# Marsh Word Detectives

Use nearby details to uncover the meanings of unfamiliar words.

**8.L.V.3.a** "This progression transitions to 6-8.L.V.3.b."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** For each italicized word, underline the words or phrases that reveal its meaning. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 above each underlined clue group to match the italicized word's order in the passage.

### Watching the Osprey

1 Before sunrise, Maya climbed the old fire tower with her uncle, a wildlife photographer. From the platform, she saw an osprey settle on a narrow *perch* above the marsh. The bird gripped the rail with curved claws and balanced without flapping. "That spot gives it a clear view," her uncle said, pointing to the high resting place. Maya quietly raised her camera as the osprey watched the water below for silver fish moving through the reeds nearby.

2 By midmorning, wind swept across the marsh, and dark clouds hid the sun. The osprey did not leave. Instead, it shifted from the exposed rail to a lower branch, then searched a different inlet. Its ability to change its behavior when conditions changed showed that it was *adaptable*. Maya noticed that the bird kept hunting successfully even when the weather made its usual spot less useful and the waves rougher than before for hunting fish.

3 At noon, a sudden gust made Maya's hat *plummet* from the tower steps to the ground. It dropped quickly in a straight fall, landing beside a puddle. Her uncle laughed, then pointed toward the marsh, where fewer fish flashed near the surface. After several hot, dry weeks, food had become *scarce* for the osprey. Only a small number of fish remained in the shallow water, so the bird flew farther to hunt there each day.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does *perch* mean in paragraph 1? Which details help you figure it out?

2. What does *adaptable* mean in paragraph 2? Explain using the osprey's actions.

3. What does *plummet* mean in paragraph 3? Identify the strongest context clue.

4. What does *scarce* mean in paragraph 3? How do the fish details support your answer?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences using the words *reluctant* and *fragile*. Include context clues in each sentence so a reader can figure out what each word means.

**ANSWER KEY**

# Marsh Word Detectives

**GRADE 8 · 8.L.V.3.a**

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

For each italicized word, underline the words or phrases that reveal its meaning. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 above each underlined clue group to match the italicized word's order in the passage. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What does *perch* mean in paragraph 1? Which details help you figure it out? | **A perch is a high resting place for a bird. Clues include that the osprey settles on it, grips the rail, and the uncle calls it a "high resting place."** |
| 2 | What does *adaptable* mean in paragraph 2? Explain using the osprey's actions. | **Adaptable means able to change to fit new conditions. The osprey moves to a lower branch and searches a different inlet when wind and waves make its usual spot less useful.** |
| 3 | What does *plummet* mean in paragraph 3? Identify the strongest context clue. | **Plummet means to fall quickly. The strongest clue is that the hat "dropped quickly in a straight fall."** |
| 4 | What does *scarce* mean in paragraph 3? How do the fish details support your answer? | **Scarce means limited or in short supply. Fewer fish are visible, and only a small number remain in the shallow water.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Although Nia wanted to join the debate, she was reluctant, or hesitant, because she feared speaking to a crowd. She carried the fragile, easily broken glass model in both hands so it would not crack.

Accept reasonable definitions that match the passage and are supported by nearby details. For Part 3, each sentence should use the assigned word correctly and provide a clear clue to its meaning.