MODULE INTENSIVE READING
(PBI 221)

MODULE SESION 7

LEARNING AND USING WORDS IN CONTEXT

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Why should you always learn vocabulary in context ?

Learning vocabulary in context means that you learn new words when you are reading or listening. You <u>learn a new word</u> by seeing how it is used in a sentence. Many learners try to memorize a list of individual words.

The fact is that learning isolated word without context is just waste of time and effort. It will not work. You can learn many words, maybe 10 to 20 new words a day. But you don't know how to use them and you will forget them in the short period of time. Here are some reasons why you should always learn new words in context :

- **You have an example sentence of HOW TO USE new word.** Learning a new word separately will not help you learn how to use it. You might remember its meaning, but when it comes time to speaking or writing, you will not able to use it to produce a complete sentence.

- **You remember new words longer.** Research shows that the more information you have for a certain word, the longer you will remember it. Just repeating a word over and over again does not help. You have very little information about its meaning and how to use it so you can not remember it for a long time.

- **You learn Common phrase.** When you learn new words by reading in context, you might see a group of some words always go together in certain order. It is an English phrase or idiom. And common phrases are as important as common vocabularies. You cannot improve your English if you don't learn English phrases.

- **You learn different meanings of a certain word.** Some words have many different meanings. The best way to get through all of the meanings is to learn them in their context. When you learn them in context, you can know the meaning of the word in that sentence.

- **You learn to guess the meaning of new words.** It is a good habit. The fact is that you can learn all the English words. By reading or listening other words found around it, you can its meaning. Another benefit is when you try to guess the meaning of new words first before you check it in the dictionary, you will remember it longer.

- **You learn vocabulary in an active way.** When you read a story and there is a word you don't know, you will desire to find out its meaning. Otherwise, you can not understand fully the story. You learn the meaning of a new word because you WANT to learn it. This will help you learn faster and remember longer.

What is context?

We're so glad you asked! To better understand the meaning of the word context, let's look at the meaning of its parts: "con-" and "text."

Con- This prefix means "with" or "together"

Text You might know that "text" means "reading material," but did you know that the Latin root of this word, texere means "to weave?"

When you put them together, con and text make a pretty important and powerful word that could be defined like this:

Context = the surrounding circumstances, ideas and words woven together to form the setting or background for an event, statement, or idea.

Context – the words or ideas expressed before and after – provides us with the information we need to fully understand, evaluate or interpret the ideas in the passage.

Example: "You misinterpreted my words because you took them out of context. I did say that I was hesitant to bake cookies for the fundraiser, but it's not because I don't want to participate, as you claim. I also told you I ran out of butter, and the last time I made cookies, nobody bought them."

High-Utility Academic Words and Phrases

The SAT focuses on the type of vocabulary that you can find in a wide range of challenging reading across a range of subjects – it does not test you on obscure, seldom-used words and phrases presented with little context.

OK - so where's "The List?" There isn't any official list. We do not recommend practicing by memorizing long lists of vocabulary!

Read with Purpose Since the SAT focuses on academic words and phrases commonly encountered in challenging texts, a good way to prepare is to read texts across a range of subjects and types. As you encounter unfamiliar words or phrases, practice using context clues to determine their meaning, and then look them up to check if you were right! Many students create word notebooks to keep track of all the new words they're learning. Give it a try and let us know if it works for you!

Here are a few examples to show you how words can change depending on their context:

Example: **"restrain"**

Depending on context, **restrain** can mean several things:

- **To hold back physically:** "His classmates had to restrain him from eating the last cupcake."

- **To control emotions:** "I wasn't able to restrain my excitement upon winning the tournament – I threw my ping-pong paddle into the crowd and hit my poor brother on the forehead, knocking him out."

- **To limit:** "The embargoes and tariffs were designed to restrain trade."

Example: **"discriminate"**

Discriminate is often used in a negative way, but it also can be positive:

- **To judge, or make an unfair distinction about people based on their race, age or gender:** "Widespread racial discrimination led to the disenfranchisement of thousands."

- **To tell apart:** "Death doesn't discriminate between the sinners and the saints."

- **To note subtle differences:** "The dolphin's electroreception enables it to better discriminate between shrimp and crayfish on the muddy river bottom."

Example: **"compromise"**

As a verb, compromise has three distinct meanings:

- **To settle a dispute by mutual agreement and concession:** "My sister wanted to listen to hip-hop and my brother wanted to listen to bebop, so we compromised and put on some R&B."

