

# Unit 1

## Vocabulary Knowledge for Effective Reading

### Guessing Unknown Vocabulary

What do you usually do when you come to a word you do not know in your reading? Do you:

- a. look it up in the dictionary?
- b. ask your teacher?
- c. ask another student or friends?
- d. try to guess what it means?

If your answer a, b, or c, then you are not reading as effectively and efficiently as you could be. In fact, the best strategy for dealing with an unknown word is to try to guess what it means. This strategy:

- is fast because you don't interrupt your reading
- helps your comprehension because you stay focused on the general sense of what you are reading
- helps build vocabulary because you are more likely to remember the words
- allows you to enjoy your reading more because you don't have to stop often

### Guessing Meaning from Context in Sentences

When you try to guess the meaning of an unknown word, you use the text surrounding the word - the context. One sentence may be enough to give you the meaning, or you may need to use a longer passage.

**Example:** Do you know what '**misogynist**' means? If not, try to make a guess:

A misogynist is \_\_\_\_\_

Now read these sentences. Try again to guess what misogynist means:

(a) She realized that her boss was a misogynist soon after she started working for him.

(b) It is difficult for a woman to work for a misogynist. She is never sure of the reasons for his criticism.

(c) She knew that no woman would ever get a top-level job in a company owned by a misogynist.

We know from sentence (a) that **a misogynist is a man.**

From sentence (b) we learn that **a misogynist criticizes woman's work.**

Then from sentence (c) we understand that **a misogynist has negative feelings about women.**

**These exercises will help you develop the skill of guessing vocabulary in context, follow these steps:**

- Try to guess the meaning of a new word from context!
- If you can guess the meaning, don't use a dictionary.
- If you can't guess the meaning and the word is essential, you'll need to use a monolingual (English-English) dictionary!

#### Exercise 1

Directions: Read the sentences and define each word in bold type based on the context clue.

1. When it was discovered that the officer had accepted bribes from clients, he resigned his position and looked for another job.

**What does 'resigned' mean?**

---

2. The house we plan to buy is situated in an area of town which is sordid and overcrowded. The streets are dirty and the buildings look neglected and in need of painting.

**What does 'sordid' mean?**

---

3. In order that certain exotic plants survive in a cold climate they are kept in glass houses where the heat is greater than normal and water is sprayed over them to maintain a high humidity.

**What does 'humidity' mean?**

---

---

4. That's not true! You're a liar. You didn't see a fish in the swimming pool. It's not possible! There aren't any fish in the swimming pool!

**What is a 'liar'?**

---

---

5. After listening to a lecture about the creation of the universe, the student became skeptical of the ideas and theories expressed. He looked for alternative explanations.

**What does 'skeptical' mean?**

---

6. When the war started, many people left Rwanda. They lived in big refugee camps in Zaire and Burundi. Life was hard for the refugees in these camps.

What is a 'refugee'?

**What a 'refugee' ?**

---

7. Mr. Hudson's secretary was very thorough person. He always did his work carefully, and he never forgot anything.

**What is 'thorough' person?**

---

8. Mrs. Sweeny was ready to retire from her job. She was 65 years old, she was tired of working and she wanted to have more time at home.

**What does 'retire' mean?**

---

9. The witness in court gave an explanation was so nebulous that no one could deduce the facts of the case.

**What is an 'nebulous'?**

---

10. One stormy night a fishing boat crashed into some rocks. All the people on the boat perished. No one ever found their bodies.

**What does 'perish' mean?**

---

11. The class of children interrupted the lesson by talking and calling out comments to the teacher until finally he could not accept their obstreperous behavior.

**What does 'obstreperous' mean?**

---

12. My mother was an absentminded person. She was always thinking about something else, so she often forgot things. One day, she went to work with her slippers on!

**What is an 'absentminded' person?**

---

## **Exercise 2**

Directions: Read the following paragraph and find the best meaning of each bolded word.

A. George is too **fastidious**. He's always complaining about something that is not quite the way he wants it to be. For example, his food must be cooked well but not overdone. He won't eat any vegetable except corn or any meat except beef. And it is impossible to buy him any kind of gift - either he already has one or he doesn't want it.

1.

- a. easy to please
- C. hard to please
- b. concerned about health
- d. aware of himself

B. After entering the old mine', we hunted for a few specks of gold. After an hour we were all still empty-handed and so we decided to leave the dark hole in the mountain.

2.

