Words With Edges

Use context and sources to choose the most precise language.

9.L.V.3.e "Make strategic language decisions when writing or speaking by determining, clarifying, or verifying the nuanced meanings of closely related words or phrases using available print and/or digital resources. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each pair of words or phrases Maya compares, circle the source or detail she uses to check the meaning, and number the four choices. Your marks should show how she makes her language more precise.

Maya's Marsh Comment

1. When the city council announced plans to replace Harbor Marsh with parking spaces, Maya drafted a public comment. She first wrote that the project would destroy the marsh, then changed destroy to diminish. The construction would not erase every wet area, but it would shrink the marsh and interrupt its connections to the bay. Maya wanted a word that was accurate, not merely dramatic. She checked a print thesaurus and a local map before choosing diminish. The map showed that some marsh would remain, while a road and paved lots would divide the rest.

2. Maya also revised a sentence about wildlife. Her first draft said that the marsh was essential for herons, crabs, and young fish. After reading a state wildlife agency report, she replaced essential with valuable. The report described the marsh as feeding and shelter habitat, yet those species can use other places along the coast. Valuable recognized the marsh's importance without claiming that every animal would disappear without it. In another line, Maya wrote that the council should consider the evidence. She did not write obey the evidence, because evidence can guide a decision but cannot issue an order. Her revisions made her argument more precise and fair.

3. Before submitting her comment, Maya reconsidered the phrase public access. The plan promised public access to the waterfront, but the details showed a narrow viewing path beside a fenced stormwater basin. Maya decided that public view was clearer than public access in her comment. Access can imply that people can enter or use a place more fully, while view emphasized looking from the path. She quoted the plan's page number so listeners could verify her wording. Her final request did not accuse the council of hiding information. Instead, it asked officials to clarify what visitors could actually reach, see, and use.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does Maya choose diminish instead of destroy? Use the map details in your answer.

2. What information in the wildlife agency report makes valuable a better choice than essential?

3. How would obey the evidence change Maya's meaning compared with consider the evidence?

4. Why is public view more precise than public access for the planned waterfront area? What source detail can listeners use to verify Maya's choice?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences for a real school or community improvement. Name a print or digital source, use one pair of closely related words, and explain why your chosen word is more precise than the other word.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 9 · 9.L.V.3.e

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each pair of words or phrases Maya compares, circle the source or detail she uses to check the meaning, and number the four choices. Your marks should show how she makes her language more precise. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does Maya choose diminish instead of destroy? Use the map details in your answer.	**Diminish is more accurate because the project would shrink and divide the marsh, but some wet area would remain.**
2	What information in the wildlife agency report makes valuable a better choice than essential?	**The report says the marsh provides feeding and shelter habitat, but the species can use other places along the coast. Valuable shows importance without claiming the marsh is necessary for every animal's survival.**
3	How would obey the evidence change Maya's meaning compared with consider the evidence?	**Consider means the council should weigh the evidence in its decision. Obey would wrongly suggest that evidence can give an order.**
4	Why is public view more precise than public access for the planned waterfront area? What source detail can listeners use to verify Maya's choice?	**Public view fits a narrow viewing path beside a fenced basin, while public access can suggest fuller entry or use. Listeners can check the plan page number that Maya quoted.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our cafeteria should offer reusable forks instead of only plastic ones. A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency webpage about reducing waste supports the word reduce, not eliminate, because reusable forks would lower plastic waste but would not end every source of it. This change would make a measurable difference.

Accept equivalent explanations that distinguish the paired terms using passage evidence. For Part 3, accept varied topics if the response has exactly three sentences, names a source, uses a related word pair, and clearly explains the more precise choice.