



USING CONTEXT CLUES WITH SIGNAL WORDS

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Preparing
for the
2014 GED®
Reasoning
through
Language
Arts
Module

Using Context Clues with Signal Words

The instruction and activities included in this lesson are aligned with the GED® Reasoning through Language Arts Reading Standards. (R.4.1/L.4.1, R.4.2/L.4.2, R.4.3/L.4.3)

Him: "I'm still flummoxed as to what to do!"

Her: "Huh! What's *flummoxed*?"

Her Conscience: "Pay attention to the other words in the sentence, the answer is right in front of your ears."

Her: "There's nothing there."

Her Conscience: "I'll show you."

Introduction

This 5-day lesson is designed to improve students' understanding of the use of context clues via signal words as a strategy to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Students will learn about the different types of context clues, as well as their respective signal words. The gradual release model strategy - I Do, We Do, You Do - will be used for the instruction and practice of these 15-30 minute a day lessons.

Materials Needed

Presenter:

Computer
Smart Board
PowerPoint Presentation (provided)
References (provided)
Activities (provided)

Student:

Computer access for online practice
(optional)

Learning Objective

Students will be able to use context clues signal words to determine the relevant meaning of unfamiliar words.

Essential Questions - The essential questions will guide the instruction.

1. How do context clues help discover the meaning of unfamiliar words?
2. How do context clues signal words assist in attaining the meaning of unfamiliar words?

Vocabulary

Context Clues

Signal Words:

Definition or Restatement

Compare

Cause and Effect

Synonym

Contrast

Description or Inference

Antonym

Example or List

References

R-4: How to Use Context Clues Signal Words

R-0: Before the Lesson

R-1_ R-2: Activating Strategy Images

R-3: Context Clues Signal Words Chart

Activities

A-1/2/3: Context Clues Activity – Apply the Skill

A-4: Context Clues Graphic Organizer

(DAY 1) BEFORE THE LESSON – I DO/WE DO

Objective: Determine student readiness – Help students recall their encounter with an unfamiliar word. You will ask questions to which students will respond. You will record their answers.

Needed: Smart Board + R-0 & R-1 to project.

- **On the Smart Board**, project R-0.
- **Say:** *What strategies have you used, if any, when you've read, seen, or heard an unfamiliar word?*
 - *Did you use a strategy to find the meaning?* This column will record the student's strategies.
Or,
 - *Did you move on without finding the meaning?* This column will record the students' reason.
- **Ask:** *Have you ever been in a situation, while reading any type of text, where you've encountered an unfamiliar word? If so, how did you determine the meaning of that word?* Students can come up to the Smart Board and write their answers in the corresponding column.
- **Ask:** *Do you believe you had a better understanding or no understanding of the passage?* Write the YES/NO answers for each group under the corresponding column.
- **Ask:** *Based on your experience, do you think it is important to understand the meaning of those unfamiliar words in order to have a better comprehension? Why?* Write the students' reasons on the Smart Board.
- **Explain** that it is very common to find unfamiliar words in passages, as some or all of them have experienced. Each time you run across a word you don't know and can't figure out, you run the risk of not being able to understand the whole sentence, the whole paragraph, or even the whole story.
- **On the Smart Board**, write the following sentence: *Lesson Focus: Using Context Clues and signal words to find the meaning of unfamiliar words.*
- **Say:** *This lesson will focus on the use of context clues signal words as a strategy to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, with the help of signal words.*
- **Point out** to students that you underlined *strategy* because it is very important to have an approach to find the meaning of a word, and more importantly know what to look for.
- **Say:** *How do context clues work?*
- **Display** R-1 and have students identify what they see in the pictures. (Students can write their guesses on the provided piece of paper or in their notebooks.)
- **Ask:** *What do you see? Identify as many objects as you can.* Follow the same procedure for all the images. After showing the series of pictures, reveal the zoomed out image of the original pictures shown.
- **Ask:** *Is this what you guessed for number...?*
 - If students say yes, ask them how they were able to identify the content of the pictures.
 - Sample answers: *I have seen this before; I saw this (feature) of the object, etc.*
- **Explain** to students that they just used the clues found in the context to attain meaning.

