

Working Out with SOL Vocabulary

Exercising Your Standards of Learning: 9.4e, 11.4c

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*A good word is like a good tree whose root
is firmly fixed and whose top is in the sky.*

The Koran

Key Words/Questions

Notes

- What are the different types of context clues?
- Where can I find context clues?
- What am I going to do to expand my general vocabulary?
- What is not clear to me about using context to determine word meaning?
- What READING strategies will I use to discover word meanings?

Record your answers in the Notes column along with your own notes and reflections as you work through the chapter.

Warming Up to Vocabulary in Context

Vocabulary knowledge is to SOL success as exercise is to stamina.

There is no way a student or teacher can know all the words that may be asked on the test. The good news is that you do not have to. Yes, a student must learn the SOL terminology for the reading test, but there are other ways to work out meanings of unfamiliar words. The terminology both for the English/reading content and for the test itself is discussed in charts throughout this book and in the pull-out Study Guide in Appendix B. This chapter describes strategies for working out word meanings by using the clues in the passage—vocabulary in context. That just means that by using the clues in the reading passage, readers can figure out the probable meaning of unfamiliar words. The words that the SOL test-writers use as vocabulary questions must have enough context clues for a reader to figure out what the words mean. So look for that context: it is there.

Here are the most common types of context clues. They can be just about anywhere in the text, not just in the sentence with the tested word.

Types of Context Clues

Type	Definition	Example
Explicit information	This is a specific definition or explanation that is usually in the same sentence. This type of clue is frequently used in textbooks and other types of informational materials.	One can choose from the <u>flash</u> , which is a collection of tattoo designs already available, or the artist and client can create a custom tattoo.
Synonym clues	Synonyms or simpler words are used to explain the vocabulary word. The clue may not be in the same sentence with the unfamiliar word.	Each gang member’s costume will be <u>ostentatious</u> , very <u>ornate and colorful</u> .
Antonym clues	These are clue words that have the opposite meaning of the word in question.	Joe could be described as <u>docile</u> . His brother, on the other hand, was always running around, screaming, yelling, and generally getting into <u>trouble</u> .
Example clues	The clue is provided through an example or illustration.	True to his <u>parsimonious</u> nature, Ben contributed only two dollars to the charity drive.
Inferred clues	The clues are throughout the text, but are not specific. The reader must work out the meaning by comprehending the general idea or gist of the passage.	Blues is characterized by a syncopated beat and a call-and-response vocal style. Blues is a raw form of music and cannot be easily <u>transcribed</u> . It lacks the complex composition of classical music and the modulating scale structure of jazz that originated in New Orleans during the 1920s. “Blues is a simple kind of music. It’s simple and it’s good,” said B. B. King during a television interview (Stage Features September 1990). Or To fully appreciate the significance of the <u>evolution</u> of blues, however, one must examine the <u>origin</u> of the blues, the <u>physical movement</u> of blues musicians, the <u>gradual change</u> in audience appeal, and the modern state of the blues.