READING IN CONTEXT

Context clues are hints in the writing that help you figure out what a word means. Each example below has hints within the passage or sentence to help you figure out the meaning of the word.

Read each question CAREFULLY and HIGHLIGHT. The word you are defining may be in bold, underlined or both.

1. No matter where you go, the Internet is following you. Almost every portable device is being made with an Internet connection. Most new TVs and many other appliances come with Internet connections as well. The Internet is truly **ubiquitous**.
If something is ubiquitous, __ _.
a. it is fuzzy and will bite you
b. it is everywhere
c. it costs too much money
d. it causes rashes

2. Speaking rudely to the judges was **rash** behavior. You really hurt your chances of winning! In the above context, what does "rash" mean?
a. an itchy skin condition
b. funny
c. trying to hide or disguise a piece of cheese
d. with little thought or consideration

3. Some people are always **bashing** the president just like others bashed the one before him. Wouldn't you think that everyone could find something to praise him for, at least once in a while?
What does "bashing" mean in the above selection?
a. hitting hard with a heavy tool
b. going to too many expensive parties
c. speaking or writing harshly about
d. voting for a different candidate

4. Wherever he goes, the **esteemed** Dr. Sanchez is applauded for his life saving research. What does "esteemed" mean?
a. held over boiling water
b. very old
c. unable to chew gum
d. greatly admired

5. I believe that if you lower taxes so that people can keep more of the money they earn, it will be an **incentive** for them to work harder.
What is the meaning of "incentive"? _ .
a. a reason to do something
b. a small amount of money
c. a tax
d. a good job

6. Most of America's Founding Fathers did not believe in women's **suffrage**. Only men could vote in the United states until 1920.
What is "suffrage"?
a. something that causes physical pain
b. an early flag
c. skirts that did not cover ankles
d. the right to vote

7. Some people are sure that the new health care law will mean better care for everyone. Others argue that the law will mean less care and longer waiting lines for those who need to see doctors. It's a **controversy** that will not go away soon.
A controversy is something that people __ _.
a. have strong disagreements over
b. blow their noses into
c. need to pay for a visit to a doctor
d. eat with sweet candy

8. Removing seeds from cotton plants was a slow job until Eli Whitney invented the **cotton gin.** What is a cotton gin?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

a. a drink
b. a book
c. a machine
d. a cloth

9. In the early 1600s, a dangerous trip across the Atlantic Ocean was a **daunting** idea. The Europeans, who would someday be known as the Pilgrims, must have been a very determined and brave group of settlers.
A daunting task is one that would _Someone.
a. tickle
b. amuse
c. lose or misplace
d. frighten or intimidate

10. The **original** Pilgrims called themselves the "Saints" and referred to others who joined with them for the voyage as the "Strangers."
In this context, "original" means __ _.
a. one of a kind
b. first
c. humorous
d. musical

11. The Saints and Strangers argued about how they would live in the New World. After much discussion, they came together and signed the Mayflower **Compact**.
The Compact was ____.
a. a container for makeup
b. a small item
c. a machine used for mashing corn
d. an agreement

12. When the Pilgrims landed in what is now Massachusetts, they were fearful that the Native Americans would attack them. However, the people that they **encountered**, the Wampanoag Indians, were a peaceful and generous tribe.
To encounter, is to __ _.
a. meet
b. note how many
c. fight
d. exchange text messages

13. As the summer sun sent scattered rays through the maple and oak leaves overhead, the young deer stood **frozen**, making it almost impossible for the hikers to see her.
In the above passage, the word "frozen" means ___ .
a. very cold
b. visible
c. not moving
d. not melted

14. Christmas is a time when Dad **reverts** to his childhood. I really think he looks forward to Santa's visit more than any other member of the family. Mom says that he'll always be a child during this season.
What does "reverts" mean in the above passage?
a. stands up straight
b. peeks at presents
c. drinks too much egg nog
d. goes back to being what he was

