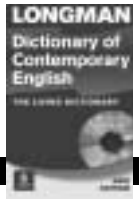


# 14 What Do You Think It Is?



Write definitions for the words in **bold** in the passages below. The context provides clues to the definitions. Underline the words that have helped you guess the meaning. The first passage has been done for you.

**A.** Two old friends got together for lunch one day. Throughout the lunch, they were talking and joking in quite a relaxed manner with each other. From the casual **banter** that they exchanged, it was quite clear that these two friends were thoroughly comfortable making fun of each other.

What is **banter**?

**B.** Mrs. Brown had been a **recluse** all her life. She spent all of her time at home alone, putting around her house and garden, cooking and cleaning for herself. She turned down invitations from her neighbors and never seemed to have any guests. Why she lived the way she did was a mystery to her neighbors.

What is a **recluse**?

**C.** By Tom's **reckoning**, his bills for the coming months were, unfortunately, going to be greater than the income that he was expecting. Although he had not made exact calculations, he was quite certain that he was going to have to figure out a way to earn some extra money to pay the unusually high bills that would soon be due.



What is **reckoning**?

**D.** The speaker at our annual dinner made such a **gaffe** last night. During his talk, he unknowingly made some comments that were actually quite insulting to his hosts. If he'd understood the significance of what he was saying at the time, I'm sure he would not have phrased what he said in such a way. If he understood what effect his words had, I'm sure he'd be quite mortified.

What is a **gaffe**?

**E.** I'm sure that this gadget was manufactured with planned **obsolescence** in mind. It was built in such a way that it's not going to last very long, and when it wears out I'm going to have to buy another. I wish I could find one that would last for a long time, but I think they're all made this way.

What is **obsolescence**?



Guessing the meaning of a word you don't know by looking at the words around it is an invaluable skill that will make reading much easier. If you get stuck, though, remember that meanings in the **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English** are all explained in clear, simple language using the 2000-word Longman Defining Vocabulary so you won't find difficult words in the definitions.



The thousands of real-life examples on the CD-ROM show you how unfamiliar words work in their natural context so that you'll have the confidence to use them yourself.

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# Teacher's Notes

## 14 What Do You Think It Is?

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Aims:**

- To develop the skill of deducing the meanings of unknown words from context.
- To prepare students for the TOEFL®/TOEIC® examinations.
- 1. Start by asking questions about unknown vocabulary. Do the students know the meanings of the targeted words? What do they do when they encounter new words?
- 2. Ask students to read each passage on their own, trying to determine the meaning of each word in bold from the context. Instruct them to underline the words that have helped them.
- 3. Put students into groups, where they can share, compare, and discuss their answers.
- 4. Tell the groups to look up each word to see how accurate their final definitions are.

**Answers:**

**A. banter**

Context clues: "talking and joking ... making fun of each other"

Dictionary definition: friendly conversation in which people make a lot of jokes with and amusing remarks about each other

**B. recluse**

Context clues: "all of her time at home alone ... turned down invitations ... never seemed to have any guests"

Dictionary definition: someone who chooses to live alone, and does not like seeing or talking to other people

**C. reckoning**

Context clues: "he had not made exact calculations ... he was quite certain"

Dictionary definition: calculation that is based on a careful guess rather than on exact knowledge

**D. gaffe**

Context clues: "unknowingly made some comments ... insulting to his hosts ... he'd be quite mortified"

Dictionary definition: an embarrassing mistake made in a social situation or in public

**E. obsolescence**

Context clues: "not going to last very long ... have to buy another"

Dictionary definition: when something becomes old-fashioned and no longer useful because something newer and better has been invented