WEEK 1

The Missing Map

Vocabulary + reading comprehension

Name _____ **Date** _____

⏱️ **30 minutes** | **6 min** Words | **10 min** Reading | **12 min** Questions | **2 min** Check

1 Core Word Lab Learn these eight words first

Word	What it means	Example
ultimately	in the end; after everything has been considered	**Ultimately**, the evidence changed her mind.
deceit	the act of deliberately making someone believe something untrue	The lie looked like evidence of **deceit**.
disastrous	causing very serious harm, failure or trouble	Losing the only map would be **disastrous**.
glint	a small, quick flash of reflected light	A **glint** of brass shone beneath the cabinet.
obscure	not well known, clear or easy to understand	The note used an **obscure** museum abbreviation.
curiosity	a strong desire to know, learn or discover something	Her **curiosity** made her inspect the clue twice.
incidental	secondary or less important than the main matter	The muddy floor was **incidental** to the missing map.
plausible	seeming reasonable or likely to be true	The first explanation sounded **plausible**.

👀 **Look out!** You will spot these words in **purple bold** in the reading passage.

2 Quick Word Check Choose the best answer

Read each question and all the options. Type the letter of your answer in the box.

1. Which sentence uses incidental correctly?

A	The incidental storm destroyed every house in the village.
B	The main reason for the visit was the exhibition; buying a postcard was incidental.
C	She gave an incidental speech that lasted three hours and changed the whole debate.
D	The detective found the incidental clue that proved exactly who committed the crime.

✏️ My answer

2. Which word best completes the sentence? "A tiny _____ of light flashed from the metal key."

A	deceit
B	curiosity
C	glint
D	obscure

✏️ My answer

3. A plausible explanation is one that…

A	is certainly true.
B	seems reasonable and could be true.
C	is deliberately dishonest.
D	is impossible to understand.

✏️ My answer

4. **Which word is strongest for something that causes very serious failure or harm?**

A	obscure
B	incidental
C	disastrous
D	ultimately

✏️ **My answer**

5. **If a person hides the truth in order to mislead someone, which noun best describes this?**

A	curiosity
B	deceit
C	glint
D	plausibility

✏️ **My answer**

6. **Which word is closest in meaning to “unclear or little known”?**

A	obscure
B	plausible
C	disastrous
D	incidental

✏️ **My answer**

7. **Which sentence best shows curiosity?**

A	Amir refused to ask what was inside the locked box.
B	Amir forgot the box was there.
C	Amir wanted to know why the box had been hidden and began looking for clues.
D	Amir decided the box was irrelevant without examining it.

✏️ My answer

8. **Ultimately means...**

A	at first.
B	by accident.
C	in the end.
D	in secret.

✏️ My answer



READING RULE

A good reader treats a first idea as a hypothesis, then checks it against new evidence.

3 Reading Passage The Missing Map

🔎 Word detective

As you read, look out for the **bold words**. There are two kinds:

★ **Purple words** are your Word Lab words. Do you remember what they mean?

★ **Orange underlined words** are new context words. Don't look them up yet! Use the clues in the sentences around them to work out what they mean.

Context words: **opaque**, **flawless**, **irrelevant**, **prudent**, **hypothetical**

Read carefully. Your first explanation may change as new evidence appears.

1 On Saturday morning, Nia expected the Wychcombe Museum to be silent. Instead, the old building hummed with worry. On Monday, a new exhibition about the town's harbour was due to open, and its centrepiece – a hand-drawn map from 1874 – had vanished from a locked display cabinet. "If we cannot find it," said Aunt Celia, the curator, "the opening will be **disastrous**." Nia had only come to help label postcards, but her **curiosity** was instantly awake.

2 The map had last been seen on Friday afternoon. A photographer had taken pictures of it, the caretaker had repaired a loose window catch nearby, and Aunt Celia had left at half past five. There had been no broken lock and no damaged glass. To Nia, that made theft seem both impossible and oddly **plausible**. Someone who already had access would not need to force the cabinet.

