

# Contents

Introduction v

## Section A

**Unit 1:** Introducing Cambridge International AS Level English General Paper 2

**Unit 2:** Effective study habits and strategies 5

**Unit 3:** Enhancing knowledge and deepening thinking 9

## Section B

### Chapter 1: Active reading strategies 15

**Unit 1:** Identifying points and ideas 16

**Unit 2:** Identifying evidence 20

**Unit 3:** Understanding language in text 25

**Unit 4:** Ways of seeing – exploring perspectives 31

**Unit 5:** Identifying evidence to support main ideas 37

**Unit 6:** Analysing how information is presented and organised 41

**Unit 7:** Evaluating texts 45

### Chapter 2: Developing comprehension skills 49

**Unit 1:** Explaining words and phrases in context 50

**Unit 2:** Understanding implicit meaning and making inferences 54

**Unit 3:** Using own words to give reasons 58

**Unit 4:** Explaining differences and similarities in texts 60

### Chapter 3: Building background knowledge through research 65

**Unit 1:** Understanding forms and purposes of evidence 66

**Unit 2:** Exploring a variety of sources 71

**Unit 3:** Using diagrams, charts and graphs as evidence 77

### Chapter 4: Active writing strategies 83

**Unit 1:** Structuring academic writing 84

**Unit 2:** Developing precision and range in vocabulary 92

**Unit 3:** Identifying sources and synthesising texts 98

**Unit 4:** Refining language techniques 103

**Chapter 5: Developing evaluative essays 113**

<b>Unit 1:</b> Introducing evaluative and discursive essays	114
<b>Unit 2:</b> Prompts and ideas	119
<b>Unit 3:</b> Planning and structuring arguments	123
<b>Unit 4:</b> Writing effective introductions	129
<b>Unit 5:</b> Developing paragraphs	133
<b>Unit 6:</b> Using language for impact and precision	138
<b>Unit 7:</b> Writing conclusions	143
<b>Unit 8:</b> Editing and redrafting	149

**Section C**

**Chapter 6: Responding to comprehension questions 153**

<b>Unit 1:</b> Approaching comprehension questions	154
<b>Unit 2:</b> Worked responses to scenario analysis comprehension questions	161
<b>Unit 3:</b> Worked responses to text analysis comprehension questions	166
<b>Unit 4:</b> Sample answers and annotated responses to comprehension questions	171
<b>Unit 5:</b> Comprehension practice questions	179

**Chapter 7: Responding to essay questions 187**

<b>Unit 1:</b> Approaching essay questions	188
<b>Unit 2:</b> Writing an essay response in timed conditions	194
<b>Unit 3:</b> Sample answers/annotated responses	201
<b>Unit 4:</b> Independent essay writing practice	206

Glossary	207
Index	211
Acknowledgements	216

# Unit 1: Explaining words and phrases in context

## You will learn:

- how to understand words and phrases according to their context
- why it is important to consider what part of speech a word is, as well as the context of the passage.

## Big question

- How can context help you to understand a text?

Our everyday understanding of the world is shaped by **context**, which is the background to any information. For example, if you see someone on the street holding their hand up, they could be greeting you or warning you not to come any closer. If the person is smiling, it is likely to be the first option. If the person is an unsmiling police officer, it is more likely to be the second.

## UNDERSTANDING WORDS AND PHRASES IN CONTEXT

If you read a text and find you cannot understand a particular word or phrase, this might make you lose confidence about understanding the whole text. However, you will usually find that you can make some sense of the word or phrase by considering its context. In other words, you can make **deductions** based on the whole sentence or paragraph, and even what you know about the whole text.

For example, look at these two sentences:

It was a dreary winter afternoon. I was bored and it was too cold and wet to go out.

You may or may not know the meaning of the word 'dreary'. If not, then what can you work out about it? First, it is an **adjective** describing the afternoon. The second sentence explains that the weather is 'cold and wet' and the narrator is 'bored', so you can **deduce** that 'dreary' does not mean hot, dry, exciting or lovely. Also, 'dreary' cannot just mean cold or wet, because then the second sentence would be repetitive. It also seems to express the narrator's negative feelings.

By now, you are probably close to deducing the meaning of dreary, which is: dull and gloomy.

### Task: Working out a word's meaning from its context

1. Deduce the meaning of the highlighted word in this sentence:

When I opened the curtains, I beheld an extraordinary sight: the garden was full of monkeys.

Topic: Artificial intelligence (AI)



### Key terms

**context:** background information that relates to a text or event, and which helps us understand it

**deduction:** a conclusion you reach by interpreting evidence

**adjective:** word that describes a noun, e.g. the *red* car, the *tall* tree

**deduce:** to interpret evidence in order to reach a conclusion

Consider: What type of word is 'beheld' (a noun, an adjective, a verb)?

- What is being 'beheld'?
- What senses are involved?
- What other word might work in place of 'beheld'?

Write a short paragraph explaining your ideas and reasoning.

