POLE MOUNTAIN LEARNING · PRINTABLE · NO DEVICE NEEDED

Upstream Vocabulary: River trip 1 of 4

Shell Creek · Grade 8



Name or class code _____ Date _____

Your trip

1. Read the passage at each stop. The vocabulary word is in **bold**.
2. Use clues in the passage. Circle the letter of the best answer, then write it on the trip map.
3. Stop 5 is the challenge: answer Part A, then choose the detail that supports it in Part B.
4. Your teacher checks each stop. If you missed one, reread for the clue and try again. Keep your first answer; write the new letter beside it with a star (★).

① Gravel Bend	② Riffle Run	③ Pine Pool	④ Boulder Pocket	⑤ Headwaters Challenge
____	____	____	____	A ____ B ____
☐ fixed ★	☐ fixed ★	☐ fixed ★	☐ fixed ★	☐ fixed ★

River Talk (bonus, not scored · do this after stop 5): riffle

Trout often feed in a **riffle**, where shallow water ripples quickly over rocks.

What do you think a riffle is?

_____

_____

1 Gravel Bend

corroborate

A museum exhibit described a spring flood through a resident's diary. Because memories can leave out important details, the student curators searched for material that could **corroborate** the account before printing it on the display. They wanted visitors to understand how the exhibit's claims had been checked, so they located a dated photograph of the flooded street.

The photograph independently showed the same line of water against the doorway. Its date matched the diary entry, and the building could be identified by an unusual window. Although the photograph could not establish every detail of the writer's experience, it supported the reported height of the flood.

The curators placed both sources beside the exhibit label. Visitors could compare the evidence instead of simply accepting the students' conclusion.

As used in this passage, what does "corroborate" most likely mean?

(A) strengthen a claim with more evidence
(B) make a claim seem more interesting
(C) replace an earlier account completely
(D) explain why a source is unreliable

2 Riffle Run

antithesis

A workshop handbook compared two approaches to group problem solving. One method invited questions and revision, while the other demanded silent acceptance of a fixed answer.

Students followed procedures for sharing materials and documenting their work in both approaches. The distinction concerned how they treated ideas: as claims that could be examined or as conclusions that had to be accepted without discussion.

The handbook called unquestioning obedience the **antithesis** of open investigation. A vocabulary note listed against or opposite as meanings of the prefix anti-. The workshop leader asked students to consider which approach each proposed procedure encouraged. They then revised a rule that had unintentionally discouraged questions about the group's first conclusion.

Using the prefix anti- (meaning against or opposite) and the passage, what does "antithesis" most likely mean?

(A) a statement offered as supporting evidence
(B) a compromise combining both approaches
(C) the direct opposite of an idea or approach
(D) a minor variation on the same idea

3 Pine Pool *pragmatic*

The committee reported on repairs to the damaged garden shelter. Members admired the proposal for a completely new building, but the money and volunteer hours required were not available. They chose a smaller repair they could finish with the materials and time actually available. The repair would not solve every future problem, and the committee stated that clearly.

The report called this response **pragmatic**. The repair would, however, make the shelter usable for the coming season while members investigated a longer-term plan. Their decision connected the desired improvement with the resources they could responsibly commit rather than treating an ambitious drawing as a finished solution.

The report included a schedule and a list of remaining questions. Visitors could see both what the committee intended to accomplish now and what still needed attention.

How does the word "pragmatic" characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

(A) focused on what can work in real conditions
(B) interested mainly in impressing an audience
(C) unwilling to improve anything at all
(D) concerned only with the cheapest option

4 Boulder Pocket *sanction*

The neighborhood festival's organizers contacted the city office because they wanted to use the public square. Submitting a plan did not automatically grant access to that space. The committee first described its proposed schedule, cleanup arrangements and the equipment it intended to bring.

Once the office gave written permission, the organizers could reserve the square and announce the date. Until then, the committee avoided ordering signs that might become useless if the location changed. The approval did not guarantee good weather or a large audience; it established that the event was authorized to use the square.

The letter recorded the office's **sanction** for the event. The committee kept a copy of the letter with the reservation documents. Volunteers then began assigning the tasks that depended on the confirmed location.

As used in this passage, what does "sanction" most likely mean?

