

Context Clues: 8 Types of Text Details that hint at a word's meaning

1 Authors sometimes print a simple definition to an unfamiliar term.

Among the corals, you'll also discover thousands of species of **invertebrates**—*animals without backbones*.

2 Sometimes an author will restate the word in a simpler way.

My favorite color is **fuchsia**. *That's a fancy way of saying purple.*

3 Explanations can come before or after the term.

But Ted wanted to be great. He wanted to hit a .400. He knew he wouldn't get a hit every time he got up to bat – no major leaguer has ever done that. In fact, major leaguers don't even get hits half the time they're at bat. *But getting a hit 40 percent of the time—**batting .400**—*Ted thought it might be possible.

4 Some authors include a literal translation of the word's meaning.

Slugs, like snails, are **GASTROPODS** (gas-trah-pods), *which means "stomach-foot"* (although they don't digest with their feet).

5 Authors may describe the purpose of something to make it more clear.

Unlike snails, which have a shell to duck into, slugs have only a *head-covering called a **mantle**, a loose flap of skin they can hide under if they get scared.*

6 Authors include an example of the term to help to clarify meaning.

Some feared that it could be dangerous to object. **Vigilante groups**, *like the Ku Klux Klan*, reacted violently against those who tried to change the way Black people were treated.

7 Authors often put related words/ideas in a series separated by commas. The recognizable words may be a clue as to the meaning of the unfamiliar word.

The four-sided shapes included *squares, rectangles, and **rhombuses**.*

8 Authors might define a word by using an antonym in the same or nearby sentence.

Some senators offer only a *few words in support of an issue*, while others provide a **filibuster**.