

Words Shape Policy

Track how precise academic language supports evidence-based decisions.

ELA.12.V.1.1 "Integrate academic vocabulary appropriate to grade level in speaking and writing."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline five academic vocabulary words or phrases whose meanings are supported by nearby context. Circle the words that act as a context clue for each one.

Mapping City Heat

- ① On a July afternoon, temperatures can differ sharply across the same city. Dark roofs, asphalt streets, and parking lots absorb solar radiation, then release stored heat after sunset. This pattern, called the urban heat island effect, can raise nighttime temperatures in densely built neighborhoods. Trees and parks moderate the effect because leaves provide shade and release water vapor through transpiration. The difference is not merely uncomfortable. Higher heat can worsen air pollution, strain electric grids, and increase health risks for people without reliable cooling. City planners therefore study where heat is concentrated before choosing responses.
- ② To map this problem, researchers combine satellite images of land-surface temperature with measurements from street-level sensors. They also examine demographic data, since exposure is shaped by housing quality, income, age, and access to air conditioning. This analysis identifies vulnerability, the conditions that make some residents more likely to be harmed. For example, an older apartment building with little insulation may stay hot overnight, even when a nearby office tower is cooled. Using several sources of evidence helps planners avoid a misleading conclusion based on one unusually hot block or one day's weather. It also reveals which communities need resources most urgently.

- ③ Possible interventions include planting street trees, installing reflective roofs, and creating cooling centers during heat emergencies. Each intervention has limits and costs. Young trees need water and years to create broad shade, while reflective roofs may be difficult for renters to request from landlords. A sound policy must evaluate efficacy, meaning how well an action achieves its intended result, and equity, meaning whether benefits reach people with the greatest need. Planners might prioritize neighborhoods with scarce tree cover and many heat-related emergency calls. They must also consult residents, because local knowledge can reveal barriers that a map or spreadsheet does not show. Effective climate adaptation joins scientific data with participation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- ① In paragraph 1, what does the academic word “moderate” mean as it describes what trees and parks do to the heat island effect?

- ② Copy the phrase in paragraph 2 that defines “vulnerability.”

- ③ Why would a policy writer name a specific intended result when evaluating efficacy? Use efficacy accurately in a sentence about a school heat intervention.

- ④ Could an intervention have high efficacy but poor equity? Explain a school example using both academic terms accurately.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word recommendation for reducing heat around your school. Integrate at least four academic vocabulary terms from the passage in meaningful context. Underline them. Then present your recommendation aloud to a partner or teacher. Answer one follow-up question using at least two of your selected terms. Ask your listener to identify one clear usage and one usage to clarify; revise that wording on your draft.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline five academic vocabulary words or phrases whose meanings are supported by nearby context. Circle the words that act as a context clue for each one. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, what does the academic word “moderate” mean as it describes what trees and parks do to the heat island effect?	It means lessen or reduce the effect.
2	Copy the phrase in paragraph 2 that defines “vulnerability.”	“the conditions that make some residents more likely to be harmed”
3	Why would a policy writer name a specific intended result when evaluating efficacy? Use efficacy accurately in a sentence about a school heat intervention.	A specific intended result makes success assessable. Example: We should evaluate the efficacy of bus-loop shade by comparing temperatures where students wait before and after installation, while accounting for weather differences.
4	Could an intervention have high efficacy but poor equity? Explain a school example using both academic terms accurately.	Yes. A roof change might effectively reduce temperatures in one building but distribute benefits unfairly if students in hotter, less protected spaces are overlooked. Accept other examples that distinguish achieving a goal from how benefits are distributed.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To mitigate heat around our school, the district should plant shade trees beside the bus loop and add reflective material to the gym roof. This intervention would lower exposure for students waiting outdoors, especially those who walk home. Before spending funds, leaders should evaluate the efficacy of both steps by comparing afternoon temperatures at shaded and unshaded locations. An equitable plan should also prioritize the playground, where few students can avoid direct sun. Student surveys and maintenance data can identify barriers, such as watering needs or damaged pavement. This climate adaptation would combine evidence, local experience, and a realistic budget.

Accept accurate meanings and meaningful grade-appropriate uses of academic vocabulary; equivalent word forms are acceptable. For the written recommendation, require 90 to 110 words and at least four accurately used passage terms. The model is the written product, not a transcript of every possible exchange. Observe the actual oral presentation and follow-up response; assess whether the student uses the terms precisely and can clarify them rather than only reciting definitions. The listener identifies a clear usage and one to refine; students revise their own wording after feedback. Example follow-up: How would you compare the efficacy and equity of your two proposals? An effective answer distinguishes measurable cooling from which students receive it. No invented local study results are claimed by the model; proposals and future measurements are identified as such.