Vocabulary • Unknown Words

• **Dictionaries** and **glossaries** provide alphabetical lists of words and their meanings.
• Sometimes looking at the words around an unknown word can’t help you figure out the word's meaning. If this happens, use a dictionary or glossary to find the meaning.

**Directions**  Read the following story. Then answer the questions below.

The buffalo lifted his massive, wooly head and looked toward the sunset. An old and mighty bull, he was leader of a herd that roamed the wide, vast plains that spread out between the mountains. He did not usually need to think much, but tonight he was deep in thought. Strange humans had come to his lands. Only a few arrived in rickety wagons at first. Now the plains were infested with them.

The buffaloes’ tough hides gave them resistance against the teeth of wolves and sometimes against the arrows of the First People. But the newcomers shot at his herd with sticks of fire. The ambition of these people seemed to be to conquer all the land and every creature on it. He wondered sadly if he could find a safe place to take his herd. He had to try. In the morning they would head west toward the Big Water beyond the mountains.

1. Which words around the word **vast** can help you figure out its meaning?

2. What is the meaning of the word **rickety**? How did you determine its meaning?

3. What words around the word **resistance** help you figure out its meaning?

4. What is the meaning of the word **ambition**? How did you determine its meaning?

5. Use a dictionary or glossary to find the definition for one of the words you couldn’t define using the words around it. Write the definition.

**Home Activity** Your child identified unknown words that could be defined using a dictionary or glossary. Work with your child to identify unknown words in a newspaper or magazine article. Ask your child if he or she needs to use a dictionary to find the meaning of the words. If so, ask your child to look up at least one definition in a dictionary or glossary.

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