

Evidence Under Canopy

Use context to build precise academic and archaeology vocabulary.

11.RV.1.A "Develop and accurately use general academic and content-specific vocabulary through reading, discussing, and writing about grade-level texts and topics."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each academic or archaeology term whose meaning the author explains or shows through context. Circle the nearby words that help you infer each term's meaning.

Reading a Hidden Landscape

- ① In this fictional fieldwork account, on a wooded hill, archaeologists used lidar, a laser-scanning method, to map ground shapes hidden beneath the forest canopy. The resulting image did not prove that every raised line was a road or a wall. Instead, it gave researchers a preliminary map of features worth investigating. In archaeology, a preliminary claim is provisional, meaning it may change when new evidence appears. This caution matters because roots, erosion, and modern trails can create patterns that resemble ancient construction. Researchers must distinguish a plausible interpretation from a conclusion supported by several kinds of evidence.
- ② To test the map, a team examines selected locations on the ground. They study stratigraphy, the sequence and relationships of soil layers and their contents. Undisturbed layers can help establish which deposits came earlier. The team records each artifact's provenience: its precise location and three-dimensional context at the site. Provenience is a different term for an object's origin or ownership history. Recording provenience helps connect an object with a layer and activity area. A proposed interpretation is corroborated when additional evidence supports it. Agreement among mapped patterns, soil relationships, and carefully recorded artifacts can strengthen a claim without removing every uncertainty.

- ③ An assertion is a statement presented as true. An inference is a conclusion drawn from evidence. These categories can overlap: a researcher may assert an inference. Neither word alone tells us how strong the evidence is. “This pattern is a plaza” and “This pattern may be a plaza” differ in certainty because of their wording, not because one must be an assertion and the other an inference. Researchers calibrate, or adjust, their language to the evidence. Another team may attempt to replicate, or repeat, measurements to check the result. A strong report separates what was observed from what was concluded and explains how new evidence could change the conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 Using paragraph 1, define provisional. Why is a provisional claim appropriate for the lidar map?

- 2 How do stratigraphy and provenience help interpretation? How does provenience differ from provenance?

- 3 What does corroborated mean here? Name three evidence types that could strengthen an interpretation.

- 4 Can a statement be both an assertion and an inference? Explain using paragraph 3.

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90-110 word field note about an unfamiliar raised pattern at a historical site. Use exactly three terms from this list, each once: provisional, stratigraphy, provenience, corroborated, inference, assertion, calibrate, replicate. Separate observation from interpretation and identify evidence still needed. Then discuss your choices with a partner.

Field note

Write 90-110 words. Underline your three selected terms after drafting; check each appears once.

Discuss and revise

Read your note to a partner. Each explain one term using its context and challenge one claim’s certainty. Record your partner’s point and a revised sentence, or explain why no change is needed.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each academic or archaeology term whose meaning the author explains or shows through context. Circle the nearby words that help you infer each term's meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Using paragraph 1, define provisional. Why is a provisional claim appropriate for the lidar map?	Provisional means subject to change when new evidence appears. The lidar image may show patterns made by roots, erosion, or modern trails rather than ancient construction.
2	How do stratigraphy and provenience help interpretation? How does provenience differ from provenance?	Stratigraphy concerns layer sequences and relationships. Provenience records an object's precise site location and context, helping link it to a layer or activity area. Provenance concerns origin or ownership history.
3	What does corroborated mean here? Name three evidence types that could strengthen an interpretation.	Corroborated means supported by additional evidence. Mapped patterns, soil relationships, and recorded artifacts can support the same interpretation.
4	Can a statement be both an assertion and an inference? Explain using paragraph 3.	Yes. A conclusion drawn from evidence is an inference; presenting that conclusion as true is an assertion. Certainty depends on evidence and wording, not those labels alone.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During a survey, our team observed a rectangular rise beside several bricks. We recorded each fragment's provenience before moving anything, so later researchers could relate the objects to their surroundings. Our identification of the rise as a building foundation is provisional because flooding may have reshaped the ground. My inference is that people once used this area for storage, but shape alone cannot establish that function. We need excavation records, soil relationships, and further evidence of past activities. Until those records support a stronger conclusion, our report should describe the pattern without assigning a definite purpose.

The 96-word field note uses provenience, provisional, and inference once each. It identifies observations, a tentative interpretation, and missing evidence. Discussion example: a partner asks whether bricks prove storage; the writer explains that the note already withholds a definite purpose. Accept other reasoned exchanges and accurate revisions. Do not require a change if the original sentence is precise. Vocabulary reference: Archaeological Institute of America, Glossary, <https://www.archaeological.org/programs/educators/introduction-to-archaeology/glossary/>. Provenience and provenance are distinguished in this glossary.