Words Signal Risk

Use context clues to uncover precise word meanings.

ELA.6.V.1 "Finding Meaning"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words or phrases that help you figure out the meaning of dormant, monitored, volatile, and precaution. Number each set of clues beside the matching word.

Watching a Quiet Volcano

1. On a small island in Alaska, scientists watch a volcano called Shishaldin. The mountain can seem dormant for years, with no ash cloud or flowing lava. Still, researchers do not treat quietness as a promise of safety. They place instruments near the volcano to record tiny earthquakes, ground movement, and gases. A sudden cluster of quakes may signal that melted rock is moving underground. By studying these clues, the team can warn nearby pilots and residents before an eruption becomes more likely.

2. One morning, a monitor in the lab showed a sharp change in the amount of sulfur dioxide gas. The word monitor can name a screen, but it can also mean to watch something carefully. Here, the scientists monitored the reading instead of assuming an eruption would happen. Volcanic gases are volatile, meaning they can change quickly and may be dangerous. Because the gas level soon dropped, the team reported the change but did not issue an alarm. Careful observations help people make decisions based on evidence, not fear.

3. When scientists share their results, they choose precise words. An alert tells people to pay attention, while an evacuation order tells them to leave an area. These terms have different weight, or strength of feeling. Calling every change an emergency could cause panic and make future warnings less trusted. Instead, officials might say that travel near the volcano is restricted as a precaution. This means the limit is meant to prevent harm, even though danger is not certain. Clear language helps communities understand both the evidence and the risk.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does dormant mean as it is used in the first paragraph? Which details help you determine its meaning?

2. What does monitored mean in the second paragraph?

3. What does volatile mean in the passage?

4. How does the passage show the difference in strength between an alert and an evacuation order?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence safety notice about a different natural hazard. Use alert or precaution correctly, and include a context clue that shows what your chosen word means.

ANSWER KEY

Words Signal Risk

GRADE 6 · ELA.6.V.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the words or phrases that help you figure out the meaning of dormant, monitored, volatile, and precaution. Number each set of clues beside the matching word. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does dormant mean as it is used in the first paragraph? Which details help you determine its meaning?	**Dormant means inactive or not erupting. The volcano has no ash cloud or flowing lava for years.**
2	What does monitored mean in the second paragraph?	**Monitored means watched carefully.**
3	What does volatile mean in the passage?	**Volatile means able to change quickly and possibly become dangerous.**
4	How does the passage show the difference in strength between an alert and an evacuation order?	**An alert tells people to pay attention, while an evacuation order tells people to leave an area.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A flood alert tells residents to pay attention to rising water and prepare to act. As a precaution, the town closes the riverside trail to prevent anyone from being swept away. People can use a different route until the water falls.

Accept equivalent meanings supported by the passage's context clues. For the open response, accept any three-sentence notice about another natural hazard that uses alert or precaution accurately and includes a meaningful context clue.