

CONTEXT CLUES

ESB ESOL Entry 3 Reading Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

CONTEXT CLUE TIP: Read the words and sentences before and after the unfamiliar word. They can help you work out its meaning.

Part 1: Find the Meaning

Read each sentence carefully. Use the context to choose the closest meaning.

1. The bus was **delayed** because of heavy traffic, so Maya arrived twenty minutes late.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|----------|----------------|
| A. early | B. not on time |
| C. empty | D. very fast |

2. The market was **crowded**. There were so many people that it was difficult to move around.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| A. full of people | B. very quiet |
| C. closed | D. expensive |

3. The teacher said the safety course was **compulsory**, so every learner had to attend.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| A. optional | B. difficult |
| C. required | D. free |

4. The manager said Imran was **reliable**. He always arrived on time and completed his work carefully.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. someone you can trust | B. someone who is new |
| C. someone who is noisy | D. someone who is tired |

CONTEXT CLUES

Exam-Style Practice – Part 2

Part 2: Use the Clues Around the Word

Do not look at the word alone. Read the whole sentence.

5. This medicine may cause **drowsiness**, so do not drive after taking it.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| A. hunger | B. feeling sleepy |
| C. pain | D. feeling angry |

6. The council wants to **improve** the park. It plans to replace broken benches and repair the play area.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| A. make it better | B. make it smaller |
| C. close it | D. sell it |

7. The café offers a **variety** of meals, including sandwiches, soup, curry and salads.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| A. one meal | B. different types |
| C. expensive food | D. hot drinks |

8. The new phone is **affordable**. It costs less than many similar phones.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| A. easy to carry | B. not too expensive |
| C. very modern | D. hard to use |

9. Nadia was **reluctant** to speak in front of the class because she felt nervous.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| A. very excited | B. not willing or unsure |
| C. ready immediately | D. unable to hear |

CONTEXT CLUES

Exam-Style Practice – Part 3

Part 3: Words and Phrases in Context

Choose the meaning that makes the most sense in the sentence.

10. The library is **temporarily** closed for repairs. It will open again next Monday.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| A. forever | B. for a short time |
| C. every evening | D. without warning |

11. On his work placement, Ali got **hands-on experience** by serving customers and using the till.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| A. learning by doing the job | B. reading about a job |
| C. watching television | D. working from home |

12. All staff must **work as part of a team** and help each other during busy periods.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| A. work alone | B. work together |
| C. work outside | D. work fewer hours |

13. Please book your appointment **in advance** because the clinic is very busy.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A. after the appointment | B. before the appointment date |
| C. at lunchtime | D. without asking |

14. The ticket machine is **out of order**, so passengers should buy tickets at the office.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| A. not working | B. very expensive |
| C. new | D. open late |

15. The supermarket will **reduce** the price of fruit this weekend, so some items will cost less than usual.

What does the bold word or phrase mean?

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| A. increase | B. check |
| C. lower | D. hide |

ANSWER KEY

Context Clues

Answers

Q	Answer	Context clue
1	B – not on time	The sentence says Maya arrived twenty minutes late.
2	A – full of people	The clue says there were so many people that it was difficult to move.
3	C – required	The clue says every learner had to attend.
4	A – someone you can trust	Arriving on time and completing work carefully show reliability.
5	B – feeling sleepy	The warning not to drive helps us understand the meaning.
6	A – make it better	Replacing broken benches and repairing the play area are improvements.
7	B – different types	The sentence gives several different kinds of food.
8	B – not too expensive	The clue says it costs less than similar phones.
9	B – not willing or unsure	Nadia feels nervous about speaking.
10	B – for a short time	The library will open again next Monday.
11	A – learning by doing the job	Ali serves customers and uses the till himself.
12	B – work together	The sentence says staff help each other.
13	B – before the appointment date	You book early because the clinic is busy.
14	A – not working	Passengers must use the ticket office instead.
15	C – lower	The clue says the items will cost less than usual.