Brief Focus Lesson

Expand Vocabulary: Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning
for Grade 1

Text: Prepared sentences on chart paper or sentence strips

CAFE Goal	Expand Vocabulary
CAFE Strategy	Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning.
Observe and Relate (1–2 min.)	Yesterday I read a great book about pets. The author described many different kinds of pets, like hamsters, gerbils, and puppies. It was a good-fit book for me, but I saw a couple of words that I did not know. One of those words was spelled *c-a-n-a-r-y*. The writer said that this pet has yellow feathers and likes to sing. I used what I knew about birds to figure out that the word I didn't know was *canary.* I read a few pages more and saw a word spelled *g-e-c-k-o*. Lucky for me, the author had given me a clue. She wrote, "The gecko, or lizard, makes an interesting pet." When I saw that the word *gecko* was followed by the words *or lizard*, I knew that the gecko was a kind of lizard. If I see a word I do not know, I always try to use what I already know or the clues around it to figure it out. If there are no clues that help, I ask a friend or use the dictionary.
Teach and Reinforce (2–3 min.)	**Establish purpose** Today we are learning to use prior knowledge and context to predict and confirm meaning. **Create urgency** We are learning to use prior knowledge and context to predict and confirm meaning so that we can figure out the meaning of new words. **Explicit teacher modeling** Today I want to tell you about some ways that writers help readers understand new words. [If possible, write the sentences in quotation marks, below, on strips or on chart paper before you start modeling.] When I read a good-fit book, I might see some words that are new. I can try my best to figure out a new word. I can look at the other words around it. I can use the clues I see to guess the word. Then I can go back and reread the sentence to check that the word makes sense. Writers want to help their readers. Sometimes they will tell readers what

a word means by giving the definition right after it. Look at this sentence to see how the writer gives the definition: "A canine is a dog." I think I've heard that word *canine* before on a TV program about dogs. Rereading the sentence shows that I am right—a canine is a dog!

At other times, the writer follows a word with another one that means the same thing. Words that mean the same thing are called synonyms. "A feline, or cat, is a good pet." [Point out that the word *or* shows that *cat* is a synonym for *feline*.]

Writers like to give readers examples to help them understand better, too. Look at this sentence: "Newborn animals, like kittens and puppies, sleep a lot." In this sentence, the words *kittens and puppies* are examples of newborn animals. They help me understand the meaning of *newborn*. [Call attention to the word *like* as a clue word.]

Sometimes writers will tell readers how one thing is unlike another. They use the word *not* to tell readers about the difference. This sentence shows how a writer tells which animal is slow and which is not: "Turtles, not rabbits, move very slowly."

Writers also give readers clues so that they can infer. In this sentence, there are clues that help readers know what kind of animal is being described: "The furry brown animal with a white tail ate all of the carrots." Do you know what those clues are? [*Furry, brown, white tail,* and *carrots* are clues that help readers infer that this animal is a rabbit.] I put the clues together to guess that this animal is a rabbit. Do you think I am right?

Practice
 	
(2–3 min.)
	I had fun sharing how I figure out the meanings of new words with clues. Now it is your turn to try this game. We will play Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down. Listen to the clues that help me figure out the meanings of some words. Put your thumbs up if what I say about the clues is true. Put your thumbs down if what I say about the clues is false. Be ready to tell why a statement is false.
	
	1. "A beaver, not a squirrel, has a flat tail."
	     The clue word *not* tells me which one of the animals has a flat tail. Thumbs up or thumbs down? [thumbs up] Clue word: *not*
	
	2. "My favorite animal has a long trunk."
	     The clue words *a long trunk* help me infer that this animal is a giraffe. Thumbs up or thumbs down? [thumbs down] These clue words help me infer that the animal is an elephant.
	
	3. "A calf is a young cow."
	     According to this sentence, *young cow* is the definition of the word *calf*. Thumbs up or thumbs down? [thumbs up] Clue: The definition

comes right after the word.

4. "The joey, or baby kangaroo, stays close to its mom."
   The words *joey* and *mother* mean the same thing. They are synonyms. Let's reread the sentence to be sure. Thumbs up or thumbs down? [Thumbs down; the word *or* tells readers that *joey* is another name for *baby kangaroo*.] Clue word: *or*

5. "Furry pets, like bunnies, are very soft."
   In this sentence, bunnies are examples of furry pets. If I didn't know the word *furry*, the example of the word *bunnies* would help me. Thumbs up or thumbs down? [thumbs up] Clue word: *like*

Encourage and Plan (1–2 min.)	Use this strategy of Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning when you read. It will help you figure out the meaning of words you do not know. Remember that writers often use the words *or, like,* and *not* to help readers understand these words. Look for clues in the sentence and put them together so that you can get the meaning of the word. Reread the sentence to be sure that you are right. You will feel proud of your hard work when you use this strategy to learn new words. If you cannot solve a word using the context clues, you can always ask a friend or use a dictionary.
Common Core Alignment	Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning aligns with Standards L.1.4 and L.1.5 on our Grade 1 CAFE Menu or CCSS Grade Level Matrix.