3 She crouched beside the empty display. A **glint** of brass winked from beneath the skirting board. Using a ruler, Nia drew out a small key. Beside it lay a folded scrap of paper: MOVED BEFORE RAIN. F.S. The letters meant nothing to her, but the note seemed important. Mr Finch, the caretaker, was the only person she knew whose surname began with F.

4 When Mr Finch arrived, Nia asked where he had been on Friday afternoon. "Outside, mostly," he said. "I never came into this gallery." Then, looking towards the cabinet, he added, "I hope the new frame wasn't scratched." Nia stared at him. Aunt Celia had not mentioned a frame. Was that a slip? Mr Finch's answer had the uncomfortable shape of **deceit**.

5 Nia whispered that they should confront him, but Aunt Celia shook her head. "It would be **prudent** to separate suspicion from proof. A **hypothetical** explanation is only a possibility. What evidence would show that Mr Finch actually opened the

cabinet?" Nia looked again at the floor. There were muddy marks near the doorway, but none beside the display. The marks might be suspicious, yet they could also be **incidental** to the missing map.

6 They checked the cabinet carefully. Its lock was intact. The wooden frame inside was **flawless** – no scratches, splinters or bent clips. Behind it, the temporary backing sheet was **opaque**, so nothing could be seen through it. Nia found a printed visitor leaflet trapped behind the cabinet and felt a jolt of excitement, but Aunt Celia pointed out that hundreds of identical leaflets had been used that week. It was probably **irrelevant**.

7 Then Nia noticed a pale brown stain on the ceiling. It spread from the skylight to the wall directly above the display. Friday's weather forecast had warned of heavy rain. Suddenly, MOVED BEFORE RAIN seemed less like a confession and more like an instruction. Nia asked Aunt Celia whether F.S. might be an **obscure** museum abbreviation rather than a person's initials.

8 Aunt Celia hurried to the conservation desk and pulled open a thick ledger. Halfway down Friday's page was a neat entry: HARBOUR MAP – FLAT STORE – 4:40 P.M. – L.J. "Flat Store," she said. "F.S. Of course. Lena moved it to protect it from the leak." The Flat Store was a cool room where delicate papers were kept in large drawers. Inside an **opaque** archival folder, the missing map lay perfectly safe.

9 There was still one mystery. Why had Mr Finch lied? After a long pause, he admitted that he had entered the gallery to fetch his umbrella, despite having been told to stay off the newly polished floor. He had left the muddy marks and had been embarrassed to admit it. He knew about the new frame because he had helped carry it upstairs the day before. His **deceit** was real, but it was not evidence that he had taken the map.

10 Nia returned the small key to Aunt Celia. It belonged to the photographer's equipment case, not the display cabinet. One by one, the clues that had seemed to point towards Mr Finch changed their meaning. **Ultimately**, Nia realised, solving a mystery was not about choosing the most dramatic story. It was about asking which story still fitted when every piece of evidence was considered.

4 Comprehension Choose the best answer

Use the passage, not guesswork. Some questions ask what is stated; others ask what is best supported by the evidence. Type the letter of your answer in the box.

1. **Why was Aunt Celia especially worried about the missing map?** *retrieval*

A	She had promised Nia she could take it home.
B	It was the centrepiece of an exhibition opening on Monday.
C	The photographer refused to continue working.
D	The museum had no other historical objects.
E	Mr Finch had already been accused of taking it.

✏️ My answer

2. **In paragraph 2, why does Nia think the absence of forced entry makes an insider explanation plausible?** *inference*

A	An insider would already have access and would not need to break the cabinet.
B	An insider would know that the map was worthless.
C	The museum had been closed for several weeks.
D	The cabinet had never had a lock.
E	The photographer had admitted taking the key.

