

Vocabulary Detective

Grades 3-8 • 15-20 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Use context to determine one meaning, compare it with another meaning, and apply the word accurately in a new sentence.

MATERIALS

One investigation sheet; a sentence from current reading or content-area study; pencil.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Choose a multiple-meaning word that students have encountered in authentic text.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

Useful practice for context clues, multiple-meaning words, parts of speech, and evidence-based explanation.

SUPPORT & DIFFERENTIATION

Underline nearby clues, act out meanings, and provide picture or translation support without replacing the context investigation.

EXTEND THE LEARNING

Compare how the word functions in two subject areas or changes part of speech across sentences.

WORKED EXAMPLE

'The bat flew from the cave.' Here bat is an animal. In baseball, bat is equipment used to hit a ball.

Name _____

Date _____

Investigate a word with more than one meaning.

Choose a word from a PunWorks game, a book, or your current lesson. Collect evidence before deciding what it means.

1**THE WORD**

Write the word and the sentence where you found it.

2**MEANING A**

What does the word mean in this sentence? Add a synonym or quick sketch.

3**MEANING B**

What is another meaning of the same word? Use it in a new sentence.

WORDPLAY CHECK

Could these two meanings create a pun? Try one:

Turn vocabulary into a short investigation.

Use this page with reading passages, science and social-studies vocabulary, or any PunWorks game that depends on multiple meanings.

01**START IN CONTEXT**

Read the full sentence aloud. Ask what clues appear before and after the target word.

02**COMPARE MEANINGS**

Name the part of speech when useful. A noun and verb can share a spelling but behave differently.

03**TEST WITH A NEW SENTENCE**

Replace the word with a synonym, then write a sentence that uses its second meaning.

04**MAKE THE WORDPLAY VISIBLE**

Invite a two-panel sketch, a short pun, or an explanation of why both meanings fit.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- What clue helped you most?
- What changed between the two meanings?
- Can the word be drawn both ways?
- Would your pun still work with a synonym?