Building Vocabulary: Getting Meaning from Context

Often the context of a word gives clues to its meaning.

Try to determine the meaning of the italicized words in each of the sentences below.

Eg: He’s very easy to get along with. Because he’s so **affable**, most people really like him.

Affable: **likeable, easy-going, friendly**

**Practice:** I got really tired of watching the new generation Star Trek. They were so **pedantic** – always working at impressing the audience with what they knew.

Pedantic: ______________________________

**Eschew** making false compliments. Instead, try for something that is both true and sincere.

Eschew: ______________________________

**English syntax** is fairly predictable and helps us understand the meaning of words. It’s when the normal order of words is inverted that the language can be hard to understand.

Syntax: ______________________________

Some people love to talk for hours about the same topic, but I prefer a speaker who can be **succinct**.

Succinct: ______________________________

Although the spider looked **innocuous**, its venom was deadly.

Innocuous: ______________________________
Because obesity can cause serious health problems, the doctor suggested that his corpulent patient go on a strict diet.

Corpulent: ________________________________

I don’t have a spare moment. Right now I am inundated with work.

Inundated: ________________________________

When I asked him why he was late, he started to fidget and gave a rather nebulous answer.

Nebulous: ________________________________

It was a tortuous journey over rough roads in barely operational vehicles.

Tortuous: ________________________________

You have to make a decision. Stop vacillating and make up your mind.

Vacillating: ________________________________

We learn a great deal from erudite instructors. Their background experience and training make them excellent sources of information.

Erudite: ________________________________

Although her comments are generally constructive, her last review was rather derisive.

I did not really appreciate the snarky tone of her review.

Derisive: ________________________________