

STRATEGY ONE

USING APPOSITION SIGNALS

Sometimes when you are reading you come to a word you don't know. You may say to yourself:

"Should I skip it or should I look it up in the dictionary?"

Maybe you look around the room and no dictionary is near you. Or maybe you do not always want to use the dictionary. You would like to figure out the meaning by yourself.

The electorate will never let such a terrible man become governor.

The meaning of *electorate* is not given in the sentence below. Even with the picture, it is hard to know exactly what *electorate* means. Writers, however, often give you the meaning for the unknown word right after it—in the same sentence.

The electorate—people who have the right to vote—will never let such a terrible man become governor.

Now the meaning of *electorate* is given in the sentence. The words *people who have the right to vote* have a line drawn under them. These words are in apposition to the word *electorate*. Apposition means *placed right next to*. It is used to make the meaning of another word or phrase clearer.

The signals to the meaning of *electorate* are the dashes. This kind of signal is called an apposition signal. Some other apposition signals are commas and parentheses.

APPOSITION SIGNALS

, commas
() parentheses
 — — dashes

You can use apposition signals to find the meaning of a word you may not know.

FOR EXAMPLE

Find the meaning of *locust* in the sentence below.

The locust (a kind of grasshopper) is still a problem to farmers in the West.

Circles are drawn around the parentheses to show that they are the apposition signals.

The meaning of *locust* is found inside the apposition signals. A line is drawn under the words *a kind of grasshopper* because these words give the meaning of *locust*.

STRATEGY

A sentence may have or contain words whose meaning you do not know. The meaning of a word or words is often inside apposition signals. Look for apposition signals and you will often find the meaning of the words.

TRY IT

You may not know the meaning of *meteorite*. But you can find the meaning if you look for apposition signals.

Every few years a meteorite, a piece of stone or metal from space, falls on the earth.

What are the apposition signals? Go back to the sentence and draw circles around the apposition signals.

You should have circles around the commas.

What is the meaning of *meteorite*? Now draw a line under the words that give the meaning of *meteorite*.

You should have a line under the words *a piece of stone or metal from space*.

Check your sentence. It should look like this:

Every few years a meteorite, a piece of stone or metal from space, falls on the earth.

Find the meaning of *piranha* in the sentence below.

Piranha (small fish with sharp

teeth that eat meat) are so dangerous they cannot be sold in pet shops.

What are the apposition signals? Draw circles around them.

What is the meaning of *piranha*? Draw a line under it.

Check your sentence. It should look like this.

Piranha (small fish with sharp teeth that eat meat) are so dangerous they cannot be sold in pet shops.

Mark the sentence below the same way as you did the others.

All the kids liked to hear Mr. Anderson tell anecdotes—short funny stories—about his days in the army.

Check your sentence. It should look like this.

All the kids liked to hear Mr. Anderson tell anecdotes—short funny stories—about his days in the army.

PRACTICE IT

The sentences below contain words which may be new to you. Use the apposition signals to find the meanings of the words in italics (words in different print). Circle the apposition signals and draw a line under the meaning of the words.

1. When a robin is still a *fledgling* (a young bird just able to fly) it has a spotted chest.
2. *New Hebrides*—a group of small islands in the South Pacific—is a place where many people live as people did hundreds of years ago.
3. The law would bring much-needed *specie* (money in coins) into the New World.
4. Felicia's mother loved the *tranquility*, the peace and quiet, after everybody had gone to school.
5. The British government was willing to *relinquish*—give up—the southern half of Oregon.

STRATEGY TWO

USING DEFINITION SIGNALS

The time of year when days and nights are the same length all over the earth (is called) the equinox.

You may not know the word *equinox*. The words *the time of year when days and nights are the same length all over the earth* are underlined to show you that they state the meaning of *equinox*.

The words *is called* signal the meaning of *equinox*. These words are circled to show you that they point to the meaning. Some other definition signals are:

or	who is, who are
that is	called, are called
is, are	means
which means	which is, which are

You can use definition signals to find the meanings of words you might not recognize.

FOR EXAMPLE

Find the meaning of *spontaneously* in the sentence below.

Spontaneously, (that is,) without planning, the team lifted the coach onto their shoulders.

A circle is drawn around the words *that is* because they are the definition signal.

The meaning of *spontaneously* is found after the definition signal. A line is drawn under the words *without planning* because they give the meaning of *spontaneously*.

You may have noticed that this sentence also has commas. Remember, commas may be used as apposition signals. Sometimes apposition signals and definition signals are in the same sentence. Both help you to find the meaning of unknown words.

STRATEGY

Definition signals tell you that the

FOR EXAMPLE

Find the meaning of *despises* in the sentence below.

Mary loves playing handball;
however, Vicki despises it.

A circle is drawn around the word *however* because it is an opposite meaning signal.

The opposite meaning of *despises* is in the first part of the sentence. A line is drawn under the word *loves* because it means the opposite of *despises*. *Despises* means: does not love, hates.

STRATEGY

Sentences sometimes contain words you do not know. Opposite meaning signals tell you that different ideas are in a sentence. Use the different ideas in a sentence to help you figure out the word or words you do not know.

TRY IT

You may not know the meaning of the word *boisterous*. You can use the strategy to figure out its meaning. Look at the list of opposite meaning signals on page 14 whenever you need to.

The students in Ms. Reeves' class were quiet during the meeting, but the students in Mr. Johnson's class were boisterous.

What is the opposite meaning signal? Go back to the sentence and draw a circle around the opposite meaning signal. You should have a circle around the word *but*.

