TEACHER COPY · READ FIRST

Upstream Vocabulary on paper · Grade 6

4 printable trips that match the 4 levels of the online game. No device or account needed.

What is inside

Pages	For	What
This page	Teacher	How to run, score and choose a next step
Trips 1–4	Students	Each trip: the level's picture and stop names, 4 word stops, a two-part challenge (stop 5) and an unscored Talk bonus
Answer key	Teacher	Answer, why it fits, and what each wrong letter usually means
Record sheet	Teacher	First answers and fixes, one row per student per trip

Run one trip (15–25 minutes)

1. Copy one trip for each student. Keep the answer key back.
2. Students read each passage and circle an answer. On the online game a miss gives a clue and a second try; on paper, check the stop, say *"Reread for the clue,"* and let the student try once more. They keep the first answer and write the new letter with a star (★).
3. If the second try misses too, read the key's "why" line together. That is what the game does after a second miss.
4. When all five stops are done, students may read and answer the Talk bonus. It is not scored.

Count and choose a next step

Count **first answers** on stops 1–4, and record stop 5 Part A and Part B separately. Fixes with a star go in their own column. There is no cut score: use the pattern to decide what to talk about next.

What you see	A next step
Missed, then fixed after rereading (★)	Ask "Which detail helped?" The clue strategy is working; give another trip.
Missed twice	Read the key's "why" line together; replace the word in the sentence and check it makes sense. Revisit that skill.
Part A right, Part B wrong	The meaning is there; practice pointing to the exact words that prove it.
Part A wrong, Part B right	The student found the clue but did not use it; ask them to say the meaning in their own words.
The same skill missed on several trips	Small-group practice on that skill (the key names the skill for each stop).

Levels in this packet

- **River trip 1: Shell Creek** — Gravel Bend, Riffle Run, Pine Pool, Boulder Pocket, Headwaters Challenge
- **River trip 2: Miracle Mile** — Sagebrush Bank, Long Glide, Deep Run, Gravel Seam, Far Bend
- **River trip 3: Encampment River** — Canyon Pool, Amber Shallows, Boulder Run, Pine Shade, Riffle Head
- **River trip 4: North Tongue River** — Meadow Bend, Willow Run, Grassy Cut, Shallow Riffle, Rapid Tail

Same words as the online game. These are the game's approved passages and questions, so a student who played online may have seen some. Every word also has a second passage that is **not** used in this packet; it is kept back for an unseen recheck. Original practice from Pole Mountain Learning, informed by published ELA expectations. It is not an official Pearson, NAVVY or WY-TOPP assessment and does not use their test questions. Results are practice notes, not grades, and do not predict test scores or establish mastery. Built and reviewed with AI tools; no human classroom trial of this revision yet. Free for classroom use. November 2026 edition.

TEACHER ANSWER KEY · KEEP SEPARATE FROM STUDENT COPIES

Answer key · Grade 6

River trip 1: Shell Creek

Stop	Word · skill	Key	Why it fits	If they chose…
1	resilient context clues · RI.6.4, L.6.4a	**A**	The detail “After the bending test, one sample remained twisted, but the resilient strip returned to its original shape after every bend.” supports “able to recover after strain”.	**B:** Recovering after strain is different from remaining rigid and never bending. **C:** The return to a useful condition shows recovery rather than easy lasting damage. **D:** A challenge does have an effect; the important point is recovering afterward.
2	inaccessible word parts · RI.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.4b	**C**	The detail “The only path had been closed at both ends, so visitors could not reach the lookout from any public entrance.” supports “not able to be reached or entered”.	**A:** The negative prefix and the blocked access mean it cannot currently be reached, not just that reaching it takes care. **B:** The prefix in- reverses the idea of access rather than opening it to everyone. **D:** The word parts do not mean again, and the passage does not promise access after a short wait.
3	assertive shades of meaning · RL.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5c	**A**	The detail “She spoke clearly about what she needed while still treating the others respectfully.” supports “confident in stating a need respectfully”.	**B:** The response is firm and respectful, unlike an aggressive attempt to dominate others. **C:** The person states a view clearly instead of being too uncertain to speak. **D:** Standing up for a view is different from agreeing automatically with every suggestion.
4	current multiple meanings · RI.6.4, L.6.4a	**A**	The detail “The water carried the markers toward the far end of the tray.” supports “a flow of water in one direction”.	**B:** That meaning concerns time; this passage describes physical movement through a system. **C:** A current of opinion is a shared trend in ideas; this passage identifies a physical flow. **D:** A barrier prevents movement, while the target word names the movement itself.
5A	a sea of faces figurative language · RL.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5a, RL.6.1	**A**	The detail “Rows of people filled the hall from the front seats to the distant doors, too many for him to recognize individually.” supports “a crowd of people filling a large space”.	**B:** The phrase compares a crowd to a sea; the people are in a hall, not floating in water. **C:** The passage emphasizes many people rather than one familiar individual. **D:** The comparison describes the crowd’s size and spread, not identical appearances.
5B	evidence	**C**	“Rows of people filled the hall from the front seats to the distant doors” is the detail that shows “a sea of faces” means “a crowd of people filling a large space.”	**A:** The detail “gathered backstage for its first community performance” belongs to the situation, but does not establish the meaning of “a sea of faces”. **B:** The detail “A stage helper signaled that the choir should get ready.” **D:** The detail “Leon joined the other singers beside the steps leading to the performance platform.”

