

# Verifying Word Meaning

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10



## Quick Review

Context clues and root analysis produce a **preliminary** guess. Smart Grade 7 readers VERIFY that guess before they rely on it. Four moves: (1) **Substitute** your guess into the sentence — does it still make sense? (2) **Check the part of speech**: a noun guess must replace a noun. (3) **Read on**: the next sentence often confirms or corrects the guess. (4) **Cross-check a dictionary** for the precise denotation. If any check fails, revise.

## PRACTICE

Choose the **BEST** way to verify or revise the word-meaning guess in each item.

- Read the sentence: *The diplomat's **prudence** impressed every member of the delegation.* Naomi guesses that *prudence* means *good judgment*. Which step would BEST help Naomi verify her guess?
  - Count how many syllables *prudence* contains.
  - Check whether *prudence* looks like a French word.
  - Read the next sentence to see whether *good judgment* still fits.
  - Ask a friend to guess what the word means.
- Mei reads: *The room was **cacophonous**: a baby screamed, a saxophone squealed, and three timers all rang at once.* She guesses *cacophonous* means *full of loud, clashing sounds*. The BEST way to verify her guess is to —
  - substitute *full of loud, clashing sounds* back into the sentence and check that it still makes sense.
  - look for *cacophonous* in the textbook's index.
  - underline every adjective in the paragraph.
  - ask whether the word came from Greek or Latin.
- Tomas reads sentence 1: *The new policy was widely **panned** by critics, who said it would worsen the shortage.* He guesses *panned* means *strongly criticized*. Then he reads sentence 2: *The chef **panned** the cookies before sliding the tray into the oven.* What should Tomas conclude?
  - His first guess is wrong; *panned* means *baked in an oven*.
  - Sentence 2 has no useful information about the word.
  - Both sentences use the word the same way.
  - Panned* has at least two distinct meanings; his first guess fits sentence 1, but in sentence 2 it means something different (here, *put into a baking pan*).



4. Read the sentence: *Coach Ortiz spoke with such **conviction** that the entire locker room believed the comeback was possible.* Vera guesses that *conviction* means *laughter*. Which check would BEST show that her guess is WRONG?

- A. Counting how often the word appears in the chapter.
- B. Substituting *laughter* back into the sentence and asking whether it still makes sense.
- C. Asking what part of speech *conviction* is.
- D. Looking at the cover of the book for clues.

5. Mara reads: *The mayor was hailed as a **visionary** after the city's bold transit plan succeeded.* She has no idea what **visionary** means. She looks it up in a dictionary and finds: *visionary, noun, a person with original ideas about what the future could be.* Which step should she do NEXT to confirm her understanding IN THIS SENTENCE?

- A. Memorize the dictionary entry word-for-word.
- B. Look up a different word from the sentence.
- C. Substitute the dictionary's definition back into the sentence and check that the sentence still makes sense.
- D. Stop reading the article.

6. Read this passage:

*Diego thought **circumvent** meant to circle around a building. Then he read the next line: 'The hackers tried to circumvent the school's password system by using a stolen staff login.'*

What should Diego do?

- A. Revise his guess; *circumvent* likely means *to get around or avoid (a rule or obstacle)*, not *to circle a building*.
- B. Keep his original guess because *circumvent* begins with *circum-*, which means *around*.
- C. Skip the word and stop reading.
- D. Decide the author used the word incorrectly.

7. Read the sentence: *The judge's **impartial** ruling satisfied both teams.* Lucas guesses *impartial* means *fair to both sides*. Which check would give him the STRONGEST confirmation?

- A. Counting the letters in *impartial*.
- B. Checking a dictionary, which defines *impartial* as *not favoring one side over another*.
- C. Asking whether anyone has heard the word before.
- D. Comparing *impartial* with *important*.

8. Read these two sentences with the same word:

1) *The carpenter used a sharp **plane** to smooth the door.*

2) *The pilot flew the small **plane** over the harbor.*

Mia first thinks **plane** means *a flying machine*. What should she conclude?

- A. Sentence 1 has a typo and should say *plate*.
- B. Both sentences use the word in the same way.
- C. Her guess is wrong everywhere and the word means something else entirely.
- D. Her guess fits sentence 2, but in sentence 1 **plane** is a different word — a woodworking tool that smooths surfaces.



