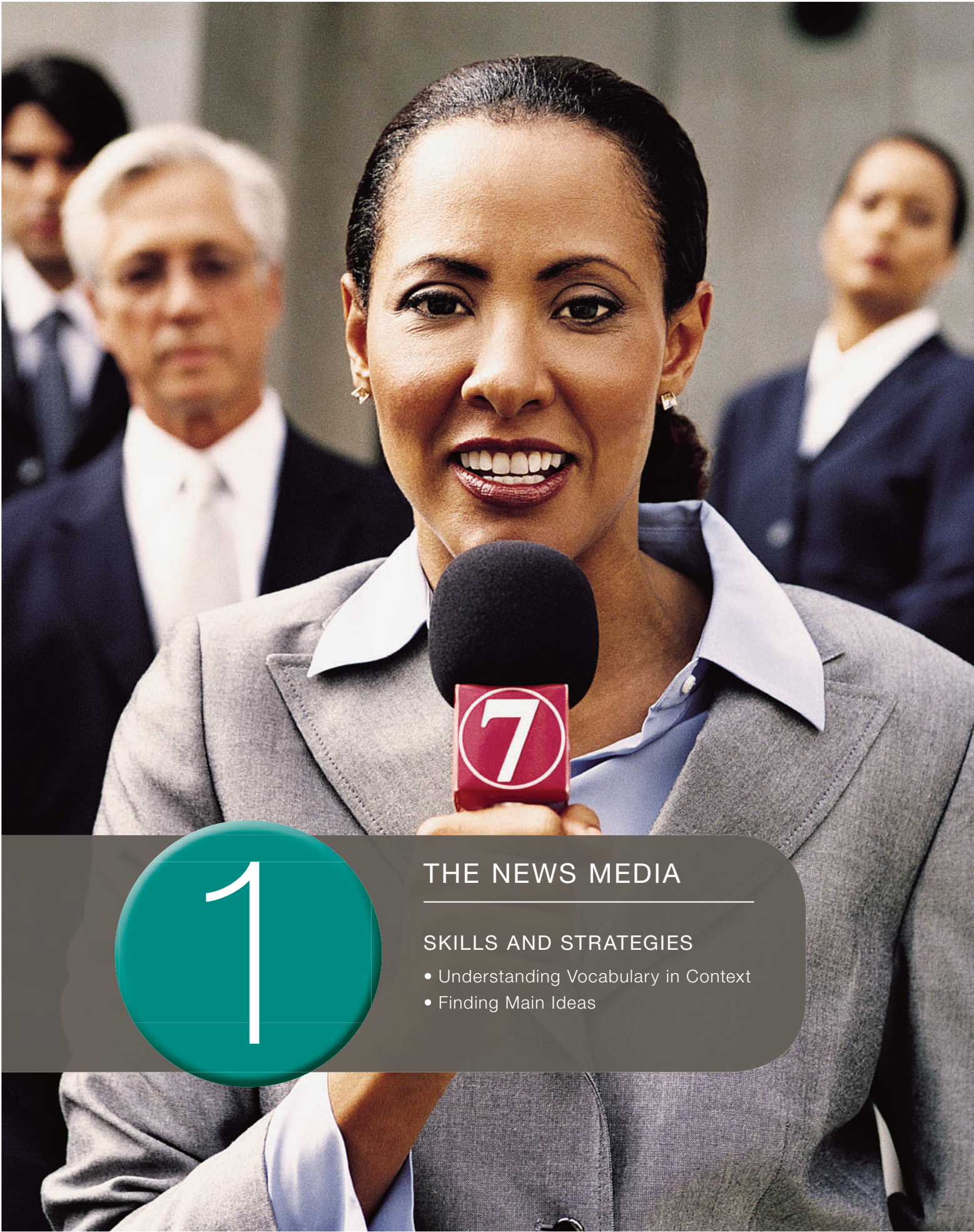


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Excerpt
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THE NEWS MEDIA

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- Understanding Vocabulary in Context
- Finding Main Ideas

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES 1

Understanding Vocabulary in Context

Good readers look for context clues to help them figure out the meanings of new and unfamiliar vocabulary. Context clues are the words, parts of words, and sentences that are near or around the unfamiliar word. They can help you guess what an unfamiliar word means. This is an important skill to develop because you don't have to keep stopping to look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary. You can then read more quickly, which makes it easier to remember and understand what you are reading.

