

# Brief Focus Lesson

Expand Vocabulary: Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning  
for Grade 6

Text: *The Kid Who Invented the Trampoline: More Surprising Stories about Inventions* by Don L. Wulffson

<b>CAFE Goal</b>	Expand Vocabulary
<b>CAFE Strategy</b>	Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning.
<b>Observe and Relate</b>  (1–2 min.)	<p>Do you like to read about people who use their skills to figure out how to do things and solve problems? As readers, we can solve problems. Often we figure out what words mean without using a dictionary or asking someone else. First, we can ask ourselves what we already know about a word—we can think about whether we have ever seen it before. Or, we can look carefully at the word and analyze the prefix, base word, or suffix. We can also look at the clues that writers give us right there in the text. It's challenging and fun to use the clues to figure out the meanings of new words. Using the clues to figure out the meanings of new words will make you feel like a first-class detective who can solve a fascinating mystery—the mystery of an unknown word!</p>
<b>Teach and Reinforce</b>  (2–3 min.)	<p><b>Establish purpose</b> Today we are learning to Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning.</p> <p><b>Create urgency</b> We are learning to Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning because this strategy helps us figure out the meanings of words that we are unsure of as we read.</p> <p><b>Explicit teacher modeling</b> I love to read about inventions and the way they were designed. Today I will share part of the book <i>The Kid Who Invented the Trampoline</i> by Don L. Wulffson. As I read, I may encounter words I do not know. That is okay, because I have many ways of figuring out what they mean. Writers often give supports to readers to help them grasp the meaning of an unusual or difficult word. Sometimes the writer makes it easier for readers to understand the meaning of the word by providing a definition, a synonym, or an example. Or the writer might use a contrast to show that the word is different from something else. On other occasions, the writer gives clues that help the reader infer what a word means. A writer may want readers to infer the meaning of a word using prior knowledge and clues, or hints, in the text.</p>

### Example 1

[Begin reading on page 99 and pause after reading the first paragraph.] According to the text, George was delighted to see performers jump to the net intentionally and continue doing their acts. I want to look at that long word *intentionally*; I am not sure what it means. First, I will ask myself if I have any prior knowledge of this word. Yes! I think I do. Actually, I see that the base word is *intent*, and I believe that word means “purpose.” Jumping down to the net was something that the performers planned to do. It was not an accident. Knowing that the performers did more stunts on the net helps me understand what the word *intentionally* means. I used my prior knowledge and the clues in the paragraph to infer the meaning.

### Example 2

In paragraph 3, the writer describes George’s “bouncing table.” He says that tables like these were made for special events before, but George wanted “a contraption” for a backyard or gym. I’m not sure of the definition of *contraption*, but based on the clues of where it could be set up and that it could be purchased by ordinary people, I can infer that it must be a piece of equipment or a machine.

### Example 3

[Continue reading to the bottom of paragraph 4.] The writer offers readers some supports in this paragraph. In the first sentence, did you notice how the writer used punctuation called a dash after the word *materials*? I see that he listed examples after the dash to give readers a clear definition of *materials*.

## Practice (2–3 min.)

You’ve heard me use my prior knowledge plus the clues in the text to infer the meanings of new words. Soon you will use your prior knowledge and the clues to figure out the meanings of some other words in this interesting chapter.

### First student practice opportunity

In this same paragraph 4 on page 99, I am not sure what that word *industrial* means when the writer talks about the “heavy-duty industrial sewing machine.” Use your prior knowledge and the clues in the text to figure out what the word means. Turn and talk to your partner. [Students might discuss how the Industrial Revolution changed the way that people made things in factories. They might say that *industrial* refers to factories, or that the base word of *industrial* is *industry*. They might point out that since the machine is heavy duty and is used to sew canvas, it is not the kind of sewing machine that people would use at home. Instead it is the kind used in places like factories. After they have shared with a partner, invite them to share with the group. Continue reading to page 101.]

	<p><b>Second student practice opportunity</b>  [Pause after reading the first paragraph on page 101.] I’m not sure of the meaning of the word <i>preflight</i>. [Underline it or point to it on your document camera.] Think of how you could figure out the meaning of this word if you did not know it. What clues might help you? Turn and talk to a partner. [After students have shared, invite a couple of responses. Students might use the prefix and base word to figure it out. Or, they might rely on the phrase <i>learning to be paratroopers and pilots</i> to arrive at the meaning of the word. These soldiers were training before they went on a flight.</p> <p><b>Third student practice opportunity</b>  [Read the next paragraph on page 101. Point out the word <i>simulates</i> at the end of the paragraph. Repeat the same procedure by asking students how they would figure out the meaning of the word and inviting them to share with a partner. Students are likely to explain that the word <i>simulates</i> means “creating the same feeling”; since scientists were preparing astronauts to be ready for space, they wanted them to experience how the trampoline made them feel weightless. Ask a couple of volunteers to share with the group.]</p>
<p><b>Encourage and Plan</b>   (1–2 min.)</p>	<p>We just learned a very important strategy that helps us expand our vocabularies. When you Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning, you are being an independent reader. You are using what you already know about a word along with the context to figure out its meaning. Use this strategy when you read your good-fit books along with other content-area texts you read. Of course, you can benefit from using this strategy when you read fiction or nonfiction or any other genre. So, make certain to use this strategy often!</p>
<p><b>Common Core Alignment</b></p>	<p>Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning aligns with Standards RL.6.4 and RI.6.4 on our <a href="#">Grade 6 CAFE Menu</a> or <a href="#">CCSS Grade Level Matrix</a>.</p>