- a. a passage dug underground beneath an enemy position
- b. a deep hole under the ground where minerals are dug
- C. a person from whom one can obtain a great deal of knowledge
- d. a metal case containing explosives and is exploded when passing over it

C. You have considered all the facts and are now ready to continue. Many will try to sway you and you should eschew all other suggestions. Stick to your original plan.

3.

- a. admit
- b. avoid
- c. consider
- d. keep

D. England alone has half a dozen easily distinguishable dialect groups. Scotland has several and the Welsh and Irish have their particular way of enunciating English to say nothing of their own Celtic tongues. American English is mainly the product of Irish and West English dialects.

4.

- a. spelling
- C. writing
- b. reading
- d. saying

E. Wages paid to employees may be based on the amount of output produced by the

worker piece wage, the amount of time spent on the job or some incentive added to a time wage or piece wage to reward the employee with extra such as time off or bonus for exceptional performance.

5.

- a. wage
- b. reward
- C. time
- d. money

### Exercise 3

**Directions:** Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the word in bold type. Then write a synonym or meaning for each in the blank.

#### **RISKS ABOUND FOR SEX WORKERS**

He Kou, China - From Lao Cai at the Vietnamese border' with China, all you need is only a short walk across Kieu Bridge or about 10 minutes on a boat to get to another country. He Kou, a town in Van Nam in China, is one crowded and busy market with all kinds of merchandise, mostly cheap consumer goods such as clothes, shoes, blankets, candies, cookies and other necessities

The buyers of these items are Vietnamese merchants from the north - west provinces of Vietnam such as Lao Cai, Yen Bai and Lai Chau, who will purchase these cheap products and sell them for a profit back in Vietnam. He Kou is also a hub® through which agricultural products and other items from Vietnam enter China, and are distributed further into the Chinese domestic® market.

Tourists from many countries, but mostly from Vietnam and China, also flock here, are making He Kou a bustling town.

**Excerpted from Crossing Borders: Reportage from Our Mekong, 2006**

1.Border: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Merchandise:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Necessities:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Merchants:

---

5. Purchase:

---

6. Hub:

---

7. Distributed:

---

8. Domestic:

---

9. Flock:

---

10. Bustling:

---

## 2. Using Grammar to Guess Word Meaning

Another way context can help you guess meaning is by giving you information about the grammar. When you find a word you do not know, look at the grammatical structure of the sentence. It will tell you about the **function of the word** - as a **noun, verb, pronoun, adjective or adverb**, etc. Then you have a much narrower range of choices for guessing the meaning. In each of the following sentences, there is one word that you probably do not know. **Look at the grammatical structure of the sentence** and decide whether the word is a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. Then guess the meaning. Compare your answers with another student.

**Example:** The news that John was resigning from his job surprised us all. We simply couldn't fathom why he wanted to leave now that the company was finally doing so well.

What is the grammatical function of fathom in this sentence? If you wrote verb, you were correct. Only a verb makes sense here after couldn't. Now can you guess what fathom means? If you answered understand or something similar, you were correct.

#### Exercise 4

**Directions:** In each of the following sentences, there is one word you probably do not know. Look at the grammatical structure of the sentence and decide what the grammatical function of the word is. Then try to guess the meaning.

1. Tommy's medicine had a **nasty** taste. He took it the first time, but he didn't want to take it again. His mother had to put some sugar in it.

Grammatical function of **nasty**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Each society's values and goals **determine** its economic system. These values and goals decide the type of economy for the country.

Grammatical function of **determine**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When the robber pulled out his gun, everyone in the bank ran **helter skelter** for cover.

Grammatical function of **helter skelter**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

4. That country is rich in **resources**. It has oil, minerals and timber.

Grammatical function of **resources**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Business doesn't **take place** on Fridays in that company. For religious reasons, no business can occur on a Friday.

Grammatical function of **take place**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Her father looked **askance** at the idea of a civil marriage in the city hall. He wanted his daughter to be married in a religious ceremony.

Grammatical function of **askance**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Due to the **unflagging** efforts of the rescue team, the children were found after a few hours.

Grammatical function of **unflagging**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_



8. The unhappy girl continued to **carp** at her mother, blaming her mother for all her problems.

Grammatical function of **carp**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

9. After the war, Gunther went back to his hometown to look at the pile of **rubble** where his house had been.

Grammatical function of **rubble**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

10. "What a slipshod job this is!" Mr. Jenkins **shouted**. "Go back and do it again more carefully."

Grammatical function of **slipshod**: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 5

**Directions:** In the paragraph below, one word has been replaced with a nonsense word.

Try to guess what that nonsense mean. Read the whole paragraph first.

