Words at Work

Use context, precision, and audience to interpret vocabulary choices.

12.L.V.1 "General, Academic, & Specialized Vocabulary: Use expanding vocabulary knowledge to interpret texts and to craft effective communications across a wide variety of real-life, academic, disciplinary, technical, and professional contexts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline five academic or specialized words or phrases in the passage. Circle the nearby words that help you infer each term's meaning or explain why that term fits its audience.

A Creek Restoration Plan

1. After heavy rain, the parking lot beside Maple Creek sends a fast sheet of water toward the stream. The city's proposed redesign would replace part of the asphalt with permeable pavement, a surface that lets water pass through into layers of stone below. This change would slow runoff, the water that flows over land after rain, before it reaches the creek. Engineers will also add shallow planted channels called bioswales. Their roots and soil can trap some sediment and pollutants while the water moves across the site.

2. Before construction begins, ecologists will establish a baseline, or a starting set of measurements, for water clarity, insect populations, and soil moisture. A baseline does not predict that conditions will stay unchanged. Instead, it gives researchers a reference point for judging whether the project improves the creek over time. The team will collect samples upstream and downstream, then compare the results across seasons. This method matters because a single clear-water reading could follow an unusually dry week, not the redesign. By tracking repeated observations, the report can distinguish a lasting trend from a temporary fluctuation.

3. Residents may hear the plan described in several ways. In a public meeting, a planner might say the project will reduce flooding and make the creek corridor safer to use. In a grant application, the same planner may write that the project will mitigate stormwater impacts and enhance riparian habitat, the land beside a river or stream. Both versions describe the same goal, but each fits its audience. The first avoids jargon, specialized language used by a field, so neighbors can quickly understand the benefit. The second uses precise disciplinary terms because reviewers need to evaluate methods, environmental outcomes, and costs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does permeable mean as it describes the pavement? Use details from paragraph 1 to explain.

2. Why does the report need a baseline before construction begins?

3. What shared idea is communicated by reduce flooding and mitigate stormwater impacts? How do the phrases fit different audiences?

4. Why does the planner use the term riparian habitat in the grant application instead of the phrase land beside a river or stream?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a practical improvement for your school or community. Write two one-sentence descriptions of it, one for a general audience and one for a grant or review audience; in the second sentence, use two academic or specialized terms and make their meanings clear from surrounding words.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · 12.L.V.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline five academic or specialized words or phrases in the passage. Circle the nearby words that help you infer each term's meaning or explain why that term fits its audience. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does permeable mean as it describes the pavement? Use details from paragraph 1 to explain.	**It means able to let water pass through it, into the stone layers below.**
2	Why does the report need a baseline before construction begins?	**The baseline provides starting measurements, or a reference point, for judging whether conditions improve over time.**
3	What shared idea is communicated by reduce flooding and mitigate stormwater impacts? How do the phrases fit different audiences?	**Both describe lessening harmful effects from rainwater. Reduce flooding is clearer for residents, while mitigate stormwater impacts is more precise for grant reviewers.**
4	Why does the planner use the term riparian habitat in the grant application instead of the phrase land beside a river or stream?	**The specialized term is more precise and fits reviewers who need to evaluate environmental methods and outcomes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

General audience: The school should plant trees beside the hot bus loop to provide shade and cool the pavement. Grant audience: The project would increase canopy cover, the leafy layer formed by tree crowns, and reduce the heat-island effect, the extra warmth created when pavement absorbs sunlight.

Accept equivalent explanations that use passage evidence about context, precision, and audience. For Part 3, accept varied topics if both descriptions communicate the same improvement and the specialized terms are understandable from context.