



My Heart Fills with Happiness

Using Context Clues to Determine the Meaning of Unknown Words



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Published by *Oklahoma Young Scholars/Javits*

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Grade Level	1st – 2nd Grade	Time Frame	1 hour
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	2 Sessions

Essential Question

How do I determine the meaning of unknown words? What is a context clue and how can it help me to determine the meaning of an unknown word? What would reading be like without context clues?

Summary

This lesson will enable students to independently use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words within children’s literature and other text. Students will be given the opportunity to explore and discuss context clues within culturally diverse reading material as well as interact with peers to practice this concept. Cross-curricular extensions are included.

Snapshot

Engage

This lesson begins by writing a nonsense word on the board such as the word “googlymac”. Read the word to the students and then ask students, “Do you have a googlymac?”

Explore

Students work with a partner to highlight context clues that explain the unknown words.

Explain

The teacher reads aloud (*My Heart Fills with Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith) and student participate in a High-Five discussion activity.

Extend

Students create their own context clues on index cards. Partners then try to guess what the nonsense words mean. Differentiate: *GT extension* - Bannock Recipe/Cooking Activity; Context Clues Millionaire Game

Evaluate

Students complete a Context Clues assessment.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 1)

1.4.R.3: Students will use context clues to determine the meaning of words with guidance and support.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 1)

2.4.R.3: Students will use context clues to determine the meaning of words with guidance and support.

Attachments

- [Context-Clues-Assessment.pdf](#)
- [Context-Clues-Highlight-Page.pdf](#)

Materials

- Teacher whiteboard and marker
- Book- *My Heart Fills with Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith or [video read aloud by the author](#).
- Copies of Context Clues Handout - 1 per partner group (has text from pgs. 2&5 from the story *My Heart Fills with Happiness*)
- Highlighters (1 per student or 1 per student group)
- Index Cards for
Context Clues Assessment
- [Context Clues Millionaire Game](#)
- optional-- [Bannock Recipe](#)

5 minutes

Engage

Teacher will begin by writing a nonsense word on the board such as “googlymac”. Read the word to the students.

Ask the class, *“Do you have a googlymac?”*

Allow time for students to respond. This should cause some intrigue. Students may ask what a “googlymac” is.

Ask the class, *“Do you know what a googlymac is? No?” “Looks like you need more information before you can tell me if you have one or not!”*

- Write on the board: “a sweet bottle of googlymac” (*ask again if they have a googlymac...no?...looks like you need more information*)
- Add to the board: “a sweet bottle of googlymac to pour on pancakes or fried bread”

Ask the class, *“Do you have this at home? What is it?”*

At this point most of the students will have enough information to be able to tell you (syrup/ maybe even honey).

Ask the class, *“How difficult was it to answer my question when you only had the word “googlymac” on the board?” “Was it easier to answer my question when you had more information?” “Why?”*

20 minutes

Explore

Tell students that they are going to explore just part of a story that may have a few words that they do not know.

Ask students if they know how they could find the meaning of words in a story they do not know? Possible responses might be: by looking at the pictures, sounding out the words, or asking the teachers

Let students know that this is what they should thinking about as they explore parts of the story in their partner groups.

Group work:

Group students into partner groups. Give students highlighters and a print of the **Context Clues** handout.

Read directions with the students and then allow them to choose a place in the room to work. Students should work together to highlight the clue words around the underlined unknown words.

As groups complete the activity-call them together as a whole group to discuss what they chose to highlight and why. Allow for each group to share.

20 minutes

Explain

Read the entire Book *My Heart Fills With Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith to the class or have the class listen and watch a [read-aloud video](#).

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=Hu1oeuDlikg>

As you read the story stop on various pages. Ask the class, *“How do the pictures and words help us to understand unknown words or ideas in the story?”*

Give Me Five Discussion Activity

1. Students stand up and find a buddy to high-5! This person is their discussion buddy.

Question to discuss: ***“What are context clues? How do context clues help us read to understand?”***
Discuss with your high-5 buddy.

2. Stand up--find a different high-5 buddy.

Question to discuss: ***“What would reading be like if we didn’t understand how to use context clues?”*** Discuss with your new high-5 buddy.

3. Come back together with the whole group. Use the [Give Me Five](#) strategy to structure think time and volunteers to share what they discussed with their high-5 buddies.
4. Give social or talk sentence stems to the students such as: ***“We discussed_____.”*** or ***“My partner and I discussed_____.”***

15 minutes

Extend

Give students an opportunity to share with their [Elbow Partner](#) what the words **finding meaning using context clues** means to them. You might want to have a few students share out with the class. This short discussion can be a formative assessment to see if your students need more instruction or clarification before completing the next activity.

Then say to the class, *“Think about all of the things we have discussed concerning context clues and how helpful they are to understand words we do not know. In this next activity, you will create a **nonsense word** and write it on the front of an index card. On the back of the index card, you will use the word in a sentence to help the reader understand what your word means. Be thoughtful of what clue words you could use. Think back to the nonsense word I wrote on the board earlier in the lesson. Remember, at first you didn’t understand the word ‘googlymac’. However, when I used it in a sentence with important clue words, you were able to understand that it probably meant a jar of syrup or honey.”*

Teacher’s Note: Creating a Nonsense Word

Before you pass out the index cards to the students, model an example of how to create a nonsense word on the front of the card and then write a sentence with the nonsense word on the back. Make sure to use specific clues to help the reader guess.

- Pass out index cards (one per student). Give ample time for students to create a nonsense word on the front of the index card and write their sentence on the back. Their sentence must include the nonsense word plus clues to help the reader figure out the word’s meaning.
- Students can then share/trade their card with another student to see if they can figure out the meanings of their nonsense words. If students are unable to figure out the word meanings, this would be a good time to discuss what other clue words they could have used in their sentence.

Optional Addition: Bannock Recipe/Cooking Activity Extension

Go to [All Recipes](#) and find the recipe for bannock.

Students participate in a cooking lesson using a Native recipe during their Social Studies block. Math concepts such as measurement, can be included to make this a cross-curricular extension.

Differentiation for Varied Abilities and Interests

- Invite struggling writers to draw picture clues on the back that will help students to guess the meaning of their nonsense word.
- Gifted or more advanced students may want to write a short paragraph with clues to help students guess the meaning of their word.
- In small groups later in the day, have your more advanced students extend the activity by using a device/tablet to play a [Context Clues Millionaire Game](#). They could then teach others in the class how to play the game.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Have the class revisit the Essential Questions.

- How do I determine the meaning of unknown words?
- What is a context clue and how can it help me to determine the meaning of an unknown word?

Pass out the attached **Context Clues Assessment** handout. Have students read the passage and then circle the correct answer choice. They should go back to the passage and highlight the context clues that help them determine the meaning of the underlined words.

Students should answer the question, “What is a context clue and how is it helpful?” They should write or dictate their answer to you to explain their thinking.

Resources

- Carol. (2023, Jan. 24). Bannock Recipe. Allrecipes. <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/6919/bannock/>
- Gray Smith, M., & Flett, J. (2016). *My heart fills with happiness*. [Victoria, British Columbia], Orca Book Publishers.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Give me five. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/150>
- Smith, M.G. (2020, March 14). *Reading My Heart Fills With Happiness* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/Hu1oeuDlikg>
- Thompson, J. (n.d.). *Context Clues Millionaire Game*. Quia. <https://www.quia.com/rr/151544.html>