**Vocabulary in Context**

**Adapted from http://www.mc.cc.md.us/faculty/~steuben/public\_html/vocabularycontext.htm**

Context clues are words and phrases in a sentence which help you reason out the meaning of an unfamiliar word.  Oftentimes you can figure out the meanings of new or unfamiliar vocabulary by paying attention to the surrounding language.  The table below gives the types of clues, signals and examples of each clue.

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|   | **Type of Context Clue** |   | **Definition** |   | **Signals** | **Examples** |
|   | **Antonym or Contrast Clue** |   | Phrases or words that indicate opposite |   | **but, in contrast, however, instead of, unlike, yet** | Unlike his *quiet and low key* family, Brad is *garrulous*. |
|   | **Definition or Example Clue** |   | Phrases or words that define or explain |   | **is defined as, means, the term, [a term in boldface or italics] set off with commas** | *Sedentary* individuals, people who are not very active, often have diminished health. |
|   | **General Knowledge** |   | The meaning is derived from the experience and background knowledge of the reader; "common sense" and logic. |   | **the information may be something basically familiar to you** | Lourdes is always sucking up to the boss, even in front of others. That*sycophant*  just doesn't care what others think of her behavior. |
|   | **Restatement or Synonym Clue** |   | Another word or phrase with the same or a similar meaning is used. |   | **in other word, that is, also known as, sometimes called, or** | The *dromedary*, commonly called a camel, stores fat in its hump. |
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In addition to context clues are word parts: prefixes, roots and suffixes.  Some textbooks refer to this as word analysis. These come into the English language from several other languages, and many of the oldest are Greek or Latin in origin.  There are many books which you can use to study word analysis.  You may also find several online sites that are excellent resources.