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## Words in context: non-fiction

### CAN YOU?

- Give the meanings of words in non-fiction.
- Give reasons for your choices when answering questions.

### SKILLS CHECK

Words in context questions are all about explaining what words mean in the way they are used in what you are reading. Words often have more than one meaning. Sometimes, more than one meaning might fit into the sentence but not into the whole passage. You have to pick the one that fits into the passage you are reading. Sometimes the answers will be more than one word long.

This piece of writing is about a footballer.

### Damon Zaga

Zaga is a mean defender.

1. What does the word *mean* tell you about Damon Zaga?

In this sentence, it tells you nothing. There are so many definitions of *mean* that it is impossible to tell which one fits best in the sentence. Zaga could be miserly, unkind or average. In some parts of the country, *mean* can also be good. This is why you have to look at the context. In this case, it means you have to read more of the passage.

Zaga is a mean defender. He does not give anything away. When he plays, his team rarely lets any goals in.

When you read the second sentence, it is much easier to answer the question. Look at the alternatives:

Zaga is an average defender.

(His team rarely lets goals in. He must be better than average.)

Zaga is a miserly defender.

(He does not give anything away.)

Zaga is an unkind defender.

(There is nothing in the passage to support this idea.)

Therefore, *mean* tells us that Damon Zaga is a miserly defender.