

Evidence Has Words

Use context clues to understand precise academic and content-specific vocabulary.

8L6 “Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases; apply vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline at least four important academic or content-specific words or phrases, and circle nearby clues that help you determine their meanings.

Reading an Archaeological Site

- ① At the edge of an old riverbank in Illinois, archaeologists uncovered a small hearth, the remains of a place where people once controlled fire. They did not treat each object as an isolated treasure. Instead, they recorded its context, or its position and relationship to nearby materials. A broken pot found beside charcoal can reveal more than the same pot removed without notes. Careful records allow researchers to infer, or reach a reasonable conclusion, how people used a site.
- ② One layer of soil at the riverbank held stone flakes from toolmaking. A deeper layer contained older materials because, at an undisturbed site, newer deposits usually rest above earlier ones. This pattern is called stratigraphy. It helped the team estimate the sequence of activity, but an estimate needs corroboration, or support from another source. Radiocarbon testing of the charcoal provided that support. The test measures changes in carbon isotopes to estimate when once-living material stopped exchanging carbon with the environment.
- ③ Vocabulary choices shape the claims readers understand. Saying that charcoal corroborates an estimate is more precise than saying it proves every detail. The evidence may strengthen a conclusion while leaving questions about who made the tools or why people returned to the riverbank. Archaeologists also distinguish an artifact, an object altered or made by people, from a natural stone. Using these content-specific terms accurately helps a report communicate both what the evidence shows and what remains uncertain.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What does *context* mean in paragraph 1? Use the explanation in the passage.

2 Which phrase in paragraph 2 gives the meaning of *corroboration*?

3 How does *stratigraphy* help the team estimate the sequence of activity?

4 Why is *corroborates an estimate* more precise than *proves every detail*?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write three sentences about a made-up discovery at a school or park. Use *context*, *infer*, and *corroborate* accurately, and make clear what evidence supports the conclusion.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline at least four important academic or content-specific words or phrases, and circle nearby clues that help you determine their meanings. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does <i>context</i> mean in paragraph 1? Use the explanation in the passage.	Context means an object's position and relationship to nearby materials.
2	Which phrase in paragraph 2 gives the meaning of <i>corroboration</i> ?	"support from another source"
3	How does <i>stratigraphy</i> help the team estimate the sequence of activity?	At an undisturbed site, newer deposits usually rest above earlier ones, so soil layers can show the order of activity.
4	Why is <i>corroborates an estimate</i> more precise than <i>proves every detail</i> ?	Corroborates means the charcoal supports or strengthens the estimate, but it does not prove every detail or answer every question.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the park, the context of several shells beside a shallow pit suggested that people had cooked there. Researchers could infer that the pit was a fire site, but they needed more evidence. Burned wood found in the pit could corroborate their conclusion.

Accept equivalent wording for the passage-based answers when students preserve the meanings of the terms. For the open response, check that context refers to surrounding conditions, infer means reaching a conclusion from evidence, and corroborate means supporting a conclusion with additional evidence.