

7 Strategies For Using Context Clues In Reading

1. Word Parts

The idea: Break down the different parts of a word—base word (word stem or root word), prefixes, and suffixes—to figure out what it means. Some words have a prefix only (reread), a suffix only (reading), both a prefix and a suffix (prereading), a combination (unreadableness), or neither (read).

Discrimination

Dis-: not, opposite of, reverse, deprive of; apart, away

crimin: verdict, judicial decision; judgment

tion: indicates the word is a noun

2. Definition/explanation

The idea: Look for a definition or an explanation within the sentence.

- Discrimination or unfairly targeting one or more groups by those who perceive themselves to be superior can cause distress.
- Vulnerable people are oftentimes in need of protection under certain laws so others cannot take advantage of them.

3. Synonym

The idea: Words next to the unknown word can be a clue that there is a synonym.

- Discrimination or bias can cause distress toward the targeted group.
- When people know they are vulnerable or defenseless, they tend to protect themselves to avoid harm.

4. Example

The idea: Providing examples of the unknown word can give readers a clue to meaning.

- Like shunning smokers in restaurants by making them satisfy their habit outside, discrimination targets a perceived undesirable group.
- Vulnerable people, such as young children, the elderly, or handicapped individuals, might have protections under certain laws.

5. Antonym/contrast

The idea: opposite information about the unknown word can be offset by words and phrases such as unlike, as opposed to, different from.

- Discrimination, as opposed to fairness for all people, can have damaging effects on a targeted group.
- Vulnerable people, unlike those who can stand up for themselves, tend to be the target of unethical or dangerous individuals.

6. Analogy

The idea: Comparisons of the word help to determine what it means.

- The ill effects of discrimination are like hateful, wicked tendrils gripping the heart.
- Vulnerable people can be like fragile glass in need of care and attention.

7. Appositive

The idea: Look for the grammatical structure of appositives which can provide a definition, synonym, or example.

- Discrimination, the act of showing bias to one group, can have damaging effects.
- The elderly and handicapped, a vulnerable group of individuals, have laws to protect them from unethical individuals.