Vocabulary Skill Checks

Grade 8 · Teacher keys

Score meaning only. Record the count out of six and the error pattern. These passages are held back from the printed game trips. Students may know a target word from another passage, or have seen the passage online. Ask about prior exposure and record familiar passages as practice. Where a second try exists it uses different passages. Target words can repeat across tries. Compare the error patterns for the skill. The tries have not been equated.

Grade 8 · Meaning from context · Try 1

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, RI.8.1, RI.8.4, RL.8.1, RL.8.4

1. A · feasible · The detail “The revised proposal used supplies already in storage and required only the two afternoons the volunteers had available.” supports “practical with the resources at hand”. The needed time, materials, access and people are available, making the plan practical to carry out. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

B · Popularity is separate from whether a plan can actually be carried out.

C · The proposal is being evaluated before it is put into practice.

D · The passage evaluates available resources, not which proposal sounds most impressive.

2. D · scrutinize · The detail “She checked each entry against the receipt rather than accepting the final total.” supports “examine something closely and critically”. Close attention to small details helps someone test whether an apparent conclusion is reliable. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · Looking closely is different from rejecting something before examining it.

B · The examination reaches details that a quick summary could miss.

C · The passage describes checking before a decision, not immediate acceptance.

3. B · detrimental · The detail “Seedlings in the crowded trays developed weaker stems and fewer leaves than seedlings given more room.” supports “causing damage or an unwanted effect”. The condition interferes with the desired result, which makes its effect harmful. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The comparison connects the condition with an unwanted result.

C · The concern is the negative effect, not simply difficulty understanding it.

D · The described effect harms the desired outcome instead of helping produce it.

4. C · reconcile · The detail “One group had measured the route to the front entrance, while the other had measured the shorter path to the side gate.” supports “bring apparently conflicting accounts into agreement”. Examining the different conditions explains why two accounts can both be accurate. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The passage investigates the apparent disagreement rather than assuming in advance that both accounts must be correct.

B · The passage checks how both accounts fit the circumstances instead of choosing one merely because it seems more convincing.

D · The accounts remain intact; examining their circumstances explains the apparent difference without changing or merging their details.

5. B · corroborate · The detail “The independently kept log matched the passengers’ reported arrival time.” supports “give independent support for a claim”. Matching evidence from a separate source strengthens the original account. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · An interesting story can still lack evidence that supports it.

C · Questioning reliability would weaken the account; the passage describes support.

D · The new evidence supports the account rather than substituting a different account.

6. A · ambiguous · The detail “The box held both a blue scarf and a blue jacket, and either could fit the instruction.” supports “not clear enough to have just one meaning”. The wording allows two reasonable interpretations, so readers cannot determine a single intended meaning. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

B · The people can read the words; they disagree about what the words direct them to do.

C · Additional detail could clarify the message; the passage does not complain that it gives too much.

D · The problem is uncertainty about the intended meaning, not evidence of a deliberate falsehood.

Grade 8 · Meaning from context · Try 2

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, RI.8.1, RI.8.4

1. A · detrimental · The detail “Whenever speakers were repeatedly interrupted, important explanations were cut off before listeners could follow the reasoning.” supports “damaging to the desired outcome”. The condition interferes with the desired result, which makes its effect harmful. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

B · The concern is the negative effect, not simply difficulty understanding it.

C · The described effect harms the desired outcome instead of helping produce it.

D · The comparison connects the condition with an unwanted result.

2. C · reconcile · The detail “The schedule showed an afternoon parade followed by an evening concert, so both descriptions referred to different parts of the celebration.” supports “explain how differing pieces of information fit together”. Examining the different conditions explains why two accounts can both be accurate. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The passage checks how both accounts fit the circumstances instead of choosing one merely because it seems more convincing.

B · The accounts remain intact; examining their circumstances explains the apparent difference without changing or merging their details.

D · The passage investigates the apparent disagreement rather than assuming in advance that both accounts must be correct.

3. D · inherent · The detail “Even a correctly made model must leave out some features of the full-size object.” supports “belonging to something by its very nature”. The characteristic remains part of the thing even when other conditions or procedures change. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The characteristic remains even when the task is completed correctly.

B · The characteristic belongs to the method or model itself; it is not merely a passing circumstance.

C · The passage distinguishes a basic characteristic from a later addition.

