



Using a dictionary entry to find out the shades of meaning



What are shades of meaning?

- When a word has more than one meaning, we have to find out which meaning is represented by the word in the text.

How to find out the meaning?

- Read the text around the word. Use context to make an educated guess at its meaning.
- Match the word in the text with each definition in the answer options.

Let's look closer!



Suzanne

Suzanne wants to add *a few LED lights* in the room to make it feel more like Christmas, i.e. *adding a festive touch*.



We definitely need to do something for the Christmas party. I was thinking about decorating the room with a few LED lights. It would be a great way to make the room look less boring while also adding a festive touch to it. I think our guests would really appreciate it. 10:48 pm

DSE 2021 Part B1 Q32 Multiple choice

e.g. Look at the word 'touch'. The word has different meanings. Read the extract of the dictionary entry for 'touch' below and decide which meaning corresponds to the meaning in the text.

- A. to put your hand on someone or something
- B. to harm someone or damage something
- C. a small amount of something
- D. a small addition to make something better

A B C D

Attending a reunion with old classmates can be problematic. For example, you had an argument with a classmate years ago, and neither of you settled it. At the reunion, it is likely that this old row would break out again. This will surely lead to a tense and unpleasant atmosphere.

The text brings up the example of *an argument* that was never settled. Based on this, we can work out that the *old row* refers to the unsettled *argument*.

DSE 2017 Part A Q6 Multiple choice

e.g. Which definition of 'row' is closest to the meaning used in line 3?

- A. a line of things situated next to each other
- B. moving a boat in the water with oars
- C. a loud and angry argument
- D. a loud and annoying noise

A B C D

Let's practise!

Instant messaging apps like WeChat and WhatsApp have established themselves as the principal communication tools globally. They provide the means for users to send and receive messages within microseconds, often with people who are on the other side of the world. This convenience means that billions of people use these apps every day. In some countries, they have replaced telephones and emails as the most popular communication tools.

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DSE 2017 Part A Q6 Multiple choice

1 Which meaning of 'principal' is closest to the meaning used in line 1?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. the person in charge of a school | C. the most convenient | A | B | C | D |
| B. the money that is lent to someone | D. the most important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

From a young age, Derek and his dad were not on good terms. While Derek loved spending most of his time reading books in his room, his dad was the opposite. He wanted his son to be just like him. Over the years, the two have fought over and over again, until one day Derek could not bear it anymore. He decided to leave home.

DSE 2021 Part B1 Q32 Multiple choice

2 Look at the word 'bear'. The word has different meanings. Read the extract of the dictionary entry for 'bear' below and decide which meaning corresponds to the meaning in the text.

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. to carry something to a place | | | | |
| B. to endure a bad experience | | | | |
| C. to support something | A | B | C | D |
| D. to take responsibility for something | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Exam Booster

Most of us cannot live without friends. They help us at our time of need, or they can simply be a pair of ears to listen to the issues we are facing. A good companion enables us to contend with the reality of daily life.

DSE 2017 Part A Q6 Multiple choice

1 Which meaning of 'contend' is closest to the meaning used in line 3?

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. to compete to win something | | | | |
| B. to say that something is a fact | | | | |
| C. to deal with difficulties | A | B | C | D |
| D. to stop someone from doing something | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |