Clues Then Check

Use context clues, then verify a word's meaning with a reliable source.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4d "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 Circle each word Maya checks in a dictionary, underline the context clues that support its meaning, and number the two dictionary definitions 1 and 2.

A Door Beneath the Ash

1 On a summer morning, a team of archaeologists worked beside an ancient Roman road near Pompeii. They used small brushes because a hurried shovel could damage fragile objects. Beneath a layer of ash, Maya uncovered a charred wooden door. The wood was brittle, meaning it could crack or break easily. Although the door looked ordinary, it offered a rare glimpse of a home that had been buried after Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 CE, nearly two thousand years ago.

2 At first, Maya thought the word domestic on a label meant "important." The label described the door as a domestic object found near a kitchen and a courtyard. She checked a dictionary, which defined domestic as "related to the home or family." Her preliminary idea did not fit all the details, so she revised it. The dictionary meaning matched the object's location in a house. Maya recorded both her first guess and the evidence that helped her correct it.

3 Later, the team found seeds in a clay jar. A report called the seeds "carbonized," and Maya inferred that they had been burned. The seeds were black, crumbly, and found in ash, which supported her inference. To verify it, she consulted a science dictionary. It explained that carbonized materials have been changed into carbon by heat or burning. Because the definition agreed with the clues, Maya kept her original meaning. She also noted the source she used, so another researcher could check her conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does brittle mean in the first paragraph? Which words in the paragraph verify that meaning?

2. What did Maya first think domestic meant? After checking the dictionary, what meaning did she use instead?

3. What meaning did Maya infer for carbonized before using the dictionary? Name two context clues that supported her inference.

4. Why did Maya keep her original meaning of carbonized after checking the science dictionary?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose an unfamiliar word from something you are reading that is not in this passage. Write three sentences: quote or copy the sentence with the word, state your inferred meaning and a context clue, then give a dictionary meaning and explain whether it confirms or changes your inference.

Clues Then Check

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each word Maya checks in a dictionary, underline the context clues that support its meaning, and number the two dictionary definitions 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does brittle mean in the first paragraph? Which words in the paragraph verify that meaning?	**Brittle means likely to crack or break easily. The passage directly explains that it "could crack or break easily."**
2	What did Maya first think domestic meant? After checking the dictionary, what meaning did she use instead?	**She first thought domestic meant important. She changed it to related to the home or family.**
3	What meaning did Maya infer for carbonized before using the dictionary? Name two context clues that supported her inference.	**She inferred that carbonized meant burned. Supporting clues include that the seeds were black, crumbly, and found in ash.**
4	Why did Maya keep her original meaning of carbonized after checking the science dictionary?	**The dictionary definition, changed into carbon by heat or burning, agreed with her context-clue inference.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In a gardening article, I read, "The garden produced abundant tomatoes, and baskets overflowed with fruit." I inferred that abundant meant plentiful because overflowing baskets show there were many tomatoes. A dictionary defines abundant as existing in large quantities, so the definition confirms my inference.

Accept equivalent meanings when students support them with accurate context clues or a correct dictionary definition. For the open task, check that the student gives an initial inference, names relevant evidence, and compares that inference with a reliable dictionary meaning.