Using Context Clues To Help Kids Tackle Unfamiliar Words

by Helen Zeitzoff
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Tools for Reading

Good readers derive meaning from many types of cues, or signals, in the texts they read. As they misread or encounter unfamiliar words, they may use three types of cues to help them identify the correct word and read on. **Graphophonic** cues, or letter combinations and their corresponding sounds, tell the reader how to pronounce the word. For example, a good reader can use the final consonants to distinguish *took* from *tool*.

**Syntactic** cues, or the grammatical function of words, highlight the role of words in a sentence. For example, in the sentence *Let’s record our song and play it back*, an accurate pronunciation of the word *record* is re*CORD* (rather than RE*cord*), because it functions as a verb, signaling the action, rather than as a noun. Finally, **semantic** cues, or the ideas provided by other words, reveal the meanings of unfamiliar words. In the sentence *Billy abhors taking that awful-tasting medicine*, a reader can infer that *abhors* means *dislikes*, since the medicine he must take is described as “awful-tasting.”

When readers effectively find and use these cues in concert, they read with greater fluency and comprehension. In classrooms, we call making meaning from a variety of cues in the text **using context clues**.

About This Book

This book places student readers in the role of word detectives. It provides eight effective strategies for using context clues. Like good sleuths, students apply the strategies they learn to solve the meanings of unfamiliar words. Each unit offers instruction ideas, skills practice, and plenty of helpful tips that guide students to use each skill independently—and gain confidence as resourceful readers.

**In this book you’ll find:**

✓ nine strategies for using context clues effectively
✓ mini-lessons and instruction ideas to make the strategies stick
✓ student reference pages that explain each strategy and give examples of how to use it
✓ reproducible pages that give students practice with each strategy
✓ student strategy sheets that summarize each section

How to Use This Book

This book is divided into four units, starting with the most basic “first aid” context-clue strategies (primarily semantic cues) and moving to more specific strategies in the second through fourth chapters (graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues). You may want to begin with the basics in Unit 1 and work through the eight strategies sequentially or focus on one target area at a time. Whatever order you choose, be sure to read the instruction ideas on the teacher page that opens the unit and teach students the strategies outlined on the student reference page. Students may complete the activity pages independently, in pairs, or in small groups. An answer key is included on pages 79–81.
The Eight Context Clues Strategies

First-Aid Strategies: (Unit 1)

- **Strategy 1** Find nearby key words for clues about the meaning of a word.
- **Strategy 2** Use story titles or reading topics to predict words you’ll read.
- **Strategy 3** Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

Graphophonic Cues & Strategies (Letter-Sound): (Unit 2)

- **Strategy 4** Use letter-sound clues to read words correctly.
  a. Use beginning letters, vowels, and ending letters to sound out unfamiliar words.
  b. Look at vowel patterns and try out sounds they can make.
  c. Separate the word into syllables.

Syntactic Cues & Strategies (Grammar): (Unit 3)

- **Strategy 5** Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.
  a. Identify nouns by locating noun determiners.
  b. Identify verbs as action words that follow the subject noun.
  c. Identify adjectives as words that describe nouns.
  d. Identify adverbs as words that describe verbs.

- **Strategy 6** Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.
  a. Use keys words to find synonyms.
  b. Use key words to find a synonym in the passage.
  c. Use key words to check words with multiple meanings.
  d. Use key words to find the meanings of unfamiliar phrases (idiomatic expressions).

Semantic Cues & Strategies (Meaning): (Unit 4)

- **Strategy 7** Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms for an unfamiliar word.
  a. Look for these words to signal synonyms: *or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.*
  b. Look for the word *but* to signal antonyms or opposite meanings.

- **Strategy 8** Use pictures to think of synonyms for an unfamiliar word.
Unit 1: First-Aid Strategies

Use the Clues! For the Teacher

This unit introduces students to context clues and helps them practice three essential “first aid” strategies for finding the meanings of unfamiliar words in the context of the sentences they read.

**Strategy 1** Find nearby key words for clues about the meaning of a word.

**Activities for Strategy 1:**
* Use circled words in sentences as clues to choose an appropriate substitute for a missing word.
* Use clues in sentences to determine if the correct word is used in context.
* Circle words in sentences that provide clues to a missing or unknown word.

**Strategy 2** Use story titles or reading topics to predict words you’ll read.

**Activities for Strategy 2:**
* Use story titles to predict possible words that may appear in a reading selection.
* Eliminate words that do not relate to the context.

**Strategy 3** Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

**Activity for Strategy 3:**
* Use pictures and other graphics to find hints about the meaning of unfamiliar words.

**Introductory Mini-Lesson**

Detective work has to do with clues. Set up four “mystery” boxes, each with one of the following: mittens, pencil, toothbrush, key. Show students a picture of a detective and discuss what good detectives do: they look for clues and put the clues together to solve a mystery. Tell students that they are going to practice being word detectives so they will be able to figure out on their own the words they don’t know when they’re reading. Introduce them to word detective work by reading aloud the sentence clues provided and inviting them to name the object in each box. Ask students to share the key word clues they used to solve the mystery. Explain that they have just used context clues to figure out the meanings of missing words.

Sample sentences with clue words circled:

**Box 1:** My (woolen) _______ keep my (hands warm). Sometimes these _______ (get wet) when I make a snowball.

**Box 2:** Ben (sharpens) his _______ before he starts (writing).

**Box 3:** My (teeth) look so (bright) and (clean) when I use my _______ after each meal.

**Box 4:** Sally can’t find the (shiny) _______ to (unlock) her (front door).

**Strategy and Practice Pages**

Distribute copies of page 7 to students. Read aloud and discuss the definitions and the examples to be sure students understand how to use these strategies before they begin.

**Note:** Pages 15–17 require you to check students’ articulation of the unfamiliar words. You may want to do this exercise in small groups or to meet individually with students.

**Tips for Teaching First-Aid Strategies**

1. Model how to use the three strategies described on this page and on page 7. Explain your problem-solving process using a sentence or passage from your read-aloud literature or a favorite book.
2. Provide plenty of real-world examples of unfamiliar words in the context of a sentence or passage from newspaper articles, advertisements, and social studies or science textbooks.
3. Encourage students to evaluate the titles of stories they read and make predictions about vocabulary words they might find in the story. This will help them anticipate words that may be difficult to sound out.
4. Display pictures from magazines, newspapers, and cartoons for students. Have them complete sentences using picture clues for missing words.
5. Let students practice highlighting clue words to provide support for their answers.
What are context clues? Context clues are hints from other words, pictures, and story titles in your reading that help you find a missing word or read unfamiliar words.

How to Use Context Clues

○ Strategy 1: Find nearby key words for clues about the meaning of a word.

Example: Mother put the cookies in the ____________ to bake for twenty-five minutes.

Answer: oven. Cookies are placed in an oven to bake.

○ Strategy 2: Use story titles or reading topics to predict words you’ll read.

Example: Title: Spaceship in My Backyard
The strange creatures were ____________ from a far away planet.

Answer: aliens. The title “Spaceship in My Backyard” sounds like a science-fiction story. You may predict that the story will be about aliens, creatures, antennae, and so on.

○ Strategy 3: Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

Example:

Jane looks at the ____________ to read a message.

Answer: monitor. The screen you look at to read your messages is called a monitor.

Get Ready for Detective Work!
In this unit you will:
* use key words in a sentence to determine a missing word.
* predict vocabulary words using story titles or subject material.
* use picture clues to read words.
Reading Detective Practice #1

Directions: Read the sentence and skip the missing word. Look for key words circled **before** and **after** the missing word. Reread the sentence with the word you chose to make sure it fits.

Example:

Bob **used** his new ____________ to (**take pictures**) of the beautiful mountains.

- paint
- camera
- hike

**Answer:** camera. Bob would use a camera to take pictures of the mountains.

1. Thunder boomed and ________________ flashed in the ____________ during the ____________.
   - girls
   - paintings
   - lightning

2. The ________________ rushed to get the **injured** boy **to the hospital**.
   - horses
   - ambulance
   - circus

3. Pat got a ________________ from the **toolbox** and (banged the nail) into the wood.
   - soap
   - pen
   - hammer

4. Thomas is **at home** and **sick** with a **bad** ________________ and a **cough**.
   - aspirin
   - cold
   - medicine

5. Lee **feels** ________________ about telling his mom he broke the computer.
   - excited
   - joyous
   - worried

6. “Get the ________________ and (clear the snow) from the sidewalk,” said Dad.
   - shovels
   - boots
   - dustpans
**Strategy 1**

Find nearby key words for clues about the meaning of a word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #2**

**Directions:** Read the sentence and skip the missing word. Look for key words circled **before** and **after** the missing word. Reread the sentence with the word you chose to make sure it fits.

**All Kinds of Food**

- turkey  
- popcorn  
- ice cube  
- tomato  
- spaghetti  
- hot dog  
- ice cream  
- apples

1. Tom snack**on** crunchy, buttery _____________ at the movies.

2. Mother uses tasty red and green _____________ in her fruit pies.

3. Chocolate or vanilla _____________ is the best cold treat in the summer.

4. I like mustard and relish on my _____________.

5. The school cafeteria serves _____________ with gravy, peas, potatoes, and pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving lunch.

6. My three-year-old brother has sauce on his face and meat on his bib as he picks up a string of _____________ from the bowl.

7. Place another _____________ in the glass to keep the drink nice and cool.

8. Richard cut some carrots, a ________, and a cucumber for the salad.
**Reading Detective Practice #3**

**Directions:** Read the sentence and skip the missing word. Look for key words circled **before** and **after** the missing word. Reread the sentence with the word you chose to make sure it fits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sundae</th>
<th>jelly</th>
<th>cake</th>
<th>beans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cob</td>
<td>pancakes</td>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>cereal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Tanya loves to eat [peanut butter] and ________________ [sandwiches] for lunch.

2. Dad uses ________________ to [sweeten] his [coffee].

3. Bill loves to eat [corn on the] ________________ for [dinner].

4. I [pour] lots of [maple syrup] on my ________________.

5. Marvin’s [Ice Cream Parlor] makes the best [hot fudge] ________________.

6. Every morning I have a [bowl] of ________________ for [breakfast].

7. [String] ________________ are my favorite [vegetable].

**Strategy 1**

Find nearby key words for clues about the meaning of a word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #4**

**Directions:** Fill in each blank with the farm word that makes sense. Circle the nearby key words that helped you.

**On the Farm**

- house
- barn
- cows
- horse
- tractor
- hay

1. Farmer Brown rides on a ________________ to clear the land.

2. Early in the morning, the farmer leaves his ________________. After a long day’s work, he returns to be with his family.

