposite of not wanting to leave. D might seem possible from ‘looking back,’ but the restatement says nothing about being lost. The third sentence adds support, because they ‘lingered’ and took ‘slow steps.’ Substitution: ‘The volunteers were unwilling to leave.’ The sentence makes sense.

WATCH FOR • Some students think ‘in other words’ introduces a new idea. It signals a restatement, which is the same meaning said a different way.

TRANSFER • Conceal means hide. The signal ‘That is’ restates it as ‘he hid it.’

17. When Word Parts Mislead: invaluable

LEVEL 3

B: invaluable means extremely valuable; worth more than can be measured. Clues: “would not trade it for any amount of money” and “keep it in a padded case.”

WORKED REASONING • The word parts suggest in- (not) + valuable, which gives ‘not valuable’ (A). The context reverses that guess: the members ‘would not trade it for any amount of money,’ so the compass is worth more than any price. The word parts were split the wrong way: in- (not) + value (to put a price on) + -able (able to be) means ‘not able to be priced,’ so valuable that no price fits. The money clue rules out A. D is wrong because nothing in the passage says the compass is broken; every clue is about how much it is worth. ‘Padded case’ could fit C, but nothing says it gets lost. The plastic compass is a different object. Substitution: ‘The compass was extremely valuable to them.’

WATCH FOR • Students read invaluable as in- + valuable and decide it means worthless. In- does mean not here, but it attaches to value + -able (‘able to be valued’), so invaluable means too valuable to put a price on. Word parts give a first guess, and context shows which split is right.

TRANSFER • Too valuable to put a price on. Price + -less means ‘without a price,’ which can sound like ‘worth nothing,’ but ‘would not sell it for any amount’ shows that no price is high enough.

18. One Word, Two Meanings: current

LEVEL 3

B: in Lena’s question, current means up to date; belonging to the present time. Clue: “pointing at a date printed 15 years ago.”

WORKED REASONING • In Mateo’s sentence, ‘the current was strongest’ is a noun that means flowing water (A). Lena’s question uses current to describe the map (‘Is this map ___?’), so it must be an adjective. That rules out A and C, which are nouns. D is an adjective, but it comes from the boat sentence and does not describe a map. The clue ‘pointing at a date printed 15 years ago’ shows Lena is asking whether the map is still up to date. Substitution: ‘Is this map up to date?’ The sentence makes sense.

WATCH FOR • Students see current twice and assume it means the same thing both times. A multiple-meaning word can change meaning, and even part of speech, within one passage.

TRANSFER • First sentence: how high or low a sound is. Second sentence: to set up (a tent).