

Context Clues for Word Meaning

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

When you meet a new word, look at the words around it. Clue types: **definition** (the meaning is given, often after *or*), **example** (a list of cases shows what fits), **synonym** (a nearby word means the same), **antonym** (a word like *unlike* shows the opposite), and **inference** (the situation tells you).

PRACTICE

Use the context clues to choose the best meaning. Distractors are real meanings of similar words or near-meanings that fit SOME clues but not ALL of them.

1. The hikers were **famished**, or extremely hungry, after the long climb.

What does **famished** mean?

- A. Worn out from effort
- B. Extremely hungry
- C. Very thirsty from heat
- D. Sore and aching

2. What TYPE of context clue is used in item 1?

- A. Antonym (contrast)
- B. Inference (figure it out)
- C. Example (a list of cases)
- D. Definition (restated meaning)

3. Reptiles, such as snakes, lizards, and turtles, lay eggs and have dry, scaly skin.

What is a **reptile**?

- A. An animal group that includes snakes, lizards, and turtles
- B. A kind of large bird with smooth feathers
- C. A small fish covered in shiny scales
- D. A soft-bodied creature like a worm or slug

4. Unlike his cheerful brother, Marco was **glum** all morning.

What does **glum** mean?

- A. Quiet and shy around people
- B. Nervous and uncertain
- C. Sad and gloomy
- D. Tired and bored



5. What TYPE of context clue is used in item 4?
- A. Antonym (contrast)
 - B. Synonym (restated)
 - C. Definition (named)
 - D. Example (list of cases)
6. *The campers were **weary**; they were so tired they could barely set up the tent.*
What does **weary** mean?
- A. Hungry and weak from no food
 - B. Very tired and worn out
 - C. Soaked and shivering from rain
 - D. Eager to keep going despite the hour
7. *The puppy **cowered** under the table when the thunder boomed.*
What does **cowered** most likely mean?
- A. Barked angrily at the sound
 - B. Tilted its head curiously
 - C. Dashed playfully across the room
 - D. Crouched down low in fear
8. *Mom said the soup was **scalding**, so she warned us to wait several minutes before tasting it.*
What does **scalding** mean?
- A. Very salty in taste
 - B. Just lukewarm and ready to eat
 - C. Dangerously hot enough to burn
 - D. Spicy with lots of pepper
9. *The teacher gave a **concise**, or short and clear, explanation.*
What TYPE of clue helps you?
- A. Definition (meaning restated)
 - B. Antonym (opposite contrast)
 - C. Inference (figured out)
 - D. Example (list of cases)
10. *While my noisy cousins shouted, baby Theo remained **tranquil** in his crib.*
What does **tranquil** mean?
- A. Fast asleep and snoring
 - B. Calm and quiet
 - C. Awake but cranky
 - D. Loud and excited too



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9 A B C D
- 10 A B C D

Explanations

1. B	All four are body states a hiker might feel. B matches the built-in definition (<i>or extremely hungry</i>). The others fit the situation (a long climb) but ignore the actual definition clue.
2. D	The word <i>or</i> introduces a restated meaning — a definition clue. An antonym would use <i>unlike/but</i> ; an example would list cases; inference is needed only when no direct restatement is given.
3. A	Such as introduces an example clue — the list points to A. B is wrong even though it sounds animal-ish (birds aren't reptiles); C uses the tempting word <i>scales</i> but fish aren't reptiles; D is invertebrate, the opposite kind of animal.
4. C	All four are negative moods. The <i>unlike</i> contrast tells you <i>glum</i> is the opposite of <i>cheerful</i> . Sad and gloomy is the direct opposite; quiet/shy is about social behavior; nervous is about worry; tired is about energy.
5. A	Unlike signals an opposite — an antonym clue. A synonym clue would use <i>or</i> ; a definition would restate; an example would list cases.
6. B	The synonym clue is right there: <i>so tired</i> . A and C fit the camping situation but ignore the synonym; D is the opposite of tired.
7. D	All four are real dog reactions — you must INFER from the situation. Hiding under the table during thunder = fear, so D fits. A shows boldness (wrong direction); B shows curiosity; C shows play.
8. C	Each option is something soup can be. The clue <i>warned us to wait</i> means the soup is too hot to be safe. C is the only answer that explains the warning; A and D describe taste; B is the opposite.
9. A	The word <i>or</i> introduces a restatement of meaning — a definition clue. No contrast, no list, no figuring out needed.
10. B	<i>While</i> sets up a contrast with the noisy cousins, so <i>tranquil</i> = opposite of noisy = calm and quiet . A is a tempting inference (calm could mean sleeping) but tranquil means peaceful awake; C is partial (quiet but unhappy); D is the same as noisy (no contrast).

