Vocabulary Skill Check

Grade 9 · Meaning from context · Try 1

Name or code _____ Date _____

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

Passage 1

The museum received a set of photographs without complete dates. Students could identify the building in several images, but one caption depended on a handwritten note whose author was unknown.

Leaving the display entirely blank would hide useful information, while printing the note as certain would exaggerate the evidence. The curator allowed a **provisional** caption. It gave the best-supported date for now and stated that further documents might change it. The label could serve a present purpose without pretending that every uncertainty had been removed.

A small source card stood beneath the image. Beside the proposed date, the curator left enough space for a correction, so a later discovery would not have to fight the appearance of a permanently finished display.

1. Which phrase best replaces “provisional” without changing the meaning?

Circle ONE letter.

A serving for now while awaiting fuller confirmation

B rejected before anyone has examined the supporting material

C confidential because only one person may know the result

D settled permanently because all relevant checks are complete

Passage 2

Volunteers reported that the community food collection had exceeded its planned total. Before announcing the result, a student editor asked how the count had been made. The first estimate came from the same group that had organized the collection. A separately kept delivery receipt could **corroborate** the volunteers' account.

The receipt’s total matched the number of boxes listed by the collectors, although the receipt had been completed by the receiving warehouse. The agreement strengthened the report because it did not depend on the collectors repeating their own estimate.

Before publication, the editor called the receiving warehouse to check that its total excluded promised boxes that had not arrived. Only received boxes stayed in the announcement. Volunteers could then report the collection without turning expected donations into evidence of completed deliveries.

2. As used in this passage, what does “corroborate” most nearly mean?

Circle ONE letter.

A replace every part of an account with a new explanation

B repeat a claim using information copied from that claim

C support a claim with additional independent evidence

D make an account sound more appealing to its audience

Passage 3

The notes from our investigation covered the wall above my desk. I needed a **coherent** account, not another impressive detail. I could remember each interview clearly, but reading the paragraphs aloud made them sound like pieces from different projects.

“Show how you got from this claim to that one,” my cousin said. I moved the explanation of the method before the results and added a sentence connecting the results to our conclusion.

The ideas now followed a relationship a reader could understand. Nothing important had been made certain by the rearrangement, but the account showed where each conclusion came from and where the evidence stopped.

I took down the pages one at a time and numbered them in pencil. The wall looked emptier, while the folder on my desk finally had a beginning someone else could follow.

3. Which meaning of “coherent” best fits this passage?

Circle ONE letter.

A complete because it includes every detail that was collected

B organized so that the relationships among ideas are clear

C simple because it removes all competing interpretations

D persuasive mainly because the speaker sounds confident

Passage 4

For three afternoons, the courtyard outside my window filled with voices from a traveling theater group. Their presence was **transient**, although I quickly came to treat it as part of the neighborhood's routine. I began timing my homework breaks to the sound of their warm-up songs.

"Tomorrow we are back on the road," one performer said when I helped carry chairs.

They would remain only briefly before moving elsewhere. The voices belonged to this week's afternoons, not to a change in who would use the courtyard for the rest of the year.

Before breakfast, I helped carry the last case to the van. "Next summer?" I asked. The performer could not promise. When the doors closed, I stepped back into the courtyard, where a neighbor was already carrying chairs out for the usual morning meeting.

4. Which phrase best replaces "transient" without changing the meaning?

Circle ONE letter.

A permanent because its first effects are difficult to undo

B invisible until a special instrument makes it noticeable

C returning at the same time in an unchanging cycle

D lasting for only a short period rather than remaining

Passage 5

The caretaker's key rested between the two halves of our cardboard model. I had spent weeks designing a studio that the club could use only after the main building closed.

"This door can be opened separately," she said, pointing to an entrance I had treated as a storeroom. That discovery was **pivotal**. Until then, every version of our plan had required a supervisor to keep the whole building available.

The separate entrance changed the direction of the project. It did not solve the budget or settle every safety question, but it made a practical arrangement possible where our earlier plans had repeatedly stopped.

I lifted the small cardboard wall and cut a new opening. The caretaker turned the key in her palm while my partner drew the access route that we would take to the next planning meeting.

5. As used in this passage, what does "pivotal" most nearly mean?

Circle ONE letter.

A crucial to the direction or outcome of later events

B noticeable because it occurs before every other event

C final because it removes the possibility of further decisions

D interesting mainly as a detail unrelated to the outcome

Passage 6

Two sketches of our grandfather’s workshop lay on the floor. We needed to **reconcile** our memories before making the model for his birthday. I kept turning mine until the door matched the position in my sister’s drawing.

“Someone has put the bench in the wrong place,” I said. She remembered it beside the window, while I remembered it against the back wall.

The bench had been moved between our two summer visits. A photograph from my earlier trip placed it against the wall, and a later picture showed it under the window. Neither memory had to be erased.

My sister balanced the small wooden bench between her fingers. We cut two slots in the model’s floor so he could move it, then set the tiny toolbox beneath the window for the first version.

6. As used in this passage, what does “reconcile” most nearly mean?

Circle ONE letter.

A choose the more appealing account without checking

B remove every detail that makes an account uncertain

C repeat both accounts without explaining their conflict

D make differing information fit a reasoned account

Teacher use: ____ / 6