Vocabulary in context: erudition and curiosity. . .

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



Lesson `grev.vocab.V23`

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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

Decades of isolation had made the community insular, suspicious of any idea or visitor from outside its valley.

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

A. open and outward-looking ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. merely shy ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. of or like an island ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

✓ **D.** narrow and closed-off

E. insultingly rude ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why D — "narrow and closed-off." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

Now a harder one

Though untutored in formal theory, the fisherman could predict the weather better than any meteorologist.

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

A. expertly trained ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. unintelligent ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. unsupervised or unguided ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

D. unspoken or unuttered ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

✓ **E.** lacking formal instruction

Why E — "lacking formal instruction." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

The method, in one line

Vocabulary in context: erudition and curiosity against...
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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