

## USING CONTEXT CLUES

Some standardized test questions will ask you to choose the best definition for a word that might be unfamiliar to you. You can often figure out the meaning of this word by using context clues.

**Context clues** - frequently can be found in nearby words and phrases that provide hints about the word.

### EXAMPLES

- **Comparison Clue** - Jake brings to his skateboarding the prowess of an Olympic athlete. If Jake is similar to a great athlete in prowess, *prowess* must mean “strong ability” or “talent.”
- **Contrast Clue** - While my grandparents’ house is bright, cheerful, and not at all mysterious, the old, abandoned mansion next to them is eerie. The word *while* signals a contrast between one house and the other. If the grandparents’ house is “not at all mysterious,” the house next door must possess some mystery. *Eerie* must mean “strange” or “mysterious.”
- **Restatement Clue** - Jeanine’s impudence gets her in trouble. Neither teachers nor other students appreciate her cocky, selfish attitude. As the second sentence suggests, *impudence* means “cockiness and disregard for other people.”
- **Apposition Clue** - As he stepped up to bat for the first time, the boy was afraid his teammates would discover his inadequacy, his inability to perform up to their high standards.

By restating the word *inadequacy* in different terms, the apposition indicates that *inadequacy* means “state of not being good enough.”

- **Examples Clue** - The child suffered derision from her classmates in the form of teasing, jokes, taunts, threats, and pointing fingers. From the actions listed here—teasing, jokes, taunts, threats, and pointing fingers—you can guess that derision means “ridicule.”
- **Cause and Effect Clue** - When Samuel crept into the room looking furtive, his parents immediately became suspicious and asked him what he was up to. If looking furtive made Samuel’s parents suspicious about his plans, *furtive* must mean “sneaky” or “sly.”