

Meaning Moves

Use word families and connotations to judge a public claim.

11.RV.1 "Vocabulary Development and Word Analysis 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 Before reading paragraph 3, use the Question 1 lines to infer credible, credulous and incredulous from paragraphs 1-2; quote a clue for each. Check paragraph 3, discuss with a partner, and label corrections beside your first answers. Complete Questions 2-4 and the application.

Words in a Consequential Decision

- ① Original fictional scene: The school newspaper received a post claiming that a local theater would close. Its editor found the claim credible only after checking a dated notice from the theater itself. A volunteer had been credulous: he believed the first anonymous post without looking for support. Another student was incredulous even after reading the notice, saying that she could hardly believe a familiar place was shutting. The editor used discretion by removing a worker's private phone number from the story while preserving the public information readers needed.
- ② The paper could win attention by publishing names from a private staff message, but the theater said doing so would end its cooperation with student reporters. The editor called that prospect a "Pyrrhic victory": a burst of attention purchased at a loss that would outweigh it. She asked the team not to "fan the flames" by repeating an unverified accusation about the manager. A skeptical reporter requested evidence; a cynical one assumed that every explanation concealed selfish motives. The editor kept questions open and checked them instead of treating distrust itself as proof.

- ③ Reference notes: Credible means believable or worthy of belief; credulous means too ready to believe with little evidence; incredulous means disbelieving. The shared Latin root cred means believe; -ible suggests capability, and negative in- helps explain incredulous. Discretion is careful judgment about what to do or disclose. Skeptical emphasizes questioning or doubt; cynical can imply distrust of others' motives. Pyrrhic victory recalls King Pyrrhus' costly military victories and means a success whose losses undermine its value. Fan the flames is an idiom for intensifying a dispute.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 Explain credible, credulous and incredulous using one precise clue for each from paragraph 1. Why are the three words not interchangeable?

- 2 Use cred, -ible and in- to explain two words, then check your explanation against the scene. Why should roots be checked in context?

- 3 How would replacing skeptical with cynical change the reporter's implied attitude? Explain how the editor's discretion differs from hiding the entire story.

- 4 Explain both "Pyrrhic victory" and "fan the flames" in paragraph 2. How do they shape the editor's advice?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 80-110 words advising a fictional club responding to an unverified rumor that an event is cancelled. Accurately use credible, credulous and discretion. Include either Pyrrhic victory or fan the flames and explain why it fits. Then follow the next-class retrieval directions.

Apply in a new context

Write your own paragraph, then read it to a partner and revise an unclear use or justify keeping it.

Retrieve next class

Cover the sheet. Explain two target words and use one in a fresh sentence. Uncover, check and correct in another color.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Before reading paragraph 3, use the Question 1 lines to infer credible, credulous and incredulous from paragraphs 1-2; quote a clue for each. Check paragraph 3, discuss with a partner, and label corrections beside your first answers. Complete Questions 2-4 and the application. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Explain credible, credulous and incredulous using one precise clue for each from paragraph 1. Why are the three words not interchangeable?	The official notice supports the claim's credibility. Believing the anonymous post without support shows credulity. Difficulty believing the checked notice shows incredulity. The first judges a claim's believability; the other two describe different responses to belief.
2	Use cred, -ible and in- to explain two words, then check your explanation against the scene. Why should roots be checked in context?	Cred concerns belief; credible is capable of being believed. Negative in- helps make incredulous disbelieving, as shown by the surprised student. Shared parts point toward meaning but do not make credible and credulous synonyms.
3	How would replacing skeptical with cynical change the reporter's implied attitude? Explain how the editor's discretion differs from hiding the entire story.	Skeptical suggests questioning the evidence, while cynical suggests assumed selfish motives. Removing a private phone number protects personal information; the verified public closure notice is still reported. The scene supports careful disclosure rather than suppressing all facts.
4	Explain both "Pyrrhic victory" and "fan the flames" in paragraph 2. How do they shape the editor's advice?	The victory would gain attention but lose valuable cooperation, a cost that undermines the gain. Fanning flames means intensifying the dispute through an unverified accusation. Together they warn against short-term attention at the expense of responsible reporting.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our club should wait for a credible notice from the event organizer before announcing a cancellation. Being credulous would mean accepting the anonymous message merely because many people shared it. We can ask for confirmation without accusing anyone of dishonesty. Discretion also means leaving private contact details out of our public reply. Reposting an unsupported accusation would fan the flames by making the disagreement more intense. A short update that identifies what is verified and what remains uncertain can inform members while keeping the discussion open to correction.

Later retrieval example: Credible means worthy of belief; credulous means too ready to believe without enough evidence. New sentence: The team showed discretion by sharing the public schedule but removing personal phone numbers.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Assess individual inference, reference checking, nuanced discussion, written application and later retrieval. Credulous does not mean trustworthy, and incredulous does not mean unbelievable. Skepticism need not imply a belief in selfish motives. Discretion depends on context and does not automatically justify secrecy. The supplied sources and scene are sufficient; no live rumor research is required. Definitions and word history checked against Merriam-Webster, credulous and Pyrrhic victory ([merriam-webster.com/dictionary/](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)). Model paragraph 1 answers the application; paragraph 2 models later retrieval.