Which Meaning Fits?

Use context and a dictionary to test word meanings.

12.4.R.4 "Students will use resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary, thesaurus, etc.) to determine or clarify the meanings, syllabication, pronunciation, synonyms, parts of speech, and etymology of words or phrases."

NAME _____ DATE _____

MEANING MATCHES

The proposed meaning fits the word's meaning and part of speech in the sentence. Use a dictionary to confirm the sense that fits.

The hikers reached the **summit** before dawn. Proposed meaning: the highest point of a mountain.

MEANING DOES NOT MATCH

The proposed meaning does not fit how the word is used in the sentence. It may still be a real dictionary meaning of that word.

The carpenter checked the **level** before hanging the shelf. Proposed meaning: a rank in a system.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle MATCH or MISMATCH for each proposed meaning; for Part 2, choose two items and explain which clues in their sentences support your choices.

1.	The critic called the film's ending **ambiguous**. Proposed meaning: open to more than one interpretation.	MATCH MISMATCH
2.	The archivist found a **lacuna** in the manuscript. Proposed meaning: a missing section in a text.	MATCH MISMATCH
3.	The biologist studied the **culture** under a microscope. Proposed meaning: the shared customs of a community.	MATCH MISMATCH
4.	The publisher withdrew the latest **issue** of the journal. Proposed meaning: a subject under debate.	MATCH MISMATCH
5.	The scientist tried to **corroborate** the result with a second test. Proposed meaning: confirm with supporting evidence.	MATCH MISMATCH
6.	His **reticent** reply gave away little. Proposed meaning: unwilling to speak freely.	MATCH MISMATCH
7.	The reviewer found the argument **tenuous** because it relied on one weak source. Proposed meaning: weakly supported.	MATCH MISMATCH
8.	The musician read the **score** before rehearsal. Proposed meaning: the number of points won in a game.	MATCH MISMATCH

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one original sentence with a proposed meaning that matches its bold word, then another with a proposed meaning that does not match.

MATCH _____

MISMATCH _____

CHALLENGE

Write a sentence using a word with two dictionary senses, list both senses, then explain in one sentence which sense fits your sentence and why.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · 12.4.R.4

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The critic called the film's ending **ambiguous**. Proposed meaning: open to more than one interpretation.	**MATCH**	An ambiguous ending can have more than one interpretation.
2	The archivist found a **lacuna** in the manuscript. Proposed meaning: a missing section in a text.	**MATCH**	A lacuna is a gap or missing section, including one in a manuscript.
3	The biologist studied the **culture** under a microscope. Proposed meaning: the shared customs of a community.	**MISMATCH**	Under a microscope, culture means microorganisms grown for study, not shared customs.
4	The publisher withdrew the latest **issue** of the journal. Proposed meaning: a subject under debate.	**MISMATCH**	An issue of a journal is a published installment, not a subject under debate.
5	The scientist tried to **corroborate** the result with a second test. Proposed meaning: confirm with supporting evidence.	**MATCH**	A second test could provide evidence that confirms the result.
6	His **reticent** reply gave away little. Proposed meaning: unwilling to speak freely.	**MATCH**	A reply that gives away little suggests reluctance to speak freely.
7	The reviewer found the argument **tenuous** because it relied on one weak source. Proposed meaning: weakly supported.	**MATCH**	Reliance on one weak source makes an argument weakly supported.
8	The musician read the **score** before rehearsal. Proposed meaning: the number of points won in a game.	**MISMATCH**	A musician reads a written musical score, not a game score.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **MATCH**: The judge cited a **precedent** from an earlier case. Proposed meaning: an earlier decision that guides later cases.
- **MISMATCH**: The forecast predicted **precipitation** overnight. Proposed meaning: a stretch of dry weather.

Challenge: A **draft** blew the papers off the desk. Senses: a current of air; a preliminary version of a text. The current-of-air sense fits because moving air can blow papers off a desk.

For Part 2, accept explanations that cite a specific context clue and connect it to the proposed meaning. For Part 3, check that each proposed meaning fits or conflicts with its sentence as requested.