15. Fortunately, the explosion **diverted** the asteroid from a course that would have sent it hurdling into our planet. To divert is to __ _.
a. change the direction of
b. look for really high waves
c. jump into a dry river
d. look through a telescope

16. A wonderful 98-year-old woman is working day and night to knit scarves to send as gifts for the troops. What a **selfless** person she is!
A selfless woman ___ __.
a. is selfish
b. has no name

LIVEWORKSHEETS

c. likes to wear scarves
d. cares more about others than herself

17. The United States has a **vast** amount of newly discovered clean geothermal (natural heat from the Earth's crust) energy. Tapping into this energy source could provide at least 10 times the energy that can be obtained from the nation's known coal reserves.
- What does "vast" mean?
a. a large amount
b. not enough
c. dangerous
d. having no known use

18. Which word in the above paragraph means supplies that are available to be used?
a. geothermal
b. tapping
c. continent
d. reserves

19. Using IQ tests and MRI brain scans, researchers have found that the measurable intelligence of teenagers can rise and fall over time. We used to believe that intelligence was **static.** But now, because of new studies, we know that teens and even fully mature adults can grow more brain cells when needed.
- What does "static" mean in the above selection?
a. noise
b. not changing
c. moldy
d. unreal

20. What are researchers?
a. people who lose things
b. people who search for knowledge
c. creatures from Mars
d. students who don't study

21. Poor Farmer Chevez **labors** sixteen hours a day and never has time for a vacation. He deserves better! Everyone should have at least one day a week for rest and relaxation.
A. plays
B. eats
C. works
D. unions

22. It's not that I'm unfriendly, but sometimes I want to leave **society** behind and be alone for a while.
A. people living as members of a group
B. homes with messy floors
C. the fastest runners
D. people who are afraid of Girl Scouts

23. Our new alarm system will wake up the entire neighborhood if an **intruder** gets in the house. An intruder is someone who intrudes. To intrude is to ____.
A. paint or repair old buildings
B. wear ones shoes on the wrong feet
C. go where one is not wanted or doesn't belong
D. be very noisy

24. Those scientists want to hear what our professor thinks about their theory because he is the **foremost** expert in their field.
A. The first or main one
B. craziest
C. least informed
D. loudest

25. Your cousin claimed to be late because the doors of his house were frozen shut. Even though I have my doubts, his explanation is **plausible**. It got really cold last night. I'll just have to take his word for it.
If a statement is plausible, _ _ _.
a. you must always believe it
b. you should never believe it
c. it's hard to understand because it makes no sense

LIVEWORKSHEETS

d. it's believable enough to possibly be true

26. If you don't **curtail** your spending, you'll be broke in no time at all! Which word is a synonym of "curtail"?
a. reduce
b. follow
c. behind
d. buy

27. No word must ever leak out about this military action! It has to be a **clandestine** operation in order to succeed. Which word is a synonym of "clandestine"?
a. family
b. useful
c. dangerous
d. secret

28. Put this medicine on your arm and rub it into your skin until it's invisible. It will **inhibit** the infection's attempt to spread.
What does "inhibit" mean?
a. live in a certain place
b. block or slow down
c. itch or burn
d. help to do something important

29. Fortunately, the dizzy spell was **transient.** He was able to continue playing within seconds and had no trouble winning the match.
When you describe an event as "transient," you are saying that _.
a. it sounds like a train
b. it is quite harmful
c. it helps you win
d. it doesn't last long

30. Brea and Elizabeth are having a **dispute** over which radio station to play at work. It would be so much simpler if they both liked the same kind of music.
A dispute is a _ _.
a. musical instrument
b. choice of music
c. discovery
d. disagreement

31. When they heard the good news about the court's decision, the angry crowd cheered and then began to **disperse**. "It looks like everyone is going home," one reporter stated.
Which would be the opposite of "disperse"?
a. come together
b. smile
c. fly like a bird
d. sing