1. What do you think "**zip**" means?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The **zips** always run along the same routes in Istanbul. They usually stop only at the main bus stops. But if you ask the driver, you can get off anywhere. These zips are faster and more comfortable than the buses. At the same time, they are also much cheaper than normal taxis. The cost of a trip is divided among the passengers, usually four or five people. For these reasons, zips are a very popular way of getting around the city.

2. What do you think "**zap**" means?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Everyone who visits Russia should first get a **zap**. If you come by train you must

already have a **zap**. You will not be allowed to enter at all without one. Travelers without **zaps** will be sent back where they came from. **Zaps** are given on the spot if you arrive by plane or by car. However, you may have to wait a long time for one. This can be avoided getting a **zap** before you leave.

3. What do you think "**zep**" means?

---

---

Various kinds of **zeps** are available in Oslo. Some are for only an hour, some for a day, and some for three days. The three-day **zep** is useful for the tourist who wants to visit different parts of the city. It allows you unlimited travel for three days on the local trains and buses. **Zeps** - and information about the buses and trains - are available at all tourist offices.

4. What do you think "**zop**" means?

---

---

In Paris it is wise to get yourself a **zop** as soon as possible. It is very easy to get lost if you leave the main streets. You can buy **zops** in the train station, but they are not complete. Better **zops** can be found in the bookstores. These have more details and they show all the named streets.

5. What do you think "**zup**" means?

---

---

Trains connect the larger cities in Tunisia, but there are not many smaller train lines. To travel between the smaller cities and towns, most people take buses or **zups**. These **zups** are often cheaper than the buses or trains. They leave as soon as they have five people who want to go to the same place. That might be a distant city, or a town nearby. The destination of the **zup** is written on a sign on the roof of the vehicle.

## Exercise 6

**Directions:** In the paragraph below, one word has been replaced with a nonsense word.

Try to guess the nonsense word. Read the whole paragraph first.

1. What do you think "**zip**" means?

---

Nobody wants a **zip** near their home. First of all, they usually do not smell very pleasant. If the wind is from the right direction, you may get that smell at home. **Zips** attract lots of insects, such as flies and mosquitoes. Animals such as rats and mice often come to live in the neighborhood too. A nearby **zip** may also mean you will have noisy trucks on your street all day. And finally, the most serious problem with **zips** is that they may pollute the drinking water. This does not always happen. But sometimes, the garbage has dangerous chemicals in it. Then when it rains, the chemicals enter the water underground and make it unsafe to drink.

2. What do you think "**zaps**" means?

---

When people think about sources of water pollution, they do not usually think of **zaps**. However, as the demand grows for fish to eat, the number of **zaps** is increasing. In some areas, they are beginning to create environmental problems. In fact, when fish are in their natural environment, they do not pollute. But in **zaps**, the situation is not natural. There are usually lots of fish in very little water. This means that the water must be changed very often. And each time it is changed, the dirty water must be thrown away. It is usually poured directly from the **zaps** into a river or the ocean. The chemical balance of the river or coastline is changed by this dirty water. And the plants and animals living there may suffer.

3. What do you think "**zep**" means?

---

In the United States and in many European countries, there is a serious problem. What should be done with the garbage? There is no more room for garbage dumps. It is not possible to burn garbage, because that pollutes the air. So the governments are looking for ways to reduce the amount of garbage that is produced. One way to do this is to **zep** as much as possible. Not all kinds of garbage can be **zipped**, of course. The easiest things to **zep** are probably glass and paper. However, one can also **zep** many kinds of metal and plastic. Many cities now require people to **zep** these materials. The people must put them separately from the regular garbage. Then special trucks take them away and bring them to private companies. These companies will buy them and use them again.

4. What do you think "**zip**" means?

---

Experiments have shown that some animals have an extraordinary sense of direction. The **zip** is a good example of this. In 1957, some scientists took eighteen **zips** from their home on the island of Midway in the Pacific Ocean. These **zips** were sent by airplane to some distant places, such as Japan, the Philippines, and the Hawalian Islands. Then they were set free. Scientists already knew that **zips** could fly for great distances because of their huge wings. But no one thought that the **zips** would be able to find their way home. After all, Midway is just a very little island in the middle of a very large ocean. However, fourteen of the **zips** did get to Midway. They got there very quickly, too. One flew from the Philippines -4, 120 km. -in only 32 days!

