Cooler City Words

Track how context and audience shape word choice.

9.L.V.1 "General, Academic, & Specialized Vocabulary: Use expanding vocabulary knowledge to interpret texts and to craft effective communications across a wide variety of real-life, academic, disciplinary, technical, and professional contexts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the context clues that help define urban heat island, pilot, evaluate, prioritize, and heat exposure, then number each clue 1 through 5 beside its word.

Mapping a Cooler City

1. On a July afternoon, students from Riverton High joined the city's heat-mapping project. They carried thermal sensors, instruments that measure surface temperature, along sidewalks, parking lots, and shaded trails. The data showed that dark asphalt absorbed sunlight and became far hotter than grass beneath mature trees. Back at school, the group compared their readings on a digital map. They noticed a pattern: blocks with few trees often had the highest temperatures. Their science teacher explained that this local temperature pattern is called an urban heat island. The term does not mean the city is surrounded by water. It describes a built-up area that stays warmer than nearby places.

2. The class then read a planning memo from the city's forestry office. Its author proposed a pilot, a small trial before a larger program, on three hottest blocks. The memo recommended planting native species, trees that naturally grow in the region, because they are adapted to local rainfall and soil. It also used the academic word evaluate: workers would evaluate each site by examining sidewalk width, overhead wires, and access to water. In this context, evaluate means to judge carefully using evidence, not simply to state an opinion. The memo's precise vocabulary helped readers understand both the proposal and the limits that planners had to consider.

3. Finally, the students turned their findings into a message for residents. They avoided saying that every street needed identical trees, because available planting space differed from block to block. Instead, they wrote, "Prioritize shade trees near bus stops and playgrounds where heat exposure is greatest." Prioritize is an academic verb meaning give something first importance. Shade trees is a practical phrase, while heat exposure is a specialized public-health term for time spent in hot conditions. By choosing words for a community audience and defining technical language when needed, the students made their recommendation clear, accurate, and useful. The city later used their map during a public meeting.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does urban heat island mean in this passage? Include one detail from the passage that supports your answer.

2. Which words in paragraph 2 explain the meaning of pilot?

3. In paragraph 2, what does evaluate mean, and which three site features would workers examine?

4. Why is "Prioritize shade trees near bus stops and playgrounds" a more effective message for residents than saying every street needs identical trees?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a two-sentence recommendation to your school principal about reducing lunchtime litter. Use one academic word and one specialized term, and make the specialized term clear with a definition, example, or appositive.

ANSWER KEY

Cooler City Words

GRADE 9 · 9.L.V.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the context clues that help define urban heat island, pilot, evaluate, prioritize, and heat exposure, then number each clue 1 through 5 beside its word. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does urban heat island mean in this passage? Include one detail from the passage that supports your answer.	**It is a built-up area that stays warmer than nearby places. The map showed that blocks with few trees often had the highest temperatures.**
2	Which words in paragraph 2 explain the meaning of pilot?	**"A small trial before a larger program."**
3	In paragraph 2, what does evaluate mean, and which three site features would workers examine?	**Evaluate means judge carefully using evidence. Workers would examine sidewalk width, overhead wires, and access to water.**
4	Why is "Prioritize shade trees near bus stops and playgrounds" a more effective message for residents than saying every street needs identical trees?	**It gives a clear action, focuses on places with greatest heat exposure, and recognizes that planting space differs from block to block.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The school should prioritize covered bins beside the cafeteria doors to reduce lunchtime litter. A waste audit, a count and sort of discarded materials, could show which bins and signs are needed.

Accept context-based definitions that match the passage, even if students use different wording. For Part 3, accept reasonable recommendations that have exactly two sentences, include an academic word, and clarify a specialized term.