3. The farmer’s ________________ provide his family with milk.

4. Farmer Brown puts ________________ in the horse’s stall.

5. When the ________________ does a good job, the farmer gives it a piece of sugar.

6. The farmer has a big red ________________ where he stores tools and keeps horses.

**Can You Name the Animals on Your Own?**

**Directions:** Fill in each blank with the name of the animal that completes each sentence. Circle the nearby key words that helped you.

1. Every morning on the farm, the ____________ crows, “Cock a doodle doo.”

2. The ________________ like to play in the mud, eat, and snort, “Oink, oink.”

3. The farmer shaves the _________________. The wool is used to make warm clothes.

4. In November the farmer picks a big ________________ for Thanksgiving dinner.
Strategy 2
Use story titles or reading topics to predict words you’ll read.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #5

Directions: Read each title and circle the words you would expect to find in the story.

Example: Story title: “The Fourth of July”
fireworks celebrate snow picnic winter holiday

Answer: The story “The Fourth of July” might include words like fireworks, celebrate, picnic, and holiday.

1. The Baseball Champ
hitter fielder football coach strike puck umpire

2. A Little Garden
flowers hose shovel pencil vegetables fish traffic

3. My Dog Felix
obeys barks bowl fishing pole bone chirps

4. The Haunted House
strange old beautiful scary peaceful bats creaks

5. A Swimming Race
field goal diving swing shallow theater goggles flippers

6. Summer Camp
bunk hikes homework counselors activities book report
Strategy 2

Use story titles or reading topics to predict words you’ll read.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #6

Directions: Read each title or subject and cross out the word that most likely would not be found in the story or passage.

1. Subject: cats
   - purr
   - whiskers
   - rowboat
   - tabby
   - fur
   - flying

2. Subject: circus
   - tiger
   - watermelon
   - trapeze
   - ringmaster
   - clowns
   - elephants

3. Subject: city
   - sidewalks
   - crowd
   - taxicabs
   - skyscraper
   - mountain climbing
   - traffic

4. Title: The Missing Money
   - detective
   - searching
   - clues
   - jungle
   - mystery
   - thief

5. Title: The Secret Cave
   - explore
   - dark
   - hidden
   - piano lessons
   - dangerous

6. Subject: geography
   - mountains
   - rivers
   - oceans
   - multiply
   - lakes
   - islands
Reading Detective Practice #7

Directions: Read the title of the story below. Circle the vocabulary words you might find in the passage. Then read the story and use context clues to write the word that makes sense on the line.

Kate’s Birthday

cake  games  recess  prizes  spelling  presents  friends  jungle

Yesterday was Kate’s birthday party. Six ______________ came to Kate’s house.

Kate and her friends ate pizza for lunch. They enjoyed ______________ and ice cream for dessert. After lunch, Kate opened ______________ and the children played party ______________. Next, a magician entertained the kids with his tricks. Then, Kate handed colorful party bags to her friends. The bags were filled with card tricks, ______________, and lollipops. As Kate waved good-bye to her friends, she said to her mom, “Today was a wonderful day.”

Directions: Predict other words you might find in a story titled “Kate’s Birthday.”

________________  __________________  __________________  __________________  __________________
Strategy 3

Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #8

Directions: Read these sentences to your teacher. Use the pictures for clues to reading each word in bold.

Example:

Kim walks slowly across the balance beam. How do you say this word?

Answer: BAH• lens. Kim is doing gymnastics. She is walking on a balance beam.

At the Store

1. Amani pays the clerk at the cash register for her new shoes.

2. Amani hands the clerk a coupon to buy the shoes on sale.

3. The clerk hands Amani a receipt after she has paid for the shoes.
Using Context Clues \(\text{•}\)

Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #8 (continued)

4. Amani takes the **escalator** up to the next floor.

5. Amani visits the **jewelry** department to buy a bracelet for her friend.

6. Amani takes the **elevator** down to the first floor.

7. Amani buys **perfume** as a gift for her mom.

8. Amani leaves the store with many **bundles** in her arms.
Strategy 3

Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #9

Directions: Use picture clues to identify the missing words in the sentences.
Fill in the missing words and read the sentences to your teacher.

The Doctor’s Office

1. The _____________ are waiting to see the doctor.

2. The _____________ takes information from Mom.

3. The doctor checks my heartbeat with a _____________.

4. Doctor Howard writes a _____________ for medicine.

Word
Clues

doctor
prescription
nurse
story
check-up
patients
stethoscope

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Strategy 3

Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

Name___________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #10

Directions: Use picture clues to identify the missing word in the sentence. Fill in the missing word and reread the sentence to see if it makes sense.

1. The king sits on his _______________. Soon he will meet with his subjects.

2. The _________________ brings food to the king.

3. The king wears a _________________ on his head.

4. The king knows that his subjects are waiting for him to give a speech. The king stands on the _________________ waving to the crowd below.

5. The king’s daughter, the _________________, wears a long dress and stands beside him.

The King’s Castle

Word Clues
plate
crown
king
throne
servant
balcony
princess
castle
Tracks to Follow!  
First-Aid Strategies

**Strategy 1**

Find nearby key words for clues about the meaning of a word.

Example: The _______galloped______ away from the barn.

Answer: horse.

**Strategy 2**

Use story titles or reading topics to predict the words you’ll read.

Example: Story title: “Summer Camp”

The story could include the words hiking, swimming, campsite, campfire, counselors, and so on.

The camp ___________ led the children to the trail.

Answer: counselors.

**Strategy 3**

Look at pictures as you read for clues about unfamiliar words.

Example:

The ____________ is working on the car right now.

Answer: mechanic.
Use the Clues! For the Teacher

This unit helps students use their knowledge of letters and corresponding sounds (graphophonic elements) in tandem with the contextual strategies from Chapter 1 to discriminate among word choices, read unfamiliar words, and prevent or correct miscues (incorrect reading of known words). Note: Before you begin this unit, be sure that students have a solid phonics foundation. They will be asked to recognize consonants and vowel blends and break words into syllables.

In this unit students will use the following strategy to decode unfamiliar words.

Strategy 4 Use letter-sound clues to read words correctly.

a. Use beginning letters, vowels, and ending letters to sound out unfamiliar words.
b. Look at vowel patterns and try out different sounds they can make.
c. Separate the word into syllables.

Activities for Strategy 4:

- Practice recognizing the phonemic differences in words.
- Use beginning letters to help determine words in context.
- Use highlighted key words to help select missing words in sentences.
- Check for accuracy using both contextual and graphophonic cues.

Introductory Mini-Lesson

When students read, they often use the beginning letters of a word to sound it out. Beginning readers may stop there and call out any word with the same initial sound as the word they are looking at, whether it makes sense or not. Good readers employ self-checking strategies. They make sure that the word they read makes sense in the context of the sentence and that they’ve read the word correctly by carefully matching the sounds to the letters in the rest of the word. To encourage students to use graphophonic cues along with context clues, write the sample sentences in set 1 on the chalkboard. Review the examples, asking students to show the letter-sound differences among the answer choices and explain the meanings of the words as used in the sentences.

Sample sentences (set 1):

1. We had fried ch___________ for dinner.
   chairs       chicken       chipmunks
2. What is the pr___________ of the new car?
   practice      preach      price

Make sure students are aware that they must focus on the letters to sound out a word correctly. Write the sentences from the sample sentences in set 2 on the chalkboard and read them with the incorrect word. Discuss with students why the word is incorrect and what the letter-sound clues tell them to say.

Sample sentences (set 2):

1. Jeff found a shiny 5-cent cone on the sidewalk.
   coin
2. Mr. Frank chose the shiny green car.
3. Did the boys prance for the game?
   practice

Strategy and Practice Pages:

Distribute copies of page 21 to students. Read aloud and discuss the letter-sound clues and examples to be sure students understand how to use this strategy. The practice pages begin with more support, listing strategies and examples, and gradually provide less help as students gain confidence using the strategy.

Note: Page 22 requires you to check students’ articulation of the unfamiliar words. You may want to have students read additional practice pages aloud to you to assess the application of this skill.

Tips for Teaching Graphophonic Cues Strategies:

1. Model the use of letter-sound clues for reading unfamiliar words in context during lessons in all subject areas.
2. Challenge students to use the letter-sound clues to decode unfamiliar words from selected reading passages (novels, newspapers, magazines, science and social studies texts, and so on).
3. Remind students that using letter-sound clues and double-checking that the word they’ve chosen makes sense can help them become stronger readers.
Use the Clues! For Students

What are letter-sound clues? These are the sounds that match the letters of the alphabet and their combinations. Good readers sound out words by making the right sounds for the letters in the words.

How to Use Letter-Sound Clues

Strategy 4: Use letter-sound clues to read words correctly.

a. Use beginning letters, vowels, and ending letters to sound out unfamiliar words.

Example: The referee (blew the whistle) because the player went out of bounds.

Answer: re*fer*EE

- The beginning letter r goes with someone who blows a whistle in a game.
- Referee has three vowels sounds: short e, er, long e.
- A referee is the person who blows the whistle when a player is out of bounds.

b. Look at vowel patterns and try out different sounds they can make.

Example: It is good to take a break and read a good book.

Answer: ea has the long a sound in break and the long e sound in read.

c. Separate the word into syllables.

Example: You are learning the fundamentals of context clues.

Answer: There are four syllables—fun da men tals.

Get Ready for Detective Work!

In this unit you will sound out words by:

- using beginning letters, vowels, and ending letters.
- looking at vowel patterns and trying out sounds for letter combinations.
- breaking the words into syllables.
Strategy 4

Strategy 4a. Use beginning letters, vowels, and ending letters to sound out unfamiliar words.

Strategy 4b. Look at vowel patterns and try out sounds for letter combinations.

Strategy 4c. Separate the word into syllables.

Use letter-sound clues to read words correctly.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #11

Directions: Read these sentences to your teacher. Use context clues and letter-sound clues to correctly read the words in bold.

Example:
The **air** conditioning is turned on to **cool the house** on **hot summer days**.

Clues:
• “air,” “cool the house,” “hot summer days”
• The beginning letters tell us to say “con.”
• A vowel sound is needed for i, the letters tion make the “shun” sound, and the ending suffix is -ing

Answer: conditioning (con*DI*shun*ing).

1. Many years had passed and Jim did not **recognize** his old friend.

2. That big, shiny car is very **expensive**.

3. We **celebrate** the holiday with a big family dinner.

4. Mrs. Smiley told the students to use their **imagination**s and write about living in space.

5. Jack was in a difficult **situation** and needed help.

6. The doctor wants Bill to take this **medication** for his allergies.

7. Jason was very **thirsty** at the end of the race.

8. The game is **canceled** if it rains.

9. Mr. Biggins **demonstrates** the correct way to test **chemicals** in the science experiment.
Use letter-sound clues to read words correctly.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #12

Directions: Follow Strategy 4 to be sure the word you choose is correct.

