

Words Shape Policy

Track how precise academic language supports evidence-based decisions.

ELA.12.V.1.1 "Integrate academic vocabulary appropriate to grade level in speaking and writing."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline five academic vocabulary words or phrases whose meanings are supported by nearby context. Circle the words that act as a context clue for each one.

Mapping City Heat

- ① On a July afternoon, temperatures can differ sharply across the same city. Dark roofs, asphalt streets, and parking lots absorb solar radiation, then release stored heat after sunset. This pattern, called the urban heat island effect, can raise nighttime temperatures in densely built neighborhoods. Trees and parks moderate the effect because leaves provide shade and release water vapor through transpiration. The difference is not merely uncomfortable. Higher heat can worsen air pollution, strain electric grids, and increase health risks for people without reliable cooling. City planners therefore study where heat is concentrated before choosing responses.
- ② To map this problem, researchers combine satellite images of land-surface temperature with measurements from street-level sensors. They also examine demographic data, since exposure is shaped by housing quality, income, age, and access to air conditioning. This analysis identifies vulnerability, the conditions that make some residents more likely to be harmed. For example, an older apartment building with little insulation may stay hot overnight, even when a nearby office tower is cooled. Using several sources of evidence helps planners avoid a misleading conclusion based on one unusually hot block or one day's weather. It also reveals which communities need resources most urgently.
- ③ Possible interventions include planting street trees, installing reflective roofs, and creating cooling centers during heat emergencies. Each intervention has limits and costs. Young trees need water and years to create broad shade, while reflective roofs may be difficult for renters to request from landlords. A sound policy must evaluate efficacy, meaning how well an action achieves its intended result, and equity, meaning whether benefits reach people with the greatest need. Planners might prioritize neighborhoods with scarce tree cover and many heat-related emergency calls. They must also consult residents, because local knowledge can reveal barriers that a map or spreadsheet does not show. Effective climate adaptation joins scientific data with participation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 In paragraph 1, what does the academic word “moderate” mean as it describes what trees and parks do to the heat island effect?

2 Copy the phrase in paragraph 2 that defines “vulnerability.”

3 Why is “efficacy” more precise than simply saying an intervention “works”? Use the passage’s definition in your answer.

4 Name the two academic criteria that a sound policy must evaluate in paragraph 3, then explain what each criterion means.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word recommendation for reducing heat around your school. Integrate at least four academic vocabulary words from the passage, and show each word’s meaning through the way you use it rather than listing definitions.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline five academic vocabulary words or phrases whose meanings are supported by nearby context. Circle the words that act as a context clue for each one. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, what does the academic word “moderate” mean as it describes what trees and parks do to the heat island effect?	It means lessen or reduce the effect.
2	Copy the phrase in paragraph 2 that defines “vulnerability.”	“the conditions that make some residents more likely to be harmed”
3	Why is “efficacy” more precise than simply saying an intervention “works”? Use the passage’s definition in your answer.	Efficacy specifies how well an action achieves its intended result.
4	Name the two academic criteria that a sound policy must evaluate in paragraph 3, then explain what each criterion means.	Efficacy, how well an action achieves its intended result, and equity, whether benefits reach people with the greatest need.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To mitigate heat around our school, the district should plant shade trees beside the bus loop and add reflective material to the gym roof. This intervention would lower exposure for students waiting outdoors, especially those who walk home. Before spending funds, leaders should evaluate the efficacy of both steps by comparing afternoon temperatures at shaded and unshaded locations. An equitable plan should also prioritize the playground, where few students can avoid direct sun. Student surveys and maintenance data can identify barriers, such as watering needs or damaged pavement. This climate adaptation would combine evidence, local experience, and a realistic budget.

Accept equivalent, passage-supported definitions for the short answers. For Part 3, accept a 90 to 110 word recommendation that uses at least four passage vocabulary terms accurately and meaningfully in context.