

Determining Word Meanings

Introduction

Students may use different strategies to determine a word's meaning such as:

1. **Context Analysis** - Read the sentence that contains the unknown word and use a clue from the sentence to determine meaning. Also read the sentence before and the sentence after to get a more accurate meaning. Reading the entire paragraph will also give you more clues to the meaning.
2. **Structural Analysis** - Use prefixes, suffixes, roots, and word endings to decode or figure out the meaning.
3. **Substitution Method** - Substitute each answer choice for the unknown word in the sentence that contains that word. The one that makes the most sense in context may be the answer.
4. **Picture the Meaning of the Selection in Your Mind** - as you read the passage to yourself, create a movie in your mind that shows you what you are reading. A visual picture of the selection will help to figure out unknown words.
5. **Use All Four Methods** - Use all four of the methods in combination to make sure that you check your answer.

"Students will always be provided with enough context clues to allow them to identify the correct meaning of the word as it is used in the reading selection" (TEA TAKS Information Booklet, January 2002).

It is also important that students are familiar with using beginners' dictionaries and glossaries when determining pronunciations and word meanings for unknown words. The task of identifying which meaning of a word used in a dictionary is not easy and students should be shown how to uncover the correct meaning of the word.

Lesson 2: Using Context



Objective 1: TEKS 9B Reading/word identification. The student uses the knowledge of word order and context to support word identification and confirm word meaning.

1. **Objective:** The learner will use context to identify unknown words by using the *Modified Cloze* activity.

2. **Activity:**

a. **Rationale:** *The Modified Cloze* activity requires students to use context to predict the meaning of unknown words.

b. **Preparation:** Choose a paragraph from a story. Lift the text (see Chapter 1: Reading Strategies). Make two copies. On one copy, use liquid paper to "white-out" words and phrases that may be new or unknown to your students. Choose no more than 5 words. Draw a line in each of the blank spaces. This copy will be the modified text. Make one transparency of both copies to use in modeling the activity. Give each student a copy of the modified text.

c. **Input:** Use the modified transparency to model how to fill in the first two blanks. Do a think-aloud with the students. Model this procedure using student page 28.



Think-aloud for Modified Cloze Activity

- Read aloud the entire modified paragraph to students. Say "blank" when you come to a blank space in the text. Reread the selection, stop at the first blank and fill in a word that you think might "fit." Explain why you chose that word. Continue the process by reading and stopping at the second blank.
- Allow students to complete the remaining blank(s) individually. Tell students that they will report their "word(s)" to the class.
- As students share their answers, record their responses on the board and ask the students to decide as a class on the word they agree should go in the blank(s). Write the word on the modified transparency and ask students to defend, clarify, and summarize their choices.

d. Directed Practice:

- Allow students to complete the paragraph. If the paragraph is complete, give students another modified paragraph (make a transparency of this text) and pair students so they can check each other's work. Monitor students and clarify misunderstandings.
- Allow students to share their findings.

e. Student Practice:

- Give each student a copy of the original text (the non-modified version).
- After all pairs have reported, the transparency has been completed, and the class has synthesized the best responses, direct students to work independently.

3. **Assessment:** Guide the class through a reflection activity by explaining that their acceptable responses and the words actually used by the author are synonyms or have similar meanings. Explain that synonymous words can replace each other in sentences because they have a similar, if not the same meaning. Then assign Working Through the TAKS, student pages 28-33.



Working Through the TAKS

Objective 1: Context Clues



Let's try determining the meaning of words in the following paragraph.

Directions: Read the paragraph and fill in a word that you think fits in each blank.

In nature, many animals use some type of camouflage to hide themselves from (1) _____ or prey. Some animals (2) _____ themselves by changing colors, while others use the color of their coats or skin to match their (3) _____. Animals that can change themselves come from every (4) _____ of animal life. Species of animal life are mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

NEED HELP? Use words from the word box.

<p>kind hunters disguise surroundings</p>
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Need more help?

Did you write hunters in the first blank? Good!

Read the paragraph again.

Which word or words helped you to fill in blank # 1 with killers?

hide themselves from



Did you write **hide themselves from**? If you did, you are correct.

Most animals will want to **hide from** things that will kill them.

You have just used context to guess what word should go in the blank!

Now reread the paragraph to fill in the remaining blanks.

Does your paragraph look like the following?

In nature, many animals use some type of camouflage to hide themselves from (1) hunters or prey. The most basic form of (2) disguise is when animals change color to match their (3) surroundings. Animals that can change themselves come from every (4) kind of animal life. Species of animal life are mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.



If no, reread and use the other words in the paragraph to help you or ask your teacher for help.

If yes, compare your answers to the words the author used in the following paragraph.

In nature, many animals use some type of camouflage to hide themselves from predators or prey. The most basic form of camouflage occurs when animals change color to match their environment. Animals that can change themselves come from every species of animal life. Species of animal life are mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.