4. C · mitigate · The detail “Moving the chairs behind the existing wall made the sound less disruptive, although cars were still audible.” supports “make a harmful effect less serious”. An action lessens the harmful effect even though it does not completely eliminate the problem. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The passage concerns reducing harm, not concealing information.

B · The passage describes an action intended to improve the situation.

D · The action lessens the problem without guaranteeing that every cause disappears.

5. B · feasible · The detail “The selected schedule fit the hours, space and staff that the library could actually provide.” supports “able to be carried out in this situation”. The needed time, materials, access and people are available, making the plan practical to carry out. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · Popularity is separate from whether a plan can actually be carried out.

C · The proposal is being evaluated before it is put into practice.

D · The passage evaluates available resources, not which proposal sounds most impressive.

6. D · scrutinize · The detail “They checked every label, arrow and stated measurement against the accompanying explanation.” supports “examine closely for possible weaknesses”. Close attention to small details helps someone test whether an apparent conclusion is reliable. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The passage describes checking before a decision, not immediate acceptance.

B · The examination reaches details that a quick summary could miss.

C · Looking closely is different from rejecting something before examining it.

Grade 8 · Word parts · Try 1

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, L.8.4b, RI.8.1, RI.8.4, RL.8.1, RL.8.4

1. D · subordinate · The detail “The assistant could organize supplies, but final decisions still required the coordinator’s approval.” supports “under another person’s authority”. The prefix sub-, meaning under, fits a relationship in which one position reports to another. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · The passage describes a position under another role, not an independent position.

B · Sub- can suggest under, but this passage concerns authority rather than physical location.

C · Rank in a structure does not determine a person’s worth.

2. A · multifaceted · The detail “The proposal affected transportation, staffing, access to rooms and the time available for family activities.” supports “having several connected dimensions”. Multi- means many, and the passage identifies several different facets, or aspects, of one issue. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

B · The contextual meaning concerns aspects of an issue, not reflected light on a surface.

C · The passage identifies several dimensions rather than one cause.

D · The aspects are connected within one issue, not unrelated fragments.

3. D · irrevocable · The detail “Once she confirmed the selection, the rules would not allow her to change it.” supports “unable to be withdrawn or reversed”. The negative prefix ir- and the idea of revoking, or taking back, fit a decision that cannot be undone. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · The decision has already been made; the issue is whether it can be reversed.

B · The concern is the decision’s permanence, not how easily it can be explained.

C · The passage establishes that changing circumstances will not reopen the decision.

4. B · counterproductive · The detail “Constant reminders interrupted students so frequently that they completed less work than before.” supports “working against the result someone wants”. Counter- means against, and the action produces an effect that works against its own purpose. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · A difficult action can still help; this action interferes with its own purpose.

C · The passage describes an effect against the goal, not merely a modest benefit.

D · The central conflict is between the action’s effect and its intended goal.

5. C · antithesis · The detail “I planned each step; he experimented without a plan. He wanted to discover the final image by trying the materials.” supports “a complete contrast to something else”. The prefix anti- signals opposition, and the surrounding ideas describe direct contrasts. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · The term identifies opposition, not a reason supporting the first approach.

B · A small change would preserve the basic approach, while the passage sets the approaches against each other.

D · The passage contrasts opposing positions rather than blending them.

6. B · circumspect · The detail “Members checked the account, considered the possible harm of errors and asked how the people mentioned could respond.” supports “cautious and attentive to consequences”. The roots circum-, around, and spect, look, combine with context to suggest examining a situation carefully. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · The person considers the decision carefully rather than rejecting change automatically.

C · The passage describes examining uncertainty instead of dismissing it.

D · The roots suggest looking around, but the contextual meaning concerns considering consequences.

Grade 8 · Word parts · Try 2

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, L.8.4b, RI.8.1, RI.8.4, RL.8.1, RL.8.4

1. A · irrevocable · The detail “After confirmation, a team cannot withdraw its design or replace it with another version.” supports “not able to be withdrawn or reversed”. The negative prefix ir- and the idea of revoking, or taking back, fit a decision that cannot be undone. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

B · The decision has already been made; the issue is whether it can be reversed.

C · The concern is the decision’s permanence, not how easily it can be explained.

D · The passage establishes that changing circumstances will not reopen the decision.

