Teaching students in year five/six to use contextual clues, as well as what they know about words (i.e.: the meaning), when faced with unknown words in a text, improves vocabulary knowledge and comprehension.

**Session One: Introductory Session**

| Prepare: | Tom Appleby, Convict Boy by Jackie French  
| Computer access  
| Dictionaries  
| Modelled sentences displayed  
| Poster with LPRRR model and graphic organizer displayed.  
| Definition poster (to be added to) |

| Introduce: | “When we are reading and we come across something we don’t understand, we can do 2 things:  
| 1. skip over it and keep reading  
| 2. try to work out what it means from the clues the author gives us. (these are called context clues)  
| If we choose 1, we run the risk of not understanding what we are reading (which is a waste of time.) By choosing 2, we are ultimately “working smarter not harder because we will invest some time in working it out, which will lead to understanding. We can then read on to gain more information.”  
| Introduce students to the notion that sometimes authors hand us information on a platter, but other times they make us work hard to find the meaning of what is written because they only give us clues. If we learn how to use the clues, we can learn new words, and understand what we read more easily. |

| Apply: | **Individual.** Refer to the following sentence which has been written on the board. **Even the harbour sounded foreign**... (have children link this sentence to the novel). Brainstorm what foreign might mean – write up suggestions. Explain that these are probably guesses as there isn’t enough information surrounding the word.  
| **Model:** | Whole class. “Even the harbour sounded foreign. Tom could hear the natives yelling as their canoes bumped the side of the Scarborough.” (pg 113) model to students the thought process you might go through. (Scarborough is the ship and they are sailing into a harbour. Natives are the people that live there. He refers to the sound of the harbour so maybe he can hear the talking of the natives. Foreign may describe their language, but I cant say for sure, so I will check the dictionary for this one – model how to use the Microsoft word dictionary. ) Record the students definition of foreign. |

| Introduce: | Introduce the LPRRR model:  
| **Look**—before, at, and after the new word  
| **Predict**—quickly predict the word’s meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start  
| **Reason**—think more carefully about the word’s meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit  
| **Resolve**—recognize that you may need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)  
| **Redo**—go through the steps again if necessary  
| Display prominently in the room  
| Introduce the graphic organizer for this model. |

| Apply: | **Individual.** Provide an example that is less demanding of the students: As a group, apply the above model using the graphic organizer, to the following sentences to define unbearable: “Unbearable, pondered Tom. The chimneys had been unbearable. Newgate was unbearable.” (references to the chimneys and Newgate will lead students to draw upon their prior knowledge of the text.) note: in this instance they will use forward clues which tend to be used less often.  
| **Study group.** Complete the graphic organizer and record the students definition of unbearable. |

| Report: | **Study group.** Have students state what they did to come up with a definition of unbearable. Teacher to note comments made by students. |

| Assess | Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to:  
| • use forward clues to determine the meaning of unbearable |
### Graphic organizer for LPRRR model:

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- **Have a go:**
  - What do you know about the word?
  - How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?

- **If you do take other steps, write them here:**
“**Unbearable,** pondered Tom. The chimneys had been unbearable. Newgate was unbearable.”

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Look—before, at, and after the new word

Predict—quickly predict the word’s meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start

Reason—think more carefully about the word’s meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit

Resolve—recognize that you may need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)

Redo—go through the steps again if necessary
### Sessions Two and Three:

**Prepare:**
- *Tom Appleby, Convict Boy* by Jackie French
- Computer access
- Dictionaries
- Poster with LPRRR model and graphic organizer displayed.
- Definition poster (to be added to)
- Worksheet # 1

**Revise:**
- *Whole class*

Have students explain what was covered in the previous lesson. (Look, predict, reason, resolve, redo) Focus on the benefit of having examples of unbearable that followed the word.

**Apply:**
- *Individual. Study group. Whole class*

As a further reminder of what was done is the prior session, have the students use the graphic organizer of the LPRRR model to attempt to define the word *haul* in the following sentence: “Tom glanced back at the marine, sitting on one of the smooth rocks that surrounded the harbour, admiring his haul.” (pg 147) Note: this example does not provide enough information to define it from contextual clues. Students will need to resolve and redo in order to gain the meaning of this word.

Students share their predicted and resolved definitions. Discuss how they resolved the problem.

Complete the graphic organizer and record the students’ definition of *haul*.

