

Making Inferences

Authors will often use words that **confounding**, or difficult to understand. Sometimes they will be **benevolent** people by giving you clues to figure the words out. Other times you will have to use context clues to help you **fathom** what the author was saying.

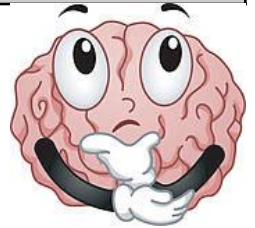
Context Clues	Any clue in a story that can be used to help you learn a new word or concept.
Background Knowledge	Information you already know about the world that can be used while reading.
Affixes	Word parts that are added to the front or back of a word that changes its meaning.
Synonyms	Words that have the same meaning . (Outgoing - friendly)
Antonyms	Words that have opposite meanings . (Generous, Miserly)



When you are making inferences it is important to remember:

First, read all the words, sound them out if you can't

Then, think about what they mean



Surrounding Context Clues

Definitions or Examples

The author gives one of these to help you understand. They can come before, after, or even within the sentence with the challenging word.

1. The lawyer presented a **specious**, or false, argument to the jury.
2. Many birds migrate during the winter. Birds are not the only animals that choose to move like this.

Main Idea or Topic

Most authors stay on topic when they write. If they use a challenging word, think about the main idea of their writing to figure it out.

1. The **frail** young man was very skinny and sickly. His thin legs could barely hold him up.
2. The farmer used many machines on his farm, but the **combine** was his favorite.

Background Knowledge

Sometimes the experiences you have in life help you understand challenging words. Reading a lot and trying new things gives you a large amount of background knowledge.

_____ The quarterback threw a lateral pass to the running back.

_____ The audience was stunned when the ballerina performed a perfect pirouette.

Word Based Context Clues

If there are no surrounding context clues, try studying the word to figure out what it could mean.

Affixes

Many challenging words can be easily understood if you just break them into pieces. Finding a word's affixes can help you figure it out. Here are some common ones.

Common Prefixes

<u>Prefix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Example</u>
pre-	before	preview
un-	not	unbelievable
dis-	not	disagree
re-	again	rewrite
mis-	not	misunderstood
im-	not	impossible
bi-	two	bicycle
de-	not	deregulated

Common Suffixes

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Example</u>
-er	doer	teacher
-able	able to	believable
-ous	full of	dangerous
-ness	state of being	happiness
-ful	full of	wonderful
-ly or -y	like	gently
-ment	state of	disappointment

Synonyms and Antonyms

Knowing words that some words can share the same meaning can help you figure out some challenging words. You can even use opposite meanings to help!

1. The ravenous dog kept eating and eating to stop the hunger.
2. The boy was a dullard, nothing like the smart young men he worked with.
3. My friend thinks that he is very sagacious but I know people that are much wiser.
4. In my country, burping is polite. Her country does not agree. They think of it as discourteous.

Grammar Clues

If every clue has failed, look at where the challenging word lies in a sentence. Figuring out if the word is a noun, verb, adjective, or something else is very helpful.

1. I was very scared when I met the obstetrician for the first time.
2. My sister broke her leg after she ascended the mountain.

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Prepositions
People, places, or things.	Action words.	Describing words.	Words that describe verbs.	Words that describe place and time