✏️ My answer

3. **What does the word incidental mean in paragraph 5?** *vocabulary in context*

A	deliberately misleading
B	very damaging
C	secondary to the main issue
D	certain to be important
E	impossible to explain

✏️ **My answer**

4. **Which detail most strongly makes Nia suspect Mr Finch at first?** *inference*

A	He arrives on Saturday morning.
B	His surname begins with F.
C	He knows there is a new frame even though Aunt Celia has not mentioned it.
D	He works as the museum caretaker.
E	He owns an umbrella.

✏️ **My answer**

5. **Why does Aunt Celia say it would be prudent not to confront Mr Finch immediately?** *meaning + reasoning*

A	She wants him to leave before the museum opens.
B	She thinks the map is unimportant.
C	She wants to distinguish suspicion from evidence before accusing him.
D	She already knows Nia is wrong.
E	She does not understand Nia's question.

✏️ **My answer**

6. **What is the effect of the phrase "A glint of brass winked from beneath the skirting board"?** *authorial choice*

A	It suggests the key makes a loud noise.
B	It makes the small flash of reflected light feel noticeable and intriguing.
C	It proves the key belongs to Mr Finch.
D	It shows the skirting board is broken.
E	It suggests the brass is completely hidden in darkness.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

7. **In paragraph 6, what does opaque most nearly mean?** *context word*

A	transparent
B	not possible to see through
C	brightly coloured
D	damaged by water
E	very valuable

✏️ **My answer** ☐

8. **Which new piece of evidence causes Nia to reconsider the meaning of the note MOVED BEFORE RAIN?** *prediction revision*

A	The muddy marks near the doorway.
B	The visitor leaflet behind the cabinet.
C	The brown water stain above the display and the forecast of heavy rain.
D	The photographer's equipment key.
E	Mr Finch's umbrella.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

9. **Why is the visitor leaflet described as probably irrelevant?** *relevance of evidence*

A	It is too old to read.
B	It contains an obscure abbreviation.
C	Many identical leaflets had been used, so it does not meaningfully explain the missing map.
D	It belongs to Lena.
E	It proves that a visitor entered the gallery.

✏️ **My answer** ____

10. **What does the ledger reveal about F.S.?** *retrieval*

A	It is Mr Finch's signature.
B	It means Friday Security.
C	It is shorthand for Flat Store, where the map had been moved.
D	It is the photographer's company name.
E	It is a code for the locked display cabinet.

✏️ **My answer** ____

11. **Which statement best explains Mr Finch's deceit?** *integration*

A	He stole the map and tried to hide it.
B	He lied about entering the gallery because he was embarrassed about leaving muddy marks.
C	He wrote the note to make Lena look guilty.
D	He broke the display frame and replaced it.
E	He hid the photographer's key beneath the cabinet.

✏️ **My answer** ____

12. **What does flawless tell us about the wooden frame in paragraph 6?** *context word*

A	It was extremely old.
B	It was completely undamaged.
C	It was difficult to see.
D	It had been recently painted.
E	It was not the correct size.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

13. **Which clue turns out to be most clearly incidental to the map's disappearance?** *evidence evaluation*

A	The water stain above the display.
B	The conservation ledger entry.
C	The muddy marks left by Mr Finch.
D	The note saying MOVED BEFORE RAIN.
E	The map being stored in an archival folder.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

14. **Which sentence best summarises the main idea of the final paragraph?** *main idea*

A	The most exciting explanation is usually correct.
B	A mystery is solved by accusing the person who behaves suspiciously.
C	Evidence must be reconsidered as new information appears, and the best explanation is the one that fits all the evidence.
D	Small physical clues are always more useful than written records.
E	People who tell one lie cannot be trusted about anything.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

5 Exit Ticket Two minutes

Without looking back at the Word Lab, complete these from memory.

1	A word meaning “in the end”:	
2	A word meaning “seems reasonable”:	
3	A word meaning “a deliberate attempt to mislead”:	

✨ **One-sentence reflection: Which clue changed Nia’s mind most, and why?**

Well done, detective! 🎉