1. The school band is getting ready to march in the holiday p_______________.
   party   parade

2. Felix gets plenty of ex_______________ at the gym.
   exercise   excitement

3. Last week our class had a s_______________ because the teacher was sick.
   submarine   substitute

4. Dad parked the car in the g_______________ so it did not get covered with snow.
   garbage   garage

5. Paul is too big to fit into his brother’s l_______________ wagon.
   listen   little

6. The wonderful sm_______________ is coming from the cake baking in the oven.
   smell   smoke

7. The kids like to r_______________ the leaves in the yard.
   rattle   rake

8. A dentist tells the boys and girls to use a t_______________ after each meal.
   toenail   toothbrush

9. Our team tied the s_______________ at half time.
   score   scare

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**Strategy 4**

**Strategy 4a.** Use beginning letters, vowels, and ending letters to sound out unfamiliar words.

**Strategy 4b.** Look at vowel patterns and try out sounds for letter combinations.

**Strategy 4c.** Separate the word into syllables.

Use letter-sound clues to read words correctly.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #13**

**Directions:** Follow Strategy 4 to be sure the word you choose is correct.

1. The men were ready to climb the highest _________________ in the world.
   - mouse       mountain       moose

2. There was _________________ on Mike’s hand from the cut.
   - brook       blood       broom

3. The pirate ship was searching for the sunken _________________.
   - treasure       treaty       trapeze

4. The campers went _________________ riding on the new trail.
   - horseback       houseboat       horseshoe

5. The _________________ boy returned the lost money to the owner.
   - hairy       horrible       honest

6. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper went to the _________________ store to buy a new sofa and chair for the living room.
   - furniture       furnace       future

7. The weather _________________ predicts snow for tomorrow.
   - forward       forecast       forest

8. Use _________________ when crossing a busy street.
   - cattle       coast       caution
## Reading Detective Practice #14

**Directions:** Use Strategy 4 to see if the word in **bold** is correct. Circle **Yes** or **No** to show your answer. If the word is incorrect, write the correct word on the line provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the word correct?</th>
<th>Write the correct word.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>The school nurse put a</strong> banana on my cut.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. City streets have lots of <strong>traffic</strong>.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Multiply</strong> 7 and 5 and the answer is 35.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The <strong>hospital</strong> flew over the highway to report on the accident.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Raven said, “I am <strong>flat</strong> from eating so much.”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Carlos won first place for running the <strong>funniest</strong>.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. You can <strong>wash</strong> the movie on television.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Some birds <strong>flip</strong> south in winter.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The <strong>president</strong> is the leader of our country.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Detective Practice #15

Directions: Read the story below and fill in the blanks with the correct word.
Use the meaning of the story to help you figure out the missing words.
Use letter-sound clues to check that you are reading the word correctly.

Jeff and Brianna were raking leaves in their yard. All of a ___________ they ____________ a loud crash. They ran out to the sidewalk and saw there had been a car ____________ at the ____________ of Main Street and Rogers Road. The drivers of both cars were talking. Kids sat inside both cars, but no one had been hurt. Jeff and Brianna ____________ to play games with the children in the yard while their parents discussed the accident. Both drivers were ____________ to Jeff and Brianna for their ____________ and for taking care of the children. Jeff and Brianna were glad to have helped the drivers and the kids. Later that day, their parents ____________ Jeff and Brianna for the kindness they showed to others.
Tracks to Follow!  
Letter-Sound Clues

**Strategy 4**
Use letter-sound clues to read words correctly.

a. Check beginning letters, vowels, and ending letters.

   **Example:** We have indoor recess today! The rain will **continue (all day long).**

   Answer: con*TIN*yew

b. Try out other sounds for letter combinations.

   **Example:** The **chemist** received an award for making a new medicine.

   Answer: Ch can make the ch, k, and sh sounds. In chemist, the ch makes a k sound, as in the word chemical. A chemist works with chemicals to make medicines and other things.

c. Separate the word into syllables.

   **Example:** The girls can **harmonize** when they sing together.

   Answer: There are three syllables—har mo nize.
Use the Clues! For the Teacher

In this unit, students use their grammar skills and the syntax of the sentence to make a good guess at an unknown or missing word. Supported by the first-aid and letter-sound strategies in Units 1 and 2, students learn to determine the meaning of unknown words by identifying the roles they play. Note: Before you begin this unit, be sure that students understand the basic parts of speech, especially nouns and verbs, which are featured on practice pages 30–38. Older students can be challenged to identify adjectives and adverbs, featured on practice pages 39–49.

Strategy 5 Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

a. Identify nouns by locating noun determiners (a, an, the).
b. Identify verbs as action words that follow the subject noun. Verbs often take these forms: (1) root and (2) root + the ending -s, -ing, or -ed.
c. Identify adjectives as words that describe nouns. Adjectives tell what kind, how many, whose, or which.
d. Identify adverbs as words that describe verbs. Adverbs tell how, when, or where.

Activities for Strategy 5:

* Use noun determiners to locate nouns in sentences.
* Use subject nouns to locate verbs in sentences.
* Use nouns to locate adjectives in sentences.
* Use verbs to locate adverbs in sentences.
* Select the noun, verb, adjective, or adverb that fits the context of a sentence.

Introductory Mini-Lesson

Tell students that grammar clues help readers figure out the jobs that unknown words are doing in sentences. To review the parts of speech they’ll need to know in the activities, show them the Branches of a Sentence model. Draw a simple tree with four branches labeled Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs. Write the sample sentences provided on sentence strips and have student volunteers place them on the branches that identify the part of speech underlined on the strip. Make sure students can explain the job of each word in the sentence.

Sample sentences

1. Jacob raced around the track.
   (Raced, a verb, shows the action that Jacob did. Clue: -ed ending.)
2. Can you sleep on a firm mattress?
   (Firm is an adjective that describes the kind of mattress. Clue: describes mattress, a noun.)
3. The cups are on the table.
   (Cups and table are nouns. They name things. Clue: The noun determiner the signals a noun.)
4. Pat ran quickly to get out of the rain.
   (Quickly is an adverb. It tells how Pat ran. Clue: describes ran, a verb.)

Strategy and Practice Pages

Distribute copies of page 29 to students. Read aloud and discuss grammar clues and the examples to be sure students understand how to use this strategy.

Tips for Teaching Syntactic-Cue Strategies:

1. For extra practice with parts of speech, play a game similar to Jeopardy! with these categories: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, All Parts of Speech. In each square, write a sentence with a missing vocabulary word. To answer, students must supply an appropriate word. The last category is the most difficult: Students must identify the missing part of speech before supplying an appropriate word.

2. Make copies of reading selections from newspapers, science and social studies textbooks, travel brochures, and other nonfiction materials. Underline or highlight difficult vocabulary words, and ask students to name what parts of speech they are. Or blank out the difficult words and have students identify which parts of speech are missing. Ask them to suggest words that fit in the blanks.
Use the Clues! For Students

Psst! Reading detectives figure out the job each word does in a sentence by using grammar clues.

What are grammar clues?
They tell whether an unknown word is a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb.

Strategy 5: Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

a. Identify nouns by locating noun determiners. (a, an, the, this, that, your, my, their, his, her, many, some, and so on)

Example: Many strangers came to our aid after the earthquake.
Answer: Strangers, aid, and earthquake are the nouns in this sentence. The determiners many, our, and the signal these nouns.

b. Identify verbs as action words that follow the subject noun. Verbs often take these forms: (1) root; (2) root + the ending -s, -ing, or -ed.

Example: The teacher explained the steps to the division problem.
Answer: Explained is the verb in this sentence. The action word explained follows teacher, the subject noun. It tells what the teacher did and has the -ed ending.

c. Identify adjectives as words that describe nouns. Adjectives tell what kind, how many, whose, or which.

Example: The comfortable sofa can seat six people.
Answer: Comfortable and six are adjectives. Comfortable describes the kind of sofa, and six tells how many people.

d. Identify adverbs as words that describe verbs. Adverbs tell how, when, or where.

Example: John ran quickly to catch the bus.
Answer: Quickly describes the verb ran. The adverb quickly tells how Jon ran. The suffix -ly is a clue that quickly is an adverb.

Get Ready for Detective Work!
In this unit you will:

- use noun determiners to locate nouns in sentences.
- use subject nouns to locate verbs in sentences.
- use nouns to locate adjectives in sentences.
- use verbs to locate adverbs in sentences.
Strategy 5

Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #16

Tips!
Noun determiners are words such as a, an, the, his, her, this, that, many, and your. Usually you can find the noun one or two words after its determiner.

Directions: Circle the nouns in each sentence. Look for noun determiners in bold.

Example: An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
Answer: Apple, day, and doctor are the nouns in this sentence.
The determiners are an, a, and the.

1. The horse galloped into the town.
2. The kids rowed their boat around the lake.
3. The machine only takes these coins.
4. The principal used the microphone to speak.
5. A troll stood under the bridge.
6. An alligator lives in the swamp.

Directions: Read the sentence and choose the best noun to fill in the blank.

7. My ________________ Tom and Aunt Betty visit us every Christmas.
   doctor Uncle children

8. The ship sails across the ________________.
   garden country ocean

9. Dad was in the ________________ preparing dinner for the family.
   city kitchen basement

10. The ________________ gives the meanings of words.
    dictionary novel map
Strategy 5

Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #17

Directions: In each sentence check if the underlined noun is correct.
Circle Yes or No.
If the noun is not correct, replace it with one that makes sense.

Is the noun correct? Write the correct noun.

1. The straps twinkle in the sky
   Yes          No
   st______________

2. The elephant sucks in water with its trunk.
   Yes          No
   e______________

3. Ben rides the bear to school.
   Yes          No
   b______________

4. Mr. Smith uses a letter to reach the top shelf.
   Yes          No
   l______________

5. The machine can make repairs to the car.
   Yes          No
   m______________

Directions: Are the underlined nouns correct? If not, write the correct one on the line provided.

6. The pillow sits in the cockpit of the plane.
   p______________

8. Mr. Jones sits on a bend in the park.
   b______________

7. There are many baskets for the party.
   b______________

9. The cabin was hidden in the woods.
   c______________

Using Context Clues to Help Kids Tackle Unfamiliar Words © Helev Zeitzoff, Scholastic Teaching Resources
The James family is busy packing suitcases for their vacation to Hawaii. The weather will be hot, so they are filling their suitcases with lightweight ______________. They will pack bathing suits for the days the family spends at the ______________.

Everyone in the family has something special that needs to go into the suitcase. Mark wants to go snorkeling, so he packs his ______________ to see underwater. Julie packs her ______________ because she wants to draw and write about the beautiful ______________ on the beach. Mom packs plenty of ______________ to protect everyone from the strong sun. Dad places the ______________ in the suitcase because he will take the ______________ of this exciting time.
Directions: Fill in the noun that completes each sentence.
Notice the noun determiners in bold.
Check that the noun you choose fits the sentence.

Police officer   Astronaut   Teacher   Lawyer   Doctor   Musician

1. “Rockets and space are my interest,” said Paul. “When I grow up I want to become an _____________.”

2. Montrose said, “I want to protect people and keep them safe in the city. One day, I hope to prevent crime when I am a _____________.”

3. Burt wants to help people who get into trouble with the law. Burt wants to become a _____________.

4. Ali said, “I want to become a _____________ just like Mrs. Light.” Ali loves to help other kids in her class with reading and spelling.

5. Robert said, “I like to play the clarinet, trombone, and piano.” He will probably become a _____________.

6. Gloria wants to care for sick people. She will become a _____________.
Reading Detective Practice #20

Directions: Circle the action word (verb) that follows each subject noun in **bold**.

Example: The **team** **plays** a soccer game today.

**Answer:** **Plays** is the action word following the subject noun **team**. **Plays** is the verb; it tells what the team does.

Tips!
Verbs often take these forms: (1) root; (2) root + the ending -s, -ing, or -ed.

1. **Policemen** protected the neighborhood.

2. **Monica** held the baby for a long time.

3. **Boys and girls** skate around the neighborhood.

4. The **class** is reading a new chapter book.

Directions: Choose the verb that fits each sentence.
Use clues **before** and **after** the blank to help you choose the verb.

5. Natalie _______________ after sitting for a long time. (strings, stretches)

6. Mr. Alva _______________ wood for the fireplace. (chops, chases)

7. The **movie** _______________ at four o’clock. (stamps, starts)

8. Frank _______________ to catch the bus. (rushes, raps)

9. Each **boy** _______________ two glasses of milk. (drinks, drills)
Reading Detective Practice #21

Directions: In each sentence, check if the underlined verb is correct. Circle Yes or No. If the verb is not correct, replace it with one that has the same beginning letters and makes sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the verb correct?</th>
<th>Write the correct verb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The <strong>firemen</strong> rested people from the building. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The <strong>crossing guard</strong> waved to the children. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Mr. Gates</strong> repaired the broken fence. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The <strong>boys</strong> liked for the lost diamond ring. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>John</strong> tagged the next runner. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The <strong>player</strong> dribbled the ball down the court. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The boys’ <strong>team</strong> juggled around the track. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The <strong>pitcher</strong> thought a fast ball. Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading Detective Practice #22

Directions: Write the verb that completes each sentence. Check that the verb you choose makes sense.

**A Saturday Club Meeting: Part 1**

announced    gathered    talked    agreed    raise    liked

The Kids Club _____________ at Tim’s house every Saturday morning. Last Saturday, the club’s president _____________ that the club would have a yard sale. They would _____________ money for the school library fund. Club members _____________ this idea. Many boys and girls _____________ about the old toys they could sell. Everyone _____________ that the sale should take place in a month.

**A Saturday Club Meeting: Part 2**

sold    examined    pointed    contributed    came

Neighborhood parents _____________ with their children to the sale. The little ones _____________ to the toys they wanted. Before they took out their money, the parents _____________ the bikes, wagons, sports equipment, and board games. Everything was in good condition. The toys _____________ fast. By the end of the day, everything was gone. The club members raised one hundred dollars, which they _____________ to the library for new books.
Read the dialogue in the sentences below.
Choose a more exact verb to replace "said."
Check that the verb you choose fits the sentence.

Example: "Look out! There's a snake!" _________ Bob.

said

What other verbs could replace said?

Answer: Yelled or screamed.

1. Tara’s mouth was full of food. I couldn’t understand her as she _________,

   "I don’t want to be late for school."

2. Bobby _________ , "I feel sick."

   said

3. “The next street has a detour, so you will have to take another route to the
   stadium,” _________ the policeman.

   said

4. Mrs. Dixon, our teacher, _________ , "The class will take a trip to the
   science museum next month."

   said

5. With tears in his eyes, the little boy _________ , “I fell down and
   skinned my knee."

   said

6. “Get a good night’s rest before you take the big test,” _________ the
   math teacher.
Strategy 5

**Strategy 5a.** Identify nouns by locating noun determiners.

**Strategy 5b.** Identify verbs as action words that follow the subject noun.

**Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.**

Name________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #24**

**Directions:** Circle **noun** or **verb** to show what is missing from each sentence. 
Fill in the blank with a noun or verb that fits each sentence. 
There is more than one right answer for each example.

1. The children ____________ at the park. noun verb

2. Many ____________ came to hear the president’s speech. noun verb

3. The big giant ____________ everyone in town. noun verb

4. The ____________ was launched at ten o’clock. noun verb

5. The ____________ pulled a rabbit out of the hat. noun verb

6. At the beach, Alex ____________ a sand castle. noun verb

7. A squirrel ____________ around the yard. noun verb

8. Billy ____________ a hamburger and fries. noun verb

9. Do you like ____________ on your pizza? noun verb
Strategy 5c. Identify adjectives as words that describe nouns.

Reading Detective Practice #25

Directions: Circle the adjectives that describe each noun in **bold**.

Example: They played an (**exciting**) game at recess.
Answer: The adjective **exciting** describes the noun **game**; it tells what kind of game took place.

1. The soft, furry **kitten** sat on my lap.
2. An old, broken-down **car** sat in the parking lot.
3. Pete found a shiny **penny**.
4. Mom told Trevor to wash his sticky **hands**.
5. Bill said, “I have a stuffy **nose**.”
6. A strange, shadowy **figure** appeared at the window.

Directions: Circle all the adjectives that could describe each noun in **bold**.

7. I like to eat ____________ **food**.
   salty excited spicy sour past clever juicy

8. A ____________ **truck** drove down the street.
   dirty squeaky honest noisy angry speedy shiny

9. The ____________ **bag** will hold the toys.
   plastic early striped tasty enormous shivering blue
Strategic Clues to Identify an Unfamiliar Word

**Name__________________________________________________ Date________________**

**Reading Detective Practice #26**

**Directions:** Choose an adjective to describe each noun in **bold** in the sentences below. Check that the word you choose makes sense.

- **curious** rude confused modern suspicious shallow smiling rotten

1. Detectives followed the _____________ **man** in the gray suit.
2. A _____________ **boy** showed his parents the A on his math test.
3. The _____________ **student** searched through science books for information.
4. Water comes up to my waist in the _____________ **part** of the pool.
5. A _____________ **building** has now replaced the old one.
6. The _____________ **person** pushed ahead of everyone in the ticket line.
7. You wouldn’t want to eat this _____________ **apple**.
8. The _____________ **campers** could not find their way back to the hiking trail.
Reading Detective Practice #27

Directions: Fill in the blank with the adjective that best fits the sentence. Check that the word you choose describes the right emotion. Use letter-sound clues to help you.

faithful furious bashful baffled panicky pleased calm comical

1. The b__________ boy would not say “Hello” to the other children.

2. José is the c__________ brother who is always telling jokes.

3. The campers were p__________ when they couldn’t find their way out of the woods.

4. Jane’s c__________ voice helped the worried children settle down.

5. The parents are p__________ with Daniel’s excellent report card.

6. Brent has been a f__________ friend for more than 20 years.

7. Dad was f__________ when he saw black ink on the new carpet.

8. Mom was b__________ about where she left her gold bracelet.
Reading Detective Practice #28

Directions: Read the story below and fill in each blank with the adjective that makes sense.

complete hardworking model two jumbo satisfied difficult

__________________ brothers purchased a ________________ airplane kit. When they arrived home from the store, the boys ran quickly down to the basement to assemble the plane. The model had so many parts that they decided to try it step by step. First, they read the three pages of ________________ directions. Then, they made a ________________ list of the parts and the steps to construct the plane. Three hours later, these ________________ boys had put together the model of a ________________ airplane. With ________________ looks on their faces, they raced upstairs to show the plane to their older sister. She checked the model and told them they had done a great job.
Strategy 5

Strategy 5a. Identify nouns by locating noun determiners.
Strategy 5b. Identify verbs as action words that follow the subject noun.
Strategy 5c. Identify adjectives as words that describe nouns.

Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #29

Directions: Write the correct part of speech (noun, verb, or adjective) for each underlined word.

1. Mrs. Rand placed a generous portion of potatoes on the plate. _________________
2. The dog made those scratches on the door. _________________
3. The mall opens early today. _________________
4. Maya served the cookies on a silver tray. _________________
5. The bus departs sharply at one o’clock. _________________ _________________

On Your Own

Directions: Read the sentence and circle the part of speech that is missing. Complete the sentence with a noun, verb, or adjective. Check that the word you choose makes sense.

Missing Word

1. The rocket _________________ off to space. noun verb adjective
2. The _________________ lights signaled for the traffic to stop. noun verb adjective
3. Pairs of students _________________ science experiments. noun verb adjective
4. It took a long time to leave the _________________ theater. noun verb adjective
5. Mary gave us clear _________________ to find her house. noun verb adjective
Strategy 5d. Identify adverbs as words that describe verbs.

Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #30

Directions: Use the action verb in **bold** to find the adverb in each sentence. Write the adverb on the line.

**Example:** Mom lifted the baby (**gently**) from the crib.

**Answer:** *Gently* is the adverb in this sentence. The word *gently* tells how Mom lifted the baby.

Write the adverb that tells *how* the action happened.

1. The crowd **cheered** loudly during the show. _________________
2. Mother **tiptoed** softly into the baby’s room. _________________
3. Jim and Joe quickly **ran** for shelter from the rain. _________________

Write the adverb that tells *when* the action happened.

4. Yesterday, we **played** at the park. _________________
5. Jackson **reads** nightly. _________________
6. Bill **painted** the fence today. _________________

Write the adverb that tells *where* the action happened.

7. The detective **looked** inside for the man. _________________
8. You may **sit** anywhere. _________________
9. The boys and girls **looked** everywhere for the puppy. _________________
Reading Detective Practice #31

Directions: On the lines write *how, when, or where* to show what the underlined adverb is telling.

1. The package was delivered *early.*

2. Ben *carefully* placed the glue on the paper.

3. Tanya ran *upstairs* to get the model airplane.

4. It is time to go *now.*

5. The children sat *quietly* watching the movie.

6. George looked *outside* for the dog.


8. You followed her directions *correctly.*

9. The family looked *everywhere* to find their lost dog.
**Strategy 5**

**Strategy 5d.** Identify adverbs as words that describe verbs.

**Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.**

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #32**

**Directions:** Complete each sentence with the correct adverb. Check that the word you choose makes sense.

---------- Part 1 — Adverbs That Tell How ----------

softly  suspiciously  sleepily  warmly  neatly  anxiously

1. The children dressed _________________ to play in the snow.

2. Mrs. Burns placed everything _________________ into the drawers.

3. The boys watched _________________ as the stranger walked up to the front door.

4. The kids walked _________________ into the house after a full day at the amusement park.

5. The family waited _________________ for Grandma and Grandpa to arrive.

6. Everyone walks _________________ around the house when the baby is asleep.

---------- Part 2 — Adverbs That Tell When ----------

afternoon  weekends  yesterday  monthly  immediately  early

1. The neighbors called 911 _________________ to report the accident.

2. They shop on _________________ so there is enough food in the house during the week.

3. Lila does her homework every _________________ when she gets home from school.
Strategy 5

Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #32 (continued)

4. Our teacher tells us to go to bed _________________ to get a good night’s rest for the next school day.

5. The Detective Club has only _________________ meetings.

6. Maria is feeling much better because she took the medicine _________________.

Part 3 — Adverbs That Tell Where

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>under</th>
<th>downstairs</th>
<th>outside</th>
<th>inside</th>
<th>here</th>
<th>by</th>
<th>above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Laura ran _________________ to the basement for the tool kit.

2. Jason dropped his fork on the floor and looked for it _________________ the table.

3. The boys and girls did not like staying _________________ for three days during the blizzard.

4. Hamid called, “Look right _________________! This is where we left the baseball glove.”

5. Jack is too short to reach the cabinet _________________ the kitchen sink.

6. _________________ the wind is blowing leaves off the trees.

7. My cat loves to sit _________________ my side and purr.
**Strategy 5**

**Strategy 5a.** Identify nouns by locating noun determiners.

**Strategy 5b.** Identify verbs as action words that follow the subject noun.

**Strategy 5c.** Identify adjectives as words that describe nouns.

**Strategy 5d.** Identify adverbs as words that describe verbs.

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Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

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**Reading Detective Practice #33**

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**Part 1**

**Directions:** Circle noun, verb, adjective, or adverb to show what’s missing.

Write a word in the blank that completes the sentence.

Check that the word you choose makes sense.

What’s missing?

1. Latasha ___________ home with her friends. noun verb adjective adverb

2. “That was a ___________ supper,” said Dad. noun verb adjective adverb

3. Many new ___________ arrived for the library. noun verb adjective adverb

4. Chris looked ___________ before he crossed the street. noun verb adjective adverb

5. Monique had a ___________ time at the party. noun verb adjective adverb

6. The deer ___________ into the woods. noun verb adjective adverb

7. This room needs ___________ wallpaper. noun verb adjective adverb

8. ___________ I went to the amusement park. noun verb adjective adverb
Use grammar clues to identify an unfamiliar word.

Name_________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #33 (continued)

Part 2

Directions: Use grammar clues to complete the story.

Fill in the blanks with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that make sense.

One ______________ Jerry and Jen ______________ to the pet _________________. They saw many ________________ in the window. There was a ______________ , ______________ puppy in a box. Jerry and Jen went ______________ to meet the puppy. They held him in their ______________ and fell in love with him. They ______________ about the cost of the dog. Then, they ______________ the shopkeeper they would come back ______________ with ______________ parents to get the dog. The ______________ day, Jen and Jerry ______________ to the shop with their parents and ______________ the puppy. The children walked ______________ out of the shop with their ______________ friend.
**Tracks to Follow!**

**Grammar Clues**

Readers use grammar clues to figure out unfamiliar words. These clues help us identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

**Strategy 5**

a. Identify nouns by locating noun determiners (a, an, the, and so forth)

Example: *The* children played in *the* house.

Answer: *Children* and *house* are the nouns in this sentence. The determiner *the* comes before *children* and *house*.

b. Identify verbs as action words that follow the subject noun. Verbs often take these forms: (1) root; (2) root + the ending -s, -ing, or -ed.

Example: *The* children *ran* to the ice cream truck.

Answer: *Ran* is the verb in this sentence. *Ran* is the action word that follows the subject noun *children*.

c. Identify adjectives as words that describe nouns. Adjectives tell what kind, how many, whose, or which.

Example: *The* happy *students* cheered for the team.

Answer: *Happy* is the adjective in the sentence. *Happy* describes the noun *students*.

d. Identify adverbs as words that describe verbs. Adverbs tell how, when, or where.

Example: *Ben* *ran* immediately to get help for the injured person.

Answer: *Immediately* is the adverb in the sentence. It describes the verb *ran*; it tells how *Ben* ran.
Use the Clues! For the Teacher

Building on first-aid strategies 1 and 3 from Unit 1, the activities in this unit help students figure out unfamiliar words in context by referring to related words, phrases, and images. In this unit students will use the following strategies to figure out what unfamiliar words mean.

**Strategy 6** Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

- Use key words to find synonyms.
- Use key words to find a synonym in the passage.
- Use key words to check words with multiple meanings.
- Use key words to find the meanings of unfamiliar phrases (idiomatic expressions).

**Activities for Strategy 6:**

- Use the context of a sentence or passage to find a synonym to substitute for a selected word.
- Find the correct synonym for a word with multiple meanings.
- Find the correct synonym or a similar phrase for an idiomatic expression.

**Strategy 7** Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms for an unfamiliar word.

- Look for these words to signal synonyms: or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.
- Look for the word but to signal antonyms or opposite meanings.

**Activity for Strategy 7:**

- Use signal words (or, but, and so on) to find synonyms or antonyms for selected words.

**Strategy 8** Use pictures to think of synonyms for an unfamiliar word.

**Activity for Strategy 8:**

- Use picture clues to find synonyms for selected words.

**Introductory Mini-Lesson**

Present the sample sentences provided and ask students to come up with a substitute word that would make sense in each sentence. Record students’ answers and then have them narrow the list by rereading the sentences with each of the substitute words to check for meaning. Discuss how using a synonym for an unknown word will help students continue reading without having to check the dictionary. Be sure to ask students to identify other clues in the surrounding language.

**Sample sentences:**

1. Bill gloats about his new bike. Have you seen him strutting around like a peacock?
2. The principal’s comment, that she thinks our class is competent, tells me that we’re a bunch of smart and able students.
3. The class collaborated, or worked together, to create a yearbook.
4. After the zoo animals escaped, there was turmoil in the city. People in cars swerved to avoid animals in the street, and many frightened pedestrians ran indoors and called for emergency help. The disruption was worsened by loud sirens.

**Strategy and Practice Pages**

Distribute copies of page 52 to students. Read aloud and discuss meaning clues and the examples to be sure students understand how to use these strategies before they begin.

**Tips for Teaching Semantic-Cue Strategies:**

1. Use real-life reading materials—novels, newspapers, magazines, and passages from science and social studies textbooks to model the specific strategies in this unit.
2. Have students highlight or circle key words in the passages to show that they’ve found clues to word meanings.
3. Help build stronger student vocabulary by posting new words students have learned using semantic cues. Let students share their successes and new-found words during class meeting time, and have them create strategy charts on which they list the words and definitions. Refer to the chart regularly and use the new words in conversation to make them an integral part of students’ vocabulary.
Use the Clues! For Students

What are meaning clues?
These clues help you figure out a synonym, or substitute, for a word you don’t know.

Strategy 6: Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

a. Use key words to find synonyms.
   Example: The (robber) conceals the (money) bag on his bed inside a (pillow).
   Answer: Conceals means “hides.” The robber hides money in his pillow so that no one can find it.

b. Use key words to find a synonym in the passage.
   Example: Bill devoured 48 hot dogs in ten minutes. He won first prize for (eating that much so quickly).
   Answer: Devoured means to “ate with great hunger.” Bill ate 48 hot dogs in ten minutes.

c. Use key words to check words with multiple meanings.
   Example: Leslie won the tennis match.
   Answer: Match means “a contest.” In this sentence match refers to a contest, not a stick you strike to light a fire.

d. Use key words to find the meanings of unfamiliar phrases (idiomatic expressions).
   Example: Malcolm is sitting pretty now that he has won the prize money.
   Answer: Sitting pretty means “to be in a great situation.” Malcolm has the money to pay his bills and buy what he wants, so he’s sitting pretty.
Strategy 7: Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms (opposites) for an unfamiliar word.

a. Look for these words to signal synonyms: or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.
   Example: They decided not to buy the house because of the labor, or work, it would take to fix it.
   Answer: Labor means “work.” Or signals that a synonym—work—is nearby.

b. Look for the word but to signal antonyms or opposite meanings.
   Example: I am full of energy now, but I will be exhausted by the time I finish running the marathon.
   Answer: Exhausted means “very tired.” But signals that a phrase with the opposite meaning—full of energy—is in the sentence.

Strategy 8: Use pictures to think of synonyms for an unfamiliar word.
Example:

A prosperous person lives in that house.

Answer: Prosperous means wealthy. The size of the house tells us that the owner is wealthy.

Get Ready for Detective Work!
In this unit you will:
- use key words to select synonyms for words.
- use signal words to select meanings for words.
- use pictures to select meanings for words.
Strategy 6

Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Name_________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #34

Directions: Use the circled key words to help you choose two synonyms for the word in bold. Underline your two choices, checking that the words make sense.

Example: The lost man bellowed, “Help me, help me! I’m down in this hole!”
          asked                   shouted                   ran                   yelled

Answer: Bellowed means “shouted” or “yelled.” A person lost and in danger would shout for help so that someone could hear him.

Part 1

1. The brutal hurricane destroyed the beach houses.
   curious                       violent                       satisfied                       powerful

2. Jennifer, a novice skier, must stay on the slopes for people just learning to ski.
   beginning                 new                           adult                           old

3. The blissful day for Mr. and Mrs. Adams was March 1, 2001, the date of the birth of their son.
   moody                       joyful                         torn                             happy

4. “Having the Super Bowl in this city is a major event for us,” said the mayor.
   noisy                          important                 small                           big

5. The Red Cross furnishes food and clothing to flood victims.
   supplies                    pulls                          gives                          builds
Part 2

Directions: Underline all synonyms for the word in bold.
Circle key words in the sentence that help you choose the synonyms.
Check that the words you choose make sense.

1. Another parking garage provides **ample** parking spaces for the mall’s shoppers.
   plenty                      no                             little                                  enough

2. Mother enjoys some **tranquil** time while the triplets are napping.
   noisy                         quiet                         screaming                         peaceful

3. Mayor Dale was the **distinguished** speaker at the college graduation.
   respected               polite                        kind                                  famous

4. **Weary** campers looked forward to resting at the end of the five-mile hike.
   sick                           tired                          worn-out                           excited

Directions: Underline one synonym for the word in bold and circle key words.

