

# R2: Give/explain the meaning of words in context

R2a: Can show an understanding of the meaning of vocabulary in different contexts



= teacher's notes

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## Teacher's Notes

- In this therapy, pupils will look at a range of ways to work out the meaning of unknown words.
- Pupils will learn how to search for clues in the text, read around the word and use the context, and use a dictionary and thesaurus.
- Throughout the therapy, there are opportunities for pupils to discuss and practise the taught skills using a range of texts.

# Working out the meaning of words



Sometimes, when we are reading, we might encounter (come across) a word or phrase that we don't understand and have not seen before. However, by **reading the whole sentence again** a few times and **looking at the other words around it**, we should be able to find some **clues** to help us understand its **meaning**.

# Working out the meaning of words

Look at the sentence below and the underlined word. How can we find out what that word means?

*She was pleased she had been exculpated.  
Everyone would now believe that she was innocent.*

Can you think of another word or words that mean the same thing? (synonyms)

We could use: freed of blame, excused, pardoned or acquitted.

Let's try and work out what the word might mean by looking for **clues** in the rest of the text. Re-read the two sentences carefully.

The first sentence is not easy to understand but it does tell you that being 'exculpated' is something she is '**pleased**' about so it must be a **good thing**! The second sentence tells you that she is '**now...innocent**' which means that she must have been **accused** of something earlier. So being 'exculpated' means that she has gone from **being guilty** to **being innocent**. Therefore, 'exculpated' must mean that she has been **cleared of blame**.

# Your turn



Answers appear in a text box straight after the options.

Read the sentence below and write down what you think the underlined word means. Choose the correct answer from the choices given.

*Guy Fawkes was tried and executed for high treason when he attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament. This would have unlawfully removed the Government of England and killed the King, had it been successful.*

- a. plotting to murder someone
- b. being disloyal to the King
- c. possessing gunpowder

b. being disloyal to the King

# Your turn



Answers appear in a text box straight after the options.

Read the sentence below and write down what you think the underlined word means. Choose the correct answer from the choices given.

*The athlete had the onerous task of running three marathons in three days!*

- a. exhausting
- b. exciting
- c. extreme

a. exhausting

# Your turn



Answers appear in a text box straight after the options.

Read the sentence below and write down what you think the underlined word means. Choose the correct answer from the choices given.

*He jumped impetuously into the water to rescue the dog and was quickly dragged away by the depth and force of the underlying current.*

- a. sensibly
- b. confidently
- c. foolishly

c. foolishly

# Working out the meaning of words

Words can mean different things depending on the context in which they are being used. We need to **read around the word** and understand the **context** before we decide on the meaning of some words.

*For example: What does the word **stew** mean in these contexts?*

In the context of the dinner party, stew is being used as a noun and is what Amelia is cooking.

In the context of the house move, stew is being used as a verb and means to think about/dwell on the situation.

Amelia was hosting a dinner party that evening for some important colleagues and her new boss. She was determined to make a success of it and was cooking her famous turkey **stew** with dumplings.

Kadeem was stressed. He and his family had recently moved house and the whole thing was chaos. There were rats beneath the already rotting floorboards and everything needed attention and repair. He tried not to **stew** on the situation.



# Your turn



Answers appear in a text box straight after the text extracts

Read the two text extracts and decide what the underlined word means in different contexts.

*What does the word entertain mean in these contexts?*

In the context of the party, the word entertain means amuse – the conjurer is going to amuse the guests while they are eating.

In the context of being sent to boarding school, the word entertain means consider – how could her parents consider sending her to boarding school?

His party was going to be the talk of the town. He had made sure that everything was perfect and had planned each part himself, right down to the last tiny detail. His best idea was the incredible conjurer he had booked to entertain his guests at the table while they were eating.

She was so angry she felt like exploding. How on earth could her parents even entertain the idea of sending her to boarding school? Boarding school: living away from home for five days a week; sharing a bedroom with three other girls.  
The thought made her feel ill.

# Using a dictionary

If we do not understand the meaning of a word, even when we have **read around** the word, we can use a dictionary to help us.

A dictionary will give us **different** meanings for the word. We then need to look at the different meanings and work out which one it is in this context.

Look at this sentence:

The icy wind whistled and the snow came down in a flurry; the plane was **grounded**.

If you look up **grounded** in the dictionary, you get the following definitions:

- well-balanced and sensible
- prevent an aircraft from flying ✓
- refuse to let a child go out socially as a punishment

We know that the context is linked to a plane so we know **grounded** must mean that the plane can't fly due to the snow.

# Your turn



Answers appear in a text box straight after the text.

Read the text below and use a dictionary to find out the meaning of the underlined word. Think carefully about the context.

*Beneath the surface he was bubbling with rage. They hadn't spoken since the incident, but as his father was watching, he had to be cordial.*

The word cordial in this context means friendly.

Other meanings are:

- A sweet fruit-flavoured drink
- A pleasant tasting medicine
- Strongly felt

These do not fit this context.

# Finding synonyms

**Synonyms** can be useful to help us to work out unknown words as they can help us to understand what the word is **similar** in meaning to.

Look at this sentence:

My sister has a superfluous amount of shoes. She just can't stop herself from buying them.

If we look up the word superfluous in a thesaurus, you get the following synonyms:

unused, spare, unnecessary, unneeded, extra

The best word here is unnecessary, because if she just can't stop herself from buying them, she probably has too many. The other words would work in this context, but may not get the writer's point of view across.

# Your turn

Find another word for the underlined words in these sentences. Use a thesaurus to help you.

I was anxious about my test results and I wished I had studied much more.

The barbecue is on Saturday, regardless of the weather, which unfortunately we cannot predict.

The football coach began to construct his new team for the competition which he hoped would be successful.

Which words did you find that make sense in the context?