

Clue Type Sort

Decide whether context tells or suggests a word's meaning.

9-10L4a "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."

NAME _____

DATE _____

DIRECT CLUE

A direct clue gives the meaning near the unfamiliar word, often with a definition or synonym.

The hikers carried **portable** stoves, which were easy to move from place to place.

INFERENCE CLUE

An inference clue gives details that suggest the meaning. Put the details together to infer the word's meaning.

The toddler was **reluctant** to enter the water, clinging to her father's hand at the pool's edge.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle DIRECT or INFERRED for each sentence, then for Part 2, choose two items and explain which words or details helped you decide.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The path was treacherous , meaning dangerous and difficult to travel. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |
| 2. The auditorium was vacant , or completely empty, before the concert. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |
| 3. After a tedious afternoon of copying names, Luis was relieved to finish. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |
| 4. The medic treated the severe injury, a wound serious enough to require stitches. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |
| 5. Nora's sarcastic "Wonderful timing" came after the bus pulled away just as she arrived. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |
| 6. The old bridge was unstable , or likely to fall or change suddenly. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |
| 7. At the formal ceremony, Jamal wore a solemn expression and did not smile or joke. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |
| 8. The coach asked the team to be resilient , able to recover quickly after a loss. | ☐ DIRECT | ☐ INFERRED |

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 two original sentences: one with a DIRECT clue and one with an INFERRED clue for an unfamiliar word. Underline the unfamiliar word in each sentence.

DIRECT

INFERRED

CHALLENGE

Write a two-sentence mini-passage that uses two different INFERRED clues for one unfamiliar word, without directly defining the word.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The path was treacherous , meaning dangerous and difficult to travel.	DIRECT	The phrase "meaning dangerous and difficult to travel" directly defines treacherous.
2	The auditorium was vacant , or completely empty, before the concert.	DIRECT	The phrase "or completely empty" directly defines vacant.
3	After a tedious afternoon of copying names, Luis was relieved to finish.	INFERRED	Copying names all afternoon and feeling relieved suggest that tedious means long, dull, or repetitive.
4	The medic treated the severe injury, a wound serious enough to require stitches.	DIRECT	The phrase "a wound serious enough to require stitches" directly explains severe.
5	Nora's sarcastic "Wonderful timing" came after the bus pulled away just as she arrived.	INFERRED	The missed bus and the ironic comment suggest that sarcastic means mocking or not sincere.
6	The old bridge was unstable , or likely to fall or change suddenly.	DIRECT	The phrase "or likely to fall or change suddenly" directly defines unstable.
7	At the formal ceremony, Jamal wore a solemn expression and did not smile or joke.	INFERRED	Not smiling or joking at a formal ceremony suggests that solemn means serious.
8	The coach asked the team to be resilient , able to recover quickly after a loss.	DIRECT	The phrase "able to recover quickly after a loss" directly defines resilient.

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)

- **DIRECT**: The artist's design was **symmetrical**, with matching halves on both sides.
- **INFERRED**: The **parched** travelers drank every drop from their canteens during the desert hike.

Challenge: During the blackout, the **resourceful** neighbors used flashlight batteries to power a radio and cooked dinner on a small camp stove. When rain began, they stretched a tarp between two cars to keep everyone dry.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify an explicit definition or synonym for DIRECT, or details that require a conclusion for INFERRED. For Part 3 and the challenge, check that the context clues match the category the student claims.