CELBAN Tips

READING – Understanding New Words

Sometimes you can understand a new word's meaning by looking at its context, that is, the words and sentences around the unknown word. When taking a test, you cannot use a dictionary. By using context clues to figure out what a word means, you will feel more confident when answering questions.

Reading Strategies

- Read in "chunks", that is, a group of 3-5 short, meaningful phrases. Look for clues in the words surrounding the unknown word.
- Identify the type of word by its location in a sentence. Is it a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb?
- Use clues in the reading to help you understand. The phrase or sentence after the word can explain the word or can provide an example, a synonym, or an antonym (opposite).
- Use logic clues to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

Read the following examples

Sometimes you can understand an unknown word by looking at its <u>context</u>, **that is**, *the words and sentences around the word.*

The phrase **that is** introduces a definition of "context."

Nurses are often overwhelmed by feelings of <u>compassion</u> **or** *pity for the suffering of their patients.*

The conjunction **or** tells us that the words "compassion" and "pity" have similar meanings and can be used in place of each other.

Find the meaning of the underlined word

1. The nurse noticed the two patients in the room were very different. Ms. Lee was <u>gregarious</u>, while Ms. LaMabe was quiet.

   (a) shy   (b) honest

   (c) timid   (d) outgoing

2. The patient came to the clinic with the complaint of being tired. She had no energy after several sleepless nights. She said she felt very <u>lethargic</u>.

   (a) active   (b) lively

   (c) exhausted   (d) bored

   (Answers: 1. (d) outgoing, 2. (c) exhausted)