Examples & Explanations

The **media** – organizations such as newspapers and television, which provide news and information – are changing quickly because of new technology.

Definition: Writers often define the meanings of important words immediately after writing them. They may introduce the definition by a dash (–), by the word *or*, or by placing the definition between commas right after the word. They may also use the verbs *be* or *mean*: *X is . . .* or *X means . . .*

Symbols can express important messages. For example, the heart often expresses the meaning of love.

Exemplification: Sometimes writers don't give exact definitions. Instead, they give examples that show the meaning of the word. Often, they will introduce the examples with signal words such as *for instance* or *such as*.

The teacher thought about **eliminating** question 4 of the final test. In the end, however, he decided to keep it.

Contrast: Sometimes you can figure out a word because the writer gives a contrast or an opposite meaning. Here the writer says that the teacher thought he might **eliminate** one of the test questions. The word *however* signals a contrast with the next phrase *he decided to keep it*. Therefore, *to eliminate* means the opposite of *to keep*; it means "to remove."

A big news story in May 2011 was the **devastation** that was caused by the Japanese earthquake and tsunami.

General knowledge: You can understand an unfamiliar word by knowing something about the general topic. In this case, you may know that the 2011 earthquake and tsunami caused terrible destruction, so **devastation** means "terrible destruction."

The Language of Vocabulary in Context

Writers often use *context clue signals* – words or phrases that tell the reader that a context clue is coming. Here is a list of signals that can help you find clues in a reading and figure out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

CONTEXT CLUE SIGNALS		
DEFINITION	EXEMPLIFICATION	CONTRAST
<i>X, or</i> <i>X is</i> <i>X, that is,</i> <i>X means</i> <i>X is defined as</i> <i>X is also called</i> <i>X is also known as</i>	<i>for example</i> <i>for instance</i> <i>such as</i>	<i>but</i> <i>however</i> <i>in contrast</i> <i>on the other hand</i> <i>unlike</i> <i>whereas</i>

Strategies

These strategies will help you understand vocabulary in context while you read.

- When you read an unfamiliar word, don't stop. Continue to the end of the sentence that contains the word, and read the next sentence.
- If you don't understand the general meaning and feel you are getting lost, return to the unfamiliar word.
- Search for signal words and phrases that introduce context clues. There may be signals of definition, exemplification, or contrast. Use the clues to guess the meaning.

Skill Practice 1

As you read the following sentences, think about the type of context clue that can help you figure out the meaning of the word in **bold**. Circle the type of clue. If you can use more than one type of clue, circle all that apply. Then, if any context clues helped you, highlight them. The first one has been done for you.

- 1

When Marcus entered the classroom, he felt calm. **However**, as soon as he turned over the test paper, he began to feel **agitated**.

a

 definition

b

 exemplification

c

☒ contrast

d

 general knowledge
- 2

Journalists must be **versatile**. For instance, they must be good at writing, listening to people, speaking, working quickly, and doing research.

a

 definition

b

 exemplification

c

 contrast

d

 general knowledge

- 3 When James worked in the office, his job was **sedentary**. In contrast, when he became a reporter, he was almost always away from his desk.
- a definition c contrast
b exemplification d general knowledge
- 4 Most people prefer **portable** music players, such as the iPod.
- a definition c contrast
b exemplification d general knowledge
- 5 The police **estimated** that over 10,000 people came to hear the speaker. They weren't exactly sure of the number because there were too many people to count.
- a definition c contrast
b exemplification d general knowledge
- 6 The national report said that most of the **illiterate** citizens, those who cannot read or write, live outside of the main cities.
- a definition c contrast
b exemplification d general knowledge

