

# Lesson 4

13

## Direct and Indirect Context Clues

A. The *coelacanth* (sē' lə kanth) is a kind of primitive fish with heavy, leg-like fins.

Sometimes context clues are *direct*; that is, the unfamiliar word is followed immediately by a word or words that explain it. In sentence A, for example, the word *coelacanth* is explained as "a kind of primitive fish with heavy, leg-like fins."

Explanations of this kind are called **direct context clues**. Such clues often immediately follow the words they explain, and may be set off with punctuation such as parentheses, dashes, or commas, as in sentence B:

B. A large amount of *adipose* (fatty) tissue found in these fish suggests that they once had lungs as well as gills.

Often, however, there are no direct clues to the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Then you must look for **indirect context clues** in the information contained in the rest of the sentence.

C. The coelacanth was supposed to have become *extinct* around sixty million years ago, until a living one was netted in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of Africa in 1938.

The clues to the meaning of *extinct* are contained in the general information given in the sentence. The fish was thought to be *extinct* until it was discovered "living" in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, *extinct* must mean something like "dead" or "vanished."

### Exercise

Read each of the following sentences and decide if the clues to the meaning of the italicized word are direct or indirect. Place a check on the correct line. Then write a meaning for the word on the line below.

1. Coelacanths are closely related to the ancestors of the land *vertebrates*—animals with backbones.

direct \_\_\_\_\_ indirect \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. These ancestors were the first *amphibians*, creatures living both in water and on land.

direct \_\_\_\_\_ indirect \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Coelacanths first appeared about 350,000,000 years ago and quickly became *abundant*, thriving in many parts of the world.

direct \_\_\_\_\_ indirect \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Although they were thought to be extinct, coelacanths were rediscovered in 1938 when some fishermen netted one in a *trawl* at a depth of about 250 feet.

direct \_\_\_\_\_ indirect \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Coelacanths are *denizens* of deep water, living in depths near the Comoro Islands in the Indian Ocean.

direct \_\_\_\_\_ indirect \_\_\_\_\_

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6. The natives of the Comoro Islands consider coelacanths to be *edible* when they are dried and salted.

direct \_\_\_\_\_ indirect \_\_\_\_\_

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7. The coelacanths are powerful *predators*, one being found with the remains of a fish of at least fifteen pounds in its stomach.

direct \_\_\_\_\_ indirect \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lesson 13

# What Is Figurative Language?



In the sentence above, *bright* is not meant to be understood literally. The sentence does not refer to the boy as being shiny or lit up.

Words, phrases, and sentences that are meant to be understood exactly word-for-word are *literal*. Words, phrases, and sentences that are *not* meant to be understood word-for-word are *figurative*.

### Exercise A

The following sentences contain figurative language. Underline the words or phrases in each that are not meant to be understood literally. Then underline the solution that best explains the figurative language.

1. Marissa is such a fast reader that she gulps down novels.
  - a. Marissa eats paperback novels.
  - b. Marissa reads many novels very quickly.
  - c. Marissa is confused by what she reads.
2. Rudy has hands that are like sandpaper.
  - a. Rudy's hands have sand glued to them.
  - b. Rudy's hands have been rubbed smooth.
  - c. Rudy's hands are dry and very rough.
3. Before a big test, Jason is as nervous as a racehorse before a race.
  - a. Jason runs very fast.
  - b. Jason keeps moving about and can't stay still.
  - c. Jason can easily kick and hurt someone.
4. When Sheila is hurt or unhappy, she pulls herself into her shell, like a turtle.
  - a. Sheila withdraws from other people when she is upset.
  - b. Sheila gets angry and shouts when she is upset.
  - c. Sheila moves very slowly when she is upset.

Many figurative expressions, like the one using *bright*, have been used for many years. Their meanings are familiar to many people. Good writers try to create fresh figurative expressions to get their ideas across. These new expressions often require more thought by a reader. For example, underline the figurative expression in the sentence on the next page.

With his long, powerful legs, Luis is a greyhound among beagles when he competes in the 440-yard dash.

Luis, who is a very fast runner, is compared to a greyhound. That dog, which has long, powerful legs, is known for its speed. In fact, it is used as a racing dog. The other runners are described as beagles, dogs with short legs that do not run very fast.

