

Grade: 8	Strand: Reading	Concept: Using strategies to determine meaning of words
Description of Task:	<p>Students determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues. They record the word, its meaning and the clues they used to determine the meaning in a class or personal dictionary using a database program. Students can search the database to find their personal word lists, or to access words entered by others.</p> <p>Teachers can search the database to locate the information a student has entered into the database.</p>	
Expectations:	<p>8e28 • decide on a specific purpose for reading, and select the material that they need from a variety of appropriate sources;</p> <p>8e29 • understand the vocabulary and language structures appropriate for this grade level;</p> <p>8e30 • use conventions of written materials to help them understand and use the materials.</p> <p>8e40 – use their knowledge of the elements of grammar and the structure of words and sentences to understand what they read;</p> <p>8e41 – use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., use word-analysis techniques; use knowledge of word origins and derivations; consult dictionaries);</p>	
Software Type:	Database	
Computer Skills Prerequisite	<p>Students must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access and run the program • add a new record • select items from a dropdown menu • click in a field and enter text • save and print the record. 	
Student Instructions: (for teacher)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review with students various strategies they can use to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g. context clues, related words, prefix/suffix, consulting a resource, etc.). 2. Show them the form (either using a print copy of the template or by displaying the digital file with a projector) and discuss the information required. It would be helpful to complete a record for an unfamiliar word as a class activity. 3. Have students access a resource such as a dictionary or thesaurus to confirm their guess. They might also use a web-based dictionary such as http://www.dictionary.com. 	

Teacher Notes:	<p>This activity can be used in a variety of settings and student groupings. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student can have his/her own copy of the file, in which they will, over the course of the year, enter their words. They can simultaneously access their files in a computer lab or on a classroom computer on an individual basis. • The class can all access the same file. In this way, the file will hold all the records of each student's entries. Students access the file one at a time (because all records are in one file, which can only be opened by one user at a time). <p>The dictionary may be kept in digital format only, or you may ask students to print their records to maintain a print copy of their dictionary/ies.</p> <p>The instruction file for this activity is 3 pages. The first page contains the basic instructions for using the database template. Pages 2 and 3 provide information about additional features of the program.</p> <p>The format of the file can be edited to add or remove any field.</p> <p>Related offline activities: Students can record their information on a paper version of the template. If they are keeping a print copy of the dictionary, they can add their handwritten records to the collection. If the file is only in digital format, they may use a print copy of the record to prepare a draft for when they have access to a computer.</p>
	Activity Template File: Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Student Instruction BLM: Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment:	<p>Are students choosing grade-appropriate words? (curriculum)</p> <p>Are their context clues included? (curriculum)</p> <p>Do they support the students' definitions? (curriculum)</p> <p>Have they used a variety of sources to help them determine meaning (e.g. dictionary, thesaurus, other texts)? (curriculum)</p> <p>Do students complete the task independently and with attention to detail? (learning skills)</p> <p>Do students approach new learning situations with interest and enthusiasm? (learning skills)</p>