Read the sentences in Skill Practice 1 again. Using the type of context clues you chose for each sentence, figure out the meaning of each word in **bold**. Circle the correct meaning. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 When Marcus entered the classroom, he felt calm. However, as soon as he turned over the test paper, he began to feel **agitated**.

a very nervous	c peaceful
b angry	d confused
- 2 Journalists must be **versatile**. For instance, they must be good at writing, listening to people, speaking, working quickly, and doing research.

a able to do one thing	c able to communicate well
b able to do lots of different things	d better at one skill than another
- 3 When James worked in the office, his job was **sedentary**. In contrast, when he became a reporter, he was almost always away from his desk.

a well paid	c sitting a lot
b moving around a lot	d exciting
- 4 Most people prefer **portable** music players, such as the iPod.

a advanced	c inexpensive
b easy to take anywhere	d not difficult to use
- 5 The police **estimated** that over 10,000 people came to hear the speaker. They weren't exactly sure of the number because there were too many people to count.

a counted very exactly	c made a careful guess
b didn't know	d hoped

- 6 The national report said that most of the **illiterate** citizens, those who cannot read or write, live outside of the main cities.
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| a unable to read or write | c uneducated |
| b poor | d not very good in school |

Skill Practice 3

The following sentences contain words in **bold** that you may not know. Look for context clues and use strategies to figure out the meaning of these words. Write the meanings on the blank lines. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 From 1930 to 1945, the number of immigrants coming to the United States **declined**. During this time, it was more difficult to get a job, and once World War II started, it was more difficult to travel. However, as soon as the war ended, immigration increased again.
became smaller _____
- 2 Many people believe that energy from the sun and wind – **alternative** sources of energy – are better choices than energy from oil and gas.

- 3 There have been many **informative** news stories recently about why our world is getting warmer and what people can do to stop it. These stories have made people think about how to use less energy.

- 4 As newspapers became cheaper, more **consumers** began to buy them. And as more people began to buy and read them, newspapers became even cheaper.

- 5 The newspaper decided not to print the picture of the plane crash. In the picture, you could see passengers who were dead and badly hurt. They decided the pictures were too **horrifying**.

- 6 The chocolates were so delicious that she could not **resist** them. She ate so many pieces that she began to feel sick.

- 7 There were many **positive** things about the building project, but there were also many parts of it that the manager did not like.

Before You Read

Connecting to the Topic

Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 1 How do you get your local news? Your national news? Your international news?
- 2 Do your parents get the news the same way you do? How about your grandparents and great-grandparents?
- 3 How did your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents get the news when they were your age?

Previewing and Predicting

Good readers quickly look over a reading before they begin to read it in depth. This is known as *previewing*. Previewing helps you better understand a reading because it gives you a general idea of what to expect in the reading. One way to do this is to read the title and look at any illustrations and graphic material (pictures, photos, charts, tables, or graphs). Previewing will help you predict what a text will be about.

A Read the title of Reading 1, and look at the photos on pages 7–8. What do you think this reading will be about? Choose the best way to complete the sentence below.

- I think this reading will be about ____
- a the history of news.
 - b news on the Internet.
 - c famous people in the news.
 - d the role of the telegraph in the news.

B Compare your answers with a partner’s.

While You Read

As you read, stop at the end of each sentence that contains words in **bold**. Then follow the instructions in the box in the margin.

READING

1

The News Media in the Past

- 1 The news is not new. Humans have always wanted to know what is happening in the world. Prior to newspapers and television, that is, before the news media of today, people wanted to hear information about events and other people. They wanted to hear local news as well as reports from places far away. A long time ago, information traveled **by word of mouth**. Villagers asked travelers questions about what was happening in other villages. Villagers also used to gather around and listen to men known as *town criers*. These men shouted out news from the town square. This human appetite for news has not changed; however, how people learn about the news has changed dramatically.
- 2 Before the invention of printing, people wrote newspapers by hand. For example, over 2,000 years ago, the Chinese government employed educated people to write the news. At about the same time, Julius Caesar, the leader of the powerful Roman Empire, put a daily newspaper on the walls of government buildings and public baths. Because most people were **illiterate** in both China and Rome, the governments also paid people to read the

WHILE YOU READ 1

Use context clues in the next two sentences to figure out the definition of *by word of mouth*. Highlight the clues.