9. Read the sentence: *The musician's **melancholy** tune left the audience in tears.*

(a) Make a preliminary guess about what **melancholy** means. (b) Describe ONE specific verification step you could take and what result would CONFIRM your guess. (c) Describe ONE result that would make you REVISE your guess.

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10. Read these two sentences:

1) *The witness produced a written **statement** for the court.*

2) *The senator's bold tie was a fashion **statement** all by itself.*

Eli thinks **statement** means *a written or spoken declaration of facts*. Test his guess against BOTH sentences. Where does it hold? Where does it need to be extended? What should he conclude in 1–2 sentences?

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# Answer Keys

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Explanations	
<b>1. C</b>	Reading on is one of the strongest verification moves: the next sentence often supplies an example of the diplomat's careful, thoughtful choices, which would confirm <b>good judgment</b> . A counts syllables — unrelated to meaning. B confuses spelling-origin with definition. D outsources the work without using the text.
<b>2. A</b>	<b>Substitution</b> is the quickest verification: <i>The room was full of loud, clashing sounds: a baby screamed...</i> reads naturally, so the guess holds. B confuses an index (page numbers) with a glossary or dictionary. C is a grammar task, not a meaning check. D is interesting trivia but does not test her current guess.
<b>3. D</b>	Verifying across multiple uses reveals when a word has more than one meaning. <b>Panned</b> can mean <i>strongly criticized</i> (sentence 1) AND <i>placed into a pan</i> (sentence 2). A throws out a correct guess to force consistency. B ignores useful evidence. C misses the obvious shift in context.
<b>4. B</b>	Substitution would give <i>Coach Ortiz spoke with such laughter that the entire locker room believed the comeback was possible</i> — the laughter doesn't explain the players' belief in a comeback, so the substitution fails and Vera knows to revise. A is a frequency check, not a meaning check. C narrows the part of speech but doesn't catch the meaning error. D is unrelated to the word.
<b>5. C</b>	A dictionary check is a strong start, but the final verification step is <b>substitution</b> : <i>The mayor was hailed as a person with original ideas about what the future could be after the city's bold transit plan succeeded.</i> The sentence still makes sense, so the meaning holds. A memorizes without checking fit. B detours from the word in question. D abandons the task.
<b>6. A</b>	The new sentence shows hackers trying to <b>get around</b> a security rule — not literally walking around a building. Diego should <b>revise</b> : <i>circumvent</i> means <i>to get around or avoid</i> , often figuratively. B half-uses the root <i>circum-</i> but ignores the figurative meaning that fits a password system. C abandons verification. D blames the writer for Diego's incomplete first guess.
<b>7. B</b>	A dictionary check confirms both Lucas's meaning AND that no key nuance is missing. A counts letters — unrelated to meaning. C is a popularity poll. D falls for the sound-alike trap ( <i>impartial</i> shares only the first three letters with <i>important</i> and they share no meaning).
<b>8. D</b>	Verifying across two contexts can REVEAL that a word has more than one meaning. Mia's guess fits sentence 2, but sentence 1 must use a different meaning — <i>plane</i> as a carpenter's smoothing tool. A invents a typo to protect a wrong guess. B ignores the clear difference in context. C overcorrects and discards a correct meaning.



9.	<b>Answer:</b> (a) Preliminary guess: <b>melancholy</b> probably means <i>deeply sad or sorrowful</i> &mdash; the tune left the audience in tears. (b) Verification step: <b>substitute</b> <i>deeply sad</i> into the sentence ( <i>The musician's deeply sad tune left the audience in tears</i> ) or <b>look it up</b> in a dictionary. A confirming result is a dictionary entry such as <i>melancholy: a feeling of pensive sadness</i> . (c) A revising result would be discovering that <i>melancholy</i> meant <i>cheerful</i> or <i>loud</i> &mdash; either would make my guess fail on substitution or dictionary check.
10.	<b>Answer:</b> Eli's guess holds in <b>sentence 1</b> : a court statement is a written declaration of facts. His guess needs to be <b>extended</b> in sentence 2: a <i>fashion statement</i> is not a declaration in words but a visual expression of an idea or identity. Eli should conclude that <b>statement</b> has a literal meaning (a written or spoken declaration) and an extended figurative meaning (any clear expression, including a visual one), and that context decides which sense fits.



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