You will sometimes come across words and phrases and even whole sentences that don't make sense when read in a literal way. Sometimes, you can find a particular figurative expression in a dictionary. Other times, you will have to figure out the expression by yourself.

### Exercise B

Choose the one sentence in each pair that uses figurative language. Circle the letter of that sentence.

1. a. When Howie is in the pool, he's a fish.  
b. When Howie is in the pool, he can swim better than anyone else.
2. a. It's so hot outside; the temperature has been over a hundred degrees every day for the last week!  
b. It's so hot outside; I feel like I've been standing under a rocket that has just blasted off!
3. a. Richard eats too much, too fast.  
b. Richard cleans up food like a human vacuum cleaner.
4. a. When it comes to remembering what other people say, Linda has tape recorders for ears.  
b. When it comes to remembering what other people say, Linda can repeat every word.
5. a. As the storm passed, the sky turned a very white color.  
b. As the storm passed, the sky changed color and looked like curdled milk.

## Lesson 25

# Plural or Possessive

An apostrophe is used to form the possessive of a noun. It is not ordinarily used to form the plural of a noun.

Plural forms and possessive forms sound the same but are formed differently. Notice the sentences below. An apostrophe is used only with the possessive forms of the nouns.

**Singular possessive form:** A walrus's tusks are used like tongs.

**Plural form:** Some populations of walruses have been hunted almost to extinction.

**Plural possessive form:** Eskimos sometimes use walruses' skins for tents and boats.

The plural form *walruses* and the plural possessive form *walruses'* are used to show more than one. The singular possessive form *walrus's* and the plural possessive form *walruses'* are used to show ownership.

Read the sentences below. Notice which words in dark type need apostrophes.

**Icebergs** float slowly.

An **iceberg's** size varies.

**Ships** sail to the Arctic.

A **ship's** strength is tested in a storm.

Remember, when you write plural possessives, follow two steps. First, write the plural form. Then add just an apostrophe if the plural ends in *s*. If the plural doesn't end in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

### Exercise A

Replace each word in parentheses with a plural or possessive form.

**Example:** In 1899 (Alaska) \_\_\_\_\_ gold attracted many (prospector) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer:** In 1899 Alaska's gold attracted many prospectors.

- For many (year) \_\_\_\_\_ gold was (Alaska) \_\_\_\_\_ most important product.
- Most (mine) \_\_\_\_\_ yields were not as great as (miner) \_\_\_\_\_ expected.
- However, many (miner) \_\_\_\_\_ stayed to become permanent (inhabitant) \_\_\_\_\_ of Alaska, and the (territory) \_\_\_\_\_ population doubled in a ten-year period.
- Alaska was one of the last two (state) \_\_\_\_\_ to join the Union.

**Exercise B**

Underline the correct form of the noun for each sentence.

**Example:** The (towns, town's) boundaries extend into the country.

**Answer:** town's

1. The (oceans, ocean's) waters became choppy.
2. Then (wave's, waves) washed over the deck.
3. Deck (chairs, chair's) were blown about.
4. The (passengers, passengers') faces showed worry.
5. The (ships, ship's) captain wasn't alarmed.
6. He asked people to go to their (cabins, cabin's).
7. Everyone followed Captain (Jones, Jones's) orders.
8. The (engine's, engines) hummed through the night.
9. The (navigators, navigator's) kept the ship on course.
10. By dawn the (sun's, suns) rays began to shine through clouds.

**Exercise C**

Read this report about Thomas Edison's inventions. Add apostrophes where needed. You will find eight words to correct.

(1) Thomas Alva Edisons first patented invention was an electronic vote recorder. (2) This invention improved the method of totaling voters ballots. (3) Later, Edison improved the financial worlds communication by designing a better stock ticker. (4) In time, Edison set up this countrys first industrial research laboratory. (5) Using the labs equipment, he developed a telephone transmitter and the phonograph. (6) He also developed the worlds first commercially successful electric light bulb. (7) The publics response to his inventions was tremendous. (8) Edisons ideas have made possible many electronic devices.

