Museum Word Detectives

Use reference sources to check exactly what a word means and how it works.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.4c "Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each reference source named in the passage. Beside each circle, write every code that applies to information that source provides there: P for pronunciation, M for precise meaning, S for part of speech. Write 0 if none of the codes applies.

Labels for the Shell Exhibit

1 At the Harbor Museum, Maya prepared labels for a display of seashells. She wanted to describe one shell as "fragile," but first checked a general dictionary. The entry gave the pronunciation "FRAJ-ul," identified fragile as an adjective, and defined it as easily broken or damaged. Before printing the label, Maya read the pronunciation aloud. Her partner noticed that the dictionary supplied three kinds of information, not just a definition for the label.

2 The exhibit also included a card about a "specimen," a shell kept for study. Maya opened a marine-biology glossary because its entries focused on scientific collecting. It defined specimen as an individual organism, or part of one, used as an example for study. The glossary did not show a pronunciation guide, so Maya returned to the general dictionary, which listed "SPES-uh-muhn" and marked specimen as a noun. Using both sources helped her make a label that visitors could understand and that scientists would find accurate.

3 Later, Maya wrote, "The shell has a hard surface." She considered replacing hard with tough. A thesaurus listed tough as a possible related word, but it could not tell her whether tough matched the shell's exact condition. Maya checked a dictionary, which defined tough as strong and not easily cut, torn, or broken. She kept hard because the shell's surface resisted scratching, while tough might suggest resistance to breaking. The thesaurus offered choices, and the dictionary helped Maya test the precise meaning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which reference source did Maya use for fragile? List the three kinds of information it provided.

2. Why was a marine-biology glossary useful for specimen?

3. What source did Maya use to find the pronunciation and part of speech of specimen? Give both details.

4. Why did Maya check a dictionary after finding tough in a thesaurus?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a word from a book, article, or class text that does not appear in this passage. Consult at least one reference source, then write 2 sentences that name the source, give the word's pronunciation or part of speech, and state a precise meaning that fits its context.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 7 · L.7.4c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each reference source named in the passage. Beside each circle, write every code that applies to information that source provides there: P for pronunciation, M for precise meaning, S for part of speech. Write 0 if none of the codes applies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which reference source did Maya use for fragile? List the three kinds of information it provided.	**A general dictionary. It provided the pronunciation "FRAJ-ul," the meaning "easily broken or damaged," and the part of speech adjective.**
2	Why was a marine-biology glossary useful for specimen?	**Its entries focused on scientific collecting, so it gave a precise scientific meaning for specimen.**
3	What source did Maya use to find the pronunciation and part of speech of specimen? Give both details.	**She used a general dictionary. It gave "SPES-uh-muhn" and identified specimen as a noun.**
4	Why did Maya check a dictionary after finding tough in a thesaurus?	**A thesaurus gave a related word, but Maya needed to check whether tough had the precise meaning that matched the shell's condition.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I checked Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary for orbit. It lists "OR-bit" and marks orbit as a noun; in my science article, it means the curved path an object follows around another object in space.

Accept accurate responses that identify an appropriate source and correctly report information found in that source. For the open task, accept any word not used in the passage if the cited reference information and context-specific meaning are accurate.