**Strategies for dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary**

Is it often advisable to try guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from context as you read rather than check every new item in your dictionary. However, if you do not understand enough of the content to guess the meaning, use an alternative strategy: deal with the vocabulary first. Identify all of the words that appear to be key – look in particular at the topic and concluding sentences and near expressions that signal importance. Study their definitions in you dictionary, beginning with the words that appear to be nouns. Where words have multiple definitions, look again at the passage and choose the definition that makes most sense in the context. You may need to look at the sentence in the passage in which the word occurs several times with different definitions in mind. Because some words can have different meanings in everyday English and specific academic contexts, you may need to use a dictionary specifically related to your subject discipline.

**Exercise 5**

*Look at this sentence and locate words 1-6 below. For each word, select the definition a or b that best fits the context.*

*‘When making judgements or forming impressions about others, one common attribution error is the* ***correspondence*** *bias, that is, the tendency to assume that other’s actions and words* ***reflect*** *their personality or* ***stable*** *personal* ***disposition****, rather than being affected by situational factors. … For those they know personally, however, their past interactions with them help Facebook users avoid the* ***trap*** *of correspondence bias and recognize the* ***external*** *factors at work: it is the occasions that make their friends happy.’*

1. Correspondence  
   a) communication by exchange letters  
   b) state of being the same as
2. Reflect  
   a) to think  
   b) to express
3. Stable  
   a) a type of shelter (n)  
   b) unchanging (adi)
4. Disposition  
   a) a person’s usual mood  
   b) transferring something to another person
5. Trap  
   a) a device for catching animals or people  
   b) an unpleasant situation which is difficult to avoid or escape
6. External   
   a) related to or coming from the outside  
   b) related to the visible or surface appearance of something

(Solution: 1b; 2b; 3b; 4a; 5b; 6a)