

Context Clue Sheet

This handout should serve as a guide for students while learning how to use context clues. The handout will help them to remember the five types of context clues they can use to learn the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Context Clue Strategy

1. Reread the sentence that contains the unknown word. Be on the lookout for signal words or punctuation.
2. Reread the sentences before and after the sentence that contains the unknown word.
3. Based on the clues, try to figure out the meaning of the word.
4. Insert your meaning in the original sentence to see whether it makes sense.

Exhibit 1. Types of Context Clues

Types of Context Clues	What to Look For	Signal Words	Examples of Signal Sentences
Definition	A definition in the sentence	- Is, are, is called, means, or - Signal punctuation: Set off by commas	Brick made of sun-dried clay is called adobe . The Native Americans used adobe , or bricks made of sun-dried clay, to build their homes.
Synonym	A word with a meaning that is similar to the meaning of the unknown word	Also, as, like, same, similarly, too	The Zuni built their homes with brick made of sun-dried clay. The Hopi also used adobe to build their homes.
Antonym	A word or phrase that means the opposite of the unknown word	But, however, in contrast, on the other hand, although, unlike	The Hopi lived in single-family houses, but the Iroquois lived in longhouses .
Example	Several examples in a list	Such as, for example, for instance, like, including	The Pueblo people grew many crops such as corn, beans, and squash.
General	General or inexact clues		After 1700, the Pueblos got sheep from the Spanish, and wool replaced cotton as the most important textile .