5. What do you think "**zap**" means?

---

Another animal with a very good sense of direction is the Monarch butterfly. The Monarch is a beautiful orange-colored butterfly. It is one of the larger kinds of butterflies, but is still only an insect. All Monarchs spend the winter in a certain area of central Mexico. In the early spring, they begin to **zap** north. The butterflies that leave Mexico will die on their way. However, their children or grandchildren will **zap** all the way to northern United States or Canada. Then, in the fall these new butterflies start **zapping** south. They have never been to Mexico, but they manage to find the place their parents left. They will even go to live in the same trees.

6. What do you think "**zep**" means?

---

Genetic programming is also probably the answers to the mystery of the salmon. These fish are born in **zeps** far from the ocean. When they are big enough, they travel all the way down the **zep**. Then they swim out into the deep ocean water, sometimes for thousands of miles. One salmon from Washington State in the United States was caught half-way to Japan. But no matter how far they are, the fish start home in the spring. Somehow they know where home is. Along all the many miles of coast each salmon finds the mouth of its own **zep**. Then it swims all the way up to the very same spot where it was born.

### **3. Compound Word**

Compound nouns are words for people, animals, places, things, or ideas, made up of two or more words. Most compound nouns are made with nouns that have been modified by adjectives or other nouns. In many compound nouns, the first word describes or modifies the second word, giving us insight into what kind of thing an item is, or providing us with clues about the item's purpose. The second word usually identifies the item.

**Study the compound noun in the box below:**

1. Housebreaker = house + breaker  
(= a person who breaks into someone's house.)

2. Fingerprint = finger + print

(= the mark of a finger.)

3. Bubble gum = bubble + gum

(= chewing gum that can be blown into large bubbles.)

4. Playing-field = playing + field

(= field for sports such as football etc. or for children's games)

5. Deadlock = dead + lock

(= a disagreement which cannot be settled.)

Compound noun functions as one unit of meaning. The meaning of some compound nouns is based on the original words, such as housebreaker, fingerprint. But some new words do not have the same meaning of the original words, for example, the word 'deadlock' changes completely. Therefore, a dictionary is sometimes needed to check the word meaning. A compound noun is written in one of three different ways.

**1. Closed or solid compound nouns** are formed when two unique words are joined together. They don't have a space between them and they are the type that generally comes to mind when we think of compound words. For example: baseball, fireworks, grandmother, sunflower, crosswalk, moonlight, football, railroad, weatherman, skateboard, earthquake, schoolhouse, fireflies, grasshopper, toothpaste, bookstore, bedroom, mantis etc.

I love the **fireworks** on the fourth of July.

Did you hear about the terrible **earthquake**?

The **fireflies** buzzed in the night sky.

**2. Hyphenated compound nouns** are connected with a hyphen (-) such as dry-cleaning, daughter-in-law, ten-year-old, mother-in-law, one-sided, thirty-two, one-third, Merry-go-round, mass-produced etc.

My **mother-in-law** is coming for a visit.

The **merry-go-round** at the carnival thrilled Ella.

**3. Open or spaced compound nouns** are formed with two separate words such as full moon, Christmas tree, swimming pool, distance learning, lawn tennis, department store etc. They have a space between the words but when they are read together a new

meaning is formed.

There must be a **full moon** out tonight.

**Ice cream** is my favorite dessert.

### **Compound Noun Examples**

The following sentences are just a few examples of compound nouns.

1. Compound nouns can be made with **two nouns**

Let's just wait at this **bus stop**.

I love watching **fireflies** on warm summer nights.

While you're at the store, please pick up some **toothpaste** and some **egg rolls**.

2. Compound nouns can be made with an **adjective and a noun**

Let's watch the **full moon** come up over the mountain.

Please erase the **blackboard** for me.

3. Compound nouns can be made with a **verb and a noun**

Be sure to add bleach to the **washing machine**.

Let's be sure to stay somewhere with a **swimming pool**.

4. Compound nouns can be made with a **noun and a verb**

**He always gets up before sunrise**.

I really could use an updated **hairstyle**.

**Source:** <http://www.gingersoftware.com/content/grammar-rules/nouns/compound-nouns/>

### Exercise 7

**Directions:** Match each word from Column A with its partner from Column B to make a new word.

Column A	Column B
1. shopping	a. book
2. pencil	b. case
3. exercise	c. holidays
4. orange	d. juice
5. birthday	e. list
6. bedroom	f. machine
7. football	g. map
8. summer	h. party
9. mind	i. shoes
10. washing	i window

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_