- **To accept a standard that is below what is desirable:** "I am willing to accept another motel room, but I'm not prepared to compromise on hygiene."

- **To endanger by foolish behavior:** "When Skywalker went along, he compromised the entire mission because Vader could sense his proximity."

As the above examples suggest, high-utility academic words and phrases are different from other kinds of vocabulary: The context of their use will tell you which meaning the author intends!

Academic These words may not be part of your everyday conversational language yet, but you will very likely run into them more regularly in academic and career settings.

Non-technical SAT doesn't test technical terms; "Atomic mass," "ductile," and "isotope" may sound like high-utility academic words and phrases, but they're generally only used in readings about and discussions of science. This doesn't mean that these terms aren't worth knowing — far from it! — but it does mean that their usefulness is more limited than that of words that you will encounter in a wider variety of texts and discussions.

Powerful! The College Board has chosen to focus on high-utility academic words and phrases because of their great power in unlocking the meaning of complex texts that you're likely to encounter in high school and postsecondary courses.

Words in Context Question Types

Questions in the Words in Context category ask you to consider both the meanings and roles of words and phrases as they are used in particular passages. You'll also be asked to think about how to make language use more effective. These questions focus on the following skills:

• Interpreting words and phrases in context (Reading Test only)

• Analyzing word choice rhetorically (Reading Test only)

• Making effective use of language (Writing and Language Test only)

Interpreting Words and Phrases in Context (Reading Test)

These questions require you to figure out the precise meaning of a given word or phrase based on how it's used in a particular passage. Generally, these words or phrases have more than one dictionary definition, so the extended context will help you decide which of the choices makes the most sense.

Example: **"intense"**

Maybe you associate "intense" with emotion or attitude, as in "He's an intense person," or perhaps with determination, as in "She worked intensely for six hours to ace the quiz." However, neither of these quite matches how "intense" is used in the following excerpt from a longer passage:

[. . .] The coming decades will likely see more intense clustering of jobs, innovation, and productivity in a smaller number of bigger cities and cityregions. Some regions could end up bloated beyond the capacity of their infrastructure, while others struggle, their promise stymied by inadequate human or other resources.

Question: As it is used in the passage, the word "intense" most nearly means...

(A) forceful

(B) concentrated

(C) energetic

(D) passionate

In this case, "intense" is more about degree: the clustering of jobs, innovation, and productivity in the coming decades is likely to be denser – or more concentrated – in fewer large cities and city-regions, according to the author. While prior knowledge of what "intense" often means could be useful here, you also have to interpret the context to determine exactly how the word is being used in this case.

TOP TIP: Plug In! One good strategy here is to use context clues in the paragraph to come up with your own word that could replace "intense" while maintaining the intended meaning of the sentence. Then, cross out the choices that don't match your word. Another effective strategy is to plug the choices into the passage and see which one sounds best.

Analyzing Word Choice Rhetorically (Reading Test)

These questions ask you to consider how an author's choice of words and phrases helps shape meaning, tone, and style. Sometimes, these questions deal with the connotations, or associations, that certain words and phrases evoke.

Example 1:

The author uses the phrase "wait for it" throughout the passage primarily to

(A) Contrast Aaron's personal style with that of his rival

(B) Emphasize Aaron's lazy, passive attitude

(C) Summarize Aaron's chosen approach to life

(D) Criticize Aaron's failure to take action

This question asks you to consider the context of the passage to arrive at a conclusion about the rhetorical effect of the repetition of a single brief phrase.

TOP TIP: What is it doing? A good way to approach questions like these is to rephrase the question to make sure you understand it, and then predict your own answer – using Your Own Words – before you look at the choices. The question is basically asking you what the phrase is doing. Go through the text and answer that question in your own words, and then use process of elimination to rule out the choices that don't match. Trust yourself!

Example 2:

Consider how you (or an author) might describe someone who wasn't accompanied by other people. Saying that person was "alone" is more or less just pointing out a fact. To say instead that that person was "solitary" offers a stronger sense of isolation. To instead call that person "forlorn" or even "abandoned" goes yet a step further in casting the person's separateness in a particular, negative way. Every word counts, and every word represents a choice. Deciding which word or phrase in a given context offers just the right flavor is something that authors do all the time.

7 Strategies For Using Context Clues In Reading

These are 7 Strategies For Using Context Clues in Reading :

1. Word Parts

The idea: Break down the different parts of a word—base word (word stem or root word), prefixes, and suffixes—to figure out what it means. Some words have a prefix only (reread), a suffix only (reading), both a prefix and a suffix (prereading), a combination (unreadableness), or neither (read).