## IDENTIFYING THE MAIN PARTS OF SPEECH

### Nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs

Working out the meaning of words from context is easier if you can identify what **parts of speech** they are. The most important ones are listed in the table. If you know these already, it is worth revising them.

Part of speech	Explanation	Examples
noun	A word for a person, thing, idea or concept.	table, sky, room, tree, anger, engagement, coincidence
adjective	A word that describes a noun.	huge, expansive, ornate, green, sudden, unexpected, happy
verb	A word that describes an action or state of being.	eat, run, think, decide, speak, hope, try
adverb	A word that describes how or when an action is done.	slowly, energetically, carefully, quickly, forcefully, always, now

### Task: Using parts of speech to deduce meaning

2. a. Read the following passage and copy the underlined words into a table like the one below. Complete the table.

Horror fiction writers often explore the theme of scientists who aspire to create human life, as though they are omnipotent. While they often have good intentions, their endeavours usually end catastrophically.

Word	Part of speech	Meaning from context	Why I think it means this
theme	noun	idea	It works as something that writers might explore, and that could be 'fascinating'.

- b. Rewrite the passage in your own words.

### Key term

**part of speech:** the grammatical function of a word in a sentence, e.g. noun, verb, adjective, pronoun, and so on

Task: Understanding words from context

3. a. For each sentence below, work out the meaning of the underlined words from their context.
- Werewolves are mythical creatures – humans who are said to metamorphose into wolf form.
  - Hoping for research funding, the doctor tried to ingratiate himself with rich investors.
  - The rocket was propelled at lightning speed through the Earth's atmosphere into the stratosphere.
  - Your apathy, which could be mistaken for laziness, is caused by your feeling despondent about your exam results.
  - There is no time to be lost – move with alacrity.
- b. Compare your results with a partner.

## UNDERSTANDING WORDS AND PHRASES IN CONTEXT IN A LONGER PASSAGE

To understand words in their context in a whole text, first try to get an overview of what the text is about. Start with the title. If there are particular words or phrases you do not immediately understand, you may be able to work out their meaning from the context of the whole text combined with the context of the whole sentence.

Read the article below. The annotations provide clues to understanding some words and phrases you might not understand, using their context.

### Time to talk about robots — let's get the rules in place

Society has been **on the back foot** with social media. Only now are we coming up with ways to **regulate** social networks, tax their activities and protect the vulnerable. In contrast, when it comes to **robotics** and artificial intelligence (AI) we still have the opportunity to get on the front foot by laying out the legislation, regulations and certification needed so they can only operate within the boundaries we set.

That requires a grown-up conversation about the influence robots have on our lives and the knock-on effects for taxation and public services. They'll be able to support us by doing the more dangerous jobs such as inspecting **offshore renewable assets** and could **complement** healthcare services, filling the gaps and supporting the social care crisis. While some repetitive jobs are already being delivered by robots, introducing robots will also create new jobs.

Humans will supervise, service, and control these robots. Freeing up workers from repetitive and dangerous tasks will create opportunities for retraining and wage growth. Robots and AI will also bring huge benefits to society. As our population ages and **demographics** change, robots will help to ease the pressure on our health and social care services, from engaging care home residents in stimulating conversations through to monitoring patients in rural or remote locations.

A boxing idiom referring to a defensive position. What could it mean when related to the next sentence?

What noun does this verb relate to?

Relate this to the heading.

Note that 'inspecting' them could be dangerous – because of where they are. And what are 'renewables'?

The phrase 'filling the gaps and supporting the social care crisis' expands on this.

Comes from Greek words *demos* (people) and *graphy* (writing or picture)

The Scottish and UK governments are already working with academia industry and wider society and we hope to grow that relationship further. Scotland can then emulate and exceed the success of Odense, the Danish region that's stealing a march with its robotics cluster.

Stewart Miller, *The Times*, 11 October 2022

You probably know that you are in an academic institute (a school).

This relates to 'the success of Odense', so what might Scotland want to do?

## Final task: Using context to understand a longer passage

4. Make a three-column table listing the word and phrases annotated in the passage. Add what you think they mean, and why you think this. The table has been started below.

Word or phrase	Probable meaning	Reasoning
on the back foot	struggling to cope	A boxer is in a stronger position when attacking. Being 'on the back foot' must mean in a weak position.
regulate		

### Thinking more deeply

The article on robots says that it is time for society to have 'a grown-up conversation' about robots. In pairs, roleplay a conversation based on the article in which one person is very enthusiastic about robots in our society and the other is more cautious.

Then individually write a paragraph summarising the views you discussed.

### Plenary

Discuss with a partner what advice you would give to someone trying to understand words and phrases in a passage without a dictionary. Agree on at least four tips.

### Key learning

- The meaning of a word can be deduced from its context, or background information.
- To work out the meaning of a word or phrase in context, consider the surrounding sentence and what part of speech it is, as well as the broader context of the passage.

