










Why Can't You Fall Asleep?

Ref: EN_CC_2

Introduction



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 Description	<p>In this English lesson, students develop vocabulary inference skills through the use of contextual cues. Using authentic and adapted texts, learners explore how to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words by identifying definitions, examples, synonyms, and antonyms in context. Through teacher modeling, guided pair work, and independent practice, students apply a four-step strategy to interpret new vocabulary. The lesson promotes metacognitive awareness, reading comprehension, and autonomy in language learning. It fosters collaboration, critical thinking, and confidence in understanding texts without relying solely on dictionaries.</p>		
 Age	16 - 18 years old	 Language Area	Vocabulary
 Proficiency Level	B2	 Authors	Maria Martzoukou & Athina Nachopoulou
 Subject	Language	 Duration	1 teaching hour (~ 40minutes)
 Links with Language Curriculum	<p>Vocabulary – Contextual Cues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary development • Enhanced passage comprehension • Critical thinking • Cultural awareness (especially for idiomatic expressions) • Skill integration (reading, writing, listening, speaking) 		
 Rationale	<p>To develop basic skills for understanding, interpreting and engaging with texts. The strategy of using contextual cues enriches language competence and develops critical thinking and independent learning, preparing students for academic success and effective communication in real-life situations.</p>		

Introduction



Aims

Through this protocol, students are expected to:

- Be able to infer meanings of unfamiliar words
- Improve their comprehension of texts
- Develop critical thinking
- Enrich their vocabulary
- Become self-sufficient readers
- Improve their overall communication skills
- Combine different language skills
- Develop cultural awareness (fairy tales from different countries)



Equipment and Material Needed

- Passages prepared in such a way as to contain contextual cues

Instructions Step by step development of the activity (preparation, implementation, summing up, reflection)



01 | Preparation

1. Choose a Suitable Text:

We select a text that matches the learners' level and interests. This could be a short story, a text from their schoolbooks, or a news article containing rich vocabulary suitable for learning.

2. Identify Key Vocabulary:

Identify key vocabulary words in the text that may be challenging for the learners.

3. Modify the Text with Contextual Cues:

Adjust the text by adding words or sentences to provide hints or additional information, helping learners predict the meaning of unfamiliar words through contextual cues.

4. Types of Contextual Cues:

- **Definitions / Explanations:** e.g. Eleni is lethargic; she has no energy even to get out of bed!
- **Examples:** e.g. Celestial bodies, including the sun, moon and stars, have fascinated humans throughout the ages.
- **Synonyms:** e.g. This situation is a riddle, a puzzle that is difficult to solve.
- **Antonyms or Contrast:** e.g. George is outgoing, unlike his brother who is quiet and shy.





02 | Strategy Application

According to Graves (2006) and İltis (2019), the steps of the strategy are as follows:

1. Introduction of the Strategy:

- Explain to the students that you are going to teach them a strategy in which we use information from the text to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Briefly introduce the steps

Step 1: We read carefully until we encounter an unfamiliar word

Step 2: We stop and reread the last sentence, trying to find information that will help us guess the meaning of the word. We guess the meaning. If we think we understand the meaning of the word, we continue reading. If not, then we move on to the next step.

Step 3: We go back and read the sentences that preceded the unfamiliar word, looking for clues/contextual cues that could help us guess the meaning of the word. If we think we understand the meaning of the word, we move on to the next step.

Step 4: We replace the unknown word with the meaning we think it has, and check if it makes sense in our text. If it does, we continue reading. If not, we repeat the previous steps or continue reading without knowing the meaning of the word and trying to understand the text.

2. Modeling the Four-Step Strategy:

- Use a text that would help you demonstrate the four-step strategy. In the Appendix you will find a suggested health article, like those found in newspapers.
- Adopt the 'thinking aloud' method, expressing metacognitive statements to show how we recognise a difficult word and how we are led to understand its meaning.

3. Guided Practice:

- Practice the strategy together with the students in pairs.
- Provide an expository text and prompt pairs to identify and infer the meanings of difficult words.
- Read the paragraph aloud and highlight challenging words, guiding the pairs to find explicit cues
- Rehearse the four-step strategy until students can fluently recite and apply it.

4. Independent Practice:

- Continue using the four-step strategy with a more advanced expository text. Ask learners to read the paragraph several times, marking unfamiliar words
- Let the students deal with the strategy of contextual cues, with you taking an increasingly less active role.
- Allow students to take increasing responsibility for implementing the strategy. The teacher should provide support and feedback, but not lead the process.