- **Point out** that the same method they used to figure out the content of the picture is the same method that will be used in a text. They used the context, and features of the object to determine meaning.
 - Note: If some students say no, show them (or have classmates share) how they used the clues from the pictures to find the name of the objects.
- **On the Smart Board**, write the following sentence:
His pertinacity, or stubbornness, is the cause of most of his trouble.
- **Directions:** Have students determine the meaning of the underlined word. If they are able to find the meaning, ask them how they did it. If not, model for students how to find the meaning. Circle the signal word *or*, and underline in a different color the word *stubbornness*. Explain that in this sentence, *or*, is the signal that pointed out the type of context clue being used; a synonym. Therefore, *pertinacity* and *stubbornness* have about the same meaning.

(DAY 2-3-4) DURING THE LESSON – I DO/WE DO/YOU DO

DAY 2 - Objective: Preview the skill – Provide students with a definition of context clues.

Needed: Smart Board

- **Explain:** As we have seen so far, readers can use context clues to make informed guesses about the meanings of unfamiliar words by examining the surrounding details (context) in a sentence or paragraph signaled by key words. Understanding the meaning of words within a passage is one of the key skills needed to master reading comprehension. Here is the definition of context clues.
- **Write on Smart Board.** Students will write the definition in their notebooks.
Context Clues is a method by which the meanings of unknown words may be obtained by examining the parts of a sentence surrounding the word for definition/explanation clues, restatement/synonym clues, contrast/antonym clues, and inference/general context clues. Each type of context clue is signaled by a key word. In short, both clues and signals give hints about a word's meaning. (Source: www.dictionary.reference.com)

DAY 2 + DAY 3 - Objective: Learn and Practice the skill

Needed: Smart Board + PowerPoint + Project R-3 + R-4 + Copy R-3 + R-4

PowerPoint Content: The presentation includes the definitions and examples of the different types of context clues. Also included are several practice website links that can be used as additional practice with the class as guided or independent practice.

Note:

- Teacher should talk through each slide in detail. Enrich the presentation with your own teaching of the material.
- R-3 and R-4 copies should be distributed to students. It will be referenced to throughout the PowerPoint presentation.
- Project R-3 – Use it as a reference for each context clues types. Focus on the signal words.
- R-4 – Use it as a reference to t
- Slides 14-18: Teacher should model the first exercise of each slide by highlighting the signal words and how meaning was attained using the “Think Aloud” strategy.

- **Optional:** Slide 19: Student may take a pretest before practicing via the links provided on slide 20. After practicing, they may also complete the posttest located on the same slide. Activities may be graded.
- **Optional:** Slide 20: YOU DO activity - Students can continue to practice on their own on their computers for a given amount of time.

DAY 4 - Objective: Apply the skill

Needed: Smart Board + Project R-3 + R-4 + A-1/2/3/4 + Copy R-3 + R-4 + A-1/2/3/4

- **Explain:** *Now that we have learned how to find the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues, we are going to apply the skills learned to excerpts from nonfiction texts. One of the activities will be a model practice where I will first show you how to use context clues in a passage. During this time, you will only listen. Next, during a guided practice, we will go over another excerpt, as a class, to find the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Then, as an independent practice, you will apply the knowledge learned to the last excerpt. We will also be using the following handouts: graphic organizer, quick reference guide, and the how to find context clues. The last two will be used for reference purposes as necessary.*
 - Note: Distribute the references and activities to students so they can use along for the activity.
- **Project** the first text A-1: *Crash No Crime* (scanned page provided – another text maybe used).
- **Draw** the context clue organizer next to the text. You will use it to write down the answers to your questions as you go through the modeling strategy.
- **Modeling – I DO:**
 - **Teacher reads the paragraph aloud** – Explain to students that you will read aloud from the text and then demonstrates examples of the thinking process that good and skilled readers use to understand how using context clues can improve comprehension.

