# Close, Clever, Crafty

Trace how context changes the force of near-synonyms.

**11.RV.1.D** "Analyze the nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations (e.g., clever, cunning, brainy)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Circle words that name a type of carefulness or intelligence. Draw arrows between words with related meanings, then write +, 0, or − beside each one to show whether its context makes it approving, neutral, or disapproving.

### The Honest Exhibit

1 At the city archive, Maya joined a volunteer crew preparing letters for an exhibit about the 1918 influenza pandemic. The work demanded a meticulous approach: she measured each folder, recorded every tear, and placed fragile pages in acid-free sleeves. Mr. Chen, the archivist, was equally scrupulous. When a donor asked to remove an embarrassing letter from the display, he explained that the collection needed an honest record, not a polished family legend. Nearby, Jordan grew fussy about a label that sat slightly crooked, even though visitors would barely notice it.

2 The exhibit's lighting problem brought out different kinds of intelligence. Maya proposed an ingenious shield made from black foam board, which blocked glare without touching the cases. Jordan made a clever adjustment to the display schedule so the sunlit wall would hold sturdier reproductions each afternoon. Later, a vendor offered a crafty plan: he could print altered copies of a letter and sell them as "newly discovered" originals. Mr. Chen rejected the idea at once, because the plan depended on deceiving buyers and weakening trust in the archive.

3 On opening day, Maya was proud of the crew's work, but she noticed their methods were not identical. Her meticulous notes helped a conservator locate a missing photograph. Mr. Chen's scrupulous decision protected the historical record, even when it disappointed the donor. Jordan's fussy concern slowed the team for several minutes, yet it led them to straighten a label before the mayor arrived. Looking at the finished exhibit, Maya decided that detailed work becomes valuable when it serves accuracy, fairness, or a real audience, rather than perfection for its own sake.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does meticulous describe Maya's work differently from fussy describing Jordan's concern in paragraph 1?

2. Why is scrupulous a more precise word than careful for Mr. Chen's response to the donor?

3. Compare ingenious and clever in paragraph 2. What kind of intelligence does each word emphasize?

4. What details make crafty carry a negative meaning in the vendor's plan?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences about students planning a school event. Use two similar words with different connotations that do not appear in the passage, and make the context show how their meanings differ.

**ANSWER KEY**

# Close, Clever, Crafty

**GRADE 11 · 11.RV.1.D**

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle words that name a type of carefulness or intelligence. Draw arrows between words with related meanings, then write +, 0, or − beside each one to show whether its context makes it approving, neutral, or disapproving. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How does meticulous describe Maya's work differently from fussy describing Jordan's concern in paragraph 1? | **Meticulous suggests careful, systematic attention needed to protect the letters. Fussy suggests excessive attention to a minor problem, the slightly crooked label.** |
| 2 | Why is scrupulous a more precise word than careful for Mr. Chen's response to the donor? | **Scrupulous includes strong moral honesty. Mr. Chen protects a truthful historical record instead of removing an embarrassing letter.** |
| 3 | Compare ingenious and clever in paragraph 2. What kind of intelligence does each word emphasize? | **Ingenious emphasizes Maya's inventive solution to the glare problem. Clever emphasizes Jordan's smart, practical adjustment to the schedule.** |
| 4 | What details make crafty carry a negative meaning in the vendor's plan? | **The vendor would alter copies and sell them as originals, deceiving buyers and weakening trust in the archive.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rosa made a shrewd choice to reserve the auditorium before the other clubs requested it. Malik used a sly method to move his group's proposal to the top of the voting pile without telling the other teams. Both choices were strategic, but shrewd suggests sound judgment, while sly suggests secretive unfairness.

Accept responses that use passage details to explain each word's connotation, not only its dictionary meaning. For Part 3, accept any accurate pair of related words if the three sentences clearly establish a meaningful difference in tone or implication.