Clues, Then Check

Infer a word's meaning, then verify it with evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4d "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 provenance, marginalia, and collation. Number the context clues that help you infer each meaning, then draw a box around each definition that verifies it.

Reading a Manuscript Record

(1) At the University of Manchester's John Rylands Library, conservators digitize fragile manuscripts so researchers can inspect them without handling every page. Before photographing a fifteenth-century book of prayers, a conservator recorded its provenance. The book had passed from a monastery to a private collector and then to the library, with dates and sale records tracing each transfer. From these details, a reader might infer that provenance concerns where an object has been and who has owned it. The record protects the book's history as carefully as its parchment. After making that preliminary inference, a library database defines provenance as the documented history of an object's ownership.

(2) On one leaf, faint marginalia appeared beside a painted initial. The tiny handwritten notes were not part of the prayer itself. One note corrected a misspelled Latin word, and another pointed toward a related passage. A reader could first decide that marginalia means writing added around the main text. To check that inference, the conservator's catalog describes the marks as "notes or drawings written in the margins of a book or manuscript." The fuller definition confirms the idea and adds that drawings can count as marginalia.

(3) Digitization also revealed a problem with the book's collation. Several sheets had been bound in the wrong order, so a prayer that began on one page continued many leaves later. This evidence suggests that collation has to do with arranging a book's folded sheets and pages. The library's glossary verifies the inference: in book studies, collation is a description of how a volume's leaves or gatherings are arranged. Comparing the clue, the glossary, and the misplaced sheets lets a reader revise a vague guess into a precise meaning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is a preliminary meaning of provenance in paragraph 1? Cite two details that support your inference.

2. How does the library database verify the preliminary meaning of provenance?

3. What meaning can you infer for marginalia before reading the catalog definition? What new detail does the catalog add?

4. Which context clue helps you infer collation, and how does the glossary verify that inference?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a two-sentence mini-passage using one unfamiliar academic or technical word. Put brackets around the word, give context clues in the first sentence, and verify its meaning with a dictionary-style definition in the second sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Clues, Then Check

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle provenance, marginalia, and collation. Number the context clues that help you infer each meaning, then draw a box around each definition that verifies it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is a preliminary meaning of provenance in paragraph 1? Cite two details that support your inference.	**Provenance means an object's ownership history or where it has been. The book moved from a monastery to a collector to the library, and dates and sale records trace each transfer.**
2	How does the library database verify the preliminary meaning of provenance?	**It defines provenance as the documented history of an object's ownership, confirming the inference from the transfer records.**
3	What meaning can you infer for marginalia before reading the catalog definition? What new detail does the catalog add?	**Marginalia means writing added around the main text. The catalog adds that drawings in a book's margins can also be marginalia.**
4	Which context clue helps you infer collation, and how does the glossary verify that inference?	**The sheets are bound in the wrong order, causing a prayer to continue many leaves later. The glossary confirms that collation describes how a volume's leaves or gatherings are arranged.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The [opaque] curtain blocked the sunlight, and I could not see the window behind it. A dictionary defines opaque as not allowing light to pass through, so objects cannot be seen clearly through it.

Accept reasonable preliminary meanings when students support them with relevant passage details. For Part 3, check that the first sentence provides inferable context and the second sentence accurately verifies the bracketed word's meaning.