5. Look at the **brilliant** diamonds in the queen’s crown.
   messy                       smart                         sparkling

6. Jake **composed** a poem to give thanks to the volunteers.
   chose                        drew                          wrote

7. With rain and heavy fog, no one wanted to go out on that **dismal** evening.
   strange                     cold                          gloomy
Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Reading Detective Practice #34 (continued)

8. When the lost hikers were found, they said, “We’re **famished**. We haven’t eaten in four days.”
   - hot
   - starving
   - cold

9. When travelers approached the bridge, they read the sign, “**Hazardous** driving on wet roads.”
   - snowy
   - dangerous
   - bumpy

10. Maria returned the **flawed** glass vase to the store. She explained to the clerk that there was a scratch on it.
   - imperfect
   - beautiful
   - purple

11. “What kind of **dwelling** do you live in?” the museum guide asked us, as we passed through the igloo exhibit.
   - house
   - workplace
   - garden

12. Billy **abhors** that awful-tasting medicine.
   - likes
   - hates
   - whines

13. A **bevy** of young girls waited for the rap star to come out of the theater.
   - van
   - group
   - cloud

14. Mr. Smith is **terminating** his business. He has decided to retire.
   - starting
   - ending
   - beginning
   - joining

15. Mrs. Bender quickly drank a glass of water. “Ah,” she said, “that soothes my **parched** throat.”
   - wet
   - oily
   - moist
   - dry
Strategy 6a. Use key words to find synonyms.

Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Name________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #35

Directions: Read through the passage.
Underline the synonym for each word in **bold**.
Circle the key words that helped you.
Check that the word you choose makes sense.

**Going Home from School**

On an **ordinary** school day, Tom and Mike take the bus home from school.

Today, after a **discussion**, the boys **concluded** they would walk home from school. After all, it was a beautiful day. The boys were **engrossed** with baseball cards as they **strolled** down the street. They were **oblivious** to the turns they were making. When they did look around them, they were **bewildered**. The houses on the street did not look **familiar**. The boys were **baffled**! Where were they?

The boys approached a man painting the front of his house and told him they were lost. This kind man **furnished** the boys with a map to guide them back home. The map was **exceedingly** helpful. Twenty minutes later, the boys were **elated** to arrive home, but then they were embarrassed to give their mom an **explanation** for being so late. She had been **anxious** when the boys had not arrived home on time. Tom and Mike **confessed** that they had learned an important lesson.
One morning Maria sat on the front steps of her new apartment building with a forlorn look on her face. Maria wished she could return to her former neighborhood. She missed the many friends she had there. Maria’s family had just moved and she had not made any acquaintances yet. School did not start for another month, and Maria was too timid to roam the neighborhood and find some playmates. Her aunt saw Maria’s distress and decided to help her.

Early that afternoon, Maria and her aunt ambled down the block together, looking around and chatting. At the fifth door, they saw a mother braiding her daughter’s hair. Maria and her aunt stopped to say “Hello” and introduce themselves to the neighbors. Maria and her aunt met Ms. Stoker and her daughter, Samaya.

Samaya was excited to make a new friend. She invited Maria to go to the park with her. All of a sudden, Maria had a lighthearted look on her face. Today she had made friends with Samaya and no longer felt isolated.
Reading Detective Practice #37

Directions: Circle the key words that help you understand the words in **bold**. Fill in the chart on page 60 with the meanings and key word clues.

1. The **jubilant** crowd cheered for the hometown football team.

2. “Wash those **grimy** hands before you sit down at the dinner table,” said my older sister when we came in from digging an underground hideout.

3. The TV weatherman told the viewers to be prepared for changes! The temperatures would **fluctuate** for the next five days. He showed the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60°</td>
<td>50°</td>
<td>65°</td>
<td>55°</td>
<td>64°</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Timothy **excelled** in swimming and had six trophies to show for it.

5. The grandparents were **ecstatic** with the birth of another grandchild.

6. Every Monday evening, laughter fills the room when the family watches that **hilarious** show.

7. The **keen** edge of this knife will cut through anything. Be careful when you use it!

8. **Masses** of people lined the streets to see the world-champion baseball team in the parade.
Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #37 (continued)

Directions: Use this chart with page 59.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Clues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>jubilant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>grimy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>fluctuate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>excelled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>ecstatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>hilarious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>keen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>masses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Name_________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #38

Directions: Read each passage. Circle the synonym for the word in bold and write it on the line.

Example: City workers cleaned the rubbish from the corner lot. Many people dump (junk) on this lot.

Answer: Rubbish means junk. City workers would clear junk from a lot. Junk is a synonym for rubbish.

1. Jamar was astonished to see friends and family when he opened the front door. Everyone sang “Happy Birthday.” His surprised expression told them they had successfully kept the party a secret.

Astonished means ________________.

2. The principal announced over the intercom, “A vehicle is parked in front of the building. This car prevents the buses from getting through.”

Vehicle means ________________.

3. Survivors of the fire paraded to the fire station with banners and balloons. They expressed their gratitude on the banners, which read, “Thanks to the people who saved our lives.”

Gratitude means ________________.

4. Dad saturates the cloth with water. After it has been soaked, he pours spot remover on the stain.

Saturates means ________________.

5. A penitent kid told his parents, “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you where I was going after school.”

Penitent means ________________.
Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #39

Directions: Read each passage.

Circle the synonym for the word in bold and write it on the line.

1. Grandma said, “What a **vivacious** host Simone is! This energetic young lady is serving food, entertaining guests, and having conversations with everyone.”

   **Vivacious** means ___________________.

2. The boys were in **peril** as they sat on the rocks above the sea. They were in danger of being swept away by the strong waves.

   **Peril** means ___________________.

3. The speaker told such a **spellbinding** story that everyone moved forward in their seats, listening to every fascinating word that fell from her lips.

   **Spellbinding** means ___________________.

4. Mom said, “Make sure the gate is shut tight at the kitchen doorway. It needs to be **secure** so the puppy does not get into the living room.”

   **Secure** means ___________________.

5. The **prime** meat served in this restaurant is the best you’ll ever get.

   **Prime** means ___________________.

6. Sitting and staring out the window, Viviana **contemplated** what she should do. She was thinking about whether she should apologize to her sister or stay in her room a while longer.

   **Contemplated** means ___________________.
Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Reading Detective Practice #40

Directions: Underline the correct meaning of the word in bold. Use the circled key words as clues.

Example: The soldiers gathered arms to protect the fort. Arms is a word with multiple meanings.
   a. the limbs of the upper body, used for lifting and holding (noun)
   b. weapons (noun)

Answer: In this sentence arms means “weapons.” The soldiers would use weapons for protection.

1. The bank has five other branches in the city.
   a. limbs of a tree
   b. offices

2. Mr. Thomas told the workers that he would dock their pay because they were late.
   a. place to tie up boats
   b. take away part of

3. You will be charged a fine if you are caught throwing trash into the street.
   a. light, powdery
   b. amount of money owed for breaking the law
   c. good, okay

4. Every float in the parade was made of beautiful flowers.
   a. moving decorated display
   b. stay on top of water

5. The husky was pulling the sled through the snowy field.
   a. big and strong
   b. a type of dog
Strategy 6c. Use key words to check words with multiple meanings.

Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #41

Directions: Underline the correct meaning for the word in bold. Use the circled key words as clues.

1. A swimmer began to **flounder** in the ocean and (yell for help).
   a. a kind of fish
   b. struggle

2. The **secretary** (takes) time to **file** (the papers).
   a. smooth something
   b. put away in an orderly fashion
   c. a folder of papers kept in a drawer

3. This **new company** wants to **court** the **best salesmen** to **work** for it.
   a. place to solve problems by the law
   b. place to play a game
   c. try to attract

4. There was a **grave** (situation) in the country after the earthquake.
   a. place for burying
   b. serious

5. Did the dog **dart** (into the street) to (get the ball)?
   a. dash, run quickly
   b. arrow thrown in a game
   c. sew a folded cloth to make a change in size

6. Captain Joe **writes** about his **sea adventures** in the **log**.
   a. a piece of wood
   b. a journal or diary
Strategy 6c. Use key words to check words with multiple meanings.

**Strategy 6**

Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #42**

**Directions:** Fill in the blanks with the word in bold that completes each sentence. In the column on the right, write the number of the meaning that was used.

### Multiple Meaning Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning 1</th>
<th>Meaning 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prunes</td>
<td>1. cuts a bush or tree</td>
<td>2. fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>racket</td>
<td>1. paddle in a tennis game</td>
<td>2. noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>root</td>
<td>1. cheer</td>
<td>2. underground part of plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toll</td>
<td>1. fee, amount of money</td>
<td>2. to ring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Which meaning?**

1. Ted does not like to eat _______________. He thinks they’re too mushy. ______

2. Traffic is slow because everyone stops at the bridge to pay the _______________. ______

3. What was that _______________ I heard in the middle of the night? ______

4. The church bells _______________ at the start of each hour. ______

5. The gardener carefully _______________ the bushes. ______

6. The P.E. instructor showed the correct way to hold the _______________. ______

7. The dog pulled up the plant by the _______________. ______

8. The boys are going to _______________ for the home team. ______
Use key words to find a word’s meaning.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #43

Directions: Fill in each blank with the word in bold that completes the sentence. In the column on the right, write the number of the meaning that was used.

Multiple Meaning Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>slip</td>
<td>1. fall  2. mistake, error 3. thin skirt worn under a dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>till</td>
<td>1. box or drawer for valuables 2. until 3. plow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toast</td>
<td>1. sliced, browned bread 2. a speech to honor someone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which meaning?

1. Lila made a ________________, so now Benny knows about his surprise party. ______
2. Each spring the farmer needs to ________________the soil. ______
3. Our dad stood up to make a ________________to the bride and groom. ______
4. The boys stole money from the ________________ to buy a new game. ______
5. The little girl’s ________________was too long. It hung below the hem of her dress. ______
6. Mother said, “Stand here ________________the bus arrives.” ______
7. Do you want jam on your ________________? ______
Strategy 6d. Use key words to find the meanings of unfamiliar phrases (idiomatic expressions).

**Use key words in a passage to find a word’s meaning.**

Name_________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #44**

**Directions:** Use circled key words to help you understand the expression in **bold**. Underline the meaning of each expression.

**Example:** The girls were planning a **(surprise party)** for Jane. Brenda **(warned)**, "Don’t let the cat out of the bag, if you see Jane.”

- tell the secret
- hide a cat
- tie up a bag

**Answer:** Let the cat out of the bag means “tell the secret.” If someone lets the cat out of the bag, Jane will not be surprised.

