Mission Meanings

Use context clues to test a word meaning.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4d "Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words or phrases whose meanings you can infer, circle nearby words that verify each meaning, and number your four sets of marks.

Apollo 13: Problems in Space

(1) On April 13, 1970, an oxygen tank exploded aboard Apollo 13 while the spacecraft traveled toward the Moon. The blast damaged the service module and cut much of the command module's electrical power. Mission Control abandoned the planned landing, a decision that altered the crew's purpose from exploration to survival. The lunar module, intended to carry two astronauts to the surface for a brief visit, became a cramped lifeboat for all three men. Its supplies were limited, so controllers and astronauts had to conserve water, electricity, and breathable air during the return journey.

(2) At one point, carbon dioxide in the lunar module threatened to rise to unsafe levels. The command module carried square filters, but the lunar module used round openings, making the filters incompatible. Engineers on the ground devised an improvised adapter from materials already aboard, including a plastic bag, cardboard, tape, and a sock. The crew followed spoken instructions to assemble it. Because the adapter connected the square filters to the round openings, it allowed the filters to remove carbon dioxide. The solution was not elegant, but it was effective.

(3) The spacecraft also needed a viable route home. A direct engine burn could have used too much fuel or caused further damage, so flight controllers chose a path that looped around the Moon and used its gravity to send Apollo 13 back toward Earth. This free-return trajectory took longer than a direct route, yet it reduced the need for major engine firings. Even then, the crew faced a precarious trip: cold temperatures, little water, and strict power limits. On April 17, Apollo 13 splashed down safely in the Pacific Ocean, ending a mission shaped by careful problem solving.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does *abandoned* most likely mean in paragraph 1? Cite one phrase that verifies your meaning.

2. What does *incompatible* most likely mean in paragraph 2? Which detail verifies your inference?

3. What does *improvised* most likely mean in paragraph 2? Explain how the listed materials verify that meaning.

4. What does *viable* most likely mean in paragraph 3? Cite one detail that confirms your meaning.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about solving a problem. Use a precise word in the first sentence, give context clues in the second sentence, then write "Verified meaning:" followed by that word's dictionary meaning.

ANSWER KEY

Mission Meanings

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases whose meanings you can infer, circle nearby words that verify each meaning, and number your four sets of marks. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does *abandoned* most likely mean in paragraph 1? Cite one phrase that verifies your meaning.	**It means stopped or gave up. The phrase "planned landing" and the change from "exploration to survival" verify this meaning.**
2	What does *incompatible* most likely mean in paragraph 2? Which detail verifies your inference?	**It means unable to work or fit together. The square filters and round openings verify the inference.**
3	What does *improvised* most likely mean in paragraph 2? Explain how the listed materials verify that meaning.	**It means made quickly from available materials. The plastic bag, cardboard, tape, and sock were materials already aboard, which verifies that the adapter was not a standard part.**
4	What does *viable* most likely mean in paragraph 3? Cite one detail that confirms your meaning.	**It means workable or possible. Controllers chose the route because a direct burn might use too much fuel or cause more damage, and the chosen route reduced major engine firings.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When the auditorium lights failed, the stage crew made a makeshift lamp from a flashlight and a paper cup. The temporary device used materials already on hand, so it was not a permanent repair. Verified meaning: serving as a temporary substitute, often made from available materials.

Accept reasonable inferred meanings when students cite a context detail that supports the meaning. For Part 3, accept any accurate dictionary meaning that matches both the chosen word and the student's context clues.