

GUESSING WORD MEANING FROM SENTENCE CONTEXT

Being able to guess the meaning of a word we don't know from the context of its sentence is a very useful skill to have. Look at the following sentence: *'In cold countries in winter motorcyclists wear mittens to keep their hands and fingers warm.'* In this sentence, if we don't know the meaning of 'mittens', we can guess it from other words in the sentence. What do people wear on their hands to keep them warm? Answer: gloves. So, mittens are a type of glove.

Now, try to guess the meanings of the underlined words in the sentences below. How you were able to guess them? You should look at the sentences in *italics*.

1. *He was feeling buoyant, he'd passed all his previous tests with high marks.* How would you feel if you passed all your exams? This is the meaning of the underlined word.
2. *Is the goal of getting rid of hunger throughout the world just a chimera?* Is this something which is easy to do? This is the meaning of the underlined word.
3. *The apotheosis of my career was when I became managing director of the company.* Was this the high point or low point of my career? That's the meaning of the underlined word.
4. *Rick gave a long eulogy about his friend at his funeral.* What do people usually say in church at a funeral service about a person who has just died?
5. *She was fulminating about the dangers and anti-social quality of smoking.* How did she feel about smoking? How was she speaking about it?
6. *Talking about stolen goods as 'having fallen off a truck' is a common euphemism.* Is this really what had happened to the goods? Does the expression 'having fallen off a truck' sound better or worse than what really happened? So, what is a euphemism?
7. *Many people enjoy the vicarious thrill of watching sports on television.* Do these people just watch sports or take part in them? This is the meaning of the underlined word.
8. *Some people from rich, aristocratic families adopt a supercilious attitude when talking to poor, lower class or uneducated people.*
9. *He's a peripatetic music teacher, he doesn't only work for one school.* What does he have to do when he's working?
10. *You can learn a new language by osmosis if you're living in a country where that language is spoken, even if you don't study it.* How is this possible?
11. *That car is so old and decrepit, I can't believe it's still running.* What condition might a very old car be in?
12. *The general was so garrulous no one had a chance to answer him.* What was the general doing? Why couldn't people answer him?