

## **Ohio Standards Connections**

### **Acquisition of Vocabulary**

#### **Benchmark A**

Use context clues and text structures to determine the meaning of new vocabulary.  
(Grades 4 - 7)

#### **Indicator 1**

Define the meaning of unknown words through context clues and the author's use of comparison, contrast, definition, restatement and example.  
(Grade 7)

### **Lesson Summary:**

*Students will review how to determine the meaning of unknown words by using the context.*

**Estimated Duration:** *Three hours and 45 minutes broken into instructional sessions.*

### **Commentary:**

A detective is someone whose work involves the investigative process. This process may sometimes require the detective to go "digging" for information. The word detective conjures up a picture for students of a person involved in uncovering secret information. The comparison of a student, who uses context clues to uncover the meaning of a new word, to a detective investigating which words will help lead to a greater understanding of another word's meaning, is a useful metaphor. Determining the meaning of words in context requires a certain investigative process on the part of students. Contextual meaning is established by looking at the words or passages surrounding the word in question and using those words to help establish meaning and understanding of the unknown word.

Evaluating mastery of the use of context clues is an ongoing process on the part of English language arts teachers. A reviewer of this lesson commented, "This lesson is so important that the teacher needs to constantly check for understanding. A student who fails to master this skill will have continued problems in vocabulary, as well as reading comprehension." Because determining word meaning from contextual information is a skill not easily learned, teachers and students need to proceed with patience and determination toward mastery.

### **Pre-Assessment:**

Provide students with the attached pre-assessment (Blackline Master 1) and ask them to complete it, using context clues to answer the questions.

### **Scoring Guidelines:**

3 = Correctly defined all four words and used appropriate context.

2 = Correctly defined three words and used appropriate context.

1 = Correctly defined one or two words and used appropriate context.

0 = Off task or topic.

### **Post-Assessment:**

Have students write an original paragraph using at least one example of each of the following types of context clues for words in the paragraph: comparison, contrast, definition, restatement and example. After writing the paragraph, students should complete the post-assessment table (Blackline Master 2).

### **Scoring Guidelines:**

3 = More than one type of context clues is used correctly in a paragraph, and the chart is accurately completed.

2 = One context clue type is used correctly in a paragraph, and the chart is partially completed.

1 = An attempt is made at incorporating a context clue type, and the chart is partially completed.

0 = Off task or topic.

### **Instructional Procedures:**

1. Read text aloud to the class. The text may be fiction or nonfiction. Stop at challenging words and model how you use context clues to identify the meaning of the words. Say your thoughts aloud so students can follow along and understand your strategy. (Note: Identify the words and practice with the text before modeling for the class.)
2. Record each word, its context clues and the sentence in which the word and clues are found in the text on a chart on an overhead transparency or on the chalkboard.
3. Continue modeling how to determine the meaning of words from context, using a variety of texts. In addition to selecting words that can be defined from the context, provide students with examples that cannot be determined from the context.
4. Record additional words whose meaning you determine from context on the chart. (Note: This may take place over several days.)
5. Explain to students that there are a variety of ways authors can provide context clues for the meanings of unknown words. Talk about each of these types of context clues and provide examples for the students.
  - **Comparison** – An archetype, like a model, helps you understand what something looks like.
  - **Contrast** - The three children were rather rambunctious as they ran and splashed in the pool. On the other hand, their parents sat peacefully beside the pool.
  - **Definition**– Entomology, or the study of insects, has helped us learn about the differences between moths and butterflies.
  - **Restatement** – The students were belligerent. In other words, they did not listen to the teacher and often talked back to her.
  - **Example** - Pasta, such as spaghetti, lasagna and macaroni, is a starchy food.
6. Refer students to the context clues chart which you have been generating over several days. Ask them to determine which type of context clue was used for each entry on the chart.
7. Have students find examples from their independent reading of each of the five types of context clues. Have them record these words on the attached table (Blackline Master 3).

### **Differentiated Instructional Support:**

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).

- Additional teacher modeling may be necessary.
- Complete activities as a whole group or in small groups.
- Complete the chart in parts, engaging the group in discussion after each part.
- Have students find examples in newspapers, magazines, etc. of words defined by context clues.

### **Extension:**

- Continue to add to the class chart, labeling each context clue according to its type as new entries are made.
- Invite students to examine texts from different time periods that use a word for which the meaning has changed over time (i.e., the word *page*).

### **Homework Options and Home Connections:**

Ask students to find examples of challenging words in context in fiction, nonfiction, newspapers, poetry, technical manuals, etc. Ask students to work with a partner, share their examples with them and "teach" the words to their partners.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

Apply knowledge of using context clues to determine meaning of unknown words in all content areas.

### **Materials/Resources Needed:**

*For the teacher:* Chalkboard and chalk, dry erase board and pens or blank transparency and overhead projector and a variety of texts.

*For the students:* Blackline Masters 1-3.

### **Key Vocabulary:**

- context
- context clues
- comparison
- contrast
- definition
- restatement
- example

### **Attachments:**

- Context Clues Pre-Assessment (Blackline Master 2)
- Context Clues Post-Assessment (Blackline Master 1)
- Context Clues Table (Blackline Master 3)