2. B · counterproductive · The detail “The more he interrupted her, the less willing she became to try anything without asking permission.” supports “producing effects against the intended goal”. Counter- means against, and the action produces an effect that works against its own purpose. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · A difficult action can still help; this action interferes with its own purpose.

C · The central conflict is between the action’s effect and its intended goal.

D · The passage describes an effect against the goal, not merely a modest benefit.

3. D · inconclusive · The detail “The totals were nearly equal, and many replies did not state availability.” supports “unable to establish a definite conclusion”. The prefix in- means not here; the evidence does not provide a conclusive or settled answer. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · A procedure can be orderly while its results still fail to settle the question.

B · The results remain relevant even though they do not justify a firm conclusion.

C · Uncertain evidence does not necessarily establish the opposite conclusion.

4. B · disproportionate · The detail “The entrance would consume most of the budget while serving only a small part of the garden’s needs.” supports “out of proper balance with another thing”. The parts dis- and proportion combine with the comparison to signal an amount that is out of balance. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · The passage identifies an imbalance rather than equality.

C · The word concerns relative amounts, not whether something can be physically separated.

D · The comparison reveals a difference in burden or effect, not merely appearance.

5. C · subordinate · The detail “The stage manager could approve changes; I had to ask her permission first.” supports “occupying a lower organizational rank”. The prefix sub-, meaning under, fits a relationship in which one position reports to another. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

A · Sub- can suggest under, but this passage concerns authority rather than physical location.

B · The passage describes a position under another role, not an independent position.

D · Rank in a structure does not determine a person’s worth.

6. A · multifaceted · The detail “Their material covered learning, repair, shared space, personal relationships and the costs of maintaining the building.” supports “involving many different aspects”. Multi- means many, and the passage identifies several different facets, or aspects, of one issue. Use the meaningful word parts, then check that meaning against the situation.

B · The passage identifies several dimensions rather than one cause.

C · The contextual meaning concerns aspects of an issue, not reflected light on a surface.

D · The aspects are connected within one issue, not unrelated fragments.

Grade 8 · Multiple meanings · Try 1

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, RI.8.1, RI.8.4, RL.8.1, RL.8.4

1. A · critical · The detail “Without a consistent starting point, the groups’ measurements could not be compared fairly.” supports “essential to the success of something”. The process cannot succeed as intended without the identified element. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

B · Critical can mean disapproving, but the passage identifies something necessary for success.

C · The described element has a necessary function rather than a decorative role.

D · The concern is whether the process works, not how outsiders react to it.

2. C · implication · The detail “If the library closed an hour earlier, students whose bus arrived at five would lose their only chance to visit after school.” supports “a result that may follow from a situation”. The passage connects a change with a result that would follow from it. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The idea is inferred from the circumstances rather than repeated word for word.

B · The possible result is connected to the proposed change.

D · The passage asks what could follow from a change, not what a command requires.

3. D · sanction · The detail “The principal’s written approval allowed the demonstration to go ahead under the agreed arrangements.” supports “authorization given by a responsible authority”. The responsible organization gives permission for the activity to go ahead. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · Sanction can refer to a penalty, but the passage concerns permission to proceed.

B · The plan provides details, while the sanction supplies authorization.

C · Approval permits an activity; it does not forecast attendance.

4. A · temper · The detail “The revised summary kept the positive result but acknowledged that only one small trial had been completed.” supports “moderate the force or intensity of something”. The added perspective reduces the intensity of the original response without removing it altogether. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

B · This use concerns a reaction or judgment, not a measurement of heat.

C · The speaker adds qualifications instead of increasing certainty.

D · The verb describes reducing the intensity of a response, not becoming angrier.

5. C · novel · The detail “He proposed an audience scene unlike anything the club had tried before.” supports “original compared with familiar methods”. The approach departs from what people have previously tried or commonly used. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The adjective describes the approach’s originality, not whether it appears in a book.

B · The passage presents something that has not already become an established practice.

D · An unfamiliar approach can still be explained and understood.

6. B · disposition · The detail “Across many projects, she responded to delays by calmly finding another useful task instead of snapping at people.” supports “a person’s usual manner of responding”. Repeated responses across different situations reveal a characteristic tendency. Try substituting this meaning into the sentence to check that it fits.

A · The passage describes how a person usually responds, not where objects are positioned.

