

Brief Focus Lesson

Expand Vocabulary: Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning
for Grade 4

Text: *Everything Vikings* by Nadia Higgins

CAFE Goal	Expand Vocabulary
CAFE Strategy	Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning.
Observe and Relate (1–2 min.)	Do you like mysteries? I do! It is fun to use clues to try to solve mysteries. When I read, sometimes I think of using the clues in the text to solve the mystery of new words. I look at the other words in the sentence that will help me figure out the words I do not know. The sentences that follow can also give clues. Putting the clues together helps me solve the mystery of an unknown word.
Teach and Reinforce (2–3 min.)	<p>Establish purpose Today we are learning to Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning.</p> <p>Create urgency We are learning to Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning because it helps readers use clues to figure out the meanings of new words.</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling Today, I want to share part of an interesting nonfiction book called <i>Everything Vikings</i> by Nadia Higgins with you. This book tells the story of a fierce people. On pages 18–19, the author has included a diagram of a Viking boat. Although the writer uses some words that are new to me, I can figure them out by using clues.</p> <p>Here are some tips that I want to share with you.</p> <p>Tip 1: A writer will sometimes add a <i>synonym</i>, <i>definition</i>, or <i>example</i> after a more challenging word for the benefit of readers.</p> <p>Tip 2: Writers sometimes use clue words like <i>or</i> and <i>means</i> to provide a definition or synonym. Once readers spot a clue word, they should zero in on it. Then they can concentrate on that clue word and figure out a new word in a sentence.</p> <p>Tip 3: Writers do not always include clue words in their texts. Sometimes they provide context clues so that readers can use their prior</p>

knowledge and the information in the text to figure out the new words.

Let me show you how this works as I think aloud. On the diagram of the Viking ship, the first callout says, “Forget Comfort or Cargo Space.” [Read the entire callout aloud.] I don’t know the meaning of the word *agility*. This sentence tells me that *agility* was an advantage, but I need to understand the meaning better. I’ve heard the word *agility* before, but it was used to describe an athlete. How can a boat be like an athlete? The next sentence explains that a warship skimmed the waves but could also be rowed. That sentence helps me understand that *agility* means being able to move quickly and easily—just like an athlete. I understand that the ship was not hard to navigate because it had *agility*.

On the following page, I see other clues. For instance, look at the callout called “For Sea and Rivers.” [Ask a student to read the sentence about the boat’s body, or hull.] Wow! This sentence has a couple of clues to help me, doesn’t it? For example, if I don’t know the word *hull*, the definition of *boat’s body* would help me. The clue word is *or*. Furthermore, if I don’t know the meaning of *shallow*, I can infer that it must mean *not deep* since the boat can fit under bridges. Don’t you agree that using context clues can really help us comprehend?

Practice
(2–3 min.)

I know that you probably want to try using some context clues, too. Direct your attention to the callout titled “Steering Straight.” [For this practice, follow this procedure: ask students to think about your questions, talk with a partner, and be ready to share with the whole group. Call on a couple of volunteers to exchange ideas in the whole group. Based on the needs of your class, offer as many of the questions as you see fit.]

“Steering Straight” callout questions

Question 1

What clue has the writer given readers so that they understand the meaning of *keel*? Why is *spine* a good name for this part of the boat? [Students might explain that the writer has used the clue word *or* and supplied a synonym, *spine*. The keel was made from a single piece of wood, so it is like a spine or backbone.]

Question 2

In this callout, how does the writer help you infer the meaning of *innovation*? [Students might explain that it means that the boat’s spine must have been made differently before and the change made it easier to direct the boat’s path and increase speed.]

“Dragon Head” callout questions

	<p>Question 3 Let’s try another example. Look at the callout titled “Dragon Head.” Read it silently [or call on a volunteer to read it aloud]. Use what you know about context clues to infer the meaning of the word <i>fearsome</i>. [Children might say that the dragon head scares away sea monsters, so it must have caused everyone to be afraid.]</p> <p>Question 4 In this callout, what parts of the boat are synonyms? What is the clue word? [Students should identify <i>front</i> and <i>pro</i> as synonyms; the clue word <i>or</i> is used.]</p> <p>Question 5 What can you infer about the meaning of the words <i>land sprites</i>? Explain your answer. [Students might express that <i>land sprites</i> must be the opposite of sea creatures; they would be the people on shore.]</p> <p>“Which Way, Captain?” callout questions</p> <p>Question 6 Where does the writer provide a definition in this callout? [Students will identify that the word <i>sunstones</i> is defined as “natural crystals that change color in the sun.”]</p> <p>Question 7 How is the definition helpful to you as a reader? [The definition helps readers understand the meaning of this compound word and makes it clear how Vikings relied on the sunstones when sailing.]</p>
<p>Encourage and Plan (1–2 min.)</p>	<p>Today when you are reading, be on the lookout for words you do not know and clues that will help you figure them out. Every time you read, you have the opportunity to use your prior knowledge and the clues that you see in the text to figure out the meaning of new words. So, remember to use your detective skills to discover the mystery of unknown words. Use the clues in the sentence and in the sentences that follow to figure out those new words.</p>
<p>Common Core Alignment</p>	<p>Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning aligns with Standard L.4.4 on our Grade 4 CAFE Menu or CCSS Grade Level Matrix.</p>