1. Mom is **tickled pink** that we **(found shoes)** to **(match her dress)**.
   - **tickled pink:** pink all over happy laughing from being tickled

2. Bill **turned red as a beet** when he was **(caught snatching someone’s book)**.
   - **turned red as a beet:** moved something red blushed with embarrassment painted with red paint

3. This year Brittany **turned over a new leaf** and handed everything in on time.
   - **turned over a new leaf:** made a change raked leaves pressed a leaf

4. The kids think that Jim will try to **weasel out of** the **(challenge to eat fried worms)**.
   - **weasel out of:** change get out of doing dig like a weasel

5. Bob **could not stomach** **(watching the operation)** on television and **(walked out of the room)**.
   - **could not stomach:** couldn’t stand had an operation had a stomachache

Using Context Clues to Help Kids Tackle Unfamiliar Words © Helev Zeitzoff, Scholastic Teaching Resources
Reading Detective Practice #45

Directions: Circle key words that help you understand the expression in bold. Underline the meaning of each expression.

1. “I’m all ears, and ready to learn about your three-week trip,” said Rashid.
   all ears: pointed ears ready to listen playing an instrument

2. Jim made it to school by the skin of his teeth and was not marked late.
   by the skin of his teeth: brushing his teeth brushing his skin just in time

3. Do you know why Gina is so thin? She eats like a bird.
   eats like a bird: eats a small amount flies to get food eats worms

4. The two brothers were told to quit horsing around or someone would get hurt.
   quit horsing around: don’t jump on a horse stop playing so hard stop walking so much

5. Sara and Kate like the same clothes, singers, school subjects, and just about everything else. They are two peas in a pod.
   two peas in a pod: like green peas the same sitting close together

6. Mr. Jones called in his workers to pick their brains on how to make more money.
   pick their brains: ask for ideas give them toothpicks to use put forks in their hair
**Strategy 7**

**Strategy 7a.** Look for these words to signal synonyms: or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.

**Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms (opposites) for an unfamiliar word.**

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #46**

**Directions:** Write the synonym for the word in **bold**.
Use the signal word **or** to help you.

**Example:** John **deletes**, or removes, files from the computer.

**Answer:** **Deletes** means “removes.” The word **or** tells us that a synonym for **deletes** is **removes**.

1. The **stout**, or plump, lady needs the next dress size up.
   
   **Stout** means ________________ .

2. The detectives want to **interrogate**, or ask questions of, Mr. Fritz.
   
   **Interrogate** means ________________ .

3. Shakira **perseveres**, or carries on, in an effort to read 100 books by the end of summer.
   
   **Perseveres** means ________________ .

4. The class wrote letters to families of victims after the **catastrophe**, or disaster, of September 11, 2001.
   
   **Catastrophe** means ________________ .

5. The police settled the **tumult**, or uproar, that took place at the hockey game.
   
   **Tumult** means ________________ .

6. When the winds **diminish**, or lessen, the fishing boats can go out to sea again.
   
   **Diminish** means ________________ .
Strategy 7a. Look for these words to signal synonyms: or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.

**Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms (opposites) for an unfamiliar word.**

Name: ________________________________ Date: __________________

**Reading Detective Practice #47**

**Directions:** In each sentence, circle the signal word and underline the meaning of the word in **bold**.

**Signal Words:**
- or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, were, were called, were known as, means, tells, such as

**Example:** A simple grid system **is** the pattern of lines that help locate places on a map or globe.

**Answer:** Simple grid system means “a pattern of lines that help locate places on a map or globe.”

The meaning follows the signal word **is**.

---

**Geography**

1. Studying **landforms** means studying the different shapes of the Earth’s surface.
2. A **plateau** is the landform that has steep sides and a flat top.
3. From the shore, we could see an **island**, or land surrounded on all sides by water.
4. Land that is surrounded by water on three sides is called a **peninsula**.
5. The low land that is between hills, mountains, and ranges is called a **valley**.
6. Very dry land with very few plants and little rainfall is known as a **desert**.
7. **Strait** means “a body of water that joins two larger bodies of water.”
**Strategy 7**

**Strategy 7a.** Look for these words to signal synonyms: or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.

**Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms (opposites) for an unfamiliar word.**

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #47 (continued)**

**Signal Words:**
- or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, were, were called, were known as, means, tells, such as

**Resources**

1. **Resources** are things that can be used to produce a good or service.

2. A mall is a collection of stores that sell a variety of **goods**, such as toys, bikes, CD players, books, pizza, and many other things people want to buy.

3. **Natural resources** are things from nature that we use to provide goods and services. They include animals, plants, water, and wood.

4. **Capital resources** are goods and services made by people—for example, bridges, theaters, planes, and jewelry.

5. The goods and services that people want to have (clothing, cars, houses, and vacations, for example) are called **economic wants**.

6. The things we rely on every day, such as building houses, teaching school, and curing sickness, are known as **basic services**.
Strategy 7

**Strategy 7b.** Look for the word *but* to signal antonyms or opposite meanings.

**Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms (opposites) for an unfamiliar word.**

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #48**

**Directions:** Circle the meaning of the underlined word. Use the signal word *but* to find an opposite meaning. The words in **bold** will help you.

**Example:** Usually Bob is **shy** about speaking in front of a large group, **but** he took a **bold** step and gave a speech to 500 people.  

happy                   easy                   brave  

**Answer:** **Bold** means “brave.” When Bob, who is shy, gave a speech to 500 people, he was brave. **Bold** is the opposite of **shy** and means “brave.”

1. The pirates **captured** the princess, **but** they said they would **release** her if she told them where to find the treasure.  

release: free hold on to keep forever  

2. When I get **criticism** from my friends, I work harder; **but** when they **praise** my ideas, I feel happy.  

criticism: disapproval statements wisdom  

3. Stretching makes your body **flexible**, **but** it can hurt if your body is **stiff**.  

flexible: bendable hard rocky  

4. Beth’s **optimistic** attitude helps her see the good in everything, **but** Sharon’s **hopeless** attitude always makes her think things will never turn out right.  

optimistic: careless cheerful curious  

5. Rushing through a test may cause you to make **mistakes**, **but** taking your time and checking the work helps you to be **accurate** on the test.  

accurate: writing spelling correct
Strategy 7

**Strategy 7a.** Look for these words to signal synonyms: or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.

**Strategy 7b.** Look for the word but to signal antonyms or opposite meanings.

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**Use signal words to find synonyms and antonyms (opposites) for an unfamiliar word.**

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

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### Reading Detective Practice #49

**Part 1**

**Directions:** In each sentence, circle the synonym for the underlined word. Use the signal word or to help you.

1. Mr. Upjohn made a **donation**, or gift, of $1,000 to help the school buy computers.

2. The **feeble**, or weak, man was not able to walk without the cane.

3. Frank wanted to visit the **remote**, or distant, island to get rest and relaxation.

4. The mayor **applauded**, or praised, the students for their math scores.

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**Part 2**

**Directions:** Circle the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence. Use the signal word but to help you find the antonym and then circle it, too.

1. People cannot see through that **opaque** window, **but** they can see through the transparent one.
   
   What is the meaning of **opaque**? (clear, foggy)
   
   What is the meaning of **transparent**? (clear, foggy)

2. It would be **ridiculous** to stay up all night, **but** sensible to get a good night’s rest and be fresh in the morning.

   What is the meaning of **ridiculous**? (wise, silly)

   What is the meaning of **sensible**? (wise, silly)
Using Context Clues

**Strategy 8**

Use pictures to think of synonyms for an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

**Reading Detective Practice #50**

**Directions:** Circle the meaning of the word in **bold**. Use the picture to help you find a synonym.

**Example:** The first-place runner’s face was **radiating** happiness.

**Answer:** Radiating means “shining” or “glowing.” The runner is so happy that her face is shining or glowing with happiness.

1. The truck will **transport** the family’s belongings to the new house.
   - transport: sell move build

2. Mary’s house is located on a busy **thoroughfare**.
   - thoroughfare: street hill traffic

3. The shy girl was **reluctant** to enter her new classroom.
   - reluctant: unwilling happy joyful
Strategy 8

Use pictures to think of synonyms for an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________________ Date________________

Reading Detective Practice #51

Directions: Circle the meaning of the word in bold. Use the picture to help you find a synonym.

1. Mr. Rodriguez showed his friend a picture of the old desk that he **salvaged** from the garbage dump.

   salvaged: sold destroyed rescued

2. Bill had **oodles** of boxes to give to Tom.

   oodles: many few little

3. Jackson **sprinted** down the street to get home in time for dinner.

   sprinted: hopped ran walked

4. Thomas **peers** through the microscope.

   peers: touches looks pokes
Strategy 8

Use pictures to think of synonyms for an unfamiliar word.

Name__________________________________________ Date_________________

Reading Detective Practice #52

Directions: Circle the meaning of the word in **bold**. Use the picture to help you find a synonym.

1. After school, this **duo** went to a baseball game.
   
   **duo:** piece pair part

2. As the kids walked, they saw Mr. Tibble **repairing** the lawn mower.
   
   **repairing:** fixing trying fighting with

3. Farther down the street, Mr. Bill was **toiling** on the engine of his car.
   
   **toiling:** rushing working playing

4. The kids were late arriving at the park, and the game had **commenced** without them.
   
   **commenced:** played started jumped
Tracks to Follow!

Meaning Clues

Readers use meaning clues to find substitutes for the words they don’t know.

Strategy 6

a. Use keys words to find synonyms.

Example: The **blustery** (wind bit at our skin) and (**howled**) in our ears.

Answer: Blustery mean “violently blowing.” Wind that bites at skin and howls is *blustery*.

b. Use key words to find a synonym in the passage.

Example: Looking at the **overcast** sky, Dad told us it was too (**cloudy**) to go to the beach.

Answer: Overcast means “cloudy.” The cloudy, or overcast, sky meant that it was not a beach day.

c. Use key words to check words with multiple meanings.

Example: The directions say to take a right at the **fork** in the road.

Answer: In this sentence, fork is a place where the road separates, going in two different directions. Fork does not mean here “an eating utensil.”

d. Use key words to find the meanings of unfamiliar phrases (idiomatic expressions).

Example: Jay was walking **on eggshells** around his angry older brother.

Answer: The expression walking on eggshells means “careful not to bother or annoy.” Jay was careful not to annoy his angry older brother, so we say he was walking on eggshells.
Tracks to Follow!

Meaning Clues

Readers use meaning clues to find substitutes for the words they don’t know.

Strategy 7

a. Look for key words to signal a synonym. (Synonym signal words include or, is, is called, is known as, are, are called, are known as, was, was called, was known as, means, tells, and such as.)

Example: The police officer apprehended, or arrested, the burglar.