(A) official approval or permission
(B) a punishment imposed for breaking a rule
(C) a prediction about how popular an event will be
(D) a detailed explanation of every planned activity

5 Headwaters Challenge

a double-edged sword

Priya finally persuaded her family to adopt a shared calendar for the busy summer. She chose different colors for each person and entered the dates they had already agreed upon, then turned on reminders for each one. Several school and work commitments overlapped that month.

The reminders improved punctuality but also interrupted everyone's concentration. Priya still valued the calendar and did not want to abandon it; she wanted to keep its usefulness without accepting every unwanted effect.

They had reviewed the calendar together after dinner. A week later, Priya described its reminders as **a double-edged sword** while showing her brother the screen.

Her brother showed her how to change which reminders appeared during study time. They returned the tablet to its stand on the kitchen counter.

Part A. As used in this passage, what does "a double-edged sword" most likely mean?

(A) a choice between two equally harmful outcomes
(B) a tool that solves two problems at once
(C) an object that is dangerous to touch
(D) a benefit that also creates a drawback

Part B. Which detail from the passage most strongly supports your answer to Part A?

(A) "The reminders improved punctuality but also interrupted everyone's concentration."
(B) "Priya finally persuaded her family to adopt a shared calendar for the busy summer."
(C) "She chose different colors for each person and entered the dates they had already agreed upon"
(D) "Her brother showed her how to change which reminders appeared during study time."

POLE MOUNTAIN LEARNING · PRINTABLE · NO DEVICE NEEDED

Upstream Vocabulary: River trip 2 of 4

Miracle Mile · Grade 8



Name or class code _____ Date _____

Your trip

1. Read the passage at each stop. The vocabulary word is in **bold**.
2. Use clues in the passage. Circle the letter of the best answer, then write it on the trip map.
3. Stop 5 is the challenge: answer Part A, then choose the detail that supports it in Part B.
4. Your teacher checks each stop. If you missed one, reread for the clue and try again. Keep your first answer; write the new letter beside it with a star (★).

① Sagebrush Bank	② Long Glide	③ Deep Run	④ Gravel Seam	⑤ Far Bend
____	____	____	____	A ____ B ____
□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★

River Talk (bonus, not scored · do this after stop 5): eddy

The main current swept downstream past the bend. Behind a rock near the bank, a leaf circled in a small **eddy** before drifting back into the river.

What is an eddy in this passage?

_____

_____

1 Sagebrush Bank

ambiguous

A community center announced, “Students and teachers with passes may enter through the side door.” Staff members received questions because the notice did not explain exactly who needed a pass. Some readers understood ‘with passes’ to describe only the teachers, while others thought it applied to both teachers and students.

The sentence left an important condition **ambiguous** for people planning to attend the center’s exhibition. Either reading was possible from the way the words were arranged. The problem was not whether readers could see the print; they needed to know which groups the condition included.

A revised notice stated that both groups needed passes and separated that requirement into its own sentence. Volunteers updated the paper copies as well as the online announcement.

As used in this passage, what does “ambiguous” most likely mean?

(A) unnecessarily detailed
(B) allowing more than one reasonable meaning
(C) deliberately inaccurate
(D) difficult to read because of small lettering

2 Long Glide

circumspect

Nadia’s friends wanted her to approve the club’s trip immediately, but she remained **circumspect**. She compared the costs, asked what would happen if a volunteer canceled and checked whether the space was actually available. Her questions made the planning meeting longer than anyone had expected.

One friend accused her of trying to prevent the trip. Nadia explained that she wanted it to succeed, which was why she would not ignore the details most likely to cause trouble. Once the group answered her questions, she helped prepare the request instead of continuing to raise objections.

On the way home, she thought about the difference between caution and refusal. Careful consideration had given her reasons to support the plan rather than reasons to fear it.

Using circum- (meaning around) and spect (meaning look) and the passage, what does “circumspect” most likely mean?

(A) unwilling to consider any possible change
(B) interested only in what nearby people are doing
(C) confident that no risk could exist
(D) careful about risks before taking action

3 Deep Run

complacent

After winning the first design trial, Adrian became confident about the model's condition. He stopped inspecting the model even after two teammates mentioned that its supports were beginning to loosen. He told them that a successful design did not need to be questioned every afternoon.

I had admired his confidence when we first began working together, but this felt different. He no longer seemed interested in what the evidence showed; he trusted the earlier result to protect us from any later problem. When the frame shifted during practice, the warning signs had already been present for several days.