**Model:**
- *Whole class*

To demonstrate that sometimes we need to go further back in the text, read the 3 paragraphs prior to the above sentence where the items that were found by the marine are mentioned. As a group list the items in the *haul*: (two spears with strange barbed points, and a stone axe too.)

**Apply:**
- *Partners Study group.*

Refresh students’ memories by discussing parts of a convict ship – deck, hold and berth. Read parts of page 124 to students and have them visualize the text (the author describes what happens to the convict ship when it enters the wild and freezing waters of the Southern Ocean).

Have students work in pairs to complete one worksheet to define words from selected passages. (see worksheet #1)

Complete the graphic organizer and record the students definition of *gales, sluicing, foul effluent, furthest colony shoved carcass arrowed glinted*.

**Report:**
- *Whole class.*

Students share the process they went through to find the meaning of their 2 words.

Teacher to note comments made by students.
“Now the freezing **gales** began as they passed into the Southern Ocean, with ice-green water **sluicing** over the deck.” (pg 124)

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List any clues here: Have a go: What do you know about the word? How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps? do take other steps, write them here:
“with water... pouring through the deck... so it washed them off their berth and sent foul waves sloshing from one side of the hold to the other awash with the effluent of humans and sheep.” (pg 125)

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“So far away, he thought. We’ll be the **furthest** colony in the world.” (pg 126)

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“... instead a sailor unlocked the chains around his ankles, and **shoved** him towards the ladder dangling above the ship’s boat. ‘Move yer **carcass,**’ he said roughly. ‘we aint got all day.’” (pg 136)

| Word: Look – before, at, and after the new word | Predict – quickly predict the word’s meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start | Reason – think more carefully about the word’s meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit | Resolve – recognize that you may need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone) | Redo – go through the steps again if necessary |
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“Tom pointed. 'Snake!' the animal swam between the reeds, then made it to the solid ground and *arrowed* up the slope. Its back was black and shiny. Its belly *glimped* red.” (pg 146)

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<th>Prepare</th>
<th>4 context clues on poster.</th>
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<td>Revise</td>
<td>Have students explain in their own words, what context clues are and why we use them.</td>
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<td>Whole class</td>
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<td>Introduce</td>
<td>Provide students with explanations for each of the following context clues. Definition, Antonym, Synonym, Inference.</td>
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<td>Model</td>
<td>Using examples of students in the room, attempt to come up with more examples for each of the 4 types of contexts. Eg: The environmental leader, the student responsible for organizing the recycling in the school, distributed the recycling bins. (definition) Whereas Ms Stevens the Phys Ed teacher is quite flexible, Mrs B is stiff and awkward. (antonym) The talkative child was so chatty, the class was unable to think about the work. (synonym) The students endearing behaviour ensured the whole class would get out early. (inference)</td>
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<td>Task</td>
<td>Have students work with a partner to come up with one example of any of the 4 types of clues.</td>
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<td>Whole class</td>
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<td>Report</td>
<td>Each group selects one good example of each of the 4 types of clues and shares them with the class. Write these up for display.</td>
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<td>Assess</td>
<td>Teacher to collect and note understanding. Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to: Used backward or forward clues to determine meaning of selected words</td>
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**Definition:** The word is defined directly and clearly in the sentence in which it appears.

“The prison, where Tom was sent as punishment for his crime, was called Newgate”.

**Antonym:** Contrasting or opposite in meaning. It is often signaled by the words whereas, unlike or as opposed to:

“Tom was an orphan, unlike Rob who was sailing on the ship with both his mother and his father.”

**Synonym:** other words are used in the sentence with similar meanings.

“The sickly prisoner was so ill, he was unable to move.”

**Inference:** word meanings are not directly described, but need to be inferred from the context.

“But there were stars now as the clouds moved towards the mountains and the wind blew fresh and salty.” (tells us it’s night time)
**Session Five:**

**Prepare:**
- 4 context clues on poster.
- Poster featuring: “The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, melancholic chimney sweep.” With 2 columns for the predicted definition of melancholic before and after the second sentence is provided.
- All sentences marked * to be written on strips of paper, ready to be pasted into workbooks. (see session 5 worksheet)

**Revise:**
*Whole class*
- Have students read examples out of each of the 4 types of context clues from the previous session.
- Revise parts of speech: Verb = action, doing word. Adverb = adds to the verb, Noun = naming word. Adjective = describes the noun

**Model:**
*Whole class.*
- "**They______________ across the water**": Brainstorm possible words. Provide students with sentence strip. Students select their word and insert.
- Without more information it is not possible to know who they were or what they did. Provide the next sentence strip: "**A cry from the mast of the ship indicated to the convicts that land had been sighted. They __________crossed the water to see for themselves.**” Students select the most appropriate word and insert.

