Words at the Dig

Use context, word parts, and reliable sources to build precise vocabulary.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.6 "Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three domain-specific terms that are important to the report. Circle the nearby words that help explain each term's meaning.

Reading an Ancient Harbor

1. At an archaeological dig near Egypt's Red Sea coast, researchers uncovered a storage jar stamped with a symbol. The jar's provenance, or record of where it came from and how it reached the site, mattered as much as the object itself. Without provenance, an artifact can be difficult to interpret because its original setting may be unknown. The team documented the jar's location, depth, nearby materials, and condition before moving it. This careful record gave later researchers evidence for deciding whether the jar had been used by sailors, traders, or residents.

2. To make a claim about the jar, the archaeologists needed corroboration, evidence from another source that supports or confirms an idea. They compared the stamp with marks on pottery from a dated shipwreck and examined residues inside the jar. Chemical analysis detected pine resin, a substance often used to seal containers or preserve goods. The findings did not prove one exact voyage, but they strengthened an inference that the jar traveled through maritime trade networks. Inference means a conclusion drawn from evidence and reasoning, not a guess detached from facts. The researchers also noted limits in the evidence, since resin could have been reused or added later.

3. Vocabulary helps readers follow both the facts and the reasoning in a report like this one. When an unfamiliar term is important, a reader can first inspect nearby definitions, examples, contrasts, and word parts. The prefix geo- relates to Earth, so geochemical connects chemistry to materials from Earth. A reliable reader then checks a glossary, a credible reference work, or a subject expert instead of relying only on a first impression. In a discussion or written report, choosing precise terms such as provenance, corroboration, and inference makes a claim clearer and shows exactly how the evidence supports it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the jar's provenance matter to the researchers? Use information from paragraph 1.

2. What two kinds of evidence did the archaeologists use as corroboration for their claim about the jar?

3. What does inference mean in paragraph 2, and how is it different from a guess?

4. After using context clues and word parts, what three sources could a reader use to verify an important unfamiliar term?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a domain-specific term from a current class reading. In 2 or 3 sentences, explain its meaning using a context clue or word part, name a source you would check to verify it, and use the term accurately in a sentence about the reading.

ANSWER KEY

Words at the Dig

HIGH SCHOOL · L.9-10.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three domain-specific terms that are important to the report. Circle the nearby words that help explain each term's meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the jar's provenance matter to the researchers? Use information from paragraph 1.	**Provenance records where the jar came from and how it reached the site. It helps researchers interpret the artifact in its original setting.**
2	What two kinds of evidence did the archaeologists use as corroboration for their claim about the jar?	**They compared the stamp with pottery from a dated shipwreck and chemically analyzed residues inside the jar.**
3	What does inference mean in paragraph 2, and how is it different from a guess?	**An inference is a conclusion based on evidence and reasoning. A guess is not connected to facts.**
4	After using context clues and word parts, what three sources could a reader use to verify an important unfamiliar term?	**A glossary, a credible reference work, or a subject expert.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In our biology article, photosynthesis means the process plants use to turn light energy into chemical energy, as shown by the discussion of leaves making sugar. I would verify the term in a biology glossary. Photosynthesis explains why the article described plants releasing oxygen when they had light.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately use the passage's context clues. For Part 3, accept a relevant domain-specific term if the student gives a reasonable meaning, names a reliable verification source, and uses the term correctly.