Adrian recognized that he had been **complacent**, treating earlier success as a reason to stop checking. He helped repair the damage, though he said little while we worked. Before the next trial, he checked each support without waiting for anyone to remind him.

How does the word "complacent" characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

(A) eager to improve after receiving advice
(B) too satisfied to attend to emerging problems
(C) reasonably confident after checking the evidence
(D) secretly worried about every possible mistake

4 Gravel Seam

temper

Rina wrote an angry message after learning that the rehearsal schedule had changed. Her first version accused the entire planning group of ignoring everyone else. Before sending it, she asked her brother to read the message and help her **temper** its tone without hiding her disagreement.

She kept her main objection but removed the accusation that everyone supporting the plan was selfish. She also acknowledged that finding an open room had been difficult. The final message still argued for a change, but it invited a response instead of treating the other students as enemies.

Rina read the revised version aloud. It sounded like a problem she wanted the group to solve, which was what she had intended to communicate all along.

As used in this passage, what does "temper" most likely mean?

(A) make a conclusion sound completely certain
(B) make an attitude or response less extreme
(C) lose control of one's anger
(D) establish the exact temperature of an object

5 Far Bend

a house of cards

The group's proposal for a school exhibition looked impressive in its bright folder. I carried it into the meeting with more confidence than I had felt all term. Our adviser spread the pages across the table. Our adviser called the proposal **a house of cards** and asked us to examine its foundations.

The entire event depended on a room reservation that no one had confirmed, so one refusal would undo every planned activity. We had chosen music and designed tickets without securing the basic condition that made the rest possible.

We agreed to confirm the room before spending money on the printed materials. I put the sample tickets back in the folder as the meeting ended.

Part A. As used in this passage, what does "a house of cards" most likely mean?

(A) a weakly supported plan vulnerable to collapse
(B) a carefully protected collection of personal memories
(C) a project designed mainly for entertainment
(D) a complicated system that has been thoroughly tested

Part B. Which detail from the passage most strongly supports your answer to Part A?

(A) "before spending money on the printed materials."
(B) "one refusal would undo every planned activity"
(C) "Our adviser spread the pages across the table."
(D) "I put the sample tickets back in the folder as the meeting ended."

POLE MOUNTAIN LEARNING · PRINTABLE · NO DEVICE NEEDED

Upstream Vocabulary: River trip 3 of 4

Encampment River · Grade 8



Name or class code _____ Date _____

Your trip

1. Read the passage at each stop. The vocabulary word is in **bold**.
2. Use clues in the passage. Circle the letter of the best answer, then write it on the trip map.
3. Stop 5 is the challenge: answer Part A, then choose the detail that supports it in Part B.
4. Your teacher checks each stop. If you missed one, reread for the clue and try again. Keep your first answer; write the new letter beside it with a star (★).

① Canyon Pool	② Amber Shallows	③ Boulder Run	④ Pine Shade	⑤ Riffle Head
____	____	____	____	A ____ B ____
□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★

River Talk (bonus, not scored · do this after stop 5): seam

Fast water slid past a boulder while the water beside it moved slowly. A thin line of bubbles followed the **seam** where the two currents met.

What does seam mean here?

_____

_____

1 Canyon Pool

inherent

A student research guide examines the uncertainty that comes with drawing conclusions from a sample. Even a carefully selected sample represents only part of the whole population. Researchers therefore describe how they gathered the data and avoid claiming that every individual would respond in exactly the same way.

Collecting more observations can strengthen a conclusion, but it does not turn a sample into the entire population. The guide recommends repeating a study with different groups and reporting the boundaries of what was observed. These practices help readers judge how widely a result might apply.

The guide describes that uncertainty as **inherent** in the method, even when the work is done carefully. The purpose is not to dismiss evidence whenever uncertainty exists. It is to recognize a basic feature of the method and describe conclusions responsibly.

As used in this passage, what does "inherent" most likely mean?

(A) present only when someone makes a mistake
(B) caused only by a temporary condition
(C) existing as a basic part of something
(D) added later to improve performance

2 Amber Shallows

inconclusive

A class tested two containers to learn which would keep a model dry under simulated rain. The two designs performed almost alike, and the small differences changed direction from one trial to the next. Students could not responsibly name a winning design on that evidence.

