Clue or Consult?

Decide when context is enough and when a reference is needed.

9-10L4 "Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CONTEXT IS ENOUGH

Use context when nearby words clearly show what an unfamiliar word means. Look for a definition, example, contrast, or result.

When the puppy was *timid*, it hid behind the chair instead of greeting visitors.

USE A REFERENCE

Use a reference when nearby words do not reveal a word's meaning clearly enough. A dictionary, glossary, or reliable subject source can help.

The speaker used the word *set*.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle CONTEXT or REFERENCE for each item, then for Part 2, choose two items and explain which words gave enough information or why you would use a reference.

1.	After hiking all day without water, Nia was *parched*, or extremely thirsty.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
2.	The artist's *composition* impressed the judges.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
3.	The abandoned building was *derelict*, with broken windows and a roof that had collapsed.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
4.	The jury's verdict was *unanimous*: every juror agreed.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
5.	Jordan made a *novel* proposal.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
6.	Mira wore a *plain* dress.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
7.	The mayor's *frugal* budget avoided unnecessary spending.	CONTEXT REFERENCE
8.	The loud alarm *pierced* the silence, breaking it suddenly.	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

For Part 3, write one new sentence in which context clearly explains an unfamiliar word, then write one new sentence in which a reference would be needed.

CONTEXT _____

REFERENCE _____

CHALLENGE

Write a sentence in which an unfamiliar word has a specialized meaning, then name the reference source you would use to clarify it.

ANSWER KEY # Clue or Consult?

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	After hiking all day without water, Nia was *parched*, or extremely thirsty.	**CONTEXT**	The phrase "or extremely thirsty" directly defines parched.
2	The artist's *composition* impressed the judges.	**REFERENCE**	The sentence does not explain the precise meaning of composition.
3	The abandoned building was *derelict*, with broken windows and a roof that had collapsed.	**CONTEXT**	The details describe a neglected, ruined building.
4	The jury's verdict was *unanimous*: every juror agreed.	**CONTEXT**	The phrase "every juror agreed" defines unanimous.
5	Jordan made a *novel* proposal.	**REFERENCE**	The context does not provide enough information to determine the precise meaning of novel.
6	Mira wore a *plain* dress.	**REFERENCE**	The sentence does not clarify whether plain means simple, unpatterned, or another meaning.
7	The mayor's *frugal* budget avoided unnecessary spending.	**CONTEXT**	Avoiding unnecessary spending shows that frugal means careful with money.
8	The loud alarm *pierced* the silence, breaking it suddenly.	**CONTEXT**	"Breaking it suddenly" shows how the alarm affected the silence.

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**: Because the trail was *treacherous*, with loose rocks and icy ledges, we moved slowly.
- **REFERENCE**: Ava's *charge* changed after the meeting.

Challenge: In the biology article, the researcher described the cells' *culture*. I would use a biology glossary because *culture* has a specialized meaning in this context.

Items 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8 are CONTEXT. Items 2, 5, and 6 are REFERENCE. In Part 2, accept explanations that identify a defining clue or explain why the available context is insufficient and name an appropriate reference.