Reef Report Revision

See how precise word choices sharpen a scientific field note.

9.L.V.2.d "Use knowledge of parts of speech to determine precise and effective words and phrases when constructing texts. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three precise verbs, circle three adjectives or words used as adjectives that sharpen a noun, and number one detail that gives an exact amount, place, or time. These choices show how parts of speech make field notes clear.

Notes from an Oyster Reef

1. At dawn, marine biologist Lena Ortiz stepped onto a narrow skiff in Chesapeake Bay. Her crew was checking a restored oyster reef, a low mound built from recycled shells. Oysters filter water as they feed, and their clustered shells create shelter for small fish and crabs. Ortiz did not write that the water looked good. She noted that it appeared clearer near the reef and that silvery minnows flickered between the shell ridges. Her exact nouns and active verbs turned a broad observation into a record another scientist could understand.

2. To explain a change in the reef, Ortiz reviewed two versions of a field note. One version read, "The crew put shells in the water." Her revised entry read, "The crew lowered thirty bags of cleaned oyster shells onto the muddy bottom." The revision matched what the crew had done that morning. A deck crane carried the bags over the side, and divers arranged them where loose mud met the older shell mound. Ortiz included the details because later researchers would need to compare the reef's size and condition with future surveys.

3. Later, the crew discovered a break in one section of the reef. In the final entry of the day, Ortiz wrote, "Winter waves scattered shells from the eastern edge." She added the sentence beside a map and photographs of the site. The record distinguished this damage from the gradual settling that the crew had observed during calm summer weeks. When the team returned in spring, they could inspect the same edge, count replacement shell bags, and decide whether the repair had held. Careful wording made the notes useful beyond one day's work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In the two versions of the field note, which verb creates the clearer picture, and what movement does it describe?

2. Name the two adjectives in the revised entry that describe the condition of the shells and the bottom. What does each word describe?

3. How does the word “thirty” make the revised entry more precise than the first version?

4. In the final quoted entry, identify the word that names the season, the action verb, and the adjective that locates the edge.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly two sentences about a change you observe outdoors. Make the first sentence broad, then revise it in the second sentence with a precise verb, at least one adjective, and an exact amount, place, or time detail.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 9 · 9.L.V.2.d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three precise verbs, circle three adjectives or words used as adjectives that sharpen a noun, and number one detail that gives an exact amount, place, or time. These choices show how parts of speech make field notes clear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In the two versions of the field note, which verb creates the clearer picture, and what movement does it describe?	**Lowered. It describes moving the bags down from the boat onto the bottom.**
2	Name the two adjectives in the revised entry that describe the condition of the shells and the bottom. What does each word describe?	**Cleaned describes the oyster shells, and muddy describes the bottom.**
3	How does the word “thirty” make the revised entry more precise than the first version?	**It gives a measurable number of bags instead of an unspecified amount of shells.**
4	In the final quoted entry, identify the word that names the season, the action verb, and the adjective that locates the edge.	**Winter names the season, scattered is the action verb, and eastern locates the edge.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The storm changed the trail. Overnight rain carved three slippery channels across the steep gravel trail.

Accept varied accurate markings, as long as students identify precise verbs, descriptive modifiers, and a specific amount, place, or time detail. For the writing task, the second sentence should clearly be more precise than the first and include all required word choices.