## Lesson 26

## Pronoun Homophones

**Homophones** are words that sound alike. They have different meanings and are usually spelled differently.

Some possessive pronouns and contractions are homophones. **Homophones** are words that are pronounced the same, but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

Read the following sentence groups and explanations. Notice how the words that sound alike are formed differently.

Can you judge a book by its cover?

It's an important part of a book.

*Its* is the possessive form of the pronoun *it* and does not have an apostrophe. *It's* is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*.

Where is your science book?

You're assigned two chapters.

*Your* is the possessive form of the pronoun *you* and does not have an apostrophe. *You're* is a contraction for *you are*.

These are their art books.

They're all books about surfing.

The books are there on the table.

*Their* is the possessive form of the pronoun *they* and does not have an apostrophe. *They're* is a contraction for *they are*. *There* is an adverb which answers the question "Where?" and does not have an apostrophe.

Whose books are these?

Who's the author of this story?

*Whose* is the possessive form of the pronoun *who* and does not have an apostrophe. *Who's* is a contraction for *who is* or *who has*.

**Exercise A**

Complete each sentence with a possessive pronoun or a contraction.

1. The cat hurt \_\_\_\_\_ paw.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ at the door?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ going, aren't you?
4. Have them sign \_\_\_\_\_ names.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ idea was that?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ raining again.

**Exercise B**

Circle the correct word for each sentence.

Example: (Its, It's) unusual for a mother to have twins.

Answer: (It's)

1. You and (you're, your) family may use special words.
2. (Its, It's) not unusual for twins to have a private language.
3. Sometimes twins (who's, whose) lives have been isolated know how to talk only with each other.
4. When people are (their, there), the twins ignore them.
5. (Their, There) private vocabulary is called "twin talk."
6. (It's, Its) special sounds can make it sound foreign.
7. The specialist records the twins when (their, they're) talking to each other.
8. The specialist will learn each word and (it's, its) meaning.
9. Twin talk fascinates anyone (who's, whose) studying language.
10. Many times (there, they're) hard to understand.
11. (It's, Its) not known exactly how twin talk develops.
12. Both fraternal and identical twins were (there, their) at the conference.
13. (Its, It's) harder to tell identical twins apart.
14. Joy is a friend of mine (whose, who's) mother is a twin.
15. I asked Joy's mother and aunt if (its, it's) fun being twins.
16. They said that (their, they're) relationship is very special.



## Vocabulary Practice 9: Suffixes

### Suffixes: -ion

A suffix is a word that is added to the end of a base word. A suffix changes the meaning of the word and how it is used in a sentence.

**Example:** The suffix *-ion* is a noun-making suffix. Often, a verb can be changed into a noun by adding the suffix *-ion*, as well as by making spelling changes. The verb *progress* becomes the noun *progression* by adding *-ion*.

**A.** Think about the verb given in each item. Write the noun form of the verb from the list below.

ignition	persuasion	possession	confusion	provision
inversion	emission	infection	liberation	succession

- |             |       |            |       |
|-------------|-------|------------|-------|
| 1. possess  | _____ | 6. confuse | _____ |
| 2. liberate | _____ | 7. provide | _____ |
| 3. succeed  | _____ | 8. invert  | _____ |
| 4. ignite   | _____ | 9. infect  | _____ |
| 5. persuade | _____ | 10. emit   | _____ |

**B.** Write the noun from the list in Part A that best completes each sentence below. Use each word only once. You may use the plural form of any noun in the list.

We took one test after another this week! It was a whole \_\_\_\_\_ of tests! In science, we took a test on weather. I got every answer right except the one about temperature \_\_\_\_\_. We also had a general science test. It had questions about pollution and automobile \_\_\_\_\_. It also had questions about viruses, bacteria, and \_\_\_\_\_. We had a writing test with two parts. In one part, we had to use \_\_\_\_\_ to make an argument in favor of tough sentences for drug \_\_\_\_\_. In another test, we had to explain a simple process, such as removing car keys from the car's \_\_\_\_\_. The goal was to make the writing perfectly clear, so the reader would not have a moment of \_\_\_\_\_. We also had a test in social studies. It was about the \_\_\_\_\_ of colonies from their rulers, as well as the \_\_\_\_\_ these colonies had made for new governments.