WEEK 2

Footprints in the Fog

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
conceal	to hide something so that it cannot be seen	He tried to **conceal** the muddy glove inside his bag.
case	a mystery being investigated; also a container that protects something	The **case** of the missing card puzzled everyone.
revelation	a surprising fact that is suddenly made known	The nest in the pump house was a **revelation**.
conscious	awake and aware of what is happening around you	Jonah was **conscious** of a rattling sound above him.
cunning	clever in a sly or tricky way	Walking backwards would be a **cunning** trick.
ample	more than enough	There was **ample** time before the judges arrived.
reliable	able to be trusted or depended on	The log book was a **reliable** record of every visit.
aberrant	different from what is normal or expected	One **aberrant** footprint faced the wrong way.

👀 **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 aberrant correctly?**

A	Every print pointed the same way, which was aberrant.
B	One print faced the wrong way, which was aberrant among all the others.
C	The aberrant log book recorded every visit exactly as it always did.
D	She made her usual aberrant cup of tea at the usual time.

✏️ My answer

2. **Which word best completes the sentence? "There was _____ time to check the boardwalk before the judges arrived."**

A	aberrant
B	ample
C	cunning
D	conscious

✏️ My answer

3. **To conceal something means to…**

A	hide it from sight.
B	repair it carefully.
C	show it proudly.
D	throw it away.

✏️ My answer

4. **A reliable record is one that…**

A	is written in pencil.
B	can be trusted to be correct.
C	is kept secret.
D	is very old.

✏️ My answer

5. **Which word describes a clever but slightly sly plan?**

A	conscious
B	ample
C	cunning
D	reliable

✏️ My answer

6. **Which sentence uses conscious correctly?**

A	Jonah was conscious of a rattling sound above him.
B	Jonah conscious the camera back onto its bracket.
C	The fog was too conscious to see through.
D	She bought a conscious of apples at the market.

✏️ My answer

7. **A revelation is…**

A	a promise made in secret.
B	a surprising fact that is suddenly made known.
C	a long and boring explanation.
D	a rule that must be obeyed.

✏️ My answer

8. **In "The case of the missing card puzzled everyone", case means…**

A	a container for carrying things.
B	a mystery that is being investigated.
C	a reason for doing something.
D	a heavy suitcase.

✏️ My answer



READING RULE

Some answers are found in the text and some are built from clues in the text. Either way, point to your evidence.

3 Reading Passage Footprints in the Fog

🔎 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: **insightful**, **ironic**, **fraudulent**, **vanished**, **observant**, **ominous**

Read carefully. Notice which facts are stated and which ones you have to work out.

1 The fog at Wrenford Fen was so thick that Jonah could not see the end of the boardwalk. He had come to help Mrs Okafor, the reserve warden, get everything ready for Monday's wildlife photography competition. Instead, he found her standing outside the bird hide with an empty bracket in her hands. The reserve's camera – the one that had watched the fen owl's nest all winter – had gone, and so had the memory card inside it. "This," said Mrs Okafor, "is a **case** I could do without."

2 The camera had last been checked on Friday afternoon at four o'clock, when the light failed. The gate had been locked at five. There was no broken fence and no damaged lock. The boardwalk was the only dry path across the marsh; everywhere else the ground was soft and deep. Jonah had **ample** time before the judges arrived, so he began where any sensible detective begins: with what could actually be seen.

3 In the wet planks of the boardwalk, a line of footprints led from the gate to the hide and back again. Most of them pointed neatly forwards. One, though, was **aberrant**: it faced the gate while all its neighbours faced the hide. Jonah, who had always been **observant**, crouched beside it and frowned. "Someone walked backwards," he said. "That would be a **cunning** way to hide which direction you really came from."

4 A figure loomed out of the fog. It was Mr Pell, a visitor who came most weekends and complained, loudly and often, that the reserve attracted unreliable people. He was carrying a photograph in a plastic wallet. "For the competition," he announced. "The fen owl, at dawn." As he spoke he shifted his bag behind him, as

though trying to **conceal** something inside it, and Jonah was **conscious** of a smear of fresh mud along the strap.

5 Above them the sky turned a low, **ominous** grey, and the reeds hissed in a wind that smelt of rain. Mrs Okafor looked from the photograph to the empty bracket and back again. “Where were you on Friday evening, Mr Pell?” she asked. “At home,” he said. He said it quickly – too quickly, Jonah thought.

6 Nadia, one of the volunteers, took the photograph and studied it with an **insightful** frown. “The reeds behind this owl are tall and green,” she said. “In February our reeds are brown and cut short. This picture was taken last summer.” Mr Pell’s face reddened, and he admitted it at once: his entry was **fraudulent**, because he had wanted to win and the owl had not appeared for him all winter. But a **fraudulent** photograph, Mrs Okafor reminded them, was not the same thing as a stolen camera.

7 It was **ironic**, Jonah thought, that the man who talked most about unreliable visitors was the one who had bent the rules. Yet feeling suspicious about somebody is not the same as having evidence, and the footprints still had to be explained. He followed them to the point where the boardwalk ended and the reeds began – and there, on the soft ground where prints should have shown most clearly, they simply **vanished**.

8 Back in the office, Mrs Okafor opened the volunteers’ log. Every visit to the hide was written down with a time beside it. Saturday, 6:45 a.m.: “Boardwalk checked – planks slippery – turned back to fasten gate latch. J. Hartley.” The log was a **reliable** record, and it explained the footprints exactly: one volunteer, walking out and back, turning once to look at the latch behind her.

