Words That Work

Use precise vocabulary to investigate and explain a local problem

9-10.L.6 "Acquire and accurately use general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three words whose meanings you can infer from nearby details, and circle the details that help you. Number one word Maya checked in a source instead of guessing.

A Better Claim for the Creek

1 After a hard rain, Maya watched brown water rush across the school parking lot and into a nearby creek. Her class wanted to explain the problem without calling every puddle a flood. They learned that runoff is water that flows over land instead of soaking into it. The parking lot's pavement is impermeable, so little water can infiltrate the ground beneath it. As runoff moves, it can carry litter and oil into the creek. The students described the creek's watershed, the area of land that drains toward it, before deciding where to collect evidence.

2 First, the class established a baseline: a record of conditions before any changes. For three rainy days, they measured how long water pooled beside the parking lot and counted pieces of litter near the drain. They did not claim that the creek was polluted based on its color alone. Instead, they used the counts and observations to evaluate which problems they could document. Maya checked a county stormwater guide to confirm the term *rain garden*. The guide described a planted, shallow area that collects runoff and lets some water soak into soil.

3 The class proposed a rain garden near the drain to mitigate, or lessen, the rush of runoff. Their proposal also identified a trade-off: the garden would need regular care, but it could reduce the water moving across the pavement. Maya revised the sentence 'The garden will fix the creek' because one small garden cannot solve every problem in a watershed. She wrote, 'The garden may reduce runoff at this drain during some storms.' That cautious claim matched the evidence they had and made the proposal more credible to the school board.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does *infiltrate* mean here? Use a detail about the pavement or ground to explain your inference.

2. What does the class call its *baseline*, and how could that record help it evaluate a later change?

3. Why is *mitigate* more precise than *fix* for the rain garden's possible effect?

4. Maya checked the term *rain garden* instead of guessing from its name. Which source did she use, and what did it clarify?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences proposing how your school could reduce cafeteria food waste. Use *baseline* and *mitigate* accurately, then name one additional technical term you would check and a relevant source for checking it.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Work

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.L.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three words whose meanings you can infer from nearby details, and circle the details that help you. Number one word Maya checked in a source instead of guessing. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does *infiltrate* mean here? Use a detail about the pavement or ground to explain your inference.	**It means to soak into or enter the ground. Impermeable pavement keeps most water from soaking into the soil beneath it.**
2	What does the class call its *baseline*, and how could that record help it evaluate a later change?	**The baseline is its record of pooling times and litter counts before any changes. The class could compare later measurements with that record.**
3	Why is *mitigate* more precise than *fix* for the rain garden's possible effect?	**Mitigate means lessen. The garden may reduce runoff at one drain, but it cannot solve every problem in the watershed.**
4	Maya checked the term *rain garden* instead of guessing from its name. Which source did she use, and what did it clarify?	**She used a county stormwater guide. It clarified that a rain garden is a shallow, planted area that collects runoff and lets some water soak into soil.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before changing lunch routines, our student council could establish a baseline by weighing discarded food for one week. We could mitigate waste by offering smaller first servings and allowing students to request more. I would check the precise meaning of 'compostable' before recommending compostable trays. A municipal waste program's guide could explain whether those trays belong in the local compost collection.

Accept supported inferences that distinguish reducing a problem from eliminating it. For Part 3, look for accurate use of both required words and a source relevant to the technical term the student chooses.