WHILE YOU READ 2

Use context clues in the next sentence to figure out the definition of *illiterate*. Highlight it.



news aloud. This meant that ordinary people who could not read could also hear the news.

- 3 After the invention of the printing press in about 1440, it became possible to print the news. Printed news came out first in brief one-page reports. These early news reports were not very accurate. Writers often invented stories in order to interest readers. German newspapers, for instance, reported stories about the crimes of Count Dracula. Local people were terrified by

There's always been an interest in learning the latest news.

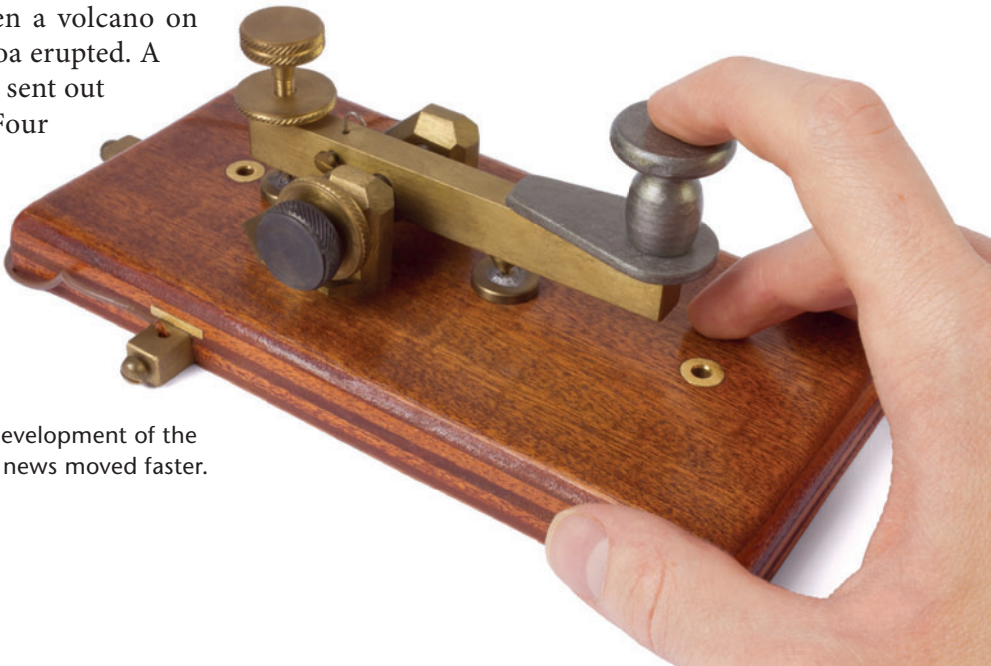
these reports, and often did not know that most of the information was false. The first real newspapers began to appear in England and France in the early 1600s. In 1690, the first newspaper in the United States started in Boston, and by 1752, Canada had its first newspaper. More newspapers appeared in North America in the early 1800s. However, few people read them because most people could not afford to buy a newspaper. The average cost of a newspaper in the United States was six cents, which was a lot of money for most people in those days. In addition, most people at that time were still illiterate.

4 By the 1840s, however, life in Europe and North America was changing very quickly, and newspapers were changing, too. New industries needed more educated workers, so there were many more schools. As a result, more people learned to read. Moreover, new technology reduced the price of paper and printing, so newspapers were much cheaper. Finally, in the United States, large numbers of immigrants were arriving. They were eager to find out about their new land and to learn English, and newspapers helped them do both. The *New York Sun*, for example, cost only one cent. It focused on entertaining stories about both famous and ordinary people. The *New York Sun* soon became popular with the public, and more and more people began to read it – especially immigrants, who learned a lot of English by reading newspapers like the *Sun*.

