

Brief Focus Lesson

Expand Vocabulary: Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning
for Grade 2

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.)	Have you ever gone bird-watching? It is fun and easy to do. You can go to a park and use a pair of binoculars to look for birds. When I watch birds, I look for clues that will help me identify them. As a reader, I look for clues when I read, too. When I get to a word that I don't know, I stop and ask myself, <i>Do I know anything about this word?</i> If I don't, I look for other words in the sentence or paragraph that might help me. Next, I reread the sentence and put the word I'm guessing it means into it. Then I check the sentence to see if it makes sense. Using the clues that an author gives helps me figure out the new 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 this strategy makes it easier to figure out the meanings of words that we do not know.</p> <p>Explicit teacher modeling Today we will use what we already know about a word, also known as our prior knowledge, along with clues in the sentence when we get to new words.</p> <p>Sometimes the writer will use special words that point us to the meaning of other words. Some of these words are <i>or, unlike, means, in other words, and also known as.</i></p> <p>Here are some examples that will help you understand. Since we were talking about bird-watching just a few minutes ago, I will use some sentences about a bird called a sparrow. [Display these sentences on chart paper or on a document camera.]</p> <p>When I come to a word I do not know, I look carefully at the sentence [pretend to have binoculars] and think about the clue words and what the</p>

unknown word might be [point to your brain]. Let me show you how I use this strategy.

1. “A baby sparrow, **or** hatchling, does not have any feathers.”
[Explain that the writer tells readers that a baby sparrow is a hatchling.] In this sentence, the words *baby sparrow* and *hatchling* mean the same thing. They are **synonyms**.
2. “The word *sparrow* **means** a small brown bird.”
In this sentence, the writer uses the clue word *means* to explain exactly what a sparrow is. The **definition** of sparrow is a small brown bird.
3. “A sparrow, **unlike** a bright yellow canary, has plain brown feathers.”
The writer helps readers understand what a sparrow is by telling how it is different from a canary. The clue word is *unlike*. It shows contrast.
4. “When I saw small brown birds in the yard, I exclaimed, ‘Look at those sparrows!’”
How did I know that those birds were sparrows? Why, I used the clues to make an **inference**. The clues for this inference are that the birds are in the yard, and they are small and brown.
5. “A common bird, **also known as** the house sparrow, eats sunflower seeds in my garden.”
In this sentence, the writer gives an example of a certain kind of bird that is common. The clue words are *also known as*.
6. “A little brown bird—**in other words**, a sparrow—made a nest under the porch.”
This is another way that the writer can tell people that the sparrow and the little brown bird are the same. The clue words are *in other words*.

Practice
(2–3 min.)

Now get ready to put on your binoculars like this [make pretend binoculars by putting circles in front of your eyes] and think about the meaning of a new word [point to your brain]. Prepare to look for some more clues—they will help you!

[In advance, write the sentences below on chart paper or sentence strips. Explain that you will read each sentence and ask some questions about it. Encourage students to put on their pretend binoculars to look for clues and think about the words after you read each sentence.]

1. “The cardinal, **or** redbird, was easy to spot in the trees.”
What is another word that means the same thing as *cardinal*?

[*redbird*]

How do you know? [*Cardinal* and *redbird* are synonyms.]

What is the clue word? [*or*]

2. “The word *parrot* **means** a colorful bird that can talk.”

What words tell you what a parrot is? [*colorful bird*]

How do you know? [The writer gives a definition.]

What is the clue word? [*means*]

3. “A toucan, **unlike** a robin, has a very large beak.”

How is a toucan different from a robin? [It has a large beak.]

How do you know? [The writer gives a contrast.]

What is the clue word? [*unlike*]

4. “Singing birds—**in other words**, canaries and male parakeets—are popular pets.”

What is one kind of singing bird? [canaries or male parakeets]

How do you know? [The writer gives examples.]

What are the clue words? [*in other words*]

5. “Last night I saw a bird with large eyes and a flat face perched in a tree; it said, ‘Hoot!’”

What kind of bird is it? [owl]

How do you know? [The writer gives clues.]

What clues helped you make this inference? [the words *bird*, *large eyes*, *flat face*, *perched in a tree*, and *hoot*]

6. “Ducklings, **also known as** baby ducks, swam in the pond.”

What means the same thing as *ducklings*? [*baby ducks*]

How do you know? [The writer follows the word *ducklings* with words that mean the same thing.]

What are the clue words? [*also known as*]

Encourage and Plan

(1–2 min.)

Today you learned how to Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning. When you use this strategy, start by thinking about what you already know about a word. Then look to see if there are any other clues to help you. Remember to look for clue words such as *or*, *unlike*, *means*, *in other words*, and *also known as*. These clue words can help you understand the meaning of another new word. You can use this strategy when you are reading fiction or nonfiction, or science, math, or social studies. During Read to Self or Read to Someone, or even Listen to Reading, you can try this strategy whenever you come to a new word.

Common Core Alignment

Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Use Prior Knowledge and Context to Predict and Confirm Meaning aligns with Standard RI.2.4 on our [Grade 2 CAFE Menu](#) and [CCSS Grade Level Matrix](#).