Talk bonus (riffle): A riffle is a shallow stretch of a stream where the water runs fast and ripples over rocks.

River trip 2: Miracle Mile

Stop	Word · skill	Key	Why it fits	If they chose…
1	debris context clues · RI.6.4, L.6.4a	**B**	The detail “They then cleared the debris, including broken twigs, scraps of roofing, and pieces of a cracked flowerpot.” supports “scattered pieces left after damage”.	**A:** Repair tools are equipment used for a job, not loose remains left by damage. **C:** The broken material is being removed, not collected because it is valuable. **D:** Scattered broken pieces are no longer firmly connected.
2	predictable word parts · RI.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.4b	**D**	The detail “Anyone watching several turns could say where the next turn would end.” supports “possible to work out beforehand”.	**A:** Knowing what will happen does not limit an event to a single occurrence. **B:** Predict refers to anticipating beforehand, not waiting until after an event. **C:** Being able to anticipate something does not mean being able to change it by asking.
3	cautious shades of meaning · RL.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5c	**B**	The detail “He tested each uncertain patch before putting his full weight on it.” supports “careful to avoid unnecessary risk”.	**A:** The person continues with care rather than refusing all unfamiliar activity. **C:** Checking before acting shows awareness of danger rather than certainty that none exists. **D:** The passage emphasizes considering risks before acting, not rushing past them.
4	channel multiple meanings · RI.6.4, L.6.4a	**B**	The detail “Rainwater ran through this shallow passage into a collection bed, leaving the path above it clear.” supports “a narrow passage that guides flowing water”.	**A:** Television is a possible meaning elsewhere, but no programs or broadcasting are described here. **C:** A route allows something to travel; it is not a command to obey. **D:** The described route carries something onward rather than stopping all movement.
5A	held its breath figurative language · RL.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5a, RL.6.1	**B**	The detail “Conversation stopped, and the audience waited in complete stillness to hear what the letter would reveal.” supports “waited in silence for an uncertain result”.	**A:** No dangerous air is described; the phrase conveys tense anticipation. **C:** The stillness comes from waiting for an important result rather than exhaustion. **D:** The group is focused on the event, not confused about why it is there.
5B	evidence	**D**	“the audience waited in complete stillness to hear what the letter would reveal” is the detail that shows “held its breath” means “waited in silence for an uncertain result.”	**A:** The detail “stood near the curtain with the props for the final moment” belongs to the situation, but does not establish the meaning of “held its breath”. **B:** The detail “After the final line, the curtain moved slowly across the stage.” **C:** The detail “The actors would return together to thank everyone who had helped with the production that term.”

Talk bonus (eddy): An eddy is a pocket of water that circles off to the side of the main current.

River trip 3: Encampment River

Stop	Word · skill	Key	Why it fits	If they chose…
1	abundant context clues · RI.6.4, L.6.4a	**C**	The detail “At the third site, seeds covered the ground beneath many plants, and plenty remained after visiting birds had eaten.” supports “available in large amounts”.	**A:** A thin spread can still be a small amount; these details emphasize having plenty. **B:** The described supply is readily available rather than hard to find. **D:** The word describes quantity, not a restriction on how something may be used.

