

Lesson: Uses context clues to discern meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary in text
Fourth Grade Objective: 1.031 remediation

Lesson

1. Good readers often come across words while reading that are unfamiliar. What makes them good readers is that they know how to use several strategies to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words, rather than just guessing. One strategy to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word is to use context clues.
2. Context clues are words around an unfamiliar word. They give important clues about what the word means.
3. In this lesson we are going to use context clues to help us understand unfamiliar words in sentences. Let's look at the following sentences:
 - a) When Papa saw the kids come in with their luggage, he said, "**Stow** your stuff in the closet and then let's go to the park."
 - b) The car took off into the desert with a squeal of tires, **spewing** sand behind it.
 - c) If we want the surprise birthday party to go off without a **hitch**, we have to go through the plans very carefully.
4. In each of the sentences above there is a word written in **bold** print. These are the words that we are going to use context clues to help us find the meaning. Remember, context clues are words around an unfamiliar word. So when I look at each sentence, I want to pay careful attention to the words around the unfamiliar word. In other words, what is the sentence about? I am going to put my finger over the word I'm trying to find the meaning of and see if I can replace it with another word that would make sense within the context of the sentence.
5. In **sentence a**, I can tell that the kids are visiting their Papa because they come in with their luggage. Around the word **stow** are the words *your stuff in the closet*. **Stow** must be a type of action you can do with stuff. Now I will try to cover up the word **stow** and insert a different word that would still make sense in the context of the sentence. I'll try the word, *put*. My new sentence reads *Put your stuff in the closet and then let's go to the park*. That makes sense. I think that **stow** must mean to put, or to store something somewhere. In this case, the kids are putting their luggage in the closet.
6. In **sentence b**, I can tell that the car is moving fast because I see the words *took off* and *squeal of tires*. Usually when a car squeals tires, it is moving fast. Around the word **spewing** are the words *squeal of tires* and *sand*. I think **spewing** is a type of action that affects sand and I can see the sand behind the car as it takes off. Now I will try to cover up the word **spewing** and replace it with a different word that would still make sense in the context of the sentence. I'll try the word *sending*. My new sentence reads *The car took off into the desert with a squeal of tires, sending sand behind it*. That makes sense. I think that **spewing** means to send something off. In this case the car is sending the sand off behind it because its wheels turned so quickly.
7. **Sentence c** talks about looking at plans carefully for a surprise birthday party. Around the word **hitch** are the words *go off without a*. I can tell that they don't want to have a **hitch**. If you are planning a surprise party, you usually don't want anything to go wrong. In this case, **hitch** must be something they want to

avoid so they are going to go over their plans carefully. Now I will try to cover up the word **hitch** and replace it with a different word that would make sense in the context of the sentence. I'll try *problem* because you usually don't want to have a problem when you plan a surprise party. My new sentence reads *If we want the surprise birthday party to go off without a problem, we have to go through the plans carefully.* That makes sense. I think that **hitch** means a problem.

Try these on your own!

What do the words in bold print mean? Use context clues to help you figure it out!

1. Aunt Sue put a **padlock** on the front door so that nobody could come in.
2. He **traipsed** into the woods looking for a secret hideout.
3. Mom hasn't done laundry in a week and there are a **heap** of clothes in the basket.

Check your answers

1. Padlock – a type of lock.
2. traipsed – walked
3. heap – a large pile

Try these on your own!

1. Read a book of your choice. Keep a list of unfamiliar words. Use the context clues to find the meaning.