Note: Before reading, be sure to use pre-reading strategies

Ask questions	Make a connection
Make a prediction	Visualize
 - **Teacher locates the unfamiliar word(s)** – Use a signal to let students know that you are now in thinking mode (you can make the “Hmm” sound)
 1. What words do I not understand?
 2. Underline the words
 3. Using the Context Clues Graphic Organizer, write the sentence(s), as well as the unfamiliar word(s) in the appropriate spaces provided
 4. Read before and after the word. Read around the word. – Are there words or information in the sentences before and after the word that can help me?
 5. Write down the words that help you find the meaning of the word (context clues)
 6. Write down what you think the word means (predict) – What do I think the word means?
 7. Check to make sure your prediction makes sense (reread) – Does my meaning make sense in the passage?
 8. Check meaning in a dictionary (Tell Students: This step is only available for class. During the test, you will not have access to a dictionary. Using a dictionary is a confirmation that we do not need them to determine meaning when we have context clues.)
- **Guided Practice – WE DO:**

A-2 Text: *Budget Deal*

The article may be projected on the Smart Board, viewed on the student's computers and/or printed. Repeat the same procedure as a whole group, and assist students throughout the process.

• **Independent Practice – YOU DO:**

A-3 Text: *Bachelet Is Back*

Students will work independently and apply the same procedure to attain meaning.

(DAY 5) AFTER THE LESSON – WE DO / YOU DO

DAY 5 - Objective: Skill Review + Extension

Directions: Write on the whiteboard the highlights of the lesson to finding context clues. Students will be asked to copy the prompts/highlights from the board in their notebooks for future reference and to be used as a study guide.

A catchphrase to the poster could be the following:

Whether it is a picture or a text, one may rely on the surrounding elements or words to infer an artist's or author's meaning.

Note: After completing all activities, the teacher can go over the post-test assessment answers with the class and use the guiding questions as needed to model how to arrive at the correct answer for any questions where the class showed widespread difficulty.

Say: *You have acquired one of the most necessary reading comprehension skills, the ability to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues.*

Know that understanding context clues is only the tip of the iceberg for achieving reading comprehension. Writers also use figurative language, multiple meaning words, homographs, connotations, as well as other literary devices. Interpreting words in context is not a simple task, but with the right strategies, you will have the ability to analyze the impact of a writer's word choice. The latter will in turn influence the writer's tone, or attitude, towards a topic (objective – provides facts and explanations about the topic- or subjective- may provide facts and explanations along with his or her feelings, judgments and opinions about the topic).

As a preview to the next lesson, for your home learning activity, you (students) will complete the following assignments:

1. Find and read a literacy nonfiction passage. Using the knowledge acquired throughout the context clues lesson, find 3 unfamiliar words, and determine their meanings.
2. In the same literacy nonfiction passage, and using a highlighter, select words and phrases that indicate the tone of the passage.
3. Be prepared to answer the following questions:
 - Although you have learned about context clues, do you still find some words that confuse you?
 - How does the author feel about the topic he or she is writing about?
 - How did you feel after reading the passage? Did the author's word choice make you feel that way?
 - Were you able to figure out the author's intent or purpose?
4. Exit Slip:
Instruct students to answer the essential question of your choice in their notebooks.

R-1 Guess the Picture



1



2



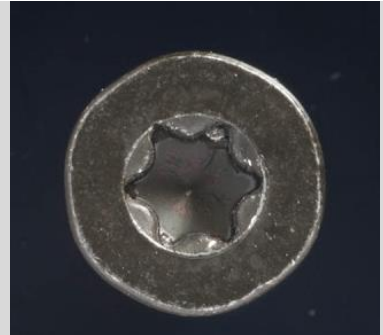
3



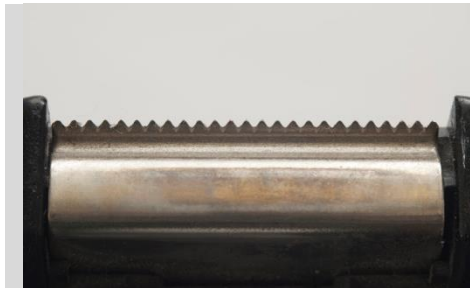
4



5



6



7



8



9

R-2 Layout created by Caroline Laroche (January 2014)
Images Source: <http://floorsix.blogspot.com>

R-2 Guess the Picture ANSWERS



1



2



3



4



5



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9

R-2 Layout created by Caroline Laroche (January 2014)
Images Source: <http://floorsix.blogspot.com>

R-3 Context Clues Signal Words Chart

Note: This table is meant to be used as a quick reference guide to assist students in identifying some of the words that can be used to pinpoint the type of context clue used.

