Comparison and Contrast Clues

Sometime you can tell the meaning of an unfamiliar word when it is compared or contrasted to something familiar. Context clues that show comparison include like, as, similar, and in the same way. Contrasts may be signaled by words such as but, although, however, and on the other hand.

Kari’s happy face was luminous, like the rays of the sun.

The clue word like in this sentence tells you that luminous means “shining” or “giving off light.”

I assumed a rhino would move in a lumbering manner, but it raced across the screen like an attacking army tank.

The clue word but in this sentence suggests that lumbering means “moving in a heavy, slow manner.”

A. Comparison and Contrast Clues in Action

Read the following sentences and underline each word or phrase that signals a compare/contrast clue. Circle comparison or contrast, depending on the clue. Then write the meaning of each italicized word.

1. The sink was clogged, like a ball stuck in the vacuum cleaner.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

2. The meeting was held in the main house, but refreshments were served in the annex.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

3. We thought we were seeing the real painting, but it turned out to be a fraud.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

4. Although we had expected a multitude to come to the rally, only ten or fifteen people showed up.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

5. That faucet is faulty, just like all the other things in this house that don’t work.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

6. The summer was sultry; on the other hand, the fall was cool and dry.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

7. The moon will diminish in size at the end of the month; however, it will grow during the first part of the month.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

8. When the winner was announced, there was pandemonium in the hall, something like what happens in the final seconds of a close basketball game.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

9. The coach’s empathy for her team was like that of a mother for her children.
   compare/contrast
   Meaning: ______________________________

10. I like foods that are hot and spicy, but my brother’s diet is much more bland.
    compare/contrast
    Meaning: ______________________________
Lesson 4

Comparison and Contrast Clues

More Practice

clogged annex bland fraud multitude
faulty empathy sultry diminish pandemonium

B. Vocabulary Words in Action

Review the meanings of the words in the list above. Then insert in each sentence the word that correctly fits the meaning.

1. The toaster is still working, even though the microwave is ________________.

2. The next morning a quiet mood settled over the city, unlike the ________________ of the night before.

3. The ________________ weather made me feel like I was swimming in warm water.

4. Although only a few flowers were growing in the valley, we could see a ________________ of them on the hill.

5. The bathroom pipe was ________________; however, the kitchen drain was open and clear.

6. This soup is just as ________________ as some of the other unexciting dishes we've been having lately.

7. We had hoped for ________________, but we were treated mostly with hostility and distrust.

8. The building has an ________________ that reminds me of the new bedroom over the garage.

9. ________________ is regarded as a crime in the same way as other dishonest business deals are.

10. I was afraid of snowboarding at first, but once I tried it, my fears began to ________________.

C. Vocabulary Challenge

Look at the following words and their meanings. Then for each word write a sentence that uses the word and includes a context clue to its meaning.

1. hilarious very funny; noisily merry

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. ordeal a difficult or painful experience

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. serene calm, tranquil, peaceful

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

4. renovate repair; restore to an earlier condition

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

5. malice a desire to hurt others; ill will

   ____________________________________________________________________________________