

PTE General: Lesson Ideas

Dubious Definitions

Time: 15-30 minutes

This activity focuses on learning to infer meaning from context which is a skill that may be in used in any section of the test.

Objectives

For A1-L5 students

This activity practices using contextual information to make an informative guess about the meaning of an unknown word. By developing this skill, students do not feel as much stress and fear when dealing with a text/audio file that presents unfamiliar language.

This activity can be done at any time during your course - the more often the better. It works best as a preview of new vocabulary that students will come across in a reading or listening activity.

Preparation

Print and cut out the definition cards (which are on p.3-5 of this worksheet).

Steps

1. The first time you play this game start with an example. If you have an interactive whiteboard, project a definition card on to the whiteboard. Alternatively, you can write the information on the whiteboard. Hide the definitions until step 4.
2. Read the sentence out loud and then highlight the target word. Elicit possible meanings from the class. Always ask them to justify their guess or they will simply say random words.
3. Point out some of the contextual clues such as grammar, word families, etc. Elicit responses again.
4. Show the definitions. Ask the students to reread the sentence while thinking of each definition.
5. Survey the class and find out how many people choose each answer. Reveal the correct answer.
6. Now that the students understand the game, you can break into small groups. Each group can be given a set amount of time (2, 5 or 10 minutes, depending on their level) to make their choice.
7. When students have decided, they write down the card number and the letter that matches the definition they chose.
8. Then the groups exchange cards and repeat steps 6 & 7. This continues until all of the groups have seen all of the cards.
9. At this point record each of the group's choices on the board. Do not do it before or they may copy each other's answers.
10. When revealing the answers, remind the students of the words, and elicit some of the justifications for their choice. Finally, show the answer and any matching contextual information.

An extra element of excitement can be added to this game by having students gamble on their answers. Along with each answer, the groups can bet up to \$100 dollars and no less than \$10 - the more certain they are of their answer, the more money they should bet. If they are correct, they win that amount of money. If they are wrong, they lose that amount of money.

Sample

1 Turn Down

I asked her on a date this weekend but she **turned me down**.

Definition A

To agree to do something

Definition B

To say no in a polite way

Definition C

To arrange to do something at a later date

Notes:

The word "but" indicates an opposite. The desired result is for the girl to say yes so the first definition doesn't make sense.

Definition B & C are both possible but there is no information related to a future or delayed arrangement so B is more likely.

"Down" is often used for negative things. For example: *I am feeling down today. Our sales are down this quarter.* So B is more likely than C

Answer: B

Definition cards

Suitable for C1**1 Dubious**

Desperate parents have frequently turned instead to **dubious**, and often risky, alternative therapies to solve their child's health problems.

Definition A

Very wonderful or amazing
- like a miracle

Definition B

Involving possible injury,
harm or death

Definition C

Causing doubt, uncertainty
or suspicion

2 Affluent

Our store catered to a mostly **affluent** clientele that was relatively price insensitive, so we could afford to pay our suppliers a premium for the very best fish.

Definition A

Easily fooled or cheated –
quick to believe something
that is not true

Definition B

Having a large amount of
money and owning many
things

Definition C

A person who does not eat
meat

3 Lenient

Many people were dissatisfied as they felt that the punishment was too **lenient**.

Definition A

Not punishing bad
behavior in a strong way

Definition B

Severe or cruel

Definition C

Feeling or showing a
desire for revenge

4 Coerce

A confession was carefully **coerced** from the suspect by police.

Definition A

To make someone do
something by using force
or threats

Definition B

To get something by
talking in a gentle and
friendly way

Definition C

To change something in
order to fool people

5 Impede

Our desire to continue travelling was **impeded** by the huge quantity of snow that fell during the night.

Definition A

To give support or strength to something

Definition B

To simplify or make something easier

Definition C

To slow the movement or progress of something or someone

6 Meander

From the mountains came a river that for several miles was seen to **meander** through an amazing variety of meadows and woods till it emptied itself into the sea.

Definition A

To move around or go to different places without having a purpose

Definition B

To have a lot of curves instead of going in a straight line

Definition C

To divide or separate

Answer Key: 1) C 2) B 3) A 4) B 5) C 6) B

Suitable for B2

7 Astonish

The garden's beauty never fails to **astonish**.

Definition A

To be attractive or glamorous

Definition B

To cause a feeling of shock or upset

Definition C

To cause a feeling of great wonder or surprise

8 Coward

The soldiers who ran as soon as the first shots were fired were branded as **cowards**.

Definition A

Someone who is decisive and determined

Definition B

Someone who is not at all brave or courageous

Definition C

Someone who is reckless and wild

9 Glance

He sat quietly, **glancing** through a magazine.

Definition A

To look at someone or something very quickly

Definition B

To look at something or someone for a long time

Definition C

To read quickly or skim

10 Motive

I think he's guilty of the crime. He had the **motive**, the means, and the opportunity.

Definition A

The desire to do someone harm

Definition B

The solution to a problem

Definition C

A reason for doing something

11 Coax

It took almost an hour to **coax** the cat down from the tree.

Definition A

To force someone or something to do something

Definition B

To get something or someone to do something by making a careful and continual effort

Definition C

To pull constantly and for a long time

12 Hinder

It's not clear whether the change will help or **hinder** our project.

Definition A

To make something such as a task or action slow or difficult

Definition B

To make something such as a task or action fail

Definition C

To make something such as a task or action faster and more efficient

Answer Key: 7) C 8) B 9) A 10) C 11) B 12) A