Vocabulary in context: frankness vs. duplicity

A vocabulary-in-context question is answered by the sentence, not by a memorized...



Lesson `grev.vocab.V17`

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The idea

A vocabulary-in-context question is answered by the sentence, not by a memorized gloss. The sentence almost always plants a clue — a defining phrase, an example, a contrast, or a consequence — that pins down which meaning the writer intends.

What clue in the sentence fixes the intended meaning of the word, and what plain paraphrase does that clue predict?

Predict a paraphrase from the clue before reading the options. Then match, discarding opposites, wrong-nuance near-synonyms, wrong dictionary senses, and sound-alikes.

Watch every step

To skip the meeting, he feigned a migraine, pressing his temples and wincing though he felt perfectly fine.

As used in the sentence, 'feign' most nearly means

A. genuinely experience ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. faintly suggest ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. make a deceptive attacking move ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

D. pretend; fake

E. grow weak and dizzy ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why **D** — "pretend; fake." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

Now a harder one

Insisting the auction stay aboveboard, she posted every bid publicly so no one could suspect a secret arrangement.

As used in the sentence, 'aboveboard' most nearly means

A. secretive and underhanded ✗ *opposite-meaning*

✓ **B.** open and honest

C. generously charitable ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

D. elevated above the water line ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

E. on the upper deck ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why **B** — "open and honest." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

The method, in one line

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Predict a paraphrase from the clue before reading the options. Then match, discarding opposites, wrong-nuance near-synonyms, wrong dictionary senses, and sound-alikes.

Could my choice replace the word and preserve the sentence's logic? Have I resisted the opposite, the almost-right synonym, and the alternate sense the context rules out?

Watch out: two traps to dodge

opposite-meaning
Selects a meaning roughly opposite to the one the clue requires.

near-synonym-wrong-nuance
Selects a meaning in the right general family but with the wrong precise nuance for this sentence.

Name the trap before you pick — most wrong answers are one of these two.

Try it, then watch the walk-through

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