Vocabulary in context: intransigence vs. . .

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



Lesson `grev.vocab.V21`

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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

So complaisant was the new hire that he agreed to every request, eager to oblige whatever anyone asked.

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

- **A.** eager to please
- **B.** defiant and uncooperative ✗ *opposite-meaning*
- **C.** smugly self-satisfied ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*
- **D.** polite merely in words ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*
- **E.** full of complaints ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why **A** — "eager to please." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

Now a harder one

He was downright mulish about the route, planting his feet and refusing to try the shortcut no matter how the others reasoned with him.

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

A. easily persuaded ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. quietly hesitant ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. stubborn; obstinate

D. resembling a mule in appearance ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

E. soft and slushy ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why C — "stubborn; obstinate." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

The method, in one line

Vocabulary in context: intransigence vs. tractability

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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