



# Vocabulary

**Grade 5 Unit 1:** Personal Narratives: Let Me Tell You a Story



## Context Clues

# Introduction: Context Clues



**Context clues** are the other words in a sentence and other sentences in a paragraph that help us determine the meaning of an unknown word.

Let's read this excerpt from "The First Real San Giving Day":

There we were: me and a twenty-one-pound turkey, lying on the pavement in the middle of a four-lane road just as the traffic light turned green and cars began honking **incessantly**.

To determine the meaning of the word **incessantly**, we can look at other words in the sentence and other sentences in the paragraph. These are called context clues.

Let's read it again:

There we were: me and a twenty-one-pound turkey, *lying on the pavement in the middle of a four-lane road* just as the *traffic light turned green* and cars began honking **incessantly**.

Based on our knowledge of the phrases *lying on the pavement*, *in the middle of the road*, and *the light turned green*, we can assume that **incessantly** means without stopping.

If you drop a turkey *in the middle of the road* when *the light turns green*, cars are going to honk non-stop!

Let's Try It Together!





Let's read another sentence from the personal narrative:

I took off my T-shirt and wrapped it around the turkey like I was **swaddling** a baby.

To determine the meaning of the word **swaddling**, we can look at other words in the sentence. These are context clues.

Now, let's read it again:

I took off my T-shirt and *wrapped it* around the turkey *like* I was **swaddling a baby**.

Based on your knowledge of the phrase *wrapped it like a baby*, what do you think **swaddling** means?

Have you seen someone *wrap a baby* in a blanket?

Put up one finger if you think **swaddling** means *wrapping up tightly*.

Put up two fingers if you think **swaddling** means *wrapping up loosely*.

Turn to a partner and discuss the context clues you used to determine that **swaddling** means *wrapping up tightly*.

Now you try one with a partner. Read the excerpt:

She looked up at me blankly, and I realized she couldn't understand "Thanksgiving" in my properly pronounced English. So I **blurted** it out the way most Cubans pronounced it, as if it were the name of a saint, "San Giving, Abuela, San Giving."

Based on context clues, do you think the word **blurted** means:

*said suddenly*

*said softly*

Did you remember the steps?



1. Look at the other words in the sentence and the other sentences in the paragraph.
2. Use your understanding of familiar words and phrases.

*looked at me blankly*

*She couldn't understand.*

3. Determine the meaning of the unknown word.

*said suddenly*

Now Try One by Yourself!



Read the following excerpt:

She slept on it for two days before making a decision: “Maybe you’re right. Maybe we’ll try San Giving how you say,” she **conceded**, with one condition.

Look for context clues to help determine the meaning of the word **conceded**.

Write your answer to the following questions:

Based on the context clues, what do you think **conceded** means?

What context clues did you use?

Answer



**Conceded** means admitted.

The context clues are *slept on it for two days* and *maybe...with one condition*.