5. Review of Instructional Program:

- Assess what students have learned by having them recap the strategy and complete worksheets with exercises to practice the four-step strategy process.

Useful Tips

01

During the “Modeling the Four-Step Strategy” teachers can use a text in which the unknown words and their contextual cues are marked with different colors

02

ATTENTION! In the following stages there should be no markers to help students identify the textual clues. Therefore, underlines and bold letters should be erased from the suggested texts if you wish to use them.

03

Create an open environment where students feel comfortable asking questions about words they do not understand and discuss possible meaning with their peers.

04

Select a variety of texts, such as stories, fairytales, newspaper articles, passages from schoolbooks, instructions and online articles. This diversity will help students understand how context operates across various types of writing and see the practical application of the skill.

05

Incorporate various types of contextual cues within the expository texts.

06

In the worksheets you can use for each word a different kind of contextual cue from the one in the text. This approach provides students with multiple opportunities to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.



01 | Texts

For the stages "Modelling the four-step strategy", "Guided practice" and "Independent practice" you can use the following texts:

Why can't you fall asleep even though you feel tired?

Sleep is essential for our health; however, many people often find themselves in a situation where they feel tired but cannot fall asleep. The reasons for **insomnia** despite the feeling of **fatigue** are numerous.

- Engaging in **stimulating** activities that prevent your mind from "shutting down," such as watching intense TV shows, working late, or even using your mobile phone or computer, can lead to insomnia.
- High levels of stress/anxiety can keep your mind active even when your body is tired. This brain stimulation can prevent you from falling asleep.
- **Irregular sleep schedules** - going to bed at different times each night - can mess up your body's "internal clock", making it difficult to sleep when you're supposed to be resting.
- **Overwork** can actually make it harder to sleep! When you are overly tired, your body can produce more chemicals, **hormones**, of stress which keep you awake.

What to do when you're sleepy but can't sleep

If you can't sleep despite being sleepy, try the following strategies:

- During the day, **limit stimulants**. Reduce **caffeine**, a substance found in coffee and black tea, **nicotine**, a substance found in cigarettes, and heavy meals near bedtime. These may keep you from falling asleep or prevent you from staying asleep.
- Stay active during the day. Regular **physical activity** can help you fall asleep faster and enjoy deeper sleep. However, avoid vigorous exercise near bedtime.
- Practice **calming** techniques, such as listening to calm music or reading a book, to get into a state of relaxation and prepare your body for sleep.
- Stay away from screens! **Avoid** mobile phone and computer screens, as the light they emit affects the production of melatonin, a substance associated with the day-night cycle, making sleep difficult
- Turn down the lights, reduce noise and keep the room at a comfortable (cool) temperature to create a **conducive environment** for sleeping.

Experts advise not staying up all night if you can't sleep. Although it may seem like a good idea to go out or do even more work, **sleep deprivation** is not **recommended** because it can have serious consequences for your health and **cognitive function**. That is, you may get sick or have difficulty thinking, remembering or making good decisions.

Answers

Why can't you fall asleep even though you feel tired?

Unfamiliar Word	Contextual Cue	Type
insomnia	<u>cannot fall asleep</u>	Definition/Explanation
fatigue	<u>they feel tired</u>	Definition/Explanation
stimulating	<u>shutting down</u>	Synonym
anxiety	<u>stress</u>	Synonym
Irregular sleep schedules	<u>going to bed at different times each night</u>	Definition/Explanation
Overwork	<u>overly tired</u>	Definition/Explanation
hormones	<u>chemicals</u>	Synonym

What to do when you're sleepy but can't sleep

Unfamiliar Word	Contextual Cue	Type
limit stimulants	<u>Reduce</u>	Synonym
caffeine	<u>a substance found in coffee and black tea</u>	Definition/Explanation
nicotine	<u>a substance found in cigarettes</u>	Definition/Explanation
physical activity	<u>exercise</u>	Synonym
calming	<u>relaxation</u>	Synonym
Avoid	<u>Stay away</u>	Synonym
conducive environment	<u>Turn down the lights, reduce noise and keep the room at a comfortable (cool) temperature</u>	Examples
sleep deprivation	<u>not staying up</u>	Definition/Explanation
recommended	<u>advise</u>	Synonym
cognitive function	<u>difficulty thinking, remembering or making good decisions</u>	Examples



Notes

[illegible]