What word means the opposite of *boisterous*? Draw a line under the word that means the opposite of *boisterous*.

You should have a line under the word *quiet*.

Check your sentence. It should look like this.

The students in Ms. Reeves' class were quiet during the meeting, but the students in Mr. Johnson's class were boisterous.

Write the meaning of *boisterous* in the blank.

boisterous means _____

You may have written some of these other meanings for boisterous not quiet;
loud, noisy

Find the meaning of *wince* in the sentence below.

Even though Carlos tried to hold still, when the nurse stuck his finger he had to wince.

This sentence has the signal words at the beginning.

When the signal word comes at the beginning, a comma separates the two different ideas in the sentence.

What is the opposite meaning signal? Draw a circle around it.

What is the opposite meaning of *wince*? Draw a line under it.

Wince means _____

Check your answer. It should look like this.

Even though Carlos tried to hold still, when the nurse stuck his finger he had to wince.

Wince means move,
not hold still

Mark the sentence below as you did those above. Write the meaning of *dreary* in the blank.

Barbara thought the movie was exciting, yet her sister thought it was dreary.

Dreary means _____

Check your answer. It should look like this.

Barbara thought the movie was exciting, yet her sister thought it was dreary.

Dreary means not exciting;
dull, boring

PRACTICE IT

The following sentences have words that you may not know. Circle the opposite meaning signal, and draw a line under the opposite meaning of the word in italics. Write the meaning of the word in italics in the blank.

1. On sale days prices were low, yet everyone still thought the price of the color TV was *exorbitant*.

Exorbitant means _____

2. Some people *loathe* worms even though others like them.

Loathe means _____

3. Camila was *engrossed* in the movie, but the other kids ignored it.

Engrossed means _____

4. Although most students tried to help Billy, some tried to *hinder* him.

Hinder means _____

STRATEGY FOUR

FINDING SUGGESTED MEANINGS

John tore his jacket and took it to the tailor to have it mended.

The ideas in the sentence above can help you figure out the meaning of *mended*. The first idea tells what happened: The words *John tore his jacket* tell what happened.

The second idea tells where he took his jacket. The words *took it to the tailor* tell you where.

The third idea tells you why. The words *to have it mended* tell you why he took it to the tailor.

What would a tailor do with a torn jacket? A tailor would try to fix it.

Mended means: fixed or repaired.

The ideas in a sentence often suggest the meaning of a word you may not know. The ideas often answer the questions:

what happened? where?
why? when? how?

FOR EXAMPLE

Figure out the meaning of *heckling* from the ideas in the sentence below.

After the outfielder dropped three fly balls, the fans began loudly heckling him.

The words *After the outfielder dropped three fly balls* tell when the fans were heckling. The word *loudly* tells how the fans were heckling. These ideas suggest that heckling means: booing, making fun of, or jeering.

STRATEGY

When a sentence contains no specific signal words or explanations, the ideas in the sentence often suggest the meaning of words you may not know. Study the whole sentence. Learn the meaning of an unknown word or words by asking questions about the information in a sentence. Your answers will help you figure out the meaning.

TRY IT

You may not know the meaning of the word *dank*. Each sentence below gives you more of an idea about the meaning of *dank*. See how many sentences you must read until you are sure of the meaning of *dank*.

1. The room was dank.

There is not much to suggest what *dank* means. Yet, you know that the word can be used to describe or say something about a room.

2. The basement was dank.
The word *basement* tells you where. Are basements often different from other rooms in a house?

3. After a week of rain, the walls of the basement became dank.

The new idea tells you when the basement became *dank*. What would basement walls be like after a week of rain?

4. After a week of rain, the basement became flooded, leaving the walls of the basement dank, even after the water drained off the floor.

You may have known the answer after reading number three above, but sentence number four provides more specific information. Write the meaning of *dank* in the blank.

Dank means _____

Check your answer. *Dank* means: wet, moist.

You may not know the meaning of the word *remote* as it is used in the following sentence. See how many sentences you must read until you are sure of its meaning.

1. She came from a remote town.
The word *town* tells you where. *Remote* describes or tells about the town.

2. She came from a remote town in the hills.

The new idea suggests something about the meaning of *remote*. How is a town in the hills different from other towns?

3. She came from a remote town in the hills and so she seldom got to the big city.

The first part of the sentence tells you why she seldom got to the big city. If the person from this town seldom could get to the big city, where do you think this town would be?

4. She came from a remote town in the hills far off from airports and trains so she seldom got to the big city.

Where is something that's *remote*?

Write your answer in the blank.

Remote means _____

Check your answer. *Remote* means: far away; not near.

Now read the sentence below and figure out the meaning of *crucial*. Write the meaning in the blank.

The operation on his eyes was *crucial* in order to save him from going blind.

Crucial means _____

Check your answer. The definition of *crucial* is: very necessary, critical.

PRACTICE IT

The following sentences contain some words which you may not know. Learn the meanings of the words by using the ideas in the sentences. Ask yourself questions about the ideas. Then write the meaning of the italicized word in the blank following each sentence.

1. Because she had a restful weekend, Kathy was *energetic* enough to work sixteen hours at the hospital.

Energetic means: _____

2. Phillip's new boots were so *glossy* you'd almost think they could glow in the dark.

Glossy means _____

3. If you are in doubt about the *purity* of your water, boil it until you are certain it is safe to drink.

Purity means _____

4. Because her eye had been sore for a week, Jenny decided to go to an *oculist* for treatment.

An oculist is _____

5. The wind howling down the chimney of the spooky old house made an *eerie* sound.

Eerie means _____