Match each word in Set A to the word in Set B that means the same:

<u>Set A</u>		<u>Set B</u>
Example: girl	_____	young lady
1. species	_____	surroundings
2. camouflage	_____	killer or hunter
3. predator	_____	kind or type of
4. environment	_____	disguise

Additional Practice:

You can tell from the paragraph that camouflage means-

- A* changing one's appearance
- B changing into another animal
- C changing into the surrounding rocks
- D changing into a larger animal



Let's try determining what words belong in the following paragraphs.

1 Some (1) _____ mammals like the hourglass dolphin and the bottlenose dolphin have "countershading." Their top side is darker than their bottom side, or belly, so that they can better blend into the shades of the ocean when it is hit by light. This shading keeps predators and fishermen from clearly spotting the dolphins in the water.

2 Another marine mammal that uses color as camouflage is the polar bear. The polar bear's fur allows him to mingle perfectly with the white snow of the Arctic. When sneaking up on its (2) _____, the polar bear will cover its black nose with its paw to disguise itself in the snow.

3 Several (3) _____ animals also use color as camouflage. The leopard generally (4) _____ from pale yellow to deep gold or reddish-gold color depending largely on its (5) _____. Leopards usually live in rocky areas, mountains and forests which hide them from their prey.

4 On the other hand, zebras use camouflage to (6) _____ their predators. No two zebras have the same stripe pattern. When you look at a whole herd of zebras, though, it is hard to tell that each one is different.



Need Help?

This word box contains words you can use to help you fill in blank #1.

ocean	river	desert
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This box contains words you can use to help you fill in blank #2.

food	mate	offspring
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This box contains words you can use to help you fill in blanks #3-#6.

*land	*hunter	*surroundings
*dangerous	*changes	*trick
*comes in different colors		*run



The students' paragraphs should look like the following: (this information is not in the Student Book)

3 Some ocean mammals like the hourglass dolphin and the bottlenose dolphin have "countershading." Their top side is darker than their bottom side or belly so that they can better blend into the shades of the ocean when it is hit by light. This shading keeps predators and fishermen from clearly spotting the dolphins in the water.

4 Another marine mammal that uses color as camouflage is the polar bear. The polar bear's white allows him to mingle perfectly with the white snow of the Arctic. When sneaking up on food, the polar bear will cover its black nose with its paw to disguise itself in the snow.

5 Several land animals also use color as camouflage. The leopard generally comes in different colors from pale yellow to deep gold or reddish-gold color depending largely on its surroundings. Leopards usually live in rocky areas, mountains and forests that hide them from their prey.

6 On the other hand, zebras use camouflage to trick their predators. No two zebras have the same stripe pattern. When you look at a whole herd of zebras, though, it is hard to tell that each one is different.

Words to Know for this lesson

Habitat: The environment or place where an animal lives.

Deceive: To trick

Varies: To come in different ways

Prey: Food

Marine: Having to do with the ocean or ocean life (stress that marine animals do not all live in the ocean, but some live around it and need it to survive)

Working Through the TAKS



Now compare your words to the author's words.

3 Some ocean mammals like the hourglass dolphin and the bottlenose dolphin have "countershading." Their top side is darker than their bottom side or belly so that they can better blend into the shades of the ocean when it is hit by light. This shading keeps predators and fishermen from clearly spotting the dolphins in the water.

4 Another marine mammal that uses color as camouflage is the polar bear. The polar bear's white fur allows him to mingle perfectly with the white snow of the Arctic. When sneaking up on food, the polar bear will cover its black nose with its paw to disguise itself in the snow.

5 Several land animals also use color as camouflage. The leopard generally comes in different colors from pale yellow to deep gold or reddish-gold color depending largely on its surroundings. Leopards usually live in rocky areas, mountains and forests that hide them from their prey.

6 On the other hand, zebras use camouflage to trick their predators. No two zebras have the same stripe pattern. When you look at a whole herd of zebras, though, it is hard to tell that each one is different.

Now that you have compared your answers to the author's words, answer the following questions.

1. In paragraph 3, the word marine means-

- A by the mountains
- B in a desert
- C a sailor
- D* by the ocean**

2. In paragraph 4, the word prey means-

- A* food**
- B child
- C mate
- D enemy



Working through the TAKS

Vocabulary Study

Directions: Define the underlined words as they are used in each sentence.



DO NOT USE A DICTIONARY, USE YOUR OWN WORDS!

1. He boasted about how he could run faster than anyone else, and on this day decided to tease his favorite prey, Thomas the turtle, for his slowness.

prey: _____

2. Giraffes, zebras, and elands, were especially excellent prey, since they were large, grey and so easy to spot in the yellowish-brown land.

prey: _____

3. Jack was greedy and soon ate too much. The heavy meal and hot sun made his eyelids droop.

droop: _____

4. At that very moment, Jack woke with a jolt.

jolt: _____

5. He leapt and bounded at a great rate, his tongue lolling, and gasping for breath.

bounded _____

lolling _____

gasping _____

Lesson 3: Understanding Figurative Language



Objective 1: TEKS 9B Reading/word identification. The student uses the knowledge of word order and context to support word identification and confirm word meaning.