CONTEXT CLUES	EXPLANATION	COMMON SIGNAL WORDS	EXAMPLE
DEFINITION/ RESTATEMENT	the unfamiliar word is defined in a dictionary form or casual form	<i>are, is, or, that is, also known as, which is to say, sometimes called, meaning, is defines as, means,</i> Note: commas, parentheses and dashes that set a word or phrase apart from the rest of the sentence could also be a signal	A vegetarian <u>is a person that does eat, or believe in eating any food derived from animals.</u>
SYNONYM	a word is similar in meaning to the unfamiliar word	<i>likewise, like, especially, or, in that, similarly, in other words, that is, and</i> Note: commas, parentheses and dashes that set a word or phrase apart from the rest of the sentence could also be a signal	His simple glance was a harbinger of danger. That is , his eyes were <u>signs foretelling</u> rough waters in their relationship.
ANTONYM	a word is opposite in meaning to the unfamiliar word	<i>different, unlike, though, opposite, by contrast, but, some...but others, on the other hand, not, despite, although, yet, then again, whereas</i>	Now they were <u>confident</u> , despite their usual diffidence . Diffidence = Lacking confidence
EXAMPLE/ LIST	examples of the unfamiliar word are given through what the word or phrase might be like, not what they have in common	<i>such as, for example, including, for instance, in one case</i>	Some animals are omnivores . Bears, for instance , <u>eat whatever meat or plants they can find.</u>
CAUSE & EFFECT	if this happens... this will happen	<i>Because, so, therefore, consequently, since, as a result, if... then, due to</i>	Because the horse was so fatigued , he <u>collapsed before he finished.</u> Fatigued = tired
COMPARE & CONTRAST	when comparing, you are determining how to words are alike when contrasting, you are determining how to words are different	<i>especially, like, likewise, also, and, as well as, that resembling, identical, similar to, as, in the same way unlike, on the other hand, in contrast to, on the contrary, however, different from</i>	My brother is enthralled by birds similar to the way that I am <u>fascinated</u> by insects.
DESCRIPTION/ INFERENCE	use your background knowledge, logical guess, and context clues to determine meaning	n/a	<u>When Joe's dog passed away</u> , he was filled with grief . You know that if your cat died, you will feel sad.

R-3 Table created by Caroline Laroche (January 2014)

R-4 How to Use Context Clues Signal Words

DEFINITION AND RESTATEMENT	COMPARISON AND CONTRAST	CAUSE AND EFFECT	EXAMPLE	INFERENCE GENERAL SENSE
<p>Definition: Directly tells the meaning of the word</p> <p>Restatement: Restates the meaning of the word in easier language</p>	<p>Comparison clue: suggests the meaning of a word by telling what it is like -</p> <p>Contrast clue: suggests the meaning of a word by telling what it is unlike</p>	<p>Cause-and-effect clue: words describing an action in which a cause or effect suggests the meaning of an unfamiliar word</p>	<p>Example clue: one or more examples that suggest the meaning of a new word</p>	<p>Inference: drawing a conclusion based on evidence</p>
<p>Step 1: Identify the word. Ask yourself, Which word or words are unfamiliar?</p> <p>Step 2: Use context. You can often determine a word's meaning from the surrounding words, or context. Look for more familiar words, phrases, or sentences surrounding a new or unfamiliar word.</p> <p>Step 3: Look for restatement clues. In a restatement clue, the writer says the same thing in a different way.</p> <p>Step 4: Look for definition clues. The context defines, or tells, the meaning of the word.</p> <p>Step 5: Define the unfamiliar word. Once you have defined the word, it is a good idea to write it and its definition in a special notebook. Try using the word in a sentence.</p>	<p>Step 1: Identify the word. Ask yourself, Which word or words are unfamiliar?</p> <p>Step 2: Use context. Look for clues in the surrounding words, or context.</p> <p>Step 3: Look for comparison clues. These describe something with a similar quality or nature to the unfamiliar or unusual word.</p> <p>Step 4: Look for contrast clues. In a contrast clue, the writer describes something unlike or very different from the unfamiliar word.</p> <p>Step 5: Define the word. Using the clues, try out a definition. Substitute your definition in place of the word to see if it makes sense.</p>	<p>Step 1: Identify the unfamiliar word. When you see an unfamiliar word, try pronouncing it.</p> <p>Step 2: Use context. You can often guess a word's meaning using context. Look for familiar words, phrases, or sentences surrounding a new or unfamiliar word.</p> <p>Step 3: Look for cause-and-effect relationships. Words explaining the reason behind an action, process, or condition signal a cause-effect relationship. Look for phrases telling why something happens. Such word groups often contain the following:</p> <p>Step 4: Define the word. Ask yourself whether the unfamiliar word is part of a cause or an effect. Then determine the cause-effect relationship, and use it to define the word.</p> <p>Step 5: Find the word in a dictionary. Check to see if you've pronounced and defined the word correctly. Write the word and its definition in a notebook. Write a sentence that uses the new word.</p>	<p>Step 1: Identify the unfamiliar word. Ask yourself: Which word don't I know?</p> <p>Step 2: Use context. You can often determine a word's meaning from the surrounding words, or context. Look for familiar words, phrases, or sentences surrounding a new or unfamiliar word.</p> <p>Step 3: Look for examples. In an example clue, the writer lists examples that suggest the meaning of the new word.</p> <p>Step 4: Define the word. Ask yourself how the examples relate to the unfamiliar word.</p> <p>Step 5: Look up the unfamiliar word in a dictionary. Write the word and its definition in a special notebook. Include a sentence that uses the new word.</p>	<p>Step 1: Read the entire passage. Try reading an entire paragraph or more to get the sense of what an unfamiliar word might mean.</p> <p>Step 2: Look carefully at the unfamiliar word. There may be parts of the word you are familiar with from words whose definitions you know.</p> <p>Step 3: Look for details to shed light on the word's meaning. Rely on prior knowledge and your general sense of the passage's meaning. Focus on phrases that suggest the meaning of the unfamiliar word.</p>