**Apply:**
*Individual, Study group, Whole class.*
- Provide students with the following sentence strip: "**The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, melancholic chimney sweep.**”
- Students record their suggestions for suitable synonyms for melancholic.
- Because there is a lack of information a conclusive definition will not be possible. Provide them with the next sentence strip: "**He had plenty of reasons to be feeling gloomy.**”
- This is a clue that allows us to reconsider the prediction. Record new predictions on strip and test to see if they fit.

**Model:**
*Whole class.*
- Demonstrate to students how to enrich the context of a sentence to show meaning:
- Brainstorm with the students to fill in the blank for the following sentence: "**The sergeant __________ the convicts.** Provide students with sentence strip. Students select the most appropriate word and insert.
- "**The sergeant __________ the convicts. He was annoyed with them for getting drunk.**”
- Finally, provide students with this final sentence strip. Students select the most appropriate word and insert: "**The sergeant __________ the convicts. They worked hard to build the makeshift shelter for the marines.**”
- In small groups, students discuss their word selection for each and explain why.

**Task:**
*Whole class, Individual, Study group.*
- Provide students with sentence strip. Students select the most appropriate word and insert. "**Tom was_________.**”
- Share possible responses.
- Provide students with sentence strip
- Have them enrich the sentence in 2 ways (1. backward clue sentence. 2. forward clue sentence) to demonstrate the meaning of the word.
- eg: Basic sentence: Tom was enthusiastic.
  - Backward clue sentence: After considering Jem’s plan to escape Tom was enthusiastic.
  - Forward clue sentence: Tom was enthusiastic. Jem’s plan to escape sounded feasible.

**Report:**
*Mixed ability.*
- Students share their enriched sentences with their mixed ability group.

**Assess:**
- Collect and check their sentences for understanding. Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to:
  - Determine the meaning of melancholic from the forward clues provided.
  - provide backward and forward clues to enrich sentences.
“They_________________ across the water”.

“A cry from the mast of the ship indicated to the convicts that land had been sighted. They ________________ across the water to see for themselves.”

“The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, melancholic chimney sweep.”

“The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, melancholic chimney sweep. He had plenty of reasons to be feeling gloomy.”

The sergeant __________________________ the convicts.
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He was annoyed with them for getting drunk.
The sergeant __________________________ the convicts. They worked hard to build the makeshift shelter for the marines.

Tom was__________________________.

Backward clue sentence:

Forward clue sentence:
### Session Six:

| Prepare: | · Multiple copies of thesauri  
|          | · Computer access  
|          | · Semantic Gradient handout (Read, Write, Think) |
| Introduce: | Revise synonym: a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word in the same language. Explain that even though they are similar, they do vary slightly in meaning. Revise antonym: a word that means the opposite of another word. Explain Semantic Gradients: a sequential array of words organized according to shades of meaning. |
| Model: Whole class. | Brainstorm synonyms for the word *angry*. Use class thesauri and also Microsoft word thesaurus. Look at the example of *angry* and *furious*. They are similar though not exactly the same. *Furious* is a stronger, more intense word for *angry*. Together, consider how the other synonyms rate in intensity compared to *angry*. Model selection of 2 words from the list as anchor points and place them on the gradient. Provide a bank of other synonyms and together place them on the gradient:  
|          | Word bank: *angry*, *frustrated*, *irritated*, *annoyed* |
| Apply: Individual. | Provide students with the semantic gradient handout. (Read, Write, Think 2007). Encourage them to use a thesaurus. Have them complete the first one on their own:  
|          | Depressed________________________________________________________Elated  
|          | Word bank: *upset*, *indifferent*, *glad*, *happy*  
|          | Come together and share answers, with students explaining their reasoning. Students complete the other 4 gradients. |
| Report: Study group. | Students come together and explain how they graded their words. Note: for children having difficulty, they could type the words into Microsoft Word, then look each one up and copy and paste the definition next to the word. This should then make the distinctions clearer. Teacher to note comments made by students. |
| Assess: | Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to:  
|          | · place the words correctly on the gradient. |
Semantic Gradients
After some explanation from your teacher, fill in the following semantic gradients and explain your reasoning.

