Vocabulary in context: assiduity vs. indolence

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



Lesson `grev.vocab.V20`

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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

The lecturer's droning voice made the whole hall somnolent, heads nodding and eyes drifting shut row by row.

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

A. wide awake and alert ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. mildly bored ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. walking while asleep ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

D. drowsy; inducing sleep

E. solemn and grave ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why **D** — "drowsy; inducing sleep." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

Now a harder one

The industrious apprentice arrived first and left last, filling every spare minute by cleaning tools or studying the master's notes.

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

A. chronically idle ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. merely busy-looking ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. relating to factories and industry ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

D. cleverly inventive ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

✓ **E.** hardworking; diligent

Why **E** — "hardworking; diligent." 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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Watch the walk-through