



Reading Skill: Working out the meaning of unfamiliar words

Learn together!

Some questions test your ability to understand the meaning of the words that you may not know. There are three steps to answering such questions:

- 1 Locate the word in question in the text. Read the sentences near the word to get some hints.
- 2 Underline the keywords in each option.
- 3 Replace the word in the text with each option and see which option matches the context best.

Learn more!

Sometimes you can also get the meaning of the words from their **roots**, **prefixes** and **suffixes**.

The **root** of a word is its most basic form. We add a **prefix** to the beginning of a word and a **suffix** to the end of a word to form new words that have different meanings.

e.g. The **root** of the word 'acting' is 'act'.

e.g. The **prefix** 'un-' in the word 'unhappy' means 'not'.

e.g. The **suffix** '-less' in the word 'hopeless' means 'without'.

Give it a try!

e.g.1 In the notice, the word '**festive**' means '_____'.
A. having a lot of things to do
B. having pleasant feelings
C. producing good feelings to celebrate a festival
D. presenting something in a bright and colourful way

- The word '**festive**' shares the **root** with the word '**festival**'. The text is also about Chinese New Year. With these hints, you can get the answer easily.

e.g.2 In the notice, the word '**compost**' means '_____'.
A. a kind of plant which is a symbol of luck
B. a material which can be recycled
C. a material which is used for building houses
D. a material which improves the quality of soil

- Read the sentence with the word '**compost**'. You can find that '**compost**' is something which is **very useful in organic farming**. Among the four options, only option D is related to farming.