Buried Word Clues

Use nearby language and word parts to uncover meaning.

8.L.V.2 "Word Analysis: Use word knowledge and word analysis skills to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases and to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words whose meanings you can figure out from nearby clues. Circle the clue words or phrases that helped you, and number each word-clue pair 1 through 4.

Mail Beneath the Streets

(1) Before electronic messages, several large cities used pneumatic tube systems to move mail quickly. In these networks, air pressure pushed small capsules through subterranean pipes, or pipes below the ground. New York City began using postal tubes in 1897. The capsules carried letters between post offices, avoiding crowded streets above. Today, remnants of some tube routes can still be found, but most of the systems became obsolete when trucks, telephones, and other technologies changed communication.

(2) Running a tube network required a meticulous schedule. Workers sorted mail into capsules, checked the machinery, and recorded each delivery. If a capsule stopped, technicians located the blockage before sending another one. The work was not always simple. A label on an old capsule might be provisional, especially when its destination or date was unclear. Historians compare such labels with maps, newspapers, and postal records. This evidence can replace an early guess with a more reliable identification.

(3) In 1913, the New York system carried millions of pieces of mail each year, showing why the technology seemed efficient in its era. Yet the equipment was expensive to maintain, and its routes could not reach every address. The postal tube service in New York ended in 1953. Museums and archives preserve photographs, capsules, and diagrams from these networks. These objects make an overlooked part of city infrastructure accessible to people studying how communication has changed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. The prefix sub- can mean "under." Use the prefix and the nearby definition to determine the meaning of subterranean.

2. Which details in paragraph 2 help you determine the meaning of meticulous? What does meticulous mean?

3. What does provisional mean as it describes a label on an old capsule? Use the context clues in paragraph 2.

4. Use the clues in paragraph 1 to determine the meaning of obsolete.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose an unfamiliar word from a science, history, or ELA text. Write one sentence that uses the word and gives a clear context clue, then underline the word and circle its clue.

ANSWER KEY

Buried Word Clues

GRADE 8 · 8.L.V.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words whose meanings you can figure out from nearby clues. Circle the clue words or phrases that helped you, and number each word-clue pair 1 through 4. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	The prefix sub- can mean "under." Use the prefix and the nearby definition to determine the meaning of subterranean.	**Subterranean means below or under the ground.**
2	Which details in paragraph 2 help you determine the meaning of meticulous? What does meticulous mean?	**Sorting mail, checking machinery, and recording every delivery show that meticulous means very careful and precise.**
3	What does provisional mean as it describes a label on an old capsule? Use the context clues in paragraph 2.	**Provisional means temporary or not final because the destination or date is unclear and later evidence may change the label.**
4	Use the clues in paragraph 1 to determine the meaning of obsolete.	**Obsolete means outdated and no longer regularly used, because newer technologies changed communication.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The fragile shell, which could ◯break with the slightest pressure◯, was placed in a padded case.

Accept meanings supported by nearby definitions, examples, contrasts, causes, or word parts. For the open task, accept any accurate sentence with a clearly marked target word and a context clue that reveals its meaning.