

Context Clues

If you are not sure what a word means, one way of figuring out what the word may mean is by using *context clues*.

Using context clues means using the information around the word you don't know. These words may help you discover what the unknown word means. Sometimes a word's definition may become clearer after reading the entire paragraph where it appears. You can also use the information in the rest of the paragraph to help you figure out what the word means.

Read each sentence or paragraph and circle the correct answer.

1. The archaeologist carefully removed the **tome** from its ancient resting place and proceeded to read the pages related to marriage in ancient Greece.

What does the word **tome** probably mean?

- a. pen b. weapon c. book d. sausage

2. The Navajo language is an unwritten language of extreme complexity with no alphabet or symbols, and is spoken only on the lands of the Navajo Nation in the American Southwest. During World War II a Navajo code was created for the U.S. Navy. This code was **virtually** undecipherable to anyone except Navajo speaking persons.

What does the word **virtually** probably mean?

- a. pleasant b. almost c. never d. always

3. Lakes occupy less than two percent of the Earth's surface, yet they help sustain life. For instance, lakes give us fish to eat, irrigate crops, and generate electrical power.

What does the word **sustain** probably mean?

- a. support b. obstruct c. prolong d. destroy

4. The ancient Greeks **pioneered** many of the kinds of writing we consider standard today. They wrote speeches, plays, poems, books about science and learning, and long histories of things that happened to them.

What does the word **pioneered** probably mean?

- a. complicated b. developed c. destroyed d. explored

5. Fifty-five mostly **prominent**, male delegates attended the Philadelphia Convention in 1787. About seventy-five percent of the delegates had served in Congress and others were important people in their home states. These men are often referred to as the Framers of the Constitution.

What does the word **prominent** probably mean?

- a. unimportant b. unknown c. common d. important

6. Bats that eat fruit and nectar spread seeds and help flowers grow. Without bats many important plants would not **thrive**.

What does the word **thrive** probably mean?

- a. flourish b. die c. wither d. deteriorate