Vocabulary Skill Check

Grade 8 · 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

When the new volunteer arrived, Felix greeted her by explaining the workshop's routine. He explained the simplest step in an exaggeratedly slow voice, although she had already demonstrated that she understood it. Then he praised her for managing to find the correct shelf.

I watched her expression change from interest to discomfort. Felix seemed to think he was being helpful, but his manner assumed that she could not manage ordinary tasks without his guidance. He had not asked about her experience or listened when she described the work she had done elsewhere.

Felix's **condescending** welcome had underestimated someone he barely knew. Later, our supervisor asked Felix to introduce people by learning what they could contribute. A welcome should make room for someone's abilities, she said, rather than diminish them before work begins.

1. How does the word "condescending" characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

Circle ONE letter.

A expressing gratitude for another person's experience

B patiently giving help that someone has requested

C treating others as less capable without good reason

D speaking cautiously because the answer is uncertain

Passage 2

After Elise criticized his unfinished sketch, Rowan made a **vindictive** request to the project leader. He admitted that he wanted her removed from the project so she would feel as embarrassed as he had. Whether her design was useful no longer seemed to matter to him.

I understood why the criticism had hurt, but his response made the conflict larger. He was not asking for a fair way to discuss feedback or for an explanation of what she had meant. He wanted to turn his discomfort into hers, and the project was becoming a tool for that purpose.

The leader refused the request and asked them to discuss the original comment. Rowan still looked angry, but at least the group would not punish someone merely to satisfy that anger.

2. How does the word “vindictive” characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

Circle ONE letter.

A careful to protect others from future harm

B determined to apply a fair rule consistently

C willing to forgive a misunderstanding quickly

D wanting to hurt someone in return for a wrong

Passage 3

The student council published a statement about complaints over the new activity schedule. It acknowledged the complaints, explained the available evidence and proposed a next step without attacking the people involved. The writers had disagreed sharply during their own meeting, but the final statement did not repeat the anger of that discussion. The council still took a definite position: it recommended changing the arrangement for the following month.

The statement offered a **measured** response. Its restrained tone allowed members to explain that recommendation while leaving room for questions and additional information. They wanted the statement to support a useful conversation rather than turn disagreement into a contest of insults.

The principal asked the group to present its reasoning at the next meeting. Members prepared a short explanation of the evidence supporting their recommendation.

3. How does the word “measured” characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

Circle ONE letter.

A dramatic in order to intensify the disagreement

B controlled rather than ruled by immediate emotion

C uncertain because no opinion has been formed

D exact in length because it was checked with a ruler

Passage 4

Alina's work on the model impressed me more than the polished version she finally displayed. Each failed trial sent her back to the notes, where she adjusted the design and prepared another test. She did not pretend that a mistake had been a success, and she did not treat one mistake as a reason to stop.

I had watched her change the arrangement several times without changing the goal she cared about. Her determination was different from insisting that her first idea must be right. She listened to the evidence, asked for help when she needed it and kept finding another useful step.

When visitors admired the finished model, I wanted them to see the pages beside it too. Those notes showed how much patient effort stood behind the result. Her **tenacious** approach deserved attention alongside the polished model.

4. How does the word "tenacious" characterize the approach or attitude described in this passage?

Circle ONE letter.

A determined to continue through repeated setbacks

B succeeding easily because no obstacles arise

C refusing a task before making any attempt

D continuing blindly without considering new information

Passage 5

I wanted our club's first exhibition to fill the entire gym with moving models. My friend Talia listened while I explained the arrangements I imagined visitors exploring.

She suggested building three reliable demonstrations with the tools and time we already had instead of promising ten unfinished ones. Her proposal gave us a clear way to make something worthwhile without depending on supplies no one had agreed to provide.

We had spread our supply list across a classroom table. Looking back, Talia had offered a **pragmatic** response that initially seemed less exciting than the picture in my mind.

I began drawing the smaller layout and noticed that it still left room for visitors to participate. We returned the borrowed rulers before leaving the classroom.

5. As used in this passage, what does "pragmatic" most likely mean?

Circle ONE letter.

A interested mainly in impressing an audience

B unwilling to improve anything at all

C concerned with workable methods and results

D concerned only with the cheapest option

Passage 6

Eva’s group had completed its first outdoor demonstration without any difficulty. Their adviser worried that the earlier success had made them **complacent** about checking their arrangements.

Visitors had followed the signs, and the borrowed equipment had worked throughout the afternoon. The next event would use a different collection of borrowed supplies. The students met again to prepare for the next demonstration.

They ignored new warnings, trusting their earlier success rather than checking. Instead of confirming what was ready, they repeated how smoothly everything had worked before and treated questions as unnecessary interruptions.

The adviser asked them to compare the current supply list with the boxes in storage. Eva carried the empty display folders back to the classroom after the meeting.

6. As used in this passage, what does “complacent” most likely mean?

Circle ONE letter.

A eager to improve after receiving advice

B secretly worried about every possible mistake

C reasonably confident after checking the evidence

D self-satisfied enough to neglect needed care

Teacher use: ____ / 6