Answer: Apprehended means “arrested.” Or signals that a word with a similar meaning—arrested—is nearby.

b. Look for the word but to signal antonyms or opposite meanings.

Example: The babysitter was lax about the rules at first, but had to be strict when the kids started fighting.

Answer: Lax means relaxed. But signals that a word with an opposite meaning—strict—is nearby.

Strategy 8

Use pictures to think of synonyms for an unfamiliar word.

Example:

The grass in the baseball diamond was perfectly manicured.

Answer: Manicured means “trimmed neatly.” The even, neat shape of the field shows that the grass is trimmed neatly.
**Answer Key**

**Unit 1: First-Aid Strategies**

**page 8, #1**
1. lightning
2. ambulance
3. hammer
4. cold
5. worried
6. shovels

**page 9, #2**
1. popcorn
2. apples
3. ice cream
4. hot dog
5. turkey
6. spaghetti
7. ice cube
8. tomato

**page 10, #3**
**Acceptable answers:**
1. jelly, jam
2. sugar, sweetener
3. cob
4. pancakes, waffles
5. sundaes, syrup
6. cereal
7. beans
8. cake

**page 11, #4**
**On the Farm**
1. tractor
   (rides around, clear the land, dig rows)
2. house
   (leaves, returns be with his family, warm, comfortable)
3. cows
   (provide the farmer’s family and others, healthy drink)
4. hay
   (in the horse’s stall)
5. horses
   (in the barn, farmer gives it a piece of sugar)
6. barn
   (big red, stores tools, keep horses there, protect them from cold and rain)

**Can You Name the Animals on Your Own?**
1. rooster
2. pigs
3. sheep
4. turkey

**page 12, #5**
1. hitter, fielder, coach, strike, umpire
2. flowers, hose, shovel, vegetables
3. obeys, barks, bowl, bone
4. strange, old, scary, bats, creaks
5. diving, shallow, goggles, flippers
6. bunk, hikes, counselors, activities

**page 13, #6**
**Circled words:** cake, games, balloons, presents, friends
1. friends
2. cake
3. presents
4. games
5. balloons

**page 14, #7**
**Circled words:** cake, games, balloons, presents, friends
1. friends
2. cake
3. presents
4. games
5. balloons

**page 15–16, #8**
Students must accurately decode these words:
1. register
2. coupon
3. receipt
4. escalator
5. jewelry
6. elevator
7. perfume
8. bundles

**page 17, #9**
1. patients
2. nurse
3. stethoscope
4. prescription

**page 18, #10**
1. throne
2. servant
3. crown
4. balcony
5. princess

**Unit 2: Graphophonic Cues**

**page 22, #11**
**Students must accurately decode these words:**
1. recognize
2. expensive
3. celebrate
4. imaginations
5. situation
6. medication
7. thirsty
8. canceled
demonstrates, chemicals

**page 23, #12**
1. parade
2. exercise
3. substitute
4. garage
5. little
6. smell
7. rake
8. toothbrush
9. score

**page 24, #13**
1. mountain
2. blood
3. treasure
4. horseback
5. honest
6. furniture
7. forecast
8. caution

**page 25, #14**
1. bandage
2. correct
3. correct
4. helicopter
5. full
6. fastest
7. watch
8. fly
9. correct

**page 26, #15**
1. sudden
2. heard
3. accident
4. intersection
5. offered
6. grateful
7. concern
8. praised

**Unit 3: Syntactic Cues**

**page 30, #16**
1. horse, town
2. kids, boat, lake
3. machine, coins
4. principal, microphone
5. troll, bridge
6. alligator, swamp
7. Uncle
8. ocean
9. kitchen
10. dictionary

**page 31, #17**
1. stars
2. correct
3. bus
4. ladder
5. mechanic
6. pilot
7. balloons
8. bench
9. correct

**page 32, #18**
**Circled words:** camera, beach, sunscreen, clothes, diary, photographs, goggles
1. clothes
2. beach
3. goggles
4. diary
5. seashells
6. sunscreen
7. camera
8. photographs

**page 33, #19**
1. astronaut
2. police officer
3. lawyer
4. teacher
5. musician
6. doctor

**page 34, #20**
1. protected
2. held
3. skate
4. is reading
5. stretches
6. chops
7. starts
8. rushes
9. drinks

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Answer Key

page 35, #21
1. rescued
2. correct
3. correct
4. looked
5. correct
6. correct
7. jogged
8. threw

page 36, #22
Part 1
1. gathered
2. announced
3. raise
4. liked
5. talked
6. agreed
Part 2
1. came
2. pointed
3. examined
4. sold
5. contributed
6. agreed

page 37, #23
1. mumbled
2. groaned
3. cautioned
4. announced
5. sobbed
6. advised

page 38, #24
Acceptable answers:
1. play, jump, run, walk—verb
2. people, workers—noun
3. scared, frightened—verb
4. rocket—noun
5. magician—noun
6. built, made, constructed—verb
7. ran, scurried—verb
8. ate, orders, eats—verb
9. cheese, sausage, onion—noun

page 39, #25
1. soft, furry
2. old, broken-down
3. shiny
4. sticky
5. stuffy
6. strange, shadowy
7. salty, spicy, sour, juicy
8. dirty, squeaky, noisy, speedy, shiny
9. plastic, striped, enormous,

page 40, #26
1. suspicious
2. smiling
3. curious
4. shallow
5. modern
6. rude
7. rotten
8. confused

page 41, #27
1. bashful
2. comical
3. panicky
4. calm
5. pleased
6. faithful
7. furious
8. baffled

page 42, #28
1. two
2. model
3. difficult
4. complete
5. hardworking
6. jumbo
7. satisfied

page 43, #29
1. adjective
2. verb
3. noun
4. adjective
5. noun, verb

On Your Own
Acceptable answers:
1. soared, flew, shot—verb
2. red, flashing—adjective
3. worked on, completed—verb
4. crowded, packed—adjective
5. directions—noun

page 44, #30
1. loudly
2. softly
3. quickly
4. yesterday
5. nightly
6. today
7. inside
8. anywhere
9. everywhere

page 45, #31
1. when
2. how
3. where
4. when
5. how
6. where
7. when
8. how
9. where

pages 46–47, #32
Part 1
1. warmly
2. neatly
3. suspiciously
4. sleepily
5. anxiously
6. softly
Part 2
1. immediately
2. weekends
3. afternoon
4. early
5. monthly
6. yesterday
Part 3
1. downstairs
2. under
3. inside
4. here
5. above
6. outside
7. by

pages 48–49, #33
Part 1
Acceptable answers:
1. walks, runs, rides—verb
2. good, delicious, wonderful, awful—adjective
3. books, tapes, cassettes—noun
4. carefully, quickly, all around—adverb
5. grand, wonderful, bad—adjective
6. ran, darted, jumped—verb
7. colorful, new, striped, floral—adjective
8. today, yesterday, last month—adverb

Part 2
Acceptable answers:
1. day, morning
2. walked, ran
3. store, shop
4. animals, pets, birds, dogs, kittens, puppies
5. cute, playful, little
6. (same answers as 5)
7. inside
8. arms
9. asked
10. told
11. today, in the afternoon, tomorrow, later
12. their, both
13. same, next
14. went, returned
15. bought, purchased
16. happily, joyfully
17. cute, adorable, little, new

Unit 4: Semantic Cues
pages 54–56, #34
Part 1
1. violent, powerful
2. beginning, new
3. joyful, happy
4. important, main
5. supplies, gives
Part 2
1. plenty, enough
2. quiet, peaceful
3. respected, famous
4. tired, worn-out
5. sparkling
6. wrote
7. gloomy
8. starving
9. dangerous
10. imperfect
11. house
12. hates
13. group
14. ending
15. dry

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page 57, #35
1. ordinary, normal
2. discussion, talk
3. concluded, decided
4. engrossed, busy
5. strolled, walked
6. oblivious, unaware
7. bewildered, confused
8. familiar, known
9. baffled, confused
10. furnished, provided
11. exceedingly, very
12. elated, happy
13. explanation, reason
14. anxious, worried
15. confessed, admitted

page 58, #36
1. forlorn, sad
2. former, old
3. acquaintances, friends
4. timid, shy
5. roam, walk around
6. distress, suffering
7. amblen, walked
8. lighthearted, happy
9. isolated, alone

page 59-60, #37
1. jubilant—happy (cheered for the home team)
2. grimy—dirty (wash... before you sit down)
3. fluctuate—go up and down (temperature going from 60 to 50, etc.)
4. excelled—was successful with (six trophies)
5. ecstatic—delighted, joyful (birth of another grandchild)
6. hilarious—funny, hysterical (laughter fills the room)
7. keen—sharp (cut through anything)
8. masses—crowds (lined the streets)

page 61, #38
1. astonished, surprised
2. vehicle, car
3. gratitude, thanks
4. satirizes, soaks
5. penitent, sorry

page 62, #39
1. vivacious, energetic
2. peril, danger
3. spellbinding, fascinating
4. secure, tight
5. prime, best
6. contemplated, thought

page 63, #40
1. b
2. b
3. b
4. a
5. b

page 64, #41
1. b
2. b
3. c
4. b
5. a
6. b

page 65, #42
1. prunes, 2
2. toll, 1
3. racket, 2
4. toll, 2
5. prunes, 1
6. racket, 1
7. root, 2
8. root, 1

page 66, #43
1. slip, 2
2. till, 3
3. toast, 2
4. till, 1
5. slip, 3
6. till, 2
7. toast, 1

page 67, #44
1. tickled pink, happy
2. turned red as a beet, blushed with embarrassment
3. turned over a new leaf, made a change
4. weasel out of, get out of doing
5. could not stomach, couldn't stand

page 68, #45
1. all ears, ready to listen
2. by the skin of his teeth, just in time
3. eats like a bird, eats a small amount
4. quit horsing around, stop playing so hard
5. like two peas in a pod, the same
6. pick their brains, ask for ideas

page 69, #46
1. stout, plump
2. interrogate, ask
3. persevere, carries on
4. catastrophe, disaster
5. tumult, uproar
6. diminish, lessen

page 70-71, #47
Geography
1. landforms, different shapes of the Earth's surface
2. plateau, landform that has steep sides and a flat top
3. island, land surrounded on all sides by water
4. peninsula, land that is surrounded by water on three sides
5. valley, low land that is between hills, mountains, and ranges
6. desert, very dry land with very few plants and little rainfall
7. strait, body of water that joins two larger bodies of water

Resources
1. resources, things that can be used to produce a good or service
2. goods, things that people want to buy
3. natural resources, things that come from nature that we use to provide goods and services
4. capital resources, goods and services made by people
5. economic wants, goods and services that people want to have
6. basic services, things we rely on every day