

## Grade 6 Playlist: Determining Word Meanings

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4*:

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

### Welcome

Amanda has just received a letter from her next-door neighbor Veronika, who is spending the winter break with her family in Russia. “I have had the opportunity to get to know family members whom I have never met,” Veronika writes, “but I am not sure how I feel about Russia overall. For one thing, the **frigid** weather is just not what I’m used to.” As she reads, Amanda raises an eyebrow. *Frigid*? What does that word mean? It sounds a little like *freezing*, another word that describes weather. Might they mean the same thing? Amanda also starts to think about the type of weather Veronika is not used to. The two girls live in Atlanta, where it is usually warm and humid. Finally, Amanda reads the last part of the paragraph. “I have to wear a hat, gloves, and a coat that’s six inches thick every time I go outside, even just for a few seconds!” Amanda realizes that her definition of *frigid* was the correct one.

### Objective

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.

### Review

#### Key Terms

- Words that can be used to explain an unfamiliar word’s meaning are called **context clues**.
- **Synonyms** are words that mean either exactly or roughly the same thing. *Weak* and *frail* are synonyms.
- **Antonyms** are words that mean the opposite of each other. *Weak* and *strong* are antonyms.



## Exploring the Standard

Reading is one of the best ways to improve one's vocabulary. When readers find an unfamiliar word, sometimes a dictionary is needed to check its meaning. Other times, the text itself is enough. In the example above, Amanda didn't need to look in a dictionary to figure out what *frigid* meant. She was able to use the context of the paragraph to help her understand the meaning.

### Watch!

This video introduces and explains what context clues are:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6spWj7OI3x0>

### A Closer Look: Determining Word Meanings

Readers can look for certain clues to help them figure out an unknown word. Here are some ways that authors provide clues about words and phrases for the reader:

1. Overall context
2. Synonyms
3. Antonyms
4. Definition

The sentences below provide examples of each method. The context clues are underlined:

1. Samantha is *proficient* in Spanish and French. She had no trouble communicating when she went to Mexico and then to France over the summer. (*overall context*)
2. Lee was embarrassed at his *blunder* during the soccer game. He couldn't believe he had made such a costly mistake. (*synonym*)
3. Derek and Steven are going to help rake the yard. Derek is lazy, but Steven is an *industrious* worker when it comes to outdoor chores. (*antonym*)
4. "The *stench* of Harriett's new perfume filled the room. I had to hold my nose because of the horrible smell." (*definition*)

