

Words at Work

Study how vocabulary shifts for field crews, the public, and officials.

11.L.V.1.b “Use grade-level general, academic, disciplinary, technical, and professional vocabulary to communicate clearly and precisely, adjusting style as appropriate in a variety of settings. (C)”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline vocabulary that fits a specialized or professional setting, circle wording written for the public, and number details that make each message precise. These choices show how writers adjust language for audience and purpose.

A Water Main Break

- ① At 6:15 a.m., a contractor installing fiber-optic conduit struck an eight-inch water main beneath Pine Street. Water pressure fell in nearby blocks, and the utility department isolated the damaged section by closing two valves. Engineers inspected the break, mapped underground lines, and set a repair sequence: excavate the pavement, replace the fractured pipe, disinfect the new section, and collect water samples. These terms let the field team discuss the work precisely. A vague report that said workers would “fix the water problem” would not identify the damaged component, the safety steps, or the order of operations.
- ② Before noon, the city posted a public alert for residents and business owners. It stated, “Crews are repairing a broken water pipe under Pine Street. Service may be interrupted from noon to 6 p.m. on Tuesday. Avoid driving through the work area, and use the signed detour.” The alert replaced “excavate” with “dig” and “isolate the damaged section” with “shut off water to the affected block.” It still named the street, the expected time, and the action people should take. Clear public language does not remove important details, it makes them easier for a broad audience to use.
- ③ Later, the utility director sent a memo to the city manager. The memo reported that the contractor had caused an unplanned service interruption and that crews had completed valve isolation. It requested approval for an emergency purchase order for pipe, fittings, pavement materials, and laboratory testing. The director also noted a possible regulatory requirement: if pressure remained below the required level, the department might need to issue a boil-water advisory after consulting the state drinking-water agency. This professional message used formal, specific vocabulary because officials needed to authorize spending, document decisions, and protect public health.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Choose one technical term from paragraph 1. Quote it, then explain the specific work or object it names.

2 Why does the public alert use “dig” instead of “excavate”? Use the passage to explain how that choice fits its audience.

3 List two precise details the public alert keeps, even while it uses simpler language.

4 What formal action does the utility director request in paragraph 3, and what materials or services would it cover?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

A school’s ventilation system stops during a hot afternoon. Write two messages of 35 to 45 words each, not counting labels: a public announcement for students and a professional request to the facilities manager. Use at least one precise word for the problem or response in each message.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline vocabulary that fits a specialized or professional setting, circle wording written for the public, and number details that make each message precise. These choices show how writers adjust language for audience and purpose. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Choose one technical term from paragraph 1. Quote it, then explain the specific work or object it names.	Answers will vary. For example, “excavate” means to dig up the pavement, or “fractured pipe” names the broken pipe.
2	Why does the public alert use “dig” instead of “excavate”? Use the passage to explain how that choice fits its audience.	“Dig” is easier for residents and business owners, a broad public audience, to understand quickly.
3	List two precise details the public alert keeps, even while it uses simpler language.	Any two: Pine Street, noon to 6 p.m., Tuesday, avoiding the work area, or using the signed detour.
4	What formal action does the utility director request in paragraph 3, and what materials or services would it cover?	The director requests approval for an emergency purchase order covering pipe, fittings, pavement materials, and laboratory testing.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Student announcement: Room 214 will move to the library from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. because its ventilation is not working. Bring your class materials, follow your teacher, and do not enter Room 214 until staff reopen it. Facilities request: The ventilation unit serving Room 214 has stopped operating. Please inspect the thermostat, electrical connections, and air handler this afternoon. Because the room may become too warm for instruction, staff have relocated classes until the system is restored.

Accept accurate quoted terms and equivalent explanations that connect word choice to audience, purpose, or precision. For Part 3, accept varied situations and vocabulary if both messages meet the word range, provide useful details, and clearly adjust style for students versus facilities staff.