

Sidebar A
Instructions for CSI Investigators

Revised July 19, 2006

1. Focus on Hard Word: Have you seen/heard the word before? Does the word have any identifiable structural cues (e.g., prefix, affix, root)?	
2. Reread: Reread the sentence with the hard word (maybe the preceding sentence) to gain full meaning.	
3. Synonyms: Can you think of another word or phrase that would easily replace this word and make sense within the text?	
4. Part of Speech: What part of speech is this word?	
5. Word Linkages: Are other words within the text possibly linked to this word (e.g., antonyms, synonyms, subordinates, superordinates)?	
6. Reword: Reconstruct the target sentence so that the target word is in the subject position.	
7. Summarize Your Comprehension: In your mind, summarize the meaning you gained from everything in the text you have read so far.	
8. Use Prior Knowledge: Think about what you already know about the topic; think how your prior knowledge might be linked to the hard word.	
9. Connect: Connect meaning gained from reading with prior knowledge so that all you know about this topic is at the forefront of your thinking.	
10. Reaction: Imagine yourself in this portion of the text. How you would feel? What you would be experiencing? How you might react?	
11. Thinking or Reasoning: Use the following suggestions to guide you think about what you have learned from the text about the hard word.	
a. For Nouns—these processes are not linear, and are listed in no particular order	General meaning: How does this word relate to the meaning of the passage or the meaning of the immediately surrounding text?
	Class membership: What category of person or thing is this?
	Properties: What properties does this person or thing have?
	Structural information: What is the size, shape, parts, etc. of this person or thing?
	Visualize: Can you build a picture in your mind of what this person or thing might look like?
	Acts or Functions: What kinds of things can this person or thing do? What this person or thing does is done to whom or what?
	Agents: Who does something to or with this person or thing? What do they do to or with the person or thing?
	Ownership: Can this thing be owned? If so, by whom?
	Comparison-Contrast: Is the person or thing compared or contrasted to some other person or thing?
Synonyms: Can you think of another word or phrase that would easily replace this word and make sense within the text?	
b. For Verbs—these processes are not linear, and are listed in no particular order	Transitivity (Knowing if the unknown verb is solely an action, an action done to another person or thing, or an action done to another person or thing to or with something may provide much information about the unknown verb):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this word the actual action (intransitive—action only: e.g., John sang). • Is the action done to another thing (transitive—verb and direct object: e.g., John sang Happy Birthday). • Is the action done to another thing to/with something (ditransitive—has direct and indirect object: John sang Happy Birthday to his sister).
	Class membership: What category of action is this?
	Properties: What properties does this action have?
c. For Modifiers	Visualize: Can you build a picture in your mind of what this action might look like?
	Contrasts: Does this hard word appear to contrast the subject or action it modifies to another familiar subject or action?
	Parallelism: If the grammar of the hard word's sentence/clause (modifier-subject/action) is parallel to another, is that a clue?
Attributes: What information does the hard word provide about of gender, number, actions, appearance, color, direction, feelings, existence, qualities, relation, place, shape, sound, speed, status, temperature, time, touch or negative/positive attributes of the subject it modifies?	
12. Hypothesis: State your hypothesized or predicted meaning of the hard person, thing, or action.	
13. Test the Hypothesis: Replace the hard word with your meaning or synonym. Does this make sense? If yes, continue. If no, go back to 1.	