C · Repeated reactions point to a usual tendency rather than one brief mood.

D · No property is being assigned; the context concerns someone’s habitual behavior.

Grade 8 · Figurative language · Try 1

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, L.8.5a, RL.8.4

1. D · perfect timing · The detail “The lights went out just as I reached the most important sentence of my presentation.” supports “the timing is especially unfortunate”. The circumstances contradict the literal praise, making the remark an ironic expression of frustration. Compare the literal picture with what is actually happening in the passage.

A · The remark evaluates when something happened, not the accuracy of a clock.

B · The problem concerns the moment it occurred rather than its duration.

C · The speaker’s situation makes the literal praise inappropriate; the intended meaning is criticism.

2. B · a fine mess · The detail “The colored water had spilled across both plans, and neither set of measurements could be read.” supports “a seriously troublesome situation”. Fine normally suggests approval, but the troublesome circumstances show that the speaker means the opposite. Compare the literal picture with what is actually happening in the passage.

A · The problems interfere with the work rather than making it better.

C · The speaker’s reaction and the actual problems make the phrase ironic rather than admiring.

D · The damage delays the planned work and cannot be put right with a quick tidy-up. Compare that disruption with the suggestion that only a little work is needed.

3. C · a double-edged sword · The detail “The new attention brought volunteers to the workshop, but it also brought more repair requests than the small team could handle.” supports “something with benefits and drawbacks”. The same thing produces a welcome benefit and an unwanted consequence. Compare the literal picture with what is actually happening in the passage.

A · The situation includes a real benefit as well as a difficulty, not two wholly harmful choices.

B · The passage uses an image to describe a situation, not the physical edge of an object.

D · The expression emphasizes an unwanted effect alongside the useful one.

4. D · a house of cards · The detail “If that one driver canceled, no equipment, costumes or performers would reach the hall.” supports “a fragile plan that one small failure could ruin”. An entire arrangement depends on weak or uncertain supports rather than a reliable foundation. Compare the literal picture with what is actually happening in the passage.

A · The expression concerns the plan’s weakness rather than the value of a collection.

B · Complexity alone does not make a system fragile, and this plan’s supports have not been secured.

C · The plan may be serious; the image describes how easily it could fall apart.

5. A · a hollow victory · The detail “I had won the position, but the way I had treated my friend made the announcement impossible to enjoy.” supports “a win that feels empty because of its cost”. Winning does not provide the expected satisfaction because something important has been lost. Compare the literal picture with what is actually happening in the passage.

B · The expression describes missing satisfaction, not the amount of effort required.

C · The result is settled; the question concerns how the winner experiences it.

D · The disappointment comes from the cost of winning, not simply from a lack of attention.

6. B · a moving target · The detail “Each time we met the stated requirements, the organizer added a new condition.” supports “a goal or requirement that keeps changing”. The goal changes repeatedly, making it difficult to know what would count as finishing. Compare the literal picture with what is actually happening in the passage.

A · The difficulty comes from the changing goal, not from the need to travel.

C · The repeated changes prevent the characters from knowing when the work is complete.

D · The expression describes changing expectations rather than someone’s physical movement.

Grade 8 · Shades of meaning · Try 1

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, L.8.5c, RI.8.4, RL.8.1, RL.8.4

1. C · condescending · The detail “He explained the simplest step in an exaggeratedly slow voice, although she had already demonstrated that she understood it.” supports “treating others as less capable without good reason”. Condescending criticizes a supposedly helpful manner that treats the listener as less capable. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The tone dismisses the other person’s ability instead of valuing it.

B · The speaker assumes inferiority rather than responding respectfully to a request for help.

D · The speaker presents superiority, not uncertainty about the information.

2. D · vindictive · The detail “He admitted that he wanted her removed from the project so she would feel as embarrassed as he had.” supports “wanting to hurt someone in return for a wrong”. Vindictive has a negative tone because the behavior is driven by revenge rather than fairness or repair. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The stated purpose is personal retaliation rather than protection.

B · The action targets someone for payback rather than applying a rule fairly to everyone.

C · The character tries to repay a hurt instead of putting the conflict aside.

3. B · measured · The detail “It acknowledged the complaints, explained the available evidence and proposed a next step without attacking the people involved.” supports “controlled rather than ruled by immediate emotion”. Measured characterizes a response as controlled and carefully considered without implying that it lacks a clear position. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The response reduces emotional intensity instead of inflaming it.

