# Museum Word Detectives

Use reference clues to uncover how words work.

**7.RV.1.G** "Use general and specialized word-reference materials, print and digital, to identify word origins and derivations, pronunciations, precise meanings, and their parts of speech."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each word that a reference source defines, and circle details that give its pronunciation, word origin, related form, or part of speech. These details help you find a word's precise meaning.

### Labels That Tell More

1. At the city museum, Maya paused beside a case of tiny clay tablets. A label called them cuneiform, a noun meaning a system of wedge-shaped writing used in ancient Mesopotamia. Maya checked a learner's dictionary and heard its pronunciation, kyoo-NEE-uh-form. The entry traced the word to Latin cuneus, meaning wedge, plus forma, meaning shape. Knowing those roots helped her picture pointed marks that scribes carefully pressed into wet clay in Mesopotamia long ago by hand.

2. Another card used the adjective archaeological to describe the dig where the tablets were found. A specialized archaeology glossary defined archaeological as related to the scientific study of human history through material remains. Its base word, archaeology, comes from Greek archaios, ancient, and logia, study. The glossary also showed the related noun archaeologist, a person who studies evidence from past human life. Maya noticed that the suffix -ist changes the idea from a field of study to a person.

3. Before leaving, Maya searched a digital etymology dictionary for transcribe, a verb meaning to make a written copy. It listed the Latin prefix trans-, meaning across, and scribere, meaning to write. The entry gave the pronunciation tran-SKRIBE and named transcript as a related noun, a written copy or record. Maya then compared the two tools. The general dictionary helped with pronunciation and everyday meaning, while the specialized glossary gave a precise meaning for a field-specific adjective.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. According to the learner's dictionary entry, how do you pronounce cuneiform?

2. What two Latin words are named as the origins of cuneiform, and what does each word mean?

3. What part of speech is archaeological, and what precise meaning does the archaeology glossary give for it?

4. How are transcribe and transcript related? Include the part of speech and meaning of each word.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose an academic word that does not appear in the passage. Use a general dictionary and a specialized glossary or dictionary to write exactly four sentences that give the word's pronunciation, part of speech, precise meaning, and origin or derivation.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 7 · 7.RV.1.G

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each word that a reference source defines, and circle details that give its pronunciation, word origin, related form, or part of speech. These details help you find a word's precise meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | According to the learner's dictionary entry, how do you pronounce cuneiform? | **kyoo-NEE-uh-form** |
| 2 | What two Latin words are named as the origins of cuneiform, and what does each word mean? | **Cuneus means wedge, and forma means shape.** |
| 3 | What part of speech is archaeological, and what precise meaning does the archaeology glossary give for it? | **It is an adjective meaning related to the scientific study of human history through material remains.** |
| 4 | How are transcribe and transcript related? Include the part of speech and meaning of each word. | **Transcribe is a verb meaning to make a written copy. Transcript is a related noun meaning a written copy or record.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My word is photosynthesis, a noun pronounced foe-toh-SIN-thuh-sis. A general dictionary says it is the process by which plants make food using light. A science glossary gives the precise meaning: plants, algae, and some bacteria use light energy to make glucose from carbon dioxide and water, releasing oxygen. An etymology dictionary traces photo- to Greek phōs, meaning light, and synthesis to Greek synthesis, meaning putting together.

Accept equivalent pronunciation spellings that clearly show the correct stressed syllable. For Part 3, accept varied academic words if all required details are accurate and the student uses both a general and a specialized reference source.