Stop	Word · skill	Key	Why it fits	If they chose…
2	interdependent word parts · RI.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.4b	**A**	The detail “The repair shop needed parts from the delivery team, while the delivery team needed the shop to keep its vehicles running.” supports “relying on one another for support”.	**B:** Each side needs the other, so they are not entirely independent. **C:** Support works in both directions rather than benefiting only one controlling side. **D:** The relationship involves shared needs, not merely being physically close.
3	frugal shades of meaning · RI.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5c	**C**	The detail “They reused sound containers and bought only what was needed, while still making sure every group had enough equipment.” supports “careful not to waste money or useful materials”.	**A:** Necessary materials are still provided, so the word does not suggest refusing all needed spending. **B:** The group pays attention to cost and waste instead of spending carelessly. **D:** The choices serve practical needs rather than an effort to impress an audience.
4	bank multiple meanings · RL.6.4, L.6.4a	**C**	The detail “From the dry edge of the river, Nora could watch leaves drift past without stepping into the stream itself.” supports “the land along the edge of a river”.	**A:** A saved supply is another sense of bank, but Nora is sitting on land beside the river. **B:** The word names the riverside place where Nora sits; nobody is tilting through a turn. **D:** Nora sits at the dry edge of the river, not in a raised row of audience seating.
5A	a silver ribbon figurative language · RL.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5a, RL.6.1	**C**	The detail “A narrow strip of reflected light curved through the dark neighborhood, shining against the shadowed buildings on either side.” supports “a long, thin, shining shape in the view”.	**A:** This is a visual comparison, not an actual strip of fabric tied into a bow. **B:** The description emphasizes a narrow strip rather than a broad area with no edges. **D:** The light and curves conflict with something completely straight and dark.
5B	evidence	**A**	“A narrow strip of reflected light curved through the dark neighborhood” is the detail that shows “a silver ribbon” means “a long, thin, shining shape in the view.”	**B:** The detail “Theo looked down the long road from the upper floor of his aunt’s house.” **C:** The detail “The wet road became a silver ribbon in his description of the view.” **D:** The detail “closed the notebook when his aunt called him to supper” belongs to the situation, but does not establish the meaning of “a silver ribbon”.

Talk bonus (seam): A seam is the line where two currents meet, often where faster water runs beside slower water.

River trip 4: North Tongue River

Stop	Word · skill	Key	Why it fits	If they chose…
1	persistent context clues · RL.6.4, L.6.4a	**D**	The detail “She returned with a shorter proposal, arranged another meeting, and followed up when the office requested more information.” supports “continuing an effort despite obstacles”.	**A:** The repeated attempts show that progress takes time, rather than happening without delay. **B:** The same goal is pursued through difficulties instead of being abandoned for a new interest. **C:** Continuing to pursue a goal does not require refusing helpful advice.

Stop	Word · skill	Key	Why it fits	If they chose…
2	subsurface word parts · RI.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.4b	**B**	The detail “They used the prefix sub-, meaning under or below, to describe where the lower material lay in relation to the visible top.” supports “located below an outer layer”.	**A:** Sub- means below, which conflicts with a location at the highest point. **C:** The prefix describes position, not the order in which work is completed. **D:** Being under an outer layer differs from spreading across it in all directions.
3	skeptical shades of meaning · RL.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5c	**D**	The detail “She was willing to change her mind if reliable information supported the claim, but bright pictures alone did not convince her.” supports “doubtful but open to convincing evidence”.	**A:** The person is open to convincing evidence instead of automatically rejecting every unfamiliar claim. **B:** An appealing presentation is not enough; supporting evidence is requested. **C:** Looking for reliable support shows interest in truth rather than indifference.
4	conduct multiple meanings · RI.6.4, L.6.4a	**D**	The detail “Members would organize the process, ask students for their views, and bring the completed forms together for discussion.” supports “carry out and manage an activity”.	**A:** The passage concerns leading an activity, not a material passing heat or electricity. **B:** That sense concerns behavior or manners; the target verb describes directing an activity. **C:** The actions involve taking part and giving direction, not only writing a plan.
5A	a mountain of work figurative language · RL.6.4, L.6.4a, L.6.5a, RL.6.1	**D**	The detail “Thousands of mixed photographs needed sorting, identifying, and arranging, far more tasks than one afternoon could possibly hold.” supports “a great many demanding tasks still ahead”.	**A:** The comparison concerns the size of the task, not a mountain location. **B:** Many tasks remain ahead; the work is not one completed assignment. **C:** The amount of work is clearly visible rather than hidden.
5B	evidence	**B**	“far more tasks than one afternoon could possibly hold” is the detail that shows “a mountain of work” means “a great many demanding tasks still ahead.”	**A:** The detail “She collected the first box from a cupboard beside the meeting room.” **C:** The detail “Nadia volunteered to organize the club’s old photographs” belongs to the situation, but does not establish the meaning of “a mountain of work”. **D:** The detail “Nadia placed the first box on a clear table.”

Talk bonus (tailout): It is the shallow downstream end of the pool, where water flows into the next run.

TEACHER COPY · CLASS RECORD SHEET

Upstream Vocabulary on paper · Grade 6

Use initials or class codes only. One row per student per trip. Copy this page for more students.

Student (initials or code)	River trip #	Stop 1	Stop 2	Stop 3	Stop 4	Stop 5 · Part A	Stop 5 · Part B	Next step / notes

In each stop cell write ✓ if the FIRST answer was right, or ★ if the student fixed it after rereading. Leave it blank if it was still missed. Count only ✓ as first answers, as the online game does; ★ fixes are shown but counted separately. Part A and Part B of stop 5 are recorded separately.