The results were **inconclusive**, despite the students' careful notes and repeated trials. They considered whether their method measured the outcome clearly enough and whether additional trials might reveal a consistent pattern. The uncertainty did not make the investigation useless; it helped identify what the class needed to examine next.

Their report described the competing explanations and proposed a revised procedure. It avoided turning an uncertain result into a confident claim merely because the assignment asked for a conclusion.

Using the prefix in- (meaning not) and the base conclusive and the passage, what does "inconclusive" most likely mean?

(A) not sufficient to settle a question
(B) certain to prove the original prediction wrong
(C) completed without any mistakes in the procedure
(D) not worth examining because it is unfamiliar

3 Boulder Run

insinuation

The storage keys were missing again, and I offered to help search the rehearsal room. Blake's reply carried an **insinuation** that made me stop beside the door. He did not accuse me directly, but he asked why the keys always disappeared whenever I stayed late.

I could hear what he wanted the others to suspect even though he had not made a claim he would have to defend. I explained when I had last used the room and asked him to say plainly whether he believed I had taken the keys. The conversation grew quieter as the others recognized the accusation beneath his question.

The keys eventually turned up in a coat pocket. Finding them solved the practical problem, but Blake and I still needed to discuss the way he had spoken.

How does the word "insinuation" characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

(A) asking a straightforward question without implying an answer
(B) announcing a proven fact in a neutral manner
(C) suggesting an accusation without saying it openly
(D) offering direct praise with clear supporting reasons

4 Pine Shade

novel

A design contest asked students to improve a collection bin without increasing its size. Instead of building a larger container, one team proposed changing the shape of the opening so items would separate as they entered. The change concerned the sorting process rather than the container itself.

The judges regarded this **novel** approach as worth testing. They asked the students to explain how they had reached the idea and which features would need testing. An original proposal still required evidence that it could work.

The students brought a model to the next meeting. They invited classmates to use it and noted where the design created unexpected difficulties.

As used in this passage, what does "novel" most likely mean?

(A) more complicated than anyone can understand
(B) proven successful through many earlier uses
(C) new and unlike familiar approaches
(D) described in a long fictional book

5 Riffle Head *a hollow victory*

Sasha's team received the highest score for its model bridge at the school exhibition. Their classmates gathered around the display while a judge attached the award ribbon.

Sasha thanked the judge and moved the model away from the edge of the table. Later, she described the award as **a hollow victory** when her teacher asked how she felt.

Winning gave her little joy; the project had cost her a friendship she valued. She had spent the afternoon beside the award wishing the group had worked differently, even though the judges had praised the finished design.

She asked her former partner whether they could meet after school to talk. Before leaving the exhibition, she placed the ribbon inside the project folder.

Part A. As used in this passage, what does "a hollow victory" most likely mean?

(A) a victory achieved with very little effort
(B) a win that feels empty despite the outward success
(C) an achievement that no one else notices
(D) a result that is announced before the competition ends

Part B. Which detail from the passage most strongly supports your answer to Part A?

(A) "Sasha's team received the highest score for its model bridge at the school exhibition."
(B) "Their classmates gathered around the display while a judge attached the award ribbon."
(C) "Winning gave her little joy; the project had cost her a friendship she valued."
(D) "Before leaving the exhibition, she placed the ribbon inside the project folder."

POLE MOUNTAIN LEARNING · PRINTABLE · NO DEVICE NEEDED

Upstream Vocabulary: River trip 4 of 4

North Tongue River · Grade 8



Name or class code _____ Date _____

Your trip

1. Read the passage at each stop. The vocabulary word is in **bold**.
2. Use clues in the passage. Circle the letter of the best answer, then write it on the trip map.
3. Stop 5 is the challenge: answer Part A, then choose the detail that supports it in Part B.
4. Your teacher checks each stop. If you missed one, reread for the clue and try again. Keep your first answer; write the new letter beside it with a star (★).

1	2	3	4	5
Meadow Bend	**Willow Run**	**Grassy Cut**	**Shallow Riffle**	**Rapid Tail**
____	____	____	____	A ____ B ____
□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★	□ fixed ★

River Talk (bonus, not scored · do this after stop 5): tailout

Below the deep bend, the pool grew shallow and the current sped up over gravel. The angler watched the **tailout** where the pool emptied into the next run.

Where is the tailout of the pool?

_____

_____

1 Meadow Bend

mitigate

The school's entrance became slippery whenever visitors tracked wet soil inside. To **mitigate** the problem during a construction project, the maintenance team installed long mats between the temporary walkway and the doors. Students also helped move signs so the intended entrance was easier to find.

The mats did not stop the rain, but they kept much of the mud from reaching the hallway. Custodians still inspected the floor and replaced soaked mats when necessary. The building remained open while workers finished the outside path, and the team continued checking whether its temporary measures were working.

The principal's message described the improvement without declaring the entrance permanently fixed. A new walkway was still needed once the construction equipment had been removed.

As used in this passage, what does "mitigate" most likely mean?

(A) remove every possible cause of a problem
(B) make a problem easier to hide
(C) accept a problem without responding
(D) reduce the severity of a problem

2 Willow Run

disproportionate

The planning group wanted every team to contribute, but its first schedule created a workload the group needed to review. A team with only a few members was assigned almost half of the entire project. Larger teams received tasks that could be completed during a single short meeting.

The students compared assignments with the time and number of people available to each team. They did not insist that every task had to be identical, because some required different tools or experience. They did agree that no group should bear a burden far larger than its share of the project.

Members described the original burden as **disproportionate** to the small team's share of the project. The revised schedule moved several jobs to teams with more available volunteers. Each team then reviewed the new arrangement before the full plan was approved.

Using the prefix dis- and the base proportion and the passage, what does "disproportionate" most likely mean?

(A) different in appearance but equal in effect
(B) not in proper balance with another amount
(C) exactly equal in every relevant respect
(D) impossible to divide into smaller pieces

3 Grassy Cut

candid

I asked Marisol whether my article was ready, hoping she would say yes and hand it back. She said plainly that the opening was confusing, then showed me the places where she had lost track of the explanation. At first, I felt embarrassed by how much work remained.

Her **candid** response was not what I had expected. Then I noticed that she was discussing the writing carefully, not laughing at me or pretending to know more than she did. Her honesty gave me something I could actually revise, which the pleasant reassurance I had wanted would not have provided.

I asked her to read the new opening the next afternoon. This time, I wanted a clear answer more than I wanted an easy compliment.

How does the word "candid" characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

(A) deliberately cruel to the person being addressed
(B) carefully vague to avoid revealing an opinion
(C) confident despite having no relevant information
(D) honest and open about an uncomfortable truth

4 Shallow Riffle

disposition

Theo had always admired his aunt's hopeful outlook, although he sometimes mistook it for a belief that nothing could go wrong. Working beside her at the community workshop showed him that she noticed problems as clearly as anyone. Her response to those problems was what made the difference.

Even when a delivery was late or a plan fell apart, she usually searched for something that could still be done. She did not promise that every repair would succeed. Instead, she identified the next useful step and invited someone to help her try it.

When Theo broke a model he had spent days building, his aunt sat beside him. She asked which pieces could be saved, and he found himself willing to begin again. Her hopeful **disposition** now mattered to him for a reason beyond her reassuring words.

As used in this passage, what does "disposition" most likely mean?

(A) an arrangement of objects in a space
(B) a formal decision about ownership
(C) a sudden feeling that disappears immediately
(D) a usual pattern of mood or behavior

(5) Rapid Tail

a moving target

Tomas spent the weekend preparing a demonstration for the club committee's open evening. He brought the materials to Monday's meeting in two neatly labeled boxes.

The committee had changed the required length and audience every time he revised the demonstration to match its last request. He wanted to make the activity useful, but the repeated changes meant he could never be certain that his preparation met the current goal.

The committee gathered in the workshop to review everyone's plans. Tomas finally described the committee's expectations as **a moving target** after another round of instructions.

He asked the committee to agree on one description before he rebuilt the demonstration again. The boxes stayed beneath the workshop table until the meeting ended.

Part A. As used in this passage, what does "a moving target" most likely mean?

(A) a task that can be completed only while traveling
(B) an objective that has already been achieved
(C) a goal that becomes hard to reach as it changes
(D) a person who avoids standing in one place

Part B. Which detail from the passage most strongly supports your answer to Part A?

(A) "spent the weekend preparing a demonstration for the club committee's open evening"
(B) "He asked the committee to agree on one description before he rebuilt the demonstration again."
(C) "The boxes stayed beneath the workshop table until the meeting ended."
(D) "changed the required length and audience every time he revised the demonstration"