Words in Focus

Choose words that give readers a clear picture.

4.L.V.3.e "Use knowledge of word relationships and learned vocabulary words and phrases to make precise word choices when speaking and writing. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline six words that give exact details about what the heron or pond does or looks like. Circle either big or nice, then draw an arrow to words that give a clearer detail.

Maya's Pond Notes

1. At sunrise, Maya walked to the pond behind the nature center. A great blue heron stood in the shallow water, nearly as still as a statue. Its long, pointed bill faced the reeds. Maya did not write that the bird was "big." She described its tall body, wide wings, and slow, careful steps. Those details helped readers picture the heron clearly.

2. Soon, the heron lifted one foot and placed it silently into the mud. A small fish flickered near the surface. The bird did not rush. It froze, then jabbed its bill into the water and caught the fish. In her notes, Maya chose the verb jabbed instead of hit. Jabbed showed a quick, sharp movement. She chose flickered instead of moved because the fish made a brief flash of light. Precise verbs told what happened.

3. Maya also listened to the pond. The water lapped softly against the bank, and dragonflies hovered above the lilies. She wrote that the air was cool, not just nice. Cool told about temperature, while nice did not give readers much information. By choosing exact words, Maya made her field notes clearer and more useful for a science report.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which three details does Maya use instead of the general word big?

2. Why does Maya choose jabbed instead of hit?

3. What does flickered tell readers that moved does not?

4. What does cool tell readers, and why is nice less useful?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences for a nature journal about an animal you have observed or can imagine. Use at least three precise verbs or describing words, and underline the precise words.

ANSWER KEY

Words in Focus

GRADE 4 · 4.L.V.3.e

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline six words that give exact details about what the heron or pond does or looks like. Circle either big or nice, then draw an arrow to words that give a clearer detail. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which three details does Maya use instead of the general word big?	**tall body, wide wings, and slow, careful steps**
2	Why does Maya choose jabbed instead of hit?	**Jabbed shows a quick, sharp movement.**
3	What does flickered tell readers that moved does not?	**The fish made a brief flash of light.**
4	What does cool tell readers, and why is nice less useful?	**Cool tells about temperature. Nice does not give much information.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The striped squirrel scampered along a narrow branch and clutched an acorn. Its bushy tail trembled in the cool breeze.

Accept the stated details and explanations from the passage. For Part 3, accept any two sentences with at least three underlined, precise word choices that clearly describe an animal.