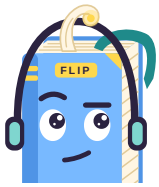
Name _____ Date _____

Word detectives

Use clues in the sentence to work out what a new word means.

1 Learn



Met a word you don't know? Don't skip it! The words **around** it are clues. Read the whole sentence, find the clues, and make a smart guess.



The puppy was so **famished** that it gobbled its food in seconds.

Clues: gobbled its food and in seconds. So **famished** must mean **very hungry**.

Crack the case: The path was **treacherous**, so we held on tight and walked very carefully.

1. **Read the whole sentence**, right to the end.
2. **Find the clues:** held on tight, walked very carefully.
3. **Guess:** people are careful when something is risky, so treacherous might mean **dangerous**.
4. **Test it:** swap your guess in. "The path was dangerous, so we held on tight…" It makes sense!

Flip's tip: watch out for **but**. It warns you that the clue means the **opposite**: "Sam is usually **timid**, but today he was brave." So timid means shy, not brave.

Warm up: underline the clue words. What does **drenched** mean?

We forgot our coats and came home from the storm **drenched**, dripping water all over the floor.

Drenched means _____

Grown-ups: before telling your child a meaning, ask "What clues can you find?", then check together.

Name _____ Date _____

2 Try it together

a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Book detectives

You need: a storybook a little above your child's level, and a pencil. A dictionary if you have one.

1. Read a page together. Stop at a word your child doesn't know (or the grown-up picks a tricky one).
2. Read the whole sentence again. Hunt for clue words nearby.
3. Make a guess and test it by swapping it into the sentence.
4. Check the real meaning in a dictionary, or ask the grown-up. How close was the guess?

New word	Clue words	Our guess	Real meaning

Grown-ups: a close guess counts as a win: "large" for "enormous" shows good detective work. Sometimes the clues are in the next sentence, so read on a little.

3 Practise

A. Use the clues to ring what the word in bold means.

1 After the long walk, Leo was **weary** and wanted to lie down.

tired excited hungry

2 The kitten was **minuscule**: it could fit in a teacup.

tiny huge fluffy

3 The old house was **gloomy**, but the garden was bright and sunny.

dark cheerful noisy

4 Mia was **elated** when she won the prize. She jumped and cheered!

very happy sad bored

Name _____ Date _____

B. Underline the clue words. Then write what the word in bold means.

1 The soup was **scalding**, so we waited for it to cool down.

_____

2 The room was **cluttered**, with toys, books and clothes everywhere.

_____

3 Ben is usually **talkative**, but today he hardly said a word.

_____

C. The first puzzle was simple, but the second one was **baffling**.

1 What does **baffling** mean? _____

2 How did the word **but** help you?

_____

D. Make your own clue sentence for the word **gigantic** (very, very big). Put clues in it for a reader.

Challenge

Sam reads: **"The giant was enormous, but his house was tiny."** He says **enormous** means tiny, because tiny is the clue. Is he right? What should he notice?

_____

I can… Tick when you can.

- ☐ find clue words around a new word
- ☐ test my guess by swapping it into the sentence
- ☐ notice when "but" means the clue is an opposite