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.

1. 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?

A. Count how many syllables *prudence* contains.

B. Check whether *prudence* looks like a French word.

C. Read the next sentence to see whether *good judgment* still fits.

D. Ask a friend to guess what the word means.

2. 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 —

A. substitute *full of loud, clashing sounds* back into the sentence and check that it still makes sense.

B. look for *cacophonous* in the textbook's index.

C. underline every adjective in the paragraph.

D. ask whether the word came from Greek or Latin.

3. 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?

A. His first guess is wrong; *panned* means *baked in an oven*.

B. Sentence 2 has no useful information about the word.

C. Both sentences use the word the same way.

D. *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

1	A	B	**C**	D	6	**A**	B	C	D
2	**A**	B	C	D	7	A	**B**	C	D
3	A	B	C	**D**	8	A	B	C	**D**
4	A	**B**	C	D	9	See below			
5	A	B	**C**	D	10	See below			

Explanations

1. C	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 **good judgment**. A counts syllables — unrelated to meaning. B confuses spelling-origin with definition. D outsources the work without using the text.
2. A	**Substitution** is the quickest verification: *The room was full of loud, clashing sounds: a baby screamed...* 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.
3. D	Verifying across multiple uses reveals when a word has more than one meaning. **Panned** can mean *strongly criticized* (sentence 1) AND *placed into a pan* (sentence 2). A throws out a correct guess to force consistency. B ignores useful evidence. C misses the obvious shift in context.
4. B	Substitution would give *Coach Ortiz spoke with such laughter that the entire locker room believed the comeback was possible* — 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.
5. C	A dictionary check is a strong start, but the final verification step is **substitution**: *The mayor was hailed as a person with original ideas about what the future could be after the city's bold transit plan succeeded.* 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.
6. A	The new sentence shows hackers trying to **get around** a security rule — not literally walking around a building. Diego should **revise**: *circumvent* means *to get around or avoid*, often figuratively. B half-uses the root *circum-* but ignores the figurative meaning that fits a password system. C abandons verification. D blames the writer for Diego's incomplete first guess.
7. 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 (*impartial* shares only the first three letters with *important* and they share no meaning).
8. D	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 — *plane* 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.	**Answer:** (a) Preliminary guess: melancholy probably means deeply sad or sorrowful — the tune left the audience in tears. (b) Verification step: substitute deeply sad into the sentence (The musician's deeply sad tune left the audience in tears) or look it up in a dictionary. A confirming result is a dictionary entry such as melancholy: a feeling of pensive sadness. (c) A revising result would be discovering that melancholy meant cheerful or loud — either would make my guess fail on substitution or dictionary check.
10.	**Answer:** Eli's guess holds in sentence 1: a court statement is a written declaration of facts. His guess needs to be extended in sentence 2: a fashion statement is not a declaration in words but a visual expression of an idea or identity. Eli should conclude that statement 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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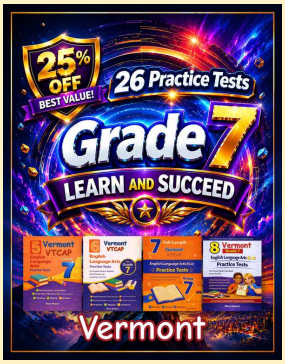

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