9 That left the camera. Jonah returned to the hide and stood very still. He became **conscious** of a rattling, chattering sound somewhere above the old pump house. A jackdaw was perched on the roof, and jackdaws are **cunning**, curious birds with a weakness for anything that shines. Inside the pump house, on an untidy nest of twigs, lay a bottle top, a strip of foil and one small, bright memory card. The camera itself was underneath, still in its waterproof **case**, where it had fallen when the bird knocked it from the bracket.

10 The **revelation** made Mrs Okafor laugh for the first time that morning. The most dramatic explanation had been a thief creeping through the fog; the true one had feathers. “Two lessons,” she said, handing Jonah the card. “Work from the evidence you actually have – and keep a record you can trust.”

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. When was the camera last checked? *retrieval*

A	On Saturday at 6:45 a.m.
B	On Friday afternoon at four o'clock.
C	On Monday morning, before the competition.
D	On Friday at five o'clock, when the gate was locked.
E	On Sunday evening.

✏️ My answer ____

2. Why could footprints only be found on the boardwalk? *retrieval*

A	It was the only dry path across the marsh.
B	It was the only part of the reserve with lights.
C	The rest of the reserve was fenced off.
D	Visitors were banned from walking in the reeds.
E	The fog had covered everywhere else.

✏️ My answer ____

3. What does the aberrant footprint suggest to Jonah at first? *inference*

A	That two people walked to the hide together.
B	That someone walked backwards to hide which way they had come.
C	That a large bird landed on the boardwalk.
D	That the planks had recently been replaced.
E	That the gate had been left unlocked.

✏️ My answer ____

4. **What does observant mean in paragraph 3?** *context word*

A	good at noticing things
B	easily frightened
C	quick to argue
D	careful with money
E	unwilling to wait

✏️ **My answer** ☐

5. **Why does Jonah become suspicious of Mr Pell in paragraph 4?** *inference*

A	Mr Pell is carrying a camera of his own.
B	Mr Pell arrives before the reserve has opened.
C	Mr Pell seems to hide something in his bag and his strap is freshly muddy.
D	Mr Pell refuses to enter the competition.
E	Mr Pell has never visited the fen before.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

6. **What is the effect of describing the sky as "a low, ominous grey"?** *authorial choice*

A	It shows that the weather is improving.
B	It warns the reader that something unpleasant may be coming.
C	It proves the camera was taken at night.
D	It tells the reader the exact time of day.
E	It suggests the reserve is a cheerful place.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

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

A	carefully planned
B	dishonest and meant to deceive
C	taken from far away
D	blurred and hard to see
E	extremely valuable

✏️ **My answer** ☐

8. **How does Nadia work out that the photograph was not taken that week?** *inference*

A	The owl is the wrong species for the fen.
B	The photograph is in black and white.
C	The reeds behind the owl are tall and green, but in February they are brown and cut short.
D	Mr Pell tells her the date it was taken.
E	The camera's memory card is missing.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

9. **Why does Mrs Okafor say that "a fraudulent photograph was not the same thing as a stolen camera"?** *meaning + reasoning*

A	She wants Mr Pell to win the competition.
B	She thinks the photograph matters more than the camera.
C	She is reminding them that being dishonest about one thing does not prove he did the other.
D	She has already decided Mr Pell is innocent of everything.
E	She no longer cares about the missing camera.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

10. **What did the volunteers' log record for Saturday morning?** *retrieval*

A	That the hide was locked at five o'clock.
B	That the boardwalk was checked at 6:45 a.m. and the gate latch was fastened.
C	That the camera had been moved into the office.
D	That a jackdaw had been seen on the pump house.
E	That Mr Pell had visited the reserve.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

11. **How does the log book explain the footprints?** *inference*

A	It shows that two visitors walked out to the hide.
B	It shows one volunteer walked out and back, turning once to check the latch.
C	It proves that nobody used the boardwalk at all.
D	It shows the prints were made on Friday evening.
E	It shows the prints belonged to Mr Pell.

✏️ **My answer** ☐

12. **In paragraph 9, "still in its waterproof case" uses case to mean…** *multiple meanings*

A	a mystery that is being investigated
B	a container that protects something
C	an argument in favour of an idea
D	an example of an illness
E	a reason for a decision

✏️ **My answer** ☐

13. **What is the real explanation for the missing memory card?** *evidence evaluation*

A	Mr Pell took it so that he could win the competition.
B	A volunteer moved it into the office for safekeeping.
C	A jackdaw carried the shiny card to its nest in the pump house.
D	It was washed away by the rain.
E	It was never put into the camera at all.

✏️ My answer

14. **Which sentence best summarises what Jonah learns?** *main idea*

A	The most dramatic explanation is usually the correct one.
B	Anyone who lies once cannot be believed about anything.
C	Behaving suspiciously is proof that somebody is guilty.
D	Work from the evidence you actually have, and keep records you can trust.
E	Nature reserves are dangerous places in fog.

✏️ My answer

5 Exit Ticket Two minutes

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

1	A word meaning “more than enough”:	
2	A word meaning “to hide something from sight”:	
3	A word meaning “different from what is normal”:	

✨ **One-sentence reflection: Which clue showed that Mr Pell had not taken the memory card, and why?**

Well done, detective! 🎉