

Evidence Under Canopy

Use context to build precise academic and archaeology vocabulary.

11.RV.1.A “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 Underline each academic or archaeology term whose meaning the author explains or shows through context. Circle the nearby words that help you infer each term’s meaning.

Reading a Hidden Landscape

- ① On a wooded hill in Guatemala, archaeologists used lidar, a laser-scanning method, to map ground shapes hidden beneath the forest canopy. The resulting image did not prove that every raised line was a road or a wall. Instead, it gave researchers a preliminary map of features worth investigating. In archaeology, a preliminary claim is provisional, meaning it may change when new evidence appears. This caution matters because roots, erosion, and modern trails can create patterns that resemble ancient construction. Researchers must distinguish a plausible interpretation from a conclusion supported by several kinds of evidence.
- ② To test the map, a team examines selected locations on the ground. They record the stratigraphy, or layers of soil and material, in each excavation unit. Stratigraphy can show whether a stone surface was built before or after nearby deposits accumulated. The team also studies artifacts, such as pottery fragments, and documents each object’s provenance, its recorded location and history of recovery. Provenance helps scholars connect an object to a particular layer and activity area. A claim that draws on mapped features, stratigraphy, and well-documented artifacts is more likely to be corroborated, or confirmed by independent supporting evidence.
- ③ Vocabulary choices also shape how readers judge certainty. Saying that a feature is “a ceremonial plaza” presents an assertion as settled. Saying that it is “a possible plaza” signals a more limited inference, a conclusion drawn from evidence rather than directly observed fact. Careful researchers calibrate their language to match the strength of their evidence. They may revise an interpretation after fieldwork reveals a different soil layer or after another team cannot replicate the original measurements. This process does not weaken research. It makes the final explanation more precise, transparent, and open to scrutiny.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Using paragraph 1, define provisional. Why is a provisional claim appropriate for the lidar map?

2 What do stratigraphy and provenance each help archaeologists determine?

3 What does corroborated mean in paragraph 2? Name the three kinds of evidence that can corroborate a claim.

4 How does paragraph 3 distinguish an assertion from an inference?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word field note about investigating an unfamiliar raised pattern at a historical site. Use exactly three terms from this list, each once: provisional, stratigraphy, provenance, corroborated, inference, assertion, calibrate, replicate. Make clear what the evidence supports and what remains uncertain.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each academic or archaeology term whose meaning the author explains or shows through context. Circle the nearby words that help you infer each term's meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Using paragraph 1, define provisional. Why is a provisional claim appropriate for the lidar map?	Provisional means subject to change when new evidence appears. The lidar image may show patterns made by roots, erosion, or modern trails rather than ancient construction.
2	What do stratigraphy and provenance each help archaeologists determine?	Stratigraphy helps determine the order of soil layers and whether a surface was built before or after deposits. Provenance connects an artifact to its recorded location, recovery history, layer, and activity area.
3	What does corroborated mean in paragraph 2? Name the three kinds of evidence that can corroborate a claim.	Corroborated means confirmed by independent supporting evidence. The evidence includes mapped features, stratigraphy, and well-documented artifacts.
4	How does paragraph 3 distinguish an assertion from an inference?	An assertion presents an idea as settled, while an inference is a limited conclusion drawn from evidence rather than directly observed fact.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During a survey of a riverbank, our team found a rectangular rise beside several broken bricks. We recorded each fragment's provenance before moving it, because its location could connect it to a particular activity area. The rise is a provisional feature, not yet a confirmed foundation, since flooding may have reshaped the soil. My inference is that people once used the site for storage, but we need excavation records and soil layers to test that idea. This wording states what the evidence suggests without claiming more than the investigation can support.

Accept equivalent definitions that preserve the passage's meanings and accurately connect terms to evidence. For the field note, check the word count, exactly three listed terms used once each, and language that distinguishes supported conclusions from uncertainty.