Context, alternatives and limits

All excerpts are invented. Read the whole excerpt; find two clues; try a meaning and a plausible alternative; state what the excerpt leaves uncertain. Read or listen, then explain in writing, speech or your agreed route.

Teaching example — reasoning intentionally shown

When Jo opened the hall door, a draft lifted the loose papers. Jo shut the door and the papers settled. No fan was running.

> Draft means a current of air here: opening the door lifts papers, and closing it lets them settle. A draft can also mean an early version of a piece of writing, but that sense does not explain the papers moving when the door opens. We do not know how strong the air movement was. We should not claim that a storm caused it.

Compare: ‘Draft means air.’ That gives a meaning but leaves its support, alternative and limit unstated. Add the door/paper clues and explain how they select this sense.

Guided practice — retain every reasoning step

The school play had a second cast. The program listed different actors for Thursday and Friday, and Mina rehearsed the same role that Sol would perform the next evening.

What does cast mean here? Name two clues and explain their connection. Compare another possible sense, such as a rigid covering for an injured limb, with the whole excerpt. Name one thing about the actors that the passage does not tell us. Do not replace the evidence with a guessed story.