32. It's a wonder to me how anyone can still be undecided about this election. These two candidates are certainly **distinct**. Each would lead our nation in opposite directions.
What does "distinct" mean?
a. needing a bath
b. dishonest
c. clearly different
d. about the same age

33. Mr. Huge was very proud of his auto superstore. "We have such an **extensive** selection of cars," he said, "so everyone should find a vehicle that he or she will love!"
The word "extensive" means __ _.
a. costing a lot of money
b. large amount
c. having no color
d. not enough

34. Friendship is a **priceless** thing. If Chris put a price, or conditions, on her friendship, it's no longer priceless. In fact, it's not real friendship at all!
If something is priceless, _ _ __ .
a. it has a missing tag
b. it has no value

LIVEWORKSHEETS

c. it has great value
d. it is made out of rice

35. The news story was based on a letter that was a **fabrication**. Now the reporter who wrote the story is in big trouble. Will anyone believe him again?
A fabrication is _ _ _.
a. made of cloth
b. full of long words
c. funny
d. fake

36. The reporter insisted that the letter he used was **authentic**. He said that he had shown it to many experts before he used it in his story.
When something is authentic, it's _.
a. genuine, or real
b. carefully written
c. full of tasty worms
d. very old

37. In 1975, Governor James promised to do something about the high taxes in our state. She didn't present a tax cut bill to lawmakers until 1985. It took her a **decade** to keep her promise, but better late than never.
How long is a decade?
a. 75 years
b. 85 years
c. a century
d. 10 years

38. Your plan looks good. I hope it will really work. It's time to **implement** it and see if it's as brilliant as you claim.
a. instrument
b. take apart
c. change
d. carry out

39. If your plan fails, we'll have to find someone who can **devise** a better one.
a. design
b. dislike
c. appliance
d. to use peanut butter as toothpaste

40. Of course, I'm not saying that your plan is no good. I tend to be **optimistic**, so I won't be surprised when you succeed.
a. expecting the best to happen
b. needing glasses to see
c. full of gas
d. unselfish

41. When your plan brings us great wealth, you will be rewarded for your **sagacity**.
a. good looks
b. mistakes
c. intelligence
d. huge appetite for herbs

42. No matter what happens, I **assure** you that I will not forget how hard you have worked on this project.
a. dare
b. promise
c. act like a donkey
d. forget

Marsha is really an **introvert**. When I took her to Jason's party, she sat in a corner without speaking to anyone. All she did was eat most of the snacks. The only reason she hangs out with me is because I never try to force her to be sociable. She would never forgive me if I introduced her to anyone.
43. An introvert is usually _ __.
a. friendly
b. hungry
c. unclean

LIVEWORKSHEETS

d. shy

44. Sunshine said, "Amber, why are you making such a big deal about Robert's hair? Yes, he did dye it purple. It is rather unusual for a guy to have purple hair. On the other hand, it's not exactly going to change the course of world history. It's really quite a **trivial** matter."
What does "trivial" mean?
a. strange
b. unimportant
c. disgusting
d. dangerous

45. Both sides in the election contest are throwing accusations at each other. The Gore supporters claim that Governor Bush is trying to **thwart** the will of the people. The Bush supporters say that Mr. Gore is trying to create votes or assign choices to people who did not really cast votes for president.
What does "thwart" mean?
a. help
b. figure out
c. block
d. tickle

46. There is a legal battle raging and the judges are concerned that time is running out. Lawyers are being asked to **expedite** the matter by getting their paperwork in early.
What does "expedite" mean?
a. quicken
b. agree on
c. sue
d. discuss

47. The Florida legislature believes that it has the power to choose the winner of the election if the courts haven't finished their work by December 12. Both houses are controlled by Republicans and they would surely **resolve** the matter in Bush's favor.
What does "resolve" mean?
a. cancel
b. consider
c. debate
d. settle