1. **Objective:** The learner will identify figurative language.

2. **Activity: Modified Cloze Activity**

a. **Rationale:** Since many authors use different types of figurative language to make their stories more vivid and engaging, the 4th grade TAKS requires students to identify figures of speech, i.e. idioms. Using the Modified Cloze activity will give students practice with reading authentic text that contains figurative language and idioms.

b. **Preparation:**

(1) **Preteach** the following vocabulary:

- **Idiom:** A saying or motto that gives a vivid picture of the speaker's or writer's message.
- **Figure of speech and figurative language**

In this book, figure of speech and figurative language will be used interchangeably. These synonymous terms describe the method that authors and speakers use to vividly express their thoughts and emotions. To accomplish this, writers and speakers use words, which are used out of their ordinary use. These words not only express thoughts, but add beauty, emotional intensity or transfer the writer's/speaker's feelings. One method used is to compare or identify one thing with another that has a meaning familiar to the reader. Fourth graders will only be required to know those figures of speech that are appropriate for their grade level. Students will not have to define the terms **simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole and symbol** or identify a figure of speech, but will have to know **the meaning of a figure of speech.**

(2) Choose a paragraph from a story. Lift the text (see Chapter 1: Reading Strategies). Make two copies. On one copy, use liquid paper to "white-out" idioms, sayings and phrases that may be new or unknown to your students. Choose no more than 5 idioms. Draw a line in each of the blank spaces. This copy will be the modified text. Make one transparency of both copies to use in modeling the activity. Give each student a copy of the modified text.

c. **Input:** Use the modified transparency to model how to fill in the first two blanks. Do a think-aloud with the students. Model this procedure using the paragraph on student page 34. A review of the think-aloud procedure is as follows:



Think aloud for Modified Cloze Activity

- Read aloud the entire modified paragraph to students. Say "blank" when you come to a blank space in the text. Reread the selection, stop at the first blank and fill in a saying or phrase that you think might "fit." Explain why you chose that phrase. Continue the process by reading and stopping at the second blank.
- Allow students to complete the remaining blank(s) individually. Tell students that they will report their sayings or phrases (s) to the class.
- As students share their answers, record their responses on the board and ask the students to decide as a class on the saying or phrase they agree should go in the blank(s). Write the sayings on the modified transparency and ask students to defend, clarify, and summarize their choices.

- d. Directed Practice:**
 - Allow students to complete the paragraph. If the paragraph is complete, give students another modified paragraph (make a transparency of this text) and pair students so they can check each other's work. Monitor students and clarify misunderstandings.
 - Allow students to share their findings.

 - e. Student Practice:**
 - Give each student a copy of the original text (the non-modified version).
 - After all pairs have reported, the transparency has been completed, and the class has synthesized the best responses, direct students to work independently.
- 3. Assessment:** Guide the class through a reflection activity by explaining that their acceptable responses and the language actually used by the author have similar meanings. Then assign Working Through the TAKS, student pages 34-35.



Working Through the TAKS

Objective 1: Figurative Language

Directions: Read the paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

When Linda first heard the news, it was like a bolt from the blue it was so surprising. Linda was going around in circles after she heard the exciting news about winning the \$5,000.00 prize for the best essay. She never thought that she would win the essay contest. She ran like the wind to spill the beans to her mother. Her mother was waiting at the door because a little bird had already told her the wonderful news. Her mother, though, listened like a hawk until Linda told her the whole nine yards. Linda was always the apple of her mother's eye, and now Linda's mother could not have been more pleased with her daughter's success.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. In this paragraph, the phrase "like a bolt from the blue" means-</p> <p>A* hard to believe</p> <p>B hit with lightning</p> <p>C hard to understand</p> <p>D easy to understand</p> | <p>3. In this paragraph, the phrase "ran like the wind" means-</p> <p>A all the way</p> <p>B* as quickly as she could</p> <p>C as happily as the wind</p> <p>D toward the wind</p> |
| <p>2. In this paragraph, the phrase "going around in circles" means-</p> <p>A confused</p> <p>B* excited</p> <p>C afraid</p> <p>D calm</p> | <p>4. In this paragraph, the phrase "spill the beans" means-</p> <p>A to tell in a quick manner</p> <p>B to tell in a confusing manner</p> <p>C* to tell everything that happened</p> <p>D to tell only the facts</p> |

5. In this paragraph, the phrase "like a hawk" means-

- A to be very confused
- B* to be very interested**
- C to be amused
- D to be very bored

6. In this paragraph, the phrase "the apple of her mother's eye" means-

- *A her mother loves her more than anyone else**
- B her mother loves her eyes very much
- C her mother loves apples very much
- D her mother loves her like she loves apples

7. The phrase to spill the beans doesn't actually mean to spill beans. Write a sentence using this figure of speech in the same way it is used in the paragraph. Then write your own definition.

My sentence: _____

My definition: _____

