Six Kinds of Context Clues

**Definition:** The term will be defined or sufficient explanation given within the sentence for the meaning to be available.

His succinct style made for difficult reading. That is, he compressed so much information into a few words that it was difficult to get the full meaning.

*Succinct* must mean ________________________________________________________.

**Analysis:** The parts used to construct the word can be a direct clue to meaning. The first three units of this program have offered practice in using the elements most commonly found to construct English words.

The nature of the Secret Service precludes public recognition of a member for outstanding achievement.

*Precludes* means ________________________________________________________.

**Experience:** Either from a direct experience or one that is easily imagined the meaning is made clear.

Early treatment of cancer by surgery or radiation can save a life or at least alleviate much suffering.

*Alleviate* means ________________________________________________________.

**Contrast:** By contrasting terms, you may find that one term will help to clarify or explain another assuming that you know one of the terms.

At the turn of the twentieth century a French bacteriologist observed that although typhus was rife in the city, no one in the hospital caught it.

*Rife* means ________________________________________________________.

**Inference:** Sufficient clues are available for you to make an educated guess at the meaning.

The General Assembly of the United Nations was required to meet in the plenary session for this important decision.

*Plenary* means ________________________________________________________.

**Combination of analysis with one of the above:** Modern usage may have grown away from literal meanings of prefixes and roots, but clues within the passage will enable you to start with a basic meaning and tease out the modern meaning.

A colloquial style of writing is out of order in a term paper.

*Colloquial* means ________________________________________________________.