Vocabulary in context: clarity of understanding. . .

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



Lesson `grev.vocab.V24`

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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

A perspicacious reader, he caught the author's buried irony that most took at face value.

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

A. imperceptive ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. sharply discerning

C. widely well-read ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

D. clearly expressed and easy to follow ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

E. perspiring heavily ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why **B** — "sharply discerning." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

Now a harder one

After the concussion he was so addled he could not remember which day it was or how he had gotten home.

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

A. sharp and fully alert ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. mentally muddled

C. merely tired ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

D. rotten or spoiled, as an egg ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

E. agitated and angry ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why **B** — "mentally muddled." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

The method, in one line

Vocabulary in context: clarity of understanding 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

Explore this live

Watch the walk-through