Clues After Disaster

Use nearby details to determine word meanings in an informational text.

9.L.V.3.a "This progression transitions to 9-12.L.V.3.b."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words whose meanings you can infer from context, then circle the nearby words or phrases that help you determine each meaning.

San Francisco Rebuilds

1 On April 18, 1906, a powerful earthquake shook San Francisco before dawn. Brick walls crumbled, streets split, and gas lines broke. Fires soon spread through neighborhoods where water pipes had also ruptured. In the confusion, many residents carried supplies to open spaces such as parks and plazas. The city's telegraph system was crippled, so reliable news traveled slowly. People often relied on handwritten notices or word of mouth to learn where relatives had gone. The disaster destroyed thousands of buildings, but it also revealed how quickly ordinary systems can fail when several problems strike at once.

2 Within days, volunteers and soldiers organized makeshift camps in Golden Gate Park and other open areas. Families slept in tents, wooden sheds, or shelters built from salvaged boards. These arrangements were not meant to last, but they offered safety away from damaged buildings and burning districts. Food lines formed near field kitchens, where workers prepared simple meals for large crowds. The camps also became places for sharing information. A person searching for a missing neighbor might scan lists posted near a tent or ask people arriving from another part of the city. Such connections were tenuous, yet they mattered.

3 Rebuilding required years, not weeks. City leaders adopted new building rules, while residents reopened shops and repaired homes. Many businesses operated from provisional locations, including tents or small temporary structures, until permanent spaces were ready. The city's recovery was uneven: some people had insurance or savings, while others faced severe losses with little help. Still, San Francisco's residents showed resilience by creating new routines amid the damage. The earthquake and fires changed the city's streets and skyline, but they did not erase its communities. Today, photographs, letters, and surviving buildings help historians study how people responded to the catastrophe.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does crippled mean in paragraph 1? Cite one detail that helps you determine its meaning.

2. What does makeshift mean in paragraph 2? Cite one context clue that supports your answer.

3. What does tenuous mean in paragraph 2? How do the details about finding a missing neighbor help you infer the meaning?

4. What does resilience mean in paragraph 3? Which action by residents helps you infer its meaning?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences using a precise word that a reader might not know. Use context clues in the second sentence to help the reader determine the word's meaning.

ANSWER KEY

Clues After Disaster

GRADE 9 · 9.L.V.3.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words whose meanings you can infer from context, then circle the nearby words or phrases that help you determine each meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does crippled mean in paragraph 1? Cite one detail that helps you determine its meaning.	**Crippled means badly damaged or unable to work normally. The passage says reliable news traveled slowly after the telegraph system was crippled.**
2	What does makeshift mean in paragraph 2? Cite one context clue that supports your answer.	**Makeshift means temporary and quickly assembled from available materials. The camps used tents, wooden sheds, and shelters made from salvaged boards, and the arrangements were not meant to last.**
3	What does tenuous mean in paragraph 2? How do the details about finding a missing neighbor help you infer the meaning?	**Tenuous means weak, uncertain, or not dependable. People had to scan lists or ask arriving people for information, so connections were difficult and uncertain.**
4	What does resilience mean in paragraph 3? Which action by residents helps you infer its meaning?	**Resilience means the ability to recover or adapt after difficulty. Residents created new routines amid the damage.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The water in the mountain stream was frigid. Ice clung to the rocks, and my bare hands began to ache as soon as I touched it.

Accept reasonable meanings supported by nearby details, even when students use different wording. For Part 3, accept any precise word used correctly when the second sentence provides clear context clues to its meaning.