



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Using Contrasts

Sometimes the meanings of words can be understood because they are in contrast to another word in the sentence. Words that indicate a contrast are:

but	despite	or
unlike	whereas	however

- The bite of a garter snake, unlike that of the deadly cobra, is benign.
- The brief scenes in the movie focus on the boy's point of view, whereas the longer scenes depict the father's side.

Using Other Words in the Sentence

Other words in a sentence can sometimes help identify a word.

- The bright purple gentian grows wild in Colorado and blooms in late summer.
- While blowing air into the leather bag, the bagpipe player produces melodies by fingering the chanter.

Referents, Transitions, and Connectors

Being able to locate referents, transitions, connectors and complex sentences will give you more information about what you are reading. These help you not only understand content, but also understand the organisation and structure of the piece of text.

In order to understand a reading passage, you need to be able to

1. Identify what the referents are referring to.
2. Follow the flow of ideas by paying attention to transitions and connectors.

Break complex sentences into simple sentences in order to understand the ideas.

Complex Structures

Complex sentences may be broken into short, simple sentences in order to understand all the ideas.

Example:

The advantage of such a bridge being built across the point where the two rivers join far outweigh the disadvantages of the cost and labour it will entail.

- A bridge may be built across two rivers.
- The bridge will cross where the two rivers join.
- The advantages of the bridge being built here are greater than the disadvantages.
- The disadvantages are the cost and the labour.

Using Appositives

A noun or noun group that follows a noun and is set off by commas is an appositive. It identifies the noun it follows.

- Pacemakers, small electrical devices that stimulate the heart muscle, have saved many lives.
- Studying supernovas, the catastrophic explosions of dying stars, may give answers to questions of modern cosmology.