depressed           elated
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|

Word Bank: upset, indifferent, glad, happy

obese                           skinny
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|

Word Bank: slender, thin, chubby, hefty, average

trudged                       sprinted
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|

Word Bank: raced, walked, hurried, dawdled, hobbled

microscopic                   gargantuan
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|

Word Bank: big, small, tiny, huge, large

careless                     meticulous
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|

Word Bank: haphazard, careful, tidy, casual
**Session Seven:**

| Prepare: | • Thesauri  
• Computer access |
|--------|-------------------|
| Revise: | **Whole class**  
Revisit definitions of synonyms and semantic gradients  
Revise parts of speech: verb, adverb, noun, adjective.  
Have students demonstrate how to use a thesaurus |
| Model: | **Whole class**  
Provide students with the word: EAT.  
Brainstorm possible synonyms.  
From this list select 2 anchor points. (EG: nibble devour.)  
Have students act out these words to demonstrate shades of meaning.  
Students select suitable words from brainstorm to put onto gradient.  
Note: cross out the words that don’t really belong on the gradient as you go.  
Place all the words on the gradient and have students act out each one:  
\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c}  
nibble & chew & munch & scoff & devour \end{array}\] |
| Task: | **Whole class. Partners**  
Students work in pairs to come up with their own semantic gradients using 4 or 5 words that are synonyms of a selected word.  
When satisfied with their answers, they can create the gradient with anchor points and selected words placed appropriately. |
| Report: | **Partners Mixed ability.**  
Pairs report to the group on the gradient that was given to them to complete. If they were not in agreement with the creators, they must state their case. |
| Assess: | Teacher to collect gradients to check for understanding. |
## Session Eight:

| Prepare: | • All display posters on hand  
|          | • worksheet with 4 sentences on it |
| Revise:  | Students need to explain the following:  
|          | Context clues  
|          | LPRRR  
|          | 4 types of context clues  
|          | Enriching context clues  
|          | synonyms  
|          | semantic gradients |
| Model:   | Write the following sentence on the board:  
|          | “Tom ___________back.” note the possibilities –walked, moved, stepped, jumped, leapt, ran etc  
|          | At this point, because of a lack of context a decision cannot be made as to which is the most appropriate word to use.  
|          | Enrich the sentence:  
|          | “Tom ___________back. ‘Snake!’”  
|          | Supply the following semantic gradient:  
|          | l_________l_________l_________l_________l  
|          | moved  
|          | leapt |
|          | Word bank: jumped walked stepped  
|          | Discuss with the students which word would be most appropriate to use. |
| Apply:   | Provide students with the example (Read, Write, Think 2007):  
|          | “Jimmy ___________home.” Have them list possible words.  
|          | Enrich the sentence:  
|          | “Jimmy ___________home. He couldn’t wait to see the new puppy”  
|          | Students fill in the following gradient:  
|          | l_________l_________l_________l_________l_________l_________l_________l  
|          | trudged  
|          | sprinted  
|          | Word bank: raced, walked, hurried, dawdled, hobbled  
|          | Students write the complete sentence including the word they select as most appropriate. |
| Report:  | Students share their sentence. Explain why they chose the word.  
|          | Teacher to note comments made by students. |
| Apply:   | Look at examples of contextually thin sentences provided in the Semantic Gradients Plus Context worksheet (Read, Write, Think 2007):  
|          | 1. “Jamon’s team _______ their opponents.”  
|          | 2. “Jamon’s mom _______ during the movie.”  
|          | 3. Jamon felt _______ when he got the test back.”  
|          | 4. Jamon was dressed properly for the _______ weather.”  
|          | Students select one sentence and brainstorm possible words. |
Semantic Gradients Plus Contexts

Select a word to fill in the blank in the first sentence. Then place the Word Band words along the semantic gradient. Be prepared to consider which word best fits with the context that is provided in the second sentence.

“Jimmy ________ home.”

trudged  
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sprinted

Word Bank: raced, walked, hurried, dawdled, hobbled

“Jimmy __________ home. He couldn’t wait to see the new puppy.”

1. “Jamon’s team ________ their opponents.”
2. “Jamon’s mom ________ during the movie.”
3. “Jamon felt __________ when he got the test back.”
3. “Jamon was dressed properly for the __________ weather.”

