

Context Clues

Reading About Writing:

A Book Review

How do you choose a book to read for pleasure? You might ask a friend or a librarian for a recommendation. Or you might read a book review like this one.



Authors of great **literature** explore ideas that matter to everyone. They create stories about friendship, love, loyalty, honesty, trust, respect, guilt, punishment, and other themes. All of these ideas are in a book I would like to recommend to young readers. The book is *The Real Thief*, by the author-illustrator William Steig. William Steig's well-known and **esteemed** picture books for children include *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *Doctor De Soto*, and *Shrek!* Although Steig drew illustrations for *The Real Thief*, it is not a picture book. The cartoon-style drawings are entertaining, but the book presents serious themes, not **comical** ones. It was written for children, but it is **sophisticated** enough for adults to enjoy.

Because of its animal characters, *The Real Thief* has the flavor of **folklore**. Gawain the goose guards the Royal Treasury of King Basil, a bear. Gawain loves the fatherly king and serves him with pride and loyalty. A **crisis** arises

when treasure disappears from the Royal Treasury. Gawain is accused of the theft, tried in court, and found guilty. He escapes before being imprisoned and hides in the woods. Gawain's friend, Derek the mouse, is the real thief. Derek decides to take action to clear his friend's name. By the end of the story, all of the characters have learned to forgive one another.

This plot summary barely hints at Steig's masterly **depiction** of the characters' troubles. The author shows Gawain's hurt and anger. Readers see why the shame-filled Derek does not confess and help his friend. The book is filled with moving and **graphic** descriptions of the characters' thoughts and feelings.

One reason that Steig's books appeal to children is that even when his story has a "lesson," it never **plods** along. Steig's writing is sharp and **brilliant**. *The Real Thief* is a gem. I highly recommend it!


Context Clues Strategy

Look for Words That Mean the Opposite


EXAMPLE: The writer showed respect for his readers' intelligence by using a *voluminous* vocabulary instead of simple words.

CLUE: The words *instead of* are a clue. The phrase *simple words* is the opposite of *voluminous*. A *voluminous* vocabulary is large and advanced.


Here is another strategy for using context clues. Use it here to understand the meaning of the word *comical* from the book review.

 **Read** the sentence with the unknown word and some of the sentences around it.


The cartoon-style drawings are entertaining, but the book presents serious themes, not comical ones.

 **Look** for context clues. What Words That Mean the Opposite can you find?


The word *serious* means the opposite of *comical*.

 **Think** about the context clues and other information you may already know.

Serious things are not funny. The word *comic* is in *comical*. The comics in a newspaper are funny.

 **Predict** a meaning for the word.

The word *comical* probably means "funny and entertaining."

 **Check** the Word Wisdom Dictionary to be sure of the meaning.

The word *comical* means "funny."



Unlock the Meanings

Practice the Strategy Here is one of the boldfaced words from the book review on page 138. Use the context clues strategy on page 139 to figure out the meaning of the word.

sophisticated



Read the sentence that uses the word *sophisticated* and some of the sentences around it.



Look for context clues to the word's meaning. What Words That Mean the Opposite can you find?



Think about the context clues. What other helpful information do you know?



Predict a meaning for the word *sophisticated*.



Check the Word Wisdom Dictionary to be sure of the meaning of *sophisticated*. Decide which meaning fits the context.



WORD LIST

literature

esteemed

✓ comical

✓ sophisticated

folklore

crisis

depiction

graphic

plod

brilliant

Use Context Clues Two words you have learned from the book review are checked off in the Word List. In the first column, write the other eight words from the Word List. In the second column, use context clues to predict a meaning for each word. Then look up the word in the Word Wisdom Dictionary. In the third column, write the dictionary meaning that fits the context.

Vocabulary Word

Your Prediction

Dictionary Says

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8



Process the Meanings

WORD LIST

- literature
- esteemed
- comical
- sophisticated
- folklore
- crisis
- depiction
- graphic
- plod
- brilliant

Find Synonyms Write the word from the Word List that is a synonym for the boldfaced word in each sentence. You will need to add an ending to one word.

