Clues in Yellowstone

Use context clues and word parts to unpack academic vocabulary.

8.P.EICC.3.g "Determine the meanings of unfamiliar words and concepts by applying knowledge of context and of academic vocabulary and word parts. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three unfamiliar or academic words or concepts. Circle nearby words that help explain each one, and box any useful word parts, such as re-, inter-, or -tion.

Wolves and a Changing Park

1. In 1995, biologists began restoring gray wolves to Yellowstone National Park after the animals had been absent for decades. This reintroduction, or return of a species to a place where it once lived, changed more than the wolf population. Wolves hunted elk, which had been eating young willow and aspen trees near streams. In some areas, elk spent less time browsing in open valleys, so more plants survived. The growing vegetation gave beavers materials for dams and gave birds safer places to nest.

2. The effects can spread through the food web, a network of organisms that eat or are eaten by one another. Scientists use the term trophic cascade for a sequence of changes across feeding levels. Trophic relates to feeding, and cascade suggests changes moving from one level to another. In some places, taller willows have helped beavers build dams. Those dams slow water and create ponds, which offer habitat, or living space, for frogs, fish, and insects. Rainfall, soil, and human decisions also affect the park.

3. Ecologists continue to monitor, meaning observe and measure over time, the park's changing communities. They study whether the ecosystem is becoming more resilient, or better able to recover after a disruption such as drought or fire. This work does not prove that every change comes from wolves. Instead, researchers compare many kinds of evidence. By examining animal counts, plant growth, and stream conditions, they can explain how living and nonliving parts of Yellowstone are interdependent, meaning each part affects the others.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does reintroduction mean in paragraph 1? Use the context to explain it.

2. What does trophic cascade mean in paragraph 2?

3. What does monitor mean in paragraph 3?

4. What does interdependent mean in paragraph 3? Use the word part and the context clue.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly two sentences about a school garden. In the first sentence, put brackets around an unfamiliar academic word and give a context clue in parentheses. In the second sentence, use a word beginning with re-, inter-, or non- and make its meaning clear through context.

ANSWER KEY

Clues in Yellowstone

GRADE 8 · 8.P.EICC.3.g

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three unfamiliar or academic words or concepts. Circle nearby words that help explain each one, and box any useful word parts, such as re-, inter-, or -tion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does reintroduction mean in paragraph 1? Use the context to explain it.	**It means returning a species to a place where it once lived.**
2	What does trophic cascade mean in paragraph 2?	**It is a sequence of changes across feeding levels in a food web.**
3	What does monitor mean in paragraph 3?	**It means to observe and measure over time.**
4	What does interdependent mean in paragraph 3? Use the word part and the context clue.	**It means that parts depend on or affect one another.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The garden soil showed [erosion] (rain had carried loose dirt down the slope). Students replanted grass, putting new plants where the rain had washed the old ones away.

Accept reasonable meanings supported by nearby context clues and word parts. For Part 3, accept varied academic vocabulary and prefixed words when each sentence makes the meaning clear.