Vocabulary Skill Check

Grade 10 · Shades of meaning · Try 2

Name or code _____ Date _____

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

Passage 1

Our climbing club had used the same exhibition format since before I joined. I liked the familiarity of the route diagrams, but visiting students kept asking questions our displays did not answer. They had traveled across town with an audio example, expecting us to examine it before deciding. The visitors offered to show us how their group explained route choices through audio accounts.

We treated ideas from beyond our own club as unworthy of consideration simply because they were unfamiliar. Nobody had shown that the audio approach was unsuitable; we had relied on the comfort of doing things our usual way.

Our secretary called our response **insular** after we rejected the suggestion without looking at a single example. “Can we at least listen?” I asked, opening the message that contained the sample. My teammates pulled their chairs toward the small speaker, and I lowered the familiar diagram between us.

1. What judgment does the word “insular” convey in this context?

Circle ONE letter.

A independent because every member works alone

B careful to protect private information from outsiders

C narrowly focused on one’s own group or world

D situated on a distant island

Passage 2

My partner proposed performing the final scene in the audience aisle rather than on the stage. I put down the costume needle because I thought I had misunderstood him the first time. Neither of us had rehearsed anything beyond the stage itself.

We had borrowed a narrow hall whose owners disliked changes to their usual seating arrangement. His plan challenged the owners' expectations even though they could refuse our performance. He had mapped the exits and planned a rehearsal, but he knew the idea could still be rejected by people whose permission we needed.

His **audacious** proposal would leave us within arm's reach of the front row. "Let them see the plan before they hear the rumor," he said, sliding his drawing beneath my sewing light. I cleared the loose thread away and asked where the first actor would stand.

2. What does the writer's choice of "audacious" suggest about the attitude described?

Circle ONE letter.

A carefully limited to avoid any chance of criticism

B reckless because no possible benefit has been considered

C content to repeat a familiar approach

D strikingly bold in the face of accepted limits

Passage 3

I told my father that the argument at rehearsal had caused a little awkwardness. He kept drying the same plate while I stared at the table, hoping he would accept the description. The unfinished set pieces still stood in my classroom, where I would have to face everyone tomorrow.

Two cast members had walked out, and nobody knew whether the final performance could proceed. I had chosen words that would **understate** the damage because saying it plainly made my own part in the argument harder to ignore.

Calling it awkwardness made a threatened cancellation sound like an uncomfortable conversation. My father asked who was still willing to meet, and I finally explained what had been said before the others left.

"Start with what happened," he said, setting the plate down at last. I opened the message I had been avoiding and read the first request for a meeting aloud.

3. What judgment does the word "understate" convey in this context?

Circle ONE letter.

A make the described effect seem smaller than it is

B express a complaint more strongly than the facts justify

C state a conclusion before all the facts are collected

D describe an event without taking sides

Passage 4

The exhibition team spread six boxes of uncatalogued recordings across the archive floor. Preparing them for public use was a **formidable** task, the project lead wrote in her first report. Several boxes contained incompatible formats, and many recordings lacked dates or permission information.

Completing the work required technical skill, careful research and hundreds of separate decisions about access. The difficulty could not be removed by copying files into one folder. Nor could the team assume that an interesting recording was ready to share.

The lead divided the collection into smaller groups and requested advice about the cases the volunteers could not resolve. Her description justified a realistic schedule rather than a promise that everything would be ready for the next festival.

By the first evening, one labeled box stood beside the empty shelves. A question card rested on the next box, waiting for a decision the team had not yet learned to make.

4. What judgment does the word “formidable” convey in this context?

Circle ONE letter.

A unfamiliar but easy once briefly explained

B impossible to approach with any chance of success

C dangerous because its purpose is malicious

D challenging enough to demand serious effort

Passage 5

The exhibition record included a disagreement between two groups competing for the same room. One group’s complaint had delayed the other’s event for several weeks before the committee resolved the matter. The file would become part of a display about how shared spaces had been organized.

A later account examined the delayed group’s response to its competitor. The writer compared the meeting notes with the practical assistance recorded in the following month’s schedule.

The group offered its rival equipment and help despite having a reason to feel resentful. The assistance came without a demand for a public apology or favorable treatment when the next room application was considered.

The account did not erase the original disagreement, whose documents remained available beside the later schedule. The writer described the response as **magnanimous**. A visitor examining the file could see the complaint and the offer of help on two separate pages.

5. How does “magnanimous” characterize the response described in the passage?

Circle ONE letter.

A willing to help only in return for future repayment

B eager to prove superiority through public kindness

C generous even toward an opponent or offender

D indifferent to the other person’s fate

Passage 6

I wanted the old climbing photograph to show the first ascent everyone had argued about. The date on the back seemed to settle the matter, and I had already imagined the exhibition caption. The print had come from a collection whose other labels had already proved difficult to verify.

My sister placed the picture beneath the reading lamp without sharing my excitement. She was **skeptical** about the date, though she did not claim that it had to be wrong. Before agreeing to the caption, she asked for a second dated copy of the photograph. The handwriting differed from the notes in the photographer's folder, and nothing on the print itself established when the pencil mark was made.

"What else can we compare?" she asked, handing me a second box from the shelf. I put the unfinished caption aside and began looking for another copy of the same scene.

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

Circle ONE letter.

A rejecting every unfamiliar claim

B withholding belief while examining the evidence

C unconcerned about whether the claim can be checked

D unable to understand the claim's actual wording

Teacher use: ____ / 6