Words Under Heat

How word origins and forms shape a public message

9-10.L.5.b "Analyze word relationships (morphology, etymology, and linguistics) and their role in creating nuanced meaning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage, then underline three pairs of related or contrasting words. Circle the word parts or nearby clues that help you explain how each pair differs in meaning.

What Should the Library Notice Say?

1 On a July afternoon, the library's doors stayed open after closing time. Inside, neighbors filled water bottles and sat beneath ceiling fans. A city notice called the building a *cooling center*, while a volunteer called it a *heat refuge*. Both names described the same room, but they aimed attention in different directions. *Cooling center* sounded like a planned public service, with a location and set hours. *Heat refuge* suggested people escaping a danger. The volunteer chose the second name when she asked the city to keep the doors open longer.

2 At a meeting the next day, residents debated two proposals: planting shade trees and adding reflective roofs. An engineer called these changes *mitigation*, from a Latin verb meaning "to soften." In climate discussions, mitigation usually means reducing the causes of climate change, not merely easing its local effects. A student therefore suggested *adaptation* for the proposals. Built from Latin roots meaning "to fit to," adaptation describes adjusting to conditions already present. The engineer agreed that the trees and roofs could protect residents during heat, but neither would, by itself, stop the warming that made the heat more likely.

3 Before the meeting ended, the mayor praised the neighborhood's *resilience*. That word traces to a Latin verb meaning "to leap back," as if a place could recover after a blow. A nurse objected that the city also needed *resistance*, related to a Latin verb meaning "to stand against." For her, resistance meant challenging the decision to close the library early, not simply recovering afterward. The mayor changed the final notice: "We will adapt our buildings and resist policies that leave neighbors exposed." The sentence gave residents two kinds of action, adjusting their surroundings and confronting a choice made by people.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do *cooling center* and *heat refuge* lead readers to think differently about keeping the library open?

2. Why is *adaptation* a more precise name than *mitigation* for the shade trees and reflective roofs? Use the word origins and the proposals in your answer.

3. How do the Latin meanings behind *resilience* and *resistance* clarify the nurse's objection?

4. The final notice uses *adapt* and *resist* instead of *adaptation* and *resistance*. How does changing the nouns to verbs affect the notice?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a two-sentence library notice for a heat wave that uses both *safe* and *safer*. Then write two sentences explaining how the suffix changes the claim and why that difference matters.

ANSWER KEY # Words Under Heat

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage, then underline three pairs of related or contrasting words. Circle the word parts or nearby clues that help you explain how each pair differs in meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do *cooling center* and *heat refuge* lead readers to think differently about keeping the library open?	**Cooling center presents the library as a scheduled service. Heat refuge emphasizes escape from danger, which strengthens the volunteer's case for longer hours.**
2	Why is *adaptation* a more precise name than *mitigation* for the shade trees and reflective roofs? Use the word origins and the proposals in your answer.	**Adaptation comes from roots meaning "to fit to," and the proposals help residents adjust to heat. Mitigation means "to soften" and, in climate discussions, usually refers to reducing the causes of climate change.**
3	How do the Latin meanings behind *resilience* and *resistance* clarify the nurse's objection?	**Resilience suggests leaping back or recovering after harm. Resistance suggests standing against a harmful choice, such as closing the library early.**
4	The final notice uses *adapt* and *resist* instead of *adaptation* and *resistance*. How does changing the nouns to verbs affect the notice?	**The verbs present adjusting buildings and challenging policies as actions people will take, rather than as abstract ideas.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The library aims to provide a safe place to rest during today's heat. Its water and fans may make your visit safer than waiting in direct sun. The suffix *-er* makes *safer* a comparison rather than a promise of complete safety. That difference matters because indoor spaces can still become dangerously hot.

Accept explanations that distinguish a public service from a place of escape, adjustment from reducing climate change's causes, and recovery from opposition. For Part 3, check that the notice uses both forms and that the explanation identifies the comparative meaning of *-er*.