Pick one of the four sentences and make a semantic gradient including anchor words and Word Bank words. Place the words along the continuum. Then revise or add to the sentence by including context and then explain which word on the gradient would be the best answer to fill in the blank.
Session Nine:

**Prepare:**
- 4 sentences written up on butcher paper.
- Semantic gradient for each of the 4 enriched sentences written up.
- Thesaurus
- Computer access

**Revise:**

*Similar ability.*

Look back at the 4 sentences form the previous session:

1. “Jamon’s team _______ their opponents.”
2. “Jamon’s mom _______ during the movie.”
3. “Jamon felt _______ when he got the test back.”
4. “Jamon was dressed properly for the _______ weather.”

Read over possible words.
Group the students according to similar ability. As a group come up with a master list of all the words they could put into their sentence.
Display list of words under each sentence

**Model:**

Have students explain that the 4 sentences did not provide enough information for them to be specific with their word selection.
Provide students with enriched sentences:

1. “Jamon’s team _______ their opponents 45 to 3.”
2. “Jamon’s mom _______ during the movie. It was the saddest film she had ever seen.”
3. “Jamon felt _______ when he got the test back. He blamed himself for not making the time to study.”
4. “Jamon was dressed properly for the _______ weather. His wool hat, mittens, and insulated boots were just perfect.”

Discuss how this new information now narrows the list of words.

**Apply:**

*Similar ability.*

Each group of similar ability needs to review their list of possible words and delete any that do not fit with the enriched sentences and possibly add any more new words that they think do fit with the sentences.

**Task:**

*Similar ability. Study group. Individual.*

Provide each of the 4 groups with the relevant semantic gradient.
Have them insert graduated synonyms either as a group or individually.
Each group member must write out their sentence using the word they believe fits best.

**Report:**

*Study group. Whole class.*

Students share their sentences which have substituted words in them.
Students can agree or disagree by stating their case.

**Assess:**

Collect individual sentences to check for understanding.
Semantic Gradients Plus Contexts (Continued)

Fill in words along the continuum and then select the word that best completes the sentence based on the context.

1. "Jamon's team ________ their opponents 45 to 3."
   Squeezed by                                                                                          decimated
   |-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|

2. "Jamon's mom ________ during the movie. It was the saddest film she had ever seen."
   giggled                                                                                                        bawled
   |-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|

3. Jamon felt __________ when he got the test back. He blamed himself for not making the time to study."
   somber                                                                                                         jubilant
   |-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|

4. "Jamon was dressed properly for the __________ weather. His wool hat, mittens, and insulated boots were just perfect."
   sweltering                                                                                                frigid
   |-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
### Session Ten:

| **Prepare:** | - Graphic organizer poster from Session Two  
- Graphic organizers for each of the 5 sentences from Session Two. |
| **Model:** | **Whole class** Refer back to example provided in Session Two:  
“Tom glanced back at the marine, sitting on one of the smooth rocks that surrounded the harbour, admiring his haul.”  
Remind students of the backward clue that gave us the context for the word **haul**.  
Brainstorm synonyms for the noun haul.  
Place on a semantic gradient.  
Using the graphic organizer for that sentence, re write the sentence replacing **haul** with an appropriate synonym. |
| **Task:** | **Individual** Refer back to contextual charts used in Sessions Two and Three.  
For each of the underlined words, find synonyms. Select the most appropriate synonym and use it in the sentence – re write the sentence in the last box on the graphic organizer.  
- “Now the freezing **gales** began as they passed into the Southern Ocean, with ice-green water **sluicing** over the deck.” (pg 124)  
- “with water…pouring through the deck…so it washed them off their berth and sent **foul** waves sloshing from one side of the hold to the other awash with the **effluent** of humans and sheep.” (pg 125)  
- “So far away, he thought. We’ll be the **furthest colony** in the world.” (pg 126)  
- “…instead a sailor unlocked the chains around his ankles, and **shoved** him towards the ladder dangling above the ship’s boat. ‘Move yer **carcass,**’ he said roughly. ‘we aint got all day.’” (pg 136)  
- “Tom pointed. ‘Snake!’ the animal swam between the reeds, then made it to the solid ground and **arrowed** up the slope. Its back was black and shiny. Its belly **glistened** red.” (pg 146) |
| **Report:** | **Whole class** Students share their modified sentences for discussion  
**Study group** |
| **Assess:** | Collect individual sentences to check for understanding. |