Discrimination

Dis-: not, opposite of, reverse, deprive of; apart, away crimin: verdict, judicial decision; judgment tion: indicates the word is a noun

2. Definition/explanation

The idea: Look for a definition or an explanation within the sentence.

• Discrimination or unfairly targeting one or more groups by those who perceive themselves to be superior can cause distress.

Vulnerable people are oftentimes in need of protection under certain laws so others cannot take advantage of them.

3. Synonym

The idea: Words next to the unknown word can be a clue that there is a synonym.

• Discrimination or bias can cause distress toward the targeted group.

• When people know they are vulnerable or defenseless, they tend to protect themselves to avoid harm.

4. Example

The idea: Providing examples of the unknown word can give readers a clue to meaning.

• Like shunning smokers in restaurants by making them satisfy their habit outside, discrimination targets a perceived undesirable group.

• Vulnerable people, such as young children, the elderly, or handicapped individuals, might have protections under certain laws.

5. Antonym/contrast

The idea: opposite information about the unknown word can be offset by words and phrases such as unlike, as opposed to, different from.

• Discrimination, as opposed to fairness for all people, can have damaging effects on a targeted group

• Vulnerable people, unlike those who can stand up for themselves, tend to be the target of unethical or dangerous individuals.

6. Analogy

The idea: Comparisons of the word help to determine what it means.

• The ill effects of discrimination are like hateful, wicked tendrils gripping the heart.

• Vulnerable people can be like fragile glass in need of care and attention.

7. Appositive

The idea: Look for the grammatical structure of appositives which can provide a definition, synonym, or example.

- Discrimination, the act of showing bias to one group, can have damaging effects.

- The elderly and handicapped, a vulnerable group of individuals, have laws to protect them from unethical individuals.

Once students identify the context clue, orchestrate activities for students to learn the word so they can use it when speaking and within their writing. Students can complete the graphic organizer in Figure A individually or with pairs for several words using online and print resources.

Readers often have trouble because they identify the literal but incorrect meaning of a word when they should identify the way it was used in the passage. The following sections will give you more explanation and some exercises on how to get help on the meaning of unknown words by checking their part of speech and their place in context.

A. Using The Part of Speech of the unknown word as a help in reading.

One consideration in using the context is to determine the unknown word's part of speech. The words around the unknown word give you clues. Once you know if the word is a noun or if it is an adjective, it often is enough for you to continue reading intelligently without having to stop to look up the meaning of the word. After coming across the word a few more times, you will know its meaning more firmly than if you had just looked it up.

In the following sentences, identify the part of speech of the italicized words by writing N if the word is a noun, V if the italicized word is a verb, Adj if the italicized word is an adjective, or Adv if the italicized word is an adverb.

Example: She liked to wear red and always wore jewelry made of carnelian. Ans. N

1. The dirty old man gave the young woman a salacious look.

2. The president prayed for the sagacity to make the right decision in the face of many alternatives.

3. The man looked at the rusty old gadget and wondered how its mechanism worked.

4. The dying man designated his son to receive his property.

5. The brindled dogbarked loudly.

6. The father caressed his crying child with great tenderness.

7. "Don't patronize us; we are not children!" said the angry indigenous leaders to the politicians.

8. John was a good emanuensis, always taking dictation correctly and typing up all of his employer's correspondence.

9. The boy was disappointed by the paltry amount he received as an inheritance when his grandfather died.

10. The young boy ran clumsily down the hill with his arms and legs flapping all over.

B. USING OTHER CLUES GOTTEN FROM THE TEXT ITSELF

Knowing the part of speech of the unknown word is not the only way to figure out its meaning. There are other clues to the meanings of unknown words. They are found directly within a sentence, paragraph, passage, or chapter. Being able to recognize these clues helps you define new words in context. These clues are found right in the text and can be words or punctuation marks or specific words or phrases.

You use them to compare words or to identify unknown words that mean the same or the opposite of words you already know. The clues can also be used to define unknown words that are examples of a group.

There are five other clues that will help you:

1. Punctuation clues,

2. Definition clues,

3. Contrast clues,

4. Comparison clues, and

5. Example clues.

Of these types, the most important are the Contrast clues and the Comparison Clues. The other clues are very obvious and are given here just for the sake of completeness. The reader should concentrate on the Contrast and the Comparison clues.

The five text based clues are useful but the most powerful tool is the Framework based clue. This is the use of information from your own experience, common sense, and the context in which you find the difficult word. There will be examples of this tool at the end of the paper.

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