- 1 Please welcome our **admired** speaker, who will read from her book. _____
- 2 The author's **description** of the family was believable. _____
- 3 His dull but steady work **drudged** along. _____
- 4 What a **smart** idea you came up with, you genius! _____
- 5 Everyone giggled at Aisha's **amusing** facial expression. _____
- 6 Trevor is too **mature** to believe everything he hears. _____

Choose the Correct Word Write the word from the Word List that completes each sentence.

- 7 *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White is a classic of children's _____.
- 8 I love legends, myths, and _____.
- 9 Readers feel as if they are in the storm because the description is so _____.
- 10 I couldn't wait to find out how the characters managed the difficult _____.



Apply What You've Learned

Add Examples Use what you have learned to add the vocabulary word that belongs in each group.

- 1 humorous, clownish, silly, _____
- 2 danger, emergency, moment of truth, _____
- 3 sculpture, music, dance, _____
- 4 customs, beliefs, holidays, _____
- 5 experienced, knowledgeable, grown-up, _____

Demonstrate Word Knowledge Answer each question.

- 6 Do you enjoy reading books that have depictions of people your age? Why or why not?

- 7 What are **brilliant** students expected to do?

- 8 What is something that seems to **plod** along for you?

- 9 What well-known person do you think should be **esteemed**? Why?

- 10 Would you like to read a **graphic** account of a roller coaster ride? Why or why not?



Write It! Write your own book review. Try to get readers interested in the book you are writing about. Use as many vocabulary words from Part 1 as you can.

Latin and Greek Roots

For
Word
Wisdom

It's All in the Family:

The Brontë Sisters

Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë were English writers who lived in the 1800s. Some people think that their short lives were as interesting as their stories.

The Brontë sisters truly loved literature. They dreamed of being published authors someday. Sadly, none of them lived long enough to see how admired their writing would become. Remember the **acronym** *CEA*. It sounds like *sea* and can help you remember the order in which the sisters were born: Charlotte (1816), Emily (1818), and Anne (1820).

Each of the Brontë sisters took a **pseudonym**. Charlotte wrote under the name Curren Bell; Emily was Ellis Bell; and Anne was Acton Bell. Together, they published a book of poems called *Poems by Curren, Ellis, and Acton Bell*. Later, Charlotte explained why the sisters used men's names: "...we did not like to declare ourselves as women, because ... authoresses are [likely] to be looked on with prejudice."

Fans of the Brontës are glad their writing was not **anonymous**. We may have never known who these sisters were!


The Brontë sisters were very **literate** children. They wrote many stories about made-up worlds. They continued to write as they grew up. This was a time before typewriters, so the sisters' poems and novels were written by hand. The British Library in England has a sample page from Charlotte's novel *Jane Eyre*. You can see her beautiful writing style. It looks like fancy **calligraphy**!


In their poetry, the sisters experimented with language. They used **alliteration**. They played with **homonyms**. As with all poetry, you must look beyond the **literal** meaning of the words to truly understand these poems.


If you want to learn more about the Brontës, find a **bibliography** of resources on their lives and works. None of the sisters wrote the story of her own life. But the writer Elizabeth Gaskell wrote Charlotte's **biography**. This book is a great place to start.


Practice the Context Clues Strategy Here is one of the boldfaced words from the essay on page 144. Use the context clues strategy you learned in Part 1 on page 139 to figure out the meaning of this word.


pseudonym

 **Read** the sentence that uses the word *pseudonym*. Read some of the sentences around the word.

 **Look** for context clues to the word's meaning. Can you find any Words That Mean the Opposite of the word?

 **Think** about the context clues. What other helpful information do you know?

 **Predict** a meaning for the word *pseudonym*.

 **Check** your Word Wisdom Dictionary to be sure of the meaning of the word *pseudonym*. Write the definition here.

Unlock the Meanings

In this unit you will learn one Latin root and two Greek roots that are related to language and writing. Knowing these roots will help you recognize many English words and learn their meanings.

Latin Root: **litera**

meaning: letter

English word: *literature*

meaning: writing that is of lasting value

Greek Root: **graph**

meaning: to write

English word: *graphic*

meaning: described in clear detail

Greek Root: **nym**

meaning: name

English word: *antonym*

meaning: a word having the opposite meaning

WORD LIST

acronym

pseudonym

anonymous

literate

calligraphy

alliteration

homonym

literal

bibliography

biography

Sort by Roots Find the roots you just learned in the Word List. Then write each word in the correct column. Think of other words you know that come from the same Latin and Greek roots. Write each one in the correct column.