R-4 Table layout created by Caroline Laroche

Source: <http://woosteramericanlit.wikispaces.com/file/view/Context+Clues.pdf>

A-1 Context Clues – Apply the Skill

New York City

Crash no crime: Investigators say it's unlikely that criminal charges will be brought against William Rockefeller, the motorman who dozed off just before his commuter train barreled into a 30 mph curve at 82 mph earlier this month, causing it to derail and killing four people. A law-enforcement source reportedly said that a breath test showed that Rockefeller had not been drinking before the Metro North crash, that his cellphone was off at the time of the accident, and that he had gone to bed at 8:30 p.m. the night before he entered the cabin of the 5:45 a.m. Manhattan-bound train. There were no other contributing factors to be found, said the source. "Falling asleep, by itself, is fundamentally not a crime," he added. Rockefeller's lawyer said his client remains "devastated" by the accident.

TEXT 1

Source: The Week, issue December 27, 2013

A-2 Context Clues – Apply the Skill

Washington, D.C.

Budget deal: The Senate this week passed a two-year budget agreement, ending nearly three years of political gridlock and reducing the chances of a government shutdown early next year. The compromise bill, negotiated by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), easily passed the House last week in a 332–94 vote, and this week it won approval from 64 senators—including nine Republicans. Several Republican and Democratic senators came out against the deal, however. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) was among the conservatives attacking the bill’s cuts to military benefits, while liberals expressed dismay that the measure didn’t extend unemployment benefits. The compromise agreement is a rare example of congressional bipartisanship, but that could fade when the question of raising the debt ceiling arises again in the spring.

TEXT 2

Source: The Week, issue December 27, 2013

A-3 Context Clues – Apply the Skill

Santiago, Chile

Bachelet is back: After one term off, Socialist Michelle Bachelet has been elected president of Chile again in a landslide. Bachelet defeated her conservative rival, Evelyn Matthei, with 62 percent of the vote in the continent's first all-female race. She praised the hundreds of thousands of Chileans who have demonstrated in recent years for free higher education and better public schools, promising to deliver both by raising taxes. Bachelet's first term coincided with a global boom in demand for copper, Chile's main export, and she was able to reform the pension system and boost social services. Now, though, she takes office as demand for copper is slumping.

