Vocabulary in context: growth and flourishing vs. . . .

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



Lesson `grev.vocab.V29`

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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 startup began to burgeon overnight, its user base doubling each month as demand exploded.

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

A. to shrink away ✗ *opposite-meaning*

B. to hold steady ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*

C. to bud or sprout ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*

D. to grow rapidly

E. a middle-class merchant ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why **D** — "to grow rapidly." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

Now a harder one

The delta's fecund soil yielded three harvests a year, its richness feeding an entire region.

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

- **A.** highly fertile, productive
- **B.** barren and sterile ✗ *opposite-meaning*
- **C.** well-watered ✗ *near-synonym-wrong-nuance*
- **D.** prolific in ideas ✗ *wrong-dictionary-sense*
- **E.** second in order ✗ *sound-alike-or-association*

Why A — "highly fertile, productive." Choose the option closest to your predicted paraphrase.

The method, in one line

Vocabulary in context: growth and flourishing vs. decline. . .
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