Latin Root:
litera

Greek Root:
graph

Greek Root:
nym

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Prefix	Meaning
bio-	life
pseudo-	false

Example

bio- (life) + graph (write) + -y (noun) = **biography**

Use Roots and Prefixes Circle the root and any prefix you find in each boldfaced word. Use context clues, roots, and prefixes to write the meaning of each word. Check your definitions in a dictionary.

1 This **biography** of Roberto Clemente tells facts about his life.

2 Mary Evans used the **pseudonym** George Eliot, not her real name.

3 Nick listed the books he used in a **bibliography** at the end of his report.

4 "Roaring, raging river" is one example of **alliteration**.

5 The **acronym** RADAR stands for "radio detecting and ranging."

6 The wedding invitations were written in **calligraphy**.

7 Our teacher explained the **literal** meaning of the poem.

8 The words *scene* and *seen* are **homonyms**.

9 If people are **literate**, they can read newspapers and write letters.

10 No one at school knew who had written the **anonymous** note.

Process the Meanings

WORD LIST

acronym
pseudonym
anonymous
literate
calligraphy
alliteration
homonym
literal
bibliography
biography

Match the Examples Match each example to the vocabulary word it represents. Write the word on the line.

	Example	Vocabulary Word
_____	1 <i>Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery</i>	acronym
_____	2 large, leaping leopard	biography
_____	3 Samuel Clemens, also known as Mark Twain	calligraphy
_____	4 NASA is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.	pseudonym
_____	5 <i>beautiful writing</i>	alliteration

Revise Sentences Rewrite each sentence. Replace the underlined words with a word from the Word List. You may have to add an ending.

6 At the back of the book is a list of sources. _____

7 If you're not able to read and write, you won't get a good job.

8 To stay unknown, she didn't give her name. _____

9 The words *sail* and *sale* sound the same but have different meanings and spellings.

10 He gave a factual explanation of the character's actions.



Apply What You've Learned

Give Examples Use what you know about the boldfaced words to write an example of each item.

- 1** words that are homonyms _____
- 2** a favorite biography _____
- 3** alliteration with the letter *m* _____
- 4** an acronym and its meaning _____
- 5** a place you might see calligraphy _____

Name the Categories Write a word from the Word List to complete each category. Tell what category the words belong to.

- 6** educated, scholarly, _____
Category: _____
- 7** table of contents, index, _____
Category: _____
- 8** title, nickname, _____
Category: _____
- 9** accurate, precise, _____
Category: _____
- 10** unidentified, hidden, _____
Category: _____



Speak It! Imagine that you have written a book about a person that you admire. Tell a friend about your book. Use several vocabulary words from Part 2.

Reference Skills

for
Word
Wisdom

A New Debate:

Music As Literature?

Do you believe that music is a form of literature? Some people argue that it is, while others disagree. Read this article to learn more about musical lyrics.

There are two sides to every argument. But this **document** will only present one side of the music-as-literature debate: Music should be considered one of the many **genres** of literature. After all, music is **published** just as other literature is. Like literature, music is a form of expression. Also, you can hear a sample of a song on the Internet just as you can read an **excerpt** of a novel. Some song lyrics, or the words to a song, are complete **fiction** while others tell about the writer's real life or ideas; the same is true of literature.

Song lyrics are most commonly compared to poetry. They have a style and a structure similar to poetry. And song lyrics use many elements that poems use, such as rhythm, rhyme, and **figurative** language.

Some of a song's rhythm comes from musical instruments, but it can also come from its lyrics. To create rhythm, a writer chooses just the right mix of **syllables** for

each line. He or she chooses a song's words very carefully. And, as in poetry, rhyme is used to make the song flow smoothly.


A **simile** is one example of figurative language. Similes use the words *like* or *as* to compare things that do not seem to be related. Song lyrics often use similes. For example, a well-known song by Simon & Garfunkel includes the simile "like a bridge over troubled water" to describe friendship. Song lyrics also use other writing tools, such as **idioms**. You may have heard the song "Walking on Sunshine" by the group Me First & the Gimme Gimmes. No one is *actually* walking on sunshine! It is an idiom.


