

Vocabulary • Context Clues

- **Homonyms** are words that are pronounced and spelled the same but have different meanings.
- Use the words and sentences around the **homonym** to help you figure out what it means.

Directions Read the following passage about life during the Gold Rush. Then answer the questions below. Look for context clues as you read.

Our family decided to head West after we heard about the discovery of gold. As the boat carried us away, we waved to our friends standing on the bank of the river watching us leave. Once we reached the West, it didn't take long to see that we weren't going to strike it rich as miners. For a short spell, we didn't know how we would live. Then Dad had an idea.

He decided the boom town that had grown so quickly near the mines needed a store. The store would sell tools and other supplies that miners needed. The first day we opened, Dad sold a pick and a shovel. After that, business just kept growing.

1. What does *leave* mean in this passage? What clues help you to determine the meaning?

to go away; clue—carried us away

2. What are two meanings for *bank*? What clues tell you the word's meaning here?

a place to keep money; the ground along the edge of a river; clue—friends standing on the bank of the river

3. What does *spell* mean in this passage?

a period of time

4. What does *boom* mean in this passage? What clues help you know this?

fast-growing; clue—town that had grown so quickly

5. In this passage, is a *pick* something you use or something you do? What clues help you to figure this out?

something you use; clues—tools and other things that miners needed; it was sold with a shovel



Home Activity Your child used context clues to understand homonyms—words that are pronounced and spelled the same but have different origins and meanings. Provide sentences with homonyms such as *ball* (a round object/a formal dance) or *bat* (a flying animal/a club). Ask your child to use context clues to determine the meaning of each homonym.