

## Using context clues

### Grade 3 Reading Worksheet

**Context clues** are hints that readers use to find the meaning of unknown words. There are different types of context clues, including:

- **Definition Clues:** The word is defined in the sentence or nearby sentences.
- **Antonym Clues:** The sentence or a nearby sentence gives a word that means the opposite.
- **Synonym Clues:** The sentence or a nearby sentence gives a word that means the same or almost the same.
- **Example Clues:** The sentence or a nearby sentence gives an example to help explain the word.



**As you read the story, look for context clues that help explain the meaning of the underlined words.**

#### Beneath the Surface of the Ocean

Even though most of the Earth's surface is covered by ocean, a lot of the ocean floor is still a mystery. Scientists use special tools to study the deep sea and learn more about what lies beneath the waves. The seafloor is a world of underwater mountains, deep valleys and unusual sea creatures. It stretches far below the surface and is hidden under miles of water.



One of the most important features of the ocean floor is the mid-ocean ridge. This is a long, underwater mountain range that stretches across the ocean. These mountains form when hot, melted magma from inside the Earth pushes up through cracks in

the seafloor and creates new land over time. This glowing, liquid rock is similar to the lava that flows from volcanoes on land.

The deepest parts of the ocean are called trenches. Ocean trenches are deep valleys that stretch far below the ocean's surface, cutting through the seafloor like giant cracks. The Mariana Trench is the most famous one. It is so deep that even the tallest mountain on land would be able to fit inside it! Scientists send special submarines into trenches to explore the creatures that live in these dark waters.



Not all parts of the ocean floor are deep. A continental shelf is the shallow area at the edge of a continent. It is covered by water but is still part of the land. Many fish and other sea animals live in this area because sunlight can reach it, which helps plants grow.

The abyssal plain is one of the flattest places on Earth. This wide, open area is deep in the ocean and far from land. Even though it is dark and cold, some sea creatures survive here. They drift with the current, or stream, of ocean water that moves in one direction. Scientists use robots to explore these deep waters and discover new life.

Learning about the ocean floor helps scientists understand how the Earth is changing. Some areas are growing as new rock forms, while others are slowly wearing away. By studying the deep sea, scientists can learn more about our planet and the life beneath the waves.

**Then answer the following questions:**

1. What is the text mostly about?
  - a. Waves
  - b. The ocean floor
  - c. Sea animals
  
2. Which phrase from the text helps you figure out the meaning of *seafloor* in paragraph 1?
  - a. "The seafloor is a world of underwater mountains, deep valleys and unusual sea creatures."
  - b. "Scientists use robots to explore the deep sea. "
  - c. "Many fish and sea animals live in this area. "
  
3. What is the best definition of the term *mid-ocean ridge* in paragraph 2?
  - a. A long, underwater mountain range
  - b. A deep valley in the ocean
  - c. A wide, open area deep in the sea
  
4. What type of context clue helps you figure out the meaning of *magma* in paragraph 2?
  - a. Synonym
  - b. Example
  - c. Antonym

5. What type of context clue helps you figure out the meaning of *trenches* in paragraph 3?
- a. Definition
  - b. Example
  - c. Antonym
6. What is the best definition of *continental shelf* in paragraph 4?
- a. A long, underwater mountain range
  - b. A shallow area at the edge of a continent
  - c. A deep valley in the ocean
7. What is the best definition for *abyssal plain* (in paragraph 5)?
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8. What type of context clue helps you figure out the meaning of *current* in paragraph 5?
- a. Synonym
  - b. Antonym
  - c. Example

## Answers

1. What is the text mostly about?  
b. The ocean floor
2. Which phrase from the text helps you figure out the meaning of *seafloor* in paragraph 1?  
a. "The seafloor is a world of underwater mountains, deep valleys and unusual sea creatures."
3. What is the best definition of the term *mid-ocean ridge* in paragraph 2?  
a. A long, underwater mountain range
4. What type of context clue helps you figure out the meaning of *magma* in paragraph 2?  
b. Example
5. What type of context clue helps you figure out the meaning of *trenches* in paragraph 3?  
a. Definition
6. What is the best definition of *continental shelf* in paragraph 4?  
b. A shallow area at the edge of a continent
7. What is the best definition for *abyssal plain* (in paragraph 5)?  
A wide, open area that is deep in the ocean and far from land
8. What type of context clue helps you figure out the meaning of *current* in paragraph 5?  
c. Example