

## Strong Active Terms (SAT) Workout

So you don't have a dictionary handy, and you need to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word? Don't worry. One way to determine the meaning of a word is to use the context clues, or surrounding words to help you understand the general meaning of a sentence.

**Example:**

I understand your **quandary**—as an animal lover, you don't want to dissect a frog. However, dissecting an avocado is not a logical substitute.

Ⓐ excitement Ⓑ dilemma Ⓒ nervousness Ⓓ joy

The correct answer is Ⓑ dilemma. Why? Notice how the words *don't want to dissect a frog* and *however* support the meaning of *quandary*. Those context clues tell you that *quandary* has a negative connotation. It is not a positive word. If you're still not sure of the answer, try plugging in each of the answer choices to see what fits.

The following sentences provide context clues to the meaning of words that appear in the September 2006 issue of Writing. Use them to help you select the correct definitions.

- Peter's response was a **crass** one. All the students in the class yawned.  
Ⓐ intelligent      Ⓑ dull      Ⓒ sudden      Ⓓ tempting
- I am **ambiguious** about my decision to move to New York City. I find myself making a pros and cons list everyday.  
Ⓐ confident      Ⓑ exhilarated      Ⓒ unsure      Ⓓ excited
- There's a **dearth** of job opportunities for recent college graduates.  
Ⓐ abundance      Ⓑ influx      Ⓒ lack      Ⓓ proliferation
- The Malay **archipelago** is large and scattered, bordered on the east by the Pacific Ocean and on the west by the Indian ocean.  
Ⓐ school of fish      Ⓑ volcano      Ⓒ landmass      Ⓓ collection of islands
- Microsoft Word has a **template** that you can use as a model to write a business letter.  
Ⓐ trainer      Ⓑ extension      Ⓒ board      Ⓓ predesigned pattern
- After sharing all the **mundane** details of her day, Starr went on to spill the big news. She had been promoted.  
Ⓐ exciting      Ⓑ turbulent      Ⓒ dull      Ⓓ graphic
- In the **aftermath** of the September 11 attacks, the U.S. flag stood as an **icon** of patriotism.  
Ⓐ month; trial      Ⓑ day; test      Ⓒ event; result      Ⓓ follow-up; emblem
- The **maudlin** nature of the story sent the students into hysterics. "Nobody would get that upset over losing a keychain," said George.  
Ⓐ serious      Ⓑ dramatic      Ⓒ foolishly sentimental      Ⓓ persuasive
- The spooky stories that Mo tells are so **credible** that they make his parents break into a cold sweat.  
Ⓐ believable      Ⓑ boring      Ⓒ sad      Ⓓ tiring
- Mark's **trivial** pursuits frustrated his girlfriend so much that she ended up in an **eternal** depression.  
Ⓐ mindless; quick      Ⓑ rapid; pushy      Ⓒ mindless; neverending      Ⓓ ambitious; rejected