

# Clue or Check

Choose the best strategy for an unfamiliar word.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4** “Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.”

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## USE CONTEXT CLUES

Use context clues when nearby words give a definition, synonym, example, or description of the unfamiliar word.

The lantern was luminous, meaning it gave off light.

## USE A REFERENCE TOOL

Use a dictionary or glossary when nearby words do not tell the word's exact meaning. This works well for precise academic terms.

For the exact meaning of monarch in a history chapter, check a glossary or dictionary.

## 1 SORT 8 items

Circle CONTEXT or REFERENCE for each item, then choose two items and explain the clues or tool choice that helped you decide.

- |    |                                                                                    |                               |                                 |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | The trail was treacherous, or dangerous and hard to travel, after the rain.        | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |
| 2. | Mira was reluctant to speak because she felt unsure and hesitant.                  | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |
| 3. | The lab team recorded the solution's viscosity.                                    | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |
| 4. | The chef's bland soup had little flavor, even with salt.                           | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |
| 5. | The historian studied the treaty's ratification.                                   | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |
| 6. | The diagram showed the molecule's valence electrons.                               | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |
| 7. | The fledgling bird, still young and learning to fly, hopped from branch to branch. | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |
| 8. | The room was cramped, with barely enough space for everyone.                       | <input type="radio"/> CONTEXT | <input type="radio"/> REFERENCE |

## 2 PROVE IT Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_ HOW I KNEW \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_ HOW I KNEW \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 3 MAKE YOUR OWN One of each

Write one new sentence for CONTEXT and one new sentence for REFERENCE.

CONTEXT \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### CHALLENGE

Write one sentence using a multiple-meaning word. Add context clues that show its meaning, then write the meaning in 3 to 6 words.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## PART 1 • SORT

| # | ITEM                                                                               | CATEGORY  | WHY                                                              |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | The trail was treacherous, or dangerous and hard to travel, after the rain.        | CONTEXT   | The phrase "dangerous and hard to travel" defines treacherous.   |
| 2 | Mira was reluctant to speak because she felt unsure and hesitant.                  | CONTEXT   | The words "unsure and hesitant" explain reluctant.               |
| 3 | The lab team recorded the solution's viscosity.                                    | REFERENCE | No nearby words explain the precise science term viscosity.      |
| 4 | The chef's bland soup had little flavor, even with salt.                           | CONTEXT   | The phrase "had little flavor" explains bland.                   |
| 5 | The historian studied the treaty's ratification.                                   | REFERENCE | No context clue gives the exact meaning of ratification.         |
| 6 | The diagram showed the molecule's valence electrons.                               | REFERENCE | No nearby words explain the academic term valence electrons.     |
| 7 | The fledgling bird, still young and learning to fly, hopped from branch to branch. | CONTEXT   | The phrase "still young and learning to fly" explains fledgling. |
| 8 | The room was cramped, with barely enough space for everyone.                       | CONTEXT   | The phrase "barely enough space" explains cramped.               |

## PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

## PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **CONTEXT:** The pond was shallow, so the water was not deep.
- **REFERENCE:** The engineer calculated the bridge's load capacity.

**Challenge:** The baseball player slid into home plate. Meaning: base a runner tries to reach.

Accept CONTEXT when the sentence directly explains the target word through nearby language. Accept REFERENCE when the sentence gives no definition or description that reveals the term's precise meaning.