48. The election could actually end up being decided in the U.S. Congress. Al Gore's vice-presidential running mate, Joe Lieberman, and perhaps Mr. Gore himself, would be able to vote on the matter. Some would argue that they should **recuse** themselves, but they would probably exercise their right to vote.
What does "recuse" mean?
a. step aside and not be involved
b. admit that you are wrong
c. leave the country
d. insist on being heard

49. If you count all the votes in an area that heavily supports candidate A, and only some of the votes in an area that heavily supports candidate B, you'll **skew** the results in favor of candidate A.
What does "skew" mean?
a. roast
b. ignore
c. slant
d. ask

50. The home team made sure that the officials were on their side. They won a close game and the championship with many questionable decisions from the officials. However, no one from any other town would accept the winners as **legitimate** champions.
What does "legitimate" mean?
a. real
b. talented
c. sneaky
d. good looking

51. We walked slowly down the trail with great **trepidation**. No one who had gone this way had ever been heard from again. Had they simply found a better place to settle on this dark planet? We doubted that.
Which word is a synonym of "trepidation"?
a. movement
b. worry

LIVEWORKSHEETS

c. enjoyment
d. laughter

52. Only an hour or so had passed before a tremendous roar shook the ground. At that very moment, a strange grey creature **materialized** before our eyes. It resembled a lizard in shape. It was about ten feet high at the shoulders and at least fifty feet long. What did the creature do?
a. It whipped its tail back and forth.
b. It stamped its feet.
c. It showed its sharp teeth.
d. It appeared.

53. Kathy was looking for a strong but light material to use for making her water jugs. Unfortunately, she chose noodelite. It proved to too **porous** to hold jelly.
A porous material _ .
a. is good for holding things that you pour
b. protects you in pouring rain
c. allows liquids to flow through it
d. is necessary for making bowling balls

54. We have rather **lofty** expectations for you, son. You will attend college. You will become rich and famous. You will be elected president of the United States before you turn forty.
Which word is a synonym of "lofty"?
a. high
b. shaky
c. small
d. lowly

55. Ashlee was not happy with her friend Samantha. "I've been waiting here for an hour!" she growled into her cell phone. "You'd better hie yourself over here," she continued, "or we'll leave without you.
a. hurry, or hasten
b. stroll, or walk slowly
c. float above the trees
d. greet in an unfriendly manner

56. Mr. Burke stood before his employees. They had never seen him in such a serious mood. "I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that your future with this company depends on how hard you work," he stated firmly.
a. a girl again
b. honest and trustworthy
c. important
d. not responsible

57. I think it would help our basketball team, if we allowed girls to play. I've seen how Patty has a **knack** for making the tough shots when they're needed most. She wants to play on our team and we'd win more games with her help.
What does "knack" mean?
a. to throw or toss
b. a hard punch
c. a kind of sports bag
d. an ability

58. I like that store. All the employees **strive** to make the customers feel right at home. Which word is a synonym of "strive"?
a. complain
b. try
c. fail
d. clean

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Inferencing is when you "read between the lines" and use your experience and knowledge of people to understand what is happening even if the author does not tell you directly. Read the passages below and answer the question below each one using inferences to figure our your answer.

Turner almost wished that he hadn't listened to the radio. He went to the closet and grabbed his umbrella. He would feel silly carrying it to the bus stop on such a sunny morning.

59. Which probably happened?
a. Turner realized that he had an unnatural fear of falling radio parts.
b. Turner had promised himself to do something silly that morning.
c. Turner had heard a weather forecast that predicted rain.
d. Turner planned to trade his umbrella for a bus ride.

"Larry, as your boss, I must say it's been very interesting working with you," Miss Valdez said. "However, it seems that our company's needs and your performance style are not well matched. Therefore, it makes me very sad to have to ask you to resign your position effective today."

60. What was Miss Valdez telling Larry?
a. She would feel really bad if he decided to quit.
b. He was being fired.
c. He was getting a raise in pay.
d. She really enjoyed having him in the office.

LIVEWORKSHEETS