5 The development of the telegraph was the next important change in how news traveled. By the 1850s, 23,000 miles of telegraph wires spanned the United States from one coast to another. This meant that local and national news could travel almost instantly from city to city. Then, in the 1860s, engineers built telegraph **cables**, or large wires, under the oceans. Newspapers could report international news very quickly. However, early telegraph cables often did not work well. When Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States, was assassinated on April 16, 1865, the Atlantic Ocean cable was not working. It took 12 days for news of his death to get to England by ship. However, by the 1880s, international telegraph was functioning well. A good example of this happened in August 1883, when a volcano on the Indonesian island of Krakatoa erupted. A telegraph operator on the island sent out news of this natural disaster. Four hours later, a U.S. newspaper printed the news story about Krakatoa. This was the first time news from a different country was published the same day it happened.

WHILE YOU READ 3

Use context clues to figure out the definition of *cables*. Highlight it.



With the development of the telegraph, news moved faster.

Reading Skill Development

Main Idea Check

The main idea of a reading is what the whole reading is about.

Which sentence gives the main idea of Reading 1?

- a Throughout history, humans have needed to understand the news.
- b The telegraph was an invention that changed how people got the news.
- c Methods for communicating the news are much better today than in the past.
- d Technology has changed the way news is communicated.

A Closer Look

Look back at Reading 1 to answer the following questions.

- 1 There is more interest in the news today than there was in the past. **True or False?**
- 2 Why does the writer include the example about Julius Caesar in paragraph 2?
 - a It shows that the news was more important in the past than today.
 - b It shows that Julius Caesar was an intelligent leader.
 - c It shows that news wasn't important to the Roman people.
 - d It gives information about an early use of written news.
- 3 According to paragraph 3, why didn't most people buy newspapers in the early 1800s?
 - a Most people were immigrants and couldn't speak English.
 - b Readers at that time did not want to read stories about love and crime.
 - c Newspapers were too expensive for most people.
 - d There were only a few newspapers at that time.
- 4 According to paragraph 4, why did newspapers become more popular in the United States in the 1840s? Circle all that apply.
 - a They became cheaper.
 - b They had good stories that people enjoyed reading.
 - c They helped immigrants to learn English.
 - d More people could read.
 - e They gave immigrants news about their home countries.
- 5 The news of the eruption of Krakatoa appeared in U.S. newspapers the day after it happened. **True or False?**
- 6 Look through the reading for the dates listed below. Then match each date with the event that happened at that time.

1690	Krakatoa erupted.
1752	Telegraph cables under the oceans were introduced.
1840s	The first U.S. newspaper started in Boston.
1860s	Newspapers became cheaper and more popular.
1883	The first newspaper in Canada started.

Skill Review

In Skills and Strategies 1, you learned that writers often use signal words and phrases that introduce clues to the meaning of words that you may not know. These may be signals of definition, exemplification, contrast, or general knowledge. Recognizing these signals is an important reading skill.

A Look back in Reading 1, and find and highlight the words in the left-hand column of the chart below. Search for signal words and phrases that introduce context clues. Identify the type of context clue for each word, and put a check (✓) in the correct column below. The first one has been done for you.

WORD OR PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXEMPLIFI- CATION	CONTRAST	GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
prior to (<i>adv</i>) Par. 1	✓			
invention (<i>n</i>) Par. 3				
brief (<i>adj</i>) Par. 3				
spanned (<i>v</i>) Par. 5				
functioning (<i>v</i>) Par. 5				

B Use the type of context clues you chose in step **A** to figure out the meaning of each word in **bold** below. If you need help, go back and reread the clues in or around the sentences that contain the words. Then circle the correct meaning of the words.

- 1 **prior to:**

a after

b while

c before

d at the same time
- 2 **invention:**

a a newly designed machine

b a printing press

c an old machine

d printed news
- 3 **brief:**

a long

b complicated

c short

d difficult
- 4 **spanned:**

a started

b connected

c reported

d worked
- 5 **functioning:**

a working properly

b not working properly

c costing a lot

d not costing a lot