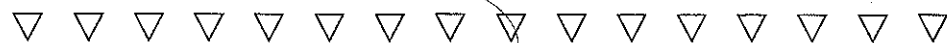


Strategy Use Context Clues



Think about the word *China*. When you see *China* printed on a map, you know it is the name of a country in Asia. But what does *China* mean when it appears on the back of a fancy dinner plate? It means “a special material used for high-quality dishes.” What *China* means depends upon the context, the place where the word appears.

When you come upon an unfamiliar word while reading, you can use clues in the same sentence or in other sentences to figure out the unknown word. This is called using **context clues**. Knowing how to use context clues when you are reading will help you to figure out words you don’t know.

To figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, look at the other words and sentences around the word. This is called using *context clues*.

- ▲ Read the following sentences. Can you figure out what *constellation* means? See the underlined context clues.

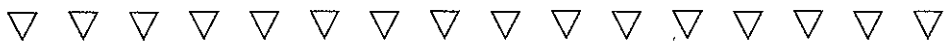
The Big Dipper is the easiest constellation to spot in the night sky. Its pattern of stars stands out. Its stars form the shape of a dipper.

What does *constellation* mean? The words *Big Dipper*, *night sky*, *pattern of stars*, and *stars form the shape* are clues. These clues help you to know that a constellation is “a group of stars appearing in the night sky that has a name and shape.”

- ▲ Do you know what the word *symbiosis* means? See if you can find the meaning by using context clues in the following example. Write the meaning of *symbiosis* on the line below.

Symbiosis between two unlike animals or plants occurs often in nature. For example, a small bird eats ticks from the back of a rhinoceros. The bird feeds itself and helps the rhinoceros at the same time. A relationship that benefits both animals is typical of symbiosis.

symbiosis: _____



Exploring the Strategy

- ▲ Read the short selection below. Use context clues to find the meanings of these words: *rodeo*, *heritage*, *spectators*, *competitors*, *bronco*, *lasso*.

Rodeo Riders

A rodeo is a contest among cowhands. In a rodeo, cowboys and cowgirls carry on an American tradition. They show off the skills that cowhands used a hundred years ago to round up cattle. The people watching gasp at the riders' daring and cheer them on. These spectators enjoy a thrilling look at a colorful sport.

In the rough and rugged events of a rodeo, cowboys and cowgirls are competitors, or rivals, fighting for prize money. The first event is bareback horse riding. A wild, untamed horse, or bronco, tries to buck the rider off its back. The rider can use only one hand to hold the reins. In another event, barrel racing, riders are timed as they race their horses in a pattern around the barrels. A third event is calf roping. The rider throws a long rope with a loop at one end. The rider is using a lasso to rope the calf. In every event, riders risk danger, but they are proud of their skills. They give everyone a taste of the Old West.

Did you find the context clues for each of the words listed at the top of the page? Go back and underline the context clues for those words.

- ▲ Now write the meaning of the words on the lines below:

rodeo: _____

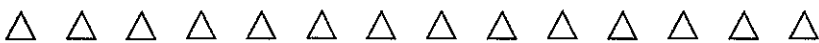
tradition: _____

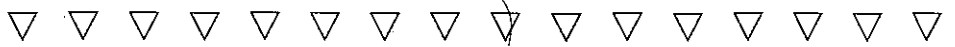
spectators: _____

competitors: _____

bronco: _____

lasso: _____





Studying the Strategy

Did You Say Toe Food?

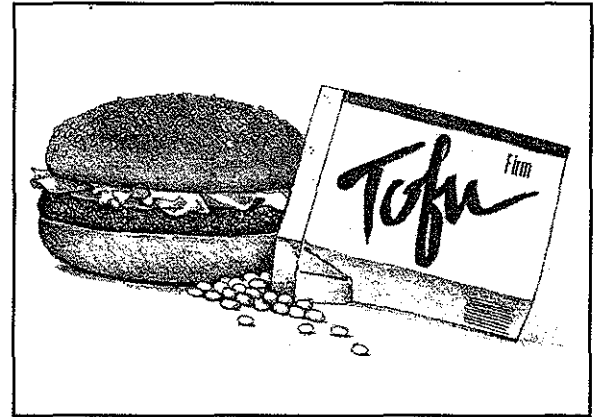
by Diane Taylor

Do you remember taking your first bite of a food that was strange and new to you? Variety is the spice of life—and of eating! It's fun to taste different foods. A new food could become your delicious new favorite. After all, pizza was once a new food to you. In this article, you'll read about a kind of food that many people have never tried.

- ▲ As you read this article, use context clues to help you understand these words: *soy milk*, *coagulant*, *whey*, *muslin*, *absorbs*, *cholesterol*, *sodium*. Sometimes you might have to read a few sentences to find all the context clues for a word. However, you do not have to underline the context clues.

Haven't you ever heard of tofu? It's a strange food that looks a little like soft, white cheese and has hardly any smell or flavor at all. It was first made by the Chinese over 2,000 years ago and has been enjoyed by people all over the world ever since. Yet, there are still many Americans who have never even heard of it.

So what is tofu? It's also known as bean curd because it's made from soybeans. The beans have to be washed, soaked, ground up, and boiled. What's left after all this is *soy milk*. The soy milk must be strained to remove the pulp and then heated again. A *coagulant*, or curdling agent, such as vinegar or lemon juice, is added to make it curdle. The curdled milk must be strained once more so that the curds can be separated from the yellow liquid called *whey*. Finally, the curds are wrapped in muslin

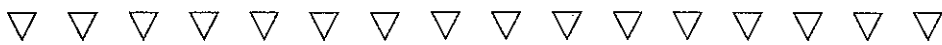


or cheesecloth and weighted to press out more liquid. Longer pressing makes firmer cakes of tofu.

Of course, the simple way for us to enjoy tofu is to go to the store and buy some. Many grocery stores stock it in the produce section. You'll find it packed in water in little plastic containers.

Although tofu doesn't have much flavor of its own, it easily absorbs flavors from the other foods it's cooked with. And as strange as it may sound, tofu can be used to make delicious dishes from burgers to brownies.





Tofu is also an incredibly wholesome food. One serving has more protein than a Big Mac. And in addition to being loaded with minerals and vitamins, it has absolutely no cholesterol and very little sodium, fat, or calories. (*Cholesterol* is fatty stuff in animal products, and *sodium* is found in salt.) Tofu is easy to digest and especially good for people who are allergic to dairy products. Just think, all this nutrition is inexpensive and easy to come by.

Using the Strategy

- ▲ Write the meaning of each word on the lines below. If you are not sure of a word's meaning, go back to the selection, find the context clues, and underline them.

soy milk: _____

coagulant: _____

whey: _____

muslin: _____

absorbs: _____

cholesterol: _____

sodium: _____

More to Explore

Choose three foods that you enjoy, and write a sentence about each. In each sentence, write the food name and use context clues to tell about it. On another sheet of paper, copy the three sentences. But in place of each name, draw a blank line. Now exchange sentences with a partner and use context clues to fill in the names of the foods. Check your answers with your partner.