C · The speaker has a position but expresses it with control and consideration.

D · The word describes the response’s restraint rather than a physical dimension.

4. A · tenacious · The detail “Each failed trial sent her back to the notes, where she adjusted the design and prepared another test.” supports “determined to continue through repeated setbacks”. Tenacious gives persistence a determined quality; the character holds onto the purpose despite setbacks. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

B · The determination is shown through difficulties rather than an effortless result.

C · The character continues working instead of withdrawing from the challenge.

D · The character keeps the goal while adjusting the method in response to evidence.

5. C · pragmatic · The detail “She suggested building three reliable demonstrations with the tools and time we already had instead of promising ten unfinished ones.” supports “concerned with workable methods and results”. Pragmatic emphasizes workable action suited to real conditions rather than impressive but unattainable possibilities. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The approach is chosen for what it can accomplish, not for how impressive it sounds.

B · A practical response still seeks improvement; it works within existing conditions.

D · Cost is one consideration, but the passage also examines whether the solution works.

6. D · complacent · The detail “They ignored new warnings, trusting their earlier success rather than checking.” supports “self-satisfied enough to neglect needed care”. Complacent has a critical tone: satisfaction has become a reason to neglect necessary attention. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The character overlooks advice or warning instead of using it to improve.

B · The problem is excessive satisfaction, not constant anxiety.

C · The character stops checking despite reasons to remain attentive.

Grade 8 · Shades of meaning · Try 2

Standards from the source items · L.8.4a, L.8.5c, RI.8.1, RI.8.4, RL.8.1, RL.8.4

1. C · measured · The detail “My revised version stated my objections calmly and considered the committee’s reasons instead of accusing its members of bad intentions.” supports “deliberate and restrained in tone or action”. Measured characterizes a response as controlled and carefully considered without implying that it lacks a clear position. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The speaker has a position but expresses it with control and consideration.

B · The response reduces emotional intensity instead of inflaming it.

D · The word describes the response’s restraint rather than a physical dimension.

2. D · tenacious · The detail “He kept pursuing the interviews after repeated cancellations, changing his arrangements without giving up the project.” supports “holding firmly to a purpose despite setbacks”. Tenacious gives persistence a determined quality; the character holds onto the purpose despite setbacks. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The character keeps the goal while adjusting the method in response to evidence.

B · The character continues working instead of withdrawing from the challenge.

C · The determination is shown through difficulties rather than an effortless result.

3. B · insinuation · The detail “He hinted that Lena hid the drawings to get her own design chosen, without accusing her openly.” supports “indirectly suggesting something unfavorable”. Insinuation gives the comment an unfavorable, indirect quality: it hints at an accusation instead of stating and supporting it. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The speaker hints at a claim without providing evidence or stating it directly.

C · The comment implies something negative rather than openly explaining admiration.

D · The wording points listeners toward an accusation rather than simply requesting information.

4. A · candid · The detail “The writers openly acknowledged that several labels had confused visitors and explained which sections needed revision.” supports “frank about problems instead of concealing them”. Candid suggests straightforward honesty, including when the information is uncomfortable to hear. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

B · The response addresses what the speaker actually knows rather than making unsupported claims.

C · The speaker states the issue plainly rather than disguising it.

D · Honesty does not require cruelty, and the passage distinguishes the response from an attack.

5. B · condescending · The detail “He praised me for understanding a basic idea in the same exaggerated tone someone might use with a much younger child.” supports “acting superior toward someone regarded as inferior”. Condescending criticizes a supposedly helpful manner that treats the listener as less capable. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The speaker assumes inferiority rather than responding respectfully to a request for help.

C · The tone dismisses the other person’s ability instead of valuing it.

D · The speaker presents superiority, not uncertainty about the information.

6. D · vindictive · The detail “She wanted to damage his model so that he would suffer a loss in return for upsetting her.” supports “seeking revenge for a real or imagined wrong”. Vindictive has a negative tone because the behavior is driven by revenge rather than fairness or repair. Notice what the word choice suggests about the person’s actions or attitude.

A · The character tries to repay a hurt instead of putting the conflict aside.

B · The stated purpose is personal retaliation rather than protection.

C · The action targets someone for payback rather than applying a rule fairly to everyone.