

Word in Context Questions

Word-in-Context questions test your reasoning ability, reading comprehension and vocabulary.

The answer choices provide possible words to complete the sentence – and they all sound good! It's a trap! *Never* read the sentence and begin filling in the answer choices to see which sounds the best. Your job is to find the exact word that perfectly highlights the text's meaning.

Word-in-context questions, for the most part, revolve around positive and negative relationships. Are you looking for a *good* word, or are you looking for a *bad* word? To determine the charge of the word(s) needed:

- **Read the sentence/s carefully**
- **Take note of any thought reversers (but, yet, however, although) – thought reversers indicate a switch**
- **Take note of any “because” or colon – both indicate a direct definition**
- **Pick out a key word or phrase**
- **Anticipate an answer**
- **In the double blanks, attack one side and then go to the other side.**
- **Compare your prediction with each answer choice and pick the best match**

Fill in the blank with a + or – and then look at the answer choices. If you're looking for a positive word, eliminate any negative answer choices immediately. If you're looking for a negative word, eliminate any positive choices immediately. If you come to a word you do not know – skip it! Come back to it after you've eliminated everything that you know is *wrong*.

The word-in-context questions are not always about getting the *right answer*. Rather, they are about picking the *least wrong* answer. There will be some words you have never seen, heard or used before on this test, but don't let those words intimidate you. Don't pick a familiar word that you know doesn't fit over an unfamiliar word that may fit. Again – find the least wrong answer choice!

Like a machine, you should pick out key words, decide positive or negative, and go through the answer choices eliminating wrong answers. Don't jump around! Go in order from A to B to C, etc. If you do not know a word, skip and go to the next answer choice. When you have narrowed down your choices to 2 possibilities, then, and only then, do you THINK about what choice fits best in the context of the question.

You are a machine! Robotically, move from answer choice A to B, to C, to D. Never jump around! Go in order and eliminate answers systematically!

Studying vocabulary can improve your word-in-context scores. Complete the Vocabulary Review Worksheets (Worksheet Icon on top right of student homepage), print and study the vocabulary lists under Key Info, and make flash cards of any words you don't know on the HSDQ! (A strong vocabulary will also improve your writing and reading comprehension.)