

Setting Context

by Kevin A. Sensenig
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WHAT CONTEXT IS

It is a difficult word to define. But one could say that it is the framework or connections surrounding a particular thought or event or noumenon (or perception or action) that one references, along with the thing itself.

There is a real sense “context” to something, that one can see and feel as tangible — either context is present or not; or varying degrees of it.

EXAMPLES

The context for eating a soft pretzel with mustard on it is that you are at a baseball game, you needed a soda also so you figured you’d get a soft pretzel, the score is tied but despite being in anticipation of the outcome you took your time so as not to spill things or get lost, it’s late in the baseball season so the outcome is important, and you’re with a couple of friends or members of your family.

The context for eating a soft pretzel is that you’re at a train station and you missed the train you had meant to catch, it’s an hour and a half until the next train, you had to reschedule your ticket, you’re bored, you’re not really hungry but you need something to do, and you’ll be late for your friend’s birthday party.

The context for eating a soft pretzel is that it is occurring in your imagination, you’re actually considering the types of things that you find interesting, a soft pretzel occurred to you because of its shape and the *contrast* of salt and mustard, and that reminds you of something else that you find interesting in this neutral but engaged sort of way — the hot summer sun on the beach and the way the shining sand the color of which emanates blazing sun *contrasts* with the cool touch of the color of the sea.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

You may not always want to consider context, but to consider only the thing itself.

If you do want to consider context, you may find that it clarifies or makes more obscure the matter, after one has considered the thing to itself (noumenon). How do you resolve these threads of interdependence? Do you find that they settle matters into a rightful place? Or do they introduce complex implications that obscure the clarity of the noumenon?

If they introduce complex implications that obscure the clarity of the noumenon, does working with layers of s/k lines yield fruitful ways to consider the domain? If you obtain some clarity this way, when is it time to put the set of insight onto a “shelf” and return to it later? Or does continued contemplation or reflection seem to unfold the matter?

When is it time to really focus on the matter, in an attempt to resolve it? Does it resolve in increments, lead to pointless reasoning loops, lead to more confusion within the domain (and can this itself be instructive), or yield an aha! moment?

Another way to view threads of interdependence from context that actually obscure the noumenon is that it is clouds passing in front of the sun.

If context on the other hand seems to clarify a somewhat obscure noumenon, what can you say about the interdependence itself? Is there a new way to consider the noumenon?

If context, in a third scenario, seems to further illuminate what is a pretty clear noumenon previously considered, are there other things in the interdependent sphere that one can apply noumenon type thought or consideration to? After visiting these, does the entire sphere “light up” with insight, clear-minded thinking or apprehension, or visualization?

Context for something (an experience, a thought, the nature of thought, an object of mind, or a conclusion) can seem to strengthen that thing or interpretation, or can seem to challenge it. Here then one can work with the very real sense of reason, or again work with k lines.

In some cases one’s domain for considering context is not broad enough. Perhaps it is broad but very incomplete, and one needs to back away and look for other resources or material — or to apply Minsky’s recommended meditation, lateral thinking, or brainstorming. I’d add contemplation.