

# Types of Context Clues

These four types of context clues help readers figure out the meanings of words and phrases.

## **Example Clues**

Examples of the word are provided in the sentence.

## **Definition Clues**

The meaning of the word or phrase can be found in the sentence itself.

## **Synonym Clues**

A familiar synonym to the unknown word can be found in the same sentence.

## **Antonym Clues**

A familiar antonym to the unknown word can be found in the same sentence.

# Example Clues



**LOOK  
FOR**

Examples of the word are provided in the sentence.

**signal phrases: such as, including,  
for example.**

Birds of prey, *such as hawks and eagles*, often have large talons and hooked beaks.

The waiter came by our table with hors d'oeuvres like olives, cheese, and shrimp.

Ben Franklin made many innovations including the odometer and the lightning rod.

In the examples above, the meaning of the unknown word or phrase can be inferred based on the *examples* listed in the same sentence.

# Definition Clues



**LOOK  
FOR**

The meaning of the word or phrase can be found in the sentence itself.

**clues like commas following the unknown word.**

Birds of prey, or birds that eat other animals, often have large talons and hooked beaks.

My dad rented a catamaran, a small boat with a large sail, for the afternoon.

Women fought for the right to vote, also called suffrage, for many years.

In the examples above, the meaning of the unknown word or phrase can be found in the same sentence. The *meaning* of the word is often found between commas, as shown in these examples.

# Synonym Clues

A familiar synonym to the unknown word can be found in the same sentence.



**LOOK  
FOR**

**signal phrases: also, too, same as, both, all.**

She didn't wash the *dirty* laundry, so it was still soiled when Mom got home.

*Carrots* and parsnips are both root vegetables that grow underground.

Hexagons and other similar *shapes* are often used for traffic signs.

In the examples above, *familiar words* help readers to better understand the meanings of the unknown words.

# Antonym Clues

A familiar antonym to the unknown word can be found in the same sentence.



**LOOK  
FOR**

**signal phrases: unlike, but, not, different.**

She washed the *dirty* laundry, so the clothes were immaculate when Mom got home.

Yesterday, the doctor felt *healthy*, but today he is indisposed.

Bats are *nocturnal*, unlike deer, bees, and sparrows which are diurnal.

In the examples above, *familiar words* help readers to better understand the meanings of the unknown words.