Words at the Marsh

Notice how word choices make science writing clear.

4.L.V.1 "General, Academic, & Specialized Vocabulary: Acquire and use general, academic, and specialized vocabulary words and phrases with precision in a variety of settings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle three specialized science words. Underline three academic words that help the writer describe an investigation or explain a result.

Helping Willow Marsh

1. On Saturday, Maya joined a team at Willow Marsh, a wetland near her town. The group planted native cattails along the muddy edge. Cattails are tall plants that grow well in shallow water. Their roots help hold soil in place, and their stems give small animals a place to hide. Maya carried a bucket, a trowel, and young plants to each planting spot.

2. Before planting, the team observed the area and recorded evidence of animal life. They saw frog eggs, bird tracks, and a turtle shell. The volunteers compared two plots of ground. One plot had many cattails, while the other had bare soil. Their observations helped the team decide where new plants could protect the bank from washing away.

3. Later, a park scientist explained that a wetland acts like a sponge during heavy rain. It can absorb water and slow its flow. This process may reduce erosion, which happens when moving water carries soil away. Maya wrote a report for her class. She used the precise word erosion instead of the general phrase soil washing away, so her readers could understand the cause more clearly.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, which general word names a living thing, and which specialized word tells exactly what kind of plant it is?

2. Which academic word in paragraph 2 means the volunteers looked at two plots to notice how they were alike or different?

3. What specialized word in paragraph 3 names the process in which moving water carries soil away?

4. Why is the word “erosion” more precise than the phrase “soil washing away”?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about a school garden. Use one general word, one academic word, and one specialized word about plants or soil. Underline the academic word and circle the specialized word.

ANSWER KEY

Words at the Marsh

GRADE 4 · 4.L.V.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle three specialized science words. Underline three academic words that help the writer describe an investigation or explain a result. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, which general word names a living thing, and which specialized word tells exactly what kind of plant it is?	**plants; cattails**
2	Which academic word in paragraph 2 means the volunteers looked at two plots to notice how they were alike or different?	**compared**
3	What specialized word in paragraph 3 names the process in which moving water carries soil away?	**erosion**
4	Why is the word “erosion” more precise than the phrase “soil washing away”?	**Erosion names the specific process in which moving water carries soil away.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our plants need water each day. We will __measure__ the amount of sun while the seeds begin to (germinate).

Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text. Accept reasonable general, academic, and specialized vocabulary choices when the words fit the student's garden sentences. Academic words may include words such as measure, observe, compare, or explain, and specialized words may include terms such as germinate, compost, roots, or photosynthesis.