

Context Clues for Word Meaning

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

When you don't know a word, look for clues in the surrounding sentences. **Definition clues** tell you the meaning directly. **Synonym clues** use a word with a similar meaning. **Antonym clues** use the opposite. **Example clues** list specific examples. **Inference clues** require you to put facts together.

PRACTICE

Read each sentence carefully. Use the context — and only the context — to choose the meaning of the bold word. All four options are real meanings; only one fits the sentence.

1. Read the sentence: *The hikers reached a **plateau** — a flat, raised area of land — and stopped to rest before climbing again.*

The word **plateau** most likely means —

- A. a deep valley between mountains.
- B. a narrow mountain trail.
- C. a flat, raised area of land.
- D. a group of small hills.

2. Read the sentence: *Unlike his **boisterous** younger brother, Marcus was quiet and calm at every family dinner.*

The word **boisterous** most likely means —

- A. loud and rowdy.
- B. shy and gentle.
- C. kind and helpful.
- D. tired and sleepy.

3. Read the sentence: *The chef added **condiments** like ketchup, mustard, and relish to the table for the burgers.*

The word **condiments** most likely means —

- A. main dishes that are served first.
- B. sauces or toppings used to flavor food.
- C. fancy plates for serving meals.
- D. tools used for cooking food.



4. Read the sentence: *After the long, sleepless flight, Mia felt **haggard**; her face was pale and her eyes were dark and tired.*

The word **haggard** most likely means —

- A. cheerful and full of energy.
- B. well-rested and bright.
- C. frightened and shaking.
- D. worn out and exhausted in appearance.

5. Read the sentence: *The committee reached a **consensus** after every member finally agreed on the same plan.*

The word **consensus** most likely means —

- A. general agreement among a group.
- B. a strong disagreement.
- C. a written list of rules.
- D. a long meeting.

6. Read the sentence: *The report was **concise** — only one page — yet it explained the whole problem clearly.*

The word **concise** most likely means —

- A. repeated many times.
- B. very long and detailed.
- C. short and to the point.
- D. hard to understand.

7. Read the sentence: *The chemicals were **volatile**; they could explode at any moment if shaken or warmed.*

The word **volatile** most likely means —

- A. heavy and hard to lift.
- B. safe to store anywhere.
- C. colorful and shiny.
- D. easily set off and unstable.

8. Read the sentence: *The dog's **incessant** barking lasted from dawn until midnight, never pausing for even a minute.*

The word **incessant** most likely means —

- A. loud and angry.
- B. continuing without stopping.
- C. soft and gentle.
- D. playful and friendly.



9. Read the sentence: *The team's victory was **fleeting**; within hours, the next opponent had already beaten them.*

The word **fleeting** most likely means —

- A. lasting forever.
- B. well deserved.
- C. lasting only a short time.
- D. celebrated by many fans.

10. Read the sentence: *The puppy was so **docile** that toddlers could pet him without fear.*

The word **docile** most likely means —

- A. easy to manage and gentle.
- B. fierce and dangerous.
- C. quick and energetic.
- D. stubborn and disobedient.



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. C	The sentence gives a definition clue right after the dash. A reverses up/down (a valley is low, not raised); B describes a path, not the land; D refers to several hills, not a single flat area.
2. A	The word Unlike signals an antonym clue : if Marcus is <i>quiet and calm</i> , then his brother is the opposite — <i>loud and rowdy</i> . B is the same as Marcus, not the opposite; C and D are unrelated traits.
3. B	The list <i>ketchup, mustard, and relish</i> is an example clue ; the category they share is <i>flavor toppings</i> . A is wrong — these are not main dishes; C confuses them with serving items; D mixes them up with kitchen tools.
4. D	The clues <i>sleepless, pale, and dark and tired</i> point to worn out and exhausted in appearance . A and B are opposites; C describes a different feeling (fear) not supported by the sentence.
5. A	<i>Every member finally agreed</i> is a definition/synonym clue for general agreement . B is the opposite; C confuses agreement with rules; D names where agreement might happen, not what it is.
6. C	The clue <i>only one page plus explained the whole problem clearly</i> point to short and to the point . A and B both suggest the opposite; D contradicts <i>clearly</i> .
7. D	The clue <i>could explode at any moment if shaken or warmed</i> defines volatile as easily set off and unstable . A talks about weight; B is the opposite of dangerous; C describes appearance only.
8. B	The clue <i>from dawn until midnight, never pausing</i> tells us incessant means continuing without stopping . A focuses on volume, not duration; C and D give the wrong feeling and miss the timing clue altogether.
9. C	The clue <i>within hours, the next opponent had already beaten them</i> shows the victory lasted only briefly — lasting only a short time . A is the opposite; B and D talk about quality and reaction, not duration.
10. A	The clue <i>toddlers could pet him without fear</i> tells us the puppy is easy to manage and gentle . B is the opposite; C focuses on speed; D is also opposite (a docile animal obeys easily).



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