Context & meaning 3

Sometimes, in addition to its context, we can work out what a word means from 'clues' in the word itself. These clues are usually in the form of one or two words (or parts of words) that we already know, often with the addition of prefixes and / or suffixes.

For example:

Healthcare = health + care

The town lacks basic healthcare facilities, so people have to travel many miles to see a doctor.

Deforestation = de + forest + ation.

Deforestation has resulted in the destruction of thousands of acres of tropical forest.

Facial = face + ial (the e is removed)

The company started off producing a range of facial cleansers and moisturisers which had not been tested on animals.

1 Can you work out what the words in bold in these sentences mean? Check your answers at the back of the book.

1. The country is very poor, and one in seven children dies in **infancy.**
2. All the employees are asked to produce a written evaluation of their performance and hand it to the **personnel** manager.
3. The new drug does not cure the illness, but can **prolong** the patient's life by up to five years.
4. The farm was on top of a **windswept** hill, miles from the nearest town.
5. Oil prices increased **threefold** over a five-year period.
6. The historical document has been examined by several distinguished **scholars,** but none of them can tell if it is genuine or fake.
7. When you deliver the package, make sure that the **recipient** signs for it.
8. The **centrepiece** of the new museum is a Henry Moore sculpture that was bought from a private collector.
9. The city offers a **multitude** of interesting and exciting activities for people of all ages.
10. Government statistics on the **numeracy** skills of ten-year-olds suggests that more emphasis needs to be placed on the teaching of mathematics in school.
11. The average **lifespan** of an elephant is 60 – 70 years.
12. Several interesting objects were found during the archaeological dig, but none of them were of any great **monetary** value.

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13. From the top of the tower, we looked out over a city of incredible **grandeur.**

14. From a traveller's **standpoint,** the competition between airlines to win customers is a good thing.

2 Now do the same with these.

1. The city was over 60 miles from the **epicentre** of the earthquake, but still suffered substantial damage.

2. In some cases, hospital **outpatients** have to wait over three hours to see a doctor.

3. To many, the evidence he provided did not **validate** his claim that the Earth moved around the Sun.

4. Many medical professionals are concerned about the **widespread** use of antibiotics to treat minor medical conditions.

5. Modern **seafarers** rely on modern technology to help them navigate the oceans.

6. After the accident, he temporarily lost **spatial** awareness, and could only pick up objects when he closed one eye.

7. A **monorail** connects the airport with the city, taking visitors into the heart of the city in less than 20 minutes.

8. A new device which stimulates the **auditory** areas of the brain offers hope to those who have serious hearing problems.

9. I don't consider myself to be particularly **industrious,** but when I'm given a job, I make sure it gets done.

10. When, on his 104th birthday, he was asked about the secret to his **longevity,** he replied that he only ever ate raw vegetables and had never smoked.

11. The new airliner is more environmentally-friendly than other aircraft, its only **drawback** being its limited flying range.

12. The Museum of Contemporary Art **showcases** all that is best about modern art.

13. The Alaskan **wilderness** is not a place you want to be when winter comes.

14. In this remote, poverty-stricken area, only a few children go to school, and consequently about a quarter of the country's population is **illiterate.**

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