



NJSLA Research Simulation Task Grade 7 Reading

Lesson 5: Using Context Clues for the Vocabulary EBSR

Rationale

- The vocabulary evidence-based selected response will test students not only on their word knowledge, but also on how they use context clues to determine the meaning of a word. Therefore, practicing finding context clues will best prepare students to answer these questions on the assessments.

Goal

- To familiarize students with the vocabulary evidence-based selected response
- To prepare students for answering these questions by teaching them strategies for deciphering word meaning through context

Task Foci

- **CCSS RI.7.3:** Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
- **CCSS L.7.4.A:** Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Objectives

- Students will be familiar with the format of the vocabulary EBSR for Research Simulation Tasks.
- Students will be able to use context clues to help them determine the meaning of words.

Materials

- Model vocab EBSR worksheet
- Model vocab EBSR worksheet (teacher's version)
- Sample Text
- Highlighters

Procedures

- Begin the lesson by asking the class what they do when they encounter a word they don't know the meaning of. Students might mention, for example, looking the word up in a dictionary or ignoring the word and reading on.
- Explain that on the assessments, students won't have these options available, so if they don't know the meaning of the word being asked, they should use context clues. Context clues are hints in the text that help the reader understand the word. These clues might be found in the same sentence as the word, or they might be part of a sentence that comes before or after the unknown word.
- Explain that these clues often take the following forms:
 - Synonyms or antonyms
 - An example that demonstrates the meaning of the word
 - Explanations (usually reserved for technical terms)
- Write the following example on the board: "Did you know that ladybugs are carnivores? When they're hungry, these tiny bugs eat other bugs." Underline "carnivores."
- Ask the students to identify which words or phrases in the example provide clues to the meaning of "carnivores." Guide them to the correct answer of "eat other bugs."
- Confirm the correct answer by defining the word. "Carnivore" is a noun that means "an animal that eats meat" (Merriam-Webster).
- Ask: **"Does everyone see why this is a context clue? The sentence following the word gives us an explanation of what the word means."** Clarify further if needed.

Activity 1

- Distribute the model vocab EBSR worksheet.
- Explain the format and instructions: **"Now let's look at the format of the question on the assessment. These are always going to be two-part questions." You can use Part B to help you answer Part A. Part B stems are often structured as, 'Which detail from the article provides the best clue to help you understand the meaning of...'—so it is asking the test taker to identify context clues."**
- Give students approximately 5 minutes to answer the worksheet.
- When students are finished, go over the worksheet.

Activity 2

- Distribute sample text. Give students time to read it independently.
- Ask them to circle any unknown words.
- When finished, ask students to call out the words they don't know. Create a list on the board.
- Break students into groups of 2-4 students.
- Divide the list of words among the groups.
- Tell students that they are going to try to figure out these unknown words using context clues.
- Elect a group scribe.
- Remind students how to find and use context clues:
 - Look at the rest of the sentence. Do you understand the rest of the sentence? What's the subject? What's the action?
 - Look at the rest of the paragraph. Determine what it is mostly about.
 - Does the author use any synonyms or antonyms?

- Does the author give an explanation or example to show the word's meaning?
 - Guess. Replace the word with a possible synonym. Does it seem right?
- Give groups enough time to work towards figuring out each word. (A group member might know the meaning of a word. If so, tell them to define the word to the group and then try to locate context clues to support their definition.)
- When finished, have each group share their finding with the class. You can write their working definitions on the board, so everyone can see as well as hear them.

Assessment

- On the vocab EBSR worksheet, explanations will vary. Explanations should indicate that students are using their reasoning skills to find the correct answer and eliminate wrong answers.
- On finding context clues in the sample texts, groups should be able to give you the correct definition of a word and be able to tell you what clues they used to find their answer.

Kenichi Horie: Japan's Most Famous Yachtsman

By Stephen Canright, Park Curator, Maritime History, NPS.gov, adapted by Laura Schaefer

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is proud of its association with Kenichi Horie, Japan's most famous yachtsman. He is the first man in history to make a non-stop solo crossing of the Pacific Ocean.