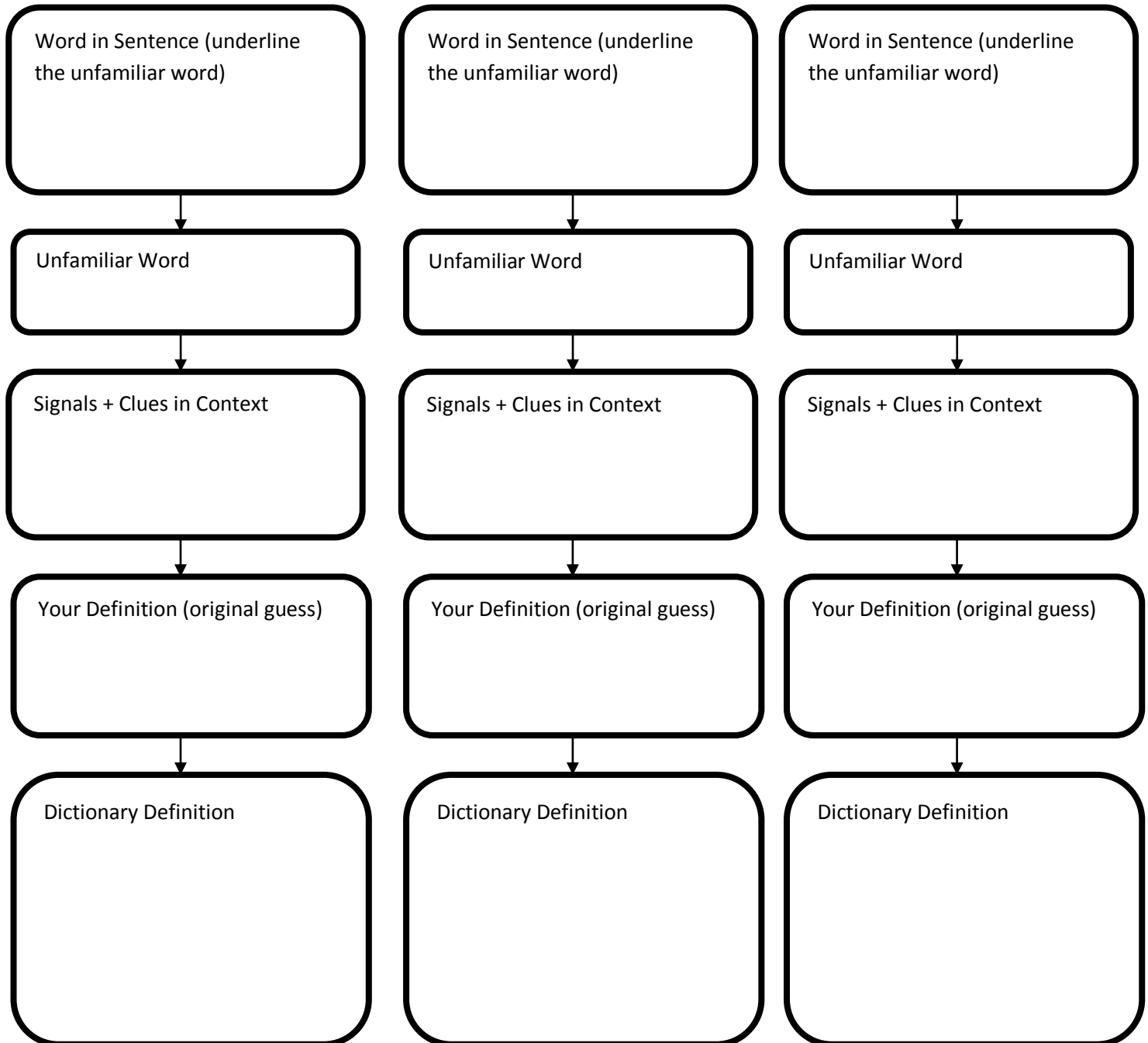


TEXT 3

Source: The Week, issue December 27, 2013

A-4 Context Clues Graphic Organizer

Note: This organizer is meant to be used as a tool to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in a passage, text, or excerpt of a fiction or non-fiction text.



A-4 Organizer created by Caroline Laroche (January 2014)

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What do you think now? Interested in trying this lesson in your classroom? To download the lesson and handouts, just access the Florida TechNet website at floridatechnet.org. That's floridatechnet.org.