Reference Detective Notes

Use reference clues to make word choices precise.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4c "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 Underline each word Lena checks in a reference source, circle each reference source, and number the information each source provides: 1 for meaning, 2 for pronunciation or part of speech, and 3 for a precise word choice.

Labels for Lost Objects

(1) At Harbor City Museum, conservator Lena Ruiz prepared a label for a bronze compass recovered from a shipwreck. Her first draft said the metal had changed color because of corrosion. She wanted a more exact word, so she checked a specialized conservation glossary. It defined patina as a thin surface layer that forms on some metals through chemical reactions. The glossary helped Lena explain that the compass's green coating was patina, not simply dirt. She wrote the word in her notes and recorded the glossary as her source.

(2) Next, Lena needed to describe the damage near the compass's iron needle. A general dictionary listed corroded as an adjective and gave its pronunciation as kuh-ROH-did. The entry explained that corroded means damaged or eaten away gradually by a chemical process. Lena used the adjective in her label: "The corroded needle cannot turn freely." Checking the dictionary kept her from using corroded as a noun or saying the word incorrectly. She also noted the pronunciation for the audio guide.

(3) Finally, Lena revised a sentence about the wooden storage box. She had written that its painted design was old, but old did not tell visitors what had happened. In a thesaurus, she compared faded, worn, and weathered. A dictionary entry clarified that faded describes color that has lost brightness. Because the blue paint looked pale after years of light exposure, Lena chose faded. She avoided weathered, which often describes change caused by outdoor conditions. The final label gave visitors a precise picture of the box's condition.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which specialized reference did Lena use for patina, and what precise meaning did it provide?

2. According to the general dictionary entry, how is corroded pronounced?

3. What part of speech did the dictionary list for corroded?

4. Which word did Lena choose for the blue paint, and why was it more precise than old?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a content-area word that does not appear in the passage. Consult a general dictionary and a specialized glossary, print or digital, then write exactly two sentences: name both sources and explain what each clarified about the word, then use the word correctly in a sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Reference Detective Notes

GRADE 8 · L.8.4c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each word Lena checks in a reference source, circle each reference source, and number the information each source provides: 1 for meaning, 2 for pronunciation or part of speech, and 3 for a precise word choice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which specialized reference did Lena use for patina, and what precise meaning did it provide?	**She used a specialized conservation glossary. It defined patina as a thin surface layer that forms on some metals through chemical reactions.**
2	According to the general dictionary entry, how is corroded pronounced?	**kuh-ROH-did**
3	What part of speech did the dictionary list for corroded?	**adjective**
4	Which word did Lena choose for the blue paint, and why was it more precise than old?	**She chose faded because the paint had lost brightness after years of light exposure.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, photosynthesis is pronounced foe-toe-SIN-thuh-sis, and a biology glossary explains that it is the process in which plants use light energy to make sugars from carbon dioxide and water. Photosynthesis allows a leaf to make sugar using light, water, and carbon dioxide.

Accept equivalent accurate pronunciations, including IPA, for corroded. For the open task, accept any appropriate word, two named reference sources, accurate information from each source, and a correct original sentence.