

GUESSING WORD MEANING FROM CONTEXT

Being able to guess the meaning of a word we don't know from the context of its sentence is a very useful skill to have, especially in the reading exam. Look at the following sentence:

'In cold countries in winter motorcyclists wear mittens to keep their hands and fingers warm'.

In the above sentence, if we don't know the meaning of 'mittens', we can guess it from other words in the sentence. What do people wear on their hands to keep them warm? Answer: *gloves*. So, 'mittens' are a type of glove.

Now, guess the meanings of the underlined words in the sentences below and say how you were able to guess them.

1] He was buoyant about doing his final exam, because he'd passed all his previous tests with high marks.

How would you feel if you passed all your exams? This is the meaning of the underlined word.

2] Famous people don't like being photographed by paparazzi, especially when they're on holiday or doing normal, everyday things like shopping.

Who photographs famous people as part of their job? This is the meaning of the underlined word.

3] The houses have been empty for years; they seem to be abandoned.

Are there any people living in them?

What's the meaning of the underlined word?

4] Peter felt exasperated; for five hours he'd been trying to repair his car, but he couldn't start the engine.

How would you feel if you'd spent five hours trying to repair your car and couldn't do it?

What's the meaning of the underlined word?

5] I will only buy a second hand car from a reputable garage.

What would you need to know about a garage before you buy a second hand car from it? This is the meaning of the underlined word.

6] He'd spent all night sleeping in a park, so his hair was dirty and tousled.

What would your hair be like if you'd spent all night sleeping outside in a park? This is the meaning of the underlined word.

7] The transition from school to university is quite difficult for many students.

Why is studying at school different to studying at university? This is the meaning of the underlined word.

8] Ibrahim was reluctant to show his essay to the other students; he thought they might copy it and say it was their work.

Would you show your essay to someone if you didn't want anyone to copy your work? This is the meaning of the underlined word.

9] I could see from the cricket ball's trajectory that it was going to smash the window before it hit it.

Where did the cricket ball go before it hit the window? This is the meaning of the underlined word.

10] Search teams are still looking for those who were unaccounted for after the airplane crashed.

Were search teams able to find those people? This is the meaning of the underlined word.