Some writers are influenced by literature they have read. In the same way, musicians are influenced by other music, especially by that of earlier generations. To show this strong influence, some musicians might perform a cover, or their own **version** of someone else's song.


These are just a few of the ways in which music is similar to literature. But for some people, this is enough! What about you? Do you think music should be considered a kind of literature?


Practice the Context Clues Strategy Here is one of the boldfaced words from the essay on page 150. Use the context clues strategy you learned in Part 1 on page 139 to figure out the meaning of this word.


fiction

 **Read** the sentence that uses the word *fiction*. Read some of the sentences around the word.

 **Look** for context clues to the word's meaning. Can you find any **Words That Mean the Opposite?**

 **Think** about the context clues. What other helpful information do you know?

 **Predict** a meaning for the word *fiction*.

 **Check** your Word Wisdom Dictionary to be sure of the meaning of the word *fiction*. Write the definition here.

Unlock the Meanings

Easily Confused Words Some words have similar spellings and pronunciations, but very different meanings. Here are two words that are easily confused:

The word *desert* means “a dry land.”

The word *dessert* means “a sweet treat at the end of a meal.”

If you need to use words like these when you write, a dictionary will help you choose the right word.

Find and Define Look up these easily confused words in a dictionary. Write their meanings in your own words.

1 fiction _____

2 friction _____

3 conscious _____

4 conscience _____

5 except _____

6 excerpt _____

7 access _____

8 excess _____

9 formally _____

10 formerly _____



**Find
the
Meaning**

1. Use context clues.
2. Look for a familiar root, prefix, or suffix.
3. If the context or a word part doesn't help, check the dictionary.

Define the Words Follow the steps above to write the meaning of each boldfaced word. Write 1, 2, or 3 to show which steps you used.

WORD LIST

- document
- genre
- publish
- excerpt
- fiction
- figurative
- syllable
- simile
- idiom
- version

- 1 Ramin's story will be **published** in a children's magazine.

- 2 An **excerpt**, not the entire interview, appeared in the newspaper.

- 3 Science fiction is Mabel's favorite **genre** of literature.

- 4 The new **version** of the play had more jokes than the original did.

- 5 She used the **simile** "as cold as ice" to describe how her toes felt.

- 6 The Declaration of Independence is a historical **document**.

- 7 The use of **figurative** language made the description vivid.

- 8 The first **syllable** in *mystery* is *mys*.

- 9 He enjoys reading **fiction** rather than informational books.

- 10 The **idiom** "raining cats and dogs" isn't about pets.

Process the Meanings

WORD LIST

document

genre

publish

excerpt

fiction

figurative

syllable

simile

idiom

version

Solve the Riddles Write a word from the Word List for each clue.

- 1 It's a part of a word. _____
- 2 Short stories and poetry are two examples of this.

- 3 Your report card is an important one. _____
- 4 It can be a few sentences from an article.

- 5 "Roaring with laughter" is an example of this kind of language. _____
- 6 It's a story about people who never existed.

Choose the Correct Words Write the correct word from the Word List to complete each sentence.

- 7 "Hold your horses" is a(n) _____ that means "be patient."
- 8 Daniel will _____ a collection of songs that he has composed.
- 9 I wrote a(n) _____ comparing my brother's cough to the sound of thunder.
- 10 I wonder if the new _____ of the movie is better than the old one.

Apply What You've Learned

Complete the Analogies Choose the correct word to complete each analogy. Write the word on the line.

- 1 Sofa is to couch as excerpt is to _____
book reading passage author
- 2 Nonfiction is to essay as fiction is to _____
story movie chapter index
- 3 Periodical is to magazine as genre is to _____
phrase myth library vocabulary
- 4 Literal is to factual as figurative is to _____
beautiful harmful dangerous imaginative
- 5 Perform is to actor as publish is to _____
teacher author banker pilot
- 6 Scene is to play as syllable is to _____
word paragraph page sentence

Demonstrate Word Knowledge Answer each question.

- 7 Why might someone not understand an idiom?

- 8 Why might there be two different versions of the same song?

- 9 Write a simile about how busy you are.

- 10 What document will you get when you graduate from school?



Write It! Write information about your favorite book or its author for a book jacket. Use as many vocabulary words from Part 3 as you can.