

Word Choice for Precision and Effect

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: ____ / 10



Quick Review

Strong writers pick the most precise word. Instead of *walked*, you might say *trudged* (slow, heavy, weary), *strolled* (relaxed), or *marched* (with purpose). Each near-synonym carries a different shade — pick the one that fits the EXACT situation.

PRACTICE

Choose the word that best matches the effect or meaning described. All four options are real words; only one is the most precise fit.

1. Which word best fits the EXACT situation?

After the long hike, Maya _____ across the muddy field toward camp.

- A. plodded
- B. trudged
- C. shuffled
- D. staggered

2. Which word BEST shows joyful excitement?

The puppy _____ toward its owner at the door.

- A. trotted
- B. scampered
- C. darted
- D. bounded

3. Replace the overused word **nice**. Which choice paints the most SPECIFIC picture of Grandma?

Grandma is a nice person.

- A. kindhearted
- B. agreeable
- C. generous
- D. pleasant

4. Which sentence shows the STRONGEST feeling of fear?

- A. He crept into the dark room, heart pounding.
- B. He walked into the dark room with shaking hands.
- C. He entered the dark room nervously.
- D. He tiptoed quietly into the dark room.



5. Which word fits the SERIOUS, dignified tone of a judge?
The judge _____ to the front of the courtroom.
- A. ambled
 - B. marched
 - C. paced
 - D. strode
6. Replace **said** to show the speaker is ANGRY.
- A. muttered
 - B. barked
 - C. snapped
 - D. growled
7. Which word fits a GENTLE mood?
The little stream _____ between the smooth rocks.
- A. trickled
 - B. murmured
 - C. rippled
 - D. gurgled
8. Which word is MOST precise for very hungry kids?
The hungry kids _____ their lunches in minutes.
- A. nibbled
 - B. gulped
 - C. gobbled
 - D. devoured
9. Replace **big** in a story about a dangerous storm.
- A. massive
 - B. fierce
 - C. severe
 - D. towering
10. Which sentence uses the MOST vivid verbs to show kids playing?
- A. The kids ran and shouted in the yard.
 - B. The kids chased one another and giggled.
 - C. The kids raced, tumbled, and shrieked with laughter.
 - D. The kids leaped and called out happily.



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9 A B C D
- 10 A B C D

Explanations

1. B	All four describe tired walking. Trudged = heavy, weary steps through difficult ground — fits BOTH the mud (effort) and the exhaustion. <i>Plodded</i> is slow and dull but does not stress the difficulty; <i>shuffled</i> means dragging feet (less effort, more lazy/old); <i>staggered</i> means unsteady, suggesting injury or dizziness, not just tiredness.
2. D	All four are real animal-movement verbs. Bounded = big, joyful leaps — captures the excitement. <i>Trotted</i> = steady, moderate pace (not specifically excited); <i>scampered</i> = small, quick, slightly skittish steps; <i>darted</i> = sudden, sharp movement (often startled or fearful).
3. C	All four are positive traits. Generous names a specific behavior (she gives freely). <i>Kindhearted</i> is close but vague — feelings, not action; <i>agreeable</i> means easy to get along with; <i>pleasant</i> describes a mild manner, not a strong trait.
4. A	All four hint at fear. A stacks two strong cues — <i>crept</i> (slow, cautious motion) PLUS <i>heart pounding</i> (physical fear). B has only the hands; C just names the feeling without showing it; D shows caution but no fear-feeling at all.
5. D	All four describe how an adult might walk. Strode = long, confident, serious steps — fits a judge. <i>Ambled</i> is too relaxed; <i>marched</i> is military/forceful, not judicial; <i>paced</i> means walking back and forth nervously, the wrong mood.
6. C	All four are anger-tinged speech verbs. Snapped = sharp, sudden, angry retort — fits everyday angry speech. <i>Muttered</i> is low and grumbling (annoyed, not openly angry); <i>barked</i> means shouting commands (more bossy than angry); <i>growled</i> is a low, threatening rumble (more intimidating than openly angry).
7. A	All four are gentle water verbs. Trickled = a thin, soft flow — perfect for a small stream between rocks. <i>Murmured</i> describes a soft sound, not the motion; <i>rippled</i> means small surface waves (better for a lake); <i>gurgled</i> emphasizes the bubbling sound, not the gentle flow.
8. D	All four are real eating verbs. Devoured = ate hungrily and completely — captures both speed and hunger. <i>Nibbled</i> means small, careful bites (opposite!); <i>gulped</i> usually applies to drinks or swallowing whole; <i>gobbled</i> is close (eat quickly) but lighter and a bit comic, missing the intensity.
9. B	All four are storm-friendly adjectives. Fierce captures the storm's violent power — its DANGER. <i>Massive</i> describes only size; <i>severe</i> is correct but formal/weather-report-flat; <i>towering</i> describes height (clouds) without the danger.
10. C	All four use action verbs. C stacks THREE precise, picture-painting verbs — <i>raced</i> , <i>tumbled</i> , <i>shrieked</i> . A's verbs are common; B has two ordinary verbs; D's verbs are clear but only two and milder.



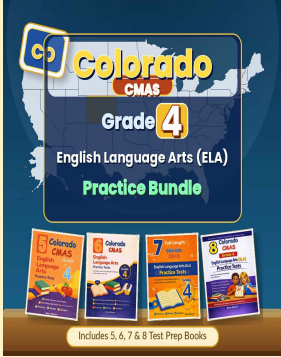
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