Words With Evidence

Choose vocabulary that says no more than the evidence supports.

11-12.L.6.a "Demonstrate independence in gathering a broad, deep, and precise vocabulary."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four terms the writer investigates, circle the sources used to check them, and write 1 beside a sentence that limits a claim to the evidence.

Naming What the Creek Shows

1 After a night of rain, the creek behind our school looked like tea stirred with milk. I was writing a report on the change, but *dirty* seemed too vague: it suggested trash or germs I had not observed. I wrote down three questions in my notebook: What made the water look cloudy? Where might the material have come from? Which word would describe only what I could see? I checked a stream-monitoring guide from a state environmental agency. It used *turbid* for water made cloudy by particles suspended in it. I kept that word, but not as proof that the creek was unsafe.

2 The guide also mentioned *runoff*, water that flows over land instead of soaking into it. Rain had washed across the bare slope beside the parking lot, so runoff was a plausible source of the creek's cloudiness, not a source I could confirm by looking. A glossary defined *sediment* as particles of material, such as soil, that water can carry or deposit. I almost wrote that the creek contained *silt*, but a geology reference identified silt as a particular size of particle, finer than sand and coarser than clay. I had not measured the particles.

3 My draft became: "After the storm, the creek was turbid; runoff from the bare slope may have carried sediment into it." The sentence is less dramatic than "The polluted creek filled with silt," but it separates observation from inference. To test whether the wording remained accurate, I compared the guide with the geology reference and asked what evidence each term required. My notebook now holds the term, its source, a short definition, and a sentence showing its limits. When I encounter another unfamiliar word, I can repeat that process rather than borrow the first impressive synonym I find.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the writer choose *turbid* instead of *dirty* to describe the creek?

2. Why does the draft say runoff *may have* carried sediment into the creek?

3. What did the geology reference establish about *silt*, and why did the writer leave that word out of the draft?

4. What four things does the writer keep in the notebook to make a new term useful and checkable?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a topic outside this passage. In four sentences, identify a vague word you might use, propose a more precise term, name a source you would consult to check its meaning, and state what you would need to observe before using it.

ANSWER KEY # Words With Evidence

HIGH SCHOOL · 11-12.L.6.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four terms the writer investigates, circle the sources used to check them, and write 1 beside a sentence that limits a claim to the evidence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the writer choose *turbid* instead of *dirty* to describe the creek?	**Turbid describes the observed cloudiness. Dirty could imply trash or germs the writer had not observed.**
2	Why does the draft say runoff *may have* carried sediment into the creek?	**The writer saw rain wash across the slope but could not confirm by looking that the runoff reached the creek.**
3	What did the geology reference establish about *silt*, and why did the writer leave that word out of the draft?	**Silt is a particular particle size, finer than sand and coarser than clay. The writer had not measured the particles.**
4	What four things does the writer keep in the notebook to make a new term useful and checkable?	**The term, its source, a short definition, and a sentence showing the term's limits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For a recipe, *hot* does not tell the cook how the broth moves. I might use *simmering* for liquid with gentle bubbles rather than a rolling boil. I would check a culinary glossary to confirm that distinction. Before using the term, I would watch the broth for gentle bubbles.

Accept other marked sentences that qualify a claim based on what the writer could observe or verify. For Part 3, accept a plausible source and an observation that would support the proposed term.