Kenichi Horie is regarded as a Japanese National Hero. Mr. Horie was an unknown 23-year-old when he sailed his 19-foot black plywood sloop, the *Mermaid*, through the Golden Gate in 1962. His arrival was entirely unannounced. He had, in fact, left Japanese waters without any form of official clearance. Ninety-four days later, he arrived in San Francisco with no passport, no money, and little knowledge of English. Horie was briefly arrested, but Mayor George Christopher saw to it that he was released and presented with a visa and the key to the city. In Kenchi Horie's book *Koduko: Sailing Alone across the Pacific*, he says, "The crew matters the most," (p. 30) so when he set out to cross the Pacific Ocean he chose the best crew he could ... himself. Just himself. At 23 years old, when most of us were just figuring out how to get to work on time, Kenchie Horie sailed from Japan to San Francisco in a 19-foot sail boat alone. When asked why he did such a thing, he replied, "Well, I crossed it because I wanted to" (p. 15). It's the sort of response one would expect of a young auto parts salesman who, against the wishes of his father and his government, set out on a ridiculously dangerous 5,300 miles journey to a country where he had no connections, barely spoke the language and no plans on how to get back.

To me, one of the most interesting things about Horie is that he did not have a life time love affair with the sea. In fact, he wasn't the least bit interested in sailing until high school when he joined the school's sailing club because "it sounded like fun" (p. 20). There was no deep passion drawing him--he could have just as easily joined the chess team. Things turned for Horie though during his sophomore year, still sailing with the club. As he described it, "A burning passion for the sea gripped me. Maybe it was then that the Pacific began to **beckon** to me, inviting me to dream of a boundless open sea to sail" (p. 21). Once in its grip, Horie was not able to let go. Despite pushback from family and ridicule from friends and worried barks from his dog (p. 79), he went to sail in the boundless open sea. He said of his goal:

If you make up your mind to do something--if you are determined to do it--there is only one way to go about it. Work out your own ideas on the general course you are going to follow and stick to them; stand on those basic ideas and assume responsibility for your actions. You yourself have to work out what you think is the best plan and carry it out to the end. You may make mistakes, there may be details in your plan that could have been improved upon by relying on someone else's advice but basically it has to be your personal responsibility to conceive and carry out the project (p. 51).

Read the article about Kenichi Horie. Then use context clues to answer Part A and Part B. For each part, circle the correct answer in the left column. In the right column, explain why each option is either right or wrong. There is only one right answer for each part.

Part A: What is the meaning of the word **beckon** as it is used in the article?

A. reject	
B. call	
C. stop	
D. widen	

Part B: Which phrase from the article best supports the answer to Part A?

A. “he could have just as easily joined the chess team”	
B. “he went to sail in the boundless open sea”	
C. “inviting me to dream of a boundless open sea to sail”	
D. “A burning passion for the sea gripped me.”	

TEACHER'S VERSION

Read the article about Kenichi Horie. Then use context clues to answer Part A and Part B. For each part, circle the correct answer in the left column. In the right column, explain why each option is either right or wrong. There is only one right answer for each part.

Part A: What is a synonym for the word **beckon** as it is used in the article?

A. reject	Students should think about the context of the paragraph (even the article) as a whole to realize that this option should be eliminated. The paragraph explains when Kenichi began to love the sea, so the Pacific wasn't rejecting him, but had become alluring to him.
B. call*	Correct answer. Again, we need to think about what is being described in this paragraph to understand why it makes sense that the sea is "calling" him. The idea "to beckon" is commonly used figuratively by English speakers to express that an object or idea appeals to them.
C. stop	Substituting "stop" for "beckon" makes the sentence ungrammatical: "...stop to..."
D. widen	Similar to option C. The sentence becomes nonsensical.

Part B: Which phrase from the article best supports the answer to Part A?

A. "he could have just as easily joined the chess team"	Throw away. An unrelated idea.
B. "he went to sail in the boundless open sea"	Tricky. This clause reiterates that of the correct answer below, so it is subordinate to the <i>best</i> support. Though it expresses a similar idea, it does not directly describe "to beckon" like option C does.
C. "inviting me to dream of a boundless open sea to sail"*	Correct answer. This subordinate clause defines and extends the idea of "beckoning" expressed in the independent clause.
D. "A burning passion for the sea gripped me."	Another tricky option. His "burning passion" is another way to describe Kenichi's relationship with the sea. But this is not the <i>best</i> clue to understanding "beckon" in the context.