

Words With Limits

Choose precise language that matches evidence and purpose.

10.L.V.3.e “Make strategic language decisions when writing or speaking by determining, clarifying, or verifying the nuanced meanings of closely related words or phrases using available print and/or digital resources. (C)”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each word or phrase Maya compares, replaces, or chooses for precision. Circle the nearby detail that clarifies or verifies why that language choice fits the evidence.

Reporting the Rail Yard

- ① For the neighborhood newsletter, Maya drafted an article about a former rail yard beside the river. She first called the site abandoned, but a city planning map showed that the land was owned and scheduled for soil testing. Abandoned suggested that nobody was responsible for it. Maya changed the word to vacant, which meant the lot was not being used at that time. The distinction mattered. Readers might assume an abandoned site had been forgotten, while a vacant site could still be under active management. She noted the planned testing so the description matched the available evidence.
- ② In another sentence, Maya wrote that residents were concerned about dust from the yard. Concerned was deliberate. Worried could describe a private feeling, but concerned fit a public issue that residents had raised at a meeting. Maya did not write that dust would harm people. A state environmental report had found elevated lead in some surface soil, yet it did not predict health effects from future work. Instead, she wrote that the report indicated a need for testing before construction. Indicated was more precise than proved because the report offered evidence for caution, not a final conclusion. Before publishing, Maya checked a learner's dictionary and linked the report.
- ③ At the public meeting, a developer described the rail yard as contaminated. Maya paused before repeating that word in the newsletter. In everyday use, contaminated can imply that something is unsafe. The environmental report, however, said only that lead levels were elevated in some surface samples. Maya chose the phrase contained elevated lead instead. This phrase reported the finding without claiming that every part of the yard was dangerous. She also quoted the report's date and named the agency that issued it. By showing where the wording came from, Maya let readers verify her claim and judge its limits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why does Maya choose vacant instead of abandoned for the rail yard?

2 Which word better fits the residents' response at the meeting, concerned or worried? Explain using the passage.

3 Why does Maya write that the report indicated a need for testing instead of saying it proved a need for testing?

4 How does contained elevated lead make a more careful claim than contaminated, and what information helps readers verify it?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word announcement about a planned change at your school or in your community. Use a reliable print or digital source to verify a pair of closely related words, name the source, and explain why your chosen word or phrase is more precise.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each word or phrase Maya compares, replaces, or chooses for precision. Circle the nearby detail that clarifies or verifies why that language choice fits the evidence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does Maya choose vacant instead of abandoned for the rail yard?	Vacant means the lot was not being used, while abandoned suggests that nobody is responsible for it. The map shows the site is owned and scheduled for testing.
2	Which word better fits the residents' response at the meeting, concerned or worried? Explain using the passage.	Concerned fits because residents raised a public issue at a meeting. Worried can describe a more private feeling.
3	Why does Maya write that the report indicated a need for testing instead of saying it proved a need for testing?	The report provided evidence for caution, but it did not make a final conclusion or predict health effects from future work.
4	How does contained elevated lead make a more careful claim than contaminated, and what information helps readers verify it?	Contained elevated lead reports the finding in some surface samples without saying the whole yard is unsafe. Readers can check the report's date and the agency that issued it.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The school board agenda lists a library renovation as proposed, not approved, for next spring. I used Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary to check the difference: proposed means suggested for consideration, while approved means officially accepted. Calling the project proposed tells families that the plan may change before the board votes, so the announcement does not promise construction if funding or the design changes during the public review.

Accept equivalent explanations that distinguish the words or phrases by their implications, strength, or level of certainty and connect them to passage evidence. For Part 3, accept varied topics and word pairs if the response meets the length requirement, names a credible source, and explains a precise language choice.