



NJSLA Research Simulation Task Grade 9 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 L.9-10.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9-10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **CCSS L.9-10.4.A:** Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; 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.

After the Resistance: The Alamo Today

Courtesy: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1. San Antonio de Valero is a former Roman Catholic mission and fortress where the Battle of the Alamo occurred from February 23 until March 6, 1836. Now known simply as the Alamo, this compound has been damaged, ransacked, and renovated many times before work on its present configuration as a museum in downtown San Antonio, Texas, USA, was completed in 1968.
2. Although located in a **bustling** urban setting, the modern day Alamo seems a tranquil place suited for relaxation or contemplation. It takes some effort to associate the Alamo with the garrison known as an iconic symbol of heroic fighting and resistance.
3. The story is well known. During the 1836 battle, a Mexican force numbering in the thousands and led by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna besieged the Alamo. The vastly outnumbered defenders—200 men, including the frontiersman Davy Crockett, commanded by Colonel James Bowie and Lieutenant Colonel William Travis—valiantly held the compound for 13 days before the Mexicans breached the mission, killing nearly everyone. On April 21, 1836, when the outnumbered Texan militia commanded by General Sam Houston defeated Santa Anna's troops at San Jacinto, the rallying cry was "Remember the Alamo!" Houston's surprise attack proved such a tactical advantage that he routed the larger force in just 18 minutes, effectively ending the Texas Revolution and leading to treaties that established the independent Republic of Texas.
4. Our often-used metaphor of humans waging "war" on infectious diseases and on the microbes that cause them invites comparison with the Battle of the Alamo. Through various antibiotics, we reduced the number of deaths caused by infections and, bolstered by successes, assumed we would win this war.
5. In reality, we live in a microbial world where we are the invaders. The Board on Global Health and Institute of Medicine noted that "On reflection, perhaps it would be wise to reconsider the frequently used metaphor of humans being 'at war with microbes.' It is absurd to believe that we could ever claim victory in a war against organisms that outnumber us by a factor of 1022, that outweigh us by a factor of 108, that have existed for 1,000 times longer than our species, and that can undergo as many as 500,000 generations during 1 of our generations."
6. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that in 2013, antibiotic resistance threats caused more than 2 million illnesses and 23,000 deaths in the United States and that in 2011, those threats were responsible for an estimated \$20 million in excess health care costs, 8 million additional hospital days, and \$35 million in societal costs. Many factors, including overuse and misuse of antibiotics, global climate change, human encroachment into more remote, less hospitable places, modern factory farming and food production practices, and rapid and accessible global mobility have heightened our vulnerability. Since the 1980s, nearly 40 new pathogens have been identified as human disease threats, and 12% of known human pathogens have been classified as either emerging or reemerging.

7. The cycle of many of these emerging microbes can be seen with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infections moving from being hospital associated to community acquired and now to a ubiquitous supply-chain associated infection. *Clostridium difficile* seems headed on the same path.

8. Successfully controlling drug-resistant microbes requires not just greater vigilance with our infection control tools, but it also requires developing and deploying creative and aggressive tactics. Changing our tactics against drug-resistance microbes involve keeping pathogens out of our supply chains to schools, hospitals, and workplaces, and keeping sick workers at home. New guidelines from the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, for example, provide recommendations to reduce the role that health care personnel attire plays in the cross-transmission of pathogens.

9. The scenario of a post-antibiotic era of infectious diseases that looks like the pre-antibiotic era that preceded penicillin and vaccines is an alarming scenario. Sir Alexander Fleming even warned about antibiotic resistance in his 1945 Nobel Prize speech. Now is the time to incorporate new strategies into our battle plans and prepare to fight against overwhelming odds.

Read the passage “After the Resistance: The Alamo Today.” 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 **bustling** as it is used in paragraph 2?

A. serious	
B. large	
C. prosperous	
D. active	

Part B: What word or phrase in paragraph 2 best clarifies the meaning of **bustling** in Part A?

A. urban	
B. restive	
C. iconic	
D. tranquil	

TEACHER'S VERSION

Read the passage “After the Resistance: The Alamo Today.” 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 **bustling** as it is used in paragraph 2?

It's important to note that paragraph 2 draws the contrast between the peacefulness of the modern day Alamo and the tumultuous Battle of the Alamo. Students want to use this information to compare answer options and eliminate antonyms and near-antonyms.

A. serious	Would it make sense to call the city “serious”? No, we can eliminate this option.
B. large	There is no suggestion being made that San Antonio is a large city. Whether it is or isn't (it is), is not important to the point the writer is making.
C. prosperous	In the same vain as option B, the wealth of the city is not considered. We have to remember that good writing uses adjectives that qualify the nouns they modify in a way to support the statement being made. They aren't used carelessly or to add unnecessary detail.
D. active*	Correct answer. “Bustling” means “busily active.” Because the writer is drawing a comparison between the city and the Alamo in this sentence, and he describes the Alamo as a “place suited for relaxation.” So it makes sense that the city, by contrast, would be an active, busy place.

Part B: What word used in paragraph 2 best clarifies the meaning of **bustling** in Part A?

A. “urban”*	Correct answer. Students may already be familiar with the common phrase “bustling city” (often “bustling metropolis”). What comes to mind when we think of a city? One of the first things is probably how the whole city seems to be alive with activity. Everyone is in a hurry—it's bustling.
B. “contemplation”	If we remember option A in Part A, as a city isn't serious, it also doesn't think, at least not literally.
C. “iconic”	This word describes the Americans who fought and died at the Alamo. It doesn't add to our understanding of how the city is being described.
D. “tranquil”	This is a near-antonym to “bustling,” but doesn't provide us with enough context to help us figure out that “bustling” means “active.”