Brief Focus Lesson

Expand Vocabulary: Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning
for Grade 3

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.)	What do you know about solving problems? Every day we have small problems to solve. For example, we might not be able to find our shoes right before the school bus comes, so we wear boots instead. Or we might find out that there is no more peanut butter to make a sandwich, so we take cheese and crackers for lunch. When we read, we solve problems, too. If we come to a word that we do not know, we can try to figure it out in different ways. We can use our prior knowledge, or what we already know, to think about the word. We can look at other words in the sentence for clues. Most of the time, we can figure out the word using our prior knowledge and clues.
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 because it helps us figure out the meanings of words when we are unsure about them. **Explicit teacher modeling** Whenever I come to a word I don't know in the text, I ask myself if I have seen it before and can guess at it. If I do not know it, I look to see if there are any other words in the sentence that might help me. [Tell the children the steps below or write them on chart paper for reference.] **Steps for using context clues** 1. Look for a context clue in the sentence or clue words such as *unlike, means, in other words,* and *also known as.* 2. Reread the sentence and think about the clue. 3. Use a dictionary or ask a friend about the meaning if you need more help. To help readers figure out the meaning of a word, writers will often follow

the word with a synonym, definition, or example. They might help readers understand the meaning by telling them what the word does not mean; they can also provide clues so that readers can make an inference.

Let's take a look at these sentences containing clues that make it easier to understand the word *herbivore*. If I did not know this word, the context clues and clue words would help me figure it out. [Display the sentences for student reference.]

1. "An herbivore, also known as a plant eater, likes grassy areas."
    In this sentence, the words *also known as* are clue words. I'll reread the sentence and think about the way the author helped me understand that *herbivore* means the same thing as *plant eater*.

2. "An herbivore is an animal that eats only plants."
    The definition follows the word *herbivore* in this example.

3. "A popular herbivore, the horse, has sharp teeth for chewing hay and grass."
    The writer has given an example of an animal that is an herbivore. The example helps me understand the meaning of the word.

4. "Unlike a meat eater, an herbivore has a diet of plants."
    The word *unlike* tells readers that an herbivore is different from a meat eater because of its diet.

Here is an example of an inference:
5. "At the children's zoo, animals grazed in the pasture. I knew that they were herbivores."
    Sometimes writers make it possible for readers to use the clues in a sentence to make an inference about a word. Readers can infer that herbivores eat plants because they are grazing.

Practice (2–3 min.)	[Display the sentences on a document camera or chart paper.] In these sentences, you will find some clue words that will help you understand the meaning of other words. With a partner, talk about the kind of clues that the writer has given and identify the clue words in the sentence. [Following the partner talk after each sentence, ask a volunteer to identify the clue(s) and explain how they help readers understand the meaning of the word.] 1. "Raccoons are plant and meat eaters; in other words, they are omnivores." [definition] 2. "Carnivores, also known as meat-eating creatures, are predators." [synonym]

	3. "An animal left the plants, but took the meat, from the cabin. It must have been a carnivore!" [inference] 4. "Unlike herbivores, omnivores eat meat as well as plants." [contrast] 5. "An omnivore, like a bear, looks for plants and meat at campgrounds." [example]
Encourage and Plan **(1–2 min.)**	We just learned how the Expand Vocabulary strategy of Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning can help us understand words that might be new to us. Whenever you read and come to a word you don't know, ask yourself if you have ever seen the word before. Try to remember when you encountered the word and what it means. If you are still unsure of it, look for clue words such as *unlike, means, in other words,* and *also known as* in the sentence. These clue words can point you to the meaning of an unknown word. Then reread the sentence and think about the clues*.*
Common Core Alignment	Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning aligns with Standards RL.3.4, RI.3.4, and L.3.4 on our Grade 3 CAFE Menu or CCSS Grade Level Matrix.