



Working out the meaning of unknown words



Read the lines before and after the unknown word.



- Look for surrounding words or phrases that provide hints.
- The root, prefix and suffix of the unknown word may indicate whether it has a positive or negative meaning.



- Look for words that are associated with the unknown word in each multiple-choice option.
- Replace the unknown word with the words in the options.
- Ensure the meaning remains relevant, logical and reasonable.

Let's look closer!

If you want to increase your productivity at home, try working out with dumbbells. Prices for dumbbells range from HK\$300–1000. You can **break up dreary routine activities** by working out between each task. Doing this keeps you focused and motivated to complete all the activities.

break up (phr. v.) = to separate something into smaller parts
dreary (adj.) = dull and boring

DSE 2012 Part A Q11 Multiple choice

e.g. What is the meaning of 'dreary'?

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. interesting (positive) | C. busy (neutral) | A | B | C | D |
| B. organised (positive) | D. boring (negative → ✓ logical and reasonable) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |

THE WANING INTEREST IN TOYS

Toy demand **falls victim to** new alternatives and cultural shifts

fall victim to = to be negatively affected by

Children's enthusiasm for toys is on the **decline**. As a result, toy manufacturers and retailers are facing **an uncertain future**. We spoke with some toy manufacturers about the **challenges** they are facing. The majority of them claim that they **cannot survive** by selling only toys, and some of them have considered turning to sell baby products or other daily necessities.

The language in the paragraph suggests a negative situation for the toy industry.

DSE 2020 Part B1 Q40 Multiple choice

e.g. What does 'waning' in the title mean?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. increasing (positive) | C. declining (negative) | A | B | C | D |
| B. growing (positive) | D. continuous (irrelevant) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Let's practise!

One evening, Emma watched a documentary about a student athlete on TV and was intrigued by the relationship between physical activity and learning. She went on to learn more about how exercising improves academic performance and realised that it is one of the most effective ways to boost test scores. According to Emma, exercising helps improve concentration and memory, making it easier for students to focus.

DSE 2012 Part B1 Q25 Multiple choice

1 Which of the following is closest in meaning to 'intrigued' (line 1)?

- | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. amused | C. interested | A | B | C | D |
| B. worried | D. confused | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

While the idea of eating out can be tempting due to the vast array of cuisine available, it can be expensive and unhealthy. A small number of people still value the convenience that eating out offers, but the pendulum has definitely swung in their minds. A majority of people feel that it is not worth the dent in their pockets and the toll on their health.

DSE 2021 Part A Q21 Multiple choice

2 What does the phrase 'the pendulum has definitely swung' (line 3) mean?

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. People always want to eat out because of the many choices offered. | A | B | C | D |
| B. People do not mind paying extra for convenience. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| C. The reason for eating out has been questioned. | | | | |
| D. Most people now focus on their health instead of convenience. | | | | |

Exam Booster

Making small talk with the person on the treadmill next to you is kind of fun. As much as I like to think that they would appreciate my effort, I can equally understand why they might think I'm a weirdo. However, I suppose it's not that uncommon to strike up conversations with strangers in an effort to be friendly.

DSE 2014 Part B2 Q56 Multiple choice

1 What does 'a weirdo' (line 2) mean?

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. a talkative person | C. a clever person | A | B | C | D |
| B. a strange person | D. a friendly person | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |