

Get a Clue-ACC

Paying attention to context can help you infer the meanings of challenging words you encounter in texts. Use context clues in this excerpt from the article "The Last Slave" to figure out the meanings of the boldfaced words.

In the summer of 1927, Lewis greeted a visitor from New York City, a **budding** writer named Zora Neale Hurston. Hurston would later pen the famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, which today is read in English classes across the country. But before she was a novelist, she'd been a cultural **anthropologist** and collector of folklore, and she had come to meet with Lewis and write a book about him.

"I want to know who you are," Hurston told Lewis, "and how you came to be a slave; and to what part of Africa do you belong, and how you fared as a slave, and how you have managed as a free man?"

The book, *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo,"* is based on a series of interviews Hurston conducted with Lewis in 1927 and 1931. (*Barracoon* is a word for the barracks built along the west coast of Africa, where enslaved Africans were held before they were herded onto ships.)

But nobody would publish the book at the time. Most of it is told from Lewis's first-person point of view and in his **dialect**. At least one publisher objected to the book being written this way. But Hurston refused to change it. She'd taken great care to **transcribe** Lewis's interviews in the way he spoke, believing in the value of black people telling their own stories in their own words. As a result, *Barracoon* remained unpublished for nearly a century.

Now Lewis's story has finally found an audience. The book was published for the first time in May, nearly 60 years after Hurston's death.

In *Barracoon*, Lewis recalls the horrors of slavery in vivid detail. He was born around 1841 in what is now the nation of Benin. By that time, international **trafficking** of Africans to the U.S. had been banned for more than 30 years, but slave traders still smuggled Africans to America.

Directions: In each part, circle the letter that best completes each sentence. Also, if an answer requires a written response, write your answer on the provided line.

1.

PART A

The word **anthropologist** most nearly means _____.

- a. a person who studies politics
- b. a person who studies the brain and its processes
- c. a person who studies people and their customs, beliefs, and relationships
- d. a person who studies weather

PART B

Which word/phrase from the article provides the best support/is the context clue for the answer to Part A?

- a. "she was a novelist"
- b. "' I want to know who you are' "
- c. "based on a series of interviews"
- d. "read in English classes"

PART C

Which type of context clue does the answer to Part B represent?

2.

PART A

The word **dialect** most nearly means _____.

PART B

Which word or phrase from the article provides the best support for the answer to Part A?

- a. "written this way"
- b. "nobody would publish the book"
- c. "refused to change it"
- d. "the way he spoke"

PART C

Which type of context clue does the answer to Part B represent?

3.

PART A

The word *trafficking* most nearly means _____.

- a. attacking villages and kings
- b. commandeering a ship
- c. reporting illegal activity to proper authorities
- d. buying or selling something illegal

PART B

Rewrite the context clue from the article that provides the best support for the answer to Part A?

PART C

Which type of context clue does the answer to Part B represent?

GOING FURTHER: Use context clues to explore these additional words from the article.

4. Infer the meaning of the word *transcribe* as used in the excerpt (notice the prefix):

Why might it be important to transcribe interviews even if they have been recorded?

5. **First**, infer the meaning of another challenging word or phrase (word gap) given by the author that has a context clue to help you better understand it. **Next**, highlight the author's entire context clue. **Finally**, provide the type of context clue that is being used by the author.

Word:

Inferred Meaning:

Context Clue Type:

