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.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
2.	Mira was reluctant to speak because she felt unsure and hesitant.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
3.	The lab team recorded the solution's viscosity.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
4.	The chef's bland soup had little flavor, even with salt.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
5.	The historian studied the treaty's ratification.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
6.	The diagram showed the molecule's valence electrons.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
7.	The fledgling bird, still young and learning to fly, hopped from branch to branch.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
8.	The room was cramped, with barely enough space for everyone.	CONTEXT 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.

ANSWER KEY

Clue or Check

GRADE 6 · L.6.4

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