# Vocabulary Skill Check

## Grade 10 · Shades of meaning · Try 1

Name or code _____ Date _____

Read each passage. Circle the letter that gives the best meaning in that passage.

**Passage 1**

Our team had lost the final debate by one point, and I could still hear the announcement when I reached the equipment table. My partner was already helping the winners repair a broken display stand.

He gave them time and spare materials without asking for praise or an advantage in return. I found his response unexpectedly **magnanimous**, especially after their sharp criticism of our proposal. That criticism had hurt him too; I had watched him grip the edge of his notes when they spoke.

“They still need the stand,” he said when I asked why he was helping. He did not pretend the result had pleased him, and he did not use the repair as an opportunity to reopen the argument.

I held the two pieces together while he fitted the replacement brace. The judges’ announcement faded behind the ordinary sound of someone searching a toolbox for the right screw.

**1. What does the writer’s choice of “magnanimous” suggest about the attitude described?**

Circle ONE letter.

**A** indifferent to the other person’s fate

**B** generous toward someone one could resent

**C** willing to help only in return for future repayment

**D** eager to prove superiority through public kindness

**Passage 2**

Beside a tray of sample materials, a student demonstrated a coating she claimed would protect every outdoor display. Her partner remained **skeptical**, although the first demonstration appeared successful. The trial had lasted only a few minutes under conditions they had arranged themselves.

He asked what evidence showed that the coating would perform the same way after repeated exposure. His question did not establish that the coating would fail, and he offered to help design another comparison.

The distinction mattered to the exhibition team because its installation would remain outside for several weeks. A successful short demonstration could justify further testing without supporting the promise that every display would stay protected.

The student divided the remaining material into labeled groups and left one untreated for comparison. Her partner drew a new observation chart with spaces that the first brief demonstration had never needed.

**2. How does “skeptical” characterize the response described in the passage?**

Circle ONE letter.

**A** unconcerned about whether the claim can be checked

**B** rejecting every unfamiliar claim

**C** questioning a claim until evidence supports it

**D** unable to understand the claim’s actual wording

**Passage 3**

The archive committee met in the same room each month with the same small circle of contributors. Their difficulty appeared when a neighborhood group offered accounts that challenged the familiar exhibition.

They dismissed the new accounts because the contributors had not belonged to their established circle. The committee's own experience had become the boundary of what it was willing to consider, even when outside material could be examined in the same way as its existing sources.

An outside review recommended open submission sessions and a clear process for evaluating evidence. Membership would not decide credibility in advance, whether a source came from an old contributor or a newcomer. The review described the committee's outlook as **insular**, although the members worked hard and knew their own collection well.

At the following meeting, several unfamiliar folders occupied the center of the table. The committee had to ask questions the labels on its own shelves had never raised.

**3. How does "insular" characterize the committee's outlook?**

Circle ONE letter.

**A** independent because every member works alone

**B** careful to protect private information from outsiders

**C** situated on a distant island

**D** closed to outside ideas or experience

**Passage 4**

The director offered me the part I had wanted since our first rehearsal. I read the message twice, then held the phone over my notebook without writing a reply.

My brother found me at the kitchen table after dinner and asked why I was not celebrating. I told him I felt **ambivalent** about the offer, although I understood exactly what accepting it would require.

I wanted the role, but accepting it meant abandoning a project I also cared about. The rehearsal dates conflicted with the final weeks of the neighborhood audio archive, whose interviews I had promised to edit. Several younger students were waiting for those recordings because they could not attend the interviews.

"Which promise can you change honestly?" my brother asked, pulling out the chair beside me. I opened the archive calendar, then set the rehearsal schedule where we could both read it.

**4. What does the writer's choice of "ambivalent" suggest about the attitude described?**

Circle ONE letter.

**A** unable to understand the words in the offer

**B** unconcerned about either possible outcome of the choice

**C** experiencing conflicting feelings about a choice

**D** certain that only one alternative is acceptable

**Passage 5**

The committee secretary spread two versions of the access plan across the meeting table. Members had requested a revision after discovering that evening visitors could not reach the workshop. The evening program had been requested by people whose working hours excluded them from daytime sessions. The newer document had the same plain cover and the same page count as the earlier one. The secretary asked members to examine the working arrangements before judging the revision from its cover.

It changed who could enter, when the doors opened and how supervision would be provided. Those decisions altered the plan's operation, even though a reader looking only at its appearance might assume little had changed.

Members checked the revised schedule against the room bookings before recording their decision. Only after reading those decisions did the chair call the revision **substantive**. The secretary clipped both versions together, leaving the approval sheet on top for the next person to sign.

**5. How does "substantive" characterize the response described in the passage?**

Circle ONE letter.

**A** making an important change to the content

**B** adding detail without affecting the central issue

**C** mainly altering the outward appearance

**D** repeating the earlier position more forcefully

**Passage 6**

I brought my article to the editor with three questions circled in the margin. She had asked for the piece herself, and I wanted to know whether the interviews supported the ending. My deadline was the next morning, and I did not want to submit an unsupported ending.

She kept one hand on the door handle while I unfolded the pages beside her. Her **perfunctory** response left me less certain about the article than I had been before arriving.

She said it looked fine without reading beyond the opening lines or addressing my questions. The reassurance sounded pleasant, but she was already discussing her next meeting while I tried to point to the disputed quotation.

"Could we find a time when you can actually read it?" I asked, gathering the pages before they slipped. She released the handle, checked her calendar and wrote an appointment beside the first empty space.

**6. What judgment does the word "perfunctory" convey in this context?**

Circle ONE letter.

**A** abandoned because the task is too demanding

**B** completed slowly because every detail matters

**C** performed with confidence after careful practice

**D** carried out merely to get the task over with

Teacher use: ____ / 6