



Context clues

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Practice

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**Context clues** are *hints to the meaning* of a difficult word.  
These hints can be in the same sentence or in the sentences  
before or after the sentence that uses the difficult word.

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As you read about sound, pay attention to the underlined words, and any *hints to the meaning* of these words.

What is Sound?

The world around us is filled with sound. There are loud sounds and soft sounds. There are pleasant sounds and unpleasant sounds. At this very moment, you are surrounded by sound. Where does sound come from? How does it get to your ears? Why are there different kinds of sound? The study of these questions about sound is called acoustics.

Imagine a cymbal hit with a drumstick. The cymbal shakes rapidly, and this vibration causes the tiny particles in the air around it to vibrate. These vibrating air particles, called molecules, bump into the air particles next to them and make them vibrate. This spreading vibration moves outward in every direction from the cymbal in waves.

When a small object is made to vibrate, the sound waves move up and down very quickly. This produces a high-pitched sound, like a high note in a song. When a large object is made to vibrate, the sound waves move up and down more slowly. This produces a low-pitched sound, like a low note in a song. Hitting a small cymbal makes a more high-pitched sound than hitting a large cymbal.

The volume of a sound depends upon the amount of energy, or force, applied to the object that is caused to vibrate. If the cymbal is hit very hard with the drumstick, the volume of the sound is louder than if it is hit lightly. The sound wave created by a hard hit carries the energy of the hit along with it. When a sound wave hits an object, the force that the sound wave carries causes movement in the object it hits. An extremely loud sound wave, such as the sound of thunder, can actually make the ground shake.



Select which context clues give a hint to the meaning of each of these words.

1. acoustics

- A. ...filled with sounds...
- B. ...surrounded by sound...
- C. ...study of...

2. vibration

- A. ...hit with a drumstick...
- B. ...shakes rapidly...
- C. ...bump into...

3. high-pitched

- A. ...move up and down...
- B. ...made to vibrate...
- C. ...high note in a song...

4. low-pitched

- A. ...move up and down...
- B. ...made to vibrate...
- C. ...low note in a song...

5. volume

- A. ...sound is louder...
- B. ...hit very hard...
- C. ...hit lightly...

6. energy

- A. ...or force...
- B. ...depends upon...
- C. ...caused to vibrate...

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7. In the third paragraph, what word tells you that there is a context clue for the meaning of the terms “high-pitched” and “low-pitched”?

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## Answer Key

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. C
5. A
6. A
7. The word “like,” as used in this paragraph, tells you that an example is being given to explain the meaning of a word or phrase.