Words Under Light

Track how closely related verbs shape a reader's sense of attention, pressure, and certainty.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5b "Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline verbs that show Imani looking, requesting, or speaking to others. Circle groups of verbs with similar basic meanings, number each group, and write a brief note showing how the words differ in force, care, or certainty.

The Bronze Map

1. At dawn, conservator Imani entered the museum's restoration lab to inspect a bronze map recovered from a shipwreck. She noticed a pale line near the coast of Africa, then observed the line through a magnifying lens. When a second, thinner groove appeared beside it, she scrutinized the surface under angled light. The marks were not random scratches. Salt crystals had collected inside both grooves, while the surrounding metal remained smooth. Imani recorded the locations, measured their depths, and carefully photographed them before anyone cleaned the artifact.

2. Later, Imani spoke with the excavation director. She asked the team to delay cleaning the map until the lab completed its tests. The director replied that the harbor exhibition opened in three days and proposed cleaning only the reverse side. Imani urged him to protect the front as well, pointing to the crystals in the grooves. He eventually agreed to postpone all cleaning. In her report, Imani wrote that the paired lines might represent a route added by a sailor. She listed several other possible explanations, including damage caused by a tool used during an earlier repair.

3. At the public briefing, a reporter asked whether the map changed the history of the wreck. Imani said the discovery was promising, but explained that the team had tested only one section. She cautioned the audience against treating the lines as a final answer. The director announced that the artifact would remain in the lab for another month. By evening, a local blog declared that the museum had found “the sailor's secret route.” Imani read the headline and revised her report's opening sentence before it went to museum staff the next morning. She retained the measurements, photographs, and list of alternate explanations from her field notes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. The words noticed, observed, and scrutinized all involve looking. How does Imani's use of scrutinized show a different kind of looking from noticed? Use one detail from the passage.

2. Compare asked and urged in paragraph 2. Which word shows that Imani applied more pressure to the director, and what passage detail supports your answer?

3. What does the word might communicate about Imani's statement that the lines represent a sailor's route?

4. How does declared characterize the blog's statement differently from said, which describes Imani's comment at the briefing?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 3- to 4-sentence scene in which you examine an object or solve a small mystery. Use three related words for looking, speaking, or requesting, then add one sentence explaining how each word creates a different shade of meaning.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline verbs that show Imani looking, requesting, or speaking to others. Circle groups of verbs with similar basic meanings, number each group, and write a brief note showing how the words differ in force, care, or certainty. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	The words noticed, observed, and scrutinized all involve looking. How does Imani's use of scrutinized show a different kind of looking from noticed? Use one detail from the passage.	**Scrutinized shows very close, deliberate inspection. Imani uses angled light to examine the surface after first noticing the pale line.**
2	Compare asked and urged in paragraph 2. Which word shows that Imani applied more pressure to the director, and what passage detail supports your answer?	**Urged shows more pressure. Imani points to the crystals and asks the director to protect the front of the map as well.**
3	What does the word might communicate about Imani's statement that the lines represent a sailor's route?	**It presents the route as a possible explanation, not a settled conclusion.**
4	How does declared characterize the blog's statement differently from said, which describes Imani's comment at the briefing?	**Declared makes the blog's statement sound forceful and definite, while said is a more neutral word for Imani's comment.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When I checked the class terrarium, I noticed a brown spot on one leaf. I observed it through the glass during science class. After watering, I scrutinized the spot with a hand lens and saw tiny insects. Noticed names the first quick awareness, observed means I watched carefully, and scrutinized shows the closest, most detailed inspection.

Accept equivalent explanations of degree, force, care, or certainty when students support them